To Win the West

China's Propaganda in the English-Language Press, 1928–1941

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I declare this thesis to be my own work except where acknowledgement has been given to the works of others.

Shuge Wei
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on China’s propaganda in the English-language press from 1928—the establishment of the Nanjing government—to 1941—the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Without a proper news infrastructure, the Guomindang government had to rely on the English-language treaty-port press, a credible source of information for foreign audiences, to present its case abroad. Yet extraterritoriality and the transnational media environment, as well as the underlying tensions among news groups representing different interests made it difficult for the government to regulate the treaty-port press. To harness this medium, the government attempted to limit the extraterritorial privileges of foreign journalists through the postal service and the threat of deportation. Chiang Kai-shek also approached the bilingual Chinese elite, particularly the US-trained Chinese journalist Hollington Tong, to tighten his connections with the foreign journalists. With Chiang’s support, Tong built a centralized propaganda system after 1937 and used his treaty-port news networks to strengthen the government’s propaganda efforts during the Sino-Japanese war. This study argues that propaganda was an important means for the Guomindang government to resist Japan’s threat to its territorial integrity and to restore its legal sovereignty in the absence of a strong military and economic capacity. The development of China’s propaganda system was a transnational and trans-social process, shaped in part by the treaty-port English-language press in China and facilitated by the cooperation between bilingual elites and propaganda officials.

This project combines examination of the government’s news policies and personal networks with analysis of reports in key English-language papers. It traces the interaction between news policy and newspapers and reveals the intricate power struggles among empires in China. It also provides an alternative interpretation to the perceived passivity of China’s propaganda apparatus during the conflict with Japan.
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I use *pinyin* to romanize Chinese names and titles of Chinese materials. But there are exceptions: names like Chiang Kai-shek, Hollington Tong and T. V. Soong, which are established in English-language literature; geographical names that no longer exist, such as Mukden, and names quoted by contemporary authors in traditional form, like Nanking and Peking. To minimize confusion, I provide below a list of important personal names in *Pinyin*, traditional form and character. Chinese and Japanese personal names in this dissertation are presented in traditional East Asian form—family name comes before the given name. Exceptions are made in the case of scholars who are well known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Traditional form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diao Minqian</td>
<td>Philip Tyau</td>
<td>刁敏謙</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dong Xianguang</td>
<td>Hollington Tong</td>
<td>董顯光</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gu Weijun</td>
<td>Wellington Koo</td>
<td>魏維釗</td>
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<td>Gui Zhongshu</td>
<td>Kwei Chung Shu</td>
<td>桂中樞</td>
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<td>Kong Xiangxi</td>
<td>H. H. Kong</td>
<td>孔祥熙</td>
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<td>Li Bingrui</td>
<td>Edward Bing-shuey Lee</td>
<td>李炳瑞</td>
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<td>Lin Wenqing</td>
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<td>Quentin Pan</td>
<td>潘光旦</td>
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<td>Shi Zhaoji</td>
<td>Alfred Sze</td>
<td>施肇基</td>
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<td>Song Ziwen</td>
<td>T. V. Soong</td>
<td>宋子文</td>
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<td>Sun Ke</td>
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<td>T’ang Leang-li</td>
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<td>Wang Zhengting</td>
<td>C. T. Wang</td>
<td>王正廷</td>
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<td>Yang Guangsheng</td>
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Names of the Guomindang Government Organizations

Ministry of Information 宣傳部
Ministry of Foreign Affairs 外交部
Ministry of the Interior 内政部
Central Party Headquarters 中央党部
The Ministry of Communications 交通部
Executive Yuan 行政院
Military Affairs Commission 军事委员会
The Investigation and Statistics Bureau of the Military Affairs Commission 國民政府軍事委員會調查統計局

Clarifications

The Guomindang and the Nationalist party are interchangeable in this dissertation.

The Nanjing government before 1938 refers to the Guomindang government led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Nanjing government after 1940 mentioned in this dissertation refers to the puppet government established by Wang Jingwei.

Beijing 北京 is known as Peking in Western literature. The Guomindang government renamed the city as Beiping 北平 (known as Peiping) in 1928. In 1949, the Communist government changed its name back to Beijing and continued to refer to the city as “Peking” until the 1970s. To avoid confusion, this dissertation uses Beijing to refer to the city.

Abbreviation of Archives

SDCF: Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, China, Internal Affairs 1930–1939
CGPH: Committee of the Guomindang Party History (Guomindang Party Archives)
USDS/ PRFRUS: United States Department of State / Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States
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INTRODUCTION

In the world there is nothing more subversive and weak than water.
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it.
This is because there is nothing that can take its place.
That the weak overcomes the strong,
And the submissive overcomes the hard,
Everyone in the world knows yet no one can put this knowledge into practice.

-------Laozi, translated by D. C. Lau, Daodejing, chapter 78
This dissertation explores the development of China’s propaganda in the English-language press between 1928—the establishment of the Nanjing government—and 1941—the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. It argues that propaganda, a new instrument in international politics after World War I, was an important means for the Guomindang government to resist Japan’s threat to its territorial integrity and to assert its legal sovereignty in the absence of military and economic strength. This study demonstrates that the development of China’s propaganda system was a transnational and trans-social process, shaped in part by the treaty-port press in China and facilitated by the cooperation between bilingual elites and propaganda officials.

Propaganda, “a concerted scheme for the promotion of a doctrine or practice,” became an important means to gain and maintain power in international affairs from the time of World War I. The rise in the use of propaganda was a result of greater mass participation in politics and the proliferation of communication technology as well as increasing interaction among different nations. During World War I, belligerents widely adopted propaganda as a means to strengthen the morale of their own forces and to sap that of their enemies. The Soviet Union also exploited the power of this strategy, regularly using propaganda as an instrument to promote its political ideology worldwide. Many officials in democratic countries influenced by a laissez-faire view of the control of information tended to view propaganda as an unethical strategy in peace, and refrained from supporting propaganda activities after the war. They nevertheless acknowledged the power of public opinion and wasted no time resuming official propaganda when international crises intensified. By the end of the 1930s, propaganda had become an important instrument in international politics worldwide. As Edward Hallett Carr observed in 1939, “new official or semi-official agencies for the influencing of opinion at home and

abroad were springing up in every country,"⁵ and propaganda "has never been so important a factor in politics as it is today."⁶

Propaganda activities by Western countries and the Soviet Union during the two world wars have been well examined, but similar activities in Asia have largely escaped scholarly attention.⁷ Recently, more studies have begun to trace Japan’s propaganda efforts, but China’s involvement in and reaction to this political strategy remain to be explored.⁸ Among the limited research on China’s propaganda, scholars tend to focus on the control of domestic opinion, leaving China’s efforts to establish its national prestige among the world press unattended.⁹ Indeed, China’s foreign propaganda in the interwar period has suffered neglect in modern scholarship, due to the political complexity of the period and the paucity of sources. Scholars have traced a series of propaganda activities organized by the Guomindang government in the United States and the establishment of an official foreign propaganda department after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, but they have not discussed the broader propaganda

⁵ E. H. Carr, The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939, 137.
⁶ E. H. Carr, Propaganda in International Politics, 3.
¹⁰ Foreign propaganda in this dissertation refers to propaganda initiated by the Chinese government or elites to influence the opinion of foreign audiences.
system and its formation.\textsuperscript{11}

The propaganda experiences of Western countries and Japan are not sufficient for understanding China’s case. China was a weak country subjected to the collective control of foreign powers in the 1930s. While the Powers—the Western countries, the Soviet Union and Japan—had military and economic strength to support their propaganda efforts, China had to organize its propaganda activities without such support. Furthermore, like many other foreign-introduced or modified instruments, ideas and systems, the strategy of foreign propaganda had to go through a process of localization before it could function well in the Chinese context.\textsuperscript{12} China has its own story to tell—a story that illuminates how a weak country modernized its propaganda, a modern political strategy, to defend and restore its national sovereignty.

China’s sovereignty was severely eroded by foreign powers from the mid-19th century. Unable to withstand their navies, China had to concede to their requests. It opened treaty ports and granted foreigners extraterritoriality exempting them from Chinese jurisdiction. Led by Britain, the foreign powers established what Peter Duus called an “informal empire” system in China, in which overt foreign rule was avoided while economic benefits were secured through unequal legal and institutional arrangements as well as through the constant threat of political meddling and military coercion.\textsuperscript{13} As Gallagher and


Robinson observed, the essence of British policy was to “trade with informal control if possible; trade with rule when necessary.”

In contrast to informal empire systems in other parts of the world where a colony was dominated by a single empire, the system in China was distinctive: a collective rule by all Powers on a balance-of-power basis. The “most favoured nation” clause in the supplementary treaty to the Treaty of Nanjing signed in 1843 ensured that any privilege garnered by one country would be automatically shared by all. This framework had been further secured by the Open Door policy promoted by US Secretary of State John Hay in the late 19th century, as part of which he demanded equal access to China among the Powers under the pretext of upholding China’s territorial and administrative integrity. Yet the equilibrium of economic control by various powers was undermined by Japan’s attempt to achieve more direct political expansion in Manchuria and the temporary distress of European powers after World War I. Determined to bring about a new era of “economic foreign policy” as the basis for the reconciliation and promotion of the Powers’ interests in China, the United States sought to redefine the status quo based on a temporary balance of power through the Washington Conference. Using the Nine Power Treaty, one of the Conference’s major outcomes, it hoped to limit the Powers’ further political and military expansion in China.

The collective informal empires system as defined by Peter Duus is not a new concept garnered through hindsight. As early as the 1920s, scholars and politicians considered the foreign powers’ imposition of the unequal treaty system as a means to subdue China for profit. They defined this form of imperial expansion as “economic imperialism.” The collective rule by various imperial countries was called gongguan 共管, meaning “joint management.” In his lectures on nationalism in 1924, Sun Yat-sen used the term “hypo-colony” (ci zhimin 次殖民) to define China’s colonial status. He clearly distinguished China’s situation from “semi-colonization,” arguing that “semi-colony” referred to the

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15 Ibid., xix.
18 Ibid., 5.
colony of a single power, while “hypo-colony” indicated a colony controlled by various powers. He argued that China’s case was worse than that of semi-colonies: “China is the colony of every nation that has made treaties with her, and the treaty-making nations are her masters. China is not the colony of one nation but of all.”\textsuperscript{19} While most contemporary scholars refer to China as a “semi-colony” from the mid-19th century to 1949, the year in which the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established, I use “hypo-colony” in this dissertation to describe China’s colonial status during the period examined, so as to better reflect the multi-national relationship in which China was situated.

In the 1920s, Chinese nationalist movements challenged the hypo-colonial system. Boycotts, demonstrations and strikes targeting foreign merchants and mill owners affected foreign economic interests in China.\textsuperscript{20} The partial reunification of China under the Guomindang brought to power a government committed in principle to ending the unequal treaty system.\textsuperscript{21} The biggest challenge to the system came from the rise of Japan in the 1930s. From 1931, the Japanese army moved to seize Chinese territory, first in Manchuria, then in North China. Meanwhile, encouraged by private initiatives as well as government policies, Japanese trade expansion in China was more rapid than that of the other foreign powers.\textsuperscript{22} Its constant demands on the Chinese government to suppress popular anti-Japanese activities provided a pretext for Japan’s intervention in China’s politics. As Parks Coble argued, nearly all of the Guomindang government’s efforts to strengthen its military, economic and political capacity in the 1930s were hampered by Japanese attacks and interventions.\textsuperscript{23}

The Nanjing government led by Chiang Kai-shek only had limited resources to withstand Japanese pressure. Despite Chiang Kai-shek’s supremacy, the Nanjing government was in reality a coalition of regional warlords who had nominally pledged allegiance to the Guomindang but maintained substantial

\textsuperscript{21} Peter Duus, \textit{The Japanese Informal Empire in China}, xxiv.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 4–5.
fiscal and administrative autonomy. 24 Chiang’s authority was frequently challenged by political rivals within the party and the Communists from outside. 25 Until his leadership in the government was fully secured, a war with Japan would be the equivalent of political suicide, destroying the delicate balance of forces that he had carefully constructed within the government and providing his rivals with opportunities to overthrow his rule. Meanwhile, the outlook for the young Nanjing government’s economic situation was bleak. Constant warfare with warlords and the Communists had depleted the Guomindang government’s coffers and caused considerable damage to the country’s economy. The government was only able to restore its control of tariffs, an important source of revenue, in 1930. Yet regional leaders in defiance of Chiang’s control blocked the collection of internal taxes. China’s low credit ratings and its anti-foreign nationalism made it unlikely to attract foreign capital and loans. Without a strong military and economic capacity, the Guomindang government had to mobilize all other resources available to withstand Japan’s pressure. It sought solutions in propaganda.

Propaganda was a potentially useful instrument for China to claim national sovereignty because after World War I the Powers purported to abandon the old way of solving international disputes by force, instead increasingly paying attention to public opinion and diplomacy for solutions. The “new diplomacy” was settled in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, which upheld the principle of open diplomacy, disarmament, fairer treatment of colonial subjects and the establishment of the League of Nations. 26 Although none of the Powers were ready to endorse China’s sovereignty in earnest, the League of Nations together with Wilson’s principle that all nations enjoyed equal position in international affairs still provided China with a platform to restore its sovereignty and independence in international affairs. 27 Moreover, the Washington Conference

24 Ibid., 27.
replaced naval competition and power politics with a temporary equilibrium based on the principle of arm control and international cooperation. Through the conference, the Powers agreed to avoid military conflicts in China so as to further their mutual economic interests. This allowed China to seek foreign mediation when the equilibrium was disturbed by a unilateral action of one Power.28

As an instrument of international politics, propaganda was essentially a privilege of powerful nations that had the infrastructure and networks to transmit their views to an international audience. As Carr put it, "power over opinion cannot be dissociated from military and economic power."29 In the late 1920s, however, the Nanjing government did not possess a single international news agency, nor did it have full sovereignty over cable transmissions within its own territory.30 Technically speaking, China was far from qualified to join the propaganda war. Yet the door to the propaganda arena was not totally closed. Ironically, it was the English-language treaty-port press—a product of imperialism—that provided a channel for China to conduct effective propaganda to resist the imperialist encroachment.

The English-language treaty-port press in China was a unique historical phenomenon in world media history. Operated in the foreign settlements and concessions, the press offered a convenient channel to link China with metropolitan audiences and influence international opinion and diplomatic circles.31 As witnesses of Chinese affairs, treaty-port journalists were highly regarded as credible sources by audiences back in their home countries.32 Western media experts in China were also frequently consulted as sources of information by diplomats of their home countries.33

The newly-established Nanjing government was determined to obtain control

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28 See Iriye’s discussion of the difference between the pre-war diplomacy of imperialism and that of the mid-1920s, in Akira Iriye, After Imperialism, 87–88.
29 E. H. Carr, The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939, 141.
31 The diplomats quoted the North China Daily News for information on the Northern Expedition. See the Charge in Shanghai (Mayer) to the Secretary of State, Peking, 21 March 1928, United States Department of State / Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1928, 126.
of the treaty-port media in order to circumvent its deficiency in news infrastructure. However, the extraterritorial system kept preventing the government from exercising effective control of the treaty-port papers. Extraterritorial privileges created a complex media environment in the treaty ports, where conventional national boundaries did not apply and transnational registration, editorship, ownership and subsidies became common practice in the press.\textsuperscript{34} As Bickers points out, the treaty-port system in practice had effectively replaced the state as the defining organizational framework. It cultivated new identities among imperial expatriates and attracted Chinese, regardless of whether they were professionals, gangsters, refugees or traders, to achieve their goal in the special system.\textsuperscript{35}

When discussing the abolition of extraterritoriality, historians tend to focus on negotiations over the full abolition, considering the 1930s as a period when treaty revision was stalled.\textsuperscript{36} However, while the Sino-Japanese conflict dominated in China’s foreign relations during the 1930s, the Guomindang government still made continuous efforts to challenge the treaty system on various individual fronts, one of which was the control of the press. The Guomindang government employed the powers it still had, notably in operating the postal services and ordering deportations, to limit the dissemination of treaty-port opinions unfavourable to the government. It also sought to restore cable control and subject the treaty-port papers to the central government’s registration system.

The Nanjing officials’ lack of a personal network with foreign journalists and editors in the treaty ports also limited their influence over the English-language press. While links between the Nanjing government and the treaty-port English-language press were tenuous, the connections between the press and the Chinese treaty-port elites were tight.\textsuperscript{37} Instead of being a passive audience, these

bilingual elites actively engaged in the operation of the English-language papers, working as contributors, editors or managers. Their active engagement in the English-language treaty-port press formed the initial basis for China's foreign propaganda, especially when an official framework was yet to be constructed. When conflict occurred between China and Japan, the treaty-port English-language periodicals edited by these bilingual elites often became the only voice to present China's case to the world.

The key person Chiang Kai-shek came to rely on to connect the government with the treaty-port press was Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang 董顯光), a US-trained bilingual journalist. Tong overhauled the government's foreign propaganda policy and centralized the Guomindang's foreign propaganda system. He also developed a sophisticated news network for the government based on his personal connections with key figures in the treaty-port press. This network became a major resource to get Chiang's information out to the international community when Chiang's government in Chongqing was besieged by Japan between 1939 and 1941.

Most scholars of Chinese media assume that national identity derives from the state and thus fail to acknowledge the English-language treaty-port papers as an integral part of the Chinese media. Despite Lin Yutang's active engagement in English-language treaty-port journals in the 1930s, he fails to include them under the rubric "Chinese press" when discussing the history of the press in China. In his two-volume *A History of China's Journalism*, Zeng Xubai only makes passing reference to the English-language newspapers without any extended discussion of their political stances. Discussion of the influence of the treaty-port press is also absent in a recent study of the Guomindang's news policy by Wang Lingxiao. PRC literature on China's media history has operated largely within the ideological bounds of the "imperialism" model, in which all aspects of the impact of the empires have long been regarded as marred by exploitation. It often neglects the contribution of the treaty-port foreign press and narrowly considers...
them as merely instruments of imperialist rule. Although Fang Hanqi briefly distinguishes the different attitudes toward China presented by British and American papers in the 1920s, he does not explore the significance of the press in China’s domestic politics and foreign relations.41

Among the few scholars looking at the history of China’s English-language papers, Zhao Minheng’s lengthy report to the Institute of Pacific Relations in 1931 provides a detailed overview of key English-language papers published in China in the early 1930s.42 Based on his observations as a Reuters correspondent in China, Zhao discusses tensions among newspapers operated by people of different nationalities and traces the development of the foreign-operated press in China. His report records the media struggle among the Powers in China’s hypo-colonial environment and constitutes a valuable source for contemporary scholars revisiting the development of China’s treaty-port media in the early 20th century.

Recent interest in China’s treaty-port media has grown out of the popularity of urban studies of Shanghai with the opening of China after the 1980s. At the present time, a broader discussion of the Western role in China during the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century has begun to appear in Chinese historical research,43 together with a more comprehensive review of the role of expatriates in China’s media development. Instead of viewing the development of China’s modern press and public sphere as a local process, Rudolf Wagner uses Shen Bao as an example to argue that the process was a global one promoted by foreign communities in China.44 Bryna Goodman traces the connections between Chinese and Western journalists in Shanghai in the 1920s and presents to us a trans-national and trans-lingual press network in hypo-colonial Shanghai. She argues that the identity of a newspaper is murky because of Shanghai newspapers’ heavy reliance on translation of information from foreign sources and Chinese editors’ strategic use of foreign registration and

42 Zhao Minheng (Thomas Ming-heng Chao), The Foreign Press in China (Shanghai: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931).
43 Xiong Yuezhi, ed., Shanghai tong shi 上海通史 (A general history of Shanghai) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999).
ownership. By looking into the *China Critic* and *Tian Xia*, two English-language journals operating in Shanghai in the 1930s, Shen Shuang reveals a “cosmopolitan public” composed of Western-returned Chinese intellectuals who actively published in the English-language treaty-port press to promote communication between China and the outside world. These Chinese-operated English-language papers, argues Shen, reflected the combination of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in China’s treaty ports. Published in English, those journals included the writings of many non-Chinese nationals, introducing foreign cultures. The journals also carried a strong nationalist inclination by “meticulously documenting China’s recent cultural achievements and tirelessly translating Chinese literature into English.”

Apart from studies on treaty-port papers in Shanghai, the Chinese government’s involvement in the English-language media in Beijing and Tianjin area has also attracted scholarly attention. By examining the Beijing government’s effort in penetrating the English-language press market in North China, Feng Yue argues that the English-language press was an effective means for the Beijing government to achieve its diplomatic goals.

All these studies have explored the transnational nature of the treaty-port media and reflected the complex media environment under the hypo-colonial system. Based on the above research, this dissertation seeks to examine the two issues that have not yet been a subject of academic inquiry: implications of the English-language treaty-port media for the development of China’s foreign propaganda system; and the role of the treaty-port press in the Sino-Japanese crisis. In order to examine these issues, I will break the conventional national framework and place the development of China’s foreign propaganda system in the broader context of a power struggle among the Powers in East Asia. Challenging the perceived passivity of China’s foreign propaganda during the period on which I focus, I demonstrate that the Guomindang government not only

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recognized the importance of a transnational news network, but effectively utilized it to counterbalance its lack of hard power.

Scholars have tended to pay most attention to hard power when examining China's nation-building during the inter-war period. Parks Coble's *Facing Japan*, for example, reveals that Chiang Kai-shek's government was challenged not only by the Communists and Japanese military but also by political rivals, such as Wang Jingwei, and regional leaders including former warlords. Coble's research, by far the most detailed study in English on the Guomindang government's political response to the Japanese military threat between 1931 and 1937, clearly shows how Chiang played off political factions against each other to reach a balance in the centre and used the anti-Japanese cause to reduce the power of regional warlords. He indicates that Chiang successfully weakened his rivalries through military campaigns and political deals. Coble also demonstrates the growing influence of domestic public opinion in the government's policy formulation, particularly the way in which Chiang struggled to temper domestic opinion hostile to the anti-Communist cause as well as his policy of appeasement to Japan in the mid-1930s. His analysis of power struggles within the Guomindang regime provides an important background in understanding rivalries in foreign propaganda between various political factions. While Coble focuses on Chiang's struggle for supremacy in the political and military arenas, this dissertation examines his efforts to assert his legitimacy and supremacy through the control of foreign propaganda. In doing so, I do not limit myself to Sino-Japanese conflicts in the 1930s. By examining the Nanjing government's attempts to regulate the treaty-port papers through control of the postal services and the withdrawal of cable rights from foreign companies, I demonstrate that while resisting Japanese aggression in the 1930s China also continued to oppose the hypo-colonial system; and that the shift from anti-imperialism to anti-Japan policy was not a linear transition. I also intend to complement Coble's discussion of the influence of domestic public opinion on politics by adding another dimension—the interaction between foreign public opinion and Chinese diplomacy.

From the perspective of international relations, Sun Youli's study of China's foreign policy in the context of multi-power struggles in the 1930s has provided a stimulating context for the analysis of the Guomindang's foreign propaganda
policy. Sun argues that China’s foreign policy-making from 1931 to 1941 was based on the anticipated conflict between Japan and the Western powers.\(^{49}\) Chiang Kai-shek’s appeasement policy together with the later military resistance was a product of such a preoccupation.\(^{50}\) However, while Sun focuses on formal diplomacy, an important part of the dissertation involves a study of a group of treaty-port elites using English-language papers to influence foreign public opinion—what we today term “public diplomacy.” Moreover, international relations after World War I, as Akira Iriye has maintained, was no longer characterized by armaments, colonial rivalries and military alliance alone. Carefully targeted information exchanges thrived and became an intangible power to shape people’s minds and thus guide their choices and behaviour.\(^{51}\) This study in part answers Iriye’s call by providing a more comprehensive understanding of China’s efforts to reclaim sovereignty through cultural means.

Given the complex domestic and international environment, how does one trace the development of China’s foreign propaganda system? Scholarship dedicated to the history of the Chinese media has tended to examine institution-building, personal networks and media texts separately. Yet one approach alone is inadequate to deal with China’s propaganda in the English-language press. Research on institution-building commonly focuses on media policies and the establishment of propaganda instruments in the central government and thus presents only the perspective of the state.\(^{52}\) However, ruling a weak state, the Guomindang government had to cooperate with social organizations and individuals to maintain control in certain areas and have its policy implemented.\(^{53}\) The cooperation between the government and non-official media experts was essential for the development of China’s foreign propaganda system. Emphasis on

\(^{49}\) Western powers in this dissertation refer to the United States and the European countries that had economic or political interests in China.


\(^{52}\) Wang Lingxiao for example, examines the Guomindang government’s news policies and the establishment of propaganda institutions, in Wang Lingxiao, *Zhongguo Guomindang xinwen zhengce zhi yanjiu*; Lee-hsia Hsu Ting has investigated censorship of the press by Chinese governments, in Lee-hsia Hus Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900–1949*.

\(^{53}\) Brian Martin has demonstrated that the Green Gang, a secret society, maintained a strong connection with the Guomindang government and was actively involved in politics during the 1930s. Brian Martin, *The Shanghai Green Gang: Politics and Organized Crime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
institutional building in the central government alone may not be able to reflect the active interaction between the state and non-state sectors in practice. By the same token, examination of only personal networks also fails to contextualize the personal activities in a broader propaganda system, while textual analysis of media content is likely to neglect the interaction between media policy and the practice of journalists. The challenge is to combine these three. This study is an attempt to integrate the three approaches to reflect the intricate relations among the state, non-official media experts and media content. “Propaganda” in this dissertation will mainly refer to news propaganda—use of news by the state and public elites in the English-language press as a means of diplomacy.

Drawing on Guomindang conference papers, minutes, regulations and work reports in various archives in Shanghai, Chongqing and Taipei, I trace the formation of propaganda institutions, the evolution of a centralized structure, their relationship with other official or non-official organization or newspapers, news policies and the mechanisms by which personnel were allocated within the system. I also explore the coordination among various organizations relevant to state propaganda, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central News Agency, the censorship offices and semi-official English-language newspapers, and analyse the role they played in the official foreign propaganda system over the period in question. Regulations on press publication and registration are examined to trace the development of the Guomindang government’s news policy.


55 Studies on the representation of the media tend to focus on textual analysis, such as research on Shen Bao, in Babara Mittler, A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai’s News Media, 1872–1912 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Correspondence and memoirs of Chinese and foreign diplomats is also used to explore how the government employed postal control and deportation to limit transmission of information by treaty-port papers unfriendly to the Guomindang.

Personal networks play a significant role in China's political culture. While official documents only reflect what a policy is, material on personal networks sometimes reveals how a decision was made and why a policy was devised. In this study, personal networks are also important in tracing how information was transmitted in practice. Using biographies and memoirs of treaty-port journalists, the Chiang Kai-shek archives, and correspondence among Guomindang officials, I focus on examining interactions between Chinese treaty-port elites and foreign journalists and the way Guomindang officials sought to gain access to the English-language press through personal contacts. Personal biographies and correspondence offer eye-witness accounts of the involvement of key individuals in political events which official documents fail to record. I pay particular attention to the role Hollington Tong played in centralizing the Guomindang government's foreign propaganda system. His extensive news network in the treaty ports enabled him to expand the government's influence among foreign communities in China and abroad. His close relationship with Chiang Kai-shek and Song Meiling also helped him establish authority in the government and build an efficient propaganda institution after the war. While Hollington Tong's name rarely appears in books featuring the involvement of foreign journalists in China's war and revolution, this study demonstrates that Tong was the key person linking the Guomindang government and the cohort of China-based correspondents after the outbreak of full-scale war.

How were media policies implemented by editors and journalists? How did newspapers representing different interest groups compete with each other to make their views accepted by their target audience? How did foreign-controlled newspapers react to the voices of China and Japan? I will answer these questions by examining the text of English-language papers published both in China's treaty ports and metropolitan cities abroad. Focusing on key events in the Sino-Japanese conflict as cases studies, I examine reports and editorials in newspapers published in the month following each event. I first look at how the Chinese- and Japanese-controlled English-language papers justified their case in the press. I then examine the opinions of the British- and American-operated treaty-port
papers to see how they engaged in the media battle. Metropolitan opinions in London and New York are also discussed to see how the metropolitan papers conformed with or challenged opinions of the treaty-port English-language newspapers. Given the aforementioned complexity of the nationality of a newspaper in the hypo-colonial context, the identity of a newspaper, in this dissertation, is based on its source of funding, which strongly affected its editorial line.

By synthesizing the institutional constructs, the personal networks and textual analysis, this dissertation reaffirms the two distinctive features that characterize Chinese history in the Republican era in general: international influence and a blurred boundary between state and society. It demonstrates that the transnational English-language treaty-port press played an important role in shaping the development of China’s foreign propaganda system. The bilingual treaty-port elites together with foreign journalists became important assets of the system, expanding China’s propaganda network and equipping the old-fashioned official propaganda apparatus with modern journalistic skills.

The first two chapters form the first part of the dissertation. It demonstrates the Chiang Kai-shek government’s weak position in foreign propaganda during the early years of the regime, when connections with the treaty-port press had not yet been established. Chapter 1 sketches the background of the key British and American-owned English-language papers in the treaty ports of the late 1920s and China’s competition with Japan in international news agencies and English-language newspapers before 1928. The chapter not only reveals the intricate rivalries among various interest groups in the English-language press, but also illustrates how the long-term unsettled political conflicts in China since the fall of the Qing Empire thwarted China’s official and non-official efforts to establish an efficient news network. Chapter 2 examines China and Japan’s confrontation in the English-language press during the Jinan Incident in May 1928. With a sophisticated news network and favourable public opinion, Japan drowned out China’s voice in both the treaty-port press and metropolitan press. Furthermore, China’s propaganda efforts were hindered by China’s anti-Western image in the eyes of Western public opinion, which was fostered by popular nationalist
movements during the 1920s, together with the nation’s lack of facilities for news gathering and delivering and a consistent news policy.

Chapters 3 to 6 form the second part of the thesis, discussing the formative period of China’s propaganda system before the war. The third chapter considers the Guomindang government’s attempts to improve its foreign propaganda from 1928 to 1932. It presents the government’s initial effort to establish a centralized foreign propaganda institution and its endeavours to regulate the extraterritoriality-protected treaty-port papers through the limited sovereign rights it exercised, notably the postal rights and the right of deportation. Meanwhile, non-governmental bilingual elites, drawing on their experiences during the Jinan Incident, also started their own newspapers to strengthen China’s voice in the world. Chiang also began to establish a connection with Hollington Tong to expand his influence in the treaty-port press.

Chapter 4 closely analyses the discourse in the English-language press during the Mukden Incident in September 1931 and the Shanghai Incident in January 1932. It examines how China and Japan justified their cases in the media, how treaty-port and metropolitan papers responded to their arguments, and how the Western media’s staunch support for Japan during the Jinan Incident shifted to sympathy for China after the Shanghai Incident. This chapter demonstrates that China was able to improve its propaganda strategies after the Jinan Incident and pursued a decisively anti-Japanese line during the Manchurian crisis. An active propaganda policy together with an improved news network in the treaty ports successfully exposed Japan’s aggression to world public opinion.

Chapter 5 examines the development of China’s foreign propaganda from 1933 to June 1937, a period characterized by the government’s appeasement of Japan. It shows that since a military solution to the Sino-Japanese crisis was unavailable, propaganda became an important strategy for the Guomindang government to reduce Japanese pressure. The Nanjing government also sought to break the extraterritorial system by tightening control of treaty-port papers and withdrawing cable rights from foreign companies. It actively built the Central News Agency and gained further access to the treaty-port press via Hollington Tong. This is followed in Chapter 6 by an analysis of the Amō case, which reveals how the proxy war between China and Japan encouraged media development during this tense period, and how non-official propaganda experts
took advantage of a favourable context of opinion to expose Japan’s plans for expansion in Asia.

The last two chapters focus on propaganda policies after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. Chapter 7 looks into the Guomindang government’s efforts to build an effective centralized foreign propaganda system. With the support of Chiang Kai-shek and Song Meiling, Hollington Tong established the International Department to supervise foreign propaganda and effectively expanded the Guomindang’s propaganda network in the United States and Britain. An analysis of the Nanjing Incident of 1937 illustrates how the new system worked on the ground and how China’s information was transmitted to the outside world after the Japanese occupation of Shanghai. Comparison of responses of the treaty-port papers and the metropolitan papers also shows the declining position of the treaty-port press in China’s propaganda and the dire need for a new channel for the transmission of information. The final chapter examines the Guomindang government’s foreign propaganda activities after Chiang Kai-shek moved the capital to Chongqing. It shows how the propaganda institution resumed its news network despite the loss of its news infrastructure in the lower and middle Yangtze areas and how the propaganda system confronted the challenge from the Wang Jingwei regime in Nanjing and the Communists in its backyard.
PART I
Chapter 1

Bridge or Barrier:
The Treaty-Port English-Language Press in China, 1920s

English-language periodicals thrived in China with the development of the treaty-port system. Backed by military strength, the Powers not only obtained rights to practice commerce in China but also leased land and administered affairs within their own community. These foreign-administered areas, mostly spread in China’s coastal ports, extended the control of the Powers inside China and thus greatly eroded China’s sovereignty. Yet those treaty ports also promoted communications between China and the world, making the ancient nation a better known place in the international community. The treaty-port newspapers were an effective tool to tighten communications not only among foreign communities in China but also between treaty ports and the metropolitan centres. Their reports about China were highly valued by audiences in their home countries as a primary introduction to Chinese politics and society; their discussion of affairs in the home countries also kept the expatriates abreast of the developments at home and thus reinforced their connections and loyalty to their country of origin. Having closely examined British reception of the treaty-port publications in China, Robert Bickers points out that accounts of China’s treaty-port papers became the “persuasive knowledge” about the country and shaped British understandings and imaginations of the land.¹ The archives of the United States’ Department of State also suggest that its officials regarded treaty-port papers as a reliable source of information, quoting them frequently in their discussion of China-related issues.²

However, the allegiance of the expatriate was not only attached to their home countries. After years of working and living in treaty ports, they tended to develop an independent view about international affairs based on their local

¹ Robert A. Bickers, Britain in China (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 22–59.
² The diplomats quoted the North China Daily News for information on the Northern Expedition. See the Charge in Shanghai (Mayer) to the Secretary of State, Peking, 21 March 1928, United States Department of State / Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1928, 126.
treaty-port interests. Such a view was often pronounced in the treaty-port papers, which would inevitably cause friction between treaty ports and metropolis.

The hypo-colonial environment also complicated the operation of treaty-port papers in China. Instead of being dominated by one empire, treaty ports in China were controlled by multiple powers on the basis of collective rule. English-language papers not only addressed the Anglophone audience but also readers from other European countries who were literate in English, and Chinese bilingual elites. Further, nationals of different countries in China frequently came into conflict when their interests clashed or they entertained different views of politics in China. The conflict often translated into tensions among English-language newspapers representing different interest groups.

The English-language press had a fairly long history in China. The first English-language newspaper in China, the *Canton Register*, appeared in Canton’s local foreign community in 1827. By then, foreigners had already been resident on China’s coast for more than two hundred years. Because of the small number of foreign residents, the running of periodicals had long been unviable. The foreigners shared similar values nurtured by Christianity and their economic interests were closely connected with the operation of the East India Company. When the trade with China began to thrive, the foreign community expanded and the monopoly of the East India Company gradually impeded the rapid growth of the local independent businesses. As the call for free trade grew stronger, British residents in China felt the need to make their appeal heard in their home country, where colonial policies were crafted. The *Canton Register* was established to challenge the monopoly of the East India Company. Realising that their criticism could draw attacks from the company, editors of the *Register* led by A. S. Keating softened their stance after the first issue. To avoid further confrontation, Keating turned the paper into a news carrier, focusing on factual reports. In 1831, William

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W. Wood, who lost his position as editor of the Register because of his intransigent attitude, started a weekly of his own. The journal, named The Chinese Courier and Canton Gazette, focused on editorials. It claimed to have a sense of justice and overtly urged the ending of the monopoly of the East Indian Company. Wood considered the Register its rival and frequently vented his anger at the Register's betrayal of its original stance. His editorial line was partly encouraged by his American citizenship and the financial assistance of an American company. The dispute of the two papers over trade issues translated into the chief editors' mutual personal attacks. The conflict culminated to the announcement of a duel between Keating and Wood. The duel did not take place. Yet the dramatic beginning of the treaty-port press industry in China foreshadowed some key elements in its later development: the focus on treaty-port interests and the tensions among papers representing the interests of different empires.

Over the next hundred years, treaty-port English-language papers played an exceedingly important role in linking China with the outside world. Before examining the Guomindang government's involvement with the English-language press during the Sino-Japanese conflicts in the 1930s, it is necessary to conduct a brief review of the press in China in the 1920s and explore how China and Japan sought to extend their influence in this medium. This chapter will introduce three important English-language periodicals controlled by British and American interests in China's treaty ports. It also discusses the rivalry between Japan and China in extending influence in the treaty-port English-language press. The goal is to reveal the transnational nature of the treaty-port media environment and illuminate the underlying tensions in the English-language press.

Key Anglo-American-controlled Treaty-Port Papers

The North China Daily News

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6 Chinese Courier and Canton Gazette, No. 1, 28 July 1831.
7 King and Clarke, A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers, 17.
The *North China Daily News* was the most important English-language paper in China in the first half of the 20th century. The paper was founded in Shanghai in 1864 by the amalgamation of two enterprises: the weekly *North China Herald* (established in 1850) and the *Daily Shipping and Commercial News* (established in 1860). The paper boasted a daily circulation of 8,000 in the early 1930s, an impressive figure if one considers that the *Central Daily News*, the official organ of the Guomindang government published in Chinese in the capital city Nanjing, sold no more than 10,000 copies. Its circulation continued to grow in the 1930s. In 1935, the paper sold around 10,000 copies per day. Up to 1937, the daily circulation rose to over 10,400 copies per issue, accounting for 35% of the circulation of the English-language dailies in Shanghai and more than 16% of the total for all China.

"Impartial not neutral" was the *Daily News*‘ editorial policy, set by the *Herald*’s chief editor Samuel Mossman in 1861. However, the paper was not as "impartial" as advertised in the eyes of the Chinese and American readers. They perceived the paper as an organ of the Shanghai Municipal Council, the British-led administrative body of the International Settlement of Shanghai, and thus an instrument to promote British imperial interests and reflect British metropolitan opinions. Such a perception hardly exaggerated the fact. The Municipal Council was the open patron of the *Daily News*, frequently providing the paper with subsidies and exclusive news.

The sophisticated news network of the *Daily News* was another reason for its stranglehold on the press market. It had contracts with nearly all important news agencies around the world, including Reuters of Britain, Associated Press of America, Havas of France, Wolff of Germany and Stefani of Italy. Such a wide range of news sources surpassed that of any other papers in China. In spite of the international scale, these news agencies lacked coverage on Chinese affairs. The

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8 Zhao Minheng, *The Foreign Press in China*, 76.
11 Hu Daojing, "Shanghai de ribao" (Daily newspapers in Shanghai), in *Shanghai xinwen shiye shiliao jiyao* (Selection of materials on history of journalism in Shanghai) (Taipei: Tianyi chubanshe, 1977), 293.
information gap could not be filled by trading news service with Chinese counterparts, since China did not possess a single credible national news agency before the 1930s. Therefore these news agencies looked to the *Daily News* to supply reports on Chinese issues. The *Daily News* developed its news network in China by mobilizing the British missionaries for news collection. The missionaries reported local events regularly to the paper’s headquarters in Shanghai on a voluntary basis, their recompense being a free copy of the *Daily News*. Their service significantly extended the scope of news gathering of the paper. The vast social network of missionaries which reached the most interior part of China, including Gansu, Xinjiang and Yunnan, transformed to a unique news network of the *Daily News*. This service made the paper a key provider of Chinese information in the news market.

As a prominent British treaty-port paper and an “official organ of the Municipal Council,” the paper kept strong connections with the London *Times*. The *Times* constantly endorsed the *North China Daily News* by purchasing its news and subsidizing correspondence. Despite the close connection, the *Daily News* did not follow the *Times*’ editorial line uncritically, as the stance of the *Times* in international affairs was influenced by the British Foreign Office. The Office reflected Britain’s national interests rather than merely those of the treaty ports. It actively sought a compromise with China in the 1920s when China’s anti-British sentiments were running high. Representing the interests of the treaty-port British who bore the brunt of Chinese nationalist movements, the *Daily News* was neither willing to bow to China’s popular protests nor to concede Britain’s extraterritorial rights. Such an attitude, notoriously known as “diehardism,” characterized the paper when Rodney Gilbert and O. M. Green were in charge from the 1910s to the 1930s. The independent attitude was shared amongst the treaty-port communities. In his article published in the *Manchester Guardian* in May 1927 Arthur Ransome cogently termed it “the Shanghai mind”:

The Shanghailanders hold that their loyalty begins at home and their primary allegiance is to Shanghai. They proclaim that property is in

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13 Hu, “Shanghai de ribao,” 293.
14 Edwin Haward (editor of the *North China Daily News*) to Lints Smith, 24 February 1932, in which Haward asked the *Times* to raise payment for editors of the *North China Daily News*, MLMSS 7594/3, Winston George Lewis papers.
danger when they need British troops to defend them, but have shown. . . that the acceptance of this assistance does not in any way prevent them from doing what they can do to make impossible the realization of a British policy which they do not like.\(^{15}\)

Despite the different stances between the metropolitan British government and the treaty-port papers—the centre and the periphery of the British Empire—it was still too easy for the ordinary treaty-port audience to mistake the opinion of the *Daily News* for that of the British government.\(^{16}\) This misunderstanding often gave rise to confusion over British policies and thus created barriers for amity between China and Britain.

Meanwhile, the *Times* was not blind to the recalcitrant attitude held by the treaty-port papers. Although the *Times* relied on the latter for information about Chinese affairs, it was cautious in handling reports by the treaty-port papers and was ready to block items inconsistent with its stance. This filtering of information had drawn strong protests from the editor of the *North China Daily News*, Rodney Gilbert. He blamed the *Times* for “stubbornly persist[ing] in misrepresenting conditions [in China]” in the hope of pleasing the “timid and weak diplomats.”\(^{17}\) The officials of the British Foreign Office also sought opportunities to change the treaty-port papers’ diehard attitude and to ameliorate Britain’s imperialistic image in China that had been created by the paper. O. M. Green was frequently called upon to soften his editorial lines. After the Guomindang government withdrew postal services from the paper in 1929, Green was advised by the Consul General to tone things down.\(^{18}\) Vexed by Green’s editorial style, Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China from 1926 to 1933, used all his influence to replace Green in 1930.\(^{19}\) As a result, Green resigned at the end of July 1930. Edwin Howard, who was appointed as his successor, adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards the Guomindang government. The change in the editorship, however, did not completely relieve the tension between

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\(^{17}\) Gilbert Rodney to J.O.P. Bland, 22 August 1926, MLMSS 7594/5.


the metropolitan paper and the treaty-port press. Howard continued to complain about the *Times*’ distortion of reports supplied by the *Daily News*. He believed that the *Times* owed his paper a “deep debt of gratitude” in terms of the coverage of the Chinese issues, and urged the paper to raise payment for the service of the *North China Daily News*.20

*The China Weekly Review*

Before the 1930s, the American newspaper enterprises in China were unable to compete with their British counterparts. In the shadow of Reuters and the *North China Daily News*, American newspapermen found it hard to maintain a competitive daily in Shanghai. The first profitable US daily, the *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*, only came after 1930.21 Falling behind in daily news reporting, nevertheless, American editors focused on the publication of magazines. The *China Weekly Review* was one of the most important journals in the English-language press in treaty ports. The journal had a strong connection with the “Missouri mafia”—graduates of the University of Missouri who were actively engaged in journalistic work in China between the 1910s and the 1940s. It became a platform for this group to wield influence on the development of China’s modern journalism.

The *China Weekly Review* (originally named “*Millard’s Review of the Far East*”) was established in 1917 by Thomas V. Millard22 with the assistance of John B. Powell, both of whom were alumni of the University of Missouri. Millard and Powell used Herbert Croly and Walter Lippman’s the *New Republic* and Oswald Garrison Villard’s the *Nation* as models for their publication. They not only followed those journals’ liberal editorial style, but also precisely copied the layout of the *New Republic*. While most newspapers followed the British style by carrying advertisements on the front page, the *Review* adopted the US layout, beginning the first page with highlights of the main content and no advertisement.

20 Edwin Haward to Lints Smith, 24 February 1932, MLMSS 7594/3, Winston George Lewis papers.
21 Other allegedly American daily newspapers, such as the *China Press* and the *Shanghai Evening Post*, had repeatedly changed ownership to people of different nationalities.
22 Millard came to China originally as a correspondent for the *New York Herald* to cover the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Before *Millard’s Review*, Millard had founded the first Sino-American joint newspaper in China, the *China Press*, in Shanghai.
This straightforward manner greatly appealed to treaty-port readers. Many treaty-port editors influenced by American journalism later introduced the style to their own papers. Hollington Tong, for example, used such a layout in his Young Bao 庸報 established in 1925. Millard sold the paper to Powell in early 1919 and Powell soon changed the title of the paper to “The China Weekly Review.”

The China Weekly Review enjoyed an average circulation of 4,000 to 5,000 copies per week in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Apart from the Western readers, the journal also attracted a considerable number of the Chinese bilingual elites. Through a survey of the Review’s readership, Powell discovered a sizable bilingual Chinese readership, including intellectuals, and students of missionary and municipal schools who took strong interest in international affairs. Powell specified the Review’s influence among the bilingual Chinese in an advertisement for the journal:

Its [the Review’s] circulation is chiefly among English-reading Chinese and foreigners throughout China and among Chinese residing overseas, particularly in the Philippines, Straits Settlements, etc. [It is] considered the best medium for reaching Chinese officials,

23 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China, 76; Carl Crow, Newspaper Directory of China, (Shanghai: Carl Crow Inc., 1935), 118.
professional and businessmen interested in foreign trade or Sino-
foreign relations.\(^{25}\)

Clearly, he considered the bilingual readership a great attraction to win more subsidies and contracts from international companies.

Unlike the *North China Daily News*, the *Review* was enthusiastic about China’s Nationalist movement. Both Millard and Powell were staunch supporters of Sun Yat-sen. They advocated a “hands-off” policy by foreign powers toward Chinese affairs. Powell commented that:

In regard to policy, the *Review* has consistently supported the program of an independent China that would be able to look after her own affairs and not become a colonial appendage of other European or Asiatic nation. . . . It has supported the Open-Door Policy, Chinese autonomy in respect to tariff, as well as the abolition of extraterritoriality; in reference to China, it has continuously advocated a policy of political, economic and industrial reconstruction that would place the nation on an equal footing with other nations of the world. Only in this way will the so-called Far Eastern questions be solved, because a weak China constantly excites the covetous ambitions of other nations, while a strong China will have a stabilizing effect on world affairs.\(^{26}\)

It was hard to determine whether the journal advocated China’s independence because of its editors’ sympathy for the nation or because of their desire to promote US national interests—an integrated China was conducive to the implementation of the Open Door doctrine. The stance, nevertheless, appealed to many Chinese bilingual intellectuals, especially American-returned scholars and professionals, such as Hu Shi 胡适 and Hollington K. Tong. These Chinese intellectuals regularly contributed articles to the journal and many became important sources of the *Review’s* information.\(^{27}\) Editorials of the journal also

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\(^{26}\) Quote of Powell’s statement of the *Review’s* editorial policy, in Zhao Minheng, *The Foreign Press in China*, 76.

\(^{27}\) Neil L. O’Brien, *An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China*, John William Powell and
flowed to Chinese native language papers through translation. Carl Crow confirmed that "practically everything" that appeared in Millard's Review was translated and "widely published" in the Chinese press.\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, the practical influence of this journal to the Chinese press went far beyond what its circulation figures suggested.

Despite the Review's sympathy with the Nationalist cause, it was not a propaganda organ of the Nationalist party. The Review was an independent journal, known for its progressive, leftist position upheld by its chief editor, John B. Powell. Its criticism of the Guomindang government's weak military capacity and the non-resistance policy was bitter during the Mukden Incident (Chapter 4). The journal's relationship with the US government also varied on a case-by-case basis. Towards the end of World War I, the United States government established a branch of the Committee on Public Information in Shanghai to advocate Wilson's idea of self-determination for weak nations to a Chinese audience. The Review, whose office was in the same building and on the same floor as the committee, served as its information channel.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, Powell himself was frequently approached by the US Department of State for exclusive information or assessment regarding Chinese attitudes in foreign affairs, such as extraterritorial issues.\textsuperscript{30} However, the journal did not always share the same line with the US government. In 1935, for example, the Review's protest against Japan's aggression in China ran contrary to the US government's isolationist policy. Facing the Japanese Consul General's complaint about the Review's anti-Japanese tone, Edwin Cunningham, the US Consul General in Shanghai, had to emphasize the difference between the US official view and the Review's position.\textsuperscript{31}

The Review's relationship with the British press in Shanghai was also complex. The US periodicals shared many common features with British papers.


\textsuperscript{30} United States Department of State / Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (USDS/ PRFRUS), 1929, Vol II, 642.

\textsuperscript{31} USDS/ PRFRUS, 1929, Vol II, 375.
Apart from publishing in the same language, newspapers and journals of the two nations also shared correspondents and contributors. George E. Sokolsky, who frequently wrote for the *North China Daily News*, for example, also published regularly in the *Review*. H. G. W. Woodhead, editor of the British-owned *Peking and Tientsin Times* from 1914 to 1930, later became an editorial associate of the American evening paper, the *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*. In 1919 the *Review* allied with the *North China Daily News* and *Peking and Tientsin Times* to expose Japanese smuggling of morphine in China. Their joint reports stirred a huge anti-Japanese sentiment among the Chinese public in early 1919. The *Review* also distributed pamphlets in both English and Chinese, presenting American and British common disgust over the Japanese activity. However, the coalition was temporary. It dissolved when the papers’ different approaches towards Japan emerged in the late 1920s. In 1928, while the American papers still carried an anti-Japanese tone, their British counterparts came to believe that Japan’s resistance to the abolition of extraterritorial rights corresponded to Britain’s similar pursuit, and Japan’s actions in Manchuria bolstered their common imperial interests in China. The political differences between the US and British papers degenerated into an open dispute in 1929 when the *North China Daily News* was banned from postal service by the Guomindang government. Chapter 2 will discuss the case in detail. The textual analysis of the reaction of the treaty-port press to Sino-Japanese conflicts in the following chapters will also reveal the tensions between the British- and US-controlled papers.

*The China Press*

The *China Press* was one of the most distinguished English-language dailies in Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s. The paper was co-founded by Thomas F. Millard and Wu Tingfang, a British-trained diplomat who was Minister to Washington from 1896 to 1902. Registered in Delaware, United States, the China Press company was a Sino-American enterprise, with Wu Tingfang as its trustee. Investors in the paper also included Charles R. Crane, the Chicago


33 Bryna Goodman, “Networks of News: Power, Language and Transnational Dimensions of the
manufacturer who became US Minister to China in 1920–1921, Benjamin Fleischer, the owner of the Yokohama-based Japan Advertiser, Tang Shaoyi, a (US) Columbia University-trained diplomat who became Republican China’s first Prime Minister in 1912, and two of the largest American concerns in China, namely the Standard Oil Company and the British-American Tobacco Company.34

Despite the semi-Chinese ownership, the paper was fully staffed by Americans in its early years. Millard secured a strong managing and editing team for the paper: Fleisher, who had successfully saved the Japan Advertiser from financial loss and guided it into profit in two years, became the paper’s business manager; C. Herbert Webb, former editor of the Chicago Examiner, served as the paper’s assistant editor; and Carl Crow, Millard’s alumnus of the University of Missouri was appointed as the chief writer. Together, they determined to create a channel to present America’s interests and point of view in East Asia and meanwhile transmit a Chinese voice abroad.35 The establishment of the paper was also motivated by their desire to break what they saw as an Anglo-Japanese monopoly of news in China:

China and the Chinese at present have no adequate means through the columns of the daily press, of promptly and continuously presenting their point of view, and of refuting misrepresentations designed to injure China, and which impair her national prestige and credit. It is said ‘China has no voice’. The China Press is designed to correct this condition.36

Millard’s team initially held an ambitious vision for their press business in China. Under the same general management, they planned to establish three daily newspapers in Beijing, Tokyo and Shanghai respectively, two weekly papers (one in English and one in Chinese), two monthly magazines (one in English and one

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in Chinese), and an annual yearbook. The only enterprise that succeeded, however, was the *China Press*.37

The *China Press* embarked on a pronounced anti-Japanese and anti-British editorial policy. Such an attitude had isolated the paper in Shanghai back in the 1910s. While the idea of establishing the *Press* was being formulated, the Japanese minister and his staff questioned American minister Calhoun about the paper and expressed their apprehension of its purpose. On June 22, 1911, the Yokohama Specie Bank in Shanghai bought the *Shanghai Times* “for Japanese interests”38 from J. C. Ferguson. The American Legation in Beijing considered the purchase as Japan’s answer to the founding of the *Press*.39 Such a judgement was reasonable. It is likely that Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was supporting the purchase behind the scene. Since the 1890s, the ministry had tried to influence China’s treaty-port English-language papers. It sought to convince the Euro-American audience that Japan was a modernized nation and its policy in China was consilitory to the other powers’ interests in the region.40

Apart from the Japanese interest groups, the British-owned paper, the *North China Daily News*, also saw the *China Press* as an unwelcome rival and sought to thwart its publication. The *Daily News* not only undermined the establishment of the *Press* by dissuading its potential Chinese shareholders,41 but also urged British advertisers and subscribers to boycott the paper in the ensuing years.42 In the early 1910s, American stakes in Shanghai were small and about 80% of the press advertising in Shanghai was controlled by British firms or agencies.43 The boycott caused serious financial troubles for the paper. To maintain operation of the *Press*, Millard had to go back to the United States to raise funds.44 His refusal to take the British side in World War I further drained the popularity of the *Press*

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39 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 267.
among British advertisers.\textsuperscript{45} These financial difficulties finally forced Millard to end his editorship in 1917.

In 1918, the \textit{China Press} was sold to Edward I. Ezra, a British opium merchant. Ezra bought the paper in an attempt to build up a newspaper chain, together with his previous acquisition, \textit{The Shanghai Evening Star}. After his death in 1921, the \textit{China Press} was purchased by Sun Yat-sen. Sun controlled the paper for no more than one year, after which Ezra’s heirs took over the paper and operated it until 1929.\textsuperscript{46} Sun’s effort demonstrated that the Guomindang was eager to obtain some space in the treaty-port English-language media. While an official attempt to control the \textit{Press} failed in the 1920s, similar effort by public elites prevailed in the 1930s. In 1930, a Chinese syndicate led by Zhang Zhuping (张竹平) acquired the paper from Ezra’s family.

\textbf{Japan’s English-Language News Network in China}

No matter how China and Japan justified their cases in the press, their message initially needed to reach their target audiences. Before analysing the narratives of the Jinan Incident by both parties (Chapter 2), it is necessary to examine how far Japanese and Chinese news networks were developed to transmit their messages. Japan and China began to construct their news networks in China in the 1910s. By 1928, Japan was more advanced than China in the development of international news agencies.

Japan’s news service in China began with the Tōhō 東方 news agency, established in 1914 in Shanghai. Before Tōhō entered China’s news market, news transmission was monopolized by Reuters. To maintain its dominance, Reuters signed an agreement with Kokusai 国際 agency, Japan’s major news agency dealing with international news, prohibiting it from transmitting news in China. Tōhō, as a regional news agency targeting Chinese news market, was able to circumvent the contract and transmitted news freely between China and Japan.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{47} Tomoko Akami, \textit{Japan’s News Propaganda and Reuters’ News Empire in Northeast Asia, 1870–
While Reuters only had branch offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, Tōhō’s offices also expanded to Hanzhou, Nanjing, Mukden, Jinan and Fuzhou by 1919. The agency was also able to obtain exclusives from Chinese sources which Reuters and other news agencies could not. Its reports from anti-Yuan Shikai sources were especially welcomed by anti-Yuan forces in China and foreign media.48 The need for a strong Japanese news agency in China was renewed after World War I. Date Genichiro 伊達源一郎, a prominent Japanese journalist, was greatly impressed by the work of Reuters at the Versailles Conference. Keenly aware of the necessity to justify Japanese interests in Manchuria and Shandong, Date perceived the need to establish a news agency in China so as to “air Tokyo’s views.”49 His vision gained approval from Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1920 the ministry sent Date to reorganize the Tōhō agency in Shanghai.50 The agency became the ministry’s official organ in China and received a regular subsidy from Tokyo.51

The reorganized Tōhō agency achieved quick successes after arriving in China’s news market. To break Reuters’ monopoly, Tōhō sold its news in China at aggressive discounts. Tōhō offered its news service to foreign newspapers at the very low rate of 15 Mexican dollars—the currency used in the treaty ports— which stood in stark contrast to the Mex$650-750 charged by Reuters.52 And while Reuters charged Chinese and Japanese newspapers between Mex$50 and Mex$100 per month, Tōhō asked only Mex$10 from Chinese newspapers and supplied news to Japanese papers for free.53 Reuters’ Far East Manager, W.

49 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China, 32.
51 See more details on the reorganization and operation of Tōhō news agency, and Japan’s news propaganda policy in the 1920s in Tomoko Akami’s book manuscript, Japan’s News Propaganda and Reuters’ News Empire in Northeast Asia, 1870–1934, Chapter 5.
52 According to Andrew James Nathan’s estimation of the exchange rate in the 1920s in Shanghai, Mex$1 was equivalent to approximately US$0.78. See Andrew James Nathan, Peking Politics, 1918–1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), xiii.
Turner, estimated that Japan subsidized Tōhō £50,000 annually and feared that Japan’s low-price service would squeeze Reuters out of the Chinese market.\textsuperscript{54} Tōhō indeed received generous subsidies from Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is recorded that the funding Tōhō received in 1920 reached ¥500,000.\textsuperscript{55} Such a support enabled the agency to challenge Reuters’ stranglehold on China. By 1928, Tōhō had won contracts with most of the newspapers in China, English-language and Chinese-language alike. Its news reports were even utilized by metropolitan papers and were frequently quoted in key papers, such as the London \textit{Times} and the \textit{New York Times}. Tōhō continued its operation in China until 1929 when Rengō news agency, Kokusai’s successor, negotiated a new agreement with Reuters and gained the right to distribute news in China.\textsuperscript{56}

Japan also controlled several English-language papers in China. The first one, the \textit{Manchuria Daily News}, was established in Dalian in 1908 by the South Manchuria Railway Company.\textsuperscript{57} The initial purpose of the paper was to propagate the Japanese cause in Manchuria to the outside world. In its early years, the \textit{Daily News} did not involve itself extensively in political discussions. Local news about Japanese construction activities in Manchuria dominated its pages. Long political editorials were rarely included. However, as Sino-Japanese relations became tenser in the late 1920s, the paper gradually transformed itself into a staunch supporter of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, with reporting on Sino-Japanese conflicts dominating its space.\textsuperscript{58} Although labelling itself an “independent daily,” the paper was commonly perceived by both Chinese and Westerners as an organ of Japanese propaganda.

Another important English-language newspaper run by the Japanese was the \textit{North China Standard} based in Beijing. The paper was founded in 1919 by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs with an annual financial support of

\textsuperscript{54} FO 371/8028 [F647/647/10], W. Turner Memorandum and private letter to “Ross” RN, 5 December 1921, quoted in O’Connor, “Endgame,” 69.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 139.
\textsuperscript{57} See Feng’s discussion on the establishment of \textit{The Manchurian Daily News}, Feng Yue, “Zaoqi Riben zai hua baoyeshi chutan” 早期日本在華報業史初探 (Discussion on Japan’s newspaper in China in the early period), \textit{Riben yanjiu} 日本研究 (Japanese studies) Vol. 4 (2006): 72–73.
\textsuperscript{58} Feng Yue, “Zaoqi Riben zai hua baoyeshi chutan,” 72–73.
Mex$60,000. The objective of the paper was to explain Japanese views and activities in China. The paper was also established to compete with the Chinese-operated English-language daily, the *Peking Leader*, in the hope of offsetting the anti-Japanese sentiments instigated by the *Leader* among its foreign and Chinese readers in north China. The *Standard* tried hard to squeeze the *Leader* out of China. As one contemporary journalist wrote, the two fought “like cats and dogs.” Although the *Leader* passed under American control in 1925, this change did not affect its editorial direction. The *Standard* continued to see the *Leader* as its primary rival, competing fiercely with it for subscriptions and advertisements. Although the *Standard* was not welcomed by the American press in the north, its anti-Guomindang stance won it immense popularity among foreign legations in Beijing and British diehard businessmen in Shanghai. The paper also forged close ties with the most powerful warlord faction in north China in the 1920s—the Fengtian 奉天 clique. Support from the Fengtian warlords not only reinforced the paper's position in the news market but also enabled it to penetrate deeply into China's political struggles.

In addition to establishing English-language papers in north China, Japan also tried to control newspapers operated by British and Americans in Shanghai. The *Far Eastern Review: Engineering, Finance, Commerce* was one of the examples. This monthly journal was originally founded in Manila in 1904 by an American national, George Bronson Rea, and moved to Shanghai in 1912. The journal maintained offices in New York, London, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo. Its large network enabled the journal to reach audiences worldwide. Apart from providing engineering and financial information, the journal also carried long editorials on political issues in East Asia. Its wide scope attracted readers in various fields. By the late 1920s, the *Far Eastern Review* had an estimated monthly circulation of 6,000 copies, making it a highly competitive player in the English-language market in Shanghai.

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Rea was initially sympathetic to China’s desire for autonomy and opposed Japan’s growing power in the Pacific. He endorsed the Open Door policy in China and saw Japan as a potential enemy of the United States. He expressed this view in his pamphlet *Japan’s Place in the Sun* (1915), which warned that Japan was secretly and heavily arming itself for a possible war with the United States. The *Far Eastern Review* was the prime platform for the dissemination of his political ideas. While the Chinese government did not yet have its own English-language paper to present its case, the *Far Eastern Review* virtually became its effective propaganda asset. Apart from editing the journal in the 1910s, Rea was also involved in Chinese politics. He was technical secretary to the Ministry of Communications of the Beijing government, working for several senior Guomindang officials, including Sun Yat-sen and Sun Ke, as an expert on railways. He later became technical secretary to China’s Industrial Commission under Minister Ye Gongchuo 叶恭绰 (also known as Yeh Kung-cho) at the Paris Conference. With a pro-Chinese journal and active engagement in Chinese politics, Rea appeared to be a firm advocate of China’s interests.

However, in 1920 Rea suddenly shifted sides, becoming a supporter of Japanese interests. He changed the editorial policy of the *Far Eastern Review* and published several books and pamphlets justifying Japanese interests in China. Rea’s reversal was so abrupt that even his associate, the co-editor of the *Far Eastern Review*, William. H. Donald, was caught by surprise. Donald resigned from his editorship and openly declared his disapproval of Rea’s new policy. Both the Office of Naval Intelligence of the United States and the American Legation in Beijing were tasked to investigate Rea’s shift. The cause of Rea’s change of heart remains something of an enigma. Some scholars argue that Rea’s shift was driven by his intention to temper the American-Japanese conflict and thus protect American interests in China—realizing that the aggressive rhetoric of the Open Door policy would lead to an actual war with Japan. They believe that Rea decided to withdraw rhetorical support for the territorial and administrative integrity of China but to promote cooperation with Japan, which could preserve

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63 George Bronson Rea, *Japan’s Place in the Sun* (Shanghai: Far Eastern Review, 1915).
order in East Asia. I believe Rea changed his political attitude because of economic interests, although Rea explained that he “had become tired of fighting China’s battles when their own statesmen were selling their country to Japan.”

The result of the American investigation, however, revealed that the problem lay elsewhere, namely that Chinese officials had failed to pay the bill presented to them by Rea for his pro-Chinese publicity in the *Far Eastern Review* at the time of the Paris Peace Conference. John B. Powell, editor of the *China Weekly Review*, confirmed in his letter to the US military attaché that Rea had complained about being “unfairly treated” by Chinese leaders “in view of the great amount of service he had done for them.” When Rea was on the verge of breaking ties with the Chinese government, Japan promptly invested in the magazine and transformed it into one of its key propaganda organs in Shanghai. It was estimated that the Japanese government paid US$100,000 a year to the journal. Indeed, obtaining Rea’s support was a significant coup for Japan: it both strengthened its own foreign propaganda network and weakened that of China.

Another important paper that fell into Japanese hands was the *Shanghai Times*. The paper was officially registered as a British daily and operated by a British subject, E. A. Nottingham. Yet beneath the veneer of British ownership lay Japanese interests. The police office in the French Concession in Shanghai discovered that the paper not only received a grant from the Yokohama Specie Bank, but also accepted subsidies from the Japanese government beginning in 1924. Although the paper never openly acknowledged its ties with Japanese interests, its pro-Japanese editorial line raised suspicion among some Western journalists in China. Carl Crow, an American journalist and businessman,

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68 “George Bronson Rea,” MLMSS 7594/5, Winston George Lewis papers, State Library of New South Wales.
69 Ibid; “George Bronson Rea: Character of and Activities in Far Eastern Affairs,” 16 February 1920, MLMSS 7594/5, Winston George Lewis papers.
70 “John B. Powell to Military Attache,” June 1920, MLMSS 7594/5, Winston George Lewis papers.
71 “George Bronson Rea,” MLMSS 7594/5, Winston George Lewis papers.
72 See O’Connor’s quotes from FO 371/445 [P1870/260/150], in “Endgame,” 68.
73 U38–2–715, Compte-rendu de renseignements No. 104/2, 9 July 1932, Concession Francaise de Shanghai, Services de Police, Shanghai Municipal Council Archives.
believed the paper was controlled by Japan although it was owned and edited by the British. 74 John B. Powell also regarded Nottingham's editorship as nominal. 75

China's English-Language News Network

Compared with the Japanese news network in China, China's foreign propaganda network was underdeveloped. By 1928, China still had no efficient national or international news agency of its own. Most of China's domestic and international news was transmitted by foreign news agencies, particularly Reuters. Reuters began its business in China in 1872. It stationed special correspondents in practically all the principal telegraphic centres in China. 76 Since it controlled the channel of news distribution, Reuters became the narrator of Chinese affairs whenever events took place. Not only did the press in other countries rely heavily on Reuters for Chinese news, but native papers also looked to it for information on Chinese domestic affairs. 77 Nevertheless, Reuters' domination was not impregnable. In the late 1920s, Reuters' position faced a significant challenge from Japan's Tōhō, the Havas of France, the Tass agency of Russia and the United Press of the United States. 78 None of China's own news agencies was strong enough to compete with these foreign news agencies. The privilege of interpreting Chinese issues was still held tightly in the hands of foreign agencies.

The lack of a strong Chinese-owned news agency did not go unrecognized. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Chinese newspapermen had tried to organize news agencies in various forms. 79 Although these efforts began earlier than Japan's establishment of Tōhō in China, none of these attempts succeeded due to the unstable political environment. Efforts primarily came from individual journalists who registered news agencies of their own and sold their services to their warlord patrons. Such private news agencies mushroomed during the late

74 Paul French, Carl Crow, a Tough Old China Hand (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 28.
75 Powell, My Twenty-five Years in China, 359.
76 Zhao, The Foreign Press in China, 48.
77 Zeng Xubai, Zhongguo xinwenshi 中國新聞史 (The history of journalism in China), (Taipei: Guoli zhengzhì daxue xinwen yanjiusuo, 1966), 571.
79 The first Chinese-owned news agency, the Zhong Xing news agency, was established in 1904. See Zeng Xubai, Zhongguo xinwenshi, 571.
Qing and early Republican period. It has been estimated that by 1926, the number of news agencies in China had reached 155.\textsuperscript{80} However, despite the large quantity, the quality of these services was far from satisfactory. Since most agencies relied on local warlords for funding, their services were focused on promoting the interests of their patrons.\textsuperscript{81} They ended up becoming a source of rumours rather than reliable information. The patronage of warlords also prevented these private agencies from expanding their business beyond the border of their patrons’ domains, especially in the early Republican period when warlords were vigorously competing with each other for political power. As a result, majority of these private agencies remained local and were unable to collect and distribute news beyond provincial borders.

Realising that news agencies run by individual journalists were prone to factional manipulation, newspapers sought to form large-scale news agencies by grouping themselves into news cooperatives. In 1910, for example, 67 Chinese papers organized the “National Press Development Committee” (Quanguo baoye jujin hui 全國報業俱進會) in Nanjing and devised a plan to build a national news agency. The plan was ambitious: they aimed to combine media sources in Beijing, Shanghai, Manchuria, Mongolia and Xinjiang in the hope of establishing a nation-wide news network. Once the national supply was in place, the network would seek to extend its service worldwide.\textsuperscript{82} However, after the fall of the Qing dynasty, many of the small newspapers, vulnerable to political and social changes, ceased publication and the plan for a national news agency was abandoned. After the Paris Peace Conference, Chinese concerns over the monopoly of news by foreign news agencies intensified, accompanied by growing criticism of foreign agencies’ reports. In Chinese eyes, foreign news agencies were institutions that “distributed rumours at random,” “muddled facts with fiction” and “instigated seditious sentiments.”\textsuperscript{83} To redress the situation, in May 1920 two leading newspapers in Guangzhou (also known as Canton), the 72 Hang Shang Bao 商報 (Commercial Press for seventy-two Fields) and Xin Min Guo Bao 新民
rallied 120 newspapers and news agencies across the country and established the “National Press Cooperating Committee” (Quanguo baojie lianhe hui 全国报业联合会). Inspired by the model of the Associated Press, the committee intended to create a news agency by combining the sources of its member newspapers. The committee also envisaged expanding the national network abroad by sending correspondents to key European cities and securing contacts with Chinese students abroad. Grand as their plan was, the committee’s operation was constantly hindered by struggles among warlords. Unable to survive in the unstable political environment, the committee soon broke up.

Owners of big newspapers also sought to set up news agencies. Instead of making the agency an independent body, they tended to make the agency a sub-organization of the paper, supervised by the same management team. The relatively influential news agencies of this type were the Guo Wen 國聞 news agency established by Hu Zhengzhi 胡政之, managing director and editor of Da Gong Bao 大公報 in Tianjin, and the Shen Shi 申時 news agency initiated by two of the most prominent Chinese dailies in Shanghai, Shen Bao 申報 and Shi Shi Xin Bao 時事新報. Yet by 1928, those agencies only offered services in Chinese for vernacular papers. Direct links with the foreign press were absent.

Apart from such private efforts, the Guomindang government in Guangzhou also made attempts to build a national news agency. It established the Central News Agency within the Ministry of Information in 1924, hoping to develop it into a national agency. However, the government neither devised a long-term plan nor streamlined the structure of the agency. It remained a loose organization, unable to compete with the Guo Wen and Shen Shi, let alone Tōhō and Reuters. In 1927, immediately after Chiang Kai-shek established his regime in Nanjing, the government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up the Guo Min 國民 (also known as Kuo Min) news agency, with the goal of publicizing the Chinese case to the outside world. It became the only Chinese news agency to

84 Ibid., 255.
85 For more on how the Shen Shi news agency was organized, see Shen Shi dianxunshe, Shi nian: Shen Shi dianxunshe chuangli shi zhounian jinian 十年: 申時電訊社創立十週年紀念 (Shanghai: Shenshi dianxunshe, 1934).
offered an English-language service. Based in Shanghai, the agency boasted a strong management team led by Zhang Sixu 张 seis (known as Samuel H. Chang) and Li Cai 李才 (also Lee Choy). Both had received university degrees in the West and possessed extensive experience in operating English-language papers in China. Despite this, the agency received insufficient funding and did not have its own correspondents in China. Instead, it collected information by translating and re-writing news from Chinese papers. Its close ties with the government, which ensured it was given exclusives from both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance, was the main reason why the agency was quoted by the foreign press.

In parallel with the failure to build a strong news agency were Chinese governments’ repeated yet unsuccessful attempts to control an influential English-language paper. The need for an English-language paper had been felt since the late Qing. The Chinese government’s first attempt to establish an English-language press of its own was made in 1909 by Yan Huiqing 颜惠庆 (known as W. W. Yen), then an official in the news department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yan founded the *Peking Daily News* with funding from the ministry and edited the paper himself. The paper aimed to explain China’s diplomatic policy abroad so as to influence opinions of foreign diplomats as well as Western-returned Chinese intellectuals. Fearing his official position might harm the paper’s credibility, Yan soon passed the editorship to W. C. Chen. Chen was unable to finance it after the fall of the Qing and sold the paper to Zhu Qi 朱淇 in Guangdong. Although the paper remained owned by a Chinese, it was edited by a Scottish journalist, Alexander Ramsay, whose loyalty was firmly attached to British interests.

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88 Shi Zhaoji (Sao-ke Alfred Sze), *Shi Zhaoji zaonian huiyilu* 施肇基早年回憶錄 (The memoir of Shi Zhaoji), (Taipei: Zhuanjij wenxue chubanshe, 1967), 77.
89 Shen could not recall the Chinese name of W. C. Chen. Other related sources also fail to record the Chinese name of W. C. Chen.
90 See Shen Jianhong, *Bansheng youhuan, Shen Jianhong huiyilu* 半生憂患, 沈劍虹回憶錄 (The memoir of Shen Jianhong), (Taipei: Lianjing Publishing Company, 1989), 57–58. Shen claimed that his record on the early Chinese-owned English-language papers was mostly based on Dong Xianguang’s (Hollington Tong) speech at the Journalism School of the National Chengchi University in 1959; Dong Xianguang, trans. Zeng Xubai, *Yi ge nongfu de zishu* — (An autobiography of a farmer), (Taipei: Taihai xinsheng baoshe, 1973), 30–34.
After the fall of the Qing, the warlords and members of the elites in Beijing also invested in the English-language papers. The *Peking Leader* was an attempt by Beijing officials to expand their influence amongst English-language readers. The paper was founded in 1920 by the Research Clique (Yanjiuxi 研究系), a powerful political group headed by Liang Qichao 梁啟超. The group invited Diao Minqian 劉敏謙 (known as M. Tukzung Tyau), an expert on Chinese foreign relations, to edit the paper. Political changes in the government, however, necessitated the reorganization of the paper in 1925. An American, Grover Clark, gained control of the paper, becoming both editor and president. Yet American patronage did not save the paper from frequent financial difficulties due to the small number of subscriptions in North China and a business downturn caused by endless military disturbances. Meanwhile, the paper’s American identity together with financial hardship made it an ideal prey for local warlords. In 1927, Hallet Abend, co-editor of the paper, found that the *Leader* was receiving regular allowances from Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥, a northern warlord sympathetic to Bolshevism.

Not only did the Qing and the Beijing governments seek to express their views in the English-language sphere, Guomindang members also made efforts to gain space in the English-language press. After the 1911 revolution, the Guomindang, under the instruction of Sun Yat-sen, founded the *China Republican* (also known as *China Gazette*) in the French Concession of Shanghai. The paper was edited by Ma Su 馬素, Sun Yat-sen’s English secretary, Hollington K. Tong, a graduate from the Journalism School of the University of Missouri and R. I. Hope, a Briton of Indian extraction. Chesney Duncan, editor of the *Hong Kong Telegraph*, also frequently contributed to the paper. The goal of the *Republican* was to glorify Sun’s plans for the nation and to denounce Yuan Shikai’s rule. Its anti-Yuan policy soon caught the attention of the Chinese elite and government. In 1913 the paper was closed down by the Consul General of

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92 Diao later became Director of the Intelligence and Publicity Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nanjing.


France in Shanghai upon the request of the Yuan government. The publisher of the paper, Ma Su, of Chinese and French parentage, was deported from China and the contributor, Chesney Duncan, was threatened with prosecution.97

After the Guomindang established its authority in Guangzhou, the party started a semi-official English paper, the *Canton Gazette*, operated by Li Cai mentioned above. The paper supported the left wing of the Party and gained popularity in the mid-1920s when Guangzhou was the revolutionary political centre of China. It attracted prominent foreign journalists like Hallett Abend, who later became the *New York Times*' key correspondent in China, and gained editorial assistance from Chen Youren 陳友仁 (known as Eugene Chen), the foreign minister of the Guangzhou government.98 However, its influence waned quickly after the Guomindang moved its capital from Guangzhou to Wuhan in November 1926.

In Wuhan, the Guomindang started a political journal called the *People’s Tribune*. The paper was set up by Chen Youren and Mikhail Borodin, a Comintern agent in China, with the help of the American journalists William and Rayna Prohme, who were sympathetic to Bolshevism. The *Tribune* aimed to inform a foreign audience about the Wuhan government’s ideology and achievements. The paper was mailed daily to a list of more than five thousand individuals and radical organizations across the world provided by Borodin.99 However, the *Tribune* did not operate for long because of the Guomindang’s internal struggles. The paper was suppressed by Wang Jingwei after it carried an article by Song Qingling 宋慶齡 (Madame Sun Yat-sen) criticizing the Guomindang for having betrayed Sun’s doctrines.100

**Conclusion**

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As a product of imperialism, English-language treaty-port papers in China played an important role connecting the empires with their colonial outposts. Their observation of the local developments in China shaped the opinion that home audiences formed on Chinese issues. Foreign-operated treaty-port papers were also commonly regarded by local Chinese as official organs of the imperial powers. This bridge, however, was at the same time a barrier when the colonial interests pursued by the treaty-port editors clashed with those of the imperial metropolitan centres. Furthermore, in the hypo-colonial environment, where several foreign powers collectively ruled the treaty ports, conflicts were continually brewing among different imperial powers. This increased tensions among the newspapers that represented the interests of different groups.

Given the important role treaty-port papers played in influencing international public opinion, both China and Japan sought to strengthen their stake in the area to win a better position in the battle of words. By the end of the 1920s, Japan had built a sophisticated news network in China. The Tōhō news agency, which was supported by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, significantly challenged the dominant position of Reuters in China’s news market. Japan also controlled several English-language newspapers and journals in the treaty ports. In contrast, China was left behind in developing its own news network. The unstable political situation rendered it difficult for governments in power to formulate a long-term news policy or offer stable funds for news organizations. Without an effective news agency or an English-language paper to gain a foreign audience, the reach of Chinese propaganda was restricted: China’s side of the story could only be heard when the foreign-controlled agencies or papers chose to quote its version. Such a disadvantage manifested itself fully in the Jinan Incident.
CHATER 2

Beyond the Front Line
China’s Rivalry with Japan in the English-language Press over the Jinan Incident, 1928

In April 1928, Chiang Kai-shek launched the second Northern Expedition against the warlord-backed Beijing government led by Zhang Zuolin. As Chiang’s troops marched towards Jinan, the provincial capital of Shandong, to remove the local warlord Han Fuju, the Japanese government dispatched troops to the city in the name of protecting the 2,000 Japanese nationals and their property. On the morning of 3 May, fighting broke out in Jinan between Chiang’s army and the Japanese troops. Chiang immediately sought a peaceful solution to the crisis by sending a diplomatic team led by Cai Gongshi to negotiate with the Japanese. However, Japanese soldiers tortured and murdered Cai and his sixteen associates.1 On 7 May, without conferring with his superiors in Tokyo, the Japanese commander General Fukuda Hikosuke presented Chiang with a twelve-hour ultimatum that Chiang was unable to accept. The fighting escalated on 8 May. By 11 May, the Japanese had driven Chiang’s troops out of the city and governed the area through a puppet organization composed of Chinese citizens. Instead of continuing the fight with Japanese forces, Chiang bypassed Jinan to resume the expedition northward. Not until March 1929 did Japan, under pressure from Western powers, return Jinan to the Guomindang government.2

The Jinan Incident was the most serious military clash between China and Japan in the 1920s. It put an end to the brief period of Sino-Japanese amity and foreshadowed the more drastic collisions between the two in 1931 and beyond.

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1 See the memoir by the wife of China’s then Foreign Minister, Huang Fu, Shen Yiyun, Yiyun huiyi 蔡公時 (Shen Yiyun’s memoir) Vol. 2 (Taipei: Zuanji wenxue chubanshe, 1968), 369, 371.
The incident immediately came under the spotlight and became widely discussed in the following months. The incident was also one of the most controversial Sino-Japanese conflicts in history. Both countries engaged in a bitter dispute about the basic facts of the event from its outbreak. Questions about who initiated the conflict and what had happened during its course were never agreed upon. Disagreements not only occurred at the time but also cast a shadow on later research. Even to this day there is no consensus on the origin of the conflict.³

It is not my intention to determine what exactly happened during the incident. Instead, my interest is in seeing what was described and discussed in the media. Since the treaty-port English-language press was an important and credible source for the metropolitan press abroad, both countries actively sought control of this channel in the hope of eliciting foreign support. Japan sought to justify its military action in Jinan and dissuade Western powers from intervention, while China intended to exert moral pressure on Japan's aggression, invite foreign mediation and boost the international prestige of the newly-established Nanjing regime. I will examine how Japan and China responded to the incident and how they justified their positions. The opinions of the British- and American-controlled treaty-port papers will be discussed to reveal their engagement in this media battle. This will be followed by a review of public opinion in London and New York in order to demonstrate the extent to which China's voice was drowned out by Japanese propaganda abroad. I argue that China lost its battle in the press both in text and context: China's inefficient news network and its indecisive propaganda policy greatly limited its voice in the English-language papers and the anti-imperialist tradition of the Guomindang greatly diminished the credibility of news from Chinese sources.

Responses to the Jinan Incident in the English-Language Press

Benefiting from a powerful news network, the Japanese media's response to the Jinan Incident was swift, consistent and intensive. The first dispatch about the military conflict came shortly after fighting broke out. Before any investigation of responsibility had been made, the Tōhō News Agency had dispatched accounts

from Beijing to the world, asserting that the trouble was caused by looting carried out by Chinese soldiers. In the hours following the outbreak of fighting, dispatches on the incident continued to be distributed from Töhō’s branch offices around China. Despite their different sources, all messages consistently stuck to the explanation of “looting”, with each bringing new details of the crime. Japanese soldiers were thus portrayed as innocent defenders who were “compelled” to return fire at the disobedient Chinese looters. By the end of the first day, at least seven dispatches were sent from Töhō, all blaming Chinese soldiers for the fighting. The misconduct of Chinese soldiers was presented in the press as the only reason, reinforced by consistent statements and repetition. It should be noted that the first few reports on the incident were likely to be decisive in forming public opinion, since they gave readers their first basic information on events and were thus likely to influence any future judgements.

Töhō’s reports went unchallenged in the English-language press for days. China’s lack of an effective news network was to some degree responsible, but this alone could not explain a complete absence of its view. The situation was exacerbated by the state of communications with forces on the battlefield. In order to isolate the armies of the northern warlords, the Nationalist troops had cut rail lines linking Jinan with Nanjing, Beijing and Qingdao prior to the battle. The telegraph lines which followed the rail lines were also destroyed. Communication with Jinan, therefore, relied solely on two wireless stations in the city, one controlled by the Japanese and the other by the Chinese. Soon after the clash began on 3 May, Japanese soldiers destroyed the Chinese wireless station, which left the Japanese station the only channel for communications. Destruction of the Chinese station not only impeded the transmission of news, but also affected general communications between Jinan and Nanjing. It was reported that the Guomindang government could only reach Chiang by first telegraphing to Yanzhou 兖州, about 60 miles south of Jinan, and then sending messages by courier. The lack of efficient communications on the Nationalist side left Japan

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5 Ibid.
7 Shen, Yiyun huiyi, 371.
in control of all messages from Jinan to the outside world.

Had alternative explanations been offered by other foreign media sources, Japan’s version may not have so easily prevailed. Despite Tōhō’s heavy stake in China’s news market, it was still Reuters that occupied the primary position globally. Reuters also enjoyed greater credibility than Tōhō in reporting events in Jinan due to its third-party position. However, an alternative view from Reuters did not appear. Rivalry between Tōhō and Reuters in China was primarily a matter of business, not politics. Instead of giving balance to non-Japanese sources or remaining sceptical of the Japanese version, Reuters completely followed the Japanese line, reporting that the trouble had arisen due to looting by Chinese soldiers. In doing so, Reuters buttressed the Japanese side in three ways: firstly, repetition of Tōhō’s reports helped to reinforce belief in the Japanese version of events; secondly, Reuters’ worldwide service assisted in distributing the Japanese story more widely; thirdly, Reuters enhanced Tōhō’s credibility in the world press. The two agencies together monopolized out-going reports of the incident and established the cause of “looting” as fact in the press.

Compared with Japan’s immediate and intensive explanations in the English-language press, China’s response was slow and inconsistent. The Guomindang government’s report of the incident did not appear in the English-language papers until 5 May, when the North China Daily News10 cited a dispatch from the official Guo Min news agency. According to the Guo Min report, the shooting occurred when Japanese troops arrested several members of the Nationalist propaganda corps and threatened to shoot anyone attempting to pass through a Japanese-controlled barricade. However, within the first two days of the incident, Tōhō and Reuters had thoroughly established the Japanese version of events in the press. China’s task now was to convert the audience’s entrenched understanding of events rather than introduce what was happening in Jinan. Converting the public consensus on an event proved far more difficult than establishing one. It required the media to continuously put forward counter-arguments with increasing intensity. Without an efficient news network, the

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10 The North China Daily News was the most influential English-language paper in China. Operated by British interests, the paper was regarded as the official organ of the Shanghai Municipal Council.
Guomindang government was unable to achieve this. Indeed, China could barely make its voice heard in the English-language press. For example, the China Press, one of the most popular English-language papers in China, offered intensive coverage of the Jinan Incident during the ten days following its start. Among the 168 reports concerning the incident in the paper during this period, only 14 were quoted from Guo Min. In comparison, it carried 107 reports from Reuters and 47 from Tōhō. These figures suggested that its main sources were Western or Japanese agencies, which accounted for 91.6% of reports on the incident in the China Press.

China’s reports on the Jinan Incident were also inconsistent. Multiple explanations concerning the origin of the fighting were distributed to the English-language press. The various accounts not only confused foreign audiences but also severely damaged China’s credibility. Shortly after Guo Min’s interpretation found its way into the press, Chiang Kai-shek and Huang Fu 黄郛, Minister of Foreign Affairs, issued another account on 5 May, stating that the incident was caused by Japanese troops shooting Chinese soldiers when the latter passed through Japanese-controlled streets. While Guo Min’s account declared that the fighting began with a clash between Chinese propagandists and Japanese soldiers, Chiang’s version dropped the reference to Chinese propagandists and asserted that the conflict had begun with a clash between the two groups of troops. Another account circulating in the press claimed that Japanese soldiers had prevented Nationalist forces from crossing the railway line in order to protect fleeing northern troops. Although all versions blamed Japan for the fighting, the disagreement on the basic reason was liable to give the impression that the Chinese were fabricating their accounts, unsure of how to effectively justify their aggression. Indeed, the existence of multiple accounts was a result of the Guomindang government’s lack of institutions for systematic foreign propaganda. There appeared to be no coordination between the official agency Guo Min and the Guomindang’s top leaders regarding explanations of the cause of the incident.

The Guomindang government’s indecision towards foreign propaganda was also significant. After the fighting broke out, the immediate solution pursued

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12 The China Press was owned and edited by British nationals in the late 1920s.
14 “Nationalist Statement,” The Times, 5 May 1928.
by the government was to localize the problem and solve it rapidly. Chiang Kai-shek initially was not keen to publicize the affair internationally, fearing that extended exposure of the incident in the media would complicate the issue and undermine attempts to reach agreement with Japan. After all, the completion of the Northern Expedition was deemed to be more important than confrontation with Japan in Shandong at the time. A quick solution could perhaps be found by negotiating with Japanese forces locally. Accordingly, Chiang’s reaction was twofold: while seeking a cease-fire with Japanese military officers on the front line, he also appealed for mediation to foreign consulates in China, especially those of Britain and the United States. However, both approaches failed to produce favourable results. The Guomindang government found it difficult to satisfy Japanese generals who threatened to bomb Jinan to force further concessions from China. The foreign consulates also refused to mediate unless a request to do so was received from both Japan and China. The reply was tantamount to a denial of help, since Japan did not favour mediation from a third party.

The Guomindang government changed its foreign propaganda strategy from 8 May when Japanese forces launched a new round of attacks on Nationalist soldiers and began bombing Jinan. Believing that the ineffectiveness of China’s voice was due not to the lack of a case but rather to the lack of a channel to make its case known, the Nanjing leaders began to seek a new way to distribute China’s views. Instead of publicizing news inside China and passively waiting for the foreign media to transmit it externally, Nanjing sought to present its case directly to foreign audiences. The first step taken by Nanjing was to report the Jinan Incident to the League of Nations, calling upon it to intervene and arrange an international inquiry into the incident. On 11 May, Tan Yankai 譚延凱, chairman

15 Shi luegao ben 事略稿本 (Chiang Kai-shek’s memoir), Vol. 3, 17 May 1928 (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2003), 316.
17 Consul General at Shanghai (Cunningham) to the Secretary of the State, United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. II (1928), 137–138.
18 Chen Gongbo, “Women duiyu Tianzhong baoxing de zhuzhang” (Our opinion on the outrages by the Tanaka government), Ge Ming Ping Lun 革命評論, Vol. 3 (1928), 5.
of the Nationalist Government Council, issued an official appeal to the secretary-general of the League of Nations. In the appeal, Tan gave a thorough account of the Chinese interpretation of the Jinan Incident. He criticized Japan's dispatch of troops to Shandong, the attacks and atrocities committed since 3 May, and the bombing of Jinan on 8 May. Tan demanded that the League intervene to end Japanese hostilities, press Japan to withdraw troops from Shandong and arrange an international inquiry into the incident. By doing so, Nanjing officials indicated to the world that they had faith in their version of the events and hoped that an impartial inquiry from the League would endorse their position. On 13 May, the League rejected China's appeal on the grounds that the League still recognized the Beijing government as the official government of China, not that of Nanjing. Guomindang leaders, indeed, were fully aware of their lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the League prior to their appeal. Nevertheless, they still saw it as an opportunity to publicize their case before the court of international opinion, since any move by the League of Nations would be monitored by the world press. Hu Hanmin, one of the top leaders of the Guomindang, indicated the purpose of reporting the Jinan case to the League of Nations in correspondence with Huang Fu:

[T]he Nanjing Government has not gained recognition from the League of Nations, yet issuing the appeal with the support of the Beijing government will boost the prestige of the northern warlords. The League was controlled by the big powers, with a British national being the president and Japan strongly influencing its political decisions. China has no chance to win. Even if the League intervened, it would only conduct investigations of the incident, offering no immediate solutions. That is why the United States refrains from stepping in. Nevertheless, we should appeal to the League for propaganda purposes... The chance of winning is always slim when it comes to the rivalry with the powers. But publicizing our causes is

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21 Hu Hanmin, "Shandong shijian tichu Guojilianmeng de jingguo" (How the Jinan incident was presented to the League of Nations), Geming wenxian 革命文献, Vol. 19–21, 1396.
better than remaining silent.\textsuperscript{22}

The Guomindang government also appealed directly to US President Calvin Coolidge, inquiring about “the attitude of the American government and the people towards this grave situation created by Japan.”\textsuperscript{23} In this appeal, the Guomindang government again lengthily reviewed events as it saw them, aiming to reinforce the Chinese version of the incident. As expected by Nanjing officials, the appeal received no response from the United States. However, China’s case was widely publicized in the process, which partly served Nanjing’s purpose.

To further reinforce China’s position concerning the Jinan Incident in the eyes of the world’s public opinion, the Nanjing government sent high officials as “special envoys” to key capitals. Among them, Wu Chaoshu 伍朝樞 (C. C. Wu) was sent to Washington, Wang Chonghui 王寵惠 to London, Wang Jingwei to Geneva, Hu Hanmin and Li Shizeng 李石曾 to Paris, and Sun Ke 孫科 to the Hague and Berlin. Their job was to form a liaison between key foreign newspapers and Chinese sources, to give public talks on the Jinan Incident and to elicit support from government officials in the target countries.\textsuperscript{24} Prior to his trip, Wu intimated to US journalists that the object of his mission to Washington was “to make the Nationalist case clear to the United States” and “to make sure America will not be led astray by propaganda.”\textsuperscript{25} These emissaries hoped to draw Western countries into mediation of situation, but Chinese officials knew that these countries would not intercede until they had a clearer understanding of the situation. With the Japanese interpretation dominant, making the Chinese version acceptable to foreign audiences was a prerequisite for securing foreign support.

\textbf{The Influence of the Context of the Treaty-Port Opinion}

\textsuperscript{22} Hu Hanmin’s telegram to Huang Fu, 12 May 1928, quoted in Shen, \textit{Yiyun huiyi}, 383.
\textsuperscript{24} “Hu Hanmin, Sun Ke, Wu Chaoshu zi Bali zhi Tan Yankai zhuxi deng chenshu dui Jinan yijian dian” 胡漢民, 孫科, 伍朝樞自巴黎致譚延鶴主席等陳述對濟南意見電 (Telegraph about opinions on the Jinan Incident, sent by Hu Hanmin, Sun Ke, Wu Chaoshu from Paris to Tan Yankai), 12 May 1928, \textit{Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: duiRi kangzhan shiqi: xubian I}, 147; Shen, \textit{Yiyun huiyi}, 382.
In addition to its advantages in the dissemination of news, Japan also enjoyed a favourable context in opinion. For English-language propaganda targeted primarily at foreigners involved or interested in East Asian affairs, sympathy for Japan could be elicited when readers found themselves sharing the same values with Japan or pursuing similar goals. Indeed, Japan shared with Western powers their “foreign” identity and experience of colonization in China. China’s anti-foreign sentiment was a common problem for both Japan and Western nations. Resentment against China could easily be stirred if Japan was able to convince Western readers that the Jinan Incident was simply a further example of an outrage committed by the Chinese against foreigners.

To invoke anti-Chinese feelings among Westerners, Japanese newspapermen attempted to portray the Jinan Incident as a second Nanjing Incident in the English-language press. The Nanjing Incident occurred during the first Northern Expedition. On 24 May 1927, Guomindang troops defeated northern warlords in Nanjing and occupied the city. Upon arrival, the troops looted and killed foreigners throughout the city. American and British warships on nearby rivers responded by shelling Chinese forces, causing heavy Chinese casualties and damaging property. Chiang Kai-shek later blamed the acts on communist elements within the army, an explanation that Westerners were ready to accept. Negotiations on the settlement of the Nanjing affair dragged on for over a year. It was not until April 1928, less than a month before the Jinan Incident began, that the Guomindang government was able to reach an agreement with the United States regarding an apology and the amount of remedy. Settlement with Britain, however, was as yet still pending due to a deadlock on issues related to the revision of treaties.

The Nanjing Incident offered a favourable precedent for Japan to justify its own actions in Jinan. The two incidents shared many common features: both cases occurred during the nationalistic Northern Expeditions and both involved clashes between Guomindang troops and foreigners. Furthermore, the Nanjing

26 “The Secretary of State to the Minister in China (MacMurray),” 4 April 1928, United States Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. II (1928), 337.
27 “Mr. MacMurray’s Brilliant Diplomatic Victory,” Far Eastern Review, April 1928.
Incident was the most recent example of Sino-foreign conflict. The foreign community’s memory of the Guomindang’s lawless actions was still fresh and resentment against Nationalist troops had not been allayed due to the incomplete settlement of the case. Japanese newspapermen therefore reported details of the Jinan case after the Nanjing model. As mentioned above, Tōhō intensively repeated the scenes of looting in its discourse on the incident, thereby justifying Japan’s military action. It should be noted that Japanese reports of the looting, the ostensible cause of the Nanjing Incident, may have been false. Reports from neutral sources, such as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New York Times*, failed to confirm the looting, and contemporary scholars have also been unable to verify either the looting or the scale on which it took place. Japanese propagandists may have fabricated the looting in order to portray events in Jinan as a second Nanjing Incident in the media. Even if the looting did occur, emphasis on the scale still made for effective propaganda, since it resonated with foreigners’ experiences in Nanjing and reaffirmed their impression of Chinese “barbarism.”

The Japanese-controlled news institutions also repeated arguments from the Nanjing case. So just as looting in the Nanjing Incident was believed to have been started by rebelling Communists within the Guomindang army, the communist element and the internal chaos were introduced in Japan’s reporting on the Jinan affair despite the fact that Chiang had excluded the Communists from the Northern Expedition Army in 1927. Immediately after the conflict on 3 May, Tōhō claimed that the looting had been planned by Feng Yuxiang, a “Communist general hidden in the nationalist armies.” According to Tōhō, disturbances were created in order to overthrow Chiang’s authority.

Nonetheless, Japan’s strategy of linking the two incidents had its drawbacks. It invited readers to question Japan’s expedition to Shandong in the first place. While the Nanjing case was initially a clash between Chinese soldiers

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31 Tōhō’s reports on the Jinan Incident, quoted in “How the Japanese reported the Tsinan Incident,” *The China Weekly Review*, 12 May 1928.
and Western civilians, the Jinan Incident was in fact a battle between Chinese and Japanese troops. Indeed, the existence of Japanese troops in Jinan had brought about the possibility of a military clash. Without good justification for reinforcing troops in Jinan, Japan’s claim to be a victim remained weak since the incident could easily be perceived as trouble Japan brought on itself.

Justification of the Japanese expedition to Shandong was more difficult than explaining Japan’s attack in Jinan. It could be argued that the expedition was a result of the inability of the civil government—led by Tanaka Giichi 田中義一—to rein in military ambitions. China and Japan had opportunities to avoid confrontation in Jinan and both governments made attempts to do so. Since the autumn of 1927, Chiang Kai-shek had made several attempts to persuade Japan not to intervene in Shandong. He had repeatedly guaranteed that he would not tolerate anti-foreign activities by his troops and had given assurances that he would work to protect the lives and property of foreigners in China.\textsuperscript{32} To seek further amity with Japan, Chiang replaced the Western-educated Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Chaoshu with the Japanese-educated Huang Fu in February 1928, even though some top leaders in Nanjing strongly opposed Huang’s appointment.\textsuperscript{33} Meanwhile, the Tanaka cabinet also hesitated before dispatching more troops to Jinan. Neither the prime minister nor the general staff were fully convinced that the expedition was necessary for the protection of Japanese nationals.\textsuperscript{34} However, the military had its own views on the subject. Pressure from the War Ministry finally forced Tanaka to accept the expedition in mid-April 1928.

Japan’s propaganda also faced challenges from its domestic audience. On 5 May, Tokyo newspapers, with the exception of \textit{Nichi Nichi}, blamed the Japanese government’s hostile policy for the conflict in Jinan.\textsuperscript{35} They believed that Japan’s dispatch of forces to Shandong, instead of protecting Japanese property, had severely harmed trade with China. Japanese commercial interests in Shandong, which “amounted to no less than $440,000,000 for the current fiscal

\textsuperscript{33} MacMurry to the Secretary of the State, 29 February 1928, United States Department of State, \textit{Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States}, Vol. II (1928), 323–324.
\textsuperscript{34} Akira Iriye, \textit{After Imperialism}, 196.
year,” “were too large to incur the ill-will of the Chinese, who were their best customers.” Furthermore, some argued that the troops which were intended to protect the inhabitants only furnished other forces with a pretext to attack. They maintained that troubles could have been avoided if no Japanese troops were present. Were the intention to protect the Japanese nationals genuine, challenged the domestic papers, the government could have temporarily relocated Japanese civilians to the nearby city of Qingdao instead of leaving them in Jinan to face possible military conflict. The Japanese propaganda thus was caught in a dilemma: the more Japanese nationals suffered in the Jinan Incident, the more Japan could blame China for its “barbarism” and thus justify its use of force, but at the same time, casualties among Japanese nationals would enrage the domestic public. The War Office was believed to have tried to withhold reports on Japanese casualties for fear that “publication of exceptionally heavy Japanese civilian losses would have a detrimental effect politically throughout the country.”

The opposing views in Japan’s domestic papers reflected a general disagreement on the government’s shift in foreign policy. While the previous minister of foreign affairs Shidehara Kijūrō pursued a non-interventionist policy towards China, seeking good relations through trade and economic cooperation, the newly inaugurated cabinet led by Tanaka Giichi tended to deal with the advancing Chinese Nationalist government by force. The sharp change of strategy was not welcomed by people in financial circles, especially in the Kansai region. Distrusting the capacity of northern warlords to maintain control, they also feared that Japan’s military actions would alienate the Nationalist Party and thus affect their trade with China after the party seized power. They believed that Japan’s limited interests in Jinan were not worth the risk of unfavourable trade relations with China in the future. However, they were unaware that the government had its own plans. By intervening in Jinan, its goal was to protect Japan’s larger interests in Manchuria. For years, Japan had been strengthening its control over the region by supporting the local warlord Zhang Zuolin. Facing the approaching Nationalist army, Tanaka sought to prevent

36 “Correspondence,” The China Press, 17 May 1928.
38 Ibid.
40 Zhang Qun, Wo yu Riben qishi nian (My seventy years with Japan), (Taipei: Zhong Ri guanxi yanjiu hui, 1980), 36.
Chiang from reaching Manchuria. Reinforcing Japanese troops in Jinan was in part a strategy to demonstrate its determination to protect its treaty rights and to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideas and practices in North China.41

Meanwhile, Zhang Zuolin also sought to reap political benefits from the Jinan Incident. His participation in the propaganda battle further complicated Japan’s position. While Japan insisted that its action in Jinan was to protect its nationals, Zhang tried to embroil Japan in China’s internal struggles in the media. Soon after the incident began, Zhang distributed a message to the press, offering to assist Japan with arms and ammunition.42 Zhang’s offer immediately raised people’s suspicions concerning Japan’s connections with the Beijing government. Rumours began to circulate in the press accusing Japan of using the Jinan Incident to assist the northern army. However, Zhang’s statement was not a genuine offer to help Japan. Throughout the Jinan Incident, Zhang exhibited an ambiguous stance, making him unreliable for both Japan and the Guomindang government. Two days after his announcement, Zhang did an about-face and issued a protest to the Japanese diplomats in Beijing, demanding that Japanese troops withdraw from Chinese territory.43 On 9 May, he circulated another message announcing a temporary cessation of the civil war due to the Sino-Japanese conflict.44

China’s dilemma

In 1928 China was situated in an unfavourable position in the court of public opinion. Two features characterized its image in the Western press, the first being underdevelopment and disorder, the second being anti-foreignism. The 1920s had seen a peak in China’s anti-imperialist passion. In 1924, Sun Yat-sen wrote nationalism into the Three People’s Principles, which would become the guideline for the Nationalist Party ever after. This nationalism specified in the principles was to overthrow imperialism and achieve racial and national equality

with other nations of the world.\textsuperscript{45} In 1925, the May Thirtieth Movement elevated anti-imperial sentiment, particularly against the British, to a new level.\textsuperscript{46} The Northern Expedition launched in 1926 led to further aggravation. The National Revolutionary Army with Bolshevik support had reclaimed the British settlements of Hankou and Jiujiang, and had also threatened foreign lives and property after taking Nanjing. These events convinced Western audiences that Nationalist armies were likely to have generated another anti-foreign incident in Jinan.

Nevertheless, leaders in Nanjing clearly understood that China, as a weak country, could not afford to confront all other powers at the same time. For events in Jinan, the Guomindang government singled out Japan as its sole enemy and was anxious to seek amity with Western powers, in particular looking to Britain and the United States to check Japan’s aggression through mediation. Chiang was concerned about Britain’s attitude in the event that diplomatic efforts failed and China was forced to confront Japan militarily.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, following the Northern Expedition, Chiang Kai-shek was keen to gain international prestige for his regime. The aims required a shift of diplomatic paradigm from anti-imperialism generally, particularly against Britain, to a focus on Japan.

This shift was not easy. With anti-foreign sentiment running high among the Chinese public, any party in China hoping to gain popular support understood the need to address public anger towards imperialism and mobilize it for their own use. Both the Nationalist Party and the Communists understood this. Even the warlords who secretly looked for support from imperialist powers constantly adopted anti-foreign positions to gain public support. Although Chiang severed relations with the Soviets after eliminating the communist element in the Nationalist army and adopted a moderate attitude towards foreign countries, he could not afford to totally abandon anti-imperialist rhetoric. Campaigns against extraterritoriality continued and negotiations on the control of tariff rates dominated China’s diplomacy.

Not all Guomindang leaders supported Chiang’s overtures to the West. For

\textsuperscript{45} Sun Yat-sen Sun, \textit{San Min Zhu Yi} 三民主義 (Three People’s Principles), (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928).
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Shi luegao ben}, Vol. 3, 300.
example, Li Shizeng, one of the top leaders of the party, tried to dissuade Chiang from reporting the Jinan Incident to the League of Nations, regarding such an effort as futile. Other left-wing members of the Nationalist Party, in their continuous opposition to Chiang, condemned his resort to the League as "begging for mercy" (qi lian 乞憐), which betrayed the party's anti-imperialist tradition. An editorial in the Ge Ming Ping Lun, an official paper of Guomindang leftists, exemplifies this attitude:

How stupid and humiliating it is to beg other imperialist powers to help China out of Japan's threat! . . . There is no fundamental difference between Japan and other imperialist countries. The only difference is that Japan acted more directly while other powers coerced China in a concealed manner. Whichever way they pursue, their goal is the same, that is, to obtain special rights in China.49

The Opinion of the English-Language Press in the Treaty-Ports

While China and Japan were trying hard to influence opinion in the treaty-ports, the Westerners in these cities did not remain a passive audience. They had their own interests to serve. Many British in the treaty ports feared China's acts might lead to foreign powers relinquishing their special rights in China one after another. In the Jinan case, Japan's defence of its own interests in Shandong strengthened imperialist ends in China more generally. China's underdevelopment and lawlessness as emphasized by Japan not only justified Japan's military action, but also offered all empires with reason to retain their involvement in China—so as to teach China how to behave.50 Despite the end of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1923 as the result of the Washington Conference, the two countries still saw each other as allies rather than enemies in the 1920s when competition between the two was not as great as it would later become. Many people on both sides quietly hoped for the return of the alliance when their interests were threatened by

48 Li Shizeng to Zhang Jingjiang and Huang Fu, 13 May 1928, quoted in Shen, Yiyun huiyi, 384.
49 Xing Cun, "Jinan shijian zhi waibao yulun" (Foreign newspapers' opinions on the Jinan Incident), Ge Ming Ping Lun, Vol. 3 (1928), 53.
Chinese nationalism or the growing influence of the United States. Yet for American progressives who saw an independent and open China as the best market for American exports as well as a means to check Japan’s rise in the Pacific, events in Jinan provided them with a chance to attack foreign intervention in China’s affairs. These divergent goals translated into views split between the British and American press in the treaty ports: the British press strongly upheld the Japanese argument, whereas US papers displayed sympathy for China’s cause.

The support of British papers for Japan was explicit. They accepted both Japan’s version of the facts and its rationale. In early May, the two largest English-language papers in China, the North China Daily News and the China Press, both endorsed the Japanese version of events. A cursory glance at the headlines of their reports indicates that the papers firmly followed the Japanese interpretation: “Chiang Kai-shek Reported to be Powerless to Control Undisciplined Soldiers Who Have Got Out of Hand in City,” “Outburst of Looting by Southern Troops,” “Japan Losing Patience under Calumnies of Nanjing.” It was generally professional practice for a journal to report a controversial issue with phrases such as “alleged by.” Yet this caution was absent when the papers quoted Japanese sources. In contrast, Chinese sources were usually labelled as “unfounded.” As noted earlier, between 4 May and 15 May, when the incident was at its height, only 8.3% of reports in the China Press derived from Chinese sources. While China’s inability to offer English-language updates on the event was partly responsible, the omission of a Chinese voice was more the result of deliberate choice. The editor of the North China Daily News stated that “we are inundated with correspondence, manifestoes, student resolutions, copies of telegrams sent abroad, all putting the Chinese view of the

53 The British papers refer to papers owned and operated by British citizens who supported British interests in China. The most popular ones during the period examined are the North China Daily News and the China Press.
54 The China Press, 4 May 1928.
The Japanese strategy of linking the Jinan Incident with earlier events in Nanjing was also welcomed by British editors. The *North China Daily News* endorsed the view that the two incidents were connected, believing that the Jinan affair was the Guomindang's "attempt to reproduce the Nanking outrage as the result of the recent diplomatic indulgence in negotiations for a settlement of that affair." With the Nanjing Incident unresolved and anti-British sentiment running high over the last five years, the British were sympathetic to the Japanese explanation. They trusted Japanese sources not because they found them more persuasive, but because the looting and other atrocities as explained by Japan vividly reminded them of their own unhappy experiences with China and they saw such things as very likely to happen again. "It would be idle to deny," confessed the editor of the *North China Daily News*, "that some of the Southern troops have a bad reputation for looting and arrogance. At a crisis like the present, this cannot be ignored." The *China Press* also supported this view, saying that:

Undisciplined [Nationalist] soldiers on nearly every occasion seem to get beyond the control of their commanders. At Hankow, at Nanking, in Nantao and Chapei, to mention only the instances of the past year, scenes of carnage, chaos and indiscriminate brigandage have characterized every change of government. Innocent citizens have been shot down, valuable property burned, and in other ways the terrible toll of warfare has been made needlessly more horrible. Now Tsinan is suffering from the same degrading lawlessness.

The British papers also upheld Japan's justification for its expedition to Shandong. They intimated that "after the experiences of the British in China, it is difficult to be very censorious over the decision of the Japanese government to

60 "A Repetition of Nanking?" *The China Press*, 5 May 1928.
defend the lives and property of their nationals by the dispatch of troops."61 They believed that Japan "in her vast interests in Shandong, has every reason for acting in defence of her own."62 According to them, Japan "was not only justified in sending troops to protect her people and property in Shandong, but would have gravely neglected her duty if she had not."63

Although the Jinan Incident was basically a Sino-Japanese affair, the British communities also used it as an opportunity to vent their anti-Chinese views. Criticism went well beyond the incident itself, expanding to a condemnation of the Chinese nation. The British press believed that the Jinan Incident only reaffirmed China's underdeveloped status and its uncivilized nature. "Now and again," stated the China Press, "the foreign residents of China are jerked back a few centuries to be reminded that, however modern living conditions in Shanghai may have been made, they are still living on the fringe of a civilization which is back in the Middle Ages."64 Thus, the trouble in Jinan, instead of being caused by Japan, was invited by China itself. The editor of the North China Daily News sarcastically commented that:

The Chinese have only themselves to thank that many of their nationals are dead and the prospects of the northern campaign gravely imperilled. And the question arises, will the Chinese never learn sense? What good did they do themselves by the raid on Hankow? The Concession was left to them. But the moral ascendancy, the honour due to those who could have hit back and did not, passed to Great Britain. What good did the Nanjing outrages do? What could it have profited even if the Southern army in Tsinan had wiped out every Japanese in the place? By every one of these Incidents the Chinese leaders put themselves a stage lower in the eyes of the civilized world and remove their country yet further from that position of acknowledged equality in the family of nations which they so ardently desire.65

61 "North and South May Sink Differences and Unite in Present Situation," The China Press, 8 May 1928.
64 "A Repetition of Nanking?" The China Press, 5 May 1928.
The anti-Chinese stance common among the British and Japanese papers, however, was not without its disagreements. When Japan bombed Jinan on 8 May and decided to dispatch more troops to Shandong, the British papers slightly shifted their pro-Japanese stance, suggesting that Japan's actions were unwarranted. Even though the British communities were ready to accept the Japanese version and blame China for starting the clash, they still viewed any escalation unfavourably, fearing that the Sino-Japanese fighting could extend to a new round of anti-foreign activities in China. In an editorial of 11 May, the editor of the North China Daily News called for a joint investigation into the incident in order to make an immediate settlement possible. The paper also approved of Nanjing's reaction to the incident for the first time, commending Nanjing for localizing the dispute and successfully preventing popular outbursts in the region.66 Editorial columns, where pro-Chinese comments were previously rejected as propaganda,67 now began to carry Chinese voices and to quote protests against British expatriates' slant towards Japan.68 Meanwhile, the paper became cautious about further Japanese moves. It advised Japan to minimize its military operations,69 and cited rumours from the treaty ports that Japan's action in Jinan was aimed at intervening in China's civil war in the hope of gaining a favourable position to secure its Manchurian interests.70

The China Weekly Review and the Peking Leader, two of the most popular American-owned papers, had taken a decisively anti-Japanese attitude from the outset, disagreeing with the account of the incident provided by the Japanese authorities. Rather than relying on these reports, the China Weekly Review relayed the information provided by H. J. Timperley, Beijing correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, regarding his reports as "the first impartial accounts by a neutral witness."71 Timperley's reports on the incident differed from Japanese versions. Before the incident, he characterized the initial Southern troops' occupation of Jinan as "peaceful" and "exemplary." He also confirmed that

Chiang’s soldiers were “friendly disposed toward foreigners.”

Regarding the origin of the clash on 3 May, Timperley claimed that the fighting began when Japanese soldiers fired on Nationalist troops passing by in the street. Instead of regarding the fighting as the result of looting, he saw the confrontation as a continuation of a series of Sino-Japanese clashes, including the shooting of a Nationalist officer on the previous day and the detention of Nationalist street lecturers by the Japanese.

Apart from quoting non-Japanese sources, the *China Weekly Review* also condemned the British papers’ support for Japan, believing that they had assisted in the distribution of Japanese propaganda. In a front-page editorial on 12 May, the Review singled out the three British dailies—the *North China Daily News*, the *China Press* and the *Shanghai Times*—for having lined up with Japan “without awaiting reports from American and British or other neutral sources in Tsinan.”

The readiness displayed by the three British newspapers in Shanghai for blaming China for the trouble, stated the Review, “indicated that ‘die-hard’ stock in Shanghai is again on the up-turn.” In the next issue on 19 May, the journal continued to criticise the British papers, arguing that the Jinan Incident was “unfairly reported in the *China Press*.”

The *Peking Leader*, while not accusing the British papers of sympathy for Japan, warned those papers to treat Japanese sources with caution. Whatever the causes, commented the Leader, the case itself had inevitably stirred furious feelings between China and Japan. Their passion may have resulted in grossly exaggerated reports of what happened on the ground. In such circumstances, warned the Leader, it was “particularly necessary to exercise caution both in accepting as valid reports which may be circulated and in voicing condemnation of one side or the other.”

Besides challenging Japanese sources, the *Review* also disagreed with Japan’s claim to be fighting in Jinan for “self-protection.” The paper perceived the presence of Japanese troops as the factor that brought about the clash. “The presence of a comparatively large armed Japanese force on Chinese soil, cheek by

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
77 Quote from the *Peking Leader* in the *The China Weekly Review*, 19 May 1928.
jowl with something like a hundred thousand Nationalists flushed with victory,”
argued the Review, “created an atmosphere which rendered some kind of an
explosion inevitable.”7 This view was endorsed by Hallet Abend in his article in
the Leader, in which he claimed that whatever had started the clash, it had only
triggered the explosion of tension rather than creating it.79 Grover Clark, editor of
the Leader, believed that the Japanese commander, knowing of the tensions inside
Jinan, could have averted serious disturbance. “There certainly would have been
no clash,” argued Clark, “if he [General Fukuda Hikosuke] had moved his troops
and the civilians only a few miles down the railway towards Tsingdao and kept
them there until the main body of the southern army had moved on northward.”80

The Review also saw the Nanjing Incident in 1927 as insufficient
justification for the Japanese reaction in Jinan. In the Nanjing Incident, argued the
journal, both the American and British governments had advised their nationals to
evacuate prior to the event.81 In contrast, Japan had made no effort to evacuate its
nationals before dispatching troops to Jinan. Thus Japan took the action
“deliberately” for the purpose of “creating trouble.”82

Disagreement over the facts and justifications as put forward by Japanese
sources aroused the suspicion of Japan’s motives in these American papers.
Several explanations were popular. The American editors saw the incident as an
effort by Japan to block the advance of Nationalist troops and assist the warlords
in Beijing. They also explained that the incident was created to “shift the
Japanese people’s attention to the foreign complication” so as to turn attention
away from Japan’s troubled domestic politics.83 Furthermore, the editors argued
that by clashing with the Guomindang government, Japan hoped to extract some
concession from the Nationalists and win a favourable position in negotiations
over its special interests in Shandong and Manchuria as well as over the tariff
problem.84

May 1928.
79 Quotes of Abend’s comments from the Leader in “In the Orient View: A Survey of the
80 Ibid.
81 “Tanaka’s Shandung Adventure a Failure from Every Possible Point of View!” The China
Weekly Review, 26 May 1928.
82 Ibid.
While China lacked its own English-language network to present its case, the American treaty-port papers provided a channel for a pro-Chinese voice to the outside world. But the effect was limited. The American treaty-port journals were less popular than the British-operated dailies. Compared to *North China Daily News*, which sold about 8,000 copies daily, the *China Weekly Review* had a circulation of only 4,000–5,000 per week. In addition, China’s weak news network was unable to supply an adequate number of credible reports at critical times. As a result, it failed to compete effectively with the Japanese and British papers in the treaty ports and make China’s voice heard in the metropolitan papers.

**Opinions of the *Times, Manchester Guardian* and the *New York Times***

The views presented in the British treaty-port press were largely echoed by the largest newspaper in London, the *Times*, although the paper was less pronounced in venting anti-Chinese sentiment. As a paper representing British business interests, it supported Japan’s justification of its actions in Jinan. It saw the incident as arising from looting by Chinese soldiers. The editorial on 5 May gave a detailed account on the start of the clash: “Looting of Japanese property by individuals followed, and when the Japanese battalion stationed in the quarter interfered, 2,000 Nationalist soldiers quartered close at hand came to the rescue of the criminals and opened fire on the Japanese troops.” The editorial continued to commend the Japanese government for treating the incident “with sobriety and sound judgement,” and blamed the escalation of fighting on the Guomindang whose passion had gone “beyond bounds.” The correspondent of the paper also saw the conflict as a repeat of the Nanjing Incident by the undisciplined Nationalist soldiers and rejected the explanation offered by Nanjing:

Some of the Nationalist troops at Tsinanfu were formerly in Chang

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86 Ibid., 76.
89 Ibid.
Chien's division, which committed the outrages at Nanjing, and are now commanded by a general who was ejected from Canton under the Communist outbreak of last December. . . . The Nanking Foreign Minister's version of the origin of the outbreak and his statement of the Japanese troops are not regarded by foreigners here as credible. Barbarous conduct is incompatible with the strict discipline of the Japanese Army. . . . It is a matter of universal comment here that the career of the Nationalist Army has been marked by outrageous conduct in many places, and that it is easy to believe that it has been guilty of further atrocities. In fact, the Nationalist Government, instead of making frank amends for the Nanking outrages, has endeavoured to evade responsibility by making unfounded counter-charges against foreigners and to instil the bitterest anti-foreign feeling into the Army. It will need a great deal of evidence to the contrary to shake the conviction that the Tsinanfu outbreak is the work of the powerful extremist element which pervades the whole Nationalist movement, and is as active today as it was when Borodin was present in person to lead it.\textsuperscript{90}

However, most of the paper's discussion of the incident focused on the event itself, rarely venturing to criticise China's underdevelopment and lawlessness as had press in the treaty ports. The paper did not seek to interpret the incident as an outburst of China's anti-foreign anger by ordinary Chinese soldiers at the front, but believed that the incident was staged by extremist leaders in the Guomindang government who intended to use the Jinan outrage, together with the Nanjing Incident, to exert pressure on foreign powers to make concessions in the revision of the treaties.\textsuperscript{91}

The stance taken by \textit{Times}, however, was not fully shared by the \textit{Manchester Guardian}, a platform for liberal and left-wing opinion. The \textit{Guardian}'s take on the incident was ambiguous. Drawing on the British experience in dealing with the National Revolutionary Army, the paper sympathized with Japan's pre-emptive action to protect its nationals and their

\textsuperscript{90} "The Tsinanfu Outrage," \textit{The Times}, 7 May 1928.

\textsuperscript{91} "Japan and China: Severe Fighting in Shandong," \textit{The Times}, 9 May 1928.
property:

The situation is almost exactly that which had been feared might arise when British troops were sent to defend Shanghai, and probably would have arisen had they been sent to defend the towns along the Yangtze valley, where British lives and property were in danger from uncontrolled soldiery. . . . Persons can be withdrawn if transport is arranged in time, but property cannot, and after our own experience it is difficult to be very censorious over the decision of the Japanese Government to defend both lives and property by the dispatch of troops.92

However, while acknowledging that Japan was following the British model and demonstrating to the Guomindang government that foreign powers had not forgotten resentment for outrages and insults,93 the paper was not satisfied with Japan’s supervision of its troops in Jinan. It complained that Japan did not follow the British model completely, failing to limit the extent of its reaction as Britain did in the Nanjing case. While the British government had the wisdom and moderation to resist appeals to exact revenge for the Nanjing outrage, the Japanese did not.94 The Japanese army unwarrantedly bombed Jinan on 8 May95 and reinforced its troops in Shandong. These actions, it argued, fuelled the tension.

The Guardian expressed similar ambiguous attitudes towards China’s case. The paper quoted Reuters’ reports to provide the Japanese side of the story and relied on Timperley, its correspondent in Beijing, to cover the Chinese side. Timperley, as mentioned above, blamed Japan for the start of the fighting. He also quoted Huang Fu’s protest against Japan’s killing of the entire staff of China’s Foreign Bureau in Jinan and mutilation of the Chinese Foreign Commissioner Cai Gongshi,96 reports often neglected by other papers who viewed it as Chinese propaganda. He reaffirmed that Chiang’s troops had “showed keen desire to avoid

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94 “From Bad to Worse,” The Manchester Guardian, 9 May 1928.
any appearance of anti-foreignism"" and testified that British and Americans in Jinan were not disturbed by the southern troops. However, the paper also blamed the limited fighting capacities of the National Revolutionary Army:

The great numbers of the Nationalist armies could not make up for their hopeless inferiority in military training and equipment. The Japanese could doubtless seize and hold the whole province of Shantung, if they have a mind to, without extraordinary exertion.99

Although looting was not regarded as the cause of the fighting, the paper still believed that it exacerbated the conflict and reaffirmed Chiang’s lack of control. Such suspicions of Chiang’s authority as well as the capability of his army were a heavy blow to the prestige of the Nanjing regime, whose authority at the time primarily rested on military power. Indeed, the paper refrained from making a judgement on the case but saw the fighting as a “natural and almost inevitable consequence” of the long-term Sino-Japanese tensions.101 The paper was more worried about the outcome of the incident than determining the cause of it, fearing that the incident would spark a new round of the anti-foreign movement in China:

With the Japanese firmly entrenched in Shantung one may expect a renewal of the demand that Great Britain should assert herself more firmly in the Yangtze Valley. There may be a recrudescence of the policy of parcelling China into spheres of influence which before the war threatened not only the integrity of China but the good relations of the grabbing Powers. Anti-foreign sentiment, which is almost as strong in the Northern armies as in the Southern, will be inflamed everywhere, and we may look for a renewal of boycotts and other manifestations of hostility.102

102 “From Bad to Worse,” The Manchester Guardian, 9 May 1928.
In contrast, although the American treaty-port papers challenged the Japanese interpretation, their views do not appear to have found their way into newspapers back home. The prominent US newspaper the *New York Times* largely maintained a neutral stance on the Jinan Incident, with slight indications of sympathy for the Japanese cause. Unlike most of the foreign press, which gained its information on the Jinan event from Reuters and Tōhō, the *New York Times* derived its information from the Associated Press news agency and from its own Chinese correspondents, namely Henry F. Misselwitz and Hallet Abend. All these sources cautiously took a balanced view, giving space to accounts from both sides. Yet this newspaper still turned to news from Japanese sources when it was the only news available. After fighting broke out on 3 May, for example, the Japanese side of the story dominated coverage of the fighting. Japanese casualties were reported frequently\(^\text{103}\) while details of Chinese losses were seldom mentioned. Chinese soldiers were portrayed as ruthless killers who slaughtered Japanese civilians\(^\text{104}\) and burned and buried Japanese soldiers alive\(^\text{105}\), whereas similar charges against Japan that were popular in China’s domestic papers were absent from the foreign press.

The *New York Times* was critical of both Japan and China. Editors of the paper were not convinced by the Japanese explanation that the fighting was started by pre-arranged looting. They saw Japanese reports on the looting and the subsequent Chinese atrocities simply as an effort to “make a second Nanking Incident out of the affair.”\(^\text{106}\) Neither did they agree that Japan had staged the fight to block the advance of Nationalist troops, since “Japan has quite enough problems on her hands at the moment to avoid new ones and no war could be as useful to her for some years as a period of peace.”\(^\text{107}\) The paper saw the incident more as “spontaneous quarrels” arising in times of acute tension,\(^\text{108}\) and urged a settlement of the conflict as soon as possible. The anger towards Japan delivered in the American treaty-port papers, however, was absent. Instead the paper carried a neutral yet detached attitude, awaiting things to drift on their own course.

Aftermath

The Jinan Incident shaped the Guomindang government’s foreign propaganda policies in future Sino-Japanese conflicts. During the Mukden Incident in September 1931, for example, the government immediately sought to publicize Japan’s invasion instead of trying to negotiate with Japanese generals at the front. In addition, the need for powerful propaganda machinery was keenly felt among the officials in Nanjing after the Jinan Incident. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 and Tan Yankai 譚延闓, for example, concluded that China’s inadequate propaganda during the Jinan Incident was caused by its lack of news facilities and networks and proposed that the Guomindang government establish a centralized foreign propaganda institution and found English-language newspapers and news agencies. Drawing on the experience in Jinan, foreign diplomats also repeatedly urged Nanjing to strengthen its foreign propaganda apparatus so as to improve the image of the Chinese nation and boost the prestige of the Guomindang government.

Disturbed by foreign newspapers’ interpretations of the Jinan Incident, China’s bilingual elites founded an English-language weekly, *The China Critic*, in Shanghai immediately after the close of the Jinan affair. The long-term editors of the journal included Gui Zhongshu 桂中樞, Lin Yutang 林語堂, Ma Yinchu 馬寅初, Liu Dajun 劉大鈞, Zhao Minheng 趙敏恆 and many other distinguished scholars who had received university degrees in the West. The editors defined themselves as “a small group of Chinese who are interested in a fair presentation of all issues arising between China and the other powers,” with a hope to “prevent the repetition of events that have made the month of May so unhappily memorable [due to the May Thirtieth Movement and the Jinan Incident].” Liu Dajun also confirmed in his letter to Hu Shi 胡適, that the journal was published to “counter

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109 Cai Yuanpei and Tan Yankai’s proposal on foreign diplomacy, 21 August 1928, the fifth meeting of the second conference of the Central Executive Committee, political files, 6.31.2, the Research Committee of the History of Guomindang, Taipei.


Japan’s harmful propaganda.” The journal in the following years became an important outlet for China to champion its cause in the treaty ports and abroad.

**Conclusion**

China was defeated in the foreign propaganda battle over the Jinan Incident. Although China made various attempts to present its case in the press, its voice was drowned out by Japanese propaganda. China failed to effectively channel its message to English-language papers at home and abroad and its argument failed to win the support of the majority of the audience in the treaty ports. This failure can be attributed to China’s disadvantages in text and context: China’s inefficient dissemination of news and its indecisive propaganda policy greatly limited the quantity and quality of its discourse. The precedents of anti-imperialist action both diminished the credibility of its news and weakened its argument. Yet behind these disadvantages lay the root of the problem—the unsettled political situation. The constant changes of government thwarted China’s official and unofficial efforts to establish a national news network. The threat from the northern warlords and China’s intricate relations with the imperialist powers deterred the Nanjing regime from formulating decisive foreign propaganda policies. The lack of coordination within the Guomindang government gave rise to inconsistent accounts in the press. Furthermore, its disputes with the Powers over national sovereignty impacted on public opinion in treaty ports and abroad, estranging the very audience to which it sought to appeal. In contrast, Japan had a strong news network in China and quickly installed its version of events in the media. Its response was swift, consistent and intensive. It also took advantage of the Nanjing Incident to justify its actions in Jinan.

Opinion in the treaty ports towards the Jinan Incident was split between the British press and American journals, with the British press supporting the Japanese argument and US papers favouring China’s case. However, the support of American papers was unable to decisively bolster China’s position in this propaganda battle. It was still the Japanese reports, with the endorsement of the

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British treaty-port papers, which were widely accepted by the *Times* of London and influenced the view of the *New York Times*. Even the *Manchester Guardian*, which attempted to give a more balanced view, nevertheless retained an ambiguous attitude to the incident largely because of its reliance on reports from the Japanese agency, the only source of information available. The failure to effectively employ the domestic and foreign media prompted the Guomindang government and non-official experts to invest in improving China’s foreign propaganda institutions. Their efforts would be more severely tested in the 1930s and beyond.
PART II
CHAPTER 3

To Control the Uncontrollable
The Nanjing Government’s Foreign Propaganda Policies, 1928–1931

By the end of 1928, the need to build foreign propaganda machinery in the Guomindang government was widely felt among the officials in Nanjing. At the Guomindang’s Third National Congress, China’s deficient foreign propaganda network had become the target of general censure and proposals for the construction of a powerful foreign propaganda institution were repeatedly raised.\(^1\) The incentive for Nanjing to improve its foreign publicity came not only from China’s painful lessons from the Jinan Incident, but also from the dire need of the newly-inaugurated government to establish its international prestige. While the underdevelopment of China was excessively exploited as the main pretext for foreign powers to continue their treaty privileges, redressing the negative portrayal of the country became a necessary diplomatic strategy to fend off foreign powers’ encroachment on China’s national sovereignty.

This chapter examines how the Nanjing government began to form its foreign propaganda policies and establish foreign propaganda institutions, how it regulated the English-language press and how it expanded its foreign propaganda network. It argues that the regulation on foreign propaganda by the Nanjing government was an integral process of its fighting for national sovereignty. Hampered by extraterritoriality, its efforts to control the foreign press only achieved limited effects. The government had not devised a coherent propaganda policy at this early stage of national construction and a centralized propaganda institution was yet to be established. However, keenly aware of the importance of propaganda, multiple ministries together with the public elites began to build news networks in the treaty ports.

\(^1\) Guomindang disanci daibiao dahui ti’an, Huiyi jilu, 國民黨第三次代表大會提要, 會議記錄, 3.1/3.12; 3.1/14.17, Committee of Guomindang Party History (CGPH), Taipei.
On June 1928, the Nationalist forces conquered Beijing. The warlord-based government was dissolved and Chiang Kai-shek declared his unification of China. By then, the Nanjing government had officially ended the phase of military rule and entered into a political tutelage period. The basic rationale for the tutelage period was to allow the enlightened group (xian zhi xian jue 先知先覺), particularly the members of Guomindang, to educate the unenlightened (hou zhi hou jue 後知後覺) and prepare them for constitutionalism. Underneath the principle lay the barely hidden condescension of the Nationalist elites toward the Chinese people: Chinese people were ignorant of democracy, the modern way of governance. Supervision and training from the political elites were therefore needed before democratic rules were adopted. The principle of "tutelage" was therefore employed to justify the dominance of the Guomindang and to shape its propaganda policies. For Britain and the United States, the maintenance of government-endorsed propaganda institutions in peacetime was viewed by many of the government officials as the preserve of a totalitarian dictatorship. For China, the very exercise of thought control was justified as an educational process that allowed the people to familiarize themselves with democratic rules.

The Guomindang valued propaganda. From as early as the late Qing period, the party or its predecessor organizations had engaged in various propaganda activities. Many of its members were professional propagandists, publishing party-sponsored journals and devoting much attention to the organizational and technical aspects of propaganda activities. The idea of exercising a routine discipline through a propaganda bureau, nevertheless, was still novel until the

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2 The Nationalist revolution, prescribed by Sun Yat-sen, would undergo three phases. The first was the period of military rule during which the reactionary warlords who were holding the country in their grip would be overthrown. Following this came the period of political tutelage, marked by the rule of an intelligent and purposeful minority while the people were being trained to an appreciation of their political responsibilities. Finally a period of constitutional government would ensue during which the people would rule themselves by means of regularly elected officials. See Yat-sen Sun, Fundamentals of National Reconstruction (Taipei: China Cultural Service, 1953).


May Fourth Movement in 1919 alerted Sun Yat-sen to the potential power of organized mass publicity.\(^6\) As soon as Sun Yat-sen reorganized the Nationalist party and established his regime in Guangzhou in 1924, a Ministry of Information, modelled on the Soviet counterpart, was installed to supervise the government’s propaganda. The Ministry was responsible for promoting Sun’s Three People’s Principles (San Min Zhu Yi, 三民主義) and censoring information unfriendly to the party.\(^7\) Its primary goal was to attain unity in opinion so as to maintain the one-party rule of the Nationalist regime.\(^8\) Unlike most of the other ministries, which belonged to the “government” sector, the propaganda ministry was a party organ, directly subject to the control of the Central Executive Committee. This arrangement is indicative of the strong emphasis that the party had placed on thought control.

Although the party was experienced in conducting domestic propaganda, English-language propaganda targeting foreign audiences in the early Nanjing decade was still a novel strategy for most Chinese officials. As mentioned in Chapter 1, English-language propaganda was conducted on an individual basis through the form of operating or subsidizing treaty-port papers. Institutional schemes and systematic practice were absent and most of the propaganda sources were controlled by Guomindang leftists rather than Chiang Kai-shek’s clique. After Chiang overthrew the warlord-backed Beijing government and militarily unified China, he was eager to strengthen the legitimacy of the Nanjing government and establish its international reputation. He therefore paid special attention to China’s relations with the imperialist powers, particularly the revision of unequal treaties,\(^9\) hoping the active response to the international disputes would both cater to the anti-imperial public sentiments domestically and make the presence of the new government felt among the world public. Keenly aware that a military battle against the imperialist powers was unfeasible, the Nanjing leaders viewed psychological warfare as the best strategy to withstand foreign pressure.

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\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Chiang’s speech delivered on 10 December 1928, “Beifa chenggong hou zui jinyao de gongzuo” 北伐成功後最緊要的工作 (The most important tasks after the Northern Expedition), in Chiang Kai-shek, *Zongtong Jianggong sixiang yanlun zongji* 總統蔣公思想言論總集 (Chiang Kai-shek’s thoughts and speeches) (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi weiyuanhui, 1985), 332.
and reclaim national sovereignty.\textsuperscript{10}

The incentive to develop China’s foreign propaganda was also propelled by the urge to redress China’s negative image among audiences in European countries and the United States. Experiences gained from the Jinan Incident and many of China’s other encounters with foreign powers had reaffirmed the stark reality that China was unfavourably portrayed and its nationalist cause was hardly understood by the world public. As one of the officials pointed out at the Third National Congress:

> It is such a weird phenomenon that few foreigners know about Chinese culture and The Three People’s Principles. As victims of propaganda conducted by the imperialists, they know nothing about Chinese fine heritage and virtues. All they know is China’s weaknesses. In their minds, China is bestowed with a vast territory and rich natural resources. Yet such an attractive land was wasted by a savage and uncivilized people.\textsuperscript{11}

Chinese elites who were proud of their own culture and tradition found it disturbing to be described as “uncivilized”, “savage” or “barbaric,” the words having long been used by Chinese to define other ethnical groups or non-Chinese neighbours.\textsuperscript{12} The sheer imbalance between China’s self-esteem and disrespect from the foreigners strongly propelled the Nationalist leaders to expand their foreign propaganda efforts so as to make China’s culture and political stance understood by the world. A proposal from a Nanjing official cogently reflected the national pride generally held among the Nationalists:

> China is a country with thousands of years of civilization and history, a huge population, a vast territory and rich natural resources. All of them are incomparable heritage for this brilliant nation and for the

\textsuperscript{10} Kuoda guoji xuanchuan de biyao yiji fang'an, Guomindang disanci daibiao dahui ti'an, Huiyi jili, 擴大國際建宣傳的必要與方針, 國民黨第三次代表大會提案,會議記錄, 20 March 1929, 3.1/3.12, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} See Wang Ermin’s discussion on the China’s traditional foreign diplomatic thoughts, in Wang Ermin, \textit{Wan Qing zhengzhi sixiang shi lun} 晚清政治思想史論 (The political thought of the late Qing period), (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1969), 183.
world. Yet the country is now unfairly treated and being exploited by the imperialist powers...China needs to make its cause known to the world. Only by doing so can it complete its revolution and thus contribute to the development of the world.\textsuperscript{13}

Impetus for a propaganda institution targeting foreign audiences also came from the enthusiastic worshipers of Sun Yat-sen’s thoughts, who saw propaganda as an important instrument to disseminate the party's ideology and make the Nationalist cause acceptable throughout the world. The ideological fever was especially high in the early years of the Nanjing decade, when the revolutionary leaders were encouraged by their triumph over the warlords and the reclamation of Hankou and Jiujiang concessions from the British Empire in 1927. Impressed by Sun's advocacy of universal commonwealth (datong 大同), an idea Sun borrowed from Confucianism to glorify the doctrine of nationalism, many Nanjing officials regarded Sun’s thoughts as an all-encompassing theory to guide revolutions around the world. They believed the best way to restore national sovereignty was to cooperate with other weak nations and collectively strive for equal rights against the imperialist powers.\textsuperscript{14} The people of other weak nations were regarded by them as an important audience for China’s propaganda and failing to disseminate Sun’s thoughts would not only hamper the development of revolution in China but also the process of achieving a global commonwealth.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Foreign Propaganda Institution and Legal Regulations on the Press}

The international division (Guoji ke 國際科) was established within the Guomindang’s Ministry of Information (Xuanchuan bu 宣傳部) in 1928 to supervise China’s international propaganda. The division included both an editing and a translation office. The former was responsible for devising foreign propaganda plans and compiling propaganda materials. The latter had an

\textsuperscript{13} Kuoda guoji xuanchuan, Guomindang disanci daibiao dahui mishuchu, Huiyi jilu, 擴大國際宣傳，國民黨第三次代表大會秘書處。會議記錄, 21 March 1929, 3.1/14.17, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{14} Kuoda guoji xuanchuan de biyao yiji fang'an, Guomindang disanci daibiao dahui ti'an, Huiyi jilu, 擴大國際宣傳的必要與方案，國民黨第三次代表大會提案。會議記錄 3.1/3.12 CGPH; Kuoda guoji xuanchuan, disanci quanguo daibiao dahui mishuchu, Huiyijilu, 擴大國際宣傳案, 第三次全國代表大會秘書處。會議記錄, March 1929, 3.1/14.16, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{15} Guomindang disanci daibiao dahui ti’an, Huiyi jilu, 3.1/3.12 CGPH.
extended role of not only translating and publishing important government
documents, but also keeping the government leaders informed about foreign
comments on Chinese issues. The establishment of the international division,
however, did not markedly improved China’s foreign publicity. The international
propaganda office lacked professionals and guidelines. A sophisticated
information network was also absent. As a result, foreign propaganda mainly
followed the principles of domestic propaganda and its work was operated by
domestic propagandists. At this stage, Nanjing officials were still unclear about
the boundary between propaganda for the domestic audience and propaganda
targeting foreign audiences to achieve diplomatic purposes.

Nationalist party members, who had great faith in their ideology, were eager
to disseminate their political ideals worldwide, regardless of the reception by the
foreign audience. The first years of the Nanjing decade had seen a steady growth
of translation and publication of the doctrines of the Guomindang, such as Sun
Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles and articles on Sun’s thoughts. Building
the Nanjing government’s authority was another important task of the foreign
propaganda office. Two dominant themes ran through the propaganda materials:
unification and construction. Publications endorsed by the government kept
assuring the foreign public that China was a unified nation under the rule of the
Nationalist party, that regional warlords had been eliminated and that the
government led by Chiang Kai-shek enjoyed absolute control over the country.
Propagandists were keen to develop the international reputation of the Nanjing
government, promoting the idea that the government was not only able to
dismantle the deeply-flawed warlordism, but also capable of building a new
modern nation.

19 Conghai Chen, General Chiang Kai-Shek: The Builder of New China (Shanghai: The
Commercial press, 1929).
20 Min-ch’ien T. Z Tyau, Two Years of Nationalist China (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, limited, 1930).
However, neither the party’s ideology nor the acclaim of the new government appealed to the foreign public. Impediments came from both the suspicion of the propaganda motives and the contrast between propaganda materials and reality. Although official propaganda on Guomindang’s ideology was perceived by officials of the party as a proper strategy to exercise thought control, foreigners were highly sensitive to government- or party-related publications. The abuse of propaganda in World War I had tinged the term with a sinister flavour by the end of the war. The notion of “propaganda” began to be linked with partial

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21 Zhongguo dier lishi dang’anguan, Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui huiyilu, Vol. 10, 204.
information, manipulation of thoughts and political deception. It implied a calculated intent on the part of the propagandists to persuade others to think and act in a certain direction.\(^{22}\) Publications related to propaganda were firmly resisted by the Anglo-American public. The dissemination of the Guomindang’s ideology directly fell into the category of “official” propaganda and thus enjoyed little credibility among foreign audiences. Foreign journals rarely discussed Sun’s thoughts or republished articles of such a topic from Chinese sources. Among the few articles commenting on Sun’s thesis, a flavour of disdain could easily be detected. The *Times* in London, for example, described the Three People’s Principles as Sun’s “curious vade-mecum of government” and perceived it as nothing more than an “amalgam of miscellaneous Western ideas with Chinese preconceptions.”\(^{23}\)

The most damaging blow to the Nanjing government’s propaganda was the reality that sharply contrasted with party claims. Despite the party’s high-sounding resolution to achieve democracy, the newly inaugurated Nanjing government failed to organize the government based on democratic principles. The Nanjing government was characterised by a one-party dictatorship, a system following that of the Soviet Union. The Organic Law which designed the government’s structure, stipulated that the Nationalist Party was the highest organ of power and that the government served to implement policies made by party institutions. In practice, by the tradition of interlocking personnel, the party institutions greatly overlapped with those of the government sectors. The Guomindang was essentially the government and the government was the party.\(^{24}\) The division of five powers within the government was originally designed to avert dictatorship. The design not only failed to bring about a more democratic leadership but also made the already clumsy bureaucracies even more cumbersome, creating high potential for despotism and corruption.

Furthermore, the unification of China was only nominal. The Nanjing government was challenged by a serious rebellion in 1930. Threats primarily came from Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥, Yan Xishan 閻錫山 and Li Zongren 李宗仁,


who belonged to different factions but drew together in their common opposition to Chiang Kai-shek. Although Chiang crushed the rebellion with the help of Zhang Xueliang 張學良 in October 1930, the underlying threat to Chiang’s rule and the actual revival of the civil war severely tarnished the image of stability and unification that Nanjing had strived to present to the world. Politicians who lost power in their struggle with Chiang or disagreed with Chiang’s operation of the government also allied to protest his rule. These malcontents, led by Wang Jingwei 汪精衛, ranged from the former Wuhan leftists to the rightist Western Hills faction.25 Threats also came from local insurgents in perpetual revolt against authority, and the Communists.26

Being fully aware of the power of reality in frustrating their propaganda efforts, Nanjing officials were keen to suppress information or opinions that were unfavourable to the government. Its first order, Rules for Censorship on Publications (宣傳品審查條例), came out as early as 10 January 1929. The Rules specified that any publication should respect Sun Yat-sen’s thoughts and follow the doctrines, policies and decisions of the Nationalist party. Publications that propagated communism, distributed rumours, fomented dissension or opposed the Guomindang would be considered “reactionary” and be punished by the government.27

After laying out what should be censored, the party began to work on how to conduct the actual censorship. In August 1929, the Central Executive Committee of the party passed the Methods of Postal Censorship in Key Cities (全國重要都市郵件檢查辦法). It required the regional municipal governments to install censorship offices and withhold public or personal mail with content that harmed the cause of the party.28 A month later, on 23 September, the party furthered its control through another order, Methods of Newspaper Registration, which demanded that all newspapers and news agencies register with the regional

propaganda agencies. Certificates for publication could be denied to any newspaper that “contained reactionary information” or was “liable to undermine social security.” Newspapers that failed to respond to the registration order would be banned from postal delivery by the Ministry of Information. Having granted the certificate for publication to a periodical, the Ministry still retained the authority to withdraw its rights to publish, should it engage in anti-party propaganda.30

The Publication Law, enacted in 1930, was the backbone of the Nanjing government’s legal basis for press control. The law primarily inherited principles of the previous orders on censorship and registration. It introduced a registration system, requiring popular newspapers to register with the Ministry of the Interior (內政部) and party-related papers to register under the Ministry of Information. Advised by Dai Jitao 戴季陶 and Chen Lifu 陳立夫, the Law extended the scope of “harmful speech” by forbidding any information that intended to undermine the Three People’s Principles, the Guomindang, the government or the interests of the nation.31 The law thereby transformed the previous content-based censorship into a restriction of subversive intentions. Since evaluation of intention was a highly subjective matter and the rights to assess the intension of a journal were solely held by the party, the new law, in fact, expanded the party’s authority in the control of information.

Battling with Extraterritoriality

Foreign-operated news agencies and newspapers in treaty ports were one of the biggest obstacles for the Nanjing government to effectively control out-going information. These sources, in general, tended to be critical of the Nanjing government and viewed Chinese issues from the perspective of their home countries or of their own interests. The underdevelopment, disorder and instability of China were on-going themes for their reports. Knowing well that foreign papers were the most trusted sources of information on Chinese issues

among overseas audiences, Nanjing leaders saw the foreign-operated news organizations as the very producers of negative portrayals of China and the instigations of anti-Chinese sentiments.\(^{32}\) Regulating the foreign-operated media in China, therefore, became a pressing task.

In February 1930, the Guomindang government passed a *Registration Order for the Foreign Press*, endeavouring to place the foreign papers under Chinese control.\(^{33}\) As much as the government desired to regulate these papers, it was impossible to do so due to the existence of extraterritoriality. Extraterritoriality stipulated that foreigners be exempted from the jurisdiction of China but be bound by the law of their home countries. The system nullified any Chinese attempt to control foreign-registered or owned papers. Complicating matters, many Chinese-operated newspapers, in order to avoid Nanjing’s censorship, tried to obtain extraterritorial protection by registering abroad and operating in foreign concessions. As a result, the dissent that the government was eager to suppress was commonly found in the treaty-port press and was transmitted more widely through the circulation of those papers beyond regional and national borders. Nanjing understood that their censorship efforts would be doomed to failure if papers with extraterritorial protection were left unregulated. To tighten the control, their primary, yet challenging, task was to abolish extraterritorial rights.

Extraterritoriality was imposed upon China from the mid-19th century. Initially, through the General Regulation of Trade, which was incorporated in the Treaty of the Bogue in 1843, the British managed to secure the provisions that British subjects involved in criminal cases in China were to be tried according to British law. In 1844, the United States quickly took advantage of these inroads into the Manchu polity and signed the Treaty of Wanghia with the Qing government, in their case enlarging the provision to include civil cases. They also secured a “most favoured nation” clause, which guaranteed that US nationals would automatically become recipients of any corresponding rights or privileges thenceforward granted other foreigners by the Chinese. Over the years, other powers obtained the same extraterritorial rights via various treaties. The scope of extraterritoriality was extended. For example, foreign-operated enterprises were


\(^{33}\) Ibid.
exempt from most Chinese taxation. These extraterritorial terms underlay the whole structure of foreign privilege in China.\textsuperscript{34}

Chinese perception of extraterritoriality had undergone a marked change over the years. When Chinese negotiators first granted extraterritorial rights to foreigners, they considered extraterritoriality as a temporary expedient to ease the legal difference between China and the Powers. They saw the treaty system as a way of fitting the Westerners into a long tradition of barbarian management which allowed foreign traders to handle their own affairs, troubling the Qing government as little as possible.\textsuperscript{35} With the growing expansion of treaty rights of the foreign powers as well as the growing awareness of nationality and sovereignty among the Chinese people, some Chinese elites began to view treaty rights as a foreign encroachment. Anti-Qing parties also constantly used the granting of extraterritoriality to attack the Qing’s inability to deal with foreigners. Such rhetoric found a large audience among the general domestic public who were eager to end the Qing’s rule. After the fall of the Qing Empire, the Nationalist party continued to oppose the unequal treaty system and blame foreign invasion for the decline of China in modern times. Thus by the end of 1928, extraterritoriality became the most acute problem for the Nanjing government. Socially, the existence of extraterritoriality greatly hurt the national pride of the Chinese people, reminding them of the downfall of the nation and the loss of national sovereignty. Politically, extraterritoriality not only damaged the prestige of the Nanjing government but also undermined its authority: foreign concessions often became the hiding place for refugees and traitors, making it difficult for the government to deal with political dissidents.

The Nanjing government began its negotiation on treaty revision immediately after it conquered Beijing. Abolition of extraterritoriality was the most important part of the negotiation. The government justified the abolition on the grounds of both morality and practicality. It believed that extraterritoriality in China was an out-dated system. It was unfit for the present-day conditions and


severely violated Chinese sovereignty.\textsuperscript{36} The government also complained that the system only complicated the existing jurisdiction standard. It not only failed to bring justice but also incurred anti-foreign feelings that might lead to extreme acts threatening foreign life and properties. Further, with the establishment of the Nanjing government, China's legal system had greatly improved, rendering the so-called "foreign tutelage on China's jurisdiction construction" unnecessary.\textsuperscript{37}

However, the disputes between foreign powers and Nanjing did not lie in whether to abolish extraterritoriality, but in how to abolish it. In 1929, foreign powers had unanimously agreed to relinquish their extraterritoriality over time. While China was eager to abolish the provisions immediately, foreign powers led by Britain preferred to prolong the process, believing a "gradual and progressive solution of the problem" was the most advantageous and practical approach to deal with China's current incompetent legal system and its domestic chaos.\textsuperscript{38} They complained that China's judicial system was not innately independent, since the judicial part was controlled by the Nationalist Party rather than a civil government.\textsuperscript{39} Also, the powers were in apparent agreement that the Nanjing government had neither achieved absolute physical control of the entire country, nor could it guarantee the stability to warrant the withdrawal of the protection offered to foreign nationals by the extraterritoriality system.\textsuperscript{40}

China's foreign propaganda, which was devoted to boosting Nanjing's achievement and authority, was an effective diplomatic strategy to refute the powers' justification of their extraterritorial privileges. Yet the exercise of this very means to undermine extraterritoriality was frustrated by the existence of the extraterritorial provision. After an unsuccessful attempt to unilaterally abolish extraterritoriality in 1929, followed by the escalation of the Sino-Japanese crisis in 1931, the government withdrew from its attempt to achieve overall treaty revisions to fights against extraterritoriality on various individual fronts.

\textsuperscript{38} Iriye, \textit{After Imperialism}, 256; Fishel, \textit{The End of Extraterritoriality in China}, 150.
\textsuperscript{39} See Dr. Ho Shih-tsung's summary of powers' position on treaty negotiations, first published in the \textit{Shanghai Times}, 7 April 1929, quoted in "Foreign Opinions in the Abolition of Extrality," \textit{The China Critic}, 18 July 1929.
\textsuperscript{40} Fishel, \textit{The End of Extraterritoriality in China}, 169–170.
Regulation of the treaty-port press was one of them. The government’s best weapons were postal control and the rights of deportation.

Postal Ban

Nanjing’s censorship system was not completely powerless in regulating the foreign-operated press. Although it had no legal rights to conduct prior censorship or penalize disobedient papers the way it did the domestic press, it was still able to limit treaty-port papers’ distribution with the sovereign power it possessed—the postal control. The Nanjing government’s first postal ban on the English-language press was imposed on an American-owned newspaper, the North China Star, on 5 February 1929. It denied postal facilities to the paper because of an article written by C. D. Bess of the United Press in which he predicted that serious political trouble was inevitable between the Northern generals and Nanjing in the spring of 1929. The Star was registered at the American Consulate-General in Tianjin, with three-fifths of its capital stock belonging to Charles J. Fox, a well-known lawyer. The Star was regarded by the British press as an organ “notoriously pro-Guomindang,” and the ban by the very government it sympathized with not only left the editors of the paper shocked but also took C. T. Wang, the then Chinese minister of foreign affairs, by surprise.

The postal ban was not a coordinated decision between the Ministry of Communication and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The order was issued by the Central Executive Committee without any prior reference to officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any other appropriate authority. After learning about the ban, C. T. Wang was particularly concerned about the consequences. He believed that the order was issued under the direction of a principal official simply because he was “incensed” by the particular article. Wang not only worried that the ban would discourage C. J. Fox, the consistent Nationalist sympathiser, from supporting China’s cause but also feared that C. J. Fox’s brother Albert W. Fox, a well-known newspaperman in Washington, would

44 Ibid., 757.
publicize the case to the US audience. Despite Wang’s desire to lift the ban, the leaders in the Central Executive Committee were unwilling to withdraw its order. Only after Fox officially expressed regret for publishing the article, as the Committee required, was the postal ban finally lifted.45

The Star case did not provoke much protest from the English-language press. The paper’s close cooperation with the Nanjing government to solve the dispute greatly eased the tension. Moreover, the Star was a medium-sized English-language paper based in Tianjin, with a circulation of 2,000 copies per issue. With the move of the Chinese capital from Beijing (then named Peiping) to Nanjing in 1928, the influence of Tianjin, in the neighbourhood of Beijing, also waned significantly, leading to the decline in the Star’s popularity.

If the ban on the Star only caused minor friction between the Nanjing government and a foreign-operated paper, an intense battle ensued following the withdrawal of postal service to the North China Daily News. The case not only reflected the long-harboured animosity between the Chinese government and the British treaty-port paper but also illuminated the underlying tensions among papers of different nationalities in Shanghai and the disagreement between the British diplomats and British treaty-port journalists.

The British-operated Daily News, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was commonly regarded as the official organ of the Shanghai Municipal Council. The paper was known for its imperialist tone, treating China the way a mother country would treat a rebellious colony.46 It was this condescending manner that drove the Guomindang government to lose patience. On 18 April, the Standing Committee of the Central Executive Yuan, the highest administrative body of the Nanjing government, resolved to suspend the mail privilege to the North China Daily News and ordered the deportation of Mr. George E. Sokolsky, a distinguished contributor to the paper. The resolution was introduced by Ye Chucang 葉楚伧, head of the Ministry of Information. Ye severely criticized the North China Daily News’ anti-Chinese tone, and blamed the paper as it had “repeatedly and maliciously attacked the Guomindang government and the Guomindang, hoping to create dissension within ranks of the Guomindang and to discredit China in the

45 See preliminary paper prepared for the fourth biennial conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations to be held in Hangchow, from Oct 21 to Nov 4th, 1931, Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China (Shanghai: China Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931), 73.
Ye further explained that the postal ban was the last resort in response to the inaction of the British Consulate-General to repeated protests against the paper’s misreporting from China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To enforce the ban, the government ordered Customs to cooperate in stopping the circulation of the paper overseas and forbade government organizations and officials to advertise in, subscribe to or read the paper.

The postal ban on the *Daily News* was a double-edged sword for Nanjing. While the underdevelopment of China was the common pretext for Western powers to strengthen extraterritorial protection for their nationals, the case was exploited by the British papers in China as evidence of the Nanjing government’s maladministration. Not being informed of the reason for the ban, the paper openly interpreted the ban as the government’s response to its editorial article “Freedom of the Press,” in which the paper displayed contempt for the Nanjing government’s warning to foreign newspapers. By explaining the ban with a minor and specific editorial article, the paper tended to downplay its general anti-Guomindang tone while accentuating the government’s suppression of expression. It derided that the Nanjing government’s action had announced to the world its intolerance of criticism and different views. Without due respect for dissent, the paper argued, the democracy the government promised to fight for was only a deception, since “democratic progress is impossible in any country without a healthy opposition to check and stimulate the party in power.”

In response to Nanjing’s request for the change of editorial policy for the paper, O. M. Green, the chief editor of the *Daily News*, replied with an outright denial, saying that the “policy for over three-quarters of a century, where it touched Chinese questions, has always been framed with a view to the best interests of the Chinese people.”

50 “China’s Attempt to Muzzle the Foreign Press,” a pamphlet edited by the North China Daily News and Herald, 20 May 1929, 9, 15–16.
52 Editorial by O.M. Green in the *North China Daily News*, 7 June 1929, quoted in “Has the N.C.
Apart from protesting Nanjing’s ban in its own editorials, the *Daily News* also allied with other die-hard British papers in a joint criticism of Nanjing’s action. Its closest ally was the *Peking and Tientsin Times* edited by Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead, a trenchant defender of British treaty rights in China. The *Tientsin Times* commented that the *Daily News*’ case was a “flagrant violation of treaty rights” by the Nanjing government and criticized that the “inexperienced and intolerant politicians” in Nanjing only revealed their despotism and corruption by suppressing the press.53

The *Daily News* also published a pamphlet to protest against the postal ban. The pamphlet not only repeated the criticism of the suppression of free speech by the Nanjing government and the “lawless nature” of China but also extended the scope of the disputes. It warned foreign firms that their fate was “wholly dependent on the whims and vagaries of the gentlemen at present in power in Nanjing,”54 and that the Nanjing government “which knows little of law” could adopt the same ban on their mail, deny their rights to pass anything through Customs and hence ruin their business ultimately.55

Although the *North China Daily News* presented itself as a defender of the freedom of speech for all treaty-port papers, its stance hardly received sympathy from the *China Weekly Review*, its long-term competitor run by the Americans. The *Review* applauded Nanjing’s postal ban, believing that the editorial line of the *Daily News* would be “labelled seditious in any sovereign country”56 and that no country would put up for a minute with the constant attacks and pin-pricking attitude of this foreign newspaper.57 It also criticized the *Daily News*’ self-conceited attitude in reporting Chinese issues, warning that foreign journalists would invite punishment if they continued to dictate to the Chinese how they should manage their country.58

The postal ban, apart from an attempt to penalize the paper, was also explained by the *China Weekly Review* as the Nanjing government’s effort to

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54 China’s Attempt to Muzzle the Foreign Press,” a pamphlet edited by the North China Daily News and Herald, 20 May 1929.
55 Ibid., 12.
58 “Has the NCDN Promised to be Good?” *The China Weekly Review*, 15 June 1929.
break up a secret foreign propaganda organization known as the “Shanghai Committee.” According to the Review, the committee had been distributing confidential pamphlets all over the world, “paint[ing] conditions in China in the blackest light possible” so as to hamper China’s treaty revision process. Since the organization had for many years been centred around the Daily News, the government’s obstruction of the paper’s distribution was also an attempt to crash the Committee’s malign plan. However, the involvement of the Shanghai Committee remained open to considerable debate. The so-called secret propaganda organization was an unofficial publicity organization established by the Constitutional Defence League in 1925. The organization later transformed into the Shanghai Publicity Bureau. Its goal was to disseminate propaganda that strengthened the rule of the Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC) and countered the efforts of the Comintern. Its aim was never fixed on being “anti-Guomindang,” although their pro-SMC publication on treaty revision and the abolition of extraterritoriality inevitably created such an impression. With the decline of the Comintern by late 1927, the organization shifted its target from countering communist propaganda to altering the “die-hard” image of the British communities in China. Instead of collaborating with the “die-hard” North China Daily News, therefore, the organization aimed to remedy the negative image the British paper had created.

The China Critic, an English-language paper operated by independent Chinese intellectuals, also lent its support to the Nanjing government’s postal ban. The journal not only criticized the Daily News’ inveterate misinterpretation of China to audiences abroad, but also took the opportunity to expose the harm the “Shanghai mind” had done to Sino-British relations. The “Shanghai mind” was a term coined by Arthur Ransome in his article published in the Manchester Guardian in May 1927. It referred to the British blind loyalty to their imperialistic privilege in treaty ports, even though the privilege was no longer valid. The harm of the “Shanghai mind” manifested itself fully in the treaty revision issues. The British government’s endeavour to compromise was constantly frustrated by the treaty-port papers’ intransigency. The Chinese public

61 “What Ails the Press of Shanghai?” The China Critic, 6 March 1929.
often mistook the British treaty-port papers’ unyielding position for the British government’s attitude towards Chinese affairs. Editors of the *Critic*, who observed the disunity, questioned “whether the Labour Government represents the British people or the British press [in Shanghai] is really representative of them,” indicating that “the government of Shanghai does not hold itself responsible to the diplomats or the Powers they represent.” The paper warned that British trade with China, which was based on mutual goodwill, could be affected by the Shanghai-minded propaganda if the die-hard papers continued to pursue the hostile stance. By exposing the difference between the die-hard views and British diplomatic attitude, the *Critic* aimed to isolate the *Daily News* and urge the British Foreign Office to check the paper’s anti-Nanjing stance.

The *Daily News*’ independent line was a constant problem for the British Foreign Office. Although Miles Lampson, British Minister to China between 1926 and 1933, had repeatedly instructed the treaty-port community to act with “patience and self-sacrifice” and let the Chinese decide who was to run their country, O. M. Green and Rodney Gilbert, who edited the paper in the late 1920s, continued to act in their own way. Instead of feeling troubled for not coordinating with the Foreign Office, they were proud of their independent policy, believing they were the only people who dared to “tell the unflattering truth about China to a world hypnotized by the flummery of diplomats and politicians in Peking, Whitehall, and Washington and by the deceptive dreams of missionaries and uplifters who saw a bright future amidst the chaos of China’s unending civil wars.” Their disobedience and the harm the paper had done to the British image in China raised awareness both in London and Shanghai. While the American press in China aided Washington’s policy, complained Colonel L’Estrange Malone, a visiting Labour Member of Parliament, the British press hindered London’s. Many of the social workers in Shanghai also admitted that O. M. Green was “quite frankly a serious menace to British interest in this country.”

“If anyone would murder Green,” wrote Warren Swire, a distinguished British

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65 F4425/10/10 contained the statement, quoted in Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire*, 175.
66 Ibid., 66.
68 F2942/194/10 (1925) undated letter from a Miss Arnold, quoted in Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire*, 66.
businessman in Shanghai, "I would gladly pay for his defence and the education of his orphans." After Nanjing banned the *Daily News* from delivery, Green was advised by the Consul General to tone things down. Yet he refused to yield to the British metropolitan authority. His compromising attitude eventually led to the end of his editorship with the paper. In 1930, Lampson used all his influence to "get a different and better type" to replace Green. He finally secured Edwin Haward, *London Times* correspondent in India, to the post. Following that, the editorial standpoint of the paper changed noticeably. Fault-finding criticism of Nanjing ceased, and a generally more objective approach became the norm of the paper in the 1930s.

**Deporting Foreign Journalists**

Another strategy of the Nanjing government to control the English-language press was to deport unfriendly foreign journalists. Again, hindered by extraterritoriality, the Chinese government did not possess the legal power to expel a foreigner. Any successful deportation would require cooperation from foreign legations. However, the foreign diplomats often did not see eye to eye with the Chinese government. The journalist considered to be a threat by the Nanjing government might be viewed as a valuable source of information by foreign diplomats. This conflict occasionally resulted in a lack of cooperation or even protest from the foreign legations as a response to Nanjing’s deportation order. As a result, the deportation frequently ended in empty demands or embarrassing compromises from China.

The deportation of Hallett Abend was a vivid example. On June 17, 1929, C. T. Wang sent a note to John Van Antwerp Macmurray, US Minister to China, demanding Hallett Abend be deported from China. Wang complained that Abend’s news dispatches had consistently been biased and unfair to the

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70 Ibid.
Guomindang government, and his libellous publications were likely to harm Sino-American relations or estrange the US foreign public. Wang particularly complained about two of Abend’s dispatches: one concerning an attack on Chiang Kai-shek’s wife Song Meiling 宋美齡, the other revealing Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 and Zhang Xueliang’s 張學良 denunciation of the Nanjing leaders.⁷² While making efforts to have Abend deported, the Nanjing government also tried to ostracize him by cutting his communications with US newspapers. Nanjing ordered the Telegraph Administration to withdraw telegraph and cabling privileges from Abend and warned other correspondents from forwarding Abend’s dispatches. To isolate Abend socially, the Nanjing Ministry of Foreign Affairs forbade officials to receive or visit him.⁷³

Abend arrived in China in 1926. Under George E. Sokolsky’s advice and introduction, he went to Guangzhou, then the headquarters of the Guomindang, and worked for the local Chinese-owned English-language newspaper, the Canton Gazette. Years of frequent communication with the Guomindang’s top leaders, including T. V. Soong and Eugene Chen, led Abend to develop a critical view of Chinese domestic politics. Also, the Guangzhou days left him with a deep impression of the lawlessness and naked force in China. Abend later joined the American-operated paper, the Peking Leader and concurrently served as a foreign correspondent for the New York Times in Peking. His discovery of the warlord’s subsidy for the Leader reinforced his understanding of backdoor politics in China. His observation of China’s deeper flaws in society and politics was fully evinced in his dispatches to the New York Times. His reports provided a sharp contrast to Chiang’s claim that China had restored order after 1928.

The New York Times had undergone a major reorganisation of its correspondents in China in the mid-1920s, which resulted in a different political stance. Abend was appointed in that context. For a considerable period prior to the occupation of the Yangtze Valley by the Nationalists, the New York Times employed Thomas F. Millard, former editor of the Millard’s Review/ China Weekly Review, as its China correspondent. Millard had adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the Chinese revolution and attempted to contextualize Chinese revolts under China’s long-term struggle for nationalism and independence. Yet a

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few weeks before Shanghai was captured by Guomindang forces in 1927, the *New York Times* suddenly replaced Millard with Frederick Moore, a Far Eastern specialist with completely different political ideals. Moore perceived the Chinese Nationalist movement as a communist threat manipulated by the Soviets. Diverging from Millard's "hands-off" policy toward China, Moore urged armed intervention on the part of the United States in cooperation with Great Britain and Japan. However, Moore's policy drew so much protest from the readers that the publisher Adolph S. Ochs had to recall him and replace him with a new correspondent, Hallett Abend. Abend did not advocate foreign intervention in Chinese issues, but continuously exposed the weakness of the Nanjing regime, reinforcing the idea that the Nanjing government was hopeless in bringing order out of chaos. It was this attitude that eventually saw his name appear on the government's blacklist.

Neither the US Legation in China nor the *New York Times* surrendered in the Abend case. J. V. A. MacMurray, who was personally on good terms with Abend, refused the deportation on the grounds that he had no authority to deport any US citizen. Also, deportation was a mode of punishment not recognized in the United States. The *New York Times* also acted defiantly against the pressure from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It neither recalled Abend nor transferred him from China to another country as required by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Instead, the *New York Times* immediately moved him from Beijing to Shanghai where he could have better access to foreign-controlled cables. During the days when Abend was trapped in Beijing, the *New York Times* dispatched its staff member, Herbert L. Matthews, to approach Abend in a semi-official capacity, working as his correspondent and filing his dispatches out of China. Further, while the Chinese government estranged Abend, the Japanese courted him. They offered to send Abend's dispatches via the Japanese-owned telegraph system, going out of their way to give him the news as they saw it.

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74 It was reported that Adolph S. Ochs had received more than 4,000 letters of protest against Moore's articles. See "The *New York Times* and Its China Correspondents," *The China Weekly Review,* 13 July 1929, 283–284.
78 Ibid, 108.
The tension between Hallett Abend and the Guomindang government remained unchanged until April 1931. Upon mediation of the new American Minister Nelson T. Johnson, C. T. Wang finally agreed to drop the dispute after receiving Abend's letter which Wang saw as an attempt to express "regrets for his unfair and false reports." Abend, however, insisted he had never apologized for his reporting in his letter. He maintained that what he regretted was only the controversy itself and the government's objection to his manner of handling the news. The whole deportation drama proved that without the cooperation of the American foreign ministry and the foreign newspapers, the Nanjing government was neither able to deport an unpopular foreign journalist nor effectively isolate him.

Such a deportation failure was not a rare occurrence. It also happened to Sokolsky. A demand for his deportation was issued together with a postal ban on the *North China Daily News*, the newspaper he was then working for. Sokolsky had a long and diversified experience working in China. He used to be close to Sun Yat-sen and had worked as a key person linking student leaders of the May Fourth Movement with Sun's followers. He was involved in English-language papers of various backgrounds and political stances, including the *North China Star*, *Shanghai Gazette*, *China Weekly Review*, the *North China Daily News*, the *Japan Advertiser* and the *Far Eastern Review*. His marriage to Rosalind Peng, a close friend of Song Meiling and the Song family, brought him into the centre of Chinese politics. His understanding of and insight into Chinese politics became the most important source for some American diplomats and journalists. However, his independent editorial style made it hard for others to discern his political loyalties. In 1921, he associated closely with ardent defenders of China like W. H. Donald, Thomas F. Millard and John B. Powell, advocating China's independence and America's involvement in China's market. Yet only two years later, he shifted sides and began to write for his prior enemy, George B. Rea, publicizing Japan's perspective in the *Far Eastern Review*. While seeking good

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80 Ibid, 126.
terms with the Guomindang’s central leaders, such as T. V. Soong and C. T. Wang, he continued to write articles criticizing the Nationalist Party’s undemocratic rule and untalented leadership. Unable to harness his wild pen, the Nanjing government finally decided to drive him out. His attack on the C. C. Clique in the *North China Daily News* eventually brought him the deportation notice. Although the deportation began with a resolute demand, it ended in silence. Mediated by the American Minister and T. V. Soong, the case against Sokolsky was diluted by the attacks on other related journalists\(^\text{84}\) and it eventually subsided without any expulsion.

**The Review of Cable Contracts**

China’s foreign propaganda was also greatly handicapped by its lack of control of out-going cables. The foreign ownership of the cables, protected by extraterritoriality, had prevented China from conducting censorship on out-going dispatches. Despite Nanjing’s continuous efforts to stifle dissention via various regulations and the censorship apparatus, speech considered harmful by the Guomindang government was transmitted freely via foreign cables to the outside world. The lack of cable rights also diminished the Nanjing government’s control on un-cooperative foreign journalists. In the aforementioned case of the attempted deportation of Abend, the *New York Times* had successfully broken Nanjing’s isolation of Abend by enabling him to access the foreign cables through Shanghai. Furthermore, the foreign ownership enabled the cable companies to determine the price for outgoing dispatches. In order to save time, most press messages had to send dispatches at urgent rates, which cost around $0.4 (gold) per word to Europe.\(^\text{85}\) The high cable rate far exceeded the affordability of most of the Chinese newspapers and news agencies.\(^\text{86}\) This resulted in a lack of a Chinese voice abroad. The 1926 Chinese telegraph administration report showed that overall 1,500,000 messages were despatched from China to other countries. Yet the total amount of messages sent abroad through the Japanese Telegraph

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Administration nearly doubled that of China.87

China's cable communications with other countries were mainly monopolized by three foreign companies: the Great Northern Telegraph, a Danish corporation but largely British owned and controlled; the Eastern Extension, a British company; and the Commercial Pacific Cable, an American enterprise with three-fourths of its stock owned by foreign cable interests. The Great Northern Company controlled cables connecting Vladivostok, Nagasaki, Shanghai, Amoy and Hong Kong. It also operated cables in north European waters and owned land telegraphs across Russia and Siberia which connected its Eastern and Western cable systems. The Eastern Extension operated a cable system from Hong Kong to Singapore where further connection with Europe was established. The company also owned the cable from Hong Kong to Fuzhou and Shanghai. The Commercial Pacific had a cable that linked Shanghai to San Francisco via Manila, Midway and Honolulu.88

In addition to the monopoly by Western companies, Japan also enjoyed control of the cables linking Shanghai with Nagasaki and Fujian with Taiwan (Formosa). Upon Germany’s defeat in World War I, its former cable rights were claimed by Japan. Meanwhile, a dispute arose between the United States and Japan with regard to the cable landing rights upon the island of Yap, which was strategically located between the US cable ports in Hawaii and the Philippines. In 1922, the United States recognized Japan’s control of the former German cables in the Pacific under the condition that the United States and Japan enjoyed equal cable landing rights on Yap.89

The year 1929 provided a prime opportunity for the Nanjing government to review the cable contracts, given the fact that most of the foreign companies’ contracts with China were to expire by the end of 1930 and new rules were to be settled before the deadline. Nanjing actively prepared for the negotiation and organized an International Communications Committee to deal with it. The

87 "Today's Cable Conference at Nanjing," The China Critic, 20 March 1930.
committee, led by Zhuang Zhihuan 莊智煥,\textsuperscript{90} was composed of representatives from the Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of War.\textsuperscript{91} Its main goals were: to deny the foreign companies’ right to build cables and land submarine cables within Chinese territory; to reduce the period of cable lease from twenty years to two years; to reclaim control of the cable infrastructure, including the landing of cables and cable poles; and to increase China’s share of the revenue generated by cable transmissions.\textsuperscript{92}

However, China’s resolute endeavour was thwarted by its lack of funds to repay the £535,000 debt to Western cable companies and to purchase their cable facilities.\textsuperscript{93} The foreign companies constantly used the debts as leverage to deny the Nanjing government’s demands. Knowing that cable communication was China’s only channel of communication to the world and that China could not afford any disconnection in case negotiations broke down, the companies refused to make concessions.\textsuperscript{94} They made a concerted demand to extend the current contract for another 20 years and refused to relinquish their ownership of the landing stations in port cities. The first round of negotiations in 1930 reached no satisfactory conclusion for China. Instead of reducing the period of cable lease to five years as the Nanjing government had planned, Zhuang conceded to a 14-year lease term and failed to reclaim companies’ rights to operate cable services in China.\textsuperscript{95}

The concession made by Zhuang and the Committee subjected Zhuang to severe public censure. Regional telegraph worker unions repeatedly sent representatives to Nanjing to demand the punishment of Zhuang. Thus in an action that was directed both against foreign coercion and the weakness of the central government, telegraph staff in Fuzhou 福州 and Xiamen 廈門 cut the

\textsuperscript{90} Director-General of Telegraphs and Telephones of the Ministry of Communications of the Nanjing government.

\textsuperscript{91} “Today’s Cable Conference at Nanking,” \textit{The China Critic}, 20 March 1930.

\textsuperscript{92} Jiaotong bu ni ju jiejue dadong, bei quan’an banfa qing jian he chenggao 交通部擬據解決大東北全案辦法請警呈稿, 30 April 1929, Nanjing Second Historical Archives, \textit{Minguo dang’an shiliao huibian} 民國檔案史料匯編 (Collection of archives of Republic China), Vol. 5, No. 1, Economy (9) (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1994), 659.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{94} Xingzhengyuan cheng shuixian dianxin jiaoashe jingguo 行政院呈水電信交涉經過, 21 March 1931, Minguo dang’an shiliao huibian, Vol. 5, No. 1, Economy (9), 683.

\textsuperscript{95} “Woguo yu dadong Dabei gongsi shuixian jiaoshe guoqu yu xianzai” 我國與大東大北公司水電交涉過去與現在, \textit{Guo Wen Zhou Bao} 國聞週報, Vol. 10, No. 20, 1933.
foreign cable lines immediately after the previous contract expired. The effort of the public also testified to the popular awareness of the importance of cable control. Although inappropriate, the sabotage created practical trouble for the continued operation of foreign cable companies in China. The activity also assisted the Chinese officials on the negotiation table who could argue the reclaim of cable rights aligned with the Chinese popular protests.

The cable negotiation dragged on much longer than the Nanjing government had expected. In new rounds of negotiations, the foreign companies focused on deterring the revision process. They hoped that procrastination in solving the problem would transform the status quo into an acquiesced agreement the way many of the foreign privileges were initially acquired. In 1931, negotiations were interrupted by the Mukden Incident and, afterwards, Japan’s cable privileges from Shanghai to Nakasaki became the major excuse for the Danish, British and American companies to demand the same cable rights in China.

**Construction of a News Network**

To compensate for the lack of news agencies and effective cable control, the Nanjing government, as well as treaty-port elites, continued to purchase, subsidize or establish English-language papers to be published in treaty-port cities. The goal was to channel China’s voice to the outside world via treaty-port media and offset the harm the die-hard papers had done to the Chinese image.

The *Peking Leader* had been in financial difficulty since 1928. Its popularity waned rapidly with the move of the Chinese capital from Beijing to Nanjing. The Nanjing government purchased the *Peking Leader* from the American newspaperman Grover Clark who, by the latter half of 1929, was unable to maintain the operation of the paper. The government reorganized the paper, renamed it *The Leader* and appointed Diao Minqian (also known as

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97 Jiaotongbu guanyu dadong Dabei Taipingyang san shui xian gongsi dianxin jiaoshe jingguo qingxing zhi xingzheng huiyi ti’an gao 交通部關於大東大北太平洋三水線公司電信交涉經過情形暨行政會議提案稿, 18 April 1933, Minguo dang’an shili hui bian, Vol. 5, No. 1, Economy (9), 688.
Philip Tyau), a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as its managing
director. Li Bingrui 李炳瑞 (also Edward Bing-shuey Lee), who was born and
educated in Canada and joined the Ministry of Information upon his return to
China, was appointed as one of the editors of the paper. Operated by the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the paper also received a monthly subsidy of 3,000
yuan from the Ministry of Information. The Leader, originally founded by the
late Qing officials as mentioned in Chapter 1, finally returned to Chinese control
after several years of American ownership.

Before passing to Chinese control, the Peking Leader was considered a
liberal paper in foreign circles, independent of both the Guomindang government
and the American Legation in Beijing. In 1927, the paper firmly opposed the
proposed American loan to the South Manchuria Railway for the development of
South Manchuria. This attitude made Clark a disobedient nuisance in the eyes of
the American diplomats in Beijing. When the Nationalist troops approached
Beijing at the end of the Northern Expedition, rumours were rampant in the
Legation Quarter that the “southern Communists” would repeat the Boxer
atrocities of 1900. Upon the Legation’s offer to Clark for “adequate protection” of
the American properties, Clark bluntly rejected the request, saying that he was
quite happy under the protection of the Chinese laws. Whenever legal disputes
with Chinese firms occurred, the paper preferred to fight the case out in Chinese
courts than to claim extraterritoriality, which further embarrassed the American
Legations. The paper’s attack on Japanese atrocities during the Jinan Incident also
enraged the Japanese companies. Many Japanese firms cancelled their advertising
contracts in protest when Clark refused to change his stance. However, the
Leader’s anti-extraterritoriality and anti-Japanese tone did not mean it was a
Nationalist propaganda asset. While serving the paper in 1927, Hallet Abend
happened to find that the paper was subsidized by the Northern warlord Feng
Yuxiang and financed by Russian money.

The Leader was the only Chinese-controlled English-language paper in

98 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China, 74.
99 “Zhongyang caiwu weiyuanhui dishiwucui huiyi jilu” 中央財務委員會第十五次會議紀錄,
Zhongguo dier lishi dang’anguan, Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui
changwu weiyuanhui huiyilu., Vol. 9, 480.
100 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China, 74–75.
North China. The purchase of the paper was of strategic importance for Nanjing. It enabled the Guomindang to have its voice heard among the foreign public in the North. Its pro-Nanjing tone also helped to counter the anti-Nanjing views held by die-hard British papers published in the same area, such as the *Peking and Tientsin Times*. However, the distance from the Yangtze area—Chiang Kai-shek’s political centre—led to a lack of protection from the Central government. The paper became a victim of political and military struggle in the North. In mid-1930, after the insurgent warlords, led by Feng Yuxiang, Yan Xishan and Li Zongren, had taken control of Beijing, the paper was forcibly seized and all Chinese employees were expelled. Having no interest in serving the insurgent government, E. H. Hunter, a former American editor, resigned soon after. The vacuum was filled by Lenox Simpson, also known as Putman Weale. Simpson, of British nationality, was born in China. He joined his father’s service, the Imperial Maritime Customs, in 1896 at the age of 19 and quit after the Boxer Rebellion. After serving the *Daily Telegraph* as a Beijing correspondent from 1911 to 1914, he worked as adviser for military warlords in Beijing. Simpson was an active treaty-port writer. He was both critical of the policies of the Guomindang government and the imperialist stance of the Shanghai Municipal Council. However, Simpson’s editorship with the paper was brief. The Guomindang reclaimed Beijing in October 1930 and Simpson was assassinated a month later after being appointed as Tientsin Customs Commissioner.

Apart from the purchase of the *Leader* in Beijing, the Nanjing government also sought to penetrate the stronghold of the English-language press in Shanghai. The *Shanghai Mercury* was briefly subsidized by the government after the Jinan Incident. The *Mercury* was a well-known British paper established by J. D. Clark in 1879. The paper reached its height at the turn of the 20th century when it broke the *North China Daily News*’ monopoly on Reuters’ service. Since 1904, Japanese interests had kept influencing the paper. By 1917, nearly half of the shares were bought by the Japanese. British nationals controlled no more than 20% of the shares while the remaining 30% was held by American shareholders. The paper naturally turned into a propagator of Japanese interests. Such an overt bias ruined

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103 “The Death of Mr. Lenox Simpson,” *The China Critic*, 20 November 1930.
the popularity of the paper. Circulation dropped sharply in the 1920s and by 1929, the paper was on the verge of bankruptcy. To bail the paper out of financial difficulties, the editor of the *Mercury* approached the Guomindang Ministry of Information for funding. Realizing that the government needed an English-language outlet to publicize its cause and that a British-operated English-language paper was better received by the foreign audience, the Ministry provided the paper 2,000 yuan per month\(^{104}\) under the condition that the Guomindang co-edit the paper.\(^{105}\) Unfortunately the Guomindang’s limited financial assistance failed to pull the paper out of the quagmire, but a merger eventually did. The paper was purchased by the American newspaperman, C. V. Starr, who combined the *Mercury* with the *Shanghai Evening Post* to form the new *Shanghai Evening Post & Mercury*. Under the new management, the *Post* soon developed into a successful Shanghai evening paper in the 1930s.

With the support of the Nationalist Party,\(^{106}\) Li Bingrui established a political weekly, the *Chinese Nation* in Shanghai. The journal was edited by Lin Wenqing (林文慶, also Lim Boom Keng), a British-trained doctor who was then the president of the University of Amoy.\(^{107}\) The journal received a monthly 3,000-yuan allowance from the government.\(^{108}\) Yet Li was reluctant to reveal the journal’s connection with the government, fearing the government backing might undermine the journal’s credibility. When the *China Weekly Review* introduced the journal as a magazine edited by “prominent members of the Kuomintang Party,”\(^{109}\) Li asked the *Review* to make a correction immediately, emphasizing that the *Chinese Nation* was owned by a “private company.”\(^{110}\)

Chinese elites were also keen to extend influence in the English-language

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\(^{105}\) Zhongyang xuanchuanbu yizhou gongzuo gaikuang, Huiyijilu 中央宣傳部一週工作概況, 12–18 August 1929, CGPH, Taipei.


\(^{107}\) The *Chinese Nation*, 18 June 1930; Liu Guoming et al, eds., *Zhongguo Guomindang bainian renwu quanshu* 中國國民黨百年人物全書 (Full collection of biographies of key members of the Guomindang) Vol.2 (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2005), 1488.


press in China. After the Jinan Incident, Shanghai intellectuals, including Lin Yutang 林語堂, Gui Zhongshu 桂中樞 (also known as Kwei Chung Shu), Zhao Minheng 趙敏恆 (known as Thomas Ming-heng Chao), Ma Yinchu 馬寅初 (Y. C. Ma,) and Pan Guangdan 潘光旦 (Quentin Pan), also founded a new journal entitled The China Critic to express their views on Chinese politics.

The anti-Japanese stance of the China Critic was obvious from the beginning. One of the editors, Chen Shifu 陳石孚, recalled in his memoir that the journal was established as a response to Japan’s military action in Jinan and the killing of China’s diplomat Cai Gongshi 蔡公時. Liu Dajun also confirmed in his letter to Hu Shi that the journal was published to “counter Japan’s harmful propaganda.” The publication of the journal, however, was not an impulse driven by the acute situation during the Jinan Incident. The need for a “representative publication,” “independent of governmental control and popular prejudices (anti-imperialist sentiment),” “has long been felt,” and the journal intended to “strengthen the friendly relations between China and the outside world” and to promote “better understanding between China and the other Powers.”

The relationship between the China Critic group and the Nanjing government was delicate. The publishers claimed themselves to be a “voluntary” and “independent” group of Chinese “who were interested in a fair presentation of all issues arising between China and the other Powers.” However, their self-claimed “independence” was under suspicion. The editorial board of the Critic was close to Sun Yat-sen’s son, Sun Ke 孫科 (known as Sun Fo), then the head of the Legislative Yuan (立法院). Sun contributed frequently to the journal, especially in the first few issues. Some key founders of the Critic also held important positions in the Nanjing government. Zhang Xinhai, for example, joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June, 1928. Liu Dajun, a Missouri university graduate majoring in economics and statistics, became the head of the

113 “Foreword,” The China Critic, 31 May 1928.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
statistics department in the Legislative Yuan, supervised by Sun Ke. And yet, despite all the personal connections with the government, there was no concrete evidence showing that the paper was receiving any government subsidy. The paper’s resistance to the government’s line also showed how it kept its distance from the Nanjing regime. Its criticism of the Nationalist party could be bitter when the government’s policy clashed with its editorial policy. Nevertheless, the difference between the group and the government was much less distinctive when dealing with foreign affairs. Before 1933, the journal largely endorsed the government’s international approach to dealing with the Sino-Japanese conflict. It became one of China’s effective outlets during the Manchurian Crisis in the early 1930s.

Another important Chinese-controlled English-language paper was the China Press. In 1930, a Chinese syndicate led by Zhang Zhuping 張竹平 acquired the paper from Ezra’s family for 260,000 taels. John B. Powell, manager of the China Weekly Review, learnt from his private yet “authoritative” sources that Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun 顧維鈞) was the principal shareholder in the new organization, having advanced 100,000, local currency, for the purchase of the paper.116 Constant change of ownership blurred the paper’s editorial line, as Hollington K. Tong observed: “the founder’s objective, namely to remove international misunderstanding and place before the world Chinese views and thoughts” had remained dormant as the paper was “tossed alternatively from the Chinese to the Americans, from Americans to the British, and from the British back to Chinese.”117

Zhang soon organized a board of directors which contained four foreigners and four Chinese. This arrangement intended to create an impression that the paper was jointly operated by Westerners, particularly Americans, and Chinese. The four Western board members were Chauncey P. Holcomb, an American attorney in Shanghai, William T. Findley, an American optician, E. L. Marsh, a medical practitioner and William. H. Donald, adviser to Marshal Zhang Xueliang and formerly New York Herald correspondent in China.118 Apart from Donald,

116 Douglas Jenkins, Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister to Peiping, February 24, 1931. 893.911/266, Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, China, Internal Affairs 1930–1939 (SDCF).


118 “China Press’ Changes Hands: New Board of Four Foreign, Four Chinese Directors Named,”
none of them had experience in journalism. They lent their fame and credibility to the paper yet were seldom involved in editing and managing of the Press. Donald was indeed active in the reorganization, yet his service to the Press was brief. It was believed that Donald came to assist the reorganization upon Wellington Koo's request. Soon after he finished his task in 1932, he withdrew from the board and Xu Xinliu (徐新六), Chinese representative to the Shanghai Municipal Council, took over the position. The active control of the paper was in the hands of the Chinese members led by Hollington K. Tong, the managing director of the paper.

Tong's career spanned both journalism and politics. He was the first Chinese graduate from the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri in the United States. In Missouri, he was taught by John. B. Powell, who later joined Thomas Millard in China and founded the Millard's Review of the Far East. His acquaintance with Powell paved the way for his later service for the Millard's Review. His experience in the University of Missouri facilitated his connection with the "Missouri Mafia," a group of graduates from the University of Missouri who practiced journalism in China in the 1930s and the 1940s. After graduation, Tong became a member of the first class of the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University. The Columbia experience put Tong in touch with many energetic classmates who later became key figures in the journalistic field. They remained friends with Tong in the following years. Carl W. Ackerman was one of them. Thirty years later, in 1942, Tong was the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Information of the Guomindang government. Ackerman was dean of the School of Journalism, Columbia University. They collaborated to set up a wartime journalism school in China, staffed by Columbia and underwritten secretly by the Office of Strategic Services.

Upon Tong's return to China in 1913, Sun Yat-sen recruited him to the Republican China, an English-language paper Sun organized in Beijing to

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*Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, 20 February 1931.

119 Douglas Jenkins, Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister to Peiping, February 24, 1931. 893.911/266, SDCF.

120 Shanghai Xinwen Shiye Shiliao Jiyao (Selected collection of material on the press history of Shanghai), Vol 1, Shanghai zhi Xinwen Shiye, (A press history of Shanghai), 57.


undermine Yuan Shikai’s authority. The Republican China was closed at the end of 1913. Tong then moved to edit the Peking Daily News, a newspaper owned by the Communication Clique led by Zhou Ziqi and Ye Gongchuo, and subsidized by several governmental ministries including the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The newspaper was in rivalry with the Peking Gazette, edited first by W. H. Woodhead and then Eugene Chen. Tong pursued an anti-Japanese stance during his service to the Peiking Daily News. Such an attitude offended the Anhui clique, a powerful warlord faction supported by Japan. As a result, he was forced to resign in the mid-1910s. The experience in the Republican China and the Peking Daily News, nevertheless, offered Tong a real taste of China’s sophisticated politics and the intricate relations between the political factions and the press.

Despite Tong’s short-lived service to the Peking Daily News, his relation with Xiong Xiling 熊希齡, then in charge of China’s oil and mining affairs, and the “Missouri Mafia” was long-lasting. Tong had been Xiong’s secretary for many years. The service brought Tong to the centre of China’s politics and enabled him to gain access to many of the key politicians. In a trip to Washington to deter the United State’s loan to Japan for the development of Manchuria, Tong worked closely with Wellington Koo, then China’s Minister to the United States. Tong also kept close connections with political leaders in North China, which, as he commented, “enabled him to closely observe the activities of China’s top officials” and “gain deep insight into China’s politics.” Meanwhile, he resumed close ties with his Missouri Alumni, Millard and Powell. He joined the Millard’s Review (renamed China Weekly Review after 1921) and worked as the Review’s associated editor and Beijing correspondent for ten years.

Tong also nurtured a good relationship with China’s largest press syndicate, the Shen Bao Company. In 1925, Tong established his own Chinese-language paper Yong Bao 浸報 in Tianjin. The paper’s anti-Japanese stance and its

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124 A pro-Yuan Shikai clique in the Beijing government.
126 Hollington Kong Tong, Dong Xianguang Zi Zhuang (Taibei: Taiwan xinsheng baoshe, 1981), 39.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
independent attitude received support from Shi Liangcai and Zhang Zhuping, the owner and operator of Shen Bao. Tong later assisted Shi in negotiating with C. J. Ferguson for the purchase of Xin Wen Bao. Although the purchase did not succeed, the experience tightened their relationship and paved the way for their later cooperation during Tong’s editorship with the China Press. Tong’s professional ability and his extensive social networks in the press and politics made him a leading figure in China’s treaty-port press. Later chapters will discuss Tong’s role in the development of the Guomindang’s English-language propaganda system.

Tong tried hard to maintain the American element of the China Press. He kept the registration of the paper in Delaware, United States, so as to enhance the paper’s credibility as well as to gain extraterritorial protection. He preserved the American-style layout and hired many American journalists as its reporters and editors. Malcolm Rocholt, for example, became a China Press reporter in 1931. Earle Seile, who later worked for the Advertiser in Honolulu and became famous for his biography on W. H. Donald, joined the Press as an editor around the same time.

Despite all these American elements, the reorganized China Press was representing Chinese interests. The new managing team was “doing its utmost” to feature Chinese news in its papers in order to compete with the British-owned North China Daily News, which paid handsomely for exclusive services supplied by Reuters and United Press. In addition to the regular Reuters, Guo Min and Transocean news services, the Press also obtain exclusive service from the Shen Shi Telegraph News Agency, a private news agency organized by the largest Shanghai native papers Shen Bao and Shi Shi Xin Bao. The goal of the paper was to break the monopoly of Chinese news by Reuters and other big foreign news agencies.

Tong also endeavoured to make the paper a platform to promote a good relationship between China and the Western powers. He specified that the paper intended to encourage cooperation and mutual understanding between China and foreign powers, a direction he believed to be “most desirable for the early

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129 Ibid, 44-47.
131 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China, 72.
realization of China's national aspirations.” In regard to “Shanghai local problems of an international character,” Tong claimed that the paper would “promote the welfare and prosperity of Shanghai as a whole,” indicating that the *Press* disagreed with the “Shanghai mind” mentality which focused primarily on British interests. In regard to Chinese domestic politics, Tong claimed that the paper would “take no sides.” Yet he did not rule out the possibility of making “constructive criticisms of measures and policies” when necessary. 

Much as the Chinese board members wanted to accentuate the papers’ American ownership, the Shanghai Municipal Council and the American Legation tried to negate the American influence in the paper. “According to my recollection,” commented Stirling Fessenden, the Chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council who had been president of the paper, “the only American interest in the China press of any consequence was a small number of shares” held by those “who never took the slightest interest in the paper.” Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, even questioned the existence of American stakes. He believed that none of the foreign board members “had any financial interests in the concern but acted in that capacity for the purpose of emphasizing the fact that the *China Press* has an American charter.” The paper’s American registration also raised concerns from the China-based American diplomats. Knowing that Zhang Zhuping was occasionally critical of the government policies, the American consuls feared that the registration would entangle the US Legation in the tussle between the paper and the Nanjing government. The Legation, therefore, tried to revoke the paper’s American registration through the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State. Nevertheless, the attempt failed since there was no legal basis for Delaware to revoke the registration.

**Conclusion**

133 Ibid.
134 Stirling Fessenden to Hollington Tong, May 19, 1931, Q3–6–88, Shanghai Municipal Archive.
135 Edwin S. Cunningham to the Secretary of State, Washington, June 10, 1935, SDCF, 893.911/310.
The early years of the Nanjing government had seen the formation of the foreign propaganda apparatus. A foreign propaganda office was established and great efforts to control foreign-operated newspapers and cable companies were made by fighting for the abolition of their extraterritorial rights and negotiating for favourable cable contracts. Meanwhile, Chinese bilingual elites also started newspapers to voice China’s case to the world. Yet the Nanjing government did not have the luxury of time for the development of its foreign propaganda. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 soon dragged the government into another propaganda battle before Nanjing’s foreign propaganda machine was ready to fight against their Japanese counterpart’s influence in the English-language media.
CHAPTER 4

Shadowed by the Sun
The Mukden Incident (1931) and Shanghai Incident (1932) in the English-Language Press

On 18 September 1931, a section of the railroad owned by Japan’s South Manchuria Railway was dynamited. The Japanese Kwantung Army, accusing Chinese soldiers of the bombing, responded with an invasion of Manchuria. Within hours, the Army controlled the major cities of Southern Manchuria—Mukden (Shenyang), Yingkou, Andong and Changchun. Within days, most of Liaoning and Kirin (Jilin) provinces fell under Japanese occupation. Within a year, Japan established the puppet Manchukuo (Manzhouguo 滿洲國) government and virtually exercised authority over the entire northeast of China. The victory in Manchuria whetted the appetite of Japanese military for more success in China. On 28 January 1932, the Japanese Navy bombed Chinese residential areas in Shanghai, marking the beginning of another serious Sino-Japanese conflict, known as the Shanghai Incident.

Drawing on the experience of the Jinan Incident, the Nanjing government entertained no hope of solving the conflict locally. Instead, it sought an international solution to the crisis, looking to the jurisdiction of the League of Nations and mediation through the Anglo-American powers to restrain Japan’s aggression. Japan also sought to take advantage of its international news network to make its case accepted by foreign audiences. This chapter will compare propaganda strategies of the two countries in the English-language press and discuss the response from treaty-port and metropolitan papers. It demonstrates a clear change of propaganda guidelines by the Chinese-funded treaty-port papers—from promoting a general anti-foreign stance to an anti-Japan focus. It also reflects foreign papers’ change of perception about the Sino-Japanese conflict after the Shanghai Incident.

Response to the Mukden Incident
One of the issues that remained at the heart of the discussion on the Manchuria Incident was who started the fight. Although contemporary historians, in hindsight, commonly believe that the Japanese soldiers staged the explosion to provide a pretext for war, the cause of the fight was unclear back in 1931. In order to convince the readers that the other party was to blame for the conflict, the press on both sides relentlessly interpreted and re-interpreted the cause of the incident.

The Japanese response was swift. Within twenty-four hours after the outbreak of the incident, the Japanese War Ministry was able to issue a communiqué explaining the cause of the incident and distribute it to the London Times via Reuters in Tokyo. The communiqué blamed the Chinese troops for both bombing the South Manchuria Railway and attacking Japanese railway guards. Japan only returned fire in "self-defence." The statement remained unchallenged for a day, until China’s official response was seen in the North China Daily News on 20 September, stating that the action by Japanese troops was "entirely unprovoked." China’s defence, nevertheless, failed to be given similar prominence in key metropolitan papers as compared to the Japanese version.

The slow reaction from the Chinese side was a result of its lack of communication infrastructure and news network. Although the Nanjing government had made various efforts to strengthen the outgoing news network after the Jinan Incident, achievements by 1931 were still limited. China still relied heavily on foreign news agencies for information transmission. Further, the negotiation between the Nanjing government and foreign cable companies for the control of outgoing cables ended in stalemate in 1929. By the time of the Mukden Incident, Nanjing claimed no substantial control over outgoing cables. After Japan occupied Mukden, dispatches from the city were required to be relayed to Tokyo before reaching Shanghai. Japanese army also seized wireless stations in Mukden and installed its own censors to block information favourable to China.

The problem of lack of interpretation of the incident from Chinese

1 “Collision At Mukden Conflicting Reports, City Occupied,” The Times, 19 September 1931.
2 Ibid.
4 “Japanese Censorship in Manchuria,” The China Critic, 12 November 1931.
perspective, however, was not alleviated by the coverage of the third-party observers—the British and American treaty-port papers. Not wishing themselves to be involved in the crisis, those papers tended to be cautious in making value judgements. They kept updating the ongoing Japanese advance in the first few days after the outbreak of the incident,\(^5\) avoiding commentary on the origin of the fight. The reticence thus offered Japan a golden opportunity to impose its interpretation, leaving China on the back foot.

**Explanation of the Incident**

*Japan: beyond the incident*

The Japanese explanation of the incident was not entirely coherent. Disagreement occurred between the War Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the former blamed China for the fighting, the latter, as observed by the *North China Daily News*, inclined to view the incident as “bravado on the part of a number of hot-headed senior officers,”\(^6\) and demanded the military officers on the front line withdraw their troops soon.\(^7\) The inconsistency offset the advantage the Japan gained by presenting their case in the press before China was able to respond. Yet the split did not last long. The support of the domestic public for the military advance persuaded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to drop the “hot-headed bravado” argument and adopt the Army’s explanation.

As the Kwantung Army continued to advance in Manchuria, Japan’s initial alleged cause of the incident—the protection of the railway—became more and more difficult to justify as a reason for its military response. Many foreign correspondents travelled to Mukden to investigate the incident and returned with a story blaming Japanese troops for the explosion of the railway.\(^8\) Their versions challenged Japan’s account. Realizing that continuous elaboration of the railway explosion theme was of no avail, Japanese-controlled English-language paper, the

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\(^5\) Both *The Leader* and *The North China Daily News* only began to report on the incident two days after the outbreak. The *China Weekly Review* first reacted to the event on 26 September.


Far Eastern Review, both gradually downplayed the episode and contextualized the incident in the larger Sino-foreign conflict, invoking Western audiences’ complaints about China’s disorder and nationalism. The “self-defence” rhetoric, therefore, was gradually replaced by condemnation of the misrule of the Chinese government, thus justifying, in Japan’s eye, the occupation of Manchuria as a way to discipline China on behalf of all foreign powers.

The Far Eastern Review put forward the murder of Nakamura Shintarō as the cause for Japan’s military actions. Nakamura was a military officer on active duty. He travelled as a civilian to the Manchurian interior with his interpreter and assistants in June 1931 to make survey maps. It was learnt in August that he had been apprehended and shot by Chinese soldiers, who believed that he and his colleagues were spies. The case instigated a strong domestic protest in Japan against China’s “contempt” for Japanese rights in Manchuria. The Nanjing government initially denied that the incident had ever taken place. It later opened an investigation into the death of Nakamura, yet failed to agree with the basic facts of the event presented by Japan. The case remained unsolved by the outbreak of the Mukden Incident.

The Far Eastern Review ignored the obvious lack of a direct link with the explosion of the railway near Mukden, instead exploiting the case as an important factor in the incident and using it to justify Japan’s military actions in Mukden. The goal was to recall Westerners’ memories about China’s ill-treatment of their own nationals. The journal was not alone linking the Mukden Incident with Nakamura’s death. It mainly followed the opinions of Japanese domestic papers. An Asahi (The Asahi Shimbun 朝日新聞) article, quoted both in the North China Daily News and the Leader, best reflected how the Japanese press established a relationship between the two:

The murder of Captain Nakamura was like pouring petrol on a pile of wood, while the destruction of a section of the South Manchuria Railway line was equivalent to applying a match, thereby cutting the

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rope with which the Japanese bag of patience was tied.  

The Japanese-operated press, nevertheless, only mentioned the result of the case: the killing of Nakamura, without referring to the fact that Nakamura was suspected as a spy. Years after the incident, one former Japanese diplomat confirmed that Nakamura was indeed a spy, who was sent to Manchuria and Mongolia to gather information for the preparation of a war with Soviet Union. The deliberate omission of this information in Japanese-controlled newspapers gave rise to various speculations about the cause of Nakamura’s death in the metropolitan press. *Time* magazine, for example, even believed that Nakamura was killed because of Chinese soldiers’ illiteracy—they failed to read Nakamura’s pass issued by the Chinese government and shot him by mistake. Despite different interpretations of the scenario, the Anglo-American metropolitan papers unanimously believed that Nakamura was killed by mistake and responsibility for his death rested with the Chinese, whose rule of Manchuria was chaotic and whose hatred towards Japanese nationals remained strong.

The *Far Eastern Review* also linked the Nakamura case with extraterritoriality. Parallels were frequently drawn between the killing of Nakamura and John Thorburn, a 19-year-old British subject whose death refreshed British residents’ memories of the killing of their own nationals in China. Thorburn secretly left home to join Guomindang forces engaged in the first encirclement campaign against the Communist Party in Jiangxi province. In a night-time melee on the Shanghai-Nanjing railway line he fatally wounded two Chinese gendarmes. He was subsequently seized and secretly executed. The case roused great concern among foreign residents for their safety in China.

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While negotiations on the abolition of extraterritoriality between China and foreign powers were at their critical point, the case reinforced Shanghailanders’ concern for the post-extraterritoriality situation. George Bronson Rea, editor of the *Far Eastern Review*, took the advantage of this context and argued that both cases sent warning signals to foreigners in China that “the Chinese military officials have taken the law into their own hands,” 17 irrespective of the extraterritoriality enjoyed by foreign nationals. Rea further interpreted the Nakamura case as evidence of China’s unilateral abolition of extraterritoriality. Nakamura was shot, he wrote, because “the military may have accepted literally the government’s proclamation that extraterritoriality [was] abolished; secret orders may have been issued in regard to the treatment of suspicious foreigners arrested outside the concession areas.”18 By invoking the extraterritorial issue, the journal tended to send the message to foreign expatriates that Japan’s military action was not only to protect Japanese rights in Manchuria, but to defend empires’ rights in general. Support for the Japanese case thus equalled defending their own interests.

The Nakamura case was not always successful in strengthening Japan’s argument. Criticism was also vociferous in that the case, which had been given excessive attention, and confused the nature of the Mukden Incident. In the minutes of the Council of the League of Nations, the Nakamura case was frequently mentioned as if it was the cause of the present Sino-Japanese situation in Manchuria.19 Even the Japanese press complained that the delegates of the powers in Geneva did not understand the genuine facts of the Manchurian Incident, referring to the Nakamura case only, while completely ignoring the destruction of the South Manchuria Railway.20

The *Far Eastern Review* also portrayed the Chinese government as a treaty-violator and an incompetent ruler. It traced the origin of the Mukden Incident back to the 1915 Sino-Japanese Treaty and argued that the real issue of the Manchurian crisis lay in China’s reaction to “the validity of the 1915 Treaty.”21 All subsequent cases that embittered relations between the two nations were

18 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
caused by China’s refusal to recognize the binding nature of the treaty.\textsuperscript{22} The editor explained at length how the treaty was acquiesced to by the main European powers, how China refused to acknowledge the validity of the treaty and how Chinese officials had undermined its implementation. Thus China was depicted as a nation disrespecting international rules and order. While the Japanese invasion following the Mukden Incident was commonly criticized in the Chinese-operated English-language papers as violating the League of Nations’ Covenant and the Kellogg Pact,\textsuperscript{23} the journal indicated to readers that Japan’s current military advance was the result of China’s ruthless violation of international rules in the past. The journal also attacked the Chinese government as “weak,” “inefficient,” “corrupted,” and “powerless.”\textsuperscript{24} Although China claimed sovereignty over Manchuria, argued the journal, its control over the region was nominal. China was neither able to defend its territory against the menace of Russia nor cease domestic struggles.\textsuperscript{25} By denouncing the Chinese government, the editor intended to justify Japan’s engagement in Manchuria. The logic was: if the Chinese government was unable to govern the area wisely, why not give power to Japan? Another Japan-controlled English newspaper, the \textit{Manchuria Daily News}, echoed the view by quoting a line from the Bible: “One who does not know how to improve one’s possessions shall be deprived of what one has.”\textsuperscript{26} No matter how the \textit{Far Eastern Review} defended Japan’s vested interests in Manchuria, it was cautious not to touch the sensitive area of claiming territorial rights. The journal kept reiterating that Japan had no territorial desires in Manchuria and its troops were stationed there only to maintain stability.\textsuperscript{27}

\textit{China: concentrating on facts of the incident}

China was left on the defensive in the English-language press after the incident

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} The Kellogg Pact, also known as the Kellogg–Briand Pact, was an agreement signed on 27 August 1928, by the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, Weimar Germany and a number of other countries. The pact renounced the use of force in solving international disputes.
\textsuperscript{24} “Has Japan the Right to Defend Herself?” \textit{Far Eastern Review}, October 1931; “Militarism Must Go!” \textit{Far Eastern Review}, December 1931.
\textsuperscript{26} “The Daren Devil Who Quotes Scripture,” \textit{The China Weekly Review}, 24 October 1931.
\textsuperscript{27} “Statement by Japan,” \textit{The North China Daily News}, 26 September 1931.
broke out. This was not only caused by the Japanese pre-emptive “self-defence” argument, but also by the legacy of the unfavourable international environment China was facing. Like the Jinan Incident, China’s propaganda was hindered by the negative context of international public opinion. Bitter experiences of Chinese anti-imperialist movements still remained fresh in memories of the foreign public and fears of the abolition of extraterritoriality were commonly shared among treaty-port communities. How to separate the anti-Japanese rhetoric from China’s broader anti-imperialist precedents and how to isolate the current Sino-Japanese crisis from Sino-foreign conflicts in general became pressing tasks for China’s propaganda. Moreover, the tension over the treaty revision continued to estrange China and Western powers. Negotiations on the abolition of extraterritoriality reached a deadlock in the spring of 1931. Although foreign powers agreed to relinquish their treaty privilege in theory, none of them were willing to make a concrete move. Upon the foreign powers’ inaction, C. T. Wang and Chiang Kai-shek made an announcement on 20 April 1931 that the National Government should make a unilateral declaration abolishing extraterritoriality if no agreement was reached before 5 May. The abolition of extraterritoriality continued to occupy delegates’ attention during the National Convention, held between 8 and 17 of May 1931. They perceived the unequal treaties as the biggest obstacle in the path of the Chinese revolution and advocated an immediate abrogation.28

Chinese-operated English-language periodicals pursued a narrow interpretation of the cause of the incident. Instead of quoting other Sino-Japanese frictions to justify China’s position, the editors tended to focus on the incident itself, believing that the “undisputable facts” about Japan’s military activities and atrocities was the best way to counter Japan’s “misstatements.”29 With the battle raging on in Manchuria, it was not difficult for Chinese editors to collect factual evidence of Japanese aggression. Japan’s occupation of Chinese cities, the bombing of Jinzhou and Harbin and the killing of civilians, all were covered in detail and dominated the front page of the Leader.

While discussing Japan’s military aggression, the editors also devoted considerable attention to reviewing the explosion on the South Manchuria

Railway. Their goal was twofold: to prove that Chinese troops were entirely unprovoked on the night of 18 September and to reveal that Japan had planned the whole scheme and exploited the bombing of the railway as a pretext for its occupation of Manchuria. But both tasks were difficult. There were no Chinese eye-witness accounts for what had happened when the incident broke out. No one saw the explosion and the resulting damage except Lieutenant Karumata and his squad of soldiers who were holding night manoeuvres within 150 yards of the spot where the Chinese soldiers were alleged to have committed the act. According to the Japanese explanation, the Chinese soldiers were killed. Even if they were alive, chances for them to transmit their messages out were slim, since Japan had seized all wireless stations in Mukden after the incident and strictly scrutinized outgoing messages via cables.30

Instead of confronting Japanese accounts directly, Chinese-operated journals and Nanjing officials, who were keen to publicize China’s case worldwide, tended to challenge Japan’s version in a subtle manner. They were cautious to reduce accounts from Chinese sources while inviting foreign journalists to investigate the explosion. Two days after the incident, Zhang Xueliang arranged a special train for foreign journalists who desired to visit the scene of Japanese occupation in Manchuria.31 The visit inevitably forced Japan to prove its version of the story. Yet the more details Japan provided, the more flaws were noticed. Foreign journalists returned with a growing suspicion of the Japanese version. One journalist reported to the China Weekly Review that after the investigation trip he found the whole Japanese explanation “weak in a hundred different places...and every time some correspondent or military observer has called attention to a weak point, the Japanese have always come back with a new and more involved explanation.”32 He confessed that he finally gave up “patching the various Japanese explanations in disgust,” and totally understood why “foreign correspondents in Mukden have not been able to find a single foreigner in the city who believes the Japanese explanation of the so-called ‘Pei-ta-ying Incident’ (Mukden Incident).”33

Editors of the Leader also directed readers’ attention to the Japanese military

33 Ibid.
reaction immediately after the explosion of the railway. By exposing its swift and organized reaction in detail, they implied that the Japanese occupation of Manchuria was carefully planned. The bombing of the railway, therefore, was only a pretext for the occupation.\textsuperscript{34} Ironically, the editors, when arguing this line, relied heavily on factual materials provided by Japan’s own news agency Rengo, whose reports recorded every major Japanese military movement. Quoting Rengo’s material was an example of Chinese newspapermen’s efficient use of factual reports. It nevertheless also revealed China’s own deficient information supply which forced the editors to gather any materials available to them.

To further prove that China was completely unprovoked, the editors frequently quoted the Nanjing government’s non-resistance policy. They argued that the policy, which was adopted prior to the incident, had ruled out China’s possibility of provoking Japan. The non-resistance after the bombing further rendered Japan’s “self-defence” argument groundless, since practically no Chinese troops were fighting.\textsuperscript{35} It should be noted that the non-resistance policy was unpopular among the Chinese native press, since it exposed the Chinese government’s inability to defend its own territory. Yet the editors’ decision to quote the policy in the English-language press was a rational choice. Japan, the beneficiary of the policy, would not venture to oppose the very policy that facilitated its occupation of Manchuria. America and Britain also welcomed it, because both of them wanted to solve the problem peacefully, fearing that a war between China and Japan would affect their interests in East Asia.

Much as the editors were inclined to be objective by focusing on factual reports, their personal emotions were frequently revealed in their writing. The Leader, for example, directly addressed the Japanese as “invaders”\textsuperscript{36} before the nature of the case was clear. It also described the Kwantung Army as “the Japanese Military tiger [that] has broken loose from the flimsy cage of restraint set up by the Minseitō Government.”\textsuperscript{37}

The editors also made conscious attempts to “localize” the discussion of the Mukden Incident, trying hard to divert reader’s attention from Sino-foreign

\textsuperscript{34} “Real Facts Known from Interviews,” \textit{The Leader}, 22 September 1931; “Doubts Cast on Japanese Statement,” \textit{The Leader}, 24 September 1931.


\textsuperscript{36} “Japanese Invasion of Manchuria Takes Young Marshal by Surprise,” \textit{The Leader}, 20 September 1931.

\textsuperscript{37} “Japanese Soldiers Runs Amuck,” \textit{The Leader}, 21 September 1931.
conflicts, especially the extraterritorial issue. Before the incident, extraterritoriality was the most heated topic in all the English-language press. The *North China Daily News*, for example, carried articles on the topic almost daily. Until 19 September, the day after the incident, the Feetham Report, an investigation of the treaty issue in Shanghai, still occupied editorial pages. However, Chinese-operated papers completely dropped the debate on extraterritoriality after the outbreak of the incident. Neither the *Leader* nor the *China Critic* ever mentioned the issue in the following three months. The omission of the issue was not a truthful reflection of the shift of public interest but a deliberate choice by the Chinese-operated papers. For readers in Shanghai, the Manchurian crisis was a remote case. The foreign community’s interest was primarily drawn to the extraterritorial issue after the Mukden Incident. In November 1931, for example, the British residents organized a mass meeting to oppose negotiation on extraterritoriality.

**International Implications**

*Japan: defending against the Soviet Union and following colonial precedents of the Western powers*

Both Chinese and Japanese treaty-port newspapermen well understood that to successfully elicit the Western community’s support for their cause, they needed to internationalize the Mukden Incident and link it with foreign interests. There was no clear division between explanation of the incident itself and its international implications in Japanese-controlled treaty-port papers. As analysed above, the *Far Eastern Review*, in seeking justification for Japan’s military advance, had connected the incident with the extraterritorial issue. However, extraterritoriality primarily concerned the interests of treaty-port expatriates in China. In order to appeal to overseas metropolitan readers, the *Far Eastern Review* also played the Soviet card to justify Japan’s military occupation of Manchuria.

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The *Far Eastern Review* explained that Japan’s military action in Manchuria aimed to defend against the Soviet threat. It emphasized that the Soviet Union was at war with all other nations in the world and warned the reader that “when the time was propitious, the great Red Army would move and its first objective would be China.” Japan stationed troops in Manchuria, therefore, not only to maintain order but also to guard against Russia’s potential aggression. It was clear even at the height of the Manchurian crisis that the Soviet Union was not an imminent danger to Japan. Introducing the Soviet factor into the discussion of the Mukden Incident was an effort to serve Japan’s propaganda purpose.

This argument did find some audience. William Riddell Birdwood, Master of Peterhouse, commented on the Mukden Incident in his letter to his friend John Simon, the new Foreign Secretary, that “I know [it] sounds all wrong, perhaps immoral, when she (Japan) is flouting the League of Nations, but...her (Japan’s) presence fully established in Manchuria means a real block against Bolshevik aggression.”

Japan also used the Western power’s colonial precedents to justify its own occupation in Manchuria. In one of the front-page editorials of the *Far Eastern Review*, Rea made a parallel between the Manchurian crisis and Western colonization, arguing that

What is just and good for Great Britain in India, in Egypt and in Mesopotamia; for France in Algeria and Morocco; for Italy in the Mediterranean and for the United States in the Caribbean, must also be just and good for Japan in Manchuria.

Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead drew an analogy between the South Manchuria Railway and the Panama Canal to justify Japanese aggression in Manchuria. The style of language that the Japanese editors adopted contained a

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39 “Has Japan the Right to Defend Herself?” *Far Eastern Review*, October 1931.
40 Ibid.
42 “Has Japan the Right to Defend Herself?” *Far Eastern Review*, October 1931.
strong imperial flavour. For example, an argument from the Japanese domestic press quoted by the *North China Daily News* read “Japan... should act like a parent who spanks a naughty, spoilt child sternly yet sympathetically.” The condescending view based on the premise that the Chinese were inferior people in need of paternal guidance echoed the similar view popular among Japanese officials. Japanese diplomat Shidehara Kijūrō had voiced the same attitude in the mid-1920s:

> The Chinese...were like young children, naughty children no doubt, and fond of playing most dangerous tricks, but still mere children, and not to be taken too seriously, as he thought we and the Americans did, each in our own way. We were apt to regard them as adult misdemeanants in need of severe correction and reform, but to be dealt with by the law like other adults.

This paternalistic attitude towards China was commonly shared among Western communities. Loyal readers of the *North China Daily News* would not find such an argument foreign to their ears. Articles of similar vein could be found daily in the paper under Rodney Gilbert and O. M. Green’s editorship in the 1920s.

*China: Japan’s appetite—world conquest*

To persuade the other Powers that they shared common ground with China against Japan’s aggression was not an easy task. Japan’s invasion of Manchuria posed no immediate danger to their interests. Neither Britain nor the United States had substantial economic interests in Manchuria. Moreover, the Mukden Incident could easily be seen as a conflict between China and a foreign country in general. In order to win the other Powers’ support in the Manchuria case, China needed to abandon the old anti-imperialist rhetoric and develop a new rationale to
accommodate Western interests in China and isolate Japan. One of the common rationales pursued by Chinese editors was to interpret the incident as a larger conflict between the peace-loving nations (Anglo-American powers and China) and the aggressor (Japan).

The Chinese-operated English press, the *China Critic* in particular, frequently invoked the Tanaka Memorial as evidence of Japan’s aggressive intentions. The Memorial was first published in the December 1929 edition of the journal. Although current historians believe that the document was a Soviet forgery, the Memorial was widely accepted as authentic in the 1930s and 1940s due to the close correspondence between the plans presented in the Memorial and Japan’s military actions.

The Tanaka Memorial was claimed to be a confidential document provided by Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi to the Emperor in mid-1927. In the document, Tanaka presented Japan’s plan for world conquest:

> In order to conquer China we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world, we must first conquer China... Having China’s entire resources at our disposal we shall proceed to conquer India, the Archipelago Asia Minor, Central Asia, and even Europe.

The Memorial advocated that a “blood and iron” policy be applied to establish Japan’s authority in East Asia and saw the United States as an impediment in the way of its world conquest.

The *Critic* quoted the Memorial in the issue immediately following the Mukden Incident. Careful readers would notice that the section of “Official Documents” which accommodated the Memorial was a new section, deliberately

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created to enhance the Memorial’s authenticity. In previous issues, the same space was devoted to the publication of "The World’s Opinion," "Public Documents" and "Public Forum."

The Critic used the Memorial with caution. In the issue of 24 September, the journal primarily focused on Tanaka’s plan about Manchuria in the Memorial, seeking to establish a connection between the Mukden Incident and the document. 50 Tanaka’s perception that Manchuria and Mongolia should be conquered to facilitate Japan’s larger expansion51 was quoted to refute Japan’s claim that it had no territorial desire in China. His view that Korean immigration should be mobilized to assist Japan’s conquest of Manchuria was also cited to explain Japan’s intention in the Wanbaoshan 萬寶山 case, when a local irrigation dispute between Korean immigrants near Changchun 長春 developed into large anti-Chinese riots in Korea two months before the Mukden Incident. 52 All quotes, nevertheless, closely revolved around the Manchuria incident.

Editors used subsequent issues of the Critic to continue to quote the document. On 15 Oct, they published another two excerpts of the Memorial: one concerning the significance of the conquest of China and the other stating that the United States was Japan’s potential impediment for its leadership in the world. The selection revealed the editors’ intention to extend the implication of the Mukden Incident and involve Anglo-American countries in the Sino-Japanese dispute. However, editors of the journal were cautious not to push hard with this line. They explained that the Memorial was only to remind the Chinese of the existence of this secret document. 53 They also refrained from adding any comments to the excerpts, fearing that an explicit attack on Japan would only reveal China’s propaganda purpose and accordingly damage the authenticity of the Memorial.

The Critic referred to the Memorial again on 12 November. The purpose of the article was to clarify readers’ doubts on the authenticity of the document and “convince the reader of the accuracy of the Memorial in the prediction of Japanese aggressive acts.” 54 Instead of quoting the Memorial alone, the author

51 Ibid.
52 Iriye, After Imperialism, 291.
53 "Tantrums of Tanaka,” The China Critic, 15 October 1931.
54 "Tanaka the Prophet,” The China Critic, 12 November 1931.
placed the extracts side by side with the Japanese military actions over the last few months. By doing so, the journal intended to create the impression that Japan had “signed [its] signature to the document by [its] own deeds.”

It hinted that since Japan had strictly observed the Memorial in the past, the document could well be relied upon as an accurate prediction of Japanese aggression in the future. At the end of the article, the author abandoned his implicit style, warning Western readers directly that the Memorial not only concerned China but also threatened Russia and the U.S., two countries considered by Japan as its major obstacles in its way to world conquest.

Altogether, it took the Critic three articles stretching over 10 weeks to unfold its full interpretation of the Memorial, from primarily seeking to connect it with the Mukden Incident to warning of Japan’s menace to the world. This achieved at least some impact in the United States. The Memorial was reproduced in the United States in the Communist International magazine in late 1931. The document drew wider attention in February 1934 when it was quoted at length in the front page article of the first edition of The Plain Truth magazine, published by Herbert W. Armstrong.

Opinions of the Treaty-port Papers and Metropolitan Press

British-controlled press

Both China and Japan made great efforts to present their case in the English-language press. Each side calculated its most advantageous rationales and selected the set of facts that best served its purpose. The irony was that Japan, which desired to “localize” the incident, pursued an “international” interpretation of the incident by linking its military action with the protection of Powers’ rights in China; whereas China, which wanted to internationalize the incident to obtain foreign intervention, tried hard to “localize” the discussion of the case by focusing on the facts of the incident. Western audiences in China, nevertheless, were not impartial readers who were persuaded by the best argument and

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55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
evidence. They had their own interests to pursue and, for most of the time, it was those interests that determined their stance.

The largest English-language newspaper in Shanghai, the *North China Daily News*, led by its new editor Edwin Haward, took a mixed attitude in the Mukden Incident with a slant towards the Japanese position. Among its 74 reports on the conflict between September 20 and 30, 24 pieces covered both sides equally; 28 of them contained messages that were positive to Japan and negative to China; and 22 of them covered Japan negatively. (Table 1) The *Daily News* agreed with Japan’s ends while failing to accept its military means. On 21 September, the paper quoted a commentary from the London *Times*. In the article, the author expressed deep sympathy with Japan’s unhappy experience with China, especially “the refusal of Chinese Nationalist politicians to recognise the vital interests of Japan in Manchuria,” and praised the Japanese for “endur[ing] with remarkable patience a series of affronts [from China].”57 However, the *Daily News* also strongly opposed Japan’s military for their response to this incident, saying that “there [was] no excuse for the Japanese officers to strike the blow without consulting their government.”58

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The *North China Daily News* supported the Japanese “self-defence”

58 Ibid.
argument. On 24 September, the paper published an article expressing the editor’s compassion for Japan’s suffering in Manchuria. The author quoted statistics about “bandit raids within the Japanese railway zone since 1906,” “the number of Japanese victims between 1926 and 1929” and “the loss of Japanese army and police in resisting bandit attacks” to demonstrate that Japanese citizens in Manchuria were ill-protected by the Chinese police. He criticized that Chinese military forces seldom “effectively and sincerely” endeavoured to suppress these bandits who threatened the very life, property and enterprises of the Japanese people.59 Drawing on the Japanese experience, the Daily News frequently complained that China failed to protect British nationals. It resonated with the Far Eastern Review’s discussion of the Thorburn case, commenting that “the failure of Nanjing to give satisfaction in the Thorburn case merely illustrated the impossibility of its winning foreign confidence.”60

The Daily News’ stance on the Manchurian crisis reflected the general view held by Anglo-American communities in Shanghai. Randall Gould, who was then correspondent of the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, the largest American evening paper, observed that opinion towards the Mukden Incident among foreigners in Shanghai was divided, and a large number of Americans and most British were willing to accept the Japanese argument.61 The foreign expatriates in China, without the pressure to remain neutral as newspapers did, could be much more pronounced in their pro-Japanese view. In fact, most of the British felt that Japan was only trying to follow the steps of other empires and extend its own influence. Being stalwart supporters of imperial interests themselves, they saw no reason to challenge the Japanese acts. As Gould recalled, Colonel Amery’s statement in London was welcomed in Shanghai:

I confess that I see no reason why, whether in act, or in word, or in sympathy, we should go individually or internationally against Japan in this matter... Who is there among us to cast the first stone and to say that Japan ought not to have acted with the object of creating peace and order in Manchuria and defending herself against the

61 Randall Gould, China in the Sun (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1946), 310.
continuous aggression of a vigorous Chinese nationalism? Our whole policy in India, our whole policy in Egypt, stands condemned if we condemn Japan.\textsuperscript{62}

However, it would be irresponsible to argue that the \textit{North China Daily News} carried a pro-Japanese tone. The paper frequently addressed the Japanese army as “invaders.”\textsuperscript{63} It quoted Chinese sources at length about Japan’s militant aggression in Manchuria, published foreign accounts of Japanese offense and carried letters by Chinese readers protesting Japan’s occupation. On 30 September, for example, the paper published an eye-witness account by a “well-known” foreign resident in Manchuria. The author denied Japan’s version that the railway was blown up by the Chinese army. Drawing on his personal experience, he described how Japanese troops bullied and robbed civilian residents.\textsuperscript{64} The paper also gave space to China’s case in its “Letters to the Editor” section where harsh condemnation like “Japan is fooling the world” or “Japan’s intention towards China is an open secret to all”\textsuperscript{65} could commonly be found. Indeed, the paper was cautious not to provoke the Chinese public any further as this might lead to another large-scale anti-foreign popular movement. No matter how the paper swung between different sides, one message had clearly been sent: keep off Shanghai and restore peace soon.

Shanghai was unarguably the most important city for British interests in China. Although far from Manchuria, the city could not be insulated from the harm of the incident. The Japanese military advance as well as the Chinese government’s non-resistance soon ignited public anger among the Chinese in Shanghai. As early as 20 September 1931, representatives from thirty colleges and secondary schools in Shanghai had formed a Students’ Anti-Japanese National Salvation Association. Following the pattern of the May Fourth and May Thirtieth Movements, students gathered in the street and demonstrated against both the Japanese invasion and the non-resistance policy pursued by the Nanjing government. In response, Japan sent more warships to the Huangpu River.\textsuperscript{66} The

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} “Another View of Mukden,” \textit{The North China Daily News}, 30 September 1931.
\textsuperscript{65} “Letters to the Editor,” \textit{The North China Daily News}, 4 October 1931.
North China Daily News revealed deep concerns over the stability of Shanghai. The paper maintained that security was essential for the city and advocated that peace and order be maintained “at any cost” by the local authorities “if they wish Shanghai to continue its prosperity at all.”

Boycott was also a popular means for the public to express anti-Japanese sentiments. The economic boycott, originally organized by the Shanghai businessmen in response to the Wanbaoshan issue and other Sino-Japanese frictions before the Mukden Incident, spread rapidly after 18 September. The Daily News strongly opposed those boycotts, fearing that they would exacerbate the crisis. Editors of the paper, by quoting a reader’s letter, bitterly criticized the boycott:

The measure of boycott adopted by China is as much inhuman and cold-blooded in the eyes of humanity and as much infringement on international law as an aggressive war itself. This (the boycott) is a living death, much crueler than war in view of the fact that the former kills a man inch by inch while the latter does at once.

The paper suggested that China and Japan should “try to forget, like a true man,” their personal and international grievances and mediate “calmly” for an “immediate solution.” Although editors of the paper agreed that Japan bore some responsibility in causing the public protests, and forcing the Chinese to purchase Japanese goods was inappropriate, they still advocated a cessation of the popular movement.

Indeed, the Daily News tended to oppose any action that deepened the Sino-Japanese crisis. When Japan failed to keep its promise to the League of Nations to withdraw troops from China and ruthlessly bombed Jinzhou (Chinchow), the paper severely condemned the Japanese army for the action. It also became impatient with the League of Nations’ inability to solve the problem, warning the

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67 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
League that indecision would also cause danger.\textsuperscript{73} For the \textit{North China Daily News}, returning justice to the Far East was much less important than quieting down the conflict. As the chief editor explicitly commented in an editorial, “there is no need to weigh up the grievances of either side.”\textsuperscript{74} The chief consideration for both countries, he believed, was the speedy restoration of peace.

Compared with its stance in the Jinan Incident, the \textit{North China Daily News} had apparently toned down the die-hard perspective in the Manchuria case. The shift was caused both by the change of the editorship from O. M. Green to Edwin Haward and by Japan’s aggression that potentially threatened British interests in Shanghai. Ironically, while the treaty-port paper began to accept China’s case, the British metropolitan paper, the London \textit{Times} in particular, ignored it. The \textit{Times}’ sympathy was with Japan. It appreciated Japan’s development in Manchuria and believed that Japan’s military action in the Mukden Incident was the result of China’s long-term disrespect for Japanese vital interests in Manchuria.\textsuperscript{75} British correspondents acclaimed Japan as having created “a flourishing oasis in a howling desert of Chinese misrule,”\textsuperscript{76} and “established order where order was not known before.”\textsuperscript{77} Yet Japan’s contribution only received China’s hostile popular protests including all kinds of anti-Japanese incidents, government-appeased boycott and anti-Japanese propaganda.\textsuperscript{78} “Under such provocation,” claimed the paper, “it is no wonder that Japan should have asserted herself.”\textsuperscript{79}

The paper also drew on the British imperial experience to justify Japan’s aggression in Manchuria. “No where is it better understood how vital are the material interests of Japan in Manchuria,”\textsuperscript{80} acknowledged the paper, since “Japan’s position with regard to Manchuria today is almost similar to ours vis-à-vis of Egypt.”\textsuperscript{81} Further, the editor of the paper reminded readers of Sino-British tensions. It blamed the British government’s concession to Chinese nationalism and argued that Japan shouldered the consequences of an antagonized Sino-

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\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} “Fighting in Manchuria,” \textit{The Times}, 21 September 1931.
\textsuperscript{76} “Japan in Manchuria,” \textit{The Times}, 2 November 1931.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} “Japan and China,” \textit{The Times}, 9 September 1931.
\textsuperscript{79} “Japan in Manchuria,” \textit{The Times}, 2 November 1931.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} “Points from Letter, Japan and Manchuria,” \textit{The Times}, 23 October 1931.
}
British relationship in the 1920s: “if British rights had been safeguarded by the British government, this particular and most provocative part of the Chinese plan to injure the position of Japan in Manchuria could not have been carried out.”

Indeed, Britain was caught between “the maintenance of a traditional friendship” with Japan and the “defence of principles” that Britain had subscribed to as a signatory of Convention of the League. Being the key member of the League, considerable hope was placed upon Britain to restore peace in the East Asia. Yet Britain was not in a position to criticize Japan, with which it shared great imperialist interests in China. This hesitation translated to inaction. Inaction not only drew China’s complaint against Britain’s partiality towards Japan but also harmed the League’s reputation. To save Britain from the quagmire, the Times repeatedly criticized China’s unyielding position toward Japan’s request for Sino-Japanese negotiation, believing that internationalizing the case did not lead to a quick solution. “In the present dispute,” expressed the paper, “the Council’s [Council of the League of Nation] championship of peace does not in the least mean that it has any sympathy with the ‘pinpricking’ policy in which Chinese Governments have indulged only too often in present years.” The paper also tried to lower the public’s expectation towards the League by exposing its limitations: without any executive authority over any countries, the League even had problems carrying out its own recommendations. The League’s most powerful weapon was to rally experts to investigate the problem and mobilize public opinion.

The American Press

The key American paper in Shanghai, the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, firmly pursued an anti-Japanese line after the incident. Despite his personal liking for Japan and its people, the owner of the paper, Cornelius Vander Starr, believed that Japan had gone too far during the Mukden Incident. “Up to now” he said to his chief editor Theodore Olin Thackrey, “I’ve never tried to lay down specific

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82 “British Investments in China,” The Times, 10 November 1931.
83 “Japan in Manchuria,” The Times, 2 November 1931.
84 “Manchuria and the League,” The Times, 26 September 1931.
85 “A League Assembly Ended,” The Times, 2 October 1931.
policy for the Post, but on this Manchuria thing—I must. We are against it!"\(^86\) However, to uphold the anti-Japanese view was not easy. The paper’s reports from Manchuria needed to survive Japan’s censorship. Numerous telegrams from the Post filed from Mukden to Shanghai were held up, rewritten or edited by the Japanese censors.\(^87\) The Post also faced strong challenges from its Japanese-controlled competitors, the Far Eastern Review and the Shanghai Times. Moreover, the editors of the Post did not follow a unified line. One of the Post’s main editorial writers, H. G. W. Woodhead, had been staunchly advocating Japan’s interests in the Manchurian case. Woodhead was a popular die-hard British writer. Starr invited him to join the Post in 1930, hoping his prestige in Shanghai would bring more British readers. To secure his service, Starr also granted Woodhead full independence in his writing. After the outbreak of the Mukden Incident, Woodhead strongly defended Japanese interests in Manchuria. He argued that American and British interests in China were substantial but not vital, yet Japan’s interests in China, especially in Manchuria, were. He rejected the view that Japan had the intention to fight for other Powers in Manchuria, but agreed that its winning would inevitably strengthen other powers’ interests in China.\(^88\) Woodhead’s editorials gravely offset the Post’s anti-Japanese efforts and created confusion among its readers about its stance.

Among the foreign-operated English-language press in Shanghai, the China Weekly Review maintained the most hostile stance against Japan’s action in Manchuria. Editors of the paper challenged Japan’s “self-defence” explanation from the beginning,\(^89\) assailing Japan for its military advance,\(^90\) atrocities to civilians\(^91\) and its dishonesty before the League.\(^92\) The editors believed that Japan’s occupation of Manchuria aimed to “break up the nation” and nullify the open-door policy in China.\(^93\)

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\(^86\) Gould, China in the Sun, 310.
\(^87\) “Japanese Censorship in Manchuria,” The China Critic, 17 November 1931.
\(^88\) Woodhead and Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, The Sino-Japanese Crisis, 3.
\(^93\) “Evidence of Japan’s Real Objective in Manchuria,” The China Weekly Review, 31 October 1931.
Those anti-Japanese articles from the Review were effective propaganda material for China. As an American journal, its third-person perspective enjoyed a much higher degree of credibility among Shanghai foreign communities. Moreover, editorials of the Review were either written by the journal’s own professional editors or contributed by well-trained journalists. They understood Western audiences better and knew well how to link closely the Manchurian case with Western readers’ interests. Chinese editors, therefore, frequently republished the editorials of the Review to strengthen their foreign propaganda. In 1932, the Shanghai Bar Association, for example, published an English pamphlet opposing Japanese aggression in Manchuria and Shanghai. Out of its 25 articles dealing with the Manchurian case, 22 were Review editorials originally published between late September 1931 and early April 1932.94

Nevertheless, the Review was an independent paper, free from the influence of various political groups. Its criticism of Chinese domestic disorder was as bitter as its condemnation of Japan. It ridiculed China’s weak military: “Look at China! In what respect could she compete with Japan? Will her four hundred million brothers come together to the same front, or are those brothers all useful in fighting against Japan?”95 It also blamed Chinese leaders’ miscalculation of the non-resistance policy. It rightly pointed out that China was unable to defend Manchuria from the Japanese assault, but it did not approve that China should not resist at all. The editor argued that not resisting at all not only disgraced the nation but also confused world opinion.96 In order to invoke the Kellogg Pact, a state of war should exist. Yet China’s failure to return fire created no war-like situation, which provided the State Department of the United States with the ammunition not to intervene.97 Moreover, the Review argued that successful diplomatic results always came from sufficient military support. China’s non-resistance not only weakened its own diplomats’ position in the League but also made it difficult for other countries to offer China any practical help while China

94 K. N. Lei and Shanghai Bar Association, Information and Opinion Concerning the Japanese Invasion of Manchuria and Shanghai from Sources Other than Chinese (Shanghai: The Shanghai Bar Association, 1932).
97 “To What Extent Has Japan Violated International Agreements?” The China Weekly Review, 10 October 1931.
itself had chosen not to fight.\textsuperscript{98}

Being critical of both the Japanese military action and the Nanjing government, the journal was not in alliance with China's public salvation group. After the students attacked C. T. Wang, China's Foreign Minister, for his weak Japanese policy, the \textit{Review} severely condemned the students' action in a front page editorial. The editor referred to the students' emotions as "animal and herd passions" and accused the students of being "worse enemies of China than Japan who sits like a conqueror on Chinese soil."\textsuperscript{99}

The \textit{Review}'s progressive anti-Japanese line contrasted with the neutral stance adopted by the American metropolitan paper, the \textit{New York Times}. The \textit{New York Times} kept an interested eye on the development of the Manchuria case. It carried over two hundred articles about Manchuria in the month following the outbreak of the incident.\textsuperscript{100} Despite the close follow-up, however, the paper was uninterested in siding with any party. Fully aware of the League of Nations' weakness in solving the Sino-Japanese conflict, the paper still advocated that the United States should follow the League's decision while avoiding any commitment of joint action with the League in solving the conflict.\textsuperscript{101} Only after Japan's air assault against Jinzhou, which shook US faith in Japan's withdrawal of troops, did the US government agree to send representatives to the Council of the League to collectively curb Japan's aggression. However, the move, as interpreted by the paper, was only for the "convenience" of the procedure. The \textit{New York Times} reiterated that "we are merely sitting in on the conference...There is no implication that we are pro-Chinese or pro-Japan. We are pro-world and pro-peace."\textsuperscript{102}

Like the \textit{North China Daily News}, the \textit{New York Times} was more eager to restore peace than to achieve justice. It denied the use of force to curb Japan's militancy, believing that "putting teeth into a peace pact is to revert to the


\textsuperscript{100} Based on the search result of the key word "Manchuria" in articles between 18 September 1931 and 18 October 1931 in the historical database of the \textit{New York Times}.


doctrine of force in all its hideous, hellish brutality.” The paper also turned a blind eye to the Japanese atrocities in Manchuria, the boycott by the Chinese public and repeated Chinese appeals for foreign assistance. “If only peace wins,” commented the paper, “let the individual nations go as far as they please in safeguarding their *amour propre*.”

The Mukden Incident once again heightened the necessity of systematic foreign propaganda effort by the Nanjing government. The government, in October 1931, urgently allocated 100,000 yuan to subsidize international cable transmission. Welcoming the policy, Nanjing leaders nonetheless were critical of the ad hoc manner in which the foreign propaganda work was organized.

Our foreign propaganda lacks long-term planning and effort. Everyone realizes the importance of foreign propaganda and promotes it when the nation is threatened by external forces, yet few care about it when peace returns. Propaganda only produces an effect with ongoing efforts. Without a daily continuous preparation, foreign propaganda would not yield promising results when conflicts occur.

In November 1931, Fang Zhi 方治 and Zhang Junqi 張駿鎬 repeatedly appealed to the Nanjing government to organize a centralized foreign propaganda institution to counter Japan’s foreign propaganda. Yet before the government was able to make any concrete improvement, another Sino-Japanese conflict broke out a few months later in Shanghai.

**The Shanghai Incident**

While Manchuria was a remote place for Western powers and the remoteness justified their indifference to the Mukden Incident, the Shanghai Incident, in

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106 Ibid.
contrast, brought the fire to the centre of foreign interests in China and raised Western powers’ concern about Japan’s aggression. The renewed crisis instigated a new round of the propaganda battle in the press. Both China and Japan refined their propaganda strategies to tackle the new situation. While China condemned Japan as the aggressor which had violated the international rules, Japan tried hard to refresh Western powers’ memories of China’s anti-foreign behaviour and establish itself as a representative of the imperialist nations, determined to teach China a lesson. The incident also saw a change of opinion in the treaty-port press in Shanghai. More and more Westerners became estranged from Japan and suspicious of its plans in China.

Anti-Japanese boycotts and popular movements were active in Shanghai after the Mukden Incident. Tensions between Chinese and Japanese communities escalated at the turn of 1932. On 18 January, Japanese monks were attacked by a party of 50 to 60 Chinese in Shanghai, claiming one life and injuring several. Rear Admiral Shiozawa Kōichi 坂沢幸一, Japanese naval commander at Shanghai, seized this disturbance as a pretext to present demands to Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城, the mayor of Chinese Shanghai. The demands included a formal apology by the mayor; the arrest and punishment of the assailants; compensation for the Japanese monks; and “the most difficult” 107—the immediate dissolution of all anti-Japanese organizations and activities. 108 Fearing that resistance would lead to another military clash with Japan, Wu unconditionally accepted all the demands at 3 pm, 28 January. Yet his concession failed to satisfy the Navy officers as well as the Japanese residents in Shanghai who were bent on teaching China a lesson. Around midnight that day, the Japanese Navy bombed Zhabei, a densely populated Chinese suburb adjoining the International Settlement. This marked the beginning of the Shanghai Incident.

The Shanghai Incident was commonly considered an extension of the unresolved Manchurian dispute. The incident was instigated by the mutual hatred between the Chinese and Japanese public after the Manchurian crisis. Unable to withstand Japan’s advance in Manchuria, Chinese elites perceived boycott and non-cooperation as the “only way that a weak country can even her score with a

107 See Mr. Holman’s comments on Japanese demands in his letter to Sir J. Simon, 29 January 1932; Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1946), 213.
108 Documents on British Foreign Policy, 179.
militaristic country like Japan." 109 The device not only aimed to "make the Japanese living in this country uncomfortable and their business unprofitable," 110 but also a way to vent Chinese public anger towards the Japanese military as well as the Nanjing government's non-resistance policy. 111 Although the Sino-Japanese dispute originated in Manchuria, the boycott and anti-Japanese movements were most intense in Shanghai, China's largest commercial metropolis. The Anti-Japanese Boycott Association, for example, advocated a thorough cessation of commerce between China and Japan. It not only organized anti-Japanese activities, but also mounted campaigns of violence against Chinese dealing in Japanese goods. 112 The Japanese community in Shanghai was equally inflamed. They lodged complaints against Chinese violence to the Japanese consulates and repeatedly pressed the military authorities to take action against the Chinese hostilities. 113

There were also various hidden connections between the Shanghai and the Mukden incidents. The Shanghai Incident was partly driven by the Japanese Navy's jealousy over the Kwantung Army's success in Manchuria. 114 With the Army occupying the whole of Manchuria without meaningful resistance from the Chinese, the Navy also anticipated an easy win in Shanghai. Further, the incident was later proved to be a conspiracy by the Kwantung Army and the Navy to diverge the Western powers' attention from Manchuria, particularly their scheme of establishing Manchukuo. 115 Tanaka Ryūkichi 田中隆吉, then a major and assistant of the military attaché, testified in 1956 that from October 1931, Itagaki Seishirō 板垣征四郎 of the Kwantung Army had secretly asked him to plot some

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110 Ibid.
112 Francis Clifford Jones and Royal Institute of International Affairs, Shanghai and Tientsin: with Special Reference to Foreign Interests (San Francisco: American Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), 50.
incidents in Shanghai to distract the world's attention from Manchuria. Following the request, Tanaka, with the help of Kawashima Yoshiko 川島芳子, bribed some Chinese and staged the attack on Japanese monks on January 18.\textsuperscript{116} The assault fitted so well into the tense situation in Shanghai that neither the Chinese nor the Japanese ever suspected the true identities of the Chinese attackers.

The Shanghai Incident was unarguably an advantageous case for China's foreign propaganda. The advantage primarily came through the international nature of Shanghai. Shanghai held the largest foreign economic interests. While Great Britain and the United States together had no more than $40 million invested in Manchuria, Britain alone had direct business investment in Shanghai of $737.4 million and the United States of $97.5 million.\textsuperscript{117} Exchange of fire in Shanghai would be the last thing foreign powers wished to see, since the fighting would inevitably harm their trade with China and put property of their nationals in danger. Shanghai was also a political centre. The city accommodated tens of thousands of foreign residents and it was also the place where the two foreign settlements as well as various foreign consulates were based. Strictly speaking, Shanghai was not a Chinese city. It was an international city with three authorities supervising its own territories: the Municipal Council, mostly representing the Anglo-American interests, ruled the International Settlement; the Conseil d'administration Municipale backed by the French government controlled the French Concession; and the Chinese government was in charge of the remainder. The three parts were so closely connected, geographically and socially, that any attack in one part would cause significant disturbance to the others. In this regard, no fighting in Shanghai could be regarded "local." While Chinese propagandists were trying hard to internationalize the Sino-Japanese dispute, the Japanese bombs in Zhabei effectively did the job for them.

Shanghai was the media centre of East Asia. This advantageous location minimized China's weaknesses in the lack of an international news network. Correspondents from key foreign newspapers and news agencies around the

\textsuperscript{116} Goto-Shibata, \textit{Japan and Britain in Shanghai}, 135–136, 204–205.

\textsuperscript{117} Charles Frederick Remer, \textit{Foreign Investments in China} (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 97–98; The British Foreign Office's estimation of the British investment in Shanghai was a bit lower than Remer's figure. V. Wellesley, based on press reports, estimated the British investment to be £250,000,000 in early 1932, which included shipping and insurance interests, investments in railways and in government bonds, banking and trade of all kinds. See Memorandum by Sir V. Wellesley, 1 February 1932, in \textit{Documents on British Foreign Policy}, series IX, 288.
world gathered in Shanghai to report Chinese events abroad. With the Shanghai fighting growing intense, more and more journalists came to the city to cover the event. The number reached 50 at the height of the incident. Foreign journalists nevertheless were not passive observers but active participants, providing intelligence information to home politicians they associated with. The New York Times' correspondent Hallet Abend, after learning of Admiral Shiozawa's intention to bomb Zhabei regardless of mayor Wu's concession, warned U.S. Consul Cunningham and T. V. Soong about Admiral Shiozawa's words. It may have been at that point that Soong mobilized his hundreds of anti-smuggling police to fend off Japan's attack. Thousands of foreign residents in Shanghai also became the best third-party witnesses to this Sino-Japanese fighting. Unlike the Mukden case when Zhang Xueliang needed to organize Western journalists to travel to Mukden to investigate the conflict, the Shanghai Incident had presented all details on the doorstep of the foreign public. Witnessing the conflict in person, many of the foreign residents voluntarily provided their accounts to the local press. Moreover, Shanghai was the city best equipped with news facilities in China. It had several outgoing cable lines to Europe and the United States. In the late 1920s the Guomindang government also established wireless stations in Shanghai. All these facilities enabled the Shanghai Incident to be exposed to the widest publicity possible. The chances of a monopoly of information by Japanese-operated or pro-Japanese news agencies, as in Jinan and Mukden, were slim.

China not only had an effective channel through which to tell its story, but also had a good story to tell. During the Shanghai Incident, China enjoyed the moral superiority offered by Japanese bombs and killings, significantly the shelling of Zhabei. The Japanese soldiers fired on the international settlement and used it as a basis to attack the Chinese army. They refused to accept the terms of the Anglo-American mediation and continued fighting and reinforcement. They also bombed many of the civilian areas, including refugee camps, the Commercial Press and its libraries. These "facts" which were also witnessed by foreign residents were good propaganda material for China to present itself as the

119 Donald A. Jordan, China's Trial by Fire, 41.
victim while portraying Japan as the violent aggressor. Confident of their own case, Chinese officials temporarily lifted all censorship from local newspapers, wireless and cable offices, so as to publicize Japan’s violence to the outside world as widely as possible.

Although Japan’s advantage in possessing a sophisticated news network was inconspicuous in Shanghai and the brutal force harmed its international prestige, it did not totally lose its competitive edge in the propaganda battlefield. Its strength lay in the positive image it enjoyed among foreign powers and the peace and order it promised to bring to Shanghai. Japan was a modern imperial nation. For a large number of Shanghai residents who aligned themselves with the imperialist interests, Japan was considered “one of them” whose triumph boosted the reputation of foreigners in general. As Archibald Trojan Steele described, Europeans and Americans’ applause for Japanese action in Shanghai could commonly be heard in bars, at street corners and in offices: “Well, it’s about time somebody was knocking sense into the Chinese and bringing a little order into this country. Perhaps the Japanese are the ones to do it.”

Foreign portrayal of China, in contrast, was characterized by its disunity, lawless nature and the anti-foreign attitude. Despite the great effort the Guomindang government had made to change its image, the effect was limited. Facing the Sino-Japanese conflict, foreigners sometimes supported Japan, not necessarily because they were impressed by the Japanese case but because they deplored Chinese rule more. Japan could still score, by exposing China’s weakness and accentuating Japan’s affinity with Western powers. Knowing their advantages and limits, China and Japan refined their strategies and engaged in a new round of propaganda battle.

**China’s Strategies**

During the Shanghai Incident, China’s propaganda focused increasingly on allying with the Anglo-American powers while isolating Japan. Chinese-

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controlled newspapers tended to interpret the Shanghai battle as the conflict between two camps: the peace-loving camp which included the Western Powers and China, and the aggressor—Japan. Both government officials and public bilingual elites were eager to drop the anti-imperialist tone and redefine the borderline between “friends” and “enemy.”

At the government level, immediately after Japan’s bombing of Shanghai, Yan Huiqing 颜惠慶, Chinese delegate in Geneva, had reported the incident to the League of Nations and invoked the Covenant of the League to solve the Shanghai crisis. On 30 January, Luo Wengan 羅文幹, the Oxford-trained foreign minister, circulated a statement in the English-language press in Shanghai, confirming that China would firmly “adhere to the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Brian-Kellogg Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty—by all of which military aggression and war as an instrument of national policy are renounced and condemned.” In fact, China’s trust in the League and the competency of international treaties was much less firm than it had declared to be in the press. T. V. Soong, vice-president of the Executive Yuan, for example, was fully aware of the limits of the international agreements, believing that they were “of use only when backed by force.” The China Critic, which represented the opinion of Chinese elites, also voiced its suspicion of the strength of the League of Nations. It warned the Chinese well before the Shanghai Incident that Western powers were “paralysed by their own interests” and were unlikely to fight for China at the expense of provoking Japan. Yet by expressing China’s firm adherence to the international jurisdiction, the government’s goal was twofold: the appeal continued to press the Western powers to check Japan’s aggression; it also served the government’s propaganda purpose, creating the image that China was the Western powers’ closest follower, willing to observe and defend the world order. Wellington V. K. Koo openly criticized Japan as a threat to world order:

Are all the forces of peace in the world really powerless to stop it (Japan’s aggression)? If Japanese militarism is permitted to run

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125 “The Significance of the Warfare around Shanghai,” The People’s Tribune, March 1932.
rampant and to continue to work its havoc on a peace-loving nation, what kind of future can we contemplate for the rest of the world? Must humanity be obliged to trace its steps backward and once more undergo the horrors of a world war? Must civilization be made to retrocede and again live under the brutal rule that Might is Right?  

As the *North China Daily News* pointed out, the Chinese delegation felt that they had nothing to lose by taking their case before the League. As the *North China Daily News* observed, Chinese officials believed that the more publicity they obtained the more it would be to their advantage.  

To further ameliorate relations with foreign powers, the Chinese-controlled treaty-port journals completely omitted the revision of extraterritoriality or any issues that might remind the Westerners of China’s anti-imperialist past. For the first time they frequently addressed the Western countries as “friendly Powers,” a title they could not even conceive of only a few years earlier when Sino-foreign relations were tense.

Chinese treaty-port elites also refined their anti-imperialist line and identified Japan as their sole enemy. The *China Critic* had greatly softened its anti-West tone by January 1932. It began to criticise Chinese nationalist activities, stating that the “blind passion and prejudice” against the West were unhelpful for China’s development and warned that the “unreasoning and discriminating hostility to the foreigner and all his works can lead people astray.” The *China Press* also tried hard to link the Shanghai Incident with foreign economic interests, arguing that both the Chinese and Western public were the victims of the Japanese aggression. It attributed the depression in the London stock market to the instability in the Far East and warned that the capture of Shanghai and other ports of China by Japan would lead to a widespread bankruptcy of Chinese commercial and industrial establishments. In addition, the paper devoted much space to graphic descriptions of Japanese atrocities, particularly those conducted in the

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The Chinese public in Shanghai also dropped their anti-imperial sentiments and singled out Japan as China's sole enemy. Posters urging all Chinese to befriend Westerners while antagonizing the Japanese were put up on the doors and windows of Chinese shops along the Nanjing Road and elsewhere in the International Settlement. The posters, written in red bold Chinese characters, read:

\begin{quote}
All my countrymen, see exactly who is your enemy. Distinguish your friends from your enemies. All foreigners (other than Japanese) are friendly to us, and we should not do anything to hurt their feelings.\footnote{134}{"Only Japanese Called Enemies in Red Posters," \textit{The China Press}, 6 February 1932.}
\end{quote}

Some of the Chinese shops and institutions also put up posters welcoming the arrival of the United States Asiatic Fleet, which was sent to Shanghai to protect American interests and restore the neutrality of the International Settlement.\footnote{135}{Ibid.} It was unclear who initiated the activities or if there was any government effort behind it. But the activities sent a clear message to the foreign residents in Shanghai: the Chinese had dropped their anti-foreign attitude and considered Japan as their only foe.

Chinese treaty-port paper editors deliberately linked the Shanghai case with the Mukden Incident, arguing that the origin of the Shanghai situation could “only be traced to the situation created by Japan’s aggression in Manchuria.”\footnote{136}{"Shanghai and the Manchuria Question," \textit{The China Press}, 9 February 1932.} Linking the two incidents was a way to keep the Manchurian case in the international forum so as to restrain Japan’s activities in Manchuria and add pressure to the League and signatory powers for an intervention. Linking the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{135} Ibid.
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Manchurian crisis also helped the audience to revisit the Manchurian case based on their renewed understanding of the Japanese militancy shown in Shanghai. In the Shanghai Incident, Japanese atrocities had been vividly exposed to the world audience. It testified to the fact that Japan was capable of severe brutalities in warfare. While Chinese reports on Japan's similar war crimes in Manchuria were overshadowed by the Japanese propaganda and were commonly held as untrustworthy, the Shanghai case helped to redeem credibility for China's sources. Moreover, Japan's occupation of Manchuria and then the attack on Shanghai corroborated the Tanaka Memorial. Combining the two cases made Japan's world-conquest plan more real:

Having occupied Manchuria, which is as big as France and Germany combined, without serious opposition from Europe or America, and seeing that the rest of the world is still preoccupied with domestic and foreign problems of its own, Japan is determined to put forward her programme of conquest of China by planting her power in Shanghai which is the greatest metropolis of trade and finance in the Far East.\textsuperscript{137}

In contrast to the lack of resistance in the Mukden Incident, the Chinese army put up a meaningful resistance in Shanghai. The resistance by the 19th Route Army together with the snipers sent by Du Yuesheng 杜月笙, leader of the underworld Green Gang, dealt a heavy blow to Japanese naval forces. The defence at the front greatly benefited China's propaganda. Firstly, although neither Japan nor China declared war, the severe military confrontation created a de facto war-status, tense enough to invoke the Covenant of the League, the Nine-Power Treaties and the Kellog Pact, all of which were designed to prevent warfare. The signatory powers, therefore, were pushed to intervene. The high morale that Chinese soldiers and civilians displayed in the resistance also greatly boosted China's prestige. Henry L. Stimson, US Secretary of State, for example, acclaimed the Chinese infantry as "heroic," and believed that the spirit displayed among its people made the country deserve "more moral sympathy."\textsuperscript{138} The

\textsuperscript{138} Henry Lewis Stimson, \textit{The Far Eastern Crisis; Recollections and Observations} (N.Y: Harper,
resistance also strengthened foreign confidence in China’s military capabilities. 
Foreigners had witnessed that more than five thousand Japanese marines, 
subsequently aided by two divisions and a mixed brigade of infantry with a full 
complement of artillery, tanks and bombing airplanes had been checked, thrown 
back and held impotent for over a month by a force of Chinese soldiers armed 
only with rifles and machine guns.\textsuperscript{139} The hard fighting convinced the Western 
audience that the Chinese, while looking to the foreign assistance, also tried hard 
to defend themselves. Given the tools and wise leadership, Chinese soldiers could 
fight.\textsuperscript{140}

The Chinese officials took advantage of the military resistance to fulfil their 
propaganda purpose, repeatedly declaring their commitment to the resistance. On 
29 January, Chiang Kai-shek, in an order of the Central Executive Committee, 
claimed that if China should be pushed beyond what could be accepted, it would 
“go to war even if it would die in defeat.”\textsuperscript{141} He also published a lengthy front­
page article in the \textit{People’s Tribune}, glorifying the 19th Route Army’s heroism. 
He referred to the troop as a “chivalrous army” which would “fight to the last 
man and the last bullet” against the Japanese soldiers. He quoted several 
examples to demonstrate how the soldiers were willing to die for their country 
and concluded that the “Chinese warriors have the noble cause of humanity and 
international justice to give up their lives for.”\textsuperscript{142} T. V. Soong, in the same issue, 
buttressed Chiang’s view, maintaining that:

\begin{quote}
The manhood of China, armed only with rifles, machine guns and 
gas pipe mortars, as opposed to the most modern fighting 
equipment the world had seen, is battling along for the 
independence of the country so solemnly guaranteed by 
international agreements to which all the Powers are party.\textsuperscript{143}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{139} Stimson, \textit{The Far Eastern Crisis}, 110.
\textsuperscript{140} Archibald Trojan Steele, \textit{Shanghai and Manchuria}, 8.
\textsuperscript{141} Guomindang Archives, draft by Chiang Kai-shek of telegram to Foreign Ministry, 29 January 
1932, quoted in Jordan, 50.
\textsuperscript{142} “The 19th Route Army Resists—to the Last!” by Chiang Kai-shek, \textit{The People’s Tribune}, 
\textsuperscript{143} T. V. Soong, Guo Tai-chi and Wellington V. K. Koo, “Japan’s Challenge to the Civilized 
World,” \textit{The People’s Tribune}, February–March 1932, 11.
These statements, nevertheless, were aimed at appealing to emotions rather than reflecting the reality. Chiang was far from ready for a war at that point and would try all means to avoid it. The following chapter will further explore the Nanjing government’s effort to delay a war with Japan. In contrast to the verbal support of the military resistance, the government’s actual reinforcement for the 19th Route Army was minimal. The 19th Route Army belonged to Chiang’s rival, the Guangzhou clique. During the Shanghai Incident, Nanjing only sent nominal reinforcements to the 19th Route Army. Some troops Chiang promised, such as the 3rd and 14th division, did not arrive until 7 March after the fighting had ceased.144

Japanese Strategies

Japanese officials took various measures to suppress unfriendly reports. On 23 January, Yano, Charge d’Affaires of the Japanese Legation, called Zhang Xueliang, requiring the closure of the Leader due to its reporting of a Korean manifesto. Yano also demanded an apology from the paper and the arrest of its editor, Li Bingrui. Although Zhang rejected the request for apology and arrest, he had to close the paper to avoid trouble with Japan. It was unclear whether the demand to close the paper right before the attack on Shanghai was part of Japan’s scheme to suppress discussion of the coming Shanghai Incident in North China. It nevertheless displayed Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ definite attempts to muffle anti-Japanese voices in the north when Sino-Japanese conflicts in Shanghai grew more acute. In Shanghai, the Japanese also tried to bribe foreign journalists. On 27 January, Takahashi Sankichi 高橋三吉, then assistant to the Military Attaché, approached the New York Times correspondent, Hallet Abend, with a monetary gift, asking him to be conciliatory towards Japan and its actions.145

The Shanghai Incident had put Japan in a defensive position. Eager to present Japan’s case in front of the world public, diplomats were sent to the United States to improve the Japanese image. They explained Japan’s position through lectures,

144 See Stimson’s note in The Far Eastern Crisis, 110.
delivered both in the public forum and on radio, and newspaper interviews.\(^{146}\) Before the Incident, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Navy had organized a Press Union in Shanghai to “improve public opinion on Japan.”\(^{147}\) The Union was generally recognized as a propaganda organ of Japan’s Shanghai consulate. It released a series of reports criticizing China’s chaotic situation hours before Japan bombed Zhabei, aiming to divert people’s attention to the Japanese demands.\(^{148}\) Faced with the condemnation of the Japanese attack by American treaty-port papers, the Union also published English-language pamphlets to defend Japan’s position.\(^{149}\)

Japan lodged a firm defence in the English-language press. It maintained its traditional “self-defence” argument, insisting that Japan’s action aimed to protect their nationals in Shanghai who were severely threatened by China’s anti-Japanese movements. Rear-Admiral Shiosawa Köichi, Commander of the First Japanese Fleet in Chinese waters, blamed Chinese “lawlessness” and “disorder” for the start of warfare, saying it was China’s chaos as well as the presence of a large number of “undisciplined troops”\(^{150}\) that necessitated the Navy’s shelling of Zhabei. Japan’s government statement issued on 7 February strengthened Shiosawa’s view, confirming that Japan’s action was stimulated by Chinese soldiers’ continuous harassment of the Japanese despite Mayor Wu’s acceptance of the Japanese demands.\(^{151}\)

The Japanese propagandists also used Western precedents to justify Japan’s naval attack in Shanghai. Shiozawa, for example, argued that Japan’s shelling of Zhabei was a necessary action in response to the acute situation in Shanghai: the Municipal Council had proclaimed “the state of emergency” and the military and naval forces of other countries had respectively taken various actions to protect their nationals in Shanghai. Japan’s attack merely fulfilled its duties during the


\(^{148}\) Jordan, *China’s Trial by Fire*, 36.


state of emergency. It was acting in accordance with the foreign powers' general defence plan and was fighting for all foreigners. Shiosawa hinted that given the intense situation, fighting could break out at any moment. Japan’s response, therefore, only intensified the situation that already existed. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshizawa Kenkich drew parallel between Japan’s current actions with Britain’s response in 1927 when its nationals in Shanghai were threatened by the Guomindang’s Northern Expedition. He argued what Japan did now was "exactly the same" as how the British had reacted then. If the British attack was justified, so was that of Japan.

The Japanese-controlled treaty-port paper, the *Far Eastern Review*, also developed a realistic perspective to dissuade the powers from intervention. Knowing that to deny Japan’s brutal actions in the field was of no avail, editors of the journal deliberately avoided discussing details of these actions. Their focus, instead, was on the consequences of the foreign-Japanese antagonism. The journal argued that foreign powers, particularly the United States, would harm their own interests by involving themselves in the Sino-Japanese conflicts. It listed the amount of Western powers’ investment in Japan, indicating that any conflict with Japan would bring significant economic loss. Also, naval battle with Japan could be costly. In order to confront Japan’s Navy, argued the journal, the United States would have to abandon all its Pacific policies, build a fleet at least three times as powerful as that of Japan, and convert Manila into a military base. Even after the enormous initial expenditure, it still availed the United States little if Japan fortified its submarine defences.

China’s weakness provided the best propaganda material for Japan. By exposing China’s underdevelopment, disorder, and lawlessness, the Japanese propagandists wished to convince the western audience that China was a hopeless country that was unworthy of the Western powers’ favour. The *Far Eastern Review*, for example, quoted an American historian’s comments on the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, arguing that history would repeat itself in the current Sino-Japanese crisis.

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Her (China's) armies never once scored a victory...her fleet on which many hopes had been based, was driven ignominiously to the shelter of fortified ports. Her commanders showed themselves all incompetent, and many, cowards. Her administration was as inefficient and corrupt in the hour of the nation's peril as it notoriously was in time of peace; and her people, while they had acquired some sense of nationality, were still an inchoate mass, in which self-interest was the only motive power and blind fury replaced patriotic endeavour...it was the duty of foreign powers, and not any part of the duty of China to save China from aggression and dismemberment. \(^{155}\)

Japan also brought China's domestic chaos into the Shanghai case to attack its "peace-loving" argument. "In the past decade," the Review maintained "[China's] pitiless armies have massacred more of their own defenceless people than were killed in the world war." \(^{156}\) If China was indeed committed to a love of peace and an abhorrence of militarism, questioned the journal, why was this great peace-loving nation unable to settle its own political differences except by an appeal to the sword? The Review also warned the US audience in Shanghai that they would fall into the trap set by the China's propagandists if they kept pursuing an anti-Japanese line:

Chinese would have America fight Japan while they sit on the sidelines watching both combatants go down to defeat and disaster. They would then garner their fruits of victory.... If we win, we lose, and the Chinese would be the only gainers. \(^{157}\)

**Treaty-Port Opinions**

\(^{155}\) See quotes of Hosea Ballou Morse, a US historian in Chinese history and Harley Farnsworth Mac Nair, professor of the University Chicago in "Again, Stay Out of It," *Far Eastern Review*, January 1932.

\(^{156}\) "Basic Problems," *Far Eastern Review*, January 1932, 15.

\(^{157}\) Ibid., 3.
The Shanghai Incident saw a shift of opinion in the English-language press. The British-owned papers, which used to sympathize with Japan's case in the Jinan Incident or remained detached in the Mukden case, overtly adopted an anti-Japanese stance during the Shanghai crisis. The largest British paper, the *North China Daily News*, was a clear example. The paper, from the beginning of the Shanghai Incident, took an anti-Japanese line. Among its 154 front-page reports that concerned the Shanghai fighting between January 29 to February 18 (20 days following the bombing of Zhabei), 98 articles contained messages that were negative to Japan and sympathetic to China; 42 of them covered both sides equally and only 14 reports showed sympathy to Japan.

Table 2

![Bar chart showing North China Daily News' frontpage reports, Jan. 29—Feb. 18, 1932]

For those American-operated papers, the Shanghai Incident reinforced their anti-Japanese view. The *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury* (the Post), which took an anti-Japanese line in the Mukden Incident, continued to denounce Japan's aggression in the Shanghai case. It repeatedly urged the Japanese soldiers in the International Settlement to "get out!" The editor, Randall Gould, believed that "no other Shanghai newspaper hit the Japanese so hard" in its Shanghai attack.

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and the following Manchuria scheme than the Post.\textsuperscript{159} The Post, together with the China Weekly Review, also the long-term opponent of Japan’s policy in China, formed a strong anti-Japanese line in the treaty-port press in Shanghai. In response to this newspaper alliance, the Japanese propaganda office, the Press Union, had to compile an additional pamphlet to counter the opinions in those papers.\textsuperscript{160}

The treaty-port papers were most critical of the atrocities committed by the Japanese Navy and Army in Shanghai. Foreign journalists spared no efforts in exposing Japan’s cruel actions in Shanghai. Graphic descriptions of Japanese bayoneting the civilians, killing women and children or organized bombing of civilian districts could be found daily in various newspapers. They not only condemned Japanese soldiers, but also Japanese civilians. Those civilians, who coalesced into vigilante units and named themselves rönin in memory of the rugged lordless samurai, were seen by the journalists as “extremely cruel” mobs, beating, stabbing, and shooting the Chinese at random.\textsuperscript{161} Such a portrayal severely challenged the traditional impression that Japanese civilians were a group of people with gentleness, etiquette and patience. A. T. Steele, US correspondent in Shanghai, for example, felt himself caught between the fine impression of the Japanese people and the brutal behaviour of the Japanese marines and civilians in Shanghai, not knowing which one represented the true Japanese.

Even having seen it (Japanese soldiers killed innocent Chinese women) I found it difficult to comprehend that these cold-blooded killers could have had any connection with the island of soft hills, pretty temples, kindly people and colourful kimonos I had visited only a few weeks before.\textsuperscript{162}

Foreign journalists were also keen to collect stories of Japanese assaults on

\textsuperscript{159} Gould, China in the Sun, 149.

\textsuperscript{160} Press Union, The Shanghai Incident Misrepresented (Shanghai: Press Union, 1932).


\textsuperscript{162} Archibald Trojan Steele, Shanghai and Manchuria, 7.
Westerners. By exposing the “facts” on Japan’s brutal activities, journalists aimed to counter the popular belief that Japan would bring order to the Settlement. Indeed, Japan’s “teaching China a lesson” argument had lost its ground. The Post indicated that if China’s rule in the Settlement was bad, Japan’s could only be worse, since during the past several decades, foreigners had never had such trouble with the Chinese. The North China Herald also questioned if Japan was authorized to give China a lesson and whether in giving it Japan maintained the proper dispassion of an instructor.

Journalists’ reports were not the only source of accounts about Japanese war crimes. Protests from leaders of foreign-organized refugee camps and missionaries also complained about Japanese misbehaviour. Sir John Hope, Director of the Chinese Flood Relief Commission, telegraphed the Secretariat-General of the League of Nations on 13 Feb, chastising the Japanese bombardment of his camp as an “inhumane action.” On 22 February 1932, 105 British and American missionaries in Shanghai, in a signed statement, provided further examples of Japanese killing innocent civilians. They condemned the activity as the “madness and cruelty of war.”

Indeed, the strength of Japanese propaganda machine was greatly reduced in front of the naked “facts” exposed by foreign witnesses. If in remote Manchuria, the Japanese were still able to suppress reports of the Mukden Incident and challenge the credibility of reports unfavourable to Japan, they were unable to do so in Shanghai, since every move of the Japanese soldiers was scrutinized by hundreds of interested and inquisitive foreigners. As Henry L. Stimson observed, when it came to the criticism of Japanese atrocities, “Japan had no defenders. None of the explanations put forth by her (Japan) carried for a minute with our press or our people.”

Japan also lost the trust of many neutral observers due to its militant action in Shanghai. A. T. Steele, for example, admitted that his distrust of Japan was caused

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165 See Goto-Shibata’s quote of the leading article “A Bad Breach,” North China Herald, 9 February 1932, in Goto-Shibata, Japan and Britain in Shanghai, 141.
168 Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, 146.
by witnessing Japanese killings in 1932:

I have seen death scores of times since then, but no single incident has burned so deeply into my memory. My distrust of the Japanese militarists and all the high-sounding ideals they say they stand for began with that cabbage patch tragedy (Steel witnessed Japanese soldiers shooting an innocent woman dead) and deepened steadily during the ensuing years. 169

Moreover, despite Japanese diplomats repeatedly promising to respect China’s national sovereignty, the non-stop bombardment of Chinese cities proved the contrary. 170 The inconsistency between the statements and “facts” further discredited Japanese propaganda. The China Weekly Review overtly warned foreigners “Don’t pay any attention to what the Japanese say. Just watch what they are doing.” 171

Japan’s use of the International Settlement as its military base to attack China also became the target of common censure in the treaty-port press. The Post condemned Japan’s misuse of the International Settlement as “undesirable in the extreme.” 172 It not only “jeopardized” the neutrality of the Settlement and threatened the lives and property of the foreign nationals, but also created the impression that foreign powers endorsed the Japanese attack. 173 The foreigners nevertheless had another pressing reason to oppose Japan’s use of the International Settlement for military attack—to maintain the fiscal revenue of the Settlement. Chinese tax payers of the Settlement had collectively notified their intention not to pay any taxes if the Municipal Council failed to observe neutrality and return peace soon. 174 Since the greater part of the revenue of the

169 Archibald Trojan Steele, Shanghai and Manchuria, 7.
171 “Be Careful, Gentlemen, or the Japanese Will Have You Holding the Bag Again!” The China Weekly Review, 13 February 1932.
173 Ibid.

162
Shanghai Municipal Council came from taxes paid by the Chinese residents, the notice raised great concern among the Council leaders.

In response, Japan proposed to establish demilitarized zones, 15 to 20 miles in width, around the principal trading ports in China, notably Shanghai, Hankou, Tianjin, Guangzhou (Canton) and Qingdao. The proposal equated to an extension of foreign settlement. When the Chinese were doing their utmost in abolishing extraterritoriality and subsequently abolishing the foreign settlements, Japan’s proposal catered for the foreigners who wished to preserve their treaty privileges. British press evinced little interest in the proposal and the United States openly rejected it, fearing any support would aggravate the Chinese. Yet a Reuters report revealed that the United States secretly favoured the demilitarized zone around Shanghai.

Although both the British and US press in Shanghai adopted an anti-Japanese stance, the degree was different and they did not agree with each other in every aspect. The British press, represented by the *North China Daily News*, showed more sympathy toward the Japanese case in its editorials. After the hostilities commenced, the paper expressed its “regret that the Japanese authorities have been driven to such elaborate measures of enforcement of their demands and that the Chinese have failed to act up to the seriousness of the obligations imposed upon them.” Although the paper disagreed with Japan’s use of force in Shanghai, it still saw its action justified on “ethical grounds” because the Chinese deserved a lesson for the “illegal” boycott. As Hallet Abend observed, such an opinion, although much less explicit in the press during the Shanghai Incident, was still popular among many of the die-hard foreigners. Many Shanghailanders privately saw Japan as “one of them” and expected Japan to defend general foreign interests in China.

**Metropolitan opinions**

358.
If the opinion gap between the British- and American-controlled treaty-port papers was minor, the gap between metropolitan papers of the two countries was large. Although they agreed with the "facts" about Japanese action in Shanghai and both deplored the atrocities Japan had committed, their interpretation of the cause and the implications of the incident were different. The London Times, for example, displayed an overt slant toward the Japanese case. It believed that Japan's attack on Shanghai was justified. The paper drew parallel between the British navy's protection of Shanghai in 1927 and Japanese current action, arguing that Japan had a sound reason to defend its nationals in Shanghai considering the "close proximity of a large and notoriously ill-disciplined force of Chinese troops."181 Also, the paper showed sympathy with Japan's loss in the anti-Japanese boycott and its difficulties in dealing with the Chinese government, although British trade benefited from the Sino-Japanese tensions.182 It blamed China's "habitual procrastination and evasions [that] have been rendered more vexations than ever by the lack of any authoritative Chinese Government," and explained that "in such circumstances some display of force by Japan was not condemned by reasonably minded persons."183

The paper also saw the Shanghai Incident and the Manchurian crisis as two separate events. The solution of the Shanghai problem, therefore, should not be affected by the Manchurian case. The London Times reflected Japan's reasoning: "In Shanghai, Japanese interests were similar to those of other Powers. In Manchuria, Japan's interests were paramount economically and politically, and her matter there was a matter of life and death."184

The London Times endorsed a narrow interpretation of Japan's intention and the implications of the incident. It believed Japan's action was only to punish China without any interest in China's territory or sovereignty. Although Lord Cecil and many other diplomats had urgently warned the British to change their attitude and open their eyes to Japan's military ambition in the whole of China

183 "Critical Hours in Shanghai," The Times, 2 February 1932. A similar view was also voiced in "The Shanghai Crisis," The Times, 27 February 1932.
and its menace to other British colonies in the Pacific, particularly India, Canada and Australia, the paper lent no support to Cecil's view. It quoted many opponents who believed Cecil was exaggerating the situation. The paper also showed trust in Japan's "military virtue" and lauded Japan as Britain's "old ally" whose friendship and military strength was vital to British interests. "Generous but ignorant sympathy with an imaginary 'China'," quoted the paper, "is the greatest danger today to universal peace."

The New York Times, on the contrary, resonated with the anti-Japanese line adopted by the US treaty-port's press in Shanghai. The paper saw Japan's action as an "invasion." It referred to Japan's bombing of "a civilian population in an unfortified city" as "living testimony" to Japanese "savagery." The paper also lent support to the view that the Shanghai Incident and the Manchurian case should be considered together. It argued that Japan's application of brute force in Shanghai nullified their case in Manchuria. The Mukden Incident, argued the paper, had previously been considered as a "good case" for Japan in terms of its entitlement to "stand upon her treaty rights" and her suffering of "provocation from irresponsible Chinese officials." Yet Japan's use of force in Shanghai had "alienated many neutral supporters and sympathizers" and raised people's suspicion toward its intention in Manchuria. The paper also saw Japan's militancy in Shanghai as a menace to the balance of power. Since the incident took place right before the Geneva Conference of Disarmament in Geneva, editors of the paper worried that the tension created by Japan in Shanghai would alter the naval plans set by President Hoover. They were also concerned that Japan's plan in Manchuria and Shanghai would undermine America's two basic policies in China: the "open door policy" and the respect for China's integrity.

Conclusion

185 "The Shanghai Crisis, British Policy in Far East, Respect for Collective Treaties," The Times, 18 February 1932.
191 Ibid.
In the early 1930s, a centralized propaganda system was absent and Chinese-operated treaty-port newspapers became the most important foreign propaganda weapons. The Mukden and Shanghai incidents in 1931 and 1932 instigated a media battle in the treaty port. Both Chinese and Japanese controlled English-language papers were involved and presented their cases. After the Mukden Incident, Japan, which desired to “localize” the incident, pursued an “international” interpretation of the incident by linking the event with Sino-foreign conflicts in general; while China, wishing to “internationalize” the incident, tried hard to “localize” the Manchurian discussion by concentrating on the incident itself and avoiding connecting the dispute with its anti-imperialist movements in the past. Although metropolitan papers were leaning towards Japan’s case, believing Japan’s crucial interests in Manchuria justified its reaction, the treaty-port papers began to display caution over Japan’s motivation in China. Japan’s reputation was further tarnished in the Shanghai Incident, when its attack on China was fully exposed in front of the foreigners in that city. Chinese-controlled papers unanimously downplayed China’s anti-foreign past and identified Japan as China’s sole enemy. Their Japanese counterparts, however, upheld the view that Japan, by shelling Zhabei, was defending foreign interests in general. Witnessing the Sino-Japanese conflict, the treaty-port editors began to withdraw their sympathy from Japan after the Shanghai Incident. They criticized Japan’s atrocities and questioned its intentions. The negative portrayal of Japan did not flow widely into the British metropolitan papers, but the US metropolitan paper, the New York Times followed the treaty-port view and strongly opposed Japan’s action in Shanghai.

The change of opinion in treaty ports and metropolitan cities greatly encouraged Chinese officials to continue foreign propaganda activities. The Shanghai Incident had seen a clear shift from the anti-foreign stance to an anti-Japan focus. Yet the shift was unstable. The dilemma the Nanjing government faced between appeasing Japan and confronting it in the mid-1930s further complicated its propaganda plan.
CHAPTER 5

Facing Dilemmas:
China’s Foreign Propaganda Activities, 1932—1937

The Nanjing government survived the Mukden and the Shanghai incidents but suffered serious losses. Apart from huge numbers of military and civilian casualties, the damage to buildings and infrastructure, and the impact on businesses and industries, the Guomindang government virtually lost its sovereignty over all of Manchuria and the right to deploy troops within the Shanghai area. The Shanghai Truce and the mediation of the League of Nations failed to rein in Japanese militancy. The Japanese army established the puppet state Manchukuo in Manchuria during the fighting in Shanghai and the state was recognized by the Japanese government in September 1932.1 In January 1933, the Japanese army continued to advance on Jehol (Rehe 熱河) province, seeking to extend the Japanese-controlled territory to North China.

Keenly aware of China’s military weakness and domestic disunity, Chiang Kai-shek had tried hard to avoid a full-scale war with Japan. He busied himself with anti-Communist campaigns in south-western China and adopted the policy of “first internal pacification, then external resistance” (Rangwai bixian an’ nei 攘外必先安内), arguing that China would not be able to resist Japan until the internal menace of the Communists was eliminated. In order to avoid conflagration with Japan as well as to reduce public pressure upon his non-resistance policy, Chiang had to contain popular anti-Japanese sentiments which reached a peak after the Manchurian crisis.

Chiang’s policy was unpopular among both the public and officials. Few private journals evinced enthusiasm for the “pacification first” policy.2 A leftist periodical, Chun Qiu 春秋, for example, blamed Nanjing for a lack of resistance. It believed that Nanjing’s timorousness, instead of halting Japan’s advance, had

whetted the appetite of the Japanese army for further attacks.\textsuperscript{3} Even *Shidai Gonglun* 時代公論, a journal usually identified with the C. C. Clique, a political faction close to Chiang, complained that non-resistance would damage public morale.\textsuperscript{4} The "pacification first" policy not only drew protests from Chiang's own brother-in-law, Finance Minister T. V. Soong, but was also exploited by his rivals as ammunition to weaken his control. Wang Jingwei, for example, used the loss of Manchuria and Rehe to demand the resignation of Zhang Xueliang, one of Chiang's key military supporters. Indeed, in the 1930s Chiang was caught between Japanese military pressure and domestic anti-Japanese sentiments.

This dilemma not only complicated domestic politics, but also plagued China's diplomacy. Internationally, China had to juggle appealing to Western powers for a common resistance against Japan with appeasing Japanese demands. The weakness of China's military revealed during the Shanghai Incident reaffirmed the fact that China was unable to defend itself single-handedly. Forming an alliance with Western powers was essential. During the Mukden and Shanghai incidents, China had worked hard to make its case to the League of Nations and to create the impression before the world public that it actively sought an alliance with Western powers. Yet Japan's renewed aggression in North China dealt a heavy blow to this international approach. Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in March 1933 had demonstrated the organization's inability to check Japan's advance. To effectively halt Japan's military threat, at least temporarily, the Nanjing government had to tone down its anti-Japanese stance and reach cease-fire agreements. From 1933, the Nanjing government therefore began acceding to Japanese demands in the hope of gaining time for the preparation for a full-scale war. However, the political cost of this new approach was heavy. The policy forced the government to move even further from the anti-imperialist tradition of the Nationalist Party. It also nullified China's previous international approach, making the Sino-Japanese conflict a regional issue. China's appeasement of Japan also sent mixed messages to Western powers, leaving them unclear about China's position in the Sino-Japanese conflict.

Without strong military power, China only had limited means to fend off Japan's aggression. Propaganda was one of the important weapons of resistance.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
Beneath the appeasement policy were the government’s continuous efforts to strengthen its propaganda network. This chapter examines how the Nanjing government mobilized its foreign propaganda as a means to resist Japan and how Chiang Kai-shek consolidated foreign propaganda resources to strengthen his control of the Nanjing regime.

**Foreign Propaganda: a Means of Resistance**

After the Shanghai Ceasefire Agreement signed in May 1932 ended the intensive fighting in Shanghai, the Shanghai Incident gradually receded to the background in the international media. The Manchurian issue, where the deeper Sino-Japanese dispute lay, recaptured public interest. The main focus of the media was on the investigation by the Lytton Commission. As the result of repeated appeal by the Chinese government, the League of Nations decided to send out a commission of enquiry to investigate the Manchurian and Shanghai incidents. The Commission, headed by V. A. G. R. Bulwer-Lytton, the second Earl of Lytton of the United Kingdom, included Major General Frank Ross McCoy from the United States, Heinrich Schnee from Germany, Count Aldrovandi-Marescotti from Italy, and General Henri Claudel from France. As a third-party investigator, the Commission was commonly considered as a referee in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Its account would not only exert moral pressure over the “aggressor” in international public opinion but also influence the League’s later decisions on East Asian affairs.5 The investigation began on 14 March 1932. In the three months that followed, the Commission travelled to Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing and Manchuria to collect primary information on the development of the Manchurian crisis. It also went to Tokyo for two weeks in July and came back to Beijing to draft the final report of the inquiry from July to September.

During the Commission’s nearly six months’ stay in China, the Nanjing government organized a series of propaganda activities targeting the Commission and the League. The effort was not only motivated by the government’s urge to present its case to the world but also by the necessity to offset Japan’s propaganda

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activities in China and abroad. Since the Mukden Incident, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had made relentless efforts to disseminate the Japanese version of the Manchurian crisis. In the United States, for example, Japanese diplomats and elites had embarked on "a seemingly endless" round of lectures, radio and newspaper interviews to explain and justify Japan's position. The ministry had also distributed pro-Japanese publications and subsidized local opinion leaders to present the Japanese case. In China, the ministry funded the Press Union, which was responsible for translating reports from Rengo, a Japanese news agency, into English and sending them to the foreign and Chinese press in Shanghai. The Japanese government also subsidized George Bronson Rea, editor and owner of the *Far Eastern Review* to publicize Japan's case. The South Manchuria Railway also supported H. G. Woodhead, special writer for the American paper the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, to voice Japan's position. According to the *China Weekly Review*, Henry W. Kinney, head of the propaganda department of the South Manchuria Railway Company, frequently contributed articles to newspapers in Shanghai about Japan's contribution to the development of Manchuria. After the Shanghai Incident, he was also sent to the United States to investigate the status of public opinion so as to keep Japanese officials and leaders of the South Manchuria Railway Company better advised on propaganda policies.

In response, the Nanjing government also organized its own foreign propaganda activities during the tour of the Lytton Commission. Firstly, the government sought to influence the Commission via Wellington Koo, the Chinese assessor. During his tour with the Commission from April to August 1932, Koo frequently sent memorandums to leaders of the Commission, offering them background information on the Sino-Japanese conflict. The memorandums

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covered a wide range of topics. Apart from basic facts regarding the development of the Mukden and Shanghai incidents, Koo also reported on Japan's "provocative and hostile" activities in places other than Manchuria and Shanghai, the anti-Chinese riots in Korea, Chinese development in Manchuria, Manchurian currency and its relation to the soy bean, and the outer-Mongolia issues. He dated Japan's encroachment on China back to the 1870s and accused Japan of intending to perpetuate China's internal political struggles by intervention in Chinese affairs. Clearly, Koo's goal was to establish a broader historical context for the Sino-Japanese conflict. He argued that Japan's seizure of Manchuria was a long-planned scheme, and that the Mukden and Shanghai incidents were the beginning of Japan's invasion of the whole country.

Annoyed by his overt anti-Japanese view, the Manchukuo leaders tried to thwart Koo's accompanying of the Commission by rejecting his entry to Manchuria. Yet they had to concede, upon Lytton's insistence on Koo's presence. They allowed Koo to travel to Manchuria by sea instead of railway. As a result, the League Commission entered Manchuria in three groups. One, led by Schnee and Claudel, travelled in a Japanese destroyer; another, led by Aldrovandi, travelled by rail via Shanhaiguan; a third, in which Koo was escorted by Lytton himself, travelled in a Chinese cruiser. Immediately after his arrival, on 21 April, Koo received a warrant of arrest should he venture out of the Japanese railway area. This implied that Koo would not be able to accompany the group to north Manchuria where the Japanese railway was not as developed as that in the south. The attempt of the Manchukuo leaders to undermine Koo's involvement

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in the investigation drew international protests. A Reuters' telegram from Geneva, as the *China Weekly Review* quoted, complained that Japan's intervention "produced the worst possible impression in League circles."¹⁸ Members of the League also warned that should the Manchukuo leaders persist in rejecting Koo, they would complicate the situation even more.¹⁹

The Nanjing government also tried to build a supra-ministerial office to organize propaganda during the Lytton Commission’s tour of China. In May 1932, the Central Executive Committee initiated the creation of an office to organize foreign propaganda activities. The office was designed to incorporate the services of the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gu Mengyu, Minister of Railways, was appointed as the leader. Zhu Jiahua, Minister of Education, Shao Yuanchong, deputy president of the Legislative Yuan, Luo Jialun, president of the National Central University and Luo Wengan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, were invited to join the board.²⁰ By enlisting the help of high officials in various ministries, the government intended to centralize propaganda resources and tighten connections among those ministries. Grand as the plan was, the office was nonetheless dysfunctional. A report by Shao Yuanchong revealed that communication between the designated ministries was absent.²¹ The reason is obvious: the officials involved in the propaganda project were of equal executive rank. There was no higher institution to supervise their cooperation. Having been sufficiently occupied with the responsibilities of their respective ministries, those ministers lacked the incentive to commit to the "additional" foreign propaganda tasks. Nevertheless, the office was the Nanjing government’s first attempt to build a centralized foreign propaganda system. It indicated that the government was keenly aware of the importance of a centralized propaganda institution and was making efforts to establish one.

Moreover, the Nanjing government sought to influence the Commission’s

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¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Minute of the 18th standing conference of the Central Executive Committee, 10 May 1932, 4.3/37.42, Files on Foreign Propaganda Institutions, GPHC.
²¹ Chiang Kai-shek to Ye Chucang and Shao Yuanchong, 002010200099011, Chiang Kai-shek Archives, 2 December 1933, Academia Historica.
investigation of treaty-port opinions. Westerners living in China had been regarded as third-party witnesses of the Sino-Japanese conflict since the Mukden Incident. During the investigation, the Lytton Commission interviewed "as many as possible" of the correspondents who had been in Mukden at the time of the Mukden Incident or had visited the scene soon afterwards.22 Keenly aware of the importance of the testimonies of Western expatriates, the government paid special attention to shaping the Westerners’ view of the Sino-Japanese conflict. It supported Sun Ruiqin 孙瑞芹, an official propagandist, in the compilation of English pamphlets on China’s versions of the Mukden Incident. The pamphlets were then directly sent to the Commission and distributed widely in treaty ports and Beijing.23 In June 1932, before the Commission settled in Beijing to draft the final report, the Nanjing government launched an English-language daily, the *Peiping Chronicle*, in the hope of transmitting the Chinese voice to the commissioners as well as creating a favourable public opinion among Western communities in the city. The paper was the only Guomindang-operated English-language periodical in North China. Its predecessor the *Leader* had been forced to close before the Shanghai Incident under pressure from the Japanese military. The *Chronicle* inherited the *Leader*’s premises and its anti-Japanese stance. Yet to conceal the paper’s connection with Nanjing, the government installed a British national, William Sheldon Ridge, as nominal chief editor.24 Most of the reporting and editing work was done by the paper’s Chinese staff, who were trained in journalism and had a high level of English proficiency.

The *Peiping Chronicle* together with other pro-Nanjing English-language press in Shanghai formed an alliance to counter Japan’s propaganda in North China. In addition to presenting China’s position in Sino-Japanese disputes, the paper also sought to expose Japan’s suppression of information in the occupied region. The *Chronicle* continuously carried editorials denouncing the disturbance of Koo’s travel to Manchuria by the Japanese military, and their interference with the Commission’s interview of Ma Zhanshan 马占山, a Chinese general who

resisted Japan after the Mukden Incident. It also quoted Koo’s accounts on how Japan prevented Chinese witnesses from accessing the Commission. “Every movement to the Commission so far,” commented the paper, “has been hampered directly or indirectly by Japan.” The Chronicle’s view resonated in the China Weekly Review, which also exposed the difficulties the foreign journalists ran into when trying to cover the Lytton Commission’s trip to Manchuria. By reporting the experiences of Martin Rikli, a photographer from the German Ufa Film Company, Edward Hunter, a representative of the International News Service, A. R. Lindt, correspondent of the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung and Archibald Steele of the New York Times, the Review argued that the Japanese military authorities had made open attempts to interfere with the work of foreign journalists so as to manipulate the flow of information in North China.

The Nanjing government also collected reports from domestic papers on Japanese misconduct in China and sent them to Geneva as evidence to back up China’s case in the League. By doing so, Nanjing officials not only intended to influence the members of the Commission, but also international public opinion. For example, Chinese diplomats distributed Koo’s memorandums to the Lytton Commission widely in the United States and Europe. Within two months after Koo submitted his last memorandum to the Commission, over 40,000 copies of the full collection of his memorandums were printed and distributed abroad. After arriving in Paris, Koo organized the reprinting of the French version of the materials himself and appointed Shi Zhaoji 施肇基 (also known as Alfred Sze), Chinese Minister to Washington, to supervise the distribution of the memorandum in the United States.

China’s anti-Japanese foreign propaganda waned, however, after the publication of the Lytton Report. The trend reflected Nanjing’s change of direction in diplomacy—from appealing for international assistance to

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27 “Frank Avowals,” Peiping Chronicle, 8 June 1932.
29 Guonei zhongyao xiaoxi jiaqiang guoji xuanchuan an, 国内重要消息加强国际宣传案, January 1932—January 1933, National Government’s Archives, Academia Historica; V. K. Wellington Koo, Gu Weijun huiyilu 郭维俊回忆录 (Memoir of Wellington Koo) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 64.
30 Wellington Koo, Gu Weijun huiyilu, 64.
31 Ibid.
appeasement of Japan. By early 1933, Japan’s defeat at Geneva was certain, yet China’s victory in the League neither brought about international economic sanctions against Japan nor managed to check Japan’s military aggression in North China. In March 1933, the Japanese army crossed the Great Wall, expanding its invasion to the Beijing-Tianjin area. Unable to afford to lose more territory, which would lead to the demise of Chiang’s regime, in May 1933 the Nanjing government abandoned its reliance on Western powers’ mediation, seeking a direct settlement with Japan instead. The Tanggu Truce was signed accordingly in May 1933, which marked the beginning of the government’s appeasement policy. To further strengthen the new line, Chiang Kai-shek dismissed the pronouncedly anti-Japanese foreign minister Luo Wengan and replaced him with Wang Jingwei, who supported Chiang’s “first pacification, then resistance” formula. During a conference in October, T. V. Soong, another pro-resistance leader, was replaced as Minister of Finance and Vice President of the Executive Yuan by his brother-in-law H. H. Kung (Kong Xiangxi).32

The Nanjing government’s appeasement approach, nevertheless, did not mean a total abandonment of the effort to seek Western assistance. Instead of openly identifying itself with Western powers, the Nanjing government pursued a “quiet” diplomatic interaction with them, aiming at obtaining economic assistance. Chiang believed that “accommodation with Japan should serve as a smokescreen for diplomacy (seeking assistance from Western powers).”33 This required China’s propaganda to tone down its anti-Japanese voice, avoiding direct battle with Japan in the press so as not to provide Japan with ammunition for a political or military attack. Meanwhile, the government was also keen to improve its image among Western powers by suppressing pro-Manchukuo and anti-Guomindang reports in the press. In 1933, for example, the Nanjing government suspended postal service for George Bronson Rea’s journal *Far Eastern Review* because of Rea’s position as Manchukuo’s adviser in the League. The government also restricted the circulation of two US journals, *Asia* and *Time* magazine, in 1935 and 1936, due to their “derogatory” comments on China’s leaders.34

32 Parks Coble, *Facing Japan*, 137–141.
34 Memorandum by the assistant chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton), 6 June
Registration of the Foreign Newspaper: A Battleground for Extraterritoriality

While Nanjing officials were trying to win over Western powers' support for its resistance against Japan, they were also aware of the unresolved tensions revolving around extraterritorial issues. Although the period between 1932 and 1941 had seen a breaking off of negotiations over the overall abolition of extraterritoriality, diplomatic communication regarding extraterritorial issues in specific areas continued. China's struggle to regulate the foreign press was one of the fronts in its larger battle for the abolition of extraterritoriality. Compared with the negotiations on the abolition of extraterritoriality in the 1920s when the Guomindang government, motivated by anti-imperial sentiments, challenged the entire treaty system, negotiations in the 1930s were more sophisticated. Japan's growing military aggression became the main threat to China's sovereignty. The Nanjing government was eager to seek alliance with Western powers for common resistance against Japan. The shift of foreign policy required the government to redefine its position in handling extraterritoriality-related negotiations. Yet the change was not easy. The Chinese officials held a mixed attitude toward the extraterritorial issue. Although they were eager to abolish the system which undermined China's legal authority, they were also aware of the benefits the system brought to them in forming an alliance with Western powers against Japan's military threat. The dilemma resulted in a compromising attitude in regulating foreign periodicals in the treaty ports.

Foreign newspapers in China had long been a vexation in the eyes of the Guomindang officials. The Ministry of Information openly criticised them as rumour mongers, "trying their best to insult China and agitate anti-Chinese sentiments." As early as 1930, before the Publication Law was promulgated, the Ministry of Information had issued the Method for Registration of Foreign Papers

35 Wesley Robert Fisheal, The End of Extraterritoriality in China (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952), 188.
to regulate the foreign press. Yet due to extraterritoriality the registration was not actively enforced. In October 1932, the Ministry of Communication reopened the registration issue. On the basis of Article 7 of the Law of Publication, it sent instructions to all foreign newspapers in China, requesting them to register with the Ministry of the Interior and the Central Party Headquarters. The Ministry of Communications warned that the government would withdraw postal services to any newspaper or journal that failed to comply with the Article.\textsuperscript{37} This instruction clearly demonstrated the Ministry’s determination to control the foreign press. Yet to avoid confrontation, the government also sought to ease the tension by diverting the Powers’ attention from extraterritorial disputes. It explained that the registration was a “mere formality,” without any implications for the paper’s independence. The registration was also a way of “depriving Chinese publications of their excuse for not registering.”\textsuperscript{39}

In response, the Japanese Legation ignored this order,\textsuperscript{40} neither replying to Nanjing’s request nor communicating with other legations for a solution. The request also met with protests from legations of the other powers. They considered the request an infringement of the principle of extraterritoriality. Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, for example, was more concerned about the implication of the registration than the registration itself:

Registration of an American newspaper or periodical with the Ministry of the Interior would doubtless be construed by the Chinese authorities as \textit{ipsa facto} submission to the various articles including penalties prescribed in the Law of Publications and the Regulations, thus in effect placing the periodical under the jurisdiction of the Chinese authorities and submitting it to their censorship.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{37} Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister in Peiping, 1 October 1932. Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, China, internal affairs 1930–1939 (SDCF), 893.918/75.
\textsuperscript{38} The Charge in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State, 20 November 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East: volume III, 619.
\textsuperscript{39} The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 7 March 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 683.
\textsuperscript{40} The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East: Vol. 3, 687.
\textsuperscript{41} Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister in Peiping, 1 October 1932, SDCF, 893.918/76.
Although Cunningham did not directly object to the registration, he still advised the Consulate to ensure that the American papers “relinquish none of their extraterritorial rights” by lodging their registration with the Chinese government. Meanwhile, foreign legations opposed registration to the Guomindang Headquarters, believing that the duel registration was neither necessary nor appropriate. They also regarded registration with the Guomindang headquarters as an action subjecting the paper’s view to the line of the Party, an action against the principle of freedom of speech. The representative of the British Legation, Ingram, complained to China’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luo Wengan, that

\[\text{[t]he idea of subordinating a paper to the views of one particular political party [is] obnoxious to us, and we could never condone our nationals subscribing to those portions of the Publication Law which involved registration with the Kuomintang or submission to any form of censorship or dictatorship by the Party.}\]

The American, British and French legations, therefore, sought a coordinated effort to boycott the registration. They advised papers of their respective nationalities to ignore Nanjing’s demand temporarily and see how things would develop. They also took concerted efforts to exert diplomatic pressure on Nanjing, demanding the government to exempt foreign papers from the Chinese Publication Law. The legations actively communicated with each other and formulated an agreement before replying to the Chinese government. They even tried to synchronize the time of their replies so as to enhance their impact and avoid inconsistency.

Despite the concerted efforts, the foreign legations knew their limits. The withdrawal of postal facilities by the Nanjing government was an effective weapon to punish unregistered journals. The Chinese government restored its

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42 Ibid.
43 Ingram to Luo Wengan, 26 October 1932, in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, 外國新聞紙雜誌適用出版法問題案, October 1932–December 1934, 172-1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
44 Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister in Peiping, 1 October 1932, SDCF, 893.918/76.
45 The Secretary of State to the Minister in China (Johnson), 1 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 686.
postal control during the Washington Conference. Although extraterritoriality protected foreign papers from penalties imposed by the Chinese Publication Law, Nanjing could still ban the posting of disobedient journals outside of treaty ports.\(^{46}\) Furthermore, Western powers faced a moral dilemma in denying the binding force of China’s Publication Law. Sir John Brenan, British Consul General, confessed that the registration was “a difficult matter to deal with.” “The foreign powers had been continually urging the Chinese to enact modern laws, codes, etc.,” stated Brenan, “Now the Chinese had brought forth a law of publications...it would be difficult for a foreign publication to refuse to comply with the law.”\(^{47}\) Brenan also admitted that similar registration orders were common in Western countries and that all publications within their borders had to live up to the standards set by those orders. The Chinese government was justified, therefore, in setting reasonable standards to regulate publications.\(^{48}\) Confined by these limitations, the foreign Legations understood well that they could not seek a total abandonment of the registration order from Nanjing. The practical goal was to “satisfy the government half-way” so as to continue the postal facilities.\(^{49}\)

Even so, the coordinated effort could not obscure the disunity among Western powers. It should be noted that the American Legation, which had followed the British Legation in the negotiations over the abolition of extraterritoriality in 1930, this time took on an attitude that was more radical than that of its British and French counterparts. The British Legation, which appeared to have lost interest in defending extraterritorial rights in publishing, became a passive follower instead.

Throughout the negotiations on the press registration, the American Legation considered the registration order a serious encroachment of extraterritorial rights. American-based diplomats chastised that China’s postal ban was a misuse of postal power that violated the resolution reached at the Washington Conference, whereby the signatory countries agreed to the return of postal rights to China.\(^{50}\) The legation also insisted that American newspapers and periodicals should not

\(^{46}\) The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 688.

\(^{47}\) Memorandum of Conversation, 20 October 1932, SDCF, 893.918/76.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Edwin S. Cunningham, American Consul General, to Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister in Peiping, 1 October 1932, SDCF, 893.918/75.

\(^{50}\) Nelson T. Johnson to Luo Wengan, 2 February 1933, in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932–December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
register with the Ministry of the Interior before Chinese authorities provided a written assurance to exempt the papers from Chinese penalties, censorship and registration to the Nationalist party.\textsuperscript{51}

The British Legation, in contrast, "viewed this matter much less seriously."\textsuperscript{52} It tended to ignore Nanjing's demand and deal with the issue through informal negotiations, which Ingram and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to engage in.\textsuperscript{53} It also believed that the case was not closely pertinent to the preservation of extraterritorial rights since "there was no question of relinquishment."\textsuperscript{54} Issues concerning penalty clauses in the Publication Law that contravened extraterritorial rights "should be dealt with as they arise."\textsuperscript{55} Although the French Legation generally followed the US stance, it was much less obstinate in confronting the Nanjing government on this matter. The legation gave ground and advised their periodicals to register months before the US Legation made similar concessions.\textsuperscript{56} The retreat, inevitably, dissolved the alliance and weakened the position of the US Legation in subsequent negotiations.

Throughout the negotiations over press registration, the Nanjing government maintained a flexible and compromising attitude. The attitude was not only the result of the foreign legations' coordinated pressure but also the outcome of the relevant ministries' lack of communication and failure to reach a unified view. The Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of the Interior, two offices that initiated the registration, did not consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the registration order was sent to the foreign papers. Luo Wengan, then the Foreign Minister, had to learn the "facts of the case" from complaints lodged to his ministry by various legations.\textsuperscript{57} The lack of prior communication, in particular, created a split between the ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was much

\textsuperscript{51} The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in China (Johnson), 13 July 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 690.
\textsuperscript{52} The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Acting Secretary of State, 7 December 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 692.
\textsuperscript{53} The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 687.
\textsuperscript{54} Memorandum of Conversation, 20 October 1932. SDCF, 893.918/76.
\textsuperscript{55} Edwin S. Cunningham to Nelson T. Johnson, 6 December 1932, SDCF, 893.918/76.
\textsuperscript{56} The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 687.
\textsuperscript{57} Ingram to Luo Wengan, 26 October 1932, in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti'an 外國新聞紙雜誌適用出辦法問題案 (Application of the Publication Law on foreign-operated newspapers and magazines), October 1932–December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
less willing to cause a rift between Nanjing and the foreign press when the propaganda battle against Japan was at its height and favourable portrayal of China by foreign press was desperately needed:

The time seems most inappropriate to extend to the foreign press of China the restrictions of the Chinese press law. The British, American and French papers of Shanghai and of the main open ports of China are at present, on the whole, supporting the Chinese case against Japan. They are contributing to the formation of a general current of opinion favourable to China’s claims. It would be impolitic to antagonize them just now and to give to Japanese propagandists a weapon which they will not fail to use against the Chinese government. ⁵⁸

The office, therefore, tried hard to temper the conflict. Luo Wengan even orally promised Ingram that “the (Chinese) legislation would not be applied to British publications which accordingly would not be required to register.” ⁵⁹ Luo, nevertheless, refused to undergird his oral promise with a written assurance when asked to do so by Ingram, but his words intimated to what degree his ministry was willing to concede and his own eagerness to pacify the unrest. While the Nanjing government was seeking amendments to the registration order, Luo also repeatedly advised the Ministry of the Interior to temporarily suspend the registration order before new terms were settled. ⁶⁰

The Ministry of the Interior was eager to activate the registration order so as to “gain face.” ⁶¹ “Should those foreign papers refuse to register,” commented the

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⁵⁸ Memorandum for Luo Wengan, 1932 (estimated), in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932—December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
⁵⁹ Ingram to Luo Wengan, 17 December 1932, Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932—December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
⁶⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior, 25 November 1932; International Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Mayor of Shanghai, 23 November 1932; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Executive Yuan, 26 November 1932, Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an 外國新聞紙雜誌適用出版法問題案, October 1932—December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
⁶¹ C. E. Gauss quoted Gan Naiguang, Vice Minister of the Interior, in The Charge in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of the State, 20 November 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East: Vol. 3, 619.
official of the ministry, “the order would be issued in vain.” However, the intransigent policy met with foreign newspapers’ non-cooperation. Most of the papers, upon their legations’ advice, chose to ignore the order, awaiting further amendments. The Ministry of the Interior, as discussed above, also received little support from officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The lack of cooperation finally forced the Ministry of the Interior to soften its stance so as to make the registration order effective. Firstly, instead of exempting the foreign papers from the Chinese Publication Law, as Luo orally promised to the British Legation, the ministry agreed to temporarily “suspend” the penalties of the press law to the foreign press. Secondly, the ministry relinquished the requirement to register with the Party Headquarters. Thirdly, the ministry offered special postal rates as a benefit for the registered papers. The “favourable terms,” claimed the ministry, were to “eliminate suspicion of China’s intention on the registration order and show respect to the friendly nations.” The ministry insisted that the purpose of the registration “was to collect statistical information about the foreign press” rather than to regulate the content of the press. No matter how Nanjing conceded with Western legations, the bottom line was clear: China would not forfeit its right to punish the unfriendly papers. T. V. Soong, the deputy president of the Executive Yuan, reaffirmed that the Nanjing government would withdraw postal privileges from “any foreign papers that failed to abide by the Chinese press law.”

China’s concession as well as the threat of a postal ban dissolved the foreign legations’ anti-registration alliance. In April 1933, the French Legation advised papers operating in the French Concession to register. Satisfied with not registering to the Party, the British Legation acquiesced in the registration of British publications in December 1933. The US Legation was left alone in its

62 Correspondence of the Ministry of the Interior, November 1933 (estimated), in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932–December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
63 Documents on foreign press’ registration, 19 May 1933, October 1932—December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
64 Documents on foreign press’ registration, 19 May 1933, in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932—December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
65 T. V. Soong’s order, 1932–1933 (estimated), in Waiguo xinwenzhi zazhi shiyong chubanfa wenti’an, October 1932–December 1934, 172–1, 3138–(1), files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Academia Historica.
66 The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State, 5 April 1933, USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 688.
67 The Minister in China (Johnson) to the Acting Secretary of State, 7 December 1933,
protest. Its position was further challenged when the US journal, the *China Weekly Review*, voluntarily registered with the Ministry of the Interior despite the legation’s advice to ignore the order. In 1934 the Nanjing government issued an ultimatum to foreign papers, warning that they should either register or face postal bans. Faced with all these pressures, the American Legation withdrew its objection, but this did not mean the legation would support the registration. It adopted a hands-off policy, refusing to compel periodicals or publications to register if the paper decided not to. Nevertheless, without the coordination of foreign legations, the collective boycott on the registration soon broke down. Whether because of the threat of a postal ban or the attraction of favourable postage rates, in 1934 papers began to lodge applications with the Ministry of the Interior.

**Unifying the Voice, Unifying the Control**

Foreign propaganda in the mid-1930s was not only a method for diplomacy but also a way to acquire political supremacy in domestic struggles. In 1932, Chiang Kai-shek only had limited control over Nanjing’s foreign propaganda. Most of the propaganda resources were held by the Guomindang leftists. The Guo Min News Agency and the *Peking Leader/Peiping Chronicle*, for instance, were operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a ministry dominated by the leftists. The *People’s Tribune*, a “mouthpiece of Wang Jingwei,” was edited by Tang Liangli 湯良禮 (also T’ang Leang-li), Wang’s personal secretary and foreign propagandist. Wang was more interested in elevating his position in the Nationalist party than propagating China’s case. The *Tribune*, the Party’s foreign propaganda outlet, for example, was exploited to enhance Wang’s prestige. It frequently carried articles critical of Chiang’s policy, despite the fact that such criticism could undermine China’s general reputation abroad. In 1931, Tang published an English biography of Wang, applauding his achievements in politics. The *China Today* series edited by Tang in the early 1930s, again, attributed China’s construction solely to the leadership of Wang Jingwei.

USDS/PRFRUS, 1933, the Far East: Vol. 3, 691.
68 The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in China (Johnson), 18 January 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East: Vol. 3, 618.
69 C. E. Gauss to the Secretary of State, Washington, 18 February 1935, SDCF, 893.91/18.
Chiang also faced Hu Hanmin’s challenge from south China. Tapping into the unpopularity of the Tanggu Truce and Chiang’s non-resistance policy, Hu vehemently criticized Nanjing’s appeasement to Japan as “humiliating” and constantly pressed Chiang to go north to confront Japanese troops.\(^7\) Hu’s policy was characterized by its three stances: “anti-Chiang,” “anti-Japanese” and “anti-Communist.”\(^7\) It was clear that challenging Chiang’s rule was the ultimate objective while opposing Japan and the Communist Party were means to garner public support for his rivalry with Nanjing. In fact, Hu only paid lip service to his anti-Japanese and anti-Communist agenda. He was found secretly receiving Japanese military and political visitors, who were sent to south China to win over Hu’s support in attacking Chiang.\(^7\)

Hu Hanmin built his own foreign propaganda machinery to win foreign support. He established an English-language news agency to transmit news about southwestern China—the region he controlled—to the outside world. The agency not only networked with British, US, Russian and German news agencies but also connected with Hong Kong and key newspapers abroad.\(^7\) In the latter half of 1934, the agency transmitted 609 short reports (300–1000 characters) and 723 long articles (1500–3000 characters). It was estimated that over thirty newspapers in and outside China frequently quoted reports from Hu’s news agency.\(^7\)

As one of the main party leaders, Hu also used the Guomindang headquarters overseas to influence the foreign public. After the Tanggu Truce, Hu sent Cheng Tiangu 程天固 to the Guomindang headquarters in San Francisco to organize foreign propaganda in the United States.\(^7\) According to Cheng’s correspondence with the headquarters, the goal of Cheng’s trip was to interpret China’s domestic situation from Hu’s perspective and instigate protests against Chiang’s policy. Hu

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\(^7\) Hu Hanmin to the party headquarters in the United States, in Chen Hongmin, *Hu Hanmin weikan wanglai handiangao* 3 胡漢民來往往來函電稿 3 (Hu Hanmin’s unpublished correspondence) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2005), 573.

\(^7\) Chen Hongmin, “Hu Hanmin nianbiao (1931.9—1936.5),” *Minguo dang’ an* No.1 (1986), 126.


\(^7\) Xi’nan zhexing mishu chu, *Xi’nan dangwu nianbao*, in Guangdong archives, quoted in Chen Hongmin, *Handian lide renji guanxi yu zhengzhi*, 276.

\(^7\) Chen Hongmin, *Handian lide renji guanxi yu zhengzhi*, 276.

\(^7\) Hu Hanmin to the party headquarters in the United States, in Chen Hongmin, *Hu Hanmin weikan wanglai handiangao* 3, 573–574.
criticized the Nanjing government’s acceptance of the Tangu Truce and the non-resistance policy after the Mukden Incident. He also condemned the suppression of popular anti-Japanese activities by the Nanjing government. T. V. Soong, despite his disagreement with Chiang’s appeasement policy and his efforts in obtaining financial support from Western powers to aid China’s economic development, was not immune from Hu’s attack. Hu regarded the US cotton-and-wheat loan obtained by Soong as a funding to fuel Chiang’s rivalry with the leftists.\textsuperscript{76}

The marked difference between Hu’s and Chiang’s interpretations of Chinese affairs created confusion among foreign audiences, thus undermining China’s diplomacy and prestige abroad. Wellington Koo complained that the split between the central government and the regional forces as well as the struggles within the Nanjing regime wreaked havoc on his propaganda efforts in the League of Nations. Delegates from France, Britain, Australia and other countries had repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with China’s chaotic political situation, intimating to Koo that a unified voice from the Chinese government was the prerequisite for China to win foreign support.\textsuperscript{77} China’s disunity was also exploited as a pretext for Japan to disobey the Lytton Report which requested Japan to negotiate directly with the Chinese government for a settlement of Manchurian issues. According to Koo, Japanese Prime Minister Saitō Makoto complained openly to the media that negotiating with China was a more difficult task than settling the Manchurian problem. “We simply do not know where the Chinese government is; who is the leader and how should we negotiate.”\textsuperscript{78}

Troubled by the disunity, Chiang resolved to strengthen his control over foreign propaganda and unify China’s foreign propaganda resources. He pursued the goal on three fronts: reorganizing the Central News Agency, subsidizing the China Press, and creating a censorship system for outgoing news.

\textit{Reorganization of the Central News Agency}

The Central News Agency (Zhongyang tongxunshe 中央通訊社) was launched in

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Wellington Koo, \textit{Gu Weijun huiyilu}, 71.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 72.
1924 in Guangzhou under the supervision of the Central Party Headquarters (Zhongyang dangbu 中央黨部). It was established “to distribute information on central and local party affairs, and to supply reports on social, economic, political, diplomatic and military matters to the Chinese people.” The agency also aimed to break the monopoly on news by foreign agencies in China. Despite the ambitious plan, the agency did not have its own correspondents in the early years. News was supposed to be supplied by local party members, who, according to the Central Executive Committee’s order, bore “the obligation to report news to the Central News Agency.” Without proper institutions to supervise the service, local party members only reported to the agency on a voluntary basis and a regular and sufficient supply of news was thus not guaranteed. The agency distributed news once a day, comprising a report of 2,000 words at most. Its insufficient service hardly attracted attention from the press. Another reason for its unpopularity was the lack of human interest stories in their reports. Staffed by party administrators with no journalistic skills, the agency tended to collect reports on party-related issues, such as conference proceedings and orders issued by party leaders. Such ideologically charged information hardly intrigued the general audience.

The agency moved its headquarters from Guangzhou to Nanjing after Chiang Kai-shek founded the Nanjing government in 1928. Hu Hanmin, then the Minister of Information, placed the agency under the control of his ministry. He created editing and news offices, established branch offices in Wuhan, Beijing and Shanghai, and hired local correspondents in these cities. With the support of local cable companies, the agency greatly expanded its service. Apart from disseminating news, the agency was also in charge of censorship, blocking or

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80 Zhongyang tongxunshe, Zhongyangshe liushi nian 中央社六十年 (The Central News Agency in the past sixty years) (Taipei: Zhongyang tongxunshe, 1984), 2.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 “Liushisannian jiuyue shi'er ri zoufang Luo Xuelian xiansheng bilu” 六十三年九月十二日 走訪羅學濂先生筆錄 (The visit to Luo Xuelian on 12 September 1974) quoted in Changning weishi ziliao weiyuanhui, Xiao Tongzi he Zhongyang tongxunshe, 247.
84 Zhongyang tongxunshe, Zhongyangshe liushinian, 2.
editing news reports unfriendly to the Guomindang government. Despite receiving government funding, the scale of the agency remained small. It was little known among foreign correspondents in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The agency only achieved a marked development after it was reorganized by Xiao Tongzi 肖同兹 in 1932. Before joining the agency, Xiao was a secretary of the Ministry of Information, close to Ye Chucang 葉楚伧 and Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城, cabinet officials of Chiang Kai-shek. Xiao gained Chiang’s trust in 1930 when he, together with Wu, assisted Chiang to win over Zhang Xueliang’s military support against the warlord rebellion in Beijing. In 1932, Xiao was appointed head of the Central News Agency upon Ye’s recommendation. Unlike some of the conservative party propagandists who considered the agency an organ for the dissemination of the Guomindang’s ideology, Xiao considered the news agency a public institution, independent from the control of the Party. Xiao’s vision translated into three principles of the reorganization: first, the agency should be separated from the Ministry of Information and operate as an independent organization. Second, the agency should establish its own wireless news network. Third, the agency should enjoy sufficient discretion in deciding what to report and who to recruit.

Xiao’s “three principles” received strong support from Chiang Kai-shek and his follower, Chen Guofu 陈果夫, the leader of the C. C. Clique who was supervising the construction of a wireless infrastructure throughout the country. Since the Ministry of Information was strongly influenced by the Guomindang leftists, Chiang saw the separation of the agency from the ministry as a great opportunity to weaken the control of information by the leftists. Chen Guofu, who had been urging the government to catch up with Western countries in the development of news, radio and film propaganda, also favoured Xiao’s plan about developing national wireless infrastructure.

85 See quotes on the Guomindang government’s order, Zhongyang tongxunshe, Zhongyangshe liushinian, 4.
86 Zhao Minheng, The Foreign Press in China (Shanghai, China: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1931), 6.
89 See Fang Zhi’s account on Chen’s support of the independent operation of the Central News Agency in Feng Zhixiang, Xiao Tongzi zhuang, 154–155.
Xiao's principles were also warmly received among the public elite. Yearning for a national news agency to champion China's case abroad, private newspapermen were eager to see the establishment of a news agency with the government's support in news infrastructure, yet independent of the Party's ideological control. For decades, private media practitioners had tried hard to build a national news agency. The Guo Wen News Agency established by Hu Zhengzhi in 1921 and the Shen Shi News Agency founded by Zhang Zhuping in 1928 were the relatively successful ones. Yet the lack of funds and infrastructure constantly impeded their development. Endorsement by the government, which had better command of resources in building infrastructure for news transmission and raising funds, would greatly relieve their problems. Due to mutual distrust, however, the private news agencies and the government were never close. While the government insisted that news agencies should promote the Party's ideology and thus strengthen its authority, private newspapermen perceived the agency as a tool to serve the public, to transmit uncensored information and to promote the freedom of expression. Apart from having different views of the responsibilities of a news agency, the two were also antagonized by practical conflicts. Private media often fell prey to factional patronage, being exploited as a tool to challenge the central government. Cautious of the potential impact of local news agencies, the government was ready to crack down on them when private agencies were unfriendly to the central authority. The demise of the "Four Agencies" mentioned later in this chapter is a good example. Xiao's promise to build a news agency that served "all newspapers instead of a party" greatly appealed to the private newspapermen. Although some papers were suspicious of Xiao's intentions, most press leaders welcomed Xiao's plan and expressed their interest in cooperation.

The government sanctioned Xiao's plan and the reorganization soon took place. To openly declare the agency's independence from the Party, the first thing Xiao did was to move the agency's offices out of the compound of the Ministry of Information. This physical separation, nevertheless, was only nominal. The

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90 Ge Gongzhen, "Zhongguo jixu yige daibiao tongxinshe," in Huang Tianpeng, Xinwenxue minglunji (Collection of key articles on journalism) (Shanghai: Lianhe shudian, 1930), 41.
91 Feng Zhixiang, Xiao Tongzi zhuan, 253.
agency still relied on the ministry for funding.\(^92\)

Xiao’s reorganization took three main directions: the building of a wireless network; the takeover of Reuters’ Chinese-language service in the domestic news market; and the establishment of an English-language department. Recognizing the importance of a news infrastructure as the prerequisite for an efficient news agency, Xiao launched a project to construct a news network that sought to connect Beijing, Tianjin, Xi’an, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hankou and Hong Kong via a wireless service within a period of one year. The nationwide project showed the advantages of being a state-operated agency. The government allowed the agency to build its own wireless network, a privilege unattainable for privately operated competitors. The project also received funding from various ministries of the central government\(^93\) and local party organs.\(^94\) Even Chiang was occasionally involved in fund-raising for the agency when the project was in urgent need of capital.\(^95\)

The Central News Agency also broke Reuters’ news monopoly in China. As early as October 1931, the Nanjing government had withdrawn Reuters’ rights to operate a wireless service as well as to supply the local press with Chinese-language dispatches.\(^96\) Without a large-scale Chinese news agency to take over Reuters’ domestic services, however, Nanjing’s control over the domestic news market remained nominal.\(^97\) It was not until the rise of the Central News Agency in 1932 that a serious acquisition of Reuters’ service took place. In June that year the agency acquired Reuters’ cable assets in Shanghai and Nanjing and built its own branch stations on those premises.\(^98\) Two years later, in 1934, it contracted with Reuters to exchange Chinese domestic news for Reuters’ English-language dispatches.\(^99\) Documents of the Chinese Central Bank recorded that the Central Executive Committee provided a 10,000 yuan allowance to Reuters monthly.\(^100\)

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\(^92\) Changning weishi ziliao weiyuanhui, *Changning wenshi ziliao disiji: Xiao Tongzi he Zhongyang tongxunshe*, 161.
\(^93\) Ibid.
\(^94\) Ibid., 107.
\(^95\) Ibid., 161.
\(^96\) Ibid., 274.
\(^97\) Feng Zhixiang, *Xiao Tongzi zhuan*, 190.
Although the document does not specify the purpose of the allowance, it is reasonable to assume that the funds were allocated for the purchase of Reuters' service and compensation for the cable or wireless assets taken over by the Central News Agency. Another document of the US Department of State showed that the Guomindang government, in fact, paid $23,000 every month to Reuters: $13,000 from the party and $10,000 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And the agreement between the Reuters and the Central News Agency were not well received by foreign journalists in China.101

To further extend the influence of the agency globally, in 1934 Xiao established an English-language department. Having no experience in English-language press, Xiao turned to his friend Zhang Mingwei 張明煒, editor of the Peiping Chronicle, for advice.102 Together, they worked out criteria for the selection of the department’s personnel: they had to be bilingual Chinese nationals with professional training in journalism.103 The Central News Agency built its English-language service mainly upon the team of the Peiping Chronicle. Xiao appointed Ren Lingxun 任玲遜, assistant editor of the Chronicle, to lead the English department. The department was headquartered in Tianjin, a place deliberately chosen to avoid the fierce media competition in Shanghai and to expand the Guomindang’s influence in North China.

As a start, Ren sought to sign contracts with the two English-language newspapers in Tianjin, the American-owned North China Star and the British paper, the Peiping and Tientsin Times. With better access to news sources after taking over Reuter’s domestic service, Ren’s office managed to update China’s domestic events faster than other agencies. The North China Star immediately signed a contract with the Central News Agency after the trial period. The Peiping and Tientsin Times, however, refused to pay for the service under the pretext that the agency was a government organ and that the material supplied by the agency was pure propaganda. Ren therefore terminated the English-language

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101 News agencies, confidential office memorandum, SDCF, 893.91/15.
103 Ibid.
service to the paper after the trial period. Within a month, the paper approached Ren's office again, asking for a contract. In the following years it turned out that the *Peiping* and *Tientsin Times* quoted more Central News Agency's reports than the *Star*. After the success in Tianjin, Xiao expanded the English-language service to Nanjing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Most of the staff of the department had graduated from the School of Journalism at Yenching University, an American-operated Christian university established in 1919. The School was launched in 1924 modelled after the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, whose alumni, including Thomas F. Millard and his followers, John B. Powell, Edgar Snow and Hollington Tong, deeply influenced China's modern journalism. The Missouri-China network become further institutionalized in 1928 when Walter Williams, the dean of the School of Journalism, Missouri University, obtained funds for the five-year operation of Department of Journalism at Yenching University. The two schools exchanged professors and visiting lectures and established reciprocal graduate fellowships to promote student exchange. Curriculums and textbooks of the journalism school of the University of Missouri were also widely used in its counterpart at Yenching University. Chinese students were taught in English by US teachers based on US journalistic principles. This training not only exposed students to modern journalistic skills but also trained their English-language proficiency.

Xiao recruited outstanding Yenching graduates into his team. Wang Jiasong 王家松, then teaching assistant at the School of Journalism of Yenching University, was hired to take charge of the department's Nanjing office. Xu Zhaoyong 徐兆鏘, a Yenching graduate who was then working as head of the translation office of the Longhai Railway Bureau, was also employed to assist the department's news reporting. In the Shanghai office, Xiao appointed Tang Dechen 湯德臣 and Shen Jianhong 沈劍虹, two Yenching University alumni with

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exchange experience at the University of Missouri\textsuperscript{107} to lead the office. Together, they formed a strong English news network, providing information about Chinese domestic issues abroad.

\textit{The control of the China Press}

Chiang Kai-shek was eager to acquire a prestigious treaty-port English-language paper to strengthen his influence in the English-language media. The paper he chose to subsidize was the \textit{China Press}, one of the most distinguished English-language dailies in Shanghai in the 1930s. The circulation of the paper reached 8,000 in the mid-1930s,\textsuperscript{108} surpassing its British competitor the \textit{North China Daily News} to become the most popular English-language paper in Shanghai. Chiang gained access to the \textit{China Press} through Hollington K. Tong, the managing director of the paper from 1930 to late 1934.

Hollington Tong was undeniably the most important person linking Chiang Kai-shek with the treaty-port press. His professional ability and his extensive social networks in both the treaty-port press and politics (see Chapter 3) made him an ideal contact for Chiang to extend the influence of the Guomindang government in the English-language press. Chiang approached Tong via his secretary Yang Yongtai 楊永泰 in September 1932, inviting Tong to assist with the government’s propaganda in Shanghai.\textsuperscript{109} Unlike some of the members of the \textit{China Critic} group, mentioned in Chapter 3, who tried to distance themselves from governmental influence so as to maintain editorial independence, Tong was more accessible to Chiang. In fact, Tong was close to Chiang in private life. He was Chiang’s English teacher in 1906 when Chiang was a student of the Longjin high school.\textsuperscript{110} Chiang met Tong again in 1929 when Tong was invited by his friend Han Xigui 韓錫珪, General of the Navy, to accompany him on a tour to

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\textsuperscript{107} Xu Zhaoyong 徐兆鏞, “Xiao xiansheng chuangban zhongyangshe yingwenbu de qingxing,” 肖先生創辦中央社英文部的情形, in Changning weishi ziliao weiyuanhui, Changning weishi ziliao disiji: Xiao Tongzi he Zhongyang tongxunshe, 15.

\textsuperscript{108} Tzu-Hsiang Ch’en, \textit{The English-Language Daily Press in China}, edited under the auspices of the Department of Journalism, Yenching University (Beijing: Collectanea Commiss. Synodal, 1937), 12.

\textsuperscript{109} Yang Yongtai to Chiang Kai-shek about Hollington Tong’s plan on foreign propaganda, 24 September 1932, Chiang Kai-shek’s archives, 002080200057017, Academia Historica.

Japan, the United States, Britain, France and Italy to learn their experiences in naval construction. Chiang then invited Tong to visit his home town. The private trip greatly promoted their mutual trust and Tong’s loyalty to Chiang.\textsuperscript{111} This teacher-student experience, as Tong observed, paved the way for “a strong personal friendship besides the working relations,”\textsuperscript{112} and strengthened their ties in politics in the following years.

Tong agreed to work as a contact for Chiang on the condition that his connection with the government was concealed. This request was more a result of Tong’s concern about the efficacy of propaganda than his fear of losing independence. Trained in the United States, Tong understood the Anglo-American audience’s distrust of propaganda after World War I. He believed that China’s English-language propaganda was more plagued by the unsophisticated techniques than the underdevelopment of the news infrastructure and network. “The propaganda material used by the \textit{Chinese Nation} and the Guo Min News Agency”, Tong criticized, “is either too dry to arouse people’s interest or smacks too strongly of propaganda.”\textsuperscript{113} He believed that indirect propaganda was the best way of spreading information, in which the true source and intention were concealed and messages were transmitted to audiences via an independent platform. He strongly encouraged the Nanjing government to use foreign newspapers and agencies—platforms that enjoyed greater credibility than Chinese sources—to fulfill its propaganda agenda. Assenting to Tong’s vision, Chiang subsidized Tong with 5,000 yuan each month to conduct propaganda for the government via the \textit{China Press}. Tong’s responsibility was threefold: to publish pro-government information in the \textit{China Press}; to establish a professional and social network in treaty ports; and to collect propaganda materials for the government.\textsuperscript{114} To keep the connections between the \textit{Press} and the government secret, Tong directly reported to Chiang about his monthly progress.\textsuperscript{115}

The \textit{China Press} was an ideal platform for Tong to tighten his connection with foreign journalists. As an English-language paper ostensibly organized by

\textsuperscript{111} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dong Xianguang zizhuan: yige nongfu de zishu} (An autobiography of Hollington Tong: an account of a farmer) (Taipei: Taiwan xinsheng baoshe, 1973), 48–54.
\textsuperscript{112} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dong Xianguang zizhuan}, 53.
\textsuperscript{113} Yang Yongtai to Chiang Kai-shek about Hollington Tong’s plan on foreign propaganda, 24 September 1932, Chiang Kai-shek’s archives, 002080200057017, Academia Historica.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Hollington Tong’s report on the operation of the \textit{China Press} in October 1933, 14 November 1933, Chiang Kai-shek’s archives, 002080200248042, Academia Historica.
Sino-American joint interests, the paper attracted many young Americans who were enthusiastic about East Asian affairs. While Tong was editor of the Press, "a surprisingly large number of American newspapermen...drifted in and out of the staff." The paper became the first stop for most foreign journalists to China. This provided the paper with prime opportunities to shape the journalists' view of Chinese issues. Apart from being an organization of publicity, the paper was also an "incubator" that trained "newly-coming western journalists to develop better knowledge of this country and establish personal networks."117

The China Press was to the Far East what the Paris Herald was to Europe. Newspapermen and women on their way around the world would stop over in Shanghai, work for the Press for a few months to earn passage money to the next port, and then moved on. Others who held permanent interest in China and the Far East would stay longer and then took positions as correspondents with home-based papers and agencies.118

The China Press nurtured a significant number of foreign correspondents, who later worked for mainstream media in the United States and Britain. Tillman Durdin, who served the China Press in the mid-1930s, for example, became a Far Eastern correspondent of The New York Times after 1937, while Harold Isaacs became responsible for covering wartime China for Newsweek.119

The China Press did not lose its independence despite the subsidy from the Guomindang government. The managing team led by Tong paid special attention to maintaining the paper's "liberal" stance so as to enhance the paper's credibility. Yet its liberal attitude often aroused the government's ire. Tong therefore had to

117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
be careful not to exacerbate tensions. During the Shanghai Incident in 1932, for example, Chiang repeatedly requested Tong to hold back reports on the 19th Route Army’s disobedience to the order of the central government, believing such reports would expose the disunity within the government. Tong’s withdrawal of relevant reports met with heavy complaints from his American colleagues. In late 1933, when Chiang sent troops to Fuzhou to break the rebellion launched by the leaders of the 19th Route Army and the Guomindang leftists, a photo depicting the Nanjing government’s air bombing of a high school in Fuzhou published by Harold Isaacs in the *Press* infuriated Chiang. As a result, Tong had to travel from Shanghai to Nanjing in person to apologize for the “mistake.”

The *China Press* staff party

Tensions not only arose between journalists and officials but also between the owner of the press syndicate, Zhang Zhuping, and the Nanjing leaders. Zhang was a graduate of St. John University, an American-operated missionary university in Shanghai. He was also a member of the Green Gang, an influential

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120 Hollington Tong, *Dong Xianguang zizhuan*, 61.
121 Ibid., 59–60.
underground society in Shanghai led by Du Yuesheng.\textsuperscript{123} Zhang joined \textit{Shen Bao} in 1914. Together with Shi Liangcai, they turned \textit{Shen Bao} into the most popular newspaper in China, with a daily circulation of 150,000 in the early 1930s.\textsuperscript{124} While working under Shi, Zhang started his own news agencies and newspapers. In 1928 he established the \textit{Shen Shi} 申時 News Agency and purchased the \textit{Shi Shi Xin Bao} 時事新報. In late 1930, he obtained control of the \textit{China Press} and in early 1932 he founded a native evening paper \textit{Da Wan Bao} 大晚報. With a Chinese-language daily and evening paper, an English-language daily and a news agency in hand, Zhang began to build his long-planned press syndicate.\textsuperscript{125} To effectively merge the \textit{Shen Shi}, \textit{Shi Shi Xin Bao}, the \textit{China Press} and \textit{Da Wan Bao}, he created a general managing team to supervise the four presses' operations. Named the “Four Agencies” 四社, the alliance was the first commercial press syndicate in China. Its network greatly facilitated the flow of information and Zhang was frequently referred to in the West as the “Chinese Lord Northcliffe or Hearst.”\textsuperscript{126} Nevertheless, the general management was only nominal. The four institutions kept their own boards and managing apparatus with full discretion over their own operations.

The intervention of the Guomindang government undermined the development of the press syndicate before Zhang was able to fully integrate the Four Agencies. Chiang Kai-shek desired to control the media, especially in the mid-1930s when his appeasement policy proved unpopular with the public. He was unhappy to see a large press syndicate operated by a disobedient entrepreneur. Chiang and Zhang’s dispute lay mainly in the editorial policy of the \textit{Shi Shi Xin Bao}. As the third-largest native paper circulating about 50,000 copies daily, the paper was the backbone of Zhang’s Four Agencies. The paper adopted a critical

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{125} Zhang Zhuping, “\textit{Shen Shi dianxunshe zhi huigu yu qianzhan},” \textit{Shen Shi dianxunshe}, \textit{Shinian}—11 (Ten years), 1934, 11.
\bibitem{126} Douglas Jenkins to Nelson T. Johnson, 24 February 1931, SDCF, 893.911/266.
\end{thebibliography}
and sometimes unfriendly attitude toward Chiang's clique and the tension was finally strained to breaking point when Chiang found the paper entangled in the Fujian rebellion. In 1933, the 19th Route Army was deployed to Fujian to suppress a Communist rebellion. The leaders of the army, including Cai Tingkai, Chen Mingshu and Jiang Guangnai, entered peace negotiations with the Communists instead of fighting with them. Allied with the Guomindang leftist forces led by Li Jishen, they formed an anti-Chiang group in Fujian and proclaimed a new government in the area in November 1933. Meanwhile, Jiang Tingkai secretly approached Zhang, asking him to support the legitimacy of the Fujian government via his "Four Agencies." In return, Jiang promised to invest 400,000 yuan in Zhang's syndicate, a fund Zhang urgently needed to strengthen the fledging enterprise. After the Fujian Rebellion was suppressed by Chiang in January 1934, however, its connection with the "Four Agencies" was revealed. In response, Chiang placed a postal ban on the Shi Shi Xin Bao in late 1934. Upon learning that Zhang secretly inserted banned Shi Shi Xin Bao pages in the China Press, Chiang not only ceased subsidy to the Press but also suspended postal service for the paper.

The postal ban on two of Zhang's major papers dealt a heavy blow to his syndicate. Zhang was already deeply indebted to Du Yuesheng for the establishment and operation of the syndicate. The postal ban further exacerbated his financial difficulties. Under Du's pressure, Zhang had to mortgage the properties of the Four Agencies to Du and appointed Du as temporary managing director of his press syndicate. During Zhang's half-retirement, he was approached by the Minister of Finance, Kong Xiangxi, possibly on behalf of members of the Song family, to purchase his shares of the Four Agencies at the low price of 200,000 yuan. Zhang had to accept the deal since it was supported by his creditor Du, who cared more about his monetary interests in the paper than

127 Ibid.
130 Chiang Kai-shek ordered Zhu Jiahua to cease postal services for the China Press and Shi Shi Xin Bao, 13 September 1934, Chiang Kai-shek's archives, 002080200179076, Academia Historica.
131 Edwin S. Cunningham to the Secretary of State, Washington, 10 June 1935, SDCF, 893.911/311.
its ownership and editorial policies. Zhang eventually only obtained 50,000 yuan from Kong and left Shanghai for Hong Kong, never again stepping into the press business. Compared with Shi Liangcai, the owner of Shen Bao, who was assassinated by the C. C. Clique in 1934 because of its anti-Chiang stance, Zhang's retreat from the press was not a bad ending.

Upon the government's purchase of the Four Agencies in early 1935, Kong obtained full control of the Press and turned the paper into "an organ of propaganda for the National Government." Tong resigned from the Press due to health problems in late 1934. Kong assigned Yang Guangsheng 楊光泩 (also known as Kwangson/Kuangson Young) as managing director of the Press, assisted by F. L. Pratt, an Australian journalist, and John B. Penniston, an American who worked under Pratt. Yang was a graduate of Tsinghua College with a Ph.D. from Princeton University in international law and political science. Upon his return to China, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work as director of the intelligence and publicity department. Yang maintained the paper's registration in the United States and kept hiring American reporters. He established a good relationship with US journalists. Malcolm Rosholt, an American journalist serving the China Press between 1932 and 1937, commented that "of all the people with whom we worked in Shanghai, not one was better liked than Kuangson Young." But Yang's true identity remained a mystery to many of his foreign colleagues. Rosholt who accidentally met Yang on his trip to Paris was "surprised to hear Kuangson speak French" and was even shocked when he learnt that Yang was in Paris to purchase arms for Chiang Kai-shek. Although Yang claimed to be a

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133 Edwin S. Cunningham to the Secretary of State, Washington, 10 June 1935, SDCF, 893.911/311.
135 Edwin S. Cunningham to the Secretary of State, Washington, 10 June 1935, SDCF, 893.911/311.
137 Edwin S. Cunningham to the Secretary of State, Washington, 10 June 1935, SDCF, 893.911/311.
139 Ibid.
full-time manager of the *China Press*, it was clear that his connection with the Ministry of Foreign Ministry as well as Chiang was close. Yang's service to the *Press* was cut short after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. In 1940, he was sent to Manila to replace the Chinese Consul and was killed during Japan's occupation of the Chinese consulate. His body was identified by the gold-rimmed glasses he usually wore.\textsuperscript{140}

*Censorship on the outgoing dispatches*

The Nanjing government did not enact effective censorship on international despatches until 1934. The delay was caused by the government's lack of control on outgoing cables. As mentioned in Chapter 3, China's international cable communication had been monopolized by the Great Northern Telegraph Company (Danish), the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company (British) and the Commercial Pacific Cable Company (American) since the 1870s. The Nanjing government had been negotiating with the three companies to restore control of submarine cables since 1929. When they were about to reach agreements on new terms of the cable contract, the Mukden Incident interrupted the negotiations. Under the pretext that Japan controlled its own cables in China, the three companies refused to relinquish their cable rights.

The Nanjing government made efforts on three fronts to regain its sovereignty over submarine cables. Firstly, the Ministry of Communication mobilized the Shanghai banks to collect funds to liquidate the government's debts to the companies and to purchase the cable infrastructure. Secondly, the government actively developed the wireless service domestically and abroad, seeking to break the three companies' monopoly of cable transmissions. Thirdly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeatedly sought mediation from the British and Danish Legations, urging the companies to resume negotiations. In April 1933, the three companies finally agreed to sign a new contract with China. They agreed to relinquish their rights to own the cables, and to rent the cables for the following fourteen years instead. They also accepted terms whereby Chinese officials were installed to supervise the cable transmission and agreed to increase China's share

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
of the dividend. Thus the Nanjing government gained nominal control of cable facilities in early 1934.\textsuperscript{141}

One of the important terms of the new cable contract was to allow the Nanjing government to install censors in cable companies to supervise the transmission of information.\textsuperscript{142} Special attention was given to outgoing cables in Shanghai. The standard for censorship of international despatches largely followed that of domestic reports. The regulation read:

> No reports should contain words that cause danger to the Guomindang, the nation and social security. Apparent rumours as well as information that reveal military and diplomatic secrets are prohibited.\textsuperscript{143}

The regulation indicated that information was censored not only based on its content but also on its potential outcome. The vague definition offered censors the excessive authority to withhold any dissention that they saw unfit for publication. Without a clear definition of “secret,” any military or diplomatic information from private sources could be subjected to the highest level of scrutiny.

The Nanjing government’s censorship on outgoing messages, which directly affected the foreign correspondents in China, drew heavy protests from the English-language press in Shanghai. Most papers avoided questioning the legitimacy of censorship, since China had its postal and telegraphic rights restored during the Washington Conference and Article 26 of the International Telegraph and Postal Pact further granted China the right to “detain, delete or amend incorrect telegrams or any telegrams which were deemed to be dangerous to the security or order of the country.”\textsuperscript{144} Instead, they aimed their protests at the implementation of censorship, challenging the incompetence of the censors and the exemption of Japanese dispatches.

Foreign correspondents frequently blamed Chinese censors for their lack of

\textsuperscript{141} “Woguo yu dadongabei liangshuixian gongsi jiaoshe zhi guoqu ji xianzai,” \textit{Guowen zhourbào} Vol 10, No. 20, 1933.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{143} Procedure of the Ministry of Communications Governing Censorship of Telegrams, SDCF, 893.918/91, 11–16.

general journalistic knowledge and appreciation of newspaper operations. In May 1935 the *Journal de Shanghai* commented:

> These sorry gentlemen [censors] who, without any preparation, have been in one day placed with the various foreign telegraph offices are too ignorant of their new work to be able to discern what “Article 26 of the International Telegraph Agreement” permits them to cut out from the telegrams handed in by the correspondents of the foreign newspapers and news agencies. They tremble unceasingly at the thought lest a phrase which they very often do not understand or a comment the meaning of which is generally unintelligible to them should attract the attention of one of the officials of their Legations in Paris or London or Washington or Rome or Moscow and who may report the matter to Nanking, resulting in a reprimand being brought upon them.\(^{145}\)

Hollington Tong, in his autobiography, cited a notorious example of the Guomindang government’s abuse of censorship: The *New York Times* once received a dispatch from its China correspondent which read: “TIMES NEW YORK STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP SIGNED JAMES WOOD.”\(^{146}\) The *Christian Science Monitor* in Boston complained that Chinese censors had “rewritten messages, completely altering their meaning, and correspondents have not learnt of this deception until they received their published telegrams several weeks later.”\(^{147}\) The *Shanghai Times* quoted the Chinese journalists’ condemnation of the censorship policy in vernacular papers, such as the *Zhong Yang Ri Bao* 中央日報 (Central Daily News) and *Chen Bao* 晨報, to expose the government’s misuse of censorship power.\(^{148}\) Randall Gould, the long-term editor of the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, also expressed his frustration with the censors that:

> No one could tell when some particular enterprising censor might


\(^{146}\) Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 6.


write in a whole essay of his own, to go to some American newspaper over the signature of its unsuspecting correspondent. Notification of excisions or additions was never given the correspondents.\(^{149}\)

Journalists were also confused by China’s inconsistent censorship guidelines. Lin Yutang, a renowned writer, for example, complained that the censors mechanically deleted sensitive words regardless of their context. The clause “as preached by Tolstoy” was deleted from his article concerned with the Chinese New Year simply because Tolstoy was a Russian, and thus a Bolshevik, according to the censors’ logic.\(^{150}\) Even the Australian journalist, H. J. Timperley, who was sympathetic to the Guomindang government, was bitter about the inconsistency of the censorship:

In China the censoring of foreign telegrams has been marked both by extreme severity and by a lack of consistency which makes it virtually impossible for the bewildered correspondent to work out any sort of guiding principle, no matter how anxious he may be to accommodate himself to official requirements...What is permissible today may be blue-pencilled tomorrow. Regional interpretation of the censorship rules add to the confusion. A news item which is suppressed in Peiping may pass the Shanghai censor without difficulty, and vice versa. In practice the system is haphazard, erratic and, on occasion, irresponsible.\(^{151}\)

Indeed, inadequate censorship not only troubled China’s outgoing dispatches, but also plagued domestic news transmissions as well. Complaints about censors’ lack of professionalism and their arbitrary deletion of information were commonly heard.\(^{152}\) Protests against the policy ran high in 1935, after the government forbade newspapers to distribute news “relating to military or

\(^{149}\) Randall Gould, *China in the Sun* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1946), 308.


\(^{152}\) Lee-hsia Hsu Ting, *Government Control of the Press in Modern China, 1900–1949* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 87.
diplomatic seccresies."\textsuperscript{153} The policy became so unpopular that even the party organ, \textit{Zhong Yang Ri Bao}, turned against it:

Such an irrational system of censorship is completely demoralizing, and if continued, the Chinese will become a nation of deaf and dumb people. How can a deaf and dumb nation organize a State and exist on earth?\textsuperscript{154}

Fearing the suppression of diplomatic information would give rise to secret diplomacy between the Nanjing government and the Japanese Army, \textit{Chen Bao}, a semi-official paper, urged officials to relax their censorship and keep the public fully informed.\textsuperscript{155} Meanwhile, the department of journalism of the Central Political Training Institute at Fuhtan University, Yenching University, the University of Shanghai, the Peiping School of Journalism and the Canton School of Journalism submitted a joint petition to the Nanjing government, appealing for abolition of the censorship. They argued that censorship was plagued by a weak control of local officials who often attempted to suppress news harmful to their personal reputation. "If the control over the press is not concentrated, or if no definite standards of censorship are established and followed," warned the petition, "not only will press censorship be ineffective, but it may also be abused by the local authorities."\textsuperscript{156}

Another argument the treaty-port press frequently put forward to oppose the government's censorship was the absence of censorship on Japanese telegrams. Japan had its own cable linking Shanghai and Nagasaki, one that the Nanjing government had no control over. This enabled the Japanese correspondents to escape Chinese censorship, allowing them to transmit messages freely. The disparity between the treatment of Japanese and other foreign cables stirred anxiety among Western journalists. They believed that the exemption of censorship on Japanese telegrams was a "most serious discrimination"\textsuperscript{157} against their

\textsuperscript{153} "Censorship of Telegraphic Messages in China; The Chinese Telegraph Administration," 19 April 1935, SDCF 893.918/92.

\textsuperscript{154} Quoted in "Censorship System Has Evil Effects," \textit{Shanghai Times}, 29 November 1935.

\textsuperscript{155} "Censorship Policy Criticized, \textit{Chen Bao} Points out Three Points to be Kept," \textit{Shanghai Times}, 6 December 1935.

\textsuperscript{156} "Petition for Improvement of Press Censorship," \textit{Shanghai Times}, 28 December 1935.

\textsuperscript{157} J. B. Powell to Willys R. Peck, American Consulate General, 15 March 1935, SDCF
messages and that the incomplete censorship deeply damaged their credibility. Journalists frequently found their suppressed messages transmitted by Japanese correspondents through Japanese cables and published in Japanese newspapers without interference.\(^{158}\)

Japanese cables and radio stations, apart from serving the Japanese correspondents, were also open to all pro-Japanese correspondents provided their messages were sent in the Japanese language. The European or American correspondents who used Japanese cables could arrange retranslation in Tokyo and, from there, transmitted their dispatches to their final destinations.\(^{159}\) This implied minor additional retranslation work and a short delay for pro-Japanese messages but a complete suppression of some of the balanced accounts provided by neutral observers. Western correspondents worried that Tokyo would replace Shanghai to become the news centre for Chinese issues. Their concern was fully justified. In the mid-1930s, Tokyo indeed dominated dispatch transmissions in East Asia. Among the 33,204 press dispatches containing 1,385,974 words filed by various news services around the world in 1934, 525,001 words—more than one third of the total—were transmitted to Japan.\(^{160}\) With a steady flow of information abroad, Japan became the interpreter of East Asian politics. A semi-official report from Washington attested to the anomaly:

The Public, as well as Washington officialdom, has been beclouded about events in the Far East. We are uncertain about what has happened lately in regard to Japan’s moves vis a vis China and the reported disposition of the Nanking government to accept Japan’s tutelage. Practically all the news published in the Washington newspapers about this important matter has come from Tokyo; there have been only two or three short dispatches from China.\(^{161}\)

Journalists in Shanghai offered different suggestions to solve the problem. Some

\(^{893.918/91}\).


\(^{160}\) Ibid.

urged the Nanjing government to subject Japanese cables to an equal control with other foreign cables; others demanded a complete abolition of the cable control. Yet one message was clear: actions needed to be taken by the Nanjing government to modify its censorship policy.

Increasing criticism from the press urged Nanjing to take note. To redress the inconsistency in censorship, in 1933 the government entrusted the censorship bureau to establish branch offices in five key cities, namely Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Nanjing and Hankou, and to transfer the duty of censorship from local telegram companies to these five branch offices. The purpose was to unify the censorship criteria and to prevent local party organs from taking censorship into their own hands. Although the censorship branches were ostensibly organized by the Ministry of Information (party), the Executive Yuan (government) and the Military Affairs Commission (military), the actual operation was exercised by the military sector under Chiang Kai-shek's control.

Chiang installed his follower, Hollington Tong, to lead the key office—the Shanghai censorship bureau. Tong resigned from the Press in late 1934 because of health problems. While convalescing, he received a telegram from W. H. Donald, asking him "in the interest of patriotism" to consider accepting the position as chief censor of all outgoing foreign press telegrams. Tong had known Donald for more than twenty years. They exchanged news items when Tong worked for newspapers in Beijing and Donald served for the London Times as a Beijing correspondent. Their cooperation continued in 1931 during the reorganization of the China Press when Donald was a member of the board and Tong was the managing director of the paper. Donald resigned from the board in 1932 and became an unofficial advisor to Chiang Kai-shek. Given Donald's position, it was clear that the invitation offered to Tong came from Chiang and that Donald was the messenger to test Tong's response.

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165 The Central Executive Committee to Chiang Kai-shek, 6 August 1934, Chiang Kai-shek's archives, 002080200439034, Academia Historica; Division of Far Eastern Affairs correspondence, 13 May 1935, SDCF 893.918/91, 11-1.
Tong did not accept the job with ease despite his good relationship with Chiang. As a former journalist who had long been a victim of the government’s censorship, Tong disliked censorship as much as any newspaperman. Although working for the government was not an entirely new experience for him, becoming a censor would make him the adversary of his former colleagues in the press. Tong nevertheless accepted the offer due to patriotism. He considered the job “an opportunity to contribute his share toward building foreign goodwill through the press,” albeit via a different path from his newspaper career.

Tong soon organized his censorship team. His office included six people, all with rich experience in journalism. They were: Zeng Xubai, Tong’s colleague in Yong Bao and the Four Agencies; Mr. F. L. Pratt, an Australian journalist working as Tong’s advisor; Dong Shoupeng, Tong’s colleague in the China Press; Wei Jingmeng, Tong’s assistant in the Four Agencies; and Miss Zhu Shuqing, a censor for Russian materials. In August 1935, in a move to further centralize the censorship power, Zhu Jiahua, Minister of Communication, also a close ally of Chiang, ordered the Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing and Hankou censorship bureaus to transmit all foreign-language dispatches to Tong’s Shanghai office for censorship. Tong’s Shanghai office therefore became the pivot of censorship of China’s outgoing news.

As an experienced journalist in Shanghai, Tong was fully conversant with the inadequacies of the government’s censorship. Without delay, he lay out new rules starting with the censorship criteria. He pursued a relatively liberal censorship standard, insisting that messages should only be held up because of wrong facts. Tong believed that apart from information that concerned China’s “national security,” the censorship office “must give the writers free rein.” Secondly, Tong improved the accountability of his office. He required his staff to notify the correspondent of any changes made to their reports prior to

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166 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 7.
167 Tong was secretary to Xiong Xiling, Premier and Finance Minister between 1913 and 1914.
168 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 7.
171 Randall Gould, China in the Sun, 309.
172 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 10.
transmission. Censors were not allowed to insert words and correspondents reserved the right to rebut changes suggested by the censors. Tong kept close connections with foreign journalists. When serious disputes occurred regarding the content of dispatches, Tong would explain or "reason with" the reporters in order to avoid the misunderstanding escalating to deeper grievances that would finally translate into negative portrayals of China in their reports.

Tong markedly improved the censorship work. Randal Gould believed that Tong had finally "developed a censorship as nearly ideal as any censorship could be":

It was usually him [Tong] rather than a subordinate who phoned the correspondent in case of a projected deletion. If necessary he would meet the correspondent personally. Sometimes the correspondent was able to convince Holly (Hollington) that facts were as stated, in which case the message went off unchanged. Sometimes Holly convinced the correspondents that he had fallen for a rumour, in which case the correspondent was saved from consequences unpleasant to himself."

However, Tong’s vision on censorship was not shared by some of the conservatives in the government. In mid-1937, he was temporarily squeezed out by Zhang Xinhai 張欽海 (also known as Dr. H. H. Chang). Zhang was a Harvard graduate and former ambassador to Portugal and Poland. Although he was highly competent in the diplomatic field, his tenure in the censorship office was brief and troublesome. Without any experience in the press, Zhang had little understanding of the importance of timeliness in journalism. He replied to foreign correspondents in a dilatory manner. This often drew heavy complaints from journalists. Zhang’s fatal mistake that brought his censorship job to an end was his arbitrary restriction of news on the Red Army’s reorganization into the Chinese National Army in September 1937. When the foreign correspondents quoted the reports made about this reorganization by the Central News Agency,

Zhang saw it as just another reference to the Chinese Communists and ordered deletion of all such items. Later he explained that, “having killed so many previous references to the Chinese Communists, he might just as well kill this one also.”

Zhang’s words mirrored the mindset of many of the Chinese politicians who failed to value modern journalism. The contention between liberal publicists and the Guomindang bureaucrats was long-lasting, and Tong’s return to the censorship office did not mean general Nanjing officials gained any clearer concept of the meaning of free press and credibility of sources. As Tong recalled in his autobiography:

All through my years in the government service I faced this continuing problem of Chinese incomprehension of American journalistic methods and standards. It vastly complicated at times my task as China’s intermediary with the Western Press. Part of my difficulties stemmed from the wide differences between Chinese and American newspapers...Pre-war Chinese newspapers, with rare exceptions, were partisan and one-sided organs of particular factions or interests. The idea that a publication should present more than one side of a story in its columns was almost unthinkable to Chinese engaged in politics. Few of the government officials with whom I worked cared to read a newspaper pursuing an independent policy. It was difficult for many of them to understand my prolonged efforts to win the goodwill of free American publications.

Indeed, Tong was not the only person disturbed by the misunderstanding of foreign propaganda among conservative officials. Yan Huiqing (W. W. Yen), China’s delegate to Geneva also complained that many Guomindang officials were reluctant to present China’s case abroad, regarding such an activity as not “dignified and worthwhile.”

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176 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 8–9.
177 Ibid., 9.
Chiang Kai-shek’s Control of Foreign Propaganda Sources

Conclusion

The domestic and international dilemmas urged the Nanjing government, especially Chiang Kai-shek’s clique, to strengthen its foreign propaganda machinery. Foreign propaganda not only became a strategy to resist Japanese pressure but also a way of restoring the Nanjing government’s authority over cable and press control. Between 1932 and 1937 the Nanjing government made continuous efforts to unify China’s foreign propaganda resources. The government actively extended its influence in the treaty-port press by establishing or subsidizing English-language newspapers. The Central News Agency launched an English-language service to deepen its penetration in the foreign press and a centralized censorship system was established in 1935. Hollington Tong, as head of the censorship office, crafted liberal censorship policies which effectively improved the operation of the office. Despite all the progress in news infrastructure and administration, the period was nevertheless the most difficult time for China to pursue a stable anti-Japanese news policy. The dilemma between resistance to and appeasement of Japan prevented the English-language
press from forming a consistent approach. The Amō case discussed in the following chapter will reflect the struggle of the press in detail.
CHAPTER 6

Friend or Foe
The Amö Doctrine in the English-Language Press, 1934

The year 1934 was the height of Chiang Kai-shek's appeasement policy. After the public anger over the Tanggu Truce subsided, the Nanjing government reopened direct negotiations with Tokyo over many of the controversies, including the postal and railway connections with Manchukuo. To be sure, the appeasement pursued by the Nanjing government did help to delay large-scale military conflicts. Although skirmishes occasionally occurred in Japanese occupied areas, none was as serious as the Shanghai Incident or the fighting at the Great Wall in 1933. While trying to keep the Japanese military threat at bay, Chiang focused his resources on the Fifth Extermination Campaign against the Communists, as directed by his "first internal pacification" strategy.

This seemingly peaceful period was not, however, trouble-free. The rapprochement between Nanjing and Tokyo was marred by a series of disputes, such as the recognition of Manchukuo, tariff revision, trade issues and China's appeal for financial assistance from Western powers. Nanjing made great efforts to pursue military restraint from Japan through direct diplomacy. The government constantly conceded to Japan's requests, and altered government policies and personnel appointments so as to defuse political tension. The goal was to win time for the construction of the country and to prepare for a total war with Japan, as the second part of Chiang's strategy—"then external resistance"—suggested.

The government, indeed, relied on the foreign propaganda machinery to relieve the domestic and international tensions created by its appeasement policy. Although appeasement characterized the Nanjing government's approach in handling Sino-Japanese issues, Nanjing did not totally abandon resistance against Japan. Propaganda was one of the strategies it adopted to withstand Japanese pressure. Firstly, successful as the appeasement policy was in avoiding military clashes, it was unfavourably received by the Chinese domestic public and provided ammunition for Chiang Kai-shek's political rivals to attack his leadership. A failure to reduce this domestic opposition would lead to a political
crisis potentially as serious as a Japanese military attack. The Nanjing government, therefore, needed a medium to channel the public anger over Japan’s aggression without provoking Japanese protests. Secondly, without a strong military capacity, Nanjing looked to Western powers, particularly the United States and Britain, to harness Japan’s aggression in Asia. Although both the League and the Nine Power Treaty system had proved impotent in checking Japanese aggression since the Mukden Incident, the Nanjing government did not entirely abandon the internationalist approach in solving the Sino-Japanese crisis. The English-language media therefore became an important platform to present China’s case to the outside world and tighten the link between China and the West.

In this chapter, I will take the Amō Doctrine as a case study to analyse how China and Japan, underneath the veneer of peace, battled in the English-language press; how each side put forward their arguments; what their advantages and disadvantages in the case were; what strategy they adopted in the propaganda battle; and how the treaty-port and metropolitan papers responded to the case.

The Amō Doctrine

On April 17, 1934, Amō Eiji, head of the Department of Information of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued an “unofficial” statement in response to questions about the Japanese government’s attitude toward foreign assistance to China. The statement was later summed up as a “hands-off China” policy. Some Japanese and foreign papers also referred to the policy as the Monroe Doctrine of Asia. The statement declared that Japan had a special responsibility to maintain peace in Asia and that it opposed any foreign assistance to China that could be exploited as a means of countering Japan’s influence in the country:

Owing to the special position of Japan in her relations with China...Japan is in a position to do her best to carry out her mission in the Orient, and though there may be a divergence of opinion between the position of Japan and that of other nations towards China, [which] led to Japan’s withdrawal from the League

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of Nations, nevertheless Japan deems it natural to maintain peace in the Orient by herself, and on her own responsibility...Furthermore, Japan will be forced to object to any measures on the part of other Powers, which are likely to lead to disturbance of peace in the Orient. For example, the providing of China with military aeroplanes and military instructors, and the giving of political loans are among the measures which are doomed to be met with opposition from Japan.¹

The authority of the Amō statement remains a question even in today’s scholarly literature. It is unclear whether the statement was issued with the consent of Hirota Kōki 広田弘毅, the Foreign Minister of Japan.² Regardless of the nature of the statement, most scholars believe that the proclaimed “unofficial” statement reflected Japan’s true attitude towards Western assistance to China.³ Although the statement confused the diplomats of the other powers, it undeniably served Japan’s propaganda purpose well: Japan was able to test public opinion regarding its dominance of China and could “plausibly deny” such an intention whenever such a direction received negative feedback from the world public.

The Context of International Opinion on the Amō Doctrine

The Amō Doctrine surprised Western powers more because of the timing and the way Japan issued it than its content. Indeed, 1934 was not a good time for Japan to assert its “hands-off China” policy. First of all, the policy struck a jarring note in Japan’s attempt to rectify relationships with Western powers. Having occupied Manchuria, Japanese officials were well aware of the harm the military

aggression brought to its international image. Since the latter half of 1933, the Japanese government had made efforts “in every direction possible” to remedy international antagonism towards Japan.\(^4\) Hirota was appointed Foreign Minister with this specific task.\(^5\) As Joseph Grew, US ambassador in Japan, observed, Hirota came into office at a moment when the pendulum of public sentiment was tending to swing away from a militant policy towards a desire to normalize relationships with the outside world. The resignation of Count Uchida Yasuya\(^6\) was in itself a blow to military influence. In the Diet, the voice of public opinion revealed dismay at the size of the military budgets and an inclination to blame the army for the unnecessary and dangerous state of agitation into which the nation as a whole had been led. Meanwhile, businessmen wished to be free to reap the profits of the export boom. Hirota, after coming into office, answered those calls by restraining the military influence over diplomacy and actively repairing Japan’s relations with China, Soviet Russia, Great Britain and the United States. He tried to tone down Japan’s anti-foreign tone in the press, renew efforts to solve disputes with Russia and show eagerness to improve American-Japanese relations. Hirota’s appointment suggested a shift in the direction of Japan’s foreign policy—from what the Japanese press called the “desperate diplomacy” of Count Uchida to Hirota’s “national defence by diplomacy.”\(^7\) However, while Japan’s relations with other powers appeared to be improving, the Amö statement pulled Japan back to diplomatic isolation as it unveiled Japan’s hegemonic plans in China.

Secondly, the Amö Doctrine was issued when Japan was involved in various disputes with China and Western powers. Those disputes easily set an adverse context of opinion for the Amö Doctrine, leading to broad interpretations of Japan’s intentions in Asia by the foreign press. With China, Japan was pushing the Nanjing government to restore rail and postal links between China proper and Manchuria. Negotiation of this issue had dragged on for a year since the Tanggu Truce. Concerned that restoration equalled recognition of Manchukuo, yet not meeting Japan’s demands would incur military confrontation, the Nanjing leaders

\(^4\) Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Consul at Geneva (Gilbert), 17 May 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 182.
\(^6\) Japanese Foreign Minister, July 1932–September 1933.
\(^7\) Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Consul at Geneva (Gilbert), 17 May 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 182.
had tried to delay tackling the problem in late 1933 under the pretext that the government needed to handle the Fujian Rebellion first. Nanjing began to face the issue in early 1934, when it proved impossible to further delay it. Publicly, both Zhu Jiahua 朱家驄, the Minister of Communications, and Sun Ke 孫科, President of the Legislative Yuan, reiterated that Nanjing had no intention of restoring rail and postal connections with Manchukuo. This intransigent attitude of the Nanjing government drained the patience of the Kwantung Army. Around 13 April 1934, they increased the number of troops along the Beijing-Liaoning Railway and held military manoeuvres in Fengtian 奉天 and the eastern suburbs of Beijing. Under Japan’s military pressure, Chiang Kai-shek sent Huang Fu to Shanghai on 16 April to discuss the issue with Ariyoshi Akira, the Japanese Minister to China.8

The Amō statement was issued on the following day. Although the statement may not necessarily have had any connection with the rail and postal negotiations, it was easily perceived as additional pressure from Japan for the restoration of communications with Manchuria, since the statement was issued exactly when the negotiation had reached a crucial stage.

For the United States and Britain, the Amō Doctrine was to cast a shadow over the 1935 naval conference. Determined to achieve parity in naval power, Japan sought to abandon the 1930 London Naval Conference Treaty that set Japan’s battleship tonnage at 70% of that of the two powers. Since a new round of naval talks was to be held in 1935, the year 1934 had seen a rise in tensions over the naval issue. In the spring of 1934, the British government invited the United States and Japan to London for a preliminary discussion. Both Japan and the United States refused to give ground. Japan argued that the progress of naval science which increased the radius of action of naval vessels had altered the naval situation in the Pacific. Naval equality also helped boost Japan’s national prestige. The United States rejected Japan’s request, arguing that Japan had neither the length of sealanes to defend as Britain did, nor two fronts to guard as did the United States. Further, in the last half century, Japan had met no naval challenge and even if it did, no nation could successfully block its naval forces.9 Such a stance was reinforced by Stanley K. Hornbeck, chief of the State Department

8 Parks Coble, Facing Japan, 166–168.
Division of Far Eastern Affairs. In his memo on 31 March and 4 April, he insisted that the United States should stick to the current ratio in the upcoming Naval Conference. While the United States was on high alert regarding Japan's naval expansion, the Amō Doctrine, which reinforced Japan's desire to challenge the existing order in East Asia, heightened America's caution over Japan's naval demands. Grew, US ambassador in Japan, saw it as "highly probable that the (Amō) statement has been made with a view to building up Japan's position in the eventual conversations preliminary to the coming Naval Conference."  

With the League of Nations, Japan's disputes lay in the technical assistance provided to China by Ludwig W. Rajchman. Since 1931, the League had sent various experts to assist China in economic development. Japan had been opposing the assistance and the tension was heightened in the spring of 1934 when Rajchman, newly appointed head of the League's mission to China, issued his report on China's situation. Rajchman was a troublesome agent of the League in the eyes of Tokyo leaders. He had been closely associated with T. V. Soong since the Manchurian crisis. He was in Nanjing when the Mukden Incident happened and was believed to be the one who helped Chiang Kai-shek to appeal to the League for a solution to the Manchurian crisis. Japanese leaders distrusted Rajchman's activities in China, believing the assistance constituted political support under the guise of technical aid. On 23 April, the Japanese representative at Geneva stated that Japan had the impression that Rajchman's report involved a program that was "either implicitly or explicitly politically antagonistic to Japan." Amō's statement, which directly targeted foreign assistance to China, further estranged Japan from the League. 

The unfavourable context of opinion was not only created by the contemporary international disputes but also by the anti-Western message implied in Amō's statement and the way Japan proclaimed it. Japan's overt claim to have a special position in East Asia, as well as its opposition to foreign aid to China,

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11 The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, 20 April 1934; the Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Consul at Geneva (Gilbert), 17 May 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 182.
contained a strong anti-Western flavour. It reinforced the view that East Asia was a distinctive community in itself and that the peace and order of this region were of utmost concern to its Asian members. Western powers, as outsiders of the region, had different interests from those of Japan and China—the insiders, and Western involvement would only complicate the situation in Asia. Asian people therefore should “act alone” on their own responsibility to maintain peace in their region. The doctrine also emphasized Japan’s leadership in Asia, reiterating that Japan bore “special responsibilities” for China and East Asia and that it was its duty to police the region without interference from Western powers. Amō even acted as a representative of China, arguing that China’s unification could be attained “through no other means (foreign assistance) than the awakening and voluntary efforts of China herself.”

Japan’s open declaration of the hands-off China policy was a sharp turn from its previous propaganda rhetoric. Despite its strong military advance in Manchuria, Shanghai and north China, Japan had tried hard to portray itself in the media as a victim of Chinese pressure, acting in self-defence. Yet the overt claim voiced by Amō signified that Japan was ready to make a more assertive challenge to the current order in East Asia. Considering the implication of the Amō statement, Western powers, especially the United States, determined that the statement should not be permitted to pass without a challenge from the West. Although neither the United States nor Britain was willing to confront Japan militarily and diplomatically, they were ready to denounce Japan’s ambitions in the press.

Amō’s statement instigated a new round in the propaganda battle between China and Japan. Unlike the Jinan and Mukden incidents when Japan enjoyed a favourable context of public opinion, the Amō case occurred when Japan’s international reputation was on the wane and the country was in the middle of disputes with Western powers in various areas. China, meanwhile, was caught between its own internationalist policy and appeasement of Japan. The dilemma prevented the Nanjing government from devising consistent propaganda policies.

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15 The Counselor of Legation in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State, 27 April 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 143.
Yet Japan’s situation was no better. It was caught in dual dilemmas: one between the civil government and the military sector; the other between Japan’s national interests in East Asia and its international obligations and reputation. Nevertheless, Japan had its advantage—the non-interventionism popular among Western countries.

The change in the context of public opinion led to changes of propaganda strategies on both sides. Japan, which had sought a broader interpretation of the Mukden Incident, tried hard to avoid linking the Amō case with contemporary conflicts with the West; China, on the contrary, interpreted the Amō case broadly in the hope of reminding the audience of Japan’s general conflict with Western powers.

**Japan’s Response in the English-Language Press**

Japan’s primary objective in this propaganda battle was to reduce the unpopular impact of the Amō statement. This required Japan to tone down its anti-Western rhetoric and to subdue the public animosity brought about by the Doctrine. Hindered by political tensions within the government, however, Japan’s explanations of the case failed to follow a unified line. The attitude of the Tokyo officials alternated between endorsement of the statement and denial of its authority. On 18 April, a day after Amō issued the statement, Japan’s Foreign Minister, Hirota, modified the anti-Western tone of the Amō speech, emphasizing that “Japan will not ignore her treaty obligations.” He also ensured that “the principle enunciated in the statement will be applied with such effect as not to conflict with existing treaties.” Meanwhile, the Japanese government delayed offering the English translation of the Amō statement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the translation two days later but carefully labelled it as “unofficial” so as to further reduce the authority of the statement.

However, on 20 April the moderation was offset by another announcement made by the official spokesman of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to

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17. The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, 26 April 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 138.
foreign newspaper correspondents in Tokyo. The spokesman claimed that Japan, despite its respect for the “Open Door principle” and existing treaties, would not tolerate “any action [by the powers] which may lead to disturbance of the peace of East Asia, regardless of the form or pretexts.”

“The time has passed,” the spokesman said, “when other powers or the League of Nations can exercise their policies for the exploitation of China.” The announcement reinforced the anti-Western attitude voiced by Amö, with the spokesman projecting Japan as a protector of China from Western “exploitation” of its resources. Before the world media was able to discern Japan’s intention of making such a radical announcement, Saitō Hiroshi, Japanese Ambassador to the United States, further reiterated Japan’s leading role in Chinese affairs in an interview by the Washington Star on April 22. He requested the foreign powers to consult with Japan before any important transactions between the Nanjing government and foreign interests were concluded. Failure to do so, he declared, would be regarded by the Japanese government as an “unfriendly act” and “the responsibility will fall on the Chinese government for having overlooked our warnings.”

The interview not only reinforced the Amö statement but extended it. It indicated that China no longer had the right as a sovereign state to decide on commercial and financial matters with other countries, nor did the other countries have the right to decide themselves on the form of cooperation with China. Saitō’s words not only nullified Japan’s promise to respect China’s sovereignty, the Open Door policy and international treaties, but also reiterated Japan’s hegemonic position in China. This instigated protests from Britain and the United States. The British ambassador to Japan, Francis Lindley, sent a memorandum to Hirota on 24 April, expressing the discontent of the British government on this issue. The United States also convened conferences between envoys of the foreign powers and members of the State Department, discussing how the signatories to the Nine Power Treaty should treat Japan’s hands-off policy in China.

Under such pressure, Japan shifted its attitude again. On 28 April, Hirota retracted the Amō statement in its entirety, declaring that the informal Amō statement was "officially non-existent." Japan's retreat from the policy prevented the media from further questioning its initial intentions. It spared Japan the risk of offering more inconsistent explanations. It also provided an opportunity for Britain, which was eager to minimize tensions over the incident, to bring an end to the public debate over the case. Immediately after Hirota's denial of the authority of the Amō Doctrine, the British government declared that it regarded the "hands-off China" incident "closed."

The ten-day Amō Doctrine drama was more a propaganda incident than a diplomatic one. Amō's statement was primarily targeting the world press. The Japan Advertiser reported on 18 April that Amō's declaration was not issued at the regular press conference which was held at 11 o'clock on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, but was distributed to the newspapers and press associations through the Rengo service and was carefully labelled as "unofficial." This ensured that the statement appeared in the press before it was circulated among diplomatic offices. Further, Japan's various explanations of the statement only differed in rhetoric without altering the basic position. No matter how Japan modified the original Amō statement, none of the ensuing versions denied Japan's claim of its special position in East Asia and its fundamental rights in China. Japan, in its multiple explanations, was merely restating its East Asian policy with minor rephrasing of its relationship with the Western powers.

The reason for Amō to declare the Doctrine remained a mystery. Grew learnt from a "reliable authority" that Amō's announcement was made without the authorization or knowledge of Hirota. Hirota was reported to be angry and distressed at Amō's action, which was considered to have been taken to please the military with whom Amō was then working in an endeavour to emulate the former spokesman, Shiratori Toshio. Knowing that rejecting the statement would endanger his position, Hirota tried to modify it in the hope of

24 Ibid.
26 The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, 20 April 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 115.
reducing its negative impact. Yet his moderate approach was constantly in conflict with the hard line pursued by pro-military officials in the government and part of the domestic public that favoured Amô’s Doctrine. Grew’s “reliable” explanation of Hirota’s role in the Amô case was not commonly shared by his colleagues. Another version popular among US diplomatic circles was that the Amô announcement was a carefully considered step taken with the full approval of Hirota, who later was obliged to make Amô the scapegoat. Nonetheless, both versions together with Japan’s inconsistent reaction to the Amô statement reflected the lack of unity in the Japanese government, with both civil and military powers seeking to handle the case as they saw fit.

Japan’s inconsistent explanations of Amô’s declaration were also a result of its being torn between pursuing a powerful international reputation and national interests. The Amô Doctrine was a disclosure of Japan’s policy rather than a declaration of it. As Stanley Hornbeck, chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, commented: [the statement] “simply shows what Japan’s ‘China policy’ is; it confirms estimates long since made by unprejudiced outside observers of what it has been.” To keep foreign powers’ hands off China was what Japan’s national interests required and it was hard to deny Japan’s intention to pursue such a policy, yet disclosing it would inevitably draw foreign protests and thus further isolate Japan from Western powers. Japan’s alternation between endorsement and denial of the statement in the press reflected its attempts to balance international and national interests.

The Japanese-controlled paper, the Far Eastern Review, was keen to defend Japan’s national interests in the Amô case. Its argument mainly followed two lines: self-preservation and the necessity to change the order in Asia. The paper tried to appeal to the powers’ sympathy, arguing that each nation had an instinct for survival and that Japan’s expansion in China was propelled by it. It maintained that Japan was a country with scarce natural resources to feed its huge population. While Europe was able to move its excessive population to colonies...

27 The Ambassador in France (Straus) to the Secretary of State, 20 April 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 162.
28 Grew’s summary of an alternative explanation of Hirota’s role, in the Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, 4 May 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 161.
29 The Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hornbeck) to the Secretary of State, 26 April 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 142.
like America, Canada and Australia, Japan, victimized by strict immigration policies crafted by Western countries, had no equivalent. Moreover, China's boycott and tariff burdened Japan's sale of cotton textiles, an industry crucial for Japan's economic growth.\textsuperscript{31} The expansion in China was therefore a matter of life and death for Japan.\textsuperscript{32}

Editor of the journal George Bronson Rea also argued that Japan deserved more rights than it was granted. The injustice, he argued, should therefore be corrected by a change of rules. Japan won the war with China in 1894, beat Russia in 1905 and contributed immensely in World War I, "yet at the end," stated Rea, "we see Japan practically stripped of the gains of her three wars, caught and held fast in treaty trap."\textsuperscript{33} He complained that the current treaty system had deterred Japan's progress as well as its struggle for justice and liberty. He advanced the view that treaties in violation of human rights should be rectified.\textsuperscript{34} Rea particularly directed his criticism to the Nine Power Treaty, denouncing the legitimacy of it in restricting Japan's action in China:

\begin{quote}
The Nine Power Treaty may have been politically sound when the Treaty was signed, but from the viewpoint of humanity it has developed into the most immoral and wicked policy of modern times, handing over to one war lord [Chiang Kai-shek] the right to consolidate his rule over the whole country by the sword.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Fearing his Manchukuo adviser's position might arouse suspicion from the readers, Rea declared that he remained loyal to the United States. He also assured that the purpose of his defence of Japanese rights was to help the United States understand the situation better and avoid the agony of war with Japan:

\begin{quote}
I retained all my rights, privileges and duties as an American citizen. In this capacity, as one American speaking to another, I can express my views and interpret those of the Government and
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}"Responsibility for Peace and War in the Pacific," an address delivered by Dr. Angus at the Vancouver Institute, \textit{The Far Eastern Review}, January 1934.
\item \textsuperscript{32}"Must America Fight Japan?" \textit{The Far Eastern Review}, May 1934.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{34}"The Independence of Manchukuo," \textit{The Far Eastern Review}, February 1934.
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
people of Manchukuo with greater clarity and frankness than as a duly accredited diplomatic agent. If my opinions convey to you the impression that I am not in full sympathy with the policies of our State Department, there are weighty reasons which have influenced me to take this stand. The trend of American diplomacy in the Far East will inevitably lead the nation into war.36

Rea’s reiteration of his US identity and his claim of allegiance to his home country helped to create the impression that his advocacy of a change of order in Asia was aimed at supporting US interests. By using an American to advocate the change of the existing order, Japanese interest groups behind the paper aimed to avoid direct conflict with Western powers while making Japan’s appeal heard among Western residents in China’s treaty ports.

China’s Response in the English-Language Press

The Amö Doctrine was an advantageous case for China’s propaganda. The tension the Amö statement created between Japan and the other powers allowed China to further isolate Japan from these powers. Yet the Chinese-operated English-language periodicals failed to form a unified anti-Japanese line. In the mid-1930s the Nanjing government as well as the public elites remained torn between resistance and appeasement. This dilemma gave rise to various interpretations of the Amö statement.

The China Press pursued an anti-Japanese stance during the Amö incident. Instead of viewing Amö’s statement as a diplomatic accident, the paper saw the statement as a further step towards Japan’s realization of its long-harboured hegemonic plan. The Press traced Japan’s hegemonic ambitions back to 1915 when it manifested its desire over China by the Twenty-One Demands and argued that the doctrine “revived the spirit and substance of the Twenty-One Demands.”37 

Although Japan was forced to abandon the Demands after the Washington Treaty, the paper stated that the nation had never given up its plan to control China. Over

36 Ibid.
the years, Japan had been waiting for an opportunity to restore the Twenty-One Demands. The Manchurian crisis was a good example, and the Amō statement was another attempt.38 Japan’s policy toward China, maintained the paper, was consistent and long-term. The goal was to subject China to Japan’s control, whether by exerting the Demands, occupying Manchuria or declaring its special rights in the country.39

To reinforce the Amō Doctrine’s connection with the Twenty-One Demands, the paper reviewed the profile of Hirota, arguing that the recent moderate Sino-Japanese policy pursued by him was only a guise for his true intention of reviving the Demands. The paper claimed that Hirota, who in 1915 was a member of the political affairs bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was involved in drafting both the Demands and the Tanaka Memorial.40 It also revealed that Hirota was a member of the Black Dragon Society, a Japanese right-wing group supporting Japan’s expansion in China, and that he was “intimately” associated with the army clique.41 By exposing Hirota’s personal engagement with the Twenty-One Demands and his affiliation with the military or pro-military groups in favour of the substance of the Demands, the paper sought to create the impression that the Amō Doctrine, which “revived the worst features of the Twenty-One Demands,”42 was another attempt by Hirota to dominate China. Whereas diplomatic circles were unclear about Hirota’s role in the Amō case, the China Press was keen to emphasize it, and thus attack his foreign policy in general.

The paper continued to explore the international implications of the statement, arguing that the Amō Doctrine was more a conflict between Japan and Western powers than a crisis between Japan and China. First, the paper reiterated that Japan’s plan in Asia threatened the Open Door policy and the order established by Western powers in the Washington Conference. Instead of calling the Amō Doctrine the “hands-off China policy,” a name widely used by Western papers,

38 “Twenty-one Demands Echo,” The China Press, 10 May 1934.
42 “Twenty-one Demands Echo,” The China Press, 10 May 1934.
the *China Press* defined the doctrine as “Asian lordship” or “overlordship.” The message the editors sought to deliver through the wording was clear: by claiming to have a special responsibility to maintain peace across East Asia, Japan tended to establish itself as the “lord” of the region, seeking to dominate East Asian affairs. Japan’s “lordship,” stated the *Press*, equalled a “closed door” of this region. It was a direct “embargo on any attempt by this country (China) to prepare to defend itself and a challenge to the rest of the world to dare to afford any sort of help to that end.”44 “If she should succeed in obtaining recognition of such a claim, the way to Japan’s hegemony of this continent would be thrown open.”45 The argument of the *China Press* was endorsed by the *China Critic*:

Japan is now telling the world that she is going to close the doors of China against all foreign powers except herself. It is a declaration that she is going to translate her time-honoured Asiatic Monroe Doctrine into a fact, and in such a fashion as to make an Asia not for the Asiatics but for the Japanese alone. Japan’s expansion in Manchuria does not threaten the material interests of most of the western powers to any great extent. But in the Hands-Off-China statement the powers perceive a hint of banishing them all from China. Carried to its logical conclusion, the doctrine would mean that the foreigners must either pack up their things and go, or they should make a defence of their stakes in China against the Nipponese attack.46

Obviously, the periodicals endeavoured to divert readers’ attention from the original Sino-Japanese crisis, and thus exposed the dispute between the old and new empires: while Japan, the rising power in Asia, desired to change the established order in East Asia, the traditional imperial powers determined to maintain the current system. By doing so, the journals surreptitiously transformed China into a third-party observer of the conflict between Japan and Western

45 Ibid.
powers. Despite the fact that China was the main victim of the Amō Doctrine, the Press deliberately downplayed China's role in the dispute, establishing the view that the case, while originating from China, was in essence not about this country.

The China Press also linked the Amō Doctrine with Japan's specific disputes with the United States and Britain, with the goal of urging the Anglo-American countries to take action to curb Japan's expansion immediately. For the US audience, the paper sought to link the Amō statement with the Naval Conference. It argued that Japan's posture in claiming to have a special position in East Asia was aimed at providing a basis for its demand for naval parity in the coming Naval Conference. Hollington Tong, editor of the Press, commented in one of his editorials that Hirota, by announcing the Amō Doctrine, was attempting to put out a feeler among the public to see whether the world was prepared for Japan's domination of Asia. Japan would then decide how far it could go in the coming negotiations with Western powers.47 Tong also warned that if the United States let Japan advance its Amō Doctrine unchallenged, it would fall into Japan's trap and lose ground in the naval negotiations.

Japan was preparing in her own way for favourable consideration of her demand for naval parity with the United States and Britain. If by constantly repeating the misleading statement that it devolves upon Japan to be the keeper of the peace in the Far East, she can get it accepted there would be much stronger ground for demanding parity.48

Such an interpretation rightly struck a chord among the American diplomats. The United States saw a big Japanese Navy as a direct threat to its national security and a challenge to its authority in the Pacific region. As Stanley K. Hornbeck acknowledged, Japan's comparative naval strength was "of most and vital concern to us than to any other of the powers." While Britain, France and the Netherlands had little reason to fear an assault by the Japanese upon their home territories, the concern was real for the United States. "They are powers in but not

powers on the Pacific Ocean. We are a power both in and on that ocean.”

Editors of the China Press saw the Amō case as an opportunity to estrange Britain from Japan. The paper used trade issues to fuel anti-Japanese sentiments among the British audience. By 1934, Japan’s cotton textile business had made serious inroads into the market monopolized by British manufacturers for a long time. Japan not only threatened British trade in its colonies but also rapidly expanded the cotton textile business in Manchuria and South America. With the increase in Japan’s cotton textile trade, the Japanese ambassador in London, Matsudaira Tsuneo 松平恒雄, asked Britain to modify the quota system so as to facilitate the growth of Japan’s cotton textile industry. The editors associated Japan’s request for a new quota with its challenge to the treaty system in East Asia, portraying Britain as another victim of Japan’s expansion. The China Press, for example, considered the Amō Doctrine an attempt “to secure recognition of her claim to be the only most favoured nation in relation to China” so as to facilitate its quest for quota modification with Britain. The paper went on to portray Japan as a habitual treaty violator: “Finding that the terms of the Nine Power Treaty expressly debarred her from taking the action she (Japan) proposed to take, the Foreign Office at Tokyo is now busily engaged in preparing Japan’s own interpretation of the treaty.” By linking Anglo-Japanese trade issues with the Sino-Japanese case, the paper tried to dissolve the already estranged Anglo-Japanese friendship. The Press portrayed Japan as a country ready to betray a friend whenever it saw the latter standing in the way of its development. It insinuated that Japan, having no respect for rules and loyalty for partnership, was by no means a trustworthy friend of Britain.

The China Press also made efforts to expose the anti-Western mentality among the Japanese public. It implied that Japan’s challenge to the West not only came from its pursuit of national interests but also from its perverted value—over-suspicion of the West and excessive admiration of itself. Editors of the Press complained that Japan, having no evidence that foreign assistance to China was used for political purposes, assumed that all Western assistance was targeted against Japan. While Japan was complaining that other non-Asian countries were

49 Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hornbeck), 24 May 1934, USDS/PRFRUS, 1934, the Far East, Vol. 3, 189.
51 Ibid.
disturbing the peace and stability of the region, its over-sensitive reaction to foreign good-will was the very factor that threatened the peace in East Asia.\textsuperscript{52} In contrast to its suspicion of Western countries stood its own considerable arrogance. The \textit{Press} commented that

\begin{quote}
[Japan] remained stubborn in her belief that she was right and the rest of the world wrong. In other words she claimed the right to be a kind of super-nation, whose interpretation of treaties must be meekly accepted by the rest of the world. Instead of showing contrition she withdrew from Geneva in high indignation, and has since steadily aggravated her original offence.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

The \textit{Press} pointed out that Japan’s arrogance was also revealed in its contempt for the treaty system. The paper condemned Japan for regarding the treaties as “a scrap of paper”\textsuperscript{54} and its readiness to neglect the treaties when they contradicted Japan’s “heaven-sent mission to dominate Asia.”\textsuperscript{55}

The \textit{Press}’ outspoken anti-Japanese view was in contrast to its reticence on domestic politics. Popular topics in vernacular papers, such as criticism of the Guomindang government’s weak reaction to the Amō Doctrine, the political rupture between Chiang Kai-shek and Hu Hanmin, and appeals for an end to the anti-Communist campaign in the interest of uniting the Communists for a joint resistance to Japan, were completely absent. The lack of dissension against the Nanjing government was likely to be the result of Chiang’s penetration of the \textit{Press}. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the \textit{Press} had secretly become a semi-official organ, with Chiang directly associating with Tong to set the editorial line of the paper. Chiang was playing a double-game in the Amō case: while secretly using foreign-targeted propaganda as a way to resist Japan, he also displayed a preference for compromising with Japan in diplomacy so as not to give Japan the ammunition for further military attacks. Indeed, concealing Chiang’s connection with the \textit{Press} was of strategic importance. The anti-Japanese propaganda helped the Nanjing government form an alliance with the

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other powers in their common defence against Japan’s offensive policy. Chiang could, however, conveniently distance himself from the line when challenged by the Japanese government, claiming that the anti-Japanese attitude was evinced by a non-official paper beyond his control.

China had the same problem as Japan in that it lacked a unified line in propaganda. The strong anti-Japanese stance taken by the *Press* was in sharp contrast to the compromising attitude adopted by some Nanjing officials. On 19 April, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official response to the Amō declaration. In the speech, the official denied Japan’s charge that China intended to use international aid as a resource to resist Japan, rejected Japan’s request for China to terminate foreign assistance and appealed to Japan to handle Sino-Japanese issues with “good-will and mutual understanding.” China’s official reply was mild and defensive. Unlike the *Press* which sought to internationalize the Amō case, the official reply interpreted the statement as a minor dispute about foreign assistance, without denouncing Japan’s intention to control Chinese affairs. In addition to this moderate official response, the Nanjing government also gave in to Japanese pressure by reducing support for T. V. Soong’s bid for foreign funds, and displayed less interest in seeking assistance from the League of Nations.

Even among the Chinese-operated English-language periodicals which shared the anti-Japanese stance, the intensity and specific lines of argument were different. Compared with the *China Press*, the *China Critic* devoted much less attention to the Amō case. There was no editorial directly related to the Amō statement in the issue published on 19 April, two days after the statement was made. The most pertinent article was about Rajchman’s trip to Geneva, in which the editor expressed his concern about Japan’s interference in the League of Nations’ aid to China. If two days was too short for the weekly to react to the statement, the following issues testified that the lack of reference to the case was not a matter of time but a lack of interest. In the next issue published on April 26, only one out of the ten articles in the *Critic’s* “Editorial” section discussed the

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57 Parks Coble, *Facing Japan*, 156–158.
Amō statement.59 Even this single article was placed towards the end of the section—an inconspicuous position easily escaping the readers’ attention. The Amō case was missing in the 3 May issue again. Although the Critic discussed the Manchukuo problem60 and Rajchman’s assistance to China, two cases highly relevant to the Amō Doctrine, the journal made no effort to link them to the Amō statement. The 17 May issue continued to downplay the Amō case even though topics it discussed, such as the League of Nations’ assistance,61 Japan’s “Mizutori” diplomacy 62 and the British-Japanese trade war,63 were highly pertinent to the statement. The journal’s first strong condemnation of the Amō Doctrine came belatedly on 24 May, in which the editor denounced the policy as a “blunder” of the Japanese foreign policy.64

The Critic also differed from the Press in its interpretation of the Amō Doctrine. While the Press established the Amō case as a conflict between Japan and the other powers, the Critic saw the Amō Doctrine as a conflict between China and Japan. The Critic believed that Japan, through the Amō statement, intended to press Nanjing to concede its demand on railway and postal connections with Manchukuo. Japan’s hands-off China policy was a scheme to delay China’s construction process, a warning against China’s use of the American cotton and wheat loans and an effort to discredit T. V. Soong in the eyes of the American public. Editors of the Critic also believed that the statement was Japan’s effort to impede Rajchman’s technical aid to China endorsed by the League of Nations. Further, the Critic also downplayed the urgency of the case. “The threat,” commented the Critic, “does not appear to be designed for immediate action. Japan is merely playing the part of a bully, and it goes without saying that neither China nor the League is prepared to run counter to her

60 “Japan Chronicle Editor Speaks Out,” The China Critic, 3 May 1934; “Will Dr. Rajchman be Dismissed?” The China Critic, 3 May 1934; “‘Manchukuo’ Athletes Attacking Japan,” The China Critic, 3 May 1934.
62 Mizutori was a Japanese word for waterfowl. While the waterfowl sits on the water apparently doing nothing, its feet are busily moving under the surface. Mizutori diplomacy was a metaphor indicating that while Japan openly sought peace with China, it secretly pursued talks with Chinese leaders, pressing for more encroachment on China’s sovereignty. See “Japan’s ‘Mizutori’ Diplomacy,” The China Critic, 17 May 1934.
64 “Japan’s Diplomatic Blunder and After,” The China Critic, 24 May 1934.
Indeed, the Critic's attitude reflected a mixture of complicated feelings shared among Chinese elites. Firstly, the journal's lack of interest in the Amō case testified to the elites' suspicion of the competence of the treaty system in maintaining order in East Asia. Previous Sino-Japanese conflicts had shown clearly that the League and the other powers were incompetent in checking Japan's aggression and that the international harmony promoted by the powers was merely a political "ideal" that fell into "the realm of Utopianism." In addition, the elites were sceptical of the other powers' intentions in China. Britain, in its official reply to the Amō Doctrine, openly acknowledged Japan's "special rights" in China. This kept the elites alert to the possibility of an alliance formed by imperialist countries to preserve their common interests in China. Meanwhile, France kept encroaching on Yunnan and the British were making inroads into Tibet. While the elites perceived Japan as their most urgent enemy, they identified no friends among the other empires. They feared their efforts to ally with the other powers for a common resistance against Japan would end up inviting more intervention from imperialist foes.

The People's Tribune, an organ of the left wing of the Guomindang, made a comparison between the American Monroe Doctrine with the Amō statement. Instead of fully denouncing the Monroe Doctrine, it welcomed the idea of excluding the Western exploitation of China and supported Japan's fight against the non-Asians. What Japan needed to modify, indicated the Tribune, was not Japan's Asiatic vision but its means in pursuing it.

This is not to say 'Asiatic Monroe Doctrine' is not permissible in any form whatsoever, but the only right form is that which is in full harmony with the original (American Monroe Doctrine); that is, to prevent non-Asiatic nations from infringement of the political independence of existing sovereign States in Asia, and from securing new acquisitions of territories. If, under these principles, Japan should oppose the activities of non-Asiatic

65 "The Latest Threat from Tokyo," The China Critic, 26 April 1934.
67 "What about the Back Door?" The China Critic, 26 April 1934.
nations by formulating an ‘Asiatic Monroe Doctrine’...such a
Monroe Doctrine would be proper and righteous; it could be
applicable not only to Asia or America, but to the whole world.68

Opinion of the Treaty-Port English-Language Press

The *North China Daily News* conveyed an ambiguous attitude toward the Amō case. While trying to prevent public tension over the statement from escalating into a larger crisis, the paper was also critical of Japan’s policy in Asia, fearing that British interests would be in danger if Japan’s hegemony in Asia was allowed to pass without denunciation. To disentangle British interests from the case, the paper interpreted the case primarily as a dispute between China and Japan. “There seems to be so much of wrong presumption,” argued the paper, “that settlements and understandings and arrangements made between countries other than the two principals—China and Japan—can resolve the issues between them.”69 The paper also believed that the Amō Doctrine was announced to resolve the deadlock in the negotiations over China’s postal and railway connections with Manchukuo. It believed that by issuing the Amō Doctrine, Japan sought to exert pressure on the postal and railway connections and thus gain advantage in the international recognition of Manchukuo.70

The paper was ready to accept Japan’s moderation. It applauded Japan’s modification of the original Amō statement as “extremely gratifying” and considered Japan’s concern over the misuse of the international aid to China as legitimate:

The publication of the ‘hands-off China’ statement may have been inopportune in time, or clumsy in its manner of presentation, yet the fact remains that the declaration was the logical outcome of the political events of the last three years. The League of Nations,

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it will be recalled, intervened between China and Japan, passing against Japan a verdict which had the effect of stiffening the Chinese attitude. Thus the League functioned not as a mediator, but as an interventionist taking sides with China.... It is only natural for you [editor of the paper] to minimize a political complexion of international aid...Japan has every reason to be sceptical and suspicious when a man like Dr. Rajchman would act as a liaison agent, his appointment being considered as a “colossal blunder” in some quarters; also when China itself is desperately seeking political aid from Europe and America in order to offset Japan, as evidenced in the recent Chinese outcries of the fabled “wolf! wolf!”, if not in its traditional tactics of playing off one enemy against another.71

The paper also defended Japan’s activities in China to justify imperial rights in general:

Imperialism is by no means always a bad thing. The backward nations like China cannot govern themselves and the masses are therefore exploited to the limit by a band of robbers and adventurers abetted by Western finance who care for nothing but the gratification of their self-seeking ends. If Japan can bring peace to China and offers to do so why not let her since the other Foreign Powers have completely failed to do so?72

The Daily News’ empathy towards Japan, nevertheless, did not diminish its caution against Japan’s hegemonic plan in Asia. Perturbed by the anti-Western sentiment as evinced in the Amō Doctrine, the paper feared that Japan might exclude other powers’ interests after securing its control over China.73 The paper warned that Japan not only aimed to control China’s foreign policy, but also its domestic affairs. After subjecting China to its domination, Japan would

manipulate the Chinese market and “reduce the country to a scantily concealed vassalage.”

Although the editors doubted whether Japan had the capacity to put the Pan-Asian framework into practice, they still worried that Japan’s current policy might lead to a united Asian “crusade for elimination of every ‘white’ influence from these shores of the Pacific.” Such fears gave rise to the paper’s revision of its traditional pro-Japanese sentiment:

Those who professed to see everything good in Japan’s actions regarding China during the past three years, have now been given an opportunity to realize that not only are the Japanese injuring the interests of China alone, but that a very definite threat has been made against the interests of those who so unthinkingly have given their moral support to the aggressions that have occurred since the Mukden Incident.

Furthermore, the paper was especially dissatisfied with Japan’s claim to “special rights” in Asia. It criticized Japan’s plan to surpass Britain and become the leading empire in China. The paper argued that Britain, too, had a valid reason to claim a special position in China given its interests in the country. Yet Britain refrained from doing so for the sake of East Asian peace and stability, and Japan should withdraw its claim as well. The Daily News also invoked the Nine Power Pact to deny Japan’s “special rights” argument. It pointed out that Japan had no more right than the other seven non-Chinese signatories to the treaty, thus having no legal advantage to claim a “special position” in the Far East. However, this view was not fully supported by the British government. In early May, upon Japan’s statement that the Amö statement did not officially exist, British Foreign Secretary John Simon openly recognized that Japan enjoyed “special rights in China which were not shared by other Powers.” The Daily News severely criticized the British response, referring to Simon’s position as a “submission” to Japan. It also warned that such a policy would “bring an unfortunate effect upon

78 Ibid.
the entire world.”

In contrast to the *North China Daily News*’ ambiguous attitude stood the *China Weekly Review*’s decisively anti-Japanese line. The *Review* believed that the Amō Doctrine not only infringed on China’s sovereignty and disturbed the peace in East Asia, but also threatened US and British interests in China and around the world. The *Review* commented on the Amō Doctrine in its front-page editorial in the issue immediately following Amō’s statement. It referred to the statement as Japan’s declaration of a “protectorate over China,” and condemned the policy as amounting to “telling China that she cannot take any steps in the direction of reconstructing her national life without the consent of Imperial Japan.”

The *Review* also provided a lengthy analysis of Japan’s further intentions to coerce China. It saw Japan as not only attempting to press China towards establishing railway and postal connections with Manchukuo, but also to force China into some form of military alliance against Soviet Russia which would permit Japan to use north China as a base for military activities through Chahar, Inner-Mongolia and Xinjiang. With China’s neutral position being breached, China would bear the brunt of a Russian attack and the heightened crisis could easily give rise to large-scale military clashes. The *Review*, therefore, portrayed the case as “much more serious than the mere matter of cutting China off from financial and economic contact with other nations.” It saw it as nothing less than a provocation for war.

To heighten the Western audiences’ alarm over Japan’s plan, the *Review* warned that Japan would drive Western interests out of China. “Should the Japanese succeed in their present campaign which includes the complete military subjugation of China and the elimination of Occidental influence and interests from the Asiatic Continent,” stressed the paper, “the only customer left in Asia will be Imperial Japan!” The *Review* also linked the Amō case with the Naval Conference, commenting that the hands-off China policy constituted Japan’s

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80 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
“finishing touch or complete nullification” of the entire Washington Treaty, which included the navy ratio agreement that Japan was most keen on breaking.\textsuperscript{85}

The Review was critical not only of the Amō case itself but also of the way Japan handled the case. Japan timed the statement deliberately, argued the journal, because it planned to seize control of China while Western powers were busy dealing with the complex situation in Europe. What is more, the unofficial release of the document was also a well-planned scheme to fool the international audience.\textsuperscript{86} The journal criticized that Japan had presented its presumptuous policy in the least courageous and most dishonest way. Lacking the resolution to denounce international treaties, Japan resorted to hypocrisy, borrowing the name “Monroe Doctrine” to cover things up.\textsuperscript{87}

Indeed, the Review was a close ally with the China Press on the anti-Japanese front. Yet contrary to the Press’ reticence on China’s domestic policies, the Review was critical of Nanjing’s policies. Upon China’s weak reply to Amō’s declaration, the Review pressed Nanjing for a firmer action against Japan’s pressure. While blaming Japan’s “lordship” over China, the journal also used the Amō case to challenge China’s appeasement of Japan, stressing the point that “those who apparently thought Japan could be conciliated or circumvented by soft diplomatic words are likely to be disillusioned.”\textsuperscript{88} “China should take far more substantive action than the mere issuing of telegrams or ‘answers’ to the Japanese declaration,” the Review declared. “Unless China herself makes up her mind to make a firm stand against the Japanese aggression, no other power would come to her help.”\textsuperscript{89}

The Review did not refrain from criticizing the chaotic Chinese political situation. After the Amō statement, both the Nanjing government and Hu Hanmin’s clique in Guangzhou responded to the situation. While Nanjing’s reply was mild, Guangzhou’s protest was sharp. It directly attacked Japan’s policy as being intent on “nothing short of complete domination in the Far East.”\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{86}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{87}“Tokyo Withdraws Note Which Now Regarded as ‘Irreparable Blunder,’” The China Weekly Review, 5 May 1934.  
\textsuperscript{88}“Japan Declares ‘Protectorate over China,’” The China Weekly Review, 21 April 1934.  
\textsuperscript{89}“China, the Foreign Powers and Tokyo’s ‘Hands Off’ Declaration,” The China Weekly Review, 5 May 1934.  
\textsuperscript{90}For a quote of Hu Hanmin’s address, see “China Declares Opposition to International Control
Review quoted Hu’s address in full as a contrast to Nanjing’s comment. It also cited Wang Jingwei’s warning to the Southwest Political Council controlled by Hu, in which Wang advised him “not to issue further statements so as not to create a bad impression among the Powers.” By doing so, the Review exposed the rupture between Chiang and Hu in front of the world audience. The Review continued to challenge the unity of the country. It quoted an editorial from the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury which perceived China as a loosely connected nation. “China at present,” quoted the Review, “is divided into an Indianized Sinkiang (Xinjiang), a French Yunnan, a Soviet Mongolia, a Japanese Manchuria and Jehol (Rehe), communist areas in Kiangsi, Fukien, Hupeh, Hunan, Anhui and other points too numerous to mention together with tripartite Shanghai.” While the Nanjing government was trying hard to present itself as a united and capable regime, the Review adopted an independent standpoint, refusing to follow the Nanjing government’s agenda.

Metropolitan Opinions

The opinion of foreign expatriates living in Shanghai was not fully shared by the audiences back in their home countries. This was caused by their different degree of interest in the Amõ case and their diverse attitudes towards Japan. While the treaty-port papers closely followed the development of the Amõ case, the metropolitan papers only paid perfunctory attention to the affair. The Times in London, for example, first mentioned the Amõ statement on 19 April, two days after the statement was issued. Within the first week after Amõ’s declaration, only four reports were devoted to the development of the issue. There was no editorial reference to the case. Discussion of the Amõ statement first appeared in the Times’ editorial page on 26 April. In the following month, only three editorials focused on the case. The Times’ lack of interest in the statement could be explained by the complicated situation in Europe which occupied much of the paper’s attention. Part of the British aloofness, however, also came from the general realization after

or Domination by Any Country,” The China Weekly Review, 5 May 1934.


the Tanggu Truce and Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations that nothing
effective could be done about the Sino-Japanese conflict.93

The *Times* adopted a conciliatory attitude toward Japan in the Amō case. After
the statement was released to the press, the paper only repeated the Japanese
version, seeking no broader interpretation of the policy. Unlike the English-
language papers in China’s treaty ports, the *Times* described the Amō statement
neither as a “hands-off China policy” nor as “Japan’s Monroe doctrine.” It
referred to it as “Japan’s policy to China” or the “statement.” This reflected the
paper’s effort to avoid attaching a negative connotation to the policy. The paper
also refrained from commenting on the statement or Japan’s foreign policy in
general on the pretext that Japan’s statement was “vague.”94

Like the *North China Daily News*, the *Times* was receptive to Japan’s
modification of the statement. While other papers distrusted the “unofficial”
nature of Amō’s statement, believing that Japan’s “informal” way of issuing its
Asian policy was only a strategy to test the public reaction to its new policy in
Asia, the *Times* lent support to the “unofficial” way of issuing the statement. It
believed that the Amō statement was an “expression of the official mind but not
definitions of official policy.”95 Issuing it “unofficially” indicated that Japan was
unsure about its political line and that its policy remained open to amendment.
After the Japanese ambassador’s promise to observe the open door policy and
international treaties, the *Times* accepted the promise fully. It reiterated that
Japan’s promise of respecting British rights in China was trustworthy. It addressed
Japan as an “old ally” and acknowledged that Britain “desired” to remain “on the
best of terms” with it.96 The *Times* welcomed Japan’s admission that the Amō
statement was “tactless”97 and was eager to close the case after Japan declared that
the statement was officially non-existent.

Furthermore, the *Times* applauded Japan’s rhetorical pursuit of peace and
stability in East Asia. The British interest, stressed the paper, lay in “promoting,
by every possible means peace, security and economic development.” “As great
security is established and the peaceful organization of the country progresses, the

93 R. (Reginald) Bassett, *Democracy and Foreign Policy: A Case History, the Sino-Japanese
95 “Japan and China,” *The Times*, 1 May 1934.
Chinese market is seen to be almost illimitable."98 It believed that Japan’s concern for the disturbance of peace through the assistance of foreign powers was legitimate. It believed that the stability of China was important for British interests in this region and that Japan’s attempt to reduce the European and American trade in arms and ammunition with China was “desirable.”99 However, the paper also warned Japan of the limits of its peace-keeping cause—Japan’s justification of its mission of maintaining peace in Asia was only valid under the condition that it kept the Chinese market open for all powers.100

There were also dissenting voices against Japan’s policy in the paper. The _Times_, for example, quoted a reader’s letter criticizing the way Japan handled the Amö case: “It is a pity that matters of such vital importance to the rest of the world should be handled in such a cavalier fashion by Japanese statesmen.”101 The _Times_ also perceived Japan’s statement as “arrogant” and suspected that the statement revealed Japan’s desire for a “monopoly of influence.”102 Comments like these were nevertheless sporadic, unable to challenge the moderate tone that characterized the paper’s stance.

The _New York Times_, in comparison, was much less conciliatory towards Japan. The paper publicized the Amö statement on the front page on 18 April. Instead of seeing the statement as a warning against China, the editor, in the front-page article, argued that the statement was “aim[ed] at Western nations.”103 The paper repeatedly referred to Japan’s policy as intent on “hegemony”104 over China, which Japan pursued to eliminate the “white peril” from Asia.105 While the _Times_ in London welcomed Japan’s modification of its policy, the _New York Times_ believed that Japan’s various versions failed to change the substance.106 The paper echoed the _China Press_’ position, tracing Japan’s hegemonic plans in China back to the Twenty-One Demands, the pressure for the Lansing-Ishii agreement and the

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98 “Japan and China,” _The Times_, 1 May 1934.
100 “Japan and China,” _The Times_, 1 May 1934.
102 Ibid.
Manchurian crisis. It indicated that the Amō statement was only part of a series of Japanese attempts to control China.107

Apart from criticizing Japan's statement in general, the New York Times also tied Japan's protest against the foreign supply of airplanes in China to the US aircraft industry, arguing that Japan's policy would damage US aircraft trade with China. "As far as the United States is concerned," the paper pointed out, "aircraft, aircraft engines and accessories valued at $1,762,247 went to China last year. This was out of a total export, in these categories, of $8,827,822." As the US aircraft market was expanding in China, the paper warned that Japan's efforts to curb foreign assistance to China would cut America's gains in China's aircraft market.108

Despite the New York Times' overt opposition to the Amō Doctrine, it was reluctant to suggest that the other powers should form an alliance to challenge Japan's hegemonic plan. The paper felt that France, Italy and other signatories of the Nine Power Treaties exhibited a clear lack of interest in the Amō case.109 Besides, none of the fifty-five members of the League of Nations had stood up to protest Japan's challenge to the League's assistance to China. "It seems clearer than ever in Geneva," said the paper, "that the rest of the world has abdicated, at least, temporarily, leadership in the Far East to Britain and the United States."110 Acknowledging that "the British and American viewpoints are identical and that Anglo-American consultation at the present stage would only create an 'encirclement' bogey in the Japanese mind," the paper was also aware of British reluctance to ruffle Japanese feelings.111 The paper advocated isolationism, suggesting that the United States should follow rather than lead in solving the Amō case. It warned the United States not to repeat the situation during the Manchurian crisis when Washington took the lead and found no response from London. On the other hand, the paper feared that US entanglement with the issue would invoke two fundamental disputes between Japan and the United States: naval parity and US restrictions on Asian immigration.112 Both matters could easily transform from political issues into racial debates, which would drag the

110 Ibid.
United States further into the quagmire of the Sino-Japanese conflict.

**Conclusion**

The year 1934 saw a change of context of opinion for China and Japan in the world press. Japan was losing the international reputation it had enjoyed during the Jinan and Mukden incidents. Issues like the recognition of Manchukuo, naval parity and the competition in the cotton textile industry kept estranging Japan from Western powers. To adjust to the new situation, both China and Japan modified their foreign propaganda strategies. While Japan sought a narrow interpretation of the Amō statement, China explained the case broadly in the hope of involving Western interests in the Sino-Japanese dispute. Disturbed by divided political ideas within their respective governments, however, both countries failed to present a unified line in the press. This seemingly peaceful period, nevertheless, ended in July 1937 with the Lugouqiao Incident, which marked the outbreak of the full-scale Sino-Japanese war.
PART III
CHAPTER 7

From Nanjing to Chongqing
Foreign Propaganda in Wartime, 1937–1938

On 7 July 1937, Chinese and Japanese troops clashed near the Marco Polo Bridge southwest of Beijing. Fearing that further concession to Japan would lead to the loss of North China, Chiang Kai-shek reinforced his troops in Hebei. Japan, in response, dispatched its Kwantung and Korean Armies into the region. When all efforts for negotiation failed, years of tensions finally developed into a full-scale war.

The start of the full-scale war removed many of the impediments for the development of China’s foreign propaganda apparatus. The war brought an end to the Nanjing government’s policy of appeasement towards Japan, a policy that had not only drained the popularity of the government but also confused the Western audience about China’s real position in dealing with Japan. The war also heightened the need for an efficient foreign propaganda apparatus. Despite Nanjing’s strong will to end the humiliating “peace,” the Guomindang leaders were keenly aware that the chances for China to successfully withstand Japan’s military aggression were slim. The decision to go to war was in essence a gamble based on Chiang Kai-shek’s long-term views on international power politics in East Asia: that a Sino-Japanese war would probably trigger a war between Japan and the Powers, involving either the United States or the Soviet Union.¹ This vision required Nanjing to place much emphasis on foreign propaganda, a way to appeal for international intervention. Moreover, the war helped to unify China’s voice in the media. Although the war was unable to completely eliminate all disputes between the Nationalist and Communist parties or rivalries among the Nationalist leaders, the common goal to resist Japan still effectively eased the internal political struggles. This unification eventually generated a unified political line in the press.

The outbreak of the war, nevertheless, only provided a favourable external context for the development of the foreign propaganda system, the lack of a centralized structure continuing to be a major problem. Various departments were involved in foreign propaganda, with each pursuing their respective objectives. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, published its own English-language papers and organized diplomats to disseminate propaganda materials overseas. The Ministry of Information operated the Central News Agency and the military sector controlled the censorship office. Necessary communications among the ministries were absent and there was no institution to supervise or coordinate foreign propaganda. Although boundaries between different administrative bodies were often unclear, since the Guomindang regime was basically connected by personal networks across the government, party and military sectors, the lack of centralization still greatly limited the scope of the propaganda activities and caused overlaps which wasted the already scarce resources of the government. Nevertheless, the existing decentralized propaganda institution was perhaps the only way in which the propaganda apparatus could be built up in a period when the Nanjing government was caught between appeasing Japan and resisting it. Even if the loose system was able to handle propaganda in “peace-time”, it could hardly offer a sufficient service during the intensive war period. A centralized foreign propaganda system was urgently needed and its strategies remained to be modified.

This chapter examines the reorganization of the Guomindang’s foreign propaganda apparatus and the operation of the new system at the beginning of the war. It demonstrates how Hollington Tong reorganized this apparatus and turned the decentralized institution into an effective weapon of warfare.

The Fifth Board of the Military Affairs Commission

The need for a centralized foreign propaganda system was felt well before the outbreak of the war. The appeals were initially made by Chinese diplomats in Europe, who felt that the unfavourable portrayal of China abroad had negatively
affected their efforts to gain Western support. In 1935, these officials repeatedly pressed the Guomindang government to centralize its foreign propaganda institutions, warning that neglecting the problem would lead to severe losses in the near future:

The European countries and the United States have placed great emphasis on foreign propaganda. They allocate stable funding and devise sophisticated institutions for the work. After the Mukden Incident, Japan has also made relentless efforts conducting propaganda in Europe and the United States. The fact that Japan still gains sympathy from foreign audiences despite its ruthless encroachment on China has attested to the efficacy of Japan’s propaganda machinery. China, in contrast, has not fully recognized the power of foreign propaganda. Propaganda offices are often underfunded and there is no effective organization to supervise the work....The Second World War is about to start any time. It is a matter of life and death for the Chinese nation. China needs foreign support to survive. Apart from strengthening its military power, the central government also needs to build a strong foreign propaganda apparatus.

Although those officials agreed upon the necessity of centralizing the government’s foreign propaganda apparatus, they did not reach a consensus on how to achieve it. While Qiu Zheng’ou 丘正欧 and Kang Shipin 康士品 proposed to establish a new committee supervising all offices engaging in foreign propaganda, Luo Jiezi preferred to strengthen the existing system. While Qiu suggested that the reorganization be led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the

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2 Qing zhongyang sushe guoji xuanchuan zongbu, 請中央速設國際宣傳總部 (Proposal for the establishment of a central propaganda office), raised by Kang Shipin 康士品 et al., 17 November 1935, conference papers 5.1/9.16, CGPH.
3 Qing xianqi shishi guoji xuanchuan jihua, 請限期實施國際宣傳計劃 (Proposal for an immediate implementation of foreign propaganda plans), raised by Qiu Zheng’ou 丘正欧 et al., November 17, 1935, conference papers 5.1/9.16, CGPH.
4 Qing xianqi shishi guoji xuanchuan jihua, conference papers 5.1/9.16; Qing zhongyang sushe guoji xuanchuan zongbu, CGPH.
5 Qing xunsu zhixing guoji xuanchuan jihua an, 請迅速執行國際宣傳計劃案 (Proposal for an immediate implementation of foreign propaganda plans), raised by overseas representatives Luo Jiezi et al., 3 December 1935, conference papers, 5.1/25.20, CGPH.
War Office (參謀本部), Kang proposed that the Ministry of Information should lead the process. Despite the diplomats’ repeated appeals, in the mid-1930s their plans were not given serious consideration. Fearing that overt propaganda would invoke Japanese protests, Nanjing’s top leaders were only half-heartedly committed to their proposal. Furthermore, the diplomats were either close to the headquarters of the party or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, two sectors where Chiang’s control was relatively weak. Chiang’s power was, instead, firmly entrenched in the military and finance sectors. The distance from the centre of politics of the Nanjing regime determined that they were unlikely to exert a meaningful influence over the policy making process. Meanwhile, Chiang had his own plan for foreign propaganda: as already noted, he had been secretly subsidizing the China Press while strengthening the censorship office operated by his follower, Hollington Tong. It was unlikely that Chiang would follow the suggestion of the diplomats and entrust the instruments of foreign propaganda under his control to the Ministry of Information or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The lack of motivation for foreign propaganda was solved by the start of the full-scale war. Weak in military defence, the Nanjing government was seeking all means available to resist Japan. Foreign propaganda was one of its effective strategies. Indeed, the Nanjing leaders, instead of considering foreign propaganda an auxiliary instrument in diplomacy, began to see it as part of the military war. A pamphlet produced by the semi-official Sun Yat-sen Cultural and Educational Publishing House reflected the renewed understanding of the value of propaganda. They saw news propaganda as an “effective weapon” and the harm it could inflict on the enemy was “ten times more than what a hundred thousand soldiers could bring.”

Chiang Kai-shek appointed his propaganda expert, Hollington Tong, to

6 Qing xianqi shishi guoji xuanchuan jihua, raised by Qiu Zheng’ou et al., 17 November 1935, conference papers 5.1/9.16, CGPH.
7 Qing zhongyang sushe guoji xuanchuan zongbu, raised by Kang Shipin et al., 17 November 1935, conference papers 5.1/9.16, CGPH.
9 The publishing house was established by Sun Ke 孫科, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 and Ye Gongchuo 葉公綸 in 1933.
manage foreign propaganda. Tong was the individual primarily responsible for the founding of a centralized foreign propaganda system of the Guomindang government. He had been secretly collecting materials on war techniques years before the outbreak of the full-scale war. Although he claimed that the research was conducted voluntarily with the hope of providing advice to the government when the war started,\textsuperscript{11} it is possible that his activity was supported by Chiang Kai-shek, given their close connections after 1932. Tong submitted plans on how to resist Japan with chemical weapons, intelligence and propaganda to Chiang during the Lushan Conference in July 1937. Chiang took great interest in his plans and initially invited him to organize an intelligence office targeting foreign-related affairs. Realizing that the job would require an extended personal network within the party, which he as a new party member lacked, Tong turned down Chiang's offer. Chiang then appointed him to lead the government's foreign propaganda,\textsuperscript{12} but still put him in touch with Dai Li, the head of the Military Intelligence Service, and instructed Dai to follow Tong's strategy when operating intelligence.\textsuperscript{13} This connection paved the way for Tong's future cooperation with Dai.

In September 1937, a new institution, the Fifth Board of the Military Affairs Commission, was established to supervise all foreign propaganda activities. Tong was appointed the Vice Minister of the Fifth Board, in charge of foreign propaganda. The board was a supra-departmental institution, responsible for devising foreign propaganda policies, coordinating propaganda activities and building news networks in China and abroad.

Tong revised both the objectives and the techniques of the previous official propaganda and devised new guidelines. While the previous priority for propaganda was to boost the Nanjing government's international prestige, Tong identified the goal of propaganda in wartime as being the formation of an anti-Japanese alliance with other nations and to engage them in a common war with Japan.\textsuperscript{14} The audience the office sought to influence was the foreign elite, such as foreign government officials, non-governmental groups and organizations and

\textsuperscript{11} Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan 曾盧白自傳 (An autobiography of Zeng Xubai) (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiyue gongsi, 1988), 172.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 176–177.
social elites, especially professors and prominent journalists. This change helped to disentangle foreign propaganda from domestic struggles. Previously, foreign propaganda offices, under the name of “promoting the Guomindang’s prestige,” had been frequently manipulated by political factions to attack rivals. The new anti-Japanese agenda was conducive to uniting various institutions and preventing foreign propaganda offices from being used for factional rivalries. The change also relieved foreign propaganda offices of the duty to disseminate the party’s ideology, a task that had occupied the propaganda resources too much without producing significant effects.

Tong also sought to combine running an intelligence office with distributing propaganda, stressing the importance of confidentiality and personal networks. Acutely aware of the Western audience’s distrust of official propaganda, Tong believed that the government should “erase all traces of propaganda” so as to enhance the credibility of its information. To achieve this, he suggested that the propaganda office observe the principle that “truth is the best propaganda,” ensuring that its factual reports agreed with reality. He also advised the government to recruit foreigners to run propaganda operations for China and emphasized the necessity of concealing connections between the government and information outlets.

The reorganization of the foreign propaganda office was an integral part of Chiang’s efforts to enhance his authoritarian control after the outbreak of the war. Facing a total war with Japan, Chiang made the Military Affairs Commission the leading office of the Guomindang regime. The commission not only supervised the military sector but also took over the management of various administrative departments previously operated by the government and the party. The foreign propaganda activities that used to be organized by the party under the Ministry of Information were taken under Chiang’s wing in the same process. Although other departments, including domestic propaganda institutions, moved out of the military sector during the reorganization in early 1938, the foreign propaganda

15 Ibid.
16 The Ministry of Information to the Central Secretariat, 11 June 1938, conference papers 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
17 Ibid.
office remained under the direct control of Chiang until the end of the Sino-Japanese war.

The person who shaped Chiang’s opinion on the value of foreign propaganda was his wife, Song Meiling 宋美齡. Song attended a Methodist school in Shanghai at the age of five and was sent to the United States to be educated when she was ten. She spent the following ten years—her formative period—in the United States for high school and university education. After returning to China, she became heavily involved in foreign-related work. She joined the YWCA, worked as a censor for the National Film Censorship Board and was a committee member of the industry bureau of foreign concessions. After her marriage to Chiang, she became his secretary and translator, filing documents and receiving foreign guests.19 Her Christian background and American education provided her with an insight into the importance of public opinion in American politics. She read English-language newspapers, kept abreast of foreign affairs and was dedicated to obtaining a Western understanding of Chinese issues herself.20 Indeed, Song was the key person connecting Chiang to the West, a connection Chiang direly needed as the leader of China.

Song played an important role in installing Tong to lead China’s foreign propaganda. She shared Tong’s vision that China needed an effective system to promote its case in the West and urged Chiang to appoint Tong to organize foreign publicity. As Tong recalled:

More perhaps than anyone else in the government orbit, she recognized the extreme importance to China’s cause of an understanding foreign press....Without her insistence, I doubt if we would ever have had an overseas publicity department manned by professionally competent persons. It was not a normal governmental function, by previous government standards, nor was it an undertaking that anyone else would have recognized at that early date as important to China’s welfare or

Chiang’s patronage and Song’s support, nevertheless, could not quarantine the new office from factional struggles. Although Tong had engaged in press work for over two decades, his experience in the party had not exceeded two years. Tong’s appointment was cold-shouldered by some of the Guomindang officials, both colleagues and rivals, as they tended to favour cliques and seniority over ability and qualification. Senior party members began a whispering campaign, complaining that Tong, without much experience in party affairs, was unqualified to hold such an important position. The day before Tong took office, Wang Jingwei overtly expressed his dissatisfaction, telling Tong that he was “too old to enter official life.” Tong’s direct superior Chen Gongbo, Wang’s trusted follower, also postponed his inauguration as Minister of Information as a protest. To avoid friction with Chen, Tong moved the headquarters of the Fifth Board to Shanghai while Chen remained in Nanjing to supervise domestic propaganda.

The tension between Tong and Chen was a result of the struggle between Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Jingwei. By 1937, Wang still considered “resisting while negotiating” the best approach to dealing with Japan. His conciliatory attitude, which stemmed from his distrust of China’s military capability, deviated from Chiang’s ever-growing determination for resistance. Indeed, Wang controlled a substantial amount of propaganda resources and enjoyed high prestige in the party. Installing Tong as a direct associate of Chen Gongbo in the propaganda department was Chiang’s effort to prevent Wang from disseminating his views which would eventually affect the morale of the general public.

Apart from political struggles, a lack of competent staff and infrastructure also hindered the development of the Fifth Board. Many of the officers served the board on a part-time basis. Already overworked with their normal duties during wartime, they often neglected the propaganda tasks that Tong, a junior member of the party, assigned to them. Tong later complained that he seldom saw the chiefs of his departments since they had to give much of their time to duties in other

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., 16.
23 Hollington Tong, Dong Xianguang zizhuan 董顯光自傳 (An autobiography of Hollington Tong) (Taipei: Taiwan xinsheng baoshe, 1981), 12.
ministries. Even if they were devoted to the propaganda job, they were nevertheless unlikely to offer better services. As a foreign propaganda apparatus, the board required its staff to master foreign languages and have basic journalist knowledge. But the staff assigned to Tong’s office met neither requirement. Worse than the lack of training was the shortage of rooms. Unable to put all the offices in a single building, Tong had to use various buildings scattered across Shanghai. He ended up using “more than five gallons of gasoline daily” commuting between offices.

Facing what Tong referred to as “impossible situations,” he was eager to change the board radically. But he was also keenly aware that the change would displease certain senior members of the party and consequentially jeopardise his own position: “had I used my brand new broom for too sweeping a clean-up, both broom and I might swiftly have found ourselves outside the party.”

Tong turned to Chiang and Song for help. He repeatedly reported to them on the chaotic situation of the board and intimated the idea of reorganization. Song responded by sending one of her secretaries, Ilona Ralf Sues, to investigate. Sues was a Polish woman whom William H. Donald had recommended to Song for typing work. Her appearance in the board incensed the board members who were annoyed about being instructed by a foreign woman. When the dissatisfaction nearly escalated into a sit-down strike, it further convinced Tong that his current staff, most of whom adhered to the party’s conservative nationalist thought, were unable to cooperate with foreigners effectively. To set the foreign propaganda work on track, Tong needed either to make radical staff changes or abolish the board and create a new organization.

Despite all these difficulties, Tong still had to set the board working. The board was responsible for censoring outgoing dispatches, providing news materials and expanding China’s news networks. Tong’s focus was on the latter two, since the censorship office which he had established two years prior was on track and required only minimal supervision. It seemed that the gathering and compiling of news reports were the easiest part of Tong’s work, since the job was

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 31.
28 Ibid., 32.
29 Ibid., 27.
equal to running a newspaper, something Tong had been doing for twenty years before joining the government. Yet these tasks were the most difficult for the board because of the lack of competent staff, as mentioned above, and the unfavourable conditions during the war. Fierce battles on the front endangered the lives of the correspondents and greatly limited their activities. The continuous military defeats and retreats resulted in the Nanjing government's further loss of control of media facilities. To redress the situation, Tong turned to Xiao Tongzi, the head of the Central News Agency, for assistance in news gathering. In spite of Xiao's willingness to help, he saw little possibility of lending support to Tong when the agency was having difficulty maintaining its own normal service in the heat of war.30

Tong was also interested in distributing human interest stories, which he believed to be effective in evoking readers' sympathies. The stories covered two themes: the exposure of Japanese atrocities and reflections on the bravery of the Chinese people. Since members of the board lacked the ability to write proper reports in English, Tong sought assistance from his friends and previous colleagues and eventually recruited Hawthorne Cheng into the news section of the board to write human interest reports. Cheng was a long-term member of the China Press. He and Tong had known each other since the early 1930s when Tong was in charge of the paper. While serving the Press, Cheng was also responsible for selecting stories from Chinese newspapers and translating them into English.31 His sensitivity for news as well as his high level of proficiency in English made him an ideal member of Tong's new office. Another person Tong recruited was Frank Liu, who had a degree in agriculture from Cornell University. Although Liu had no education in journalism, Tong regarded him as a man with "a flair" for writing human interest features32 and appointed him as the head of the news section.

Tong was also keen to expand China's foreign propaganda network in Shanghai. One of his major achievements in Shanghai was the establishment of connections with the local elites. When the military battle raged in Shanghai, Tong was keen to influence foreign communities there, believing that their

30 Ibid., 29.
31 Paul French, Through the Looking Glass: China's Foreign Journalists from Opium Wars to Mao (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 159–160.
32 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 28.
opinion would “importantly affect the attitudes of their people at home and of their governments.” The Anti-Enemy Committee came to Tong’s assistance. The committee was a self-run organization that endeavoured to inform the foreign communities in Shanghai of Chinese positions in the war. Its key members were Xia Jinlin 夏晋麟, then President of the Anglo-Chinese Medhurst College and a member of the Legislative Yuan; Wen Yuanning 溫源寧, editor of Tian Xia 天下 magazine, a monthly literary magazine in English that was highly rated among the intelligentsia of Shanghai; Liu Zhan’en 劉湛恩 (known as Herman Liu), President of Shanghai University; and H. J. Timperley, then the Manchester Guardian correspondent. These members practically became external agents of the Fifth Board. Except for Liu, who was later assassinated by the Japanese, all other members officially joined Tong’s department in late 1938 and assisted him in establishing China’s propaganda branches overseas.

Tong also made great efforts to secure links with Euro-American correspondents in China, whom he considered the best third-party observers to publicize China’s case abroad. After the fall of Shanghai, Nanjing came under the spotlight of the world media. The Metropolitan Hotel of Nanjing was packed with curious foreign journalists eager to know what would happen to the capital of China. Without a press conference to disseminate information, Tong visited the hotel daily, informing foreign journalists about China’s position and options. The contact was deliberately kept informal in order to “erase the trace of propaganda.” Communication was pursued through personal visits, afternoon teas or private dinners. Tong recalled that during those days in Nanjing, he had lunch with foreign correspondents at Xiao Tongzi’s place almost every day.

Among the Euro-American journalists, Tong kept special close ties with Tillman Durdin, China correspondent for the New York Times. Durdin served the China Press before joining the New York Times in 1937. He met Tong in the early 1930s when Tong was the managing director of the Press. In Nanjing, Tong not

33 Ibid., 18.
35 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 182.
36 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 38.
only relied on Durdin as his source for war updates\textsuperscript{37} but also saw him as the most immediate and effective channel to publicize Chinese perspectives to the world. Upon the loss of Nanjing, for example, Chiang needed to convince the world that the fall of China’s capital did not mean the defeat of the nation. After Chiang urgently drafted an announcement that expressed this position, Tong immediately translated it into English and passed it to Durdin for publication.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{Ministry of Information, Wuhan, 1938}

With the fall of Nanjing, the Guomindang government moved to Wuhan, the economic and industrial centre of the central Yangtze River region. The move forced the government to abandon the news infrastructure it had built in the past ten years in the Jiangnan 江南 area. It was a heavy blow to the fledging foreign propaganda machinery. Yet the move also provided Tong a golden opportunity to reorganize his office: during the days in Wuhan China’s foreign propaganda institutions saw a rapid development.

Chiang Kai-shek did not wait long to eliminate Chen Gongbo from the propaganda office. In late 1937, Chen went to Italy to win sympathy for China from the Mussolini government. Chiang, on Donald’s advice,\textsuperscript{39} abolished the Fifth Board while Chen was away. The abolition naturally removed Chen from the leadership of the propaganda office. Chiang then appointed his own man Shao Lizi 邵力子 to supervise the Ministry of Information. The foreign propaganda office was reorganized as the International Department, attached to the party’s Ministry of Information. Tong was appointed as the Vice Minister, in charge of the department. Although the department was ostensibly affiliated with the party, in essence, it was a military institution: it continued to be funded by the Military Affairs Commission and the head of the International Department was responsible to Chiang. Also, members of the department were organized as

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 34–35.
\textsuperscript{39} J. M. McHugh’s memorandum, March 1938, Winston George Lewis papers, concerning W. H. Donald, together with papers of the Donald family, MLMSS 7594 3/10, Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
military staff, holding military ranks and wearing military uniforms at work.40

Tong quickly reorganized the new department and created six sections within it, namely the Editing Section, the Public Relations Section, the Anti-Enemy Section, the Photographic Section, the Broadcasting Section and the Section of General Affairs.

The Editing Section was headed by Shen Jianhong, whom Tong regarded as “particularly loyal” to him.41 Shen was Tong’s previous colleague and alumnus. He graduated from the Yenching University’s Department of Journalism in 1932, and joined the China Press when Tong was the managing director. Between 1934 and 1936, he was sent to the University of Missouri to study journalism. Upon returning, he became an English editor at the Central News Agency.42 The main task of this Editing Section included collecting news materials, sending news dispatches and publishing journals, pamphlets and books. The section operated like a newspaper office. Staff were sent out to collect news materials in the morning and returned to write news stories afterwards. The section, on average, produced 20,000 words of news materials everyday. Those writings were distributed to foreign journalists in Wuhan and sent to the department’s overseas branches for further distribution. The section also edited a weekly called China at War. The journal had a print run of 5,000 copies per issue and was distributed to foreign journalists, diplomats and missionaries in China and organizations overseas.43 In addition, the section dispatched telegrams to foreign public elites, eliciting their sympathy for China and encouraging them to organize anti-Japanese boycotts or strikes in support. To “erase the trace of propaganda”, all such telegrams were sent under the name of China’s non-official organizations. Over 4,000 words were telegraphed every month for this purpose.44

40 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zixuan ji, 192.
41 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 63.
43 Work report of the International Department, 1938—1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
44 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
The Public Relations Section was created to strengthen China's propaganda network. Its responsibilities included receiving foreign journalists and visitors; arranging their interviews with top officials and military leaders; contacting foreign diplomats, publishers and news organizations and convening press conferences. Tong placed great emphasis on providing a good service to the foreign journalists and visitors in China, trying to satisfy their "needs for all kinds of information" and requests for interviews. The section made particular efforts to put newly arrived Western journalists in touch with government officials. Tong believed that interviews of the leaders were often the initial introduction to Chinese affairs for newly arrived journalists. Meanwhile, the journalists also saw interviewing key Chinese officials as a precious opportunity. They often wired the conversation verbatim despite the high cost of international telegrams. The section also resumed press conferences for foreign journalists. It invited military, political and diplomatic leaders to give talks on the situation at the front. Scholars were also invited to deliver speeches. The department organized over 300 press conferences between 1 December 1937 and 24 October 1938, each attracting 50 journalists on average. Apart from working relations with Western journalists, Tong also sought to establish personal connections with them by taking care of their private life. The section not only provided the foreign journalists with food and accommodation at a minimum charge, but also attended to their personal needs. For example, after learning that Freda Utley, a British writer, arrived in Wuhan in hot weather without enough summer dresses, the section had a summer suit made for her and the dress was given to Utley as a personal gift by Song Meiling. Tong saw this hospitality as good propaganda:

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Work report, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
48 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 56.
Running this Public Relations Section is like running a shop and foreign journalists are our customers. Good shop assistants should be ready to satisfy their customers with the idea that the customers are always right. This spirit of service is the most alluring magic of our foreign propaganda. It creates the impression that cooperation with us brings pleasure, both physically and mentally. As a result, they would agree with our ideas and distribute the messages we wish them to send abroad for us.  

The Anti-Enemy Section was staffed by students returning from Japan. The leader of the section, for example, Cui Wanqiu 崔萬秋, lived in Japan between 1924 and 1933. He served as editor of Da Wan Bao managed by Zeng Xubai from 1934. While taking on the editorship, he was also teaching at the University of Shanghai (滬江大學) and Fudan University. He later joined the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Military Affairs Commission (Guomin zhengfu junshi weiyuanhui diaocha tongji ju 國民政府軍事委員會調查統計局, Juntong 軍統 for short), an intelligence agency under the supervision of Dai Li, and was recruited to Tong’s office after it moved to Wuhan. The section was both a propaganda institution and an intelligence organ. As for propaganda, the section engaged in publishing anti-war materials and designing broadcasting programs. Its target audience was the Japanese soldiers in China and the public back in Japan. The section compiled propaganda materials in Japanese and employed Japanese anti-war activists, such as Hasegawa Teruko 長谷川照子 (also known as 綠川英子, a translation of her Esperanto name Verda Majo), as broadcasters for China’s international radio station, broadcasting anti-war messages to the Japanese

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49 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
50 Xiong Yuezhi ed., Shanghai mingren mingshi mingwu daguan 上海名人名事名物大观 (Shanghai: People, Events and Relics) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2004), 258.
audience. As an intelligence office, the section organized the Research Committee on Enemy Propaganda (Duidi xuanchuan yanjiu weiyuanhui 對敵宣傳研究委員會) in March 1938, collecting and analysing Japanese propaganda materials. Under the direction of Shao Yulin 邵毓麟, the committee published Di Qing Bao Gao 敵情報告, Di Qing Jian Tao 敵情檢討, Di Fang Miu Lun 敵方謬論 and other journals for the reference of the Guomindang’s top leaders to devise anti-Japanese policies.

The Photographic Section was established with the assistance of the Central News Agency. Tong’s first attempt at supplying photographs to the foreign press ended in “dismal failure,” due to lack of trained personnel. Xiao Tongzi 小同子 came to Tong’s assistance, setting up a photographic section within the Central News Agency and sharing pictures with Tong’s department. The agency’s photographic service was nevertheless limited. One of its key photographers was H. S. Wang who was regarded by Tong as having “both technical skill and a keen news sense.” His picture of the lonely weeping baby sitting amidst the ruins of the bombed railroad station in Shanghai became the most famous picture of the war from a Chinese source. Apart from taking photos, the section also provided film developing services to foreign journalists. By doing so, the section aimed to strengthen connections with journalists and secretly censor their pictures.

The International Department established a Radio Section that supervised broadcasts in foreign languages. From December 1937, the section began to broadcast news in English, French and Japanese respectively for ten minutes daily.

52 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
54 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 29.
55 Work report of the International Department, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
through the Hankou radio station. In May 1938, the Hankou wireless station under the Ministry of Communication agreed to allocate an hour a day for foreign-language programs. While the department lacked outlets for its printed propaganda materials, the international radio station became an important channel to voice China’s position in the war. The radio station not only focused on news reporting, political comments and speeches but also devised cultural programs, including Western music, Chinese operas and poetry readings. The goal, again, was to dilute the propaganda flavour and make the program more entertaining and acceptable.

Apart from reorganizing the foreign propaganda institutions within the government, Tong also expanded the external network. He organized a branch office in Hong Kong and appointed Wen Yuanning, organizer of the Shanghai Anti-Enemy Committee, as director of the office. Wen operated the office under the cover of the editor of the Tian Xia monthly. He had Tong’s complete trust. Tong arranged Wen to be his proxy with the overseas offices in the United States, Britain and Australia in case he was in danger. With the fall of Shanghai, Hong Kong became the most important city connecting China with the outside world. Propaganda materials were sent out overseas from Hong Kong and the branch office often became the first stop for foreign journalists coming to cover the Sino-Japanese war. The office published an English-language monthly named the Far Eastern Mirror. The China at War also moved from Wuhan to Hong Kong later due to the better printing and transport conditions there. The Hong Kong office also worked as an intelligence body, collecting Japanese-related materials for the government.

The London office was organized by Xia Jinlin 夏晋麟 with the help of Harold J. Timperley, a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian. Both of them were members of the Anti-Enemy Committee which voluntarily assisted Tong’s propaganda during the battle of Shanghai. Xia was also a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Instead of retarding the progress of the propaganda work, his cross-appointment greatly facilitated the coordination between the department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Xia was on good terms with Chinese

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56 Ibid.
57 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 50.
diplomats in Europe, including Wellington Koo, Qian Tai 钱泰, Ambassador to Spain, Jin Wensi 金問泗, Ambassador to the Netherlands, and Zheng Tianci 郑天赐, Judge of the International Tribunal.

He was particularly close to Guo Taiqi 郭泰祺, Ambassador to Britain, who frequently invited Xia to gatherings in the embassy. In one of the gatherings, Xia met Kingsley Martin, his schoolmate at the Mill High School in London and Martin’s partner Dorothy Woodman. Both were actively engaged in the China Campaign Committee.\(^5\) The committee was a social organization established by a group of progressive British at the end of the 1930s to lobby on behalf of China in its war against Japan. Its principle organizers were Victor Gollancz, publisher and head of the Left Book Club, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, Margery Fry, a feminist and social activist, Harold Laski, the Labor Party theorist and Arthur Clegg, reporter for the *Daily Worker*.\(^6\) The committee engaged in collecting funds for medical aid to China, promoting boycotts of Japanese goods and supporting Chinese speakers to give talks to organizations in Britain.\(^6\) Xia’s personal friendship with Martin and Woodman strengthened his ties with the committee. He closely cooperated with the committee and used it as the major platform of the London propaganda branch to promote China’s case. Nevertheless, Xia was cautious to keep his connections with the committee out of the public eye so as to “erase the trace of propaganda” as Tong demanded.\(^6\)

In the United States, Harold J. Timperley and Earl Leaf, former United Press correspondent, were sent to New York to open a branch office. The office served in a two-way capacity: reporting American trends to China and assisting in the


\(^{6}\) Xiao Qian, Jeffrey C. Kinkley trans., *Traveller without a Map* (California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 85.


\(^{6}\) Xia Jinlin, *Wo wudu canjia waijiao gongzuo de huigu*, 58.
spread of information about China in the United States. The office focused on strengthening ties with American associations sympathetic to China; promoting boycotts of Japanese goods and an arms embargo against Japan; distributing anti-Japanese materials in the American press; and establishing connections with opinion leaders and government officials. Chen Cheng and Hollington Tong particularly advised Leaf to influence opinions among financial and commercial circles in the United States. Meanwhile, Timperley also extended the US network by securing connections with the Trans-Pacific News Service headed by Bruno Shaw, the former editor of the *Hankow Herald*, an English-language daily published in Hankou (Hankow) in the 1920s. The agency would later develop into the Chinese News Service and become China’s major news outlet in the United States.

Frank Price and his brother Harry Price also contributed to the building up of the US network. The Price brothers were born into a Nanjing missionary family. Frank Price was dean of the Nanjing Theological Seminary. He translated Sun Yat-sen’s *Three People’s Principles* into English in 1929 and was close to Song Meiling. Harry Price was formerly a professor at Yenching University. They together established a Chinese information service for Tong in the United States, “supported exclusively by American contributors.” The service operated for two years. Frank Price was also sent to Washington to distribute China’s materials among the American political elites and invite prominent opinion leaders to give lectures about China’s case. Their assistance was regarded by Tong as “extremely helpful” during “the least understood period of war.”

With Leaf’s help, the Price brothers organized the Campaign of the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression, known as the Price Committee. The committee called for an embargo on American supplies of military materials to Japan. It received warm support from officials of the Department of State and Congressmen, including Stanley K. Hornbeck, chief

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63 Chen Cheng and Hollington Tong to Chiang Kai-shek, 11 February 1938, 00801020200019001, Chen Cheng archives, Academia Historica.
64 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 91.
66 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 95.
68 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 94.
advisor on Far Eastern Affairs, and Senator Key Pittman, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The executive secretary of the committee, Harry Price, contrived to elicit support from many US political celebrities. The committee was chaired by Roger Greene, former director of the China Medical Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. Walter Judd, a Congressman from Minnesota, became one of its most effective speakers. In 1939, the committee also successfully recruited former Secretary of State Henry Lewis Stimson to be its honorary chairman, with Abbot Lawrance Lowell, Harvard President Emeritus, and Harry E. Yarnell, former commander-in-chief of the US Asiatic Fleet, as vice honorary chairman. Frederick McKee and Geraldine Fitch, wife of the well-known missionary George A. Fitch, were also important members of the organization. As Leaf reported, “the home of Harry Price in New York had become a cleaning house for editors, writers, research experts, professors, missionaries, boycott organizers and others devoted to the China cause.” However, it was hard to assess how much the Chinese government was involved in the committee, since Leaf, one of the initial members of the committee, quitted the committee in September 1938, so as not to leave the impression that the committee was prompted by or linked with the Guomindang.

The Committee was keen to publish and distribute pamphlets in large quantities to advocate its cause (see the following table).

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72 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 95.
74 Quoted by Akio, “China’s “Public Diplomacy” toward the United States before Pearl Harbor,” 45–46.
Table 1. Major Propaganda Materials Published by the Committee for Non-Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Title and Date</th>
<th>Number of Copies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booklet</td>
<td>America’s Share in Japan’s War Guilt. August 1938</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Far Eastern Conflict and American Cotton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shall America Stop Arming Japan? 1940</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>Japan’s Partner – The U. S. A</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>America Supports Japanese Aggression</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Can We Do?</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China Faces Japan and America</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Hands of America</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggestions for Committees</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flier</td>
<td>What One Person Can Do</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lists of Senators and Congressmen by state (48 fliers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reproductions of significant articles, broadcasts, editorials, public opinion polls, etc. (22 items)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Progress and Proposal of ACNPJA (16 Feb., 1940), p 4, and others.

Indeed, to win US support for China had become one of the most important tasks of China’s foreign propaganda. Chiang instructed Kong Xiangxi to allocate US$100,000 a month to support propaganda in the United States and especially advised him not to scrimp on spending and “try all means” to find reliable people in the United States to publicize the Chinese cause.75 Tong later expanded China’s US propaganda branches to Chicago and San Francisco. The new offices were led by Henry Evans and Malcolm Rosholt respectively. In February 1938, Chiang sent Zhang Pengchun 李培春 to the United States to conduct propaganda.76 Zhang was a specialist in theatre. He received PhD from Columbia University and was a professor at Nankai University. He served as the theatrical adviser and interpreter on Mei Lanfang’s successful tour of Beijing Opera performances in the United States and Russia and was experienced in introducing Chinese culture to the West. Within two weeks after his arrival, he had visited more than twenty prominent Americans, including officials in the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the

75 Chiang Kai-shek to Kong Xiangxi, 16 January 1938, 002060100125006, Academia Historica.
76 Chen Cheng and Hollington Tong to Chiang Kai-shek, 11 February 1938, 00801020200019001, Chen Cheng archives, Academia Historica.
Treasury, secretaries of the Army and Navy, intellectuals and media practitioners. He intended to collect their views on Chinese issues and inform the US elites of China’s stance. In 1938, Chiang Kai-shek appointed Hu Shih as the ambassador to the United States, hoping his prestige as a scholar would bring about favourable diplomatic and propaganda outcomes. Hu, a Cornell University undergraduate who held a PhD from Columbia University, was warmly welcomed by the Americans. The *New York Times* commended him as one of the few Chinese who were “thoroughly representative of the best of the new and old China” and “well qualified to explain China to the United States and the United States to China.” Hu toured the United States, giving speeches about China’s conditions in order to elicit the US public’s support. Hu’s overt diplomatic activities complemented the covert propaganda efforts by the propaganda branch office.

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77 Tsuchida Akio, "China’s "Public Diplomacy" toward the United States before Pearl Harbor," 42–43.
After months in Wuhan, the International Department had created a centralized and coordinated propaganda framework within the government. It also substantially extended its propaganda network abroad. The central office, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, only had 26 people on its payroll, yet the total number of people offering services directly or indirectly for the department reached over two hundred.79 Straddling the military and party sectors, the department obtained support from a wide range of government institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Military Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the Central News Agency. Compared with the disparate foreign propaganda institutions before the full-scale war, the new system was a big step forward. It should be noted that the cohesive force holding the propaganda network together was the network of personal relations.

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79 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
The reason Tong, as a new member of the Guomindang, was able to build such a network was because Chiang Kai-shek and Song Meiling supported him behind the scenes.

Madam Chiang (Song Meiling) and William H. Donald, Chiang and Song’s adviser, were the key persons closely supervising the operation of Tong’s office. Song travelled to Tong’s Shanghai office from Nanjing twice to arrange propaganda work, braving Japanese bombing along the way. She actively participated in propaganda activities, delivering speeches and issuing appeals. Song also worked as a mediator when Tong and Chiang disagreed on the publication of certain information. For example, when Tong’s decision to withhold a report on Britain’s secret agreement with Japan to maintain a neutral zone in Wuhan was overruled by Chiang, he turned to Song to persuade Chiang. Tong was more at ease dealing with Song than with Chiang. In great awe of Chiang, he was found visibly trembling in Chiang’s presence and stammered over the phone with him. Yet his communication with Song, according to Chiang’s telephone officer Wang Zhengyuan, was smooth in either Chinese or English.

Donald’s role in foreign propaganda also deserves attention. Having been a journalist earlier in his career, Donald understood how foreign news organizations worked. He assisted Tong in devising propaganda strategies and secured Timperley’s service for the office. As noted above, it was he who persuaded Chiang to eliminate Chen Gongbo from the propaganda office when Chen was on a goodwill trip to Italy. He also worked as a propagandist himself, informing newly arrived foreign diplomats about the situation in China. When J. M. McHugh, Assistant Naval Attaché to China first arrived in the country, Donald established a close friendship with him. He explained to McHugh about China’s

80 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 200.
81 Meiling Song, War Messages and Other Selections (Hankou: China Information Committee, 1938).
82 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 57.
85 Ibid.
86 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 184.
87 J. M. McHugh’s report, 8 March 1938, MLMSS 7594/3/10.
88 Ibid.
situation and later introduced him to Chiang Kai-shek.\textsuperscript{89} It was hard to assess how much of a role Donald played in building the foreign propaganda apparatus, but McHugh’s claim that Tong was under Donald’s direct control\textsuperscript{90} might have overstated his importance. The fact that most of the staff of the department were Tong’s alumni or previous colleagues testified to Tong’s independent leading position in the ministry.

The strategy of covert propaganda was fully developed during the days in Wuhan. The propaganda activities were guided by two basic beliefs: “truth is the best propaganda weapon” and the primary importance of “telling China’s stories by Westerners.”\textsuperscript{91} By saying “truth,” Tong meant “facts” or “verifiable facts” in contrast to lies or deception.\textsuperscript{92} Trained at a school of journalism in the U.S., Tong understood the foreign audience’s sensitivity to deceptive propaganda and the harm a forged news item could do to the credibility of the sources.\textsuperscript{93} He believed that the audience’s trust in Chinese sources was a prerequisite for further acceptance of Chinese views and that presenting balanced reports was the best way to obtain and maintain credibility. Guided by this principle, Tong admitted that Chinese pilots bombed the centre of foreign concessions in Shanghai and the American Dollar Liner \textit{President Hoover} in the Huangpu River by mistake, although foreign correspondents initially speculated that the bombs were dropped by the Japanese.\textsuperscript{94} Further, Tong adopted a hands-off policy, using foreigners to conduct propaganda for China. His previous connections with the “Missouri mafia” and his colleagues of the \textit{China Press} helped him to include foreign journalists in his personal network. Being a Christian also served him in securing assistance from foreign missionary groups. As mentioned above, nearly all the leaders of his branch offices overseas were foreigners. Within China, Tong appointed Maurice Votaw as his adviser and invited the Oxford-trained sinologist J. A. MacCausland to be his assistant, translating conference materials and speeches.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{89} J. M. McHugh’s report, 20 January 1938, MLMSS 7594/3/5.
\textsuperscript{90} J. M. McHugh’s report, 8 March 1938, MLMSS 7594/3/10.
\textsuperscript{91} Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{92} Hollington Kong Tong, \textit{Dateline: China}, 89.
\textsuperscript{93} See comments of Roy W. Howard, president of the Cripps-Howard Newspapers, on Tong’s personality, in Hollington Tong, \textit{China Dateline}, vii.
\textsuperscript{94} Hollington Kong Tong, \textit{Dateline: China}, 88–89.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 61–62.
Liberal censorship also characterized the news policy in the Wuhan days. Censors had the right to delete but not to alter information.\(^96\) They were required not only to inform foreign correspondents about improper content prior to its deletion but also to explain the harm that content might do to China.\(^97\) Such a liberal policy was also regarded as the best resort for China’s diminished control of news outlets after the fall of Shanghai. Tong had to admit that “news censorship was doomed to be inadequate with the existence of extraterritoriality.”\(^98\) The loss of Shanghai made it even harder for China to control the outgoing dispatches. Tong knew well that the foreign journalists, apart from using official channels to transfer their messages, had secret ways of avoiding censorship. For example, a correspondent of the United Press, despite having promised Tong not to disclose the deal between Britain and Japan to maintain a neutral zone in Wuhan, sent the message to Shanghai by courier to avoid censorship.\(^99\)

The Wuhan days saw the flowering of free expression. The list below shows data on censorship collected by the International Department between December 1937 and September 1938, the ten months in Wuhan:

\(^{96}\) Work report of the International Department, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
\(^{97}\) Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
\(^{98}\) Ibid.
\(^{99}\) Hollington Kong Tong, Dateline: China, 60.
It is unclear whether the blank areas suggest that figures were unavailable for those sections or whether censorship was interrupted because of the war. The incomplete statistics nevertheless indicate that the censorship office was conducted in a spasmodic manner, having difficulty maintaining the normal service or keeping records of its work. Censorship was also less strict than before. According to the figures in May, June, July and September 1938, the office on average deleted 3.11 words from each article. Compared with the censorship in the mid-1930s when foreign journalists often found their articles completely rewritten or deleted, the changes made by the office in Wuhan were minor. The relaxing of censorship not only applied to the English-language press but also the Chinese press. In 1938 not a single editor or publisher was arrested or assassinated.  

While the Guomindang government endeavoured to strengthen its foreign propaganda forces, the Communist Party also sought to extend its influence in the English-language media. After the Xi’an Incident, the Nationalist and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Articles received</th>
<th>Words deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1937</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1938</td>
<td>446</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td></td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>2225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>1614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100 Work report of the International Department, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
102 Stephen MacKinnon, China Reporting, 38.
Communist parties formed a united front against Japan. Although the unity was unstable due to the lack of mutual trust, their cooperation in Wuhan ran relatively smoothly. Zhou Enlai 周恩來, then the Vice Minister of the Board of Political Training of Military Affairs Commission (國民政府軍事委員會政治部副部長), frequently visited Tong’s office and attended foreign press conferences. Tong personally liked Zhou Enlai in spite of their political differences. He commended Zhou’s cooperation during the period in Hankou, saying that it “helped a great deal to make [the International Department’s] relationship with the foreign press cordial.”

Tong also regarded their cooperation as a proof of unity which helped to strengthen China’s morale. Indeed, Zhou’s personal charm attracted the attention of many foreign journalists. Foreign journalists believed that he was an official with the ability to “manipulate correspondents’ views on China.” Peggy Durdin, freelance feature writer for the Nation, Atlantic and the New York Times, for example, was impressed by Zhou’s “magnetic personality,” believing that “nobody on the KMT [Guomindang] side could touch Chou En-lai in persuasiveness or in intellectual charm.” Henry Lieberman, editor of the Foreign News, while disappointed with Zhou’s proficiency in English, still acknowledged Zhou as “one of the greatest people [he had] ever encountered because of his charm, his skills, his mental and dramatic ability.” In addition to Zhou’s efforts, Fan Changjiang 范長江, an editor of Da Gong Bao 大公報 and also a close associate of Zhou, actively organized an English news agency in Hankou. The agency, which later moved to Changsha, then Guilin, supplied news reports to the International Department.

Foreign journalists in Wuhan welcomed the unity between the Guomindang and the Communist Party. They regarded the Wuhan days as the “romantic period of Chinese resistance to the Japanese” and found their journalistic work much easier in Wuhan. They just needed to focus on united China’s resistance against the invasion of Japan, wasting no energy on complicated internal struggles between the two parties. Tillman Durdin, then the correspondent of the New York

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103 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 51.
104 Stephen MacKinnon, China Reporting, 82.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
Times, reminisced about the experience in Wuhan at a conference in 1982. He said:

It [the period in Wuhan] was also the height of the united front...The unity tremendously impressed us. Although the Chinese were losing steadily after some very tough battles, their sense of unity as a people seemed to hold. We tried to report this in whatever we wrote.109

Into the Lion's Den—Propaganda in Shanghai

Despite the fall of Shanghai, its transnational nature still made the city an important platform to disseminate China’s case. Keenly aware that the attitude of the foreigners who lived in Shanghai strongly affected the attitudes of the public abroad and the officials of their home countries, Tong sneaked into Shanghai to organize propaganda activities. Indeed, the morale of the foreign and Chinese residents was low. As Tong’s colleague reported to him on 1 December 1937, the sense of insecurity was strong among foreigners: “No one knows just how far the Japanese will go or to what extent the powers are prepared to sacrifice their rights.”110 The Chinese residents were also war-weary. They were disappointed with the Guomindang government’s abandonment of the city and complained that little support was offered to the Chinese in the Japanese-occupied regions.111 Part of Tong’s job was to boost morale in Shanghai and thus demonstrate China’s strong determination to resist to the foreign communities in the city.

Tong’s trip to Shanghai was also an effort to thwart Japanese propaganda in the region. After conquering Shanghai, Japan occupied the office of the Ministry of Communications and took over the radio station XHQC, then one of the most powerful stations in Asia.112 The Japanese army muzzled the Chinese press in the International Settlement and assassinated anti-Japanese journalists and social activists. Liu Zhan’en, one of the key members of the Anti-Enemy Committee,

109 Ibid.
110 Quoted in Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 71.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
was shot dead while waiting for a bus. On 6 January 1938, the Japanese authorities, claiming to be the successors to the Chinese government in the International Settlement, took over China’s censorship office in the Great Northern Telegraph Company, the Great Eastern Telegraph Company and the Pacific Telegraph Company and justified that their control of China’s outgoing dispatches as aiming to preserve “the secrecy of their military operations and safety of their troops.” Although American and British consulate-generals protested to the Japanese embassy about the censorship and local newspapers also collectively deplored the takeover, opposition was expressed though words only. No action was taken to stop Japan’s control of the media. As Shanghai, previously the information centre of China, slid into Japanese control, Tong considered it imperative to counter Japan’s propaganda in Shanghai.

Tong carried out his mission in Shanghai in a highly clandestine manner. Since any transport from Hankou was subjected to the tightest scrutiny by the Japanese authorities, Tong flew to Hong Kong first and took an Italian ship bound for Shanghai. Rev. Ronald Rees, then Secretary of the National Christian Council, also Tong’s friend, happened to be on the ship. Tong declined Rees’ repeated offer for help with propaganda activities, so as not to complicate the mission by involving more people and thereby putting Rees and himself in danger. Learning that other acquaintances were aboard, Tong stayed in his cabin throughout the voyage in order to keep his trip as secret as possible. During his ten days in Shanghai, he stayed mostly at Timperley’s place. This not only facilitated his cooperation with the Anti-Enemy Committee, of which Timperley was a member, but also afforded him protection due to Timperley’s British (Australian) citizenship. To keep the propaganda activities secret, Tong also had to send the staff he had left in Shanghai—Dong Shoupeng, F. L. Pratt and Jimmy Wei—to Hong Kong, since they were too well known in Shanghai as members of the Ministry of Information.

Tong opened an underground office in Shanghai and recruited S. T. Chu and John B. Penniston to operate it. Chu, who had wide connections in Shanghai both among foreigners and Chinese, had worked for Tong in the censorship office.

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113 “The Japanese censorship in Shanghai,” Journal de Shanghai, 8 Jan 1938, collected in SMP files, r6 D2398.
114 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 69–70.
Penniston had been an acquaintance of Tong since their school days at Park College in Missouri. Apart from working for Tong, he also served as chief editorial writer for the *China Press* and was teaching English and logic at Soochow University. Chu and Penniston worked from a tiny office with an entrance down a small alley in the French Concession. They were charged with the distribution of pamphlets and fliers. Most of the time, materials could be circulated through newsboys, policemen or vendors, but sometimes they had to do it themselves. By the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, Penniston had a large box in his garage filled with records and publicity materials of the secret Shanghai office. Since burning materials might catch the attention of the Japanese, he calmly waited until the Chinese New Year when Chinese people burnt spirit money for ancestors and burnt the incriminating materials for three days.\(^{115}\) As a double precaution, Tong engaged a third underground staff—Hubert Freyn, an American citizen—to work more or less as a spy for Tong and to provide him with information on Japanese moves in Shanghai. His work was arranged in such a confidential manner that even Chu and Penniston were unaware of his presence.\(^{116}\)

### The Nanjing Incident, 1937

The Nanjing Incident put Tong’s foreign propaganda network to the test. After the Japanese army occupied Nanjing in December 1937, the Japanese soldiers committed massacre, rape, looting and various other inhumane acts against Chinese civilians and disarmed soldiers. Atrocities continued on a large scale for at least the initial six weeks and sporadically thereafter.\(^{117}\) China had a good case to present to the world: its civilians in Nanjing were ruthlessly killed and assaulted in large numbers by the Japanese army. China could easily win foreign sympathy due to its victimized position and Japan’s inhuman atrocity on its territory. If Japan’s atrocities were successfully publicized, this bad record would not only change Western audiences’ understanding of Japan’s behaviour in the

\(^{115}\) Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 72.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 72–73.

past but also keep them alert to Japan’s future acts.

However, the channel to distribute the information was not smooth. After the Japanese army occupied Nanjing, all news transmission facilities were tightly controlled by the Japanese. Close to Nanjing, the previous centre of information in East Asia, Shanghai, was in no better position. Japan seized the Chinese part of the city and closely supervised activities in the two foreign concessions. The army installed censors in all foreign cable companies and strictly scrutinized China’s outgoing information. Indeed, Tong’s foreign propaganda office was faced with two challenges: to collect materials on Japan’s atrocities in Nanjing and to smuggle them out of Nanjing to transmit to the outside world.

Tong heavily relied on Westerners to conduct propaganda for China. After the fall of Nanjing, the group of Westerners remaining in the city became the eye witnesses of the events. Most of them later voluntarily offered propaganda services for Tong’s office. Some even became China’s long-term propaganda agents. The fact that foreign correspondents ended up reporting the Nanjing case abroad was not only because they were the only sources available, but also because Tong believed that accounts from “neutral” Western witnesses would be more credible than those from Chinese sources.

The publicity of the Nanjing Incident should be analysed in two phases divided by the return of international diplomats in January 1938. In December 1937 when the atrocities were at their height, reports on the events were scarce due to the blockade on information by the Japanese army. Accounts of the incident mainly came from the few foreign journalists and missionaries staying in the city. Among them, Archibald T. Steele, correspondent of *The Chicago Daily News*, and Tillman Durdin, correspondent of the *New York Times*, were especially active in reporting the incident to the outside world.

After repeated efforts to leave Nanjing, Steele finally managed to board *Oahu* leaving for Shanghai on 15 December. Once aboard, Steele wasted no time in trying to cable his reports about the Nanjing atrocities through the ship’s radio facilities. He succeeded in bribing the *Oahu* radio operator to send his accounts on the Nanjing Incident to the *Chicago Daily News* and the messages became the first report on the rape of Nanjing in the Western media. Steele referred to the

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118 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 46.

119 Lu Suping, *They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British*
Japanese killings as "systematic extermination" and recalled that the Japanese killed the Chinese civilians like "killing sheep." He also expressed his disgust at the experience of having to drive his car "over heaps of bodies five feet high, over which hundreds of Japanese trucks and guns had already passed."\(^\text{120}\) Determined to expose Japan's inhumane act to the world, Steele continued to publish stories about Nanjing on December 17 and 18, each providing graphic descriptions of the Japanese ruthless treatment of Chinese civilians.\(^\text{121}\)

Durdin also continuously reported his first-hand accounts on the situation in Nanjing to the headquarters of the *New York Times*. His first report about Japanese activities in occupied Nanjing came out on 18 December. Durdin accurately presented the sharp change of atmosphere within the city:

> A tremendous sense of relief over the outlook for a cessation of the fearful bombardment and the elimination of the threat of serious disorders by the Chinese troops pervaded the Chinese populace when the Japanese took over control within the walls. It was felt Japanese rule might be severe, at least until war conditions were over. Two days of Japanese occupation changed the whole outlook. Wholesale looting, the violation of women, the murder of civilians, the eviction of Chinese from their homes, mass executions of war prisoners and the impressing of able-bodied men turned Nanking into a city of terror.\(^\text{122}\)

Durdin not only recorded Japan's brutal treatment of the Chinese but also exposed Japanese soldiers' assault on American nationals and looting of their properties—the staff of the American Mission University Hospital was stripped of cash and watches and the home of the United States ambassador was invaded.\(^\text{123}\) Although Durdin was close to Tong, it was hard to identify him as Tong's propaganda agent. While Durdin's criticisms of Japanese acts were bitter, he

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\(^\text{123}\) Ibid., 10.
remained critical of the Chinese military defence as well. In the article, he implied that Chiang Kai-shek himself was responsible for the tragedy of Nanjing since he permitted a futile defence of the capital, following the ideas of his German military advisers and his chief military associate, Bai Chongxi.124 He portrayed Chinese soldiers as a group of people under-equipped with munitions and lacking the will to fight. A large number of Chinese soldiers, recorded Durdin, bolted from the front line, threw away their guns and put on civilian clothes so as to avoid being captured by the Japanese. Durdin therefore wondered if the Chinese army “could be rallied again for effective mass resistance against the Japanese military machine.”125

Although Shanghai was close to Nanjing, the geographical proximity did not provide Shanghai’s treaty-port papers any advantage in covering the incident. Reports about the case from Shanghai came much later than those from the metropolitan papers. The North China Daily News first reported the incident on December 25. The article was drafted by Miner S. Bates, one of the few Westerners remaining in Nanjing when Japan took over the city. Bates was a professor at the University of Nanjing and the leader of the International Committee for the Nanjing Safety Zone, which he had established to offer relief services to the Chinese people. Feeling it a “moral necessity”126 to make the terrible behaviour of the Japanese known to the world, he kept a clear record of the atrocities he witnessed, mailed the accounts to his wife Lilliath Bates in Shanghai and asked her to distribute the first-hand information through Westerners he trusted, including Steele, Timperley, and Gould of the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury.127 Bates’ article “Rape, Looting Follow Taking of the Capital” which was published anonymously on 25 December 1937 in the North China Daily News, was said to have been smuggled out of Nanjing and handed to the American Consulate General in Shanghai by Steele.128 The editor of the Daily

124 Ibid.
127 Bates to his wife, 21 January 1937, NMP0039, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library. http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/ydl_china_webapp_images/NMP0039.pdf [last accessed on 18 February 2012].
128 Lu Suping, They were in Nanjing, 20.
News commented that although the article was “written with very considerable constraint,” a picture of horror was visible between the lines and could be sketched in readers’ minds with “terrible vividness.” Bates’ reports were also used by Steele, Durdin and Leslie C. Smith, a correspondent of Reuters, in their articles. Hallet Abend, another New York Times correspondent in Shanghai, quoted the entire report in his paper on December 24. This illustrated how the limited information about Nanjing was secretly shared among the journalists in Shanghai.

The response from the China Weekly Review towards the Nanjing Incident came even later. It published a front-page article reviewing Mukai Toshiakai and Noda Iwao’s competition in killing Chinese on 12 December. Instead of quoting smuggled accounts by Westerners in Nanjing, the journal cited the Nichi-Nichi Shim bun’s report—a legitimate source under the gaze of Japanese censors. Drawing on the killing competition, the journal commented that the report although “probably exaggerated, shed considerable light on the orgy of looting, murder and rape which took place following the entrance of Japanese soldiers into the Chinese capital.” The editor then quoted reports of the New York Times on Japanese atrocities to further verify the existence of Japanese misbehaviour in Nanjing.

It should be noted that the Shanghai treaty-port papers used to be faster in providing accounts on Chinese affairs and that their comments had often been more radical or progressive, such as the case during the Mukden and Shanghai incidents. Their slow response and restrained attitude towards the Nanjing case reflected Japan’s tight control of information in the city. Indeed, the Japanese censors strictly controlled all outgoing information regarding the Nanjing Incident. Timperley’s dispatch to the Manchester Guardian which stated that some 300,000 Chinese civilians had been slaughtered by the Japanese soldiers following the occupation of the district was blocked by censors in the Danish Great Northern Cable Company, since it “was likely to harm the [Japanese] military.” Victor Keen, correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune, was

also requested to withdraw his cable concerning atrocities in Nanjing by censors in the Commercial Pacific Cable Company. The *China Weekly Review* quoted the "unanimous opinion" of the international corps of correspondents opposing the Japanese censorship, saying that "the Japanese system of censoring dispatches is the worst in the world, even worse than censorship in Russia."\(^{132}\) The *Journal de Shanghai* also pointed out that "when a censorship is instituted in one's country, it is little liked; but when it is instituted in another country it is doubly disliked."\(^{133}\) These complaints attracted the attention of the British and American consulates. Both Consul Generals filed protests against such a system. Yet the protests were too weak to exert any meaningful pressure on the strict censorship by the Japanese army, which was determined to seize total control on reporting of Chinese issues.

Even if the press were free to cover the Nanjing Incident, in December 1937 the case may still have received limited foreign attention. Parallel to the Nanjing Incident was the sinking of the USS Panay—an event more relevant to American interests. The Japanese air force attacked the United States Navy gunboat USS Panay and three Standard Oil tankers on 12 December while the ship was anchored in the Yangtze River outside Nanjing. The incident immediately appeared on the front pages of major newspapers in China and abroad. The *China Weekly Review*, for example, while keeping reticent about the Nanjing Incident, closely monitored the Panay case in late December. Japan's attack on the Panay, commented the *Review*, suggested that "the crisis in China has now become an American issue and must be settled by the United States, one way or another—either get out or prepare to fight!"\(^{134}\) Although the Panay case eclipsed the Nanjing Incident in December, it effectively instigated hatred towards Japan among the American public. The *New York Times*, for example, denied Japan's explanation that the incident was an accident. It collected various witness accounts to verify that the Japanese attack was planned in advance.\(^{135}\) The paper also regarded Japanese guarantees of no repetition of such "mistakes" as fraudulent. It argued that so long as the Japanese troops remained in China the

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\(^{132}\) Ibid., 200.


exchange of fire would endanger American nationals and properties:

The Japanese Government can no more give a convincing assurance that foreigners in China will be safe from the consequences of its aggression than a burglar can give assurance that no innocent bystander will be shot when he sets out to loot a house. The only really valid guarantee that Japan can give in this matter would be the withdrawal of its invading army from the soil of China and the liquidation of this imperialist adventure.136

Sentiments such as these provided a context of public opinion that was sympathetic to China. It made the American public more receptive towards the Chinese case when details of the Nanjing Incident emerged in the media in 1938.

It was the return of the diplomats on 6 January 1938 that enabled the worldwide dissemination of reports about the rape of Nanjing. Tong’s International Department played an important role in disseminating reports on the Nanjing Incident. Tong established close connections with Westerners coming from Nanjing and organized various activities to publicize the Nanjing case through his networks abroad. One of the important contacts for Tong’s office was H. J. Timperley. Although principally the correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, by January 1938 Timperley had also become an agent of China’s foreign propaganda office. Timperley had been on good terms with William H. Donald. This personal connection had strengthened his ties with the Guomindang government since the mid-1930s. As J. M. McHugh observed, Donald “had always had a particular leaning toward him [Timperley] because he is a fellow Australian.”137 At the outbreak of full-scale war, Donald approached Timperley, who was working in Nanjing at the time, to invite him to join the foreign propaganda office. Timperley refused at the time, believing that he might be more useful to Donald as a correspondent in Nanjing since most of other correspondents were stationed in North China or Shanghai. However, Timperley changed his mind after “seeing how the Chinese were pulling in opposite

137 J. M. McHugh’s report, Chongqing, 8 March 1938, 3/10 MLMSS,
directions and floundering around in their publicity work after the fall of Shanghai. He assisted Tong’s propaganda in Shanghai as a member of the Anti-Enemy Committee and continued to conduct propaganda for China afterwards.

Timperley was in Nanjing before the Japanese army occupied the city. He established good relations with Christian leaders in the city who later became members of the International Committee of the Nanjing Safety Zone. He left Nanjing for Shanghai after the Japanese occupation but managed to remain in contact with his friends in the city. Bates, for example, regarded Timperley as a reliable channel for the distribution of his eye-witness accounts of the Nanjing Incident and frequently asked his wife to relay his reports to him.

Tong approached Timperley immediately after Timperley arrived in Shanghai and proposed to finance him to collect eye-witness accounts of the Nanjing Incident and publish them into a book. The book project was welcomed by the International Committee in Nanjing. The committee provided Timperley with Bates’ correspondence, George Fitch’s diary and John Magee’s pictures, all of which recorded Japanese atrocities in the city in great detail. For fear of Japanese retribution, however, the committee had to ask Timperley to mediate the information, add accounts from other Japanese-occupied cities and conceal the sources of information as much as possible. Bates repeatedly demanded that Timperley rely on the facts of their accounts, avoiding unnecessary personalization. At a certain point, the missionaries in Nanjing even asked Timperley to slow down the editing pace so as to allow more time for the Westerners in Nanjing to wait for a chance for improvement in their safety conditions. Yearning to publish the book as soon as possible, Timperley was reluctant to wait. A letter by Bates suggests that Timperley was not willing to reduce the personal element of their accounts either. Bates believed that both Timperley and “his consultants in Shanghai,” who were likely to be Hollington

138 Ibid.
139 Bates to his wife, 21 January 1938, NMP0039, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library, http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/ydl_china_webapp_images/NMP0039.pdf [last accessed on 18 February 2012].
140 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 200–201.
141 Bates to Timperley, 3 March 1938, NMP0096, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library, http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/ydl_china_webapp_images/NMP0096.pdf [last accessed on 18 February 2012].
142 Bates to Timperley, 14 March 1938, NMP0097, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library, http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl/ydl_china_webapp_images/NMP0097.pdf [last accessed on 18 February 2012].
Tong and his associates, felt that personal eye-witness accounts were more direct and authentic.\textsuperscript{143} Members of the committee finally allowed Timperley to publish their accounts as soon as possible, hoping “this work in a hurry may result in greater control during later phases of this struggle, and...heighten attention in the [W]est, both to this particular situation and to the savagery of the whole military game.”\textsuperscript{144} As a result, Timperley quickly compiled a book entitled \textit{Japanese Terror in China} and published it simultaneously in Shanghai, London, New York and Calcutta in mid-1938.\textsuperscript{145} Timperley was able to publish the book less than five months after the formulation of its concept. Although he reiterated that the idea of producing this book was entirely his own—as an effort to oppose Japanese censorship of his telegrams\textsuperscript{146}—it was clear that the International Department was behind the scenes to provide funding and assistance.\textsuperscript{147}

Timperley was also active in organizing other propaganda activities for the International Department. He approached George Fitch and persuaded him to travel to the United States and lecture to American audiences about his personal experiences in Nanjing.\textsuperscript{148} Fitch’s trip was fully funded by the International Department.\textsuperscript{149} Timperley also approached a professor of sociology at the University of Nanjing, Lewis Smythe, who was in Nanjing during the incident, to help him publish his account of the Nanjing Incident with funding from the International Department.\textsuperscript{150} Timperley was later invited to Hankou to discuss

\textsuperscript{143} Bates’ letter to friends, 12 April 1938, quoted in Zhang Kaiyuan ed., \textit{Eyewitnesses to Massacre}, 33–34.
\textsuperscript{144} Bates to Timperley, 21 March 1938, NMP0100, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library, http://divdl.library.yale.edu/dl//ydl_china_webapp_images/NMP0100.pdf [last accessed on 18 February 2012].
\textsuperscript{147} Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{149} Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
plans for expanding China’s overseas propaganda network with Tong and Zeng and became the key agent of the department, supervising the establishment of the branch offices in New York and London.

In addition, the International Department sought to distribute films about the Nanjing Incident around the world. In January 1938, George Fitch successfully smuggled films about Japanese atrocities shot by John Magee out of Nanjing. After receiving the films, Tong immediately sent Earl Leaf to London to arrange the release of those movies about the Nanjing Incident with the local movie companies. The aim was to keep British people interested in China and to support the country by organizing various fund-raising activities in Britain. Leaf’s contact in London was Basil Burton, a movie merchant and a member of the China Campaign Committee mentioned above. He voluntarily offered to edit the movies and switched the format of the films from 35mm to 16mm so as to avoid British censorship—most British censors did not bother to examine the content on 16mm films due to their small size.

In April, Leaf was sent to the United States to supervise film propaganda. He established connections with the supervisor of the Harmon Foundation, Mary B. Brady, who was sympathetic to China’s anti-Japanese case. Brady voluntarily took charge of distributing the film about the Nanjing Incident in the United States and advised Leaf to combine movie propaganda with public lectures so as to reap the best propaganda effect. Meanwhile, Timperley also sent a copy of the film to Stanley K. Hornbeck, a special adviser to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, in the hope of informing him and the Secretary of State of the facts of the Nanjing Incident.

Tong also secretly sent his staff to Japan and circulated materials about the

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151 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 201.
154 Earl Leaf to Hollington Tong, H. J. Timperley and Wen Yuanning, 7 March 1938, London; 2 April 1938, New York, reports No. 21 and 37, Ministry of Information 9/718, the Second Historical Archives, Nanjing.
155 Ibid.
156 H. J. Timperley to Stanley K. Hornbeck, 16 February 1938, NMP0093, Special Collections of the Yale Divinity School Library.
Nanjing incident there. He termed the mission "whisper in the ear," indicating the propaganda targeted a specific audience and was conducted in a concealed manner. The staff had brought with them pamphlets both in English and Japanese, films and photographs shot by Western missionaries and Timperley’s manuscript on the terror of Japan. Their target audiences were diplomats of various embassies, foreign correspondents stationed in Tokyo, Christian communities in Japan, liberal business leaders and government officials. Through those activities, Tong aimed to lay bare Japanese soldiers’ ill behaviour in China so as to stir anti-war sentiments among the Japanese public, and demonstrate to the Japanese China’s strong will to resist.159

Leaving Wuhan

The temporary capital, Wuhan, was under severe threat in October 1938. On 24 October Chiang made the painful decision to abandon Wuhan and move to the inner West, Chongqing. Before departure, he ordered Tong to stay in Wuhan until the last minute and hold the last press conference the morning after Chiang’s departure to explain China’s position to the Western journalists. To ensure their safety, Tong had already sent all his staff to Changsha except for his close associate Wei Jingmeng (Jimmy Wei), who insisted on staying in Nanjing with him. Tong sent Wei to the garrison headquarters to collect information for the next day’s press conference. With the Japanese troops approaching, staying in Wuhan became more and more dangerous. At midnight, Zhou Enlai had phoned Tong four times within half an hour, urging Tong to catch the last truck at 1 a.m. with him so as to avoid being caught by the Japanese.160 Tong declined and continued to prepare for the press conference following Chiang’s order.

With Durdin’s help Tong contrived to gather Western correspondents at 10:30 a.m. His goal was to boost the correspondents’ confidence in China’s resistance

157 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
158 Confidential report to Chiang Kai-shek, from Hollington Tong, 6 May 1938, No. 5308, Ministry of Information, the Second Historical Archives, Nanjing.
159 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
160 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 63.
and to try to convince them that the loss of Wuhan was part of a strategy to win the final victory:

> We have decided to abandon the Wuhan centre as a necessary incident in the course of our all-front warfare....It must not be mistakenly viewed as a military reverse or retreat. For the key to victorious conclusion of our war of resistance lies not in what happens to Wuhan but in the conservation of our strength for continuous resistance....[China] is a nation of vast territory, huge population and large resources. The wider the sphere of hostilities extends, the stronger will become our active position.\textsuperscript{161}

Before leaving Wuhan, Tong made a last inspection of the telegraph administration and the garrison headquarters to ensure smooth transmissions of foreign dispatches. At 7 p.m. Japanese cavalry entered the city and Tong together with other garrison commanders had to leave the city on foot since driving by car would have easily caught the attention of Japanese soldiers. It took them 10 days to reach Changsha, with most of the walking done at night since Japanese planes easily spotted moving objects during the day. When Tong showed up in front of Chiang on 5 November, Chiang was surprised and “genuinely moved” to see his colleague alive.\textsuperscript{162}

**Conclusion**

In July 1937, the Sino-Japanese conflict escalated into a full-scale war. Without strong military capacity to withstand Japan’s aggression, the Nanjing government was eager to obtain external support. Foreign propaganda, therefore, became an important war strategy for China to win sympathy from the other powers, particularly the United States and Britain. Hollington Tong, with the support of Chiang Kai-shek, revised the propaganda plan and centralized the Guomindang’s foreign propaganda system. He reorganized propaganda offices and substantially

\textsuperscript{161} Quoted in Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 63.
\textsuperscript{162} Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 64.
extended China’s propaganda network in the United States and Britain. He also secretly organized propaganda activities to boost morale in Shanghai, hoping that favourable public opinion among Western communities in Shanghai would be conducive to winning more global sympathy for China’s cause. Tong pursued a “hands off policy” in encouraging Western journalists to conduct propaganda for China. He also developed a relatively liberal censorship to enhance the credibility of Chinese sources. The centralized system together with Tong’s policies proved effective during the Nanjing Incident. Western journalists in China successfully circumvented the Japanese blocking of information, informing the world about Japanese atrocities in the occupied capital. As the Chiang Kai-shek government was forced to abandon Wuhan in late 1938, more difficulties were waiting for Tong’s propaganda department in Chongqing.
CHAPTER 8

Confronting Encirclement:
Chongqing, 1939–1941

After the battle of Wuhan, the Sino-Japanese war reached a stalemate. Both sides had failed to win a large-scale victory on the battlefield and more attention was being devoted to political and diplomatic strategies. The Japanese General Staff Office, realizing that a quick end to the war was impossible, decided to slow down the offensive to ease the strain on the economy. More focus was therefore put on operations in the rear, the suppression of Nationalist and Communist guerrillas in the occupied regions, and collaboration with the Chinese officials in the occupied areas. China, in addition to establishing a series of fortress zones across the country to divert Japanese forces, actively sought assistance from other powers.

The period between 1939 and 1941 was the most difficult for the Chiang Kai-shek regime. The Guomindang government was forced to move westward to a city further inland—Chongqing. There was no meaningful foreign support for the weak government. Apart from some limited supply of munitions, the Soviet Union was unwilling to engage in a war with Japan when the conflict with Germany on its western border was imminent. A ceasefire agreement between the Soviet Union and Japan in September 1939 freed Japan from the Soviet threat. As a result, the Japanese army was free to allocate more of its military sources to bottle up the Nationalists in Sichuan 四川. In 1940, the British government under Japanese pressure temporarily closed the Burma Road, then China’s only conduit for foreign aid. Moreover, the betrayal of the Wang Jingwei clique weakened the Guomindang’s political power in Chongqing, sapped Chinese morale, and confused the Western Powers about the Guomindang’s willingness to resist. Meanwhile, cracks began to appear on the united front. Mutual distrust between the Guomindang and the Communist Party intensified. In 1941, these tensions

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escalated into large-scale military conflict in the southern part of Anhui province.

The unfavourable situation, however, did not prevent the Chongqing government from reorganizing its government institutions, continuing resistance and eliciting foreign sympathy and support. As the fighting continued, foreign propaganda became an integral part of war strategy, assisting China's diplomacy with Western powers, particularly the United States and Britain. This chapter will trace how the Guomindang's foreign propaganda apparatus in Chongqing developed despite the enormous difficulties.

The Move to Chongqing

Chongqing was chosen as the capital of the Guomindang government at war for strategic reasons. It was the most important city of Sichuan, a key province of the hinterland, a huge agricultural area surrounded by high mountains and cliffs. Those mountains were natural barriers against the Japanese advance. Although the Yangtze River running through the Sichuan basin connects the area with the lower reaches where the Japanese were already established, the gorges east of Chongqing drastically narrow the river channel, making attacks by water difficult. In addition to this favorable topography, moisture rising from the Sichuan plain was blocked by the surrounding mountains to create dense fog during winter that hid the city from the enemy's air raids. For the Guomindang government with insufficient air power to intercept the large number of Japanese bombers, the mist provided essential protection for the new capital. Most importantly, the region was self-sufficient. The Sichuan valley, irrigated and nourished by the Yangtze River, produces a wide variety of food crops. The surrounding mountains also contain rich mineral resources, necessary for basic military production.

Nevertheless, Chongqing had its drawbacks as a war capital. While natural
barriers protect the region from Japanese attacks, they also made communication with China's other regions difficult. After the capital had moved to Chongqing, the city was connected with the outside world only by air with Hong Kong and by a few winding and treacherous mountain paths with Burma. Neither people nor war materials reached Chongqing easily. Due to the remote location, people in this area were isolated from the other parts of the country. Local leaders ruling the region had tenuous links with the central government. Its people were historically the last to give allegiance to each new dynasty, the most difficult to administer from the capital and a reservoir of strength in successive revolts against alien rule. In 1938 the Sichuan people had little national consciousness. Local warlords and native inhabitants considered Chiang Kai-shek's arrival as another invasion. It took years for Chiang Kai-shek and Zhang Qun 张群 to bring the local warlords under temporary control and to convince the native people of the significance of unity against Japan. In addition, Sichuan was also separated from central and east China in terms of culture and industrial development. The local Chongqing people who were little influenced by Western modernization adhered to old traditions. As Theodore H. White, an American journalist in Chongqing during the wartime, observed, local marriages were still arranged by parents. The native Chongqing residents disapproved of the lipstick on downriver girls and disliked their frizzled hair. They were also shocked by boys and girls eating together in public restaurants. The coastal people regarded Chongqing locals as "a curious species of second-grade inhabitant" who had not even seen a street car.  

If the move from Nanjing to Wuhan did not cause much pain since both cities shared similar natural conditions and were on a par in terms of development, the move from Wuhan to Chongqing was more challenging. Propaganda officials who followed the department from coastal cities to Chongqing found it difficult to adapt to the climate—too chilly and humid in winter. Their physical discomfort often led to forms of depression. Hollington Tong observed that his staff, as well as the foreign journalists in his department, always underwent a subtle and depressing change under the heavy winter mist.  

Worse than the climate were the lack of facilities and daily essentials. Tong's
international department took over as its headquarters the Ba Shan 中学 middle school on the outskirt of Chongqing. The officials, accustomed to modern houses and buildings made of concrete, had to put up with bamboo offices that barely sheltered them from the wind and rain. As Tong recalled:

It was a large rambling mud and plaster structure, with loose tiles for a roof. The doors did not lock. They did not even close tightly. There was a crack in the door to my office through which every passer-by could peek to see what I was doing or whom I was interviewing. When there was a storm, the tiles of the roof would fly off, and the mud plaster ceilings would soften and fall. Rats gnawed their way through books and papers at night until we learned how to lock the books and papers in closed boxes.  

Behind the school, Tong built dormitories for his staff members. Due to the lack of funding, the accommodation was no better than the offices, families being lucky to have one room to themselves. Unmarried junior officials were crammed together with four or more sharing a small room. Most rooms were unheated. Officials shivered in their overcoats all day and used them for bed coverings at night. Despite their hard work, staff found that their paper-money salary was losing its value fast, to the point where an entire month’s earnings could be spent on a single party. People were constantly hungry. Children were encouraged to collect whatever they could eat in nearby mountains during the day. Officials often came back from the market empty-handed because the government coupons were insufficient and their salary was insufficient to buy food at market prices. This caused malnutrition among many. Zeng Xubai 曾虎白, head of the International Department, once passed out at a gathering of the British embassy due to hunger and stress. 

5 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 109.
6 Theodore White, Thunder Out of China, 18.
The department soon resumed its work in Chongqing. Changes were made, despite the primitive conditions. To the original six sections, the department now added three offices: the Secretariat, the Reference Office and the Censorship Office. The Secretariat led by Tong and Zeng was responsible for general supervision and coordination. Ni Yuanqing, a member highly rated by Tong for his sharp mind and good English-language writing skills, assisted Tong in drafting the propaganda guidelines and summaries of China’s domestic issues and Japanese activities. These materials would be sent to the department’s overseas branches every week. Another officer, Wang Jiayu, was responsible for translating important foreign newspaper articles for domestic reference. J. A. MacCausland, an Oxford-trained sinologist whose knowledge of Chinese language and culture was said to be as impressive as his eccentric temperament, was charged with translating Chiang Kai-shek’s orders and speeches. The Reference Office was operated by a scholar, Tang Lubin, who was tasked with collecting and translating materials about propaganda strategies for the reference of the International Department and other ministries.

While the International Department was on the move from Wuhan to Chongqing between October 1938 and February 1939, the Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Waijiaobu qingbaosi) temporarily took over censorship work. The International Department resumed its role in censorship from March 1939, with Wei Jingmeng in charge. Wei was chosen for his sophistication and lively disposition. As Zeng recalled, Wei’s cheerful demeanor always successfully defused tension caused by censorship, leaving no harm to personal feelings.

The Guomindang government tightened its censorship after moving to Chongqing. The International Department was instructed to remain sensitive to reports about China’s military activities, such as the national security plan, the movement of troops, assessments of Japanese capabilities and war strategies, and the names of military leaders and their whereabouts. Information concerning China’s internal and external debt, monetary policies and industrial construction in

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 236.
the rear was also under strict scrutiny. The censorship policy was nevertheless unstable, changing constantly to suit the need of the war. On 30 June 1939, for example, the Bureau of Wartime News Censorship of the Military Affairs Commission (Junshi weiyuanhui zhanshì xinwen jiancha ju 軍委員會戰時新聞檢查局) sent a secret order to the International Department, demanding that it hold all information concerning French military advisers, assistance from foreign missionaries, and the development of China’s air force. On 8 September 1940, Chiang Kai-shek forbade the distribution of news about inflation. A month later, he secretly ordered Wang Shijie 王世傑, then Minister of Information, to censor news about petitions for a raise in income.

From October 1940, the department introduced a three-level censorship system. On the first level, censorship was conducted by two members of the Section of Foreign Affairs. They took turns censoring reports twenty-four hours a day, generally focusing on the political input of information. They were authorized to delete improper words but not to make changes. Dispatches containing important information that they were unsure of would be sent to the second level, to be considered by the head of the Section of Foreign Affairs, Ji Zejin, and chief of the Censorship Office, Wei Jingmeng. Dispatches concerning official speeches or policy changes which Ji and Wei could not verify went through the third level of censorship conducted by Tong and Zeng.

Despite Tong’s personal belief in liberal journalism, the Guomindang’s censorship of outgoing dispatches grew stricter following their move to Chongqing. Keenly aware of the negative effect strict censorship produced in foreign-targeted propaganda, Tong had to hint to the foreign correspondents to file dispatches early in the morning before his immediate superior, the Minister of Information, came to the office to decide on the day’s censorship policies. Israel Epstein, a correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph in Chongqing in the

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13 Sichuan difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui Sichuan shengzhì (waishi zhi) 西蔭省志 (外事志) (Sichuan Affairs, foreign-related issues) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2001), 510.
14 Zhongyang guoji xuanchuan gongzuo gaiyao 中央國際宣傳工作概要 (Work report of the International Department of the Ministry of Information), 1938–1941, 496/249, CGPH, Taipei.
1940s, recalled that “no mention was permitted in news dispatches from foreign correspondents about Kuomintang-Communist differences, the existence of cliques or quarrels within the Kuomintang, the movements and personal life of the Generalissimo… and subjects such as the corruption of public officials.” Moreover, description about the deteriorating economic situations was forbidden. Correspondents were not even allowed to mention that Chongqing’s streets were dirty. By the end of war, people’s distrust of the government’s censorship system was so strong that the journalists’ genuine reports on the government’s efforts in the early days in Chongqing were commonly regarded as propaganda. But censored information was not totally suppressed. The International Department selected and compiled foreign journalists’ reports on domestic issues into pamphlets for the reference of Chinese leaders.

The tightening of censorship was the result of the International Department’s modification of its policy regarding the content of outgoing information. While the department in Wuhan was keen to expose war atrocities and Japan’s brutal treatment of Chinese soldiers and civilians—a policy fully implemented in the publicity of the Nanjing Incident—it no longer endorsed the line, fearing that too much exposure of the suffering of the Chinese not only sapped Chinese morale but also boosted the capacity of the Japanese army. Instead, the government redirected its focus to news about China’s strong morale on the frontline and domestic construction in the rear. The goal was to convince Western audiences that China had not lost the war and was capable of further resistance.

The shift of direction also shaped the content of department-sponsored publications. Among the 60 pamphlets published by the department in 1939, for example, only The Bombing of Chongqing depicted suffering created by Japanese forces. The rest either elaborated on China’s wartime achievements, such as Anti-Japanese War and Construction, or exposed the harm that Japanese expansion brought to the United States and Europe. The department’s official journal China

17 Ibid.
18 Theodore White, Thunder out of China, 27.
19 Sichuan difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, Sichuan shengzhi (waishi zhi), 509.
20 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 233.
21 Work report, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, 1938–1941, (Zhongyang guoji xuanchuan chu gongzuo gailiao 中央國際宣傳處工作概要, 1938–1941) general documents 496/294, CGPH.
at War also emphasized Chongqing’s will to resist and the development in “Free China.” For example, in the October 1940 issue, published when the Japanese air raid on Chongqing was most intensive, the journal downplayed the suffering the raids caused to the common Chinese people. Instead, the journal took a detached position, quoting data about the number of air raids and the loss of life and damage to property. Human interest stories that graphically depicted the loss and suffering in the air raids were absent. The goal was to increase the perceived urgency of international assistance while avoiding complaints caused by war-weary sentiments. Again, the main themes carried through the journal were the achievements of the Guominang’s troops at the front and the order and development the government brought to south-western China.\(^{22}\) It appeared that the journal strived more to win Westerners’ confidence over China than sympathy.

### The Press Hotel

The department continued to observe a “hands-off” policy, allowing foreign journalists to present the Chinese case in the world press. Despite the wartime hardships, Tong contrived to provide better conditions for Western journalists in Chongqing. He obtained a twenty-thousand yuan “personal donation” from Kong Xiangxi, then the finance minister, and built the Press Hotel near the department headquarters to accommodate them.\(^{23}\) The hotel had running water and electricity, a luxury even for Tong himself, who lived in the remains of an old pavilion nearby. While people outside were starving, the hotel provided a Western-style breakfast, Chinese lunch and dinner every day. Servants were hired to clean the rooms for the residents regularly. The wholesale service cost the journalists less than five dollars per month.\(^{24}\) To facilitate the journalists’ correspondence with the outside world, Tong coordinated with the department of communication and opened a post office inside the hotel. In addition, Tong put the department’s car, a rare luxury in Chongqing, at the disposal of visiting journalists for their official business. As William E. Daugherty, a contemporary scholar commented, “a foreign

\(^{22}\) *China at War*, Vol. V, No. 3, October 1940.

\(^{23}\) Zeng Xubai, *Zeng Xubai zizhuan*, 236.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 237.
correspondent is often treated like an official foreign dignitary” during their stay in Chongqing.25

The Press Hotel together with the various forms of support was an application of Tong’s “hospitality theory”: a hospitable service was conducive to a good impression of China, and a favorable impression was likely to translate into friendly reports in the foreign press.26 By gathering the Western journalists in the Press Hotel close to his office, Tong strengthened their ties with the International Department. He frequently socialized with the journalists and actively provided information of the war to them.

Yet the hotel was not as hospitable as it appeared to be. The activities of Western journalists, correspondences and publications were closely scrutinized. Dai Li, whose Office of Special Investigations in the Investigation and Statistics Bureau of the Military Affairs Commission (Guomin zhengfu junshi weiyuanhui diaocha tongji ju 軍事委員會調查統計局, hereafter Juntong 軍統) controlled mail and the telegraphs, monitored the journalists’ activities. Any anomalies were reported directly to Chiang Kai-shek.27 In April 1939, for example, dispatches and correspondence of Robert P. Martin of the United Press were closely monitored by the International Department after he was charged with leaking confidential military information about the development of China’s air force in an article he contributed to the South China Daily News in Hong Kong. Although Chiang conceded to Tong’s petition to exempt him from deportation, Chiang still requested heightened surveillance of his activities.28 Indeed, in wartime Chongqing, both the International Department and the Juntong were involved in censorship, with the former conducting the job openly and the latter secretly. Tong’s belief in liberal journalism at times clashed with Dai’s inclination for stricter controls. In August 1939, for example, Tong’s direct associate Zeng Xubai opposed the plan to tap the long-distance phone calls of foreign journalists as

26 Report of the International Department, Ministry of Information, 11 June 1938, conference paper, 5.3/81.6, CGPH.
proposed by the Division of Investigations of Chongqing Garrison Command’s Guards (Chongqing weishu silingbu jichachu 重慶衛戍總司令部稽查處), a key office of Juntong. He feared that such a “daring” activity might undermine the department’s foreign propaganda efforts. Meanwhile, foreign journalists were not entirely unaware of the surveillance. Emily Hahn, an American writer, refused to live in the Press Hotel during her visit to Chongqing, partly due to its “maddening lack of privacy.”

The operation of the Press Hotel, nevertheless, was generally welcomed by journalists of various news organizations, especially in the early days in Chongqing when those who entertained a genuine hope for the united front were commonly impressed by China’s resistance. Long-term residents included foreign advisers to the International Department T. J. Timperley, Maurice Votaw, J. A. MacCausland, Melville Jacoby and Theodore H. White. The hotel also attracted correspondents from Reuters, the Associated Press, the United Press, as well as Israel Epstein and A. T. Steele, China correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune, the Chicago Daily News and the New York Times. They irreverently referred to the Press Hotel as “Holly’s Hotel” (Holly being the nickname for Hollington). Most of them had a favorable impression of the time they spent in the hotel when recalling their Chongqing days decades later, although they used to complain heavily about the broken lights, leaking roofs, lack of running water and damage by rats.

The competition for news among residents of the Press Hotel was fierce. Rivalry between the two US news agencies, the United Press (UP) and the Associate Press (AP), was especially bitter. In his memoir, Zhao Minheng recorded that the two agencies kept close watch on each other’s activities, each fearing to be left behind by the other. When the phone rang in the AP office, the UP staff working next door would immediately call the Central News Agency.

29 Ibid., 157.
inquiring if the agency had issued any news. After learning that a UP correspondent would be absent at a dinner party for foreign journalists held by a high official, the AP staff also declined the invitation, choosing to wait by the office phone so as not to miss any news that UP might garner during the party.\textsuperscript{33}

In addition to better living conditions, the department also actively provided the journalists with information on the war. It resumed the news conference system and increased the frequency of conferences from once a week, as in Wuhan, to twice a week.\textsuperscript{34} The most popular official among the journalists was Xu Peigen 徐培根, a German-trained military officer who always brought fresh news from the front line. Chen Bingzhang 陈秉章 and Zhang Pingqun 张平群, two associates of Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙, were also well received due to their fluent English and their updates on economic issues.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to the press conference, the department actively put journalists in touch with high Chinese officials for exclusive interviews. On average, twenty such interviews were arranged every month between 1939 and 1940. The figure rose to thirty-four in early 1941.\textsuperscript{36} Although Chiang banned exclusive interviews at one point in 1940, fearing that the activity might disturb the government’s normal operations, he lifted the ban after the visit of Roy Howard, head of the US Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, who wrote a series of articles advocating firmer US policies against Japan after returning to the United States.\textsuperscript{37} Foreign journalists in Chongqing were also constantly hired as propagandists to defend the position of the Guomindang government. Robert P. Martin of the United Press was invited by the International Department to write an article about China’s military and financial achievements in Chongqing to counter the anti-Chiang arguments made by UP’s Shanghai correspondent.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{The Voice of China}

\textsuperscript{33} Zhao Minheng, \textit{Caifang wushi nian}, 89–90.
\textsuperscript{34} Work report, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH; Chen Yunge, “Kangzhan chuqi waiguo jizhe zai chongqing de huodong,” 147.
\textsuperscript{35} Chen Yunge, “Kangzhan shiqi zai yu waiguo jizhe huodong jishi,” 147.
\textsuperscript{36} Work report, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
\textsuperscript{37} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dateline: China}, 130.
\textsuperscript{38} Wu Yanjun et al. “Kangzhan shiqi zai yu waiguo jizhe huodong jishi,” 156.
The close connection between foreign journalists and the department could not alleviate the problem caused by the lack of channels for outgoing information. The move of the capital forced the government to abandon its sophisticated cable network in the lower Yangtze region. While the circle of mountains protected Sichuan from the Japanese army, it also blocked its communication with the outside world via conventional mail delivery. To make things worse, the Japanese occupied Guangzhou (Canton) in October 1938 and exerted repeated pressure on the British government to close the Burma Road in 1940. The Guomindang government’s outgoing messages, therefore, were in danger. A new route for the transmission of information was urgently needed to ensure the continuous connection between the International Department and its external network.

The International Department relied heavily on wireless devices to disseminate information. Radio became the government’s key means of communication to the outside world and the main channel maintaining the flow of information between foreign correspondents and their patron newspapers. The Guomindang government began to prepare for the establishment of an international radio station in Chongqing before the fall of Wuhan. The station, Voice of China (call number XGOY), was completed in November 1938. However, both the Central Broadcasting Administration (Zhongyang guangbo guanli chu 中央廣播管理處), controlled by the C. C. clique, and the International Department claimed direct control of it. The controversy dragged on for four months despite the dire necessity for the station’s use in wartime Chongqing. The International Department finally won control with the help of Chiang Kai-shek and the station aired its first foreign-language program in February 1939.39 Like all other department offices, the radio station was poorly equipped. It even lacked a sound-proof studio at its inception. The designated listeners in the United States reported that they could hear dogs barking and ducks quacking during the news. This eventually forced the Central Broadcasting Administration to build a respectable sound-proof studio for its international station.40

Within the department, Tong actively sought assistance from his foreign

39 Central Radio Administration to the International Department, 31 January 1940, 5.3/140.12, CGPH. Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 99.
40 Ibid., 121.
advisers for the operation of the radio station. Maurice Votaw, founder of the department of journalism at St. John’s University in Shanghai, had joined Tong’s department during the Wuhan period and became a regular broadcaster. Melville Jacoby, a postgraduate in journalism from Stanford University, frequently helped edit scripts while James MacCausland, an Oxford-trained sinologist, was charged with writing broadcasting scripts and translating Chiang Kai-shek’s orders and speeches.  

These foreign journalists became valuable assets in Tong’s office. Tong commented that after Votaw took charge, he “had no worries in connection with the details of editing.” He also considered it “fortunate” to enlist Jacoby in their team and felt it a loss for the department when Jacoby was employed by Time magazine in December 1939. Zeng developed a friendship with MacCauland. Although Zeng was concerned about MacCauland’s complete neglect of his appearance and his primitive way of life, which the latter deliberately pursued to share the hardship of war with the Chinese nationals, Zeng admired his profound knowledge about China, his devotion to his work and his genuine disposition. Over forty years after the war, Zeng still vividly remembered details of MacCauland’s behavior in Chongqing. He devoted a whole section in his memoir commemorating MacCauland who eventually suffered from a mental disorder and disappeared into the mountains in Chongqing in the mid-1940s. This affection between the department and the foreign journalists was reciprocal. After Melville Jacoby died in an air crash in Australia in 1942, his mother made a donation to rebuild the backyard of the Press Hotel, possibly in accordance with Jacoby’s will.

Tong was also keen to extend the influence of the XGOY to the United States and strengthened the department’s connection with its international network via radio transmission. While broadcasting facilities in Chongqing were not powerful enough to transmit the program directly to the United States, the signal of the XGOY was relayed in Manila to the network of the US National Broadcasting

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41 Ibid., 102–103. Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 269.
42 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 102.
43 Ibid.
44 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 269–278.
45 Zhao Minheng, Caifang wushinian, 95.
Company (NBC).\textsuperscript{46} In Ventura, southern California, Charles Stuart, an American dentist and wireless amateur, was installed to check the quality of the program. Sympathetic to China’s resistance against Japan, Stuart conducted his survey on a voluntary basis. He received and recorded programs from XGOY every morning at six o’clock, transcribing the recording with the help of his wife, and relayed typewritten copies of the transcripts to the department’s New York branch where the daily news release \textit{Voice of China} would be issued via the Chinese News Service.\textsuperscript{47} He kept constant correspondence with Chongqing, reporting about the quality of the wireless signals and offering suggestions on improvements.\textsuperscript{48}

Stuart was responsible for receiving not only the daily radio programs but also radio mail sent from the same station. Due to Chongqing’s isolation, the high cost of press dispatches and the limited cable facilities, the International Department strived to make the best use of XGOY, one of the few available means of communication. The radio transmitter was used not only to broadcast programs but also to file international dispatches. Each foreign correspondent was allowed to use it once a week for a dispatch of about 1,500 words. Journalists who transmitted information unfriendly to the Guomindang government would have their privilege withdrawn for a week or two as punishment.\textsuperscript{49} Every day, Stuart transcribed between 3,000 and 10,000 words from the XGOY station,\textsuperscript{50} including both broadcasting and news dispatches, and sent them to the department’s various branches in the United States for further distribution. He continued the service for six years until the end of the Sino-Japanese war. He practically became a connection point between Chongqing and its US news network, ensuring the continuous flow of war reports from Chongqing to the United States and saving an enormous amount on international cable transmissions. After the war, Stuart was invited to Nanjing and awarded US$100,000 by Chiang Kai-shek for his contribution to wartime communications.\textsuperscript{51}

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\textsuperscript{46} Guangbo jiemu, March, 1940, files of the Guomindang Ministry of Information, 062, Chongqing Municipal Archives.
\textsuperscript{48} The International Department’s correspondence with Charles Stuart, February 20, 1941, files of the Guomindang Ministry of Information, 070, Chongqing Municipal Archives.
\textsuperscript{49} MacKinnon and Friesen, \textit{China Reporting}, 110.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{The Radio Amateur’s Journal}, Vol. 3, 1947, 35.
\textsuperscript{51} Zeng Xubai, \textit{Zeng Xubai zizhuan}, 260.
\end{flushleft}
Another officially sponsored regular receiver was Deng Ying'an 鄧英安 (also known as Ying Ong), a Chinese grocer in Phoenix, Arizona. Equipped with a powerful receiving set, Deng was responsible for furnishing Chongqing with reports on reception and advising Chongqing about suitable broadcasting hours. Compared to Stuart, Deng’s work focused more on the Chinese-language program to overseas Chinese. He suggested that the department increase the amount of Cantonese broadcasting and add Guangzhou opera to invoke homesickness among the Chinese communities. He also occasionally transcribed the broadcasts from China and sent copies to Chinese newspapers published in the United States.

*Voice of China* broadcast around the clock, targeting audiences in North America, Europe, Russia, South Asia and Australia. It broadcast in English, French, Japanese, Russian, Dutch, Hindi and Arabic. The International Department paid special attention to broadcasting to the United States. Compared to the daily program to the British audience which lasted an hour, the station broadcast to the United States for about three hours per day, one hour to the eastern region and about two hours to the western region. The programs included news, speeches and music. The department not only broadcast in English, but also in Mandarin, Cantonese and Japanese. The multiple languages pointed to the multiple audiences it sought to appeal to and the multiple goals it addressed: to inform US audiences about Chongqing’s situation and activities; to invoke patriotic sentiments among Chinese communities in the United States; and to instigate anti-war sentiments among the Japanese audience there.

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52 The International Department’s correspondence with Deng Ying’an, in “Shouting guangbo yijian qixiang” 收聽廣播意見七項 (Seven pieces of advice on international broadcasting), 12 January 1941, files of the Guomindang Ministry of Information, 070, Chongqing Municipal Archives.

XGOY's broadcasting timetable, to North America, 1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chongqing local time</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>U.S. Eastern Time</th>
<th>Pacific Standard Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Chinese-language news</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>10:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Chinese music</td>
<td>7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>10:15 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:20 a.m.</td>
<td>English-language speech</td>
<td>7:20 p.m.</td>
<td>10:20 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 a.m.</td>
<td>English-language news</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>10:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40 a.m.</td>
<td>Cantonese-language news</td>
<td>7:40 p.m.</td>
<td>10:40 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Japanese-language news</td>
<td>7:50 p.m.</td>
<td>10:50 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>National anthem</td>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:05 a.m.</td>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>8:05 p.m.</td>
<td>11:05 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>English-language news</td>
<td>6:00 a.m.</td>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10 p.m.</td>
<td>English-language speech</td>
<td>6:10 a.m.</td>
<td>11:10 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Western music</td>
<td>6:20 a.m.</td>
<td>11:20 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Cantonese-language news</td>
<td>6:30 a.m.</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Stop</td>
<td>6:45 a.m.</td>
<td>11:45 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54 Guangbo jiemu, 1940, files of the Guomindang Ministry of Information, file no. 062, 063, Chongqing Municipal Archives.
XGOY’s broadcasting received Song Meiling’s support. She constantly gave speeches via the radio, although this job required her to arrive at the studio before dawn and technical failures sometimes nullified her efforts.55

Outside Chongqing, the Hong Kong branch office became the primary liaison station for Chongqing with the outside world. In February 1939, Chiang Kai-shek, following Song Meiling’s advice, allocated special funding to Mao Qingxiang 毛慶祥, Chiang’s confidential secretary in charge of code breaking, to strengthen the foreign propaganda office in Hong Kong.56 The office served Chongqing headquarters in two capacities: it acted both as Chongqing’s gate keeper, selecting reliable visitors to Chongqing, and as a distribution center for Chongqing’s publications. Before granting visitors permits to enter Chongqing, Tong, with the help of Chiang’s intelligence office, would fully investigate their backgrounds, the aims of their visit and their attitudes towards the Guomindang government. Tong only received visitors friendly to Chiang’s regime and rejected any who might be connected with the Wang Jingwei government or were enthusiastic about communism. In addition, the Hong Kong office continued to publish English-language journals and pamphlets, and distributed them to foreign readers in Hong Kong and Shanghai designated by the International Department. Meanwhile, the office was also charged with the confidential task of obtaining assistance from the Hong Kong government to muzzle pro-Japanese voices and boycott anti-Chiang activities.57 The propaganda work in Hong Kong proceeded under great difficulties. In order not to instigate conflicts with Japan, the British government strictly observed a policy of neutrality, preventing any anti-Japanese messages from being distributed.58 The limited activities were further restrained after the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941.

Targeting the U.S.

The early Chongqing period saw the International Department have an increasing

55 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 99.
56 Mao Qingxiang to Chiang Kai-shek, February 1939, Chiang Kai-shek archives, 002080200513048, Academia Historica, Taipei.
57 Work report, the International Department of the Ministry of Information, 1938–1941, general documents 496/294, CGPH.
58 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 267.
focus on propaganda aimed toward the United States. On 17 January 1939, Chiang Kai-shek ordered Hollington K. Tong, in a confidential cable, to pay special attention to approaching the correspondents of the Associated Press in Shanghai and Hong Kong, in order to ensure their dispatches were totally favorable to Chongqing. He also asked Tong to counter Japanese propaganda activities in the United States and thus tried to change the isolationist attitude commonly held by the US audience. In September, the International Department opened branch offices in Chicago and San Francisco. Their primary task was to promote boycotts against military supplies to Japan from southern and western America. On 10 October, Chiang reiterated the idea that “propaganda to the United States was of extreme importance to China” and ordered Tong to use various channels—including newspaper, radio and pamphlets—to encourage US economic sanctions against Japan.

This US-focused propaganda policy was based on Chiang’s assessment of the international situation. The years 1939 and 1940 represented a period of extreme uncertainty for China. The Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of 22 August and the subsequent war in Europe created fear of possible British or Soviet appeasement of Japan at China’s expense. Chiang’s intelligence officers also informed him in November 1939 that Britain was ready to acknowledge Japan’s interests in China in exchange for Japan’s support in any war against the Soviet Union. Indeed, Chiang was particularly frightened by a possible revival of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, following the acceptance of the currency of the Japanese puppet regime by the British-controlled Shanghai and the temporary closure of the Burma Road, China’s only supply route to the sea. Threatened by Germany, Britain would not assist China without American support. The United States, therefore, became the key to preventing any further appeasement of Japan by Britain and the last best hope for China to check Japan’s expansion in Asia.

The policy was also a result of the accessibility of US media networks. According to the statistics of the International Department, 77 of the 168 foreign

59 Chronicle of the Guomindang government’s foreign propaganda activities during the anti-Japanese war, documents in the Second Historical Archives collected by Liu Jingxiu, in Dang’an shiliao yu yanjiu (Archives and research), Vol. 5 (1990): 84.
60 Ibid., 86.
61 Hollington Tong’s report on Timperley’s investigation of Britain’s attitude towards China, 21 November 1939, Chiang Kai-shek archives, 00208020000520065, general material, collection of reports 93, Academia Historica, Taipei.
journalists visiting Wuhan and Chongqing between the end of 1937 and February 1939 were American. These journalists came from key American news agencies and newspapers, including the Associated Press, the United Press, the International News Services, the New York Times, the New York Herald and the Chicago Daily. In 1940 Roy Howard, head of the Scripps-Howard chain of papers, came to Chongqing. In May 1941 Henry Luce, publisher of Life, Time and Fortune, arrived. Most of the US visitors and journalists were sympathetic to China’s resistance against Japan. They actively published articles commending China’s war efforts via the influential channels they represented. Their voice was conducive to invoking public sympathy for China and instigating anti-Japanese sentiments.

In contrast, the British media were much less interested in Chinese affairs. From the fall of Wuhan to late 1940, Britain maintained only one correspondent from Reuters in Chongqing. Tong was disturbed by the fact that the influential organ of British opinion, the London Times, “appeared to be pursuing a policy of deliberately playing down Chinese war news.” Tong communicated his concerns on Britain’s indifference to China to Stafford Cripps, an influential leader of the Labor Party, during Cripps’ visit to Chongqing in the spring of 1940. As a result, Cripps sent C. M. MacDonald of the Times to Chongqing to collect information on the Sino-Japanese war for ten days in 1941. Yet the brief coverage of Chinese issues was unable to reduce the mutual estrangement between the Chinese and British publics. Harold Timperley, Chiang Kai-shek’s British propaganda adviser, was unable to fix this either. Timperley joined the Ministry of Information in 1940 to fill the vacancy left by Henry Donald after his resignation. As an Australian-born British subject and a long-term correspondent for the Manchester Guardian, Timperley’s close engagement in China’s politics was not much welcomed in British diplomatic circles. Displeased by Timperley’s criticism on the closure of the Burma Road in British and US newspapers, B. E. F. Gage, British representative in China, regarded Timperley as an “unsatisfactory factor in Anglo-Chinese relations” whose publicity greatly jeopardized British relations with

63 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 132.
China and the United States "at a particularly difficult period." Although A. Clark Kerr, British ambassador to China, was anxious to see a British adviser enjoying the confidence of Chiang, he questioned Timperley’s ability for the job as well as his influence with Chiang. He considered Timperley to be a propagandist for China and advised the Foreign Office to refrain from leaking more information to him which would enable him to pretend that he was the bearer of confidential messages from the Foreign Office.

Surviving the Air Raids

It should be noted that all the International Department’s work was maintained under intensive Japanese air raids. Although the thick layer of fog protected Chongqing from bombing during the winter, when the fog lifted, the Japanese bombers came. Between 1939 and 1941, bombing was part of summer life in the city.

The bombing began in May, 1939, after Chiang Kai-shek rejected the Konoe Fumimaro Cabinet’s offer of peace, which had the condition of Chiang’s resignation. The bombing targeted all major facilities in Chongqing, military and civilian alike. The goal was to create damage and cause terror, to sap the spirit of the Chongqing government and forced them to acknowledge defeat. The first large-scale bombing took place on 3–4 May. The Japanese air force sent thirty-six bombers on the first day and twenty-seven on the second day. Residential areas, business centers, schools and hospitals were hit by incendiary bombs and engulfed in flames. It was estimated that on these two days alone more than five thousand Chinese civilians were killed.

Terror hit Chongqing. Theodore H. White described the panic created after the raids: "A few drifters in the streets would be startled and would run at the imagined sound of an air-raid siren; others would follow, till hundreds of people

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64 FO 371/24702/9143/ Minutes, 7 November 1940, MLMSS 7594/5/9.
65 FO 371/24702/9143/ Minutes, 4 December 1940, MLMSS 7594/5/9.
67 Kobayashi Fumio, "Kangzhan zhong kunan de Chongqing," 77.
were racing for the dugouts in terror, although there was not an enemy plane within hundreds of miles." Indeed, the air raid was then a novel means of war, especially for some residents of Chongqing suburbs, whose tranquil agrarian life had rarely been disturbed by any aircraft before. Yet when bombing became a daily routine in mid-summer, the panic passed and Chongqing settled into a mode of endurance.

The Chongqing government in 1939 was unable to offer any meaningful defence against the air raids. They had to rely heavily on an old-fashioned warning system and dugouts to minimize losses. Without radar technology to detect approaching bombers, the government erected towering gallows-like poles on the highest hills in and around the city. Thousands of two-man teams were appointed to watch the sky all over the border between Sichuan and the central Yangtze area from where the Japanese planes came. An enormous paper lantern would be hoisted on each pole at the detection of bombers, and a long green paper stocking was the all-clear signal. Meanwhile, Chongqing spies in Wuhan also closely watched the movement of Japanese aircraft and sent warnings to Chongqing via secret radios hidden in the city.70 The steep cliffs and numerous caves in and around Chongqing also offered the government a natural basis for dugouts. Each bureau had its own dugout nearby to shelter its staff and its families and close relatives.

Tong contrived to keep his office running during the air raids and systematic plans were devised. As mentioned above, Tong built dormitories for his staff near

70 Ibid.
the office. This enabled them to effectively protect their personal belongings when a sudden air raid made commuting between home and workplace difficult. Staff were encouraged to keep their clothing and daily necessities in packs so that they could be whisked to the dugout at any time. Three mat sheds scattered in the compound of the department were also set up to store equipment and belongings of the staff, should the office or living places be destroyed. Important equipment, such as typewriters and transmitters, were given special care. These were the items to be carried to the dugout first. Each office was provided with boxes for important books and papers. When the siren rang, office boys assigned to each office would move the boxes either to the mat sheds or the dugout. As the bombers departed, the process would be reversed and things returned to their original places. The frequent raids trained Tong’s staff to become accustomed to the procedure, making their responses faster. As Tong recalled, they always managed to put valuable equipment in the dugouts before the sounding of the second round of air raid alarms and office boys were handling the exacting tasks “cheerfully and speedily.” Due to the systematic response to bombings, the office managed to minimize their losses, maintaining most of their facilities intact.

The loss of property, nevertheless, was inevitable in the intensive raids. The summers of 1940 and 1941 were especially hard for the department since the Japanese introduced heavy bombers, increased the frequency of attacks and, most devastatingly, fixed on the department compound as a bombing target. Between June and July, for example, the department suffered 19 days of raids in a month. Incendiary bombs burned one of the mat sheds, destroyed the department’s library and a business room, and shattered twelve rooms in a row of cottages occupied by staff members. In 1941, the Japanese bombed Chongqing for seven days and nights consecutively beginning on 8 August. The longest intervals between raids were from four to five hours, and the shortest were an hour and a half. The department lost the Press Hotel, the dining rooms and several staff cottages. The pavilion of the Tong family, Wei Jingmeng’s home and Durdin and Snow’s rooms were also destroyed several times.

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71 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 244.
72 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 114.
73 Kobayashi Fumio, “Kangzhan zhong kunan de Chongqing,” 76.
74 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 119.
The Japanese strategy was designed to exhaust the Chongqing residents and force the members of the department to spend more time in the dugouts. The staff were sometimes confined to the dugouts 10–15 hours a day for several days in a row, suffering from constant hunger and poor ventilation. Nevertheless, Tong managed to keep the information flowing. His “trump card” was the transmitter he had shipped from his Hankou office before the fall of Wuhan. The six-kilowatt transmitter was installed in the dugout and it became the main link between the correspondents in Chongqing and the outside world when the bombing damaged the telephone service and electricity supply. It was from the dugout that wireless messages were maintained to the Hong Kong office and to Charles Stuart on the western coast of the United States. News about Chongqing therefore continued to be transmitted, in spite of the air raids. Tong recalled that one of their favourite dugout pastimes was to estimate how much resource-scarce Japan spent on the bombings which, apart from making the commute between the department and the dugout an unpleasant daily routine, hardly achieved anything.

Time crept by in the dugout hour after hour until the sun disappeared, the chill of winter arrived and the mist covered Chongqing again. People emerged from the dugouts, and enjoyed several months of not worrying about the sirens, although a damp cold winter was facing them and an enormous amount of time had to be spent on expanding the caves to prepare for a new round of bombing the following year. This continued for three years, until the lifting of the fog brought only a few Japanese bombers and then none as the air raids ceased when the Japanese air force became engaged in the Pacific War in 1942.

Chongqing vs. the New Nanjing

In late 1938, Wang Jingwei left Chongqing for Hanoi and announced his support for a negotiated settlement with the Japanese. On March 1940, he established a puppet government in Nanjing which informally became known as the Wang Jingwei regime. The rivalry with the Wang Jingwei’s clique continued to trouble

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76 Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 245.
77 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 118; Zeng Xubai, Zeng Xubai zizhuan, 260.
78 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 125.
Tong’s office. On top of the department members’ troubles with the Chongqing environment was their dislike of the new leader, Zhou Fohai 周佛海, one of Wang Jingwei’s disciples who later defected to the Wang Jingwei regime. Shao Lizi 邵力子, the Minister of Information with whom Tong had cooperated well in Wuhan, was sent to Moscow to obtain Soviet assistance after the fall of Wuhan. To fill the vacancy Chiang appointed Gu Mengyu 顧孟餘, a senior Guomindang member whom he considered to be a capable administrator. Gu had been heavily involved in Chiang’s government, serving as Minister of Railways between 1932 and 1935, yet he regarded himself as a scholar, and was reluctant to take a government post after the war. In order not to entangle himself in politics, he stayed in Hong Kong in semi-retirement, avoiding Tong who was sent to Hong Kong by Chiang to persuade him to take the minister’s position. As a result, Chiang appointed Vice Minister of Information Zhou Fohai as acting minister, supervising propaganda issues domestically and internationally.

Zhou Fohai’s career spanned the political spectrum from left to right. During his study at Kyoto Imperial University in his early years, he was heavily involved in radical Marxist socialist politics among the Chinese students, whom he represented at the inaugural congress of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai and Hangzhou in July and August 1921. He was later elected vice-chairman of the Communist Party and taught in the Whampoa Military Academy during the first United Front and from then on developed connections with Chiang Kai-shek who was head of the academy. Under the influence of Dai Jitao 戴季陶, the leading right-wing Guomindang political ideologue, Zhou withdrew from the Communist Party and identified himself closely with Chiang Kai-shek. Zhou rose rapidly in the ranks of the Guomindang due to Chiang’s assistance. He was scarcely thirty years old when Chiang appointed him chief political instructor at the newly established Central Military Academy. He was subsequently elected to the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang and gravitated to the C. C. Clique run by the Chen brothers—Chen Guofu 陳果夫 and Chen Lifu 陳立夫—who controlled the Central Organization Department on Chiang’s behalf. He also participated in the activities of the C. C. Clique’s rival organization, Fuxing She.

better known as the Blue Shirts, a semi-secret organization founded by the Whampoa clique. Zhou’s specialty was in political training and indoctrination. He became an important propagandist for the party in the 1930s, interpreting the party’s ideology and editing political journals. This won him the position of vice-minister of the Ministry of Information in 1937 and made him a trusted aide-de-camp of Chiang.81

Upon Gu’s refusal to take the position of minister, both Zhou Fohai and Hollington Tong as vice ministers of the Ministry of Information were second in line for the post. Chiang chose Zhou, who had by then already displayed a strong inclination for peace negotiations with Japan instead of Tong, a faithful follower of Chiang, due to political concerns: Zhou’s senior position in the party won him authority; his wide participation provided Chiang with a link to various political groups and his close connection with the Wang Jingwei clique enabled Chiang to monitor their activities.

However, the appointment was not welcomed by Zhou. By 1938, Zhou shared Wang’s pessimistic views about China’s resistance against Japan, perhaps because his senior position in the party gave him privileged access to information about the real military situation. He co-funded the Low Key Club (Didiao julebu 低調俱樂部), which gathered a group of officials, including Gao Zongwu 高宗武 and Hu Shi 胡適, who were opposed to the unrealistic resistance-to-the-death sentiment within the party and advocated a rational diplomatic strategy to resolve the Sino-Japanese conflict. The club tied him closer to Wang Jingwei’s clique and further strengthened his disapproval of the resistance policy.82 Zhou confessed in his diary that he could not fall asleep at the thought of the appointment. He asked Zhang Qun 張群 to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to replace him with Chen Gongbo 陳公博 or Wang Shijie 王世傑.83 However, Chiang did not change his mind. As Chiang’s wartime propagandist, one of Zhou’s major responsibilities was to justify the resistance policy, boost public morale and convince the people that China would eventually win with or without foreign assistance. The contradiction between his responsibility and his beliefs tortured him. As he confessed in his

81 John Boyle, China and Japan at War, 1937–1945, 169.
82 See Boyle’s discussion of the Low Key Club, in John Boyle, China and Japan at War, 1937–1945, 167–195.
Supervising Chiang’s propaganda organ is the most painful experience for me. I believe that continuous resistance will lead to a total defeat, yet I have to advocate a final victory in the office. I personally suggest keeping the door to negotiation open, but for propaganda purposes I have to promote the spirit of resistance to the end, opposing any compromise. I have tried in vain all means to resign from the post and have to put up with myself telling lies and boasting. I feel extremely guilty doing this to our people. Worst of all are the three meetings held every week. The first is a meeting attended by people from the Propaganda Bureau, the Political Bureau, and all other organizations involved in propaganda; the second is the briefing of foreign journalists, and the third is the briefing of Chinese journalists. In attendance are head of the Political Bureau Chen Cheng, his deputy Zhou Enlai, and head of the Third Department Guo Moruo. Hollington Tong, Xiao Tongzi and I represent the Propaganda Bureau. Every time I am forced to listen to Chen’s shallow and awkward political discourses. It pains me greatly to have to sit back and suffer in silence while Zhou Enlai and Guo Moruo make announcements that they had invented.84

Hollington Tong was displeased with Zhou’s leadership. He distrusted Zhou due to his involvement in the Communist Party in the 1920s and his “flirtation” with the Japanese after the outbreak of full-scale war. He regarded Zhou as a timid man who had flown to Chongqing long before the fall of Wuhan to avoid air raids. He was also disturbed at Zhou’s advocacy of the early cessation of the war and his interference with the International Department and Tong’s propaganda policies. The tension between Tong and Zhou escalated. As Tong recalled:

I was suspicious of his motives, and refused even to see him. If he wanted to replace me, that was his privilege as Minister of

Information. But if I did not wish to have my work made entirely ineffective, I could refuse to talk to him, and that was my privilege.\textsuperscript{85}

Zhou returned Tong’s disrespect by openly appointing him Acting Minister of Information before leaving Chongqing to follow Wang. Zhou did not have the power to appoint his successor, and he knew well that Tong, who lacked authority due to his short history with the party and was commonly regarded as of the “Empress’ clique” (hou dang 后黨, here referring to the associates of Madam Chiang),\textsuperscript{86} was unable to be promoted to minister. Tong was on a confidential mission in Shanghai when Zhou announced the appointment. This action was interpreted by Tong as a “neat trick” to put Tong in the limelight and thus endangered his life when surrounded by the enemy in Shanghai.\textsuperscript{87}

In early 1939, Tong was sent to Shanghai by Chiang to persuade foreign correspondents there to come to Chongqing and report on the war from the viewpoint of the Chongqing government. Tong’s International Department did not totally sever connections with Shanghai despite its fall. Propaganda activities were actively carved out in the International Department and the French Concession, two areas principally under Western jurisdiction. The extraterritoriality which was once the major legal impediment for the Guomindang government to regulate treaty-port media now became a means of protection for the anti-Japanese propaganda activities. Apart from operating the underground propaganda offices discussed in Chapter 7, the department remained in contact with Western editors and journalists sympathetic to the Chongqing government’s cause. Tong kept in contact with Randall Gould, the chief editor of the key US paper \textit{Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury}, and his successor Frederick B. Opper, with the hope of distributing Chongqing’s anti-Japanese message in Shanghai.\textsuperscript{88} John B. Powell, the editor of the \textit{China Weekly Review}, was also one of Tong’s key contacts in Shanghai. Powell continued to publish articles criticizing Japanese rule despite Japanese pressure and frequently recommended newly-arrived Western journalists to work for Tong’s office in Chongqing. In addition, the Finance Minister Kong

\textsuperscript{85} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dateline: China}, 110.
\textsuperscript{86} Yang Zheshe, \textit{Chen Bulei: Guomindang “junji dachen”} 陳布雷: 國民黨 “軍機大臣” (Chen Bulei: the “grand minister of state” of the Guomindang) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999), 255.
\textsuperscript{87} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dateline: China}, 111.
\textsuperscript{88} 27 June 1941, \textit{Zeng Xubai riji}, 2.
Xiangxi 孔祥熙 took control of the China Press after the outbreak of the war, renewed its registration in Delaware in the United States and used it as a platform to present Chiang Kai-shek’s case in Shanghai. Carroll Alcott, a prominent anti-Japanese news commentator for the American radio station XMHA in Shanghai, was hired as cable editor for the paper.

Tong’s second Shanghai mission, like his first in early 1938 discussed in the Chapter 7, was conducted under conditions of great danger. He twice narrowly escaped capture by the Japanese during his visit to Hallet Abend. As Tong later learnt, the admiral commanding the Japanese naval forces in Shanghai was at Abend’s place when Tong called him to seek an appointment. After the visit to Abend, Tong also brushed past Horiguchi Yoshinori when stepping out of the elevator. Horiguchi was Tong’s fellow alumnus at the University of Missouri and then worked as assistant editor of the Japanese Domei News Agency. He was also a press officer of the Japanese army in Shanghai. Tong was prepared for a fight, knowing well that if seized by Horiguchi he would be unable to leave Shanghai alive.

Tong learnt of Wang’s defection during his confidential mission to Shanghai and he immediately organized propaganda activities against Wang’s clique. He persuaded foreign officials, business groups and the press community in Shanghai to boycott the puppet government and tried to convince them that the defection of Wang did not weaken the Guomindang’s strength in Chongqing.

Tong’s rival was Tang Liangli 湯良禮, the head of the International Propaganda Bureau of the Wang Jingwei government. Tang was born into a Chinese family in Java, and received a university degree in economics from London University. During his stay in London, he established connections with the staff of the Guomindang Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by Chen Youren 陳友仁. Around 1928–1929, he met with Wang Jingwei on the recommendation of Gan Naiguang 甘乃光. His connection with the left-wing Guomindang won him the

89 Q431–1–112–43, Shanghai Municipal Archives.
90 For detailed profile of Carroll Alcott, see Paul French, Through the Looking Glass: China’s Foreign Journalists from Opium Wars to Mao (Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 188–189.
91 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 77.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 75.
94 Files on Tang Liangli’s case, 4187–2–119, the Shanghai High Court, Shanghai Municipal Archives.
position of Chief of the Communication Office to Europe of the Central Executive Committee (zhongguo guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui zhu’ou tongxun zhuren 中國國民黨中央執行委員會駐歐通訊主任) in 1929. He later served as Wang’s private English-language secretary. Tang’s English was much better than his Chinese. He practically became Wang’s personal English propagandist, publishing books commending Wang Jingwei’s leadership. He wrote an English-language biography for Wang in 1931 and attributed China’s construction solely to Wang’s guidance in his China Today series.95 Meanwhile, he also served as reporter for several foreign news organizations, such as the New York Times, the News Agency of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, The Daily News (London) and the Batavia Newspaper.96 After the Mukden Incident, he founded the People’s Tribune with funding from Sun Ke and became chief editor of the journal, voicing the opinions of the left wing of the party. He moved to Hong Kong after the start of the war. Regarding him as an important propaganda asset, Chiang sent Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城 to Hong Kong to win him over.97 Tang, who had never been close to Chiang, worked temporarily with Chongqing yet remained in secret contact with Wang. He did not wait long to split with Chongqing and join his old patron. In Shanghai, he assisted Wang in expanding the network with foreign journalists. He was later appointed as Director of the International Propaganda Bureau, supervising the foreign publicity of the Wang Jingwei regime.98

Wang Jingwei’s foreign propaganda machinery was established in August 1940. The bureau was composed of four sections. The Administration Section was in charge of registration and censorship. The News Section was responsible for devising propaganda plans, distributing official announcements and exchanging news with foreign news agencies. The Translation and Editing Section compiled propaganda material. The Intelligence Office collected foreign opinions on the government and facilitated liaisons with foreign journalists and news

96 Huaqiao huaren baike quanshu bianzuan weiyuanhui, Huaqiao huaren baike quanshu, renwu juan,中國華僑百科全書，人物卷 (Encyclopedia of overseas Chinese, people) (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe, 2001), 483–484.
97 Chiang Kai-shek Archives, 15 August 1939, 002090200023201, Academia Historica, Taipei.
98 Files on Tang Liangli’s case, 4187–2–119, p. 4, the Shanghai High Court, Shanghai Municipal Archives.
Tang devised propaganda outlines regularly and distributed them to the censorship offices and the News Section to guide content. Common themes of the "outlines" supported the main argument Wang Jingwei took to justify his regime: advocating peace and cooperation with Japan; criticism of Chongqing’s blind collaboration with Britain and the United States for resistance at the expense of Chinese resources and national capacity; warnings against communist influence; and promotion of the pan-Asian thesis embraced by Sun Yat-sen.100

Indeed, Tang pursued a racial line of argument to justify the legitimacy of the Wang Jingwei regime. He believed that China could not modernize itself single-handedly and that collaboration with imperialist powers was inevitable. Collaboration with Japan, a nation with which China shared cultural and racial affinity, was far better than collaboration with the "white" races whose goal was to subdue the yellow people.101 Such a political vision, explained Tang in his deposition during his trial in 1946, was caused by his own unhappy experience with Westerners. Born in Java when still a Dutch colony, he remembered being abused by Dutch officials when he was young. His study in Britain, instead of changing his negative impression about the West, intensified his disgust with the British Empire. In a later trip to the United States, he was disturbed by the restrictions and insults inflicted on him by Americans. In contrast, the hospitality of the Japanese he received in Japan left a deep impression and altered his anti-Japanese views. He also claimed to be a faithful follower of Sun Yat-sen’s idea of closer cooperation with Japan and most of his propaganda material constituted translations of Sun’s work rather than his own creations.102

Tang’s confession should not be taken at face value. His line of propaganda was based more on hard-headed calculations of Realpolitik than resistance against racial discrimination. In fact, Tang only seriously embraced this pro-Japanese

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99 Guoji xuanchuanju banfa, 國際宣傳局組織辦法 (Organization of the International Department), 10 August 1940, in Qin Xiaoyi, ed., Zhongguo mingguo zhongyao shiliao chubian, duiRi kangzhan shiqi, Vol. 6, kuilei zuzhi (3) 中國民國重要史料初編，對日抗戰時期，第六編 倭僱組織 (Collection of important historical documents of Republican China, Sino-Japanese war, No. 6, the puppet government), (Taipei: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi weiyuanhui 中國國民黨中央委員會黨史委員會, 1981), 461–462.
100 Propaganda points, 宣傳要點, 26 July 1941, R18—1—56, Shanghai Municipal Archives.
101 Files on Tang Liangli’s case, 4187-2—119, p. 1, the Shanghai High Court, Shanghai Municipal Archives.
102 Ibid.
stance after rejoining Wang in 1940. Before that, he was a staunch supporter of China’s independence from Japanese intervention. His book *The Puppet State of Manchukuo* clearly identified Japan as an invader, seeking to control China’s resources as well as eroding national sovereignty. The rhetoric in the media, nevertheless, was determined by his political interests. Whichever direction he took, he closely followed Wang, who could guarantee him funding and power. His shift of direction, as with other so-called traitors, also reflected the desperate situation faced by China after the loss of over half of its territory. When peace with sovereignty seemed unachievable, peace without sovereignty appeared a reasonable compromise.

Outside the propaganda institutions, Tang competed with Tong fiercely for the support of foreign journalists. In early 1940, Tang contrived to contract an exchange of news with the Reuters services in Shanghai. This dealt a heavy blow to Tong’s office since Reuters’ worldwide service would inevitably boost the reputation of the Wang Jingwei regime. As a result, Tong sought to sabotage this collaboration through various means. He reported the issue to Robert Scott of the British Ministry of Information, and pressed him to investigate and end the news exchange, warning him that continuous exchange would harm Anglo-Chinese relations. Tong also boycotted Reuters’ news from Shanghai and protested to Reuters’ headquarters. These acts eventually pushed the agency to send the former head of the Far Eastern division to China in June 1940 for a thorough investigation.\(^{103}\) As a result, Reuters instructed its correspondent in Chongqing, Zhao Minheng, to send more dispatches back to the headquarters so as to resolve Chongqing’s complaint.\(^{104}\)

In addition, Tong took preemptive action to prevent further news alliances between international news agencies and the Wang regime. He asked the United Press office in Chongqing to query John Morris, the head of UP service in Shanghai, about his attitude towards the Wang Jingwei government. He also directed Leaf, who was working at the department’s US branch, to use his influence to dissuade responsible people in UP from approving any agreement with the Wang Jingwei government. Meanwhile, Tong contacted Roy Howard, head of the US Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers and who used to be in

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\(^{103}\) 26 June 1940, Wu Yanjun et al., "Kangzhan shiqi zai yu waiguo jizhe huodong jishi," 160.

\(^{104}\) 17 March 1941, Wu Yanjun et al., "Kangzhan shiqi zai yu waiguo jizhe huodong jishi," 165.
charge of UP, and warned him in a telegraph of the consequences if UP were to contract with Wang’s regime:

Since conclusion [of the] news agreement between Reuters and Tang Liang-li’s puppet news agency, Reuters’ dispatches formerly used by ninety-five percent of Chinese newspapers reduced more than half. Meantime popularity [of the] United Press [is] increasing by leaps and bounds. This displays Chinese public opinion [for the first] time in fifty years. [We] will appreciate your efforts [to] prevent United Press [from] concluding similar agreement with Nanking puppets so that [the] present happy tendency may continue.105

As a result of these efforts, the UP did not establish connections with the Wang Jingwei government throughout the war.

Tang’s bureau, nevertheless, put pro-Chongqing journalists in Shanghai in great danger. Having worked in the foreign-targeted propaganda field for a long time and having served the Chongqing government for a short period in Hong Kong, Tang was privy to the political positions of foreign journalists and the secret connection between Tong and Shanghai newspapers. As Agnes Smedley learnt from John B. Powell, Tang Liangli had helped the Japanese authorities to compile a blacklist of Western journalists holding anti-Japanese views. The list included John Powell, Carroll Allcott of the China Press, Shen Bao’s contributor Norwood Allman, editor-publisher of the Hua Min Wan Bao 華美晚報 Hal P. Mills, and Randall Gould and C.V. Starr, both of the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury. They were to be treated as Chinese belligerents if captured.106 Powell was arrested in Shanghai after the fall of Hong Kong and tortured in a Japanese prison. His feet had to be amputated after his release.

**Competition with the Chinese Communist Party**

105 Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*, 106.
While the threat from the international propaganda machinery of the Wang Jingwei government was real, the Chongqing propaganda offices also had to keep an eye on the activities of the Chinese Communist Party in the rear. The frustrating reality facing Hollington Tong was that more and more foreign journalists in Chongqing were attracted by the Communist Party and developed sympathy for their cause. Such a phenomenon was caused much less by ideological reasons than by the journalists’ growing distrust of the Guomindang government.

The enduring strict control on news exercised by the Guomindang government was responsible for the distrust. Indeed, despite the advocacy of liberal journalism by Tong and other Western-educated elites, the inclination to withhold information had been strong among conservative party members who remained suspicious of the motives of foreign journalists, and they failed to see the significance of propaganda that targeted a foreign audience. Edgar Snow, for example, initially wanted to interview Chiang Kai-shek before covering the communist activities. His trip to Yan’an only occurred after several unsuccessful attempts to reach Chiang. After returning from the trip, Snow tried again to access Chiang to gain a balanced view, but his request was turned down again. Tong later learnt that Chiang had never been informed of Snow’s requests. It was obvious that some official responsible for liaison had rejected Snow’s requests due to his own suspicions of Snow’s motivations. In contrast to the Guomindang government’s neglect was the Communist Party’s warm welcome of Snow. Liu Shaoqi, then the head of the northeast bureau of the Communist Party, was himself responsible for making arrangements for Snow to travel to the communist base.

The distrust was also intensified by the Chongqing government’s restrictions on visits to the front. Tong banned interviews at the front out of concern for the correspondents’ personal safety. He also feared that the journalists’ presence at the front might disturb operations since they lacked basic knowledge of the Chinese language and required special care to survive in the primitive conditions of

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China’s rural areas. In fact, the unstated reason was the Chongqing government’s lack of confidence in its military capacity, the very reason that prompted Wang Jingwei’s defection. The government shared Wang’s concern yet disagreed with his solution. To prevent others from adopting a pessimistic view of China’s resistance, the government was cautious with news of the war, checking information that might damage sentiments or harm public morale. As a result, the department ordered that all messages about the war should stick to the version provided by the Central News Agency and the briefings of military staff during press conferences. The ban inevitably drew strong criticism from foreign correspondents who wished to cover the war at the fronts after the fashion of correspondents in Europe. Rumors began to circulate that the Guomindang government had issued the restrictions because they were insincere in their intentions to fight the Japanese and were ready to keep negotiations with Japan open just like the Wang Jingwei clique. Meanwhile, the Communist Party’s foreign propagandists tried their best to distribute stories from the front among foreign journalists. They invited Agnes Smedley to cover the guerrilla war in north China, creating the impression that the Communist Party was the most determined to resist the Japanese.

In the course of decades of engagement with the Guomindang’s regime, the foreign journalists witnessed corruption, endless internal tussles, strict censorship and secret surveillance of their activities. This long-term experience made them wary of the Guomindang’s rule. A new party proclaiming a new strategy to save the nation satisfied the journalists’ desire for a change. The Communist Party, which claimed that the most revolutionary forces came from among the peasants and workers, promised openness and clean governance. This easily grabbed the journalists’ attention. Furthermore, criticism of the government in power was easy and the underdog was inclined to evoke public sympathy. Not facing the test of holding power somehow offered the Communist Party room to install promises for the future. The Guomindang government naturally bore the brunt of the public criticism for conducting dirty yet necessary work during wartime, such as censorship and intelligence surveillance.

Although friction between the Guomindang and the Communist Party was not

109 Hollington Tong, Dateline: China, 116.
110 Ibid., 116, 149.
obvious during the first two years of war, their rivalry to win support from foreign journalists was ongoing. The Guomindang’s strategy to check the Communist Party’s influence was aimed at the source of information: the Guomindang government prohibited foreign journalists from visiting communist areas.\textsuperscript{111} News regarding the activities of Communists was also censored with the goal of keeping this party’s affairs out of the public sphere. This blockade, however, was broken from within by Zhou Enlai, the Communist liaison officer in Chongqing. As A. T. Steele, a long-term correspondent recalled,

[Zhou was] a gold mine of gossip on the Generalissimo [Chiang Kai-shek] and the Kuomintang. Affable, smooth and convincing, Zhou was always prepared to explain in great detail just how Chiang’s armies were sabotaging national unity by squeezing the Communists out of this or that area.\textsuperscript{112}

Zhou also sought special yet secret connection with those showing an interest in the Communists. He approached Anna Louise Strong to give her a confidential briefing about the conflict between the Guomindang and the Communist Party and intimated that she ought to publish the briefing in the United States whenever rivalry escalated into military clashes. Similar preparatory information was also conveyed to Edgar Snow.\textsuperscript{113} Meanwhile, Zhou actively gained access to Theodore H. White, a member of Hollington Tong’s staff who later served Time magazine, in order to obtain his sympathy for the Communist Party.\textsuperscript{114}

The first open foreign propaganda battle within the second united front occurred after the military clash in January 1941 between the Communist New Fourth Army and the nationalist troops led by Han Deqin 韓德勤. The conflict is commonly known as the New Fourth Army Incident, or the Wannan 皖南 Incident. The clash was the result of escalation over a series of conflicts between the two sides since 1940. The incident not only put the united front to the test, but also brought the competition in foreign propaganda between the two parties to the

\textsuperscript{113} Epstein, *My China Eye*, 132.
\textsuperscript{114} Theodore Harold White, *In Search of History*, 118–120.
surface.

The Communists contrived to distribute their version of the incident in the world press immediately after the incident. Their quick response was attributed to proper preparation, connections with foreign correspondents and the party's extension office in Hong Kong. Before the incident, when friction between the two parties grew considerably, Zhou Enlai had made contact with foreign journalists in Chongqing several times, persuading them to present the Communist Party's case to the outside world in case a larger military conflict occurred. A week before the incident, Zhou had various meetings with Jack Belden, correspondent for the *Time* and *Life* magazines in China, and Hugh Deane, the China correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*, at the Communists' city office. He offered them material on the Guomindang's suppression of the Communist army, which helped to instill a view of the tension that was favourable to the Communists. Belden reported on the incident immediately after it occurred, criticizing the Guomindang's assault on the New Fourth Army. To circumvent Chongqing government censorship, he typed his principal story twice, made a total of some eight copies and gave them to several people flying out to Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the China Defence League led by Song Qingling became an extension of the Communist Party's foreign propaganda office. After receiving reports from Belden, Snow and other correspondents, the league filed those reports with newspapers around the world.

Meanwhile, the progressive leftist editor of the *China Weekly Review*, John B. Powell, also published articles criticizing the Guomindang government's attack on Communist troops. In return, the government banned circulation of the journal in Chongqing. The action prompted strong protests from Powell and soured relations between him and the International Department.

In contrast to the Communist Party's active publicity of the incident was the Guomindang's inaction. The Chongqing government insisted on suppressing all news concerning the incident and government spokesmen were reluctant to

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discuss it with foreign correspondents. This policy of silence was justified on the grounds that airing evidence of internal strife would “give aid and comfort to the enemy.”\textsuperscript{119} Although Tong himself advocated active defence and promotion of the Guomindang’s versions in the world press, he was unable to change the minds of officials who failed to understand the significance of foreign propaganda and those who attempted to avoid disagreement in the media.

The International Department, nevertheless, was not totally reticent about the incident. Tong used the cable privilege as a means to encourage foreign correspondents to report the Guomindang’s position on the incident. He secretly passed a message to journalists indicating that their cables would enjoy privileges in the censorship office if they “hinted” in their reports that the Communists had fabricated facts about the incident.\textsuperscript{120} On 19 July, the department called together the foreign correspondents and asked them to “rectify the Communists’ illegal activities through the power of the world media.”\textsuperscript{121} The department intimated that the journalists might use their outgoing cables to condemn the Communists’ long-term rebellion against the directions of the central government and advised the journalists to sincerely cooperate with the Chongqing government.\textsuperscript{122} In a confidential cable, Chiang Kai-shek ordered Wang Shijie to collect pro-communist propaganda materials published in the United States by communist sympathizers, such as Snow and Smedley, for analysis and hire prominent Americans to refute their allegations in public.\textsuperscript{123} In addition, the government increased the surveillance of Belden\textsuperscript{124} and withdrew Snow’s right to practice journalism in China.\textsuperscript{125}

This Guomindang-Communist rivalry in the foreign media was the beginning of a larger battle in the 1940s, but in 1941 the strife between the two parties remained irregular. Most of the foreign propaganda resources were concentrated on winning US support for China’s resistance against Japan. In 1941, Tong’s effort

\textsuperscript{119} Hollington Tong, \textit{Dateline China}, 147.
\textsuperscript{120} 1 June 1941, the Guomindang government’s foreign propaganda activities during the anti-Japanese war, compiled by Liu Jingxiu, based on the documents held in the Second Historical Archives of China, Nanjing. See Liu Jingxiu, Kangzhan shiqi Guomindang duiwai xuanchuan jishi (xu 1), \textit{Dang'an shiliào yu yanjiu}, No. 2 (1990): 75.
\textsuperscript{121} 19 July 1941, Liu Jingxiu, Kangzhan shiqi Guomindang duiwai xuanchuan jishi (xu 1), 76.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} 21 January 1941, Wu Yanjun et al, “Kangzhan shiqi zai yu waiguo jizhe huodong jishi,” 163.
\textsuperscript{125} February 1941, ibid., 164.
Pearl Harbour, the End of the Beginning

Step by step US public opinion moved away from isolationism. In September 1937, when the American Institute of Public Opinion (the Gallup Poll) asked the Americans whether they sympathized with either China or Japan, 43% favoured China while 55% supported neither side. Nevertheless, the public was unwilling to translate their sympathy into material support: 95% of the population surveyed rejected any financial involvement in the Sino-Japanese war. In February 1938, those sympathizing with China grew to 59% and 36% of the interviewees supported the United States shipping arms or ammunition to China. In mid-1939, 74% showed sympathy for China; 66% favored the boycott of Japanese goods and 72% supported an arms embargo on Japan. Despite this approval for material support, the population was still unwilling to confront Japan militarily: only 6% of interviewees wished to go to war with Japan. But the situation continued to change quickly. By February 1941, ten months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, 39% of the public were willing to risk war with Japan if necessary.

In July 1939, the US government decided to abrogate the Japanese-American commercial treaty, thus removing legal obstacles to an embargo on the shipment of materials to Japan. A total embargo on the export of iron and steel to Japan went into effect on 16 October 1941. On 26 November, US Secretary of State Cordell Hull rejected Japan’s demand for the relaxation of the embargo and issued an ultimatum, requesting that Japan withdraw completely from China.

This pressure on Japan resulted in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. This news was welcomed in Chongqing. Chiang Kai-shek, for the first time in the war, saw the real hope for a victory. He celebrated it by

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singing an old opera air and playing Ave Maria throughout the day.\textsuperscript{131} The United States finally was at war with Japan!

China still faced a long war. Pearl Harbour was the end of China’s lonely resistance and the beginning of closer Sino-American ties. But as it turned out, the Sino-American alliance was not a happy marriage. Tensions in leadership carried on throughout the alliance and growing communist strength began to reshape the political landscape in the 1940s and beyond.

This dissertation has traced China’s foreign propaganda activities in the English-language press in the 1930s. It sheds light on the continuous efforts by the Guomindang government and bilingual Chinese elites to win over Western powers’ sympathy for China’s resistance against Japan and the formation and centralization of the Guomindang government’s foreign propaganda system. It has demonstrated that the development of China’s foreign propaganda was a trans-national and trans-social experience, strongly influenced by the English-language treaty-port press, a product of the hypo-colonial system. The treaty-port English-language papers not only became important channels for China to present its case in the Sino-Japanese crisis before 1937 but also nurtured the news network and shaped the future development of the official propaganda system after the outbreak of full-scale war in 1937. While China’s foreign propaganda efforts in the inter-war period have largely escaped scholarly attention, this research demonstrates that the Guomindang government actively engaged in the war of words in the English-language press during the 1930s and early 1940s, and that foreign propaganda was an important instrument of nation building when China’s military and economic power was weak.

The period between 1928 and 1941 witnessed two marked trends: the growing sympathy for China’s anti-Japanese cause in the English-language press and the development of China’s foreign propaganda system. The two processes were closely connected. Although it is improper to claim that the latter was the sole cause of the former, since other elements, such as the conflict of interests between Western Powers and Japan as well as Japanese atrocities in China, also contributed to the change of opinion, yet it is undeniable that China’s continuous propaganda efforts in the English-language press successfully intensified the existing tensions between Anglo-American countries and Japan and strongly promoted the change in international public opinion.

The Guomindang government was defeated in the foreign propaganda battle with Japan over the Jinan Incident in 1928. Although Nanjing had a good case to present to the world in the Jinan Incident, it did not have a sophisticated network
through which to channel its messages to the outside world. The news market was dominated by Reuters and the official Japanese agency, Tōhō. The two agencies, believing China was to blame for the start of the fighting, distorted international understanding of the Jinan Incident and portrayed Chiang Kai-shek's troops as a ruthless force lacking order and discipline. Due to the lack of a decisive propaganda policy, the Nanjing government failed to present a unified line in the media. Entertaining the hope of solving the incident locally, Chiang was reluctant to present this case to the world press upon the outbreak of the fighting. The Guomindang leftists, with a strong anti-imperialist tradition, also refrained from reporting the event to Western papers. However, as the Japanese army continued to expand its aggression in Jinan, the Nanjing government gave up localizing the conflict and tried to disseminate China's case in the English-language press in an effort to seek Western intervention. The change of policy did not effectively alter the Western audiences' understanding of the event since China's voice was largely drowned out by Japan's intensive and consistent propaganda from the beginning of the incident. The unfavourable context of public opinion that was caused by the Guomindang's anti-foreign bias in the 1920s also contributed to the Western papers' distrust of China's version of the Jinan case.

The Guomindang officials as well as the bilingual non-governmental elites urgently felt the need for more effective propaganda machinery after the Jinan Incident. These elites established an English-language journal, *The China Critic*, in Shanghai, in the hope of countering Japan's propaganda. The journal became an important outlet for China to voice its position in the treaty ports in the early 1930s when an official propaganda apparatus had not been established. After Chiang Kai-shek overthrew the Beijing government and militarily unified China, the Nanjing government established a Division of Foreign Propaganda within the Ministry of Information to boost the government's international reputation. Although the division did not significantly improve China's foreign propaganda before 1937, due to lack of professionals and effective guidelines, the move still marked the government's early attempt in building a centralized foreign propaganda institution.

The fight for regulation of the treaty-port papers was part of China's battle to restore its sovereignty. The Nanjing government withdrew postal rights from recalcitrant newspapers, particularly the *North China Daily News*, and threatened
to deport unfriendly foreign journalists—Hallet Abend and George Sokolsky—in an effort to subject the treaty-port press to its control. Meanwhile the government also actively negotiated with the foreign cable companies to reclaim its cable rights in China, and to establish its own English-language newspapers. It bought the *Peking Leader* from its American owner and temporarily subsidized the British paper, the *Shanghai Mercury* in 1929. But before the news network was full-fledged, a new round of Sino-Japanese tensions arose and this crisis subjected China’s news network to a severe test.

The English-language journals operated by the bilingual Chinese treaty-port elites sought to internationalize the Sino-Japanese conflict after the Mukden Incident. The journals linked the Mukden Incident with the *Tanaka Memorial* and tried to persuade the treaty-port press that this incident was Japan’s first step towards world conquest. This strategy generated some favourable results: the treaty-port papers, particularly the *North China Daily News*, the organ of the die-hard British treaty-port residents, began to correct their bias against China and evince concerns about Japan’s expansion as well as an escalation of the Sino-Japanese crisis. The Shanghai Incident further changed foreign expatriates’ opinion towards the Sino-Japanese conflict. As they had personally witnessed Japanese violence, an increasing number of expatriates developed sympathy for China. While the US metropolitan paper, the *New York Times*, relayed the American treaty-port papers’ warnings against Japan to their home public, the *Times* in London failed to support the *North China Daily News*’ criticism against Japan, fearing an overt anti-Japanese line would harm relations between the two former allies.

The dilemma between appeasing Japan and resisting Japan’s military aggression in the mid-1930s made it difficult for the Nanjing government to openly pursue an anti-Japanese propaganda policy. While military resistance was not a feasible choice for China, the Nanjing government actively organized foreign propaganda activities during the Lytton Commission’s enquiry into the Manchurian and Shanghai incidents. The government kept investing in English-language papers in the treaty port. After the *Leader* was forced to close by the Japanese, the government started the *Peiping Chronicle* on the premises of the *Leader* and hired a British editor to disguise the paper’s connection with Nanjing. Between 1932 and 1934, Chiang Kai-shek also kept regular yet confidential
contact with Hollington Tong, then the managing director of the China Press, the largest English-language paper in Shanghai. Meanwhile, the Nanjing government continued to fight for the abolition of extraterritoriality through the regulation of treaty-port media. It introduced the newspaper registration system and used postal benefits as a lever to press the treaty-port English-language papers into submission.

The Nanjing government's appeasement of Japan in this period created difficulties for China's foreign propaganda in the Amö case (1934). While the China Press, whose managing director Hollington Tong was secretly contact with Chiang Kai-shek, interpreted Japan's statement as a challenge to Western interests in China, the pro-leftist journals, the China Critic and the People's Tribune, tended to view the case as Japanese intimidation of China's anti-Japanese activists. Meanwhile, the People's Tribune controlled by the Wang Jingwei clique endorsed Sino-Japanese cooperation, believing that it was a good strategy to eliminate Western exploitation. Nonetheless, these papers continued to place the Sino-Japanese tensions in the context of Japanese-Western rivalry so as to raise international awareness of the Japanese expansion. Japan, in the Amö case, also failed to produce a unified propaganda line due to the political frictions within the government. Much as the Western-controlled treaty-port papers wished to resolve the dispute in the Amö case, they could not afford to remain blind to Japan's plans for Asia which challenged the Western Powers' interests in the region. While the British metropolitan paper, the Times, tried to downplay the Amö case, the American paper, the New York Times, expressed concern for Japan's continuous naval expansion. It also linked Amö's hands-off China statement to the Sino-American trade in aircraft and warned the public about Japan's threat to the US economy. Nevertheless, it was clear that the favourable Western public opinion Japan had enjoyed in the Jinan Incident and the Mukden Incident was dwindling away. The Western public were more and more cautious of Japan's expansion and this shift was favourable for China in making its anti-Japanese argument.

The mid-1930s nevertheless constituted an important formative period for China's foreign propaganda machinery. In 1935, the government established a censorship system to further control China's outgoing dispatches. The office was headed by Hollington Tong, who was directly supervised by Chiang Kai-shek. To break the news monopoly of foreign agencies and effectively supply the treaty-
port papers with Chinese sources, Xiao Tongzi, with Chiang’s support, reorganized the Central News Agency. The agency purchased Reuters’ cable assets in Shanghai and took over its news service in China. The English-language department of the Central News Agency together with the *Peiping Chronicle*, both staffed with Western-trained bilingual elites, became important institutions to supply English-language papers with reports on Chinese affairs. More and more bilingual media experts trained in the treaty-port press began to engage in government-sponsored propaganda activities and a transnational news propaganda network as well as a centralized foreign propaganda system was in the making.

The outbreak of the full-scale Sino-Japanese war provided an opportunity for Chiang Kai-shek to centralize the foreign propaganda system. Immediately after the outbreak of the war, Chiang Kai-shek established the Fifth Board of the Military Affairs Commission to supervise the international propaganda office and appointed Hollington Tong as its head. Cold-shouldered by Wang Jingwei’s clique and hampered by a lack of professional staff and facilities, Tong contrived to keep the new office working with the assistance of his former colleagues from the treaty-port press. Chiang Kai-shek successfully eliminated Wang’s influence in foreign propaganda after the Guomindang government moved to Wuhan in 1938. Having gained full control of the foreign propaganda institution, Tong reorganized the domestic offices and extended the foreign network overseas. To enhance the credibility of the government information, he adopted a hands-off policy, and hired foreign correspondents as China’s propaganda agents. He also promoted liberal journalism, loosened censorship, and combined propaganda with intelligence operations, in an effort to erase all traces of foreign propaganda. Tong’s foreign propaganda strategy as well as the extended news network efficiently strengthened China’s voice during the Nanjing Incident. Yet the incident also indicated to Tong that the treaty-port papers were no longer efficient channels for China to distribute its message after the Japanese occupation of Shanghai and Guangzhou. Propaganda in Shanghai could only be conducted in secret and a new direct route of information transmission was urgently needed.

After the Chiang Kai-shek government moved the capital to Chongqing, the International Department managed to voice China’s position abroad despite grave difficulties. The department continued to tighten its connection with foreign
correspondents who had come to be considered valuable foreign propaganda resources for China. Tong built a well-equipped Press Hotel for the journalists near the department headquarters to accommodate foreign correspondents and monitor their activities. Facing the hefty blow of Wang Jingwei’s defection to Japan as well as the growing conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists, the International Department tightened its censorship on outgoing dispatches.

Wireless transmission was another important strategy to connect Chongqing with its external news networks. The newly established international radio station, the Voice of China, apart from broadcasting foreign-language programs to the world, also filed news dispatches to China’s foreign branch offices. The Guomindang government paid special attention to connections with the United States. The signal was relayed from Manila and picked up by radio amateurs on the West Coast of the United States. Those amateurs were responsible for transcribing the radio dispatches and distributing them to other US branch offices via the US national radio network. Broadcasting continued despite the intensive air raids from 1939 to 1941. Most of the work was done in the dugouts.

To counter Wang Jingwei’s pro-Japanese propaganda in Nanjing, Tong tried to dissuade leaders of the foreign news agencies from contracting with the news organizations of the Wang Jingwei regime. He also organized anti-Wang propaganda activities during his confidential mission to Shanghai. Compared with Wang’s threat from afar, the Communist’s rivalry was more immediate. After the military clash between troops of the Guomindang and the Communist Party in the area of south Anhui in early 1941, both sides tried hard to win over the foreign journalists’ sympathy. The disunity resulted in a split in the sympathies of the Western journalists in Chongqing. The united front gradually dissolved and the tension eventually escalated into internal warfare.

China’s foreign propaganda, nevertheless, started to show effect. More and more US nationals were moving away from isolationism and the number of supporters for China’s cause rose sharply from 1937 to 1939: from 43% to 74%. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, which was the result of long-term US-Japanese antagonism, occurred in December 1941. With the United States drawn into the Pacific War, the Chongqing government was suddenly relieved from the military pressure from Japan. The Guomindang government, after years of bitter
resistance, saw real hope of victory.

Some seven decades have elapsed since the Sino-Japanese crisis and World War II. Regardless of the bumpy road China has travelled during this period—the Civil War, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the reopening of its door to the world and the return to international society—what we have seen today is a rising independent China with a strong influence on international affairs; a nation linking more and more closely with the world in economic development, political decisions and regional security; and a nation, after the Mao era, that seeks to redress its isolated status in international politics, rebuild its national image and make its model and values widely understood.

After the 1990s, China has put great emphasis on the development of “soft power”—a term coined by Joseph S. Nye referring to a nation’s ability to get what it wants through the attraction of its culture, political ideals and policies rather than coercion or warfare. Recently, Party Chief and President Hu Jintao noted at the Central Foreign Affairs Leadership Group meeting in January 2006 that the rise of China’s international influence depended both on hard power and soft power. Hu further highlighted the significance of soft power in his political report to the 17th Party Congress in October 2007, stressing the urgent need to strengthen China’s soft power in response to international challenges.1 China’s use of soft power in South Asia, Africa and Latin America also caught global attention both among academics and diplomats. In 2007, the then Australian Labour Party leader Kevin Rudd handed to then US President George W. Bush Joshua Kurlantzich’s book *Charm Offensive: How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* at their meeting in Sydney as a hint to Bush why the United States had been losing influence.2 The US Congressional Research Service also conducted a lengthy report on China’s soft power in South America, Asia and Africa to assess implications of China’s use of soft power for the security and economic interests of the United States.3

Indeed, the development of soft power in today’s China is different from that

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in the 1930s. China is an independent nation today. Its efforts to exercise soft power are built upon its rising economic, military and political power. The deep apprehensions of the threat from Japan and other imperialist powers as well as the difficulties created by circumscribed sovereignty in organizing foreign propaganda sources in the 1930s has become history—a history that is too remote and inaccessible for those born after the war unless they deliberately make an effort to hunt for traces of it, and, sometimes, be bold enough to revisit the ultimate pain and the darkest side of human nature exposed in that horrendous humanitarian disaster. However, careful readers of this thesis may see those days still alive or being relived: amongst the hustle and bustle of the Shanghai Bund where Westerners today walk in and out of the historical buildings, we see another image of the cosmopolitan Shanghai of the 1930s on the waterfront, with an equally lively transnational flavour. When the Chinese Central Television and the Xinhua News Agency begin to expand their English-language services worldwide to present China’s perspective to a global audience, their actions strongly echoed those attempts made by China in the 1930s to make its voice heard and its cause understood abroad. When the global development of the internet technology transforms the information transmission and the social online network—microblogs (weibo 微博) provide more challenges to the Chinese government’s control of information than the leaders of the Communist Party have ever faced—we see a public sphere in the making, the way it was 70 years ago when China’s treaty-port papers embraced various opinions and exerted strong influence over the world media. And when China’s nationalism with Confucian overtones was used to fill the ideological void opened up by the collapse of communism,4 this again, serves as a reminder of a similar element of nationalism involved in the foreign propaganda of the 1930s.

China re-entered the global society after the Mao era. Both China and the world are working hard to carefully manage its comeback. The Chinese government is eager to establish its reputation and legitimacy, while the world is tentatively watching how the rise of China is transforming the world and wondering how this economic giant but ideological heretic should be portrayed. What China should do to improve its national image in the world? There is no set

answer to those questions. What we could rely on to form better judgement of today's world is the experience of the past, the road China has travelled and the experiences that continue to shape its thoughts and actions today.
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