

**Serving the Occupation State:
Chinese Elites, Collaboration, and the Problem of History in Post-war China**

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the problem of Chinese collaboration with Japan during the Second World War. It does so by considering the pre-war context of Republican China's politics, the ways in which political collaboration occurred during the Japanese occupation, as well as collaboration's aftermath in the Chinese Civil War and as a problem of postwar history and memory. Methodologically, this study adopts a biographical approach, examining four individuals—Kiang Kang-hu (Jiang Kanghu), Chu Minyi, Hao Pengju and Jiang Zemin—whose lives became entangled with the problem of collaboration as it occurred under the Re-organized National Government (RNG) of Wang Jingwei in Nanjing.

Since the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, China entered a period of state fragmentation that saw a series of different political parties, movements, and warlords compete for power under a political culture of factional politicking. This provided the context in which the decision to collaborate with Japan made sense for certain members of China's "alternate elite" whose anti-communism and opposition to military resistance set them in opposition to the Chinese Communist Party and Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist Party in Chongqing. Once in office, these individuals pursued policies that were often closely aligned with their pre-war political behaviour or beliefs, including advocating for the republican political model, maintaining the symbolism and policy of the Nationalist Party, or establishing military cliques.

Despite this consistency, however, taking office in one of the occupation states established by Japan has been framed as an aberration committed by a particular subset of individuals who have been condemned as traitors, or *hanjian*, for their moral failure and betrayal of the nation. Stepping back from moral judgment, this study shows that the political fragmentation of pre-war China shaped collaboration under the RNG as politicians attempted to turn occupation into an opportunity to preserve the Republican model, even to perpetuate Nationalist Party policies. Although the occupation failed and the RNG was officially discredited, collaboration has endured as a lingering historical controversy that reflects the lengths to which the Chinese state will go to police the allegiance of individuals, even within the realms of history and memory.

Lay Summary

This dissertation explores the problem of Chinese wartime collaboration with Japan during the Second World War through the lives of four individuals: Kiang Kang-hu, a Chinese socialist; Chu Minyi, a Nationalist Party intellectual; Hao Pengju, a military officer; and Jiang Zemin, a university student who later became President of China. Rather than understanding wartime collaboration as an action to be condemned, this study seeks to understand how the decision to collaborate under enemy occupation might have made sense at the time and how it has been retrospectively misunderstood. It does so by examining the course of these four individual lives, from the politics of the pre-war Republican era beginning in 1911, through the occupation and subsequent Civil War, and on to the renewed attention to wartime history in the 1980s and 1990s.

Preface

This dissertation is an original, unpublished and independent work by the author, Jonathan Henshaw. It was written under the co-supervision of Professor Timothy Brook and Professor Glen Peterson and is the result of research conducted in libraries and archives in Canada, China, Taiwan, and the United States.

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Acknowledgments

Researching and writing about the history of China during my doctoral program has been a tremendous privilege. My interest in China came about by chance, sparked first by childhood trips to Chinatown with my grandmother, Eleanor Henshaw, and later by a trip to the site of the former leper colony for Chinese at D'Arcy Island with my high school English teacher, Brian Twohig, in Victoria, BC. This was followed by a formal introduction to Chinese history and language courtesy of the late Daniel H. Bays and Larry Herzberg at Calvin College, and then through my MA research at the University of Alberta under the direction of Ryan Dunch. Since then, I have had the continued great fortune to be taught, guided and supported by a lengthy list of truly stellar mentors, colleagues and friends who have seen me through my doctoral training at UBC.

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Dedication

*Written in honour of my grandparents,
Anna and Evert, Roy and Eleanor*

1. Introduction: Hanjian, History and Occupation

1.1 Introduction

Chinese experiences of the Second World War played a central role in the country's postwar development, and continue to cast a shadow over the People's Republic of China (PRC) today. Over the course of the war, much of the Chinese coastline fell to Japan, including the country's major economic, cultural and political centres. Following the 1937 seizure of Nanjing the Japanese imperial army (in what became the infamous "Rape of Nanking"), the fallen Chinese capital hosted a succession of occupation states. Since then, the wartime legacy has lurked in the background of the PRC's ties with Japan and the United States, even while the history of the occupation remains a topic of continued sensitivity for Beijing. And yet, while most Chinese can readily recall (often with a curl of the lip) the names of prominent collaborationist leaders like Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883-1944) or the last Manchu emperor, Pu Yi 溥儀 (1906-1967), when it comes to the individuals who staffed these states—who collaborated—they remain poorly understood beyond their status as *hanjian* 漢奸, or traitors to the Han Chinese.¹ But as historian Peter Thilly has argued in his recent study of opium traders in Fujian province during the late

¹ Political collaboration in wartime China, as generally conceived, was primarily a male phenomenon, with the notable exception of Chen Bijun, wife of Wang Jingwei, who has only recently begun to receive scholarly attention. See, for example, Joseph K.S. Yick, " 'Self-Serving Collaboration': The Political Legacy of 'Madame Wang' in Guangdong Province, 1940-1945," *American Journal of Chinese Studies* vol. 21 (October 2014), p. 233-24, which deals less with the issue of gender and collaboration than it does with Chen Bijun's challenge to received understandings of *hanjian* as a category. Other recent studies have begun to consider gender in the context of collaboration, and there were several women who were put on trial or stigmatized after the war for their activities during the occupation, particularly in the cultural sphere, including writers like Eileen Chang, Su Qing, or the painter Li Qingping. For a general study, see Lo Jiu-jiung, *Tade shenpan: jindai zhongguo guozu yu xingbie yishi xia de zhongjian zhi bian* [Her Trials: Contextualizing Loyalty and Disloyalty in Modern China from the Gendered Nationalist Perspective] (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 2013).

Qing, “writing off the history of these people as mere traitors yields too flat a narrative; it obscures both the individual and the wider context.”² What was the context from which these so-called *hanjian* emerged; how did their collaboration unfold, and what is the significance of wartime collaboration and how it has been written about (especially by PRC-based writers) within the long durée of 20th century Chinese history?

Despite the passage of some seven decades since the end of the war, these questions remain under-examined. This is not to say that collaboration as a phenomenon has been ignored. From the outbreak of war, Chinese commentary on those individuals who contemplated negotiating peace with Japan focused uncompromisingly on the individual. Months after the war broke out in 1937 (and not long after his release from prison), Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) issued a sweeping declaration: “He who speaks of peace is a *hanjian*!”³ In October of the following year, Tan Kah-kee 陳嘉庚 (1874-1961), an overseas Chinese businessman, echoed the sentiment in a telegram sent to the National Political Council in Chongqing for which he gained much attention, claiming “He who speaks of peace before the enemy has left our country is a *hanjian*!”⁴ These sentiments, which gained currency within the country, made clear the transformation of a particular

² Peter Thilly, “Opium and the Origins of Treason in Modern China: The View from Fujian,” *Late Imperial China*, vol 38 number 1 (June 2017), p. 156.

³ Chen Duxiu, *Zenyang shi youqianzhe chuqian youlizhe chuli?* [How to make those with money pay and those with power exert themselves?] (Shanghai: Kangzhan yanjiu she, 1937), p. 9. The sad irony for Chen is that shortly thereafter he faced accusations of being a traitor.

⁴ Tang Xiyong, ed., *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwen ji* [Essays in Chinese Maritime History] vol. 7 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan renwen shehui kexue yanjiu zhongxin, 1999), p. 258, as well as C.F. Yong, *Tan Kah-kee: The Making of an Overseas Chinese Legend* (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2014), p.123. For a response from Wang Jingwei, see Huang Meizhen, Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang Jingwei jituan toudi* [The Wang Jingwei Clique’s Defection to the Enemy] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1984), p. 388-393.

action—speaking of peace—into an all-encompassing identity worthy of moral condemnation.

The same applied at the level of jurisprudence, beginning with legislation issued in 1939 to prevent the activities of spies and *hanjian*, which remained in force until the end of the war. In the fall of 1945, after the Japanese surrender, the Nationalist government brought in a series of updates to the “regulations on punishing *hanjian*,” as the legislation was called. These regulations, from an initial draft on 27th September 1945 to the final version on 6th December 1945 that was used for sentencing, had some variations in content but were uniform in their framework: anyone who conspired with an enemy power to conduct certain actions was a *hanjian*, and as a *hanjian* was therefore subject to a suite of legal penalties laid out in the regulations, as were those who had served in a given capacity in a “bogus” 偽 (*wei*) organization and engaged in acts benefiting the enemy or harming the nation or the people.⁵

However workable this might have been for the post-war judicial process, the category of *hanjian*, which remains in standard use in PRC scholarship, is an even blunter tool for the historian than the binary of collaboration versus resistance that is so familiar

⁵ These actions could include conspiring to rebel against the nation; conspiring to disturb public order; raising an army or other military force; supplying, selling, purchasing or transporting military supplies or producing materials for armaments or ammunition; supplying, selling, purchasing or transporting rice, wheat, flour, grains, or other food products; providing cash or assets; leaking, transmitting or stealing information, documents, books, or goods related to military affairs, politics or economics; serving as a guide or other military-related role; hindering civil servants from carrying out their duties; disrupting banking; sabotaging transportation or communications, or other military works or blockades; poisoning water or food supplies; inciting members of the armed forces, the civil service, or the people to go over to the enemy; or inciting or being incited to commit any of the previous crimes. See Zhu Jinyuan, Chen Zuen, eds., *Wang wei shoushen jishi* [Record of the Investigations of the Wang Jingwei puppets] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 145-151. For further discussion of these regulations, see Timothy Brook, “The Shanghai Trials, 1946: Conjuring Postwar Justice,” in Lü Fangshang, ed., *Zhanhou bianju yu zhanzheng jiyi* [Postwar changes and war memories] (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2015), p. 136-138.

(and dated) in Western scholarship.⁶ And yet this is precisely the tool that many scholars in the PRC continue to reach for when approaching the topic.

PRC accounts of Wang Jingwei, the occupation state he led, and the individuals who served in it remain locked in terms of personal moral failure. While the category of “collaboration” is familiar to English-language historians, most notably in the case of France under the Germans, PRC scholarship has framed the discussion somewhat differently, eschewing the term collaboration, which has been defined by historian Henrik Dethlefsen in his study of Denmark as “the continuing *exercise of power* under the pressure produced by the presence of an occupying power.”⁷ This term and this definition, which has gained some currency in recent studies on China and guides this dissertation, provides a well-defined target group that mirrors the attention to office-holders in the wartime ROC legislation, yet does not extend to the more ill-defined attempt effort in the legislation to include those writers, business people and others whose access to power was negligible in comparison to the politicians or the military officials. Moreover, the term collaboration itself lends itself to a certain elasticity, with various authors writing of “collaborationist nationalism,” “legitimate collaboration,” or

⁶ This binary has been rendered obsolete by, among others, Po-Shek Fu, who deemed the extant historiographical literature on occupied China to be “parochially political,” and proposed a tripartite approach to viewing the cultural sphere of Shanghai under occupation. See Po-shek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. xi, xiv-xv. Althou Fu’s work has been translated into Chinese and published in the PRC as of 2012, it is not clear to what extent it has impacted scholarly or popular perspectives on the politics of occupation and the persistence of the collaboration:resistance binary within the PRC.

⁷ See Henrik Dethlefsen, “Denmark and the German Occupation: Cooperation, Negotiation or Collaboration?” *Scandinavian Journal of History* vol 15, no 1-2 (1990), p. 199, and Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 2.

contrasting collaboration with accommodation or various other types response to occupation.⁸

In contrast, PRC scholarship has tended to view the topic through the lens of individual identity (a *hanjian*) or through that of “illegitimate” or “bogus” regimes 偽政權 (*wei zhengquan*), regarded as the institutional vehicle for the hated *hanjian*, both of which stand in contrast to being “patriotic,” and represent uncompromising, personalized moral judgments—it is hard to imagine making a case for “patriotic *hanjian*” or a “legitimate bogus regime,” for example.⁹ This discrepancy between the two languages has been acknowledged by the Chinese translator of one recent English-language work on “collaboration,” who took care to explain the unorthodox terminology (ie, the lack of familiar condemnations like *hanjian* or *wei*) to her PRC audience.¹⁰ One consequence of this binary is that much of the scholarship has thus been consumed not only with the various crimes of illegitimate puppet regimes, but also the individual moral failures of *hanjian* and the search for its causes on a personal level. Wang and his followers are typically cast as inherently morally flawed—blinded by anti-communism or warped by a lust for power, among other sins. Through the denunciation of such sins, the author can wrap him- or herself in an aura of patriotism.

⁸ For “collaborationist nationalism,” see Timothy Brook “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China,” in Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, eds., *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), especially p. 162. For “legitimate collaboration,” see James Mace Ward, “Legitimate Collaboration: The Administration of Santo Tomás Internment Camp and Its Histories, 1942-2003,” *Pacific Historical Review* vol. 77, no. 2 (May 2008), p. 160-161.

⁹ For a further reflection on this difference in terminology, see Diana Lary, “Treachery, Disgrace and Death—Han Fujū and China’s Resistance to Japan,” *War in History* 13 (2006), p. 66.

¹⁰ Pan Min, “Yizhe xu,” [Translator’s Preface] in Bu Zhengmin, *Zhixu de lunxian: Kangzhan chuqi de Jiangnan wu cheng* [Order of Occupation: Five Cities of Jiangnan in the Early Phase of the War of Resistance], translated by Pan Min (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2016), p. ii-iii.

This remains noticeably the case at a more popular level as well, as shown by a newspaper report from 2004 describing the discovery of a statue of Wang Jingwei in the city of Shaoxing in East China's Zhejiang province. Unearthed by construction workers at a residential complex, the 1.6m tall stone statue of Wang portrayed him bound and kneeling, lips daubed red and wearing a tortured expression, not unlike the statue of Qin Hui positioned outside Yuefei's tomb in Hangzhou. At the outset, the workers were unsure of what to make of their discovery, and turned to the local Cultural Relics Bureau for identification. The response from the experts—that the gargoyle-like figure emerging from the dust and dirt of People's Road was none other than Wang Jingwei, one-time protégé of Sun Yat-sen, and long reviled as an arch-traitor for his leadership of a Japanese-sponsored occupation state—provoked a note of surprise at the statue's ugly appearance. Wang was, after all, said to have been one of the handsomest men of the Republic. Tellingly, however, the experts were quick to point out the figure likely dated from the latter portion of the War of Resistance against Japan, the product of an unknown, *patriotic* [emphasis added] sculptor.¹¹

Given the moral charge with which Wang and his followers have been framed, it is important to emphasize the role of denunciation in maintaining one's own righteousness and, to a lesser extent, in legitimizing the topic and drawing a line between the denouncer and the denounced. The sculptor responsible for the statue of Wang might be entirely anonymous, the origin or objective of his or her art unknown, but through denunciation of Wang, the sculptor is deemed patriotic. Those who deviate from this pattern open

¹¹ See Shi Yu, Yao Qiong, "Shaoxing wachu Wang Jingwei guixiang: Kusang lianhong zuichun wuhua dabang," [Shaoxing Excavates Kneeling Statue of Wang Jingwei: Tearful, Bound, and Blushing, with puckered lips] *Jinbao xun*, accessed at <http://news.sina.com.cn/s/2004-11-09/04594180962s.shtml> on 23rd May 2013.

themselves to the charge of attempting to “reverse the verdict” or, more ominously, “historical nihilism,” a derisive label that came into use after the 1989 Tiananmen protests and has been recently dusted off for use with renewed vigour by the administration of current CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping.¹²

The cost of all this is to greatly narrow the scope for any understanding of collaboration as a response to occupation. The prevailing framework of moral failure, denunciation, and nationalist narrative precludes developing much understanding of collaboration at either a systemic level or an individual one. Instead, the topic remains mired in an emotional binary. Historian Cai Dejin 蔡德金 (1935-1999), one of the most prominent PRC historians of the occupation period of his time, demonstrated this more clearly than most: “If Wang Jingwei is patriotic,” he demanded, “were those martyrs who lost their lives resisting Japan traitors?”¹³ Such a stance has, by and large, foreclosed the possibility of understanding how those who collaborated may have understood what they were doing, of developing any sense of interiority for this pivotal group of individuals who played such a significant role in how the occupation unfolded. Instead, the PRC history of the war remains locked in moral judgment, obsessed with the question of good and evil, narrated as heroic Chinese resistance in the face of barbaric Japanese

¹² The label is used for anything that challenges the inevitability or correctness of the Chinese Communist revolution. See “China is struggling to keep control over its version of the past: a battle is raging in the realm of historiography,” *The Economist*, 29th October 2016, accessed online at goo.gl/svwt5p on 2nd May 2017, as well as Lv Weizhou, “Zunzhong lishi, jiangding zixin, xiaochu lishi xuwu zhuyi de yingxiang” [Respect history, strengthen self-confidence, and eliminate the influence of historical nihilism] *Hongqi wengao*, 5th November 2014, accessed at <http://goo.gl/5GQ9PZ> on 2nd May 2017.

¹³ Cai Dejin, ed., “Guanyu kangzhan shiqi Wang Jingwei yu Wang wei zhengquan de jige wenti zhi wo jian” [My views on a few questions regarding Wang Jingwei during the War of Resistance and the Bogus Wang Regime] *Tao ni ji* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 2005), p 366-367.

aggression. By this logic, the collaborators, few in number and flawed in character, are worthy of no further attention than dismissal.¹⁴

Despite this dismissal, however, the role of those who collaborated remains pivotal in how the occupation unfolded. As historian Yeh Wen-hsin asks, “Were these men ready to be submissive yet unruly, cooperative and obstructionist at the same time? Or were they poised to serve as reliable partners should the new occupiers prove to be worthy?”¹⁵ These are only a few of the central questions related to the occupation that the nationalist narrative of resistance, with its emphasis on moral judgment, has yet to fully pursue, let alone answer.

In this dissertation, I attempt to reframe the discussion regarding wartime collaboration by considering the politically fragmented context in which it emerged, the ways in which it unfolded, and the way in which it has been (mis)-remembered in the PRC. By pivoting away from the question of moral judgment that has been so dominant in PRC historical writing, I hope to provide a path forward for understanding collaboration and the politics of occupation within the context of twentieth century Chinese history. Apart from casting new light on the history of the war, this effort offers a reminder that the China of the Republican era that collaborators are said to have betrayed was in fact a fiercely-contested entity, not only conceptually, as competing

¹⁴ This is not to say there were no dissenting voices. H.G.W. Woodhead (1883-1959), for example, wrote to the *New York Times* objecting to descriptions of Pu Yi as a Chinese quisling, noting first that the former emperor was a Manchu, and then questioning what loyalty he may have owed to China, writing, “He may be accused of naïveté in ever imagining that he could assume the role of ruler of Manchuria without the support of Japanese bayonets, and he probably rues his decision. But as his dynasty’s expulsion in 1912 was due to Chinese resentment at the rule of an “alien” Emperor, it hardly seems just to me to characterize him as a China Quisling.” See “Letters to the Times: Pu Yi’s Move Defended,” *New York Times*, 14th November 1944.

¹⁵ Wen-hsin Yeh, “Review of *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* by Timothy Brook,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol 33, no. 1 (Winter, 2007), p. 209.

political movements sought to realize their vision of the nation, but also institutionally, as the country existed under a patchwork of various warlord regimes and a central government whose authority was observed only intermittently. That the actions of these wartime collaborators can be retrospectively viewed from the vantage point of the People's Republic only as emblematic of moral failure is testament to the postwar state's retrospective fetishization of national loyalties.

To accomplish this reframing, what I put forward in the pages to follow is an examination of four individuals connected to the occupation era and the collaborationist Re-organized National Government (RNG) of Wang Jingwei: Kiang Kang-hu 江亢虎 (1883-1954), who held office as president of the Examination Yuan; Chu Minyi 褚民誼 (1884-1946), who served as the RNG foreign minister, Hao Pengju 郝鵬舉 (1903-1947), who was governor of Huaihai province, and (perhaps controversially) Jiang Zemin 江澤民 (b. 1926), who pursued his university education under the RNG, became General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and president of the PRC in the wake of the 1989 protests at Tiananmen Square, and has since faced unsubstantiated accusations of being the descendant of a *hanjian*.

The typical interpretation of these first three figures is that they were merely part of the crowd, as one historian described it, of “superannuated Ch'ing officials and low-ranking Kuomintang defectors” who joined Wang in collaborating with the Japanese, with the implication that they aren't worth any further attention.¹⁶ This is a loss, not only for Wang's followers as individuals, but for any substantial effort to understand the

¹⁶ Gerald Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 226.

phenomenon of collaboration as it occurred in China, and what it might tell us about the Republican era, Chinese responses to occupation and, as in the case of Jiang Zemin, the role of the state in controlling how the past can be remembered and, how the occupation period has been interpreted.

Accordingly, these first three figures (Kiang, Chu and Hao) should be considered as examples whose lives can provide a platform for thinking about a much larger, varied group—collaborators—who play an essential role in the context of wartime occupation. In his study of colonial collaborators, Ronald Robinson has emphasised the essential role of the alternate elite who stepped forward, willing to collaborate, if the ruling elite chose to resist (or to retreat).¹⁷ In the case of China, the retreat of the ruling elite in the form of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists opened the door for alternate elites to emerge, ranging from the dethroned monarch, Pu Yi, to Jiang's longtime rival within the Nationalist Party, Wang Jingwei, and many others.

Despite Robinson's contribution, most studies of collaboration remain based on European cases, which limits scholarly understanding of what was in fact a more global phenomenon that was based on the wartime experience of enemy occupation.¹⁸ More recently, historian Timothy Brook has emphasised the interdependence between enemy occupation and collaboration in the context of China: "Japan's wartime occupation of

¹⁷ Ronald Robinson, "Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration," in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the theory of imperialism* (London: Longman Group, 1976), p. 121. Lao She made a satirical observation on who was left behind in occupied territory after those with means had fled in one of his short stories about the war, writing, "Whenever the Japanese occupied a place, the social-clout set were the first to hightail it out before the enemy arrived. People with money followed close behind them. People with neither clout nor money had no way of escaping and had to content themselves with waiting around to die." See Lao She, *Blades of Grass: the Stories of Lao She*, trans. William A. Lyell and Sara Wei-ming Chen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999) p. 34.

¹⁸ See Margherita Zanasi, "Globalizing Hanjian: The Suzhou Trials and the Post-World War II Discourse on Collaboration," *The American Historical Review* vol. 113, no. 3 (June 2008).

China created collaboration by suspending normal channels of political mobility and political communication and replacing them by an entirely new system, staffed by a mixture of old and new personnel,” or, more succinctly, “Occupation creates collaboration.”¹⁹ Both authors are thus sensitive to the framework of trade-offs and interdependence that exist between occupier and occupied, and yet the existing literature in English on collaborators as individuals and as a group remains undeveloped. As a consequence, the war in China has for too long been narrated between the poles of Tokyo, Chongqing, and Yan’an, leaving occupied China stranded in isolation.

The fourth individual I use to anchor my study, Jiang Zemin, offers a different type of case, one that extends my study beyond the events that took place in occupied China and its immediate aftermath to include the realm of memory and the writing of history in the PRC. For Jiang, I consider his biography and the controversy surrounding his wartime experiences in light of the wartime experiences of his peers at Nanjing’s National Central University and their subsequent efforts at redemption in the 1980s and 1990s. That these efforts involved a refashioning of history that maintained the binary of collaboration versus resistance is of note, but the larger issue remains not the binary of collaboration and resistance itself, which has limited explanatory power, but the strength of the state that maintains it. That is, the case of Jiang and his fellow alumni illustrates the dominance of the state in enforcing particular norms and values, and this in turn shapes historical narratives, right down to the level of how a small group of individuals choose to narrate the wartime events of their youth.

¹⁹ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 9 and 12.

In the following pages, I will outline my use of biographical studies to examine the roles of these four individuals whose lives carry us through the Republican era and into the postwar period, as well as offer a brief review of the literature that examines why collaborators themselves have remained neglected even as the literature on collaboration and the occupied territories in wartime China has advanced.

1.2 Method

As I will suggest in the pages ahead, there is much to learn from the careers of these four individuals beyond that which we might find in previous accounts that have focused more narrowly on the occupation period only, or their lives as individuals. Placing these four lives alongside each other as biographical studies provides a platform for a much broader sweep, one that not only questions conventional understandings of the occupation, but also maps out some of the politics of Republican China that shaped the emergence of collaboration, how it unfolded, and how it has been remembered in the post war context.

The use of biography is not without controversy. Long associated with Thomas Carlyle's "great man" theory of history, biography fell out of favour with academic historians following the critique of Herbert Spencer, who viewed these supposed "great men" not as shaping the fates of their societies, but as mere products of them.²⁰ Despite this disfavour, I am not the first to turn to biography for understanding those who served the occupation state.

²⁰ Cited in Robert L. Carneiro, "Herbert Spencer as an Anthropologist," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring, 1981), p. 171.

As early as 1937, the psychologist Bingham Dai (1899-1996) made a psychoanalytic study of a “young, educated Chinese, who was once an ultra-patriot, but who later decided to cooperate with the Japanese as a quisling.” In the biographical profile Dai produced, he admits that while “the patient under discussion is both a psychoneurotic with the familiar symptoms and a quisling at the same time, it does not necessarily follow that the two must go together,” he still asserts of such individuals that “it is quite probable that some, if not many, of them have a personality organization or personality traits similar to those of the patient here discussed.”²¹ The American journalist Don Bate, also writing during the war, positioned his biographical study in binary terms—*Wang Jingwei: Puppet or Patriot*—and opted cheerily for the latter.²² While these two studies did not become influential, they instead give some sense of the binary thinking and emphasis on personal flaws that has persisted in subsequent treatments of Chinese wartime collaboration.²³

In some instances, explanations for collaboration have led to moral equivalency. This has a long pedigree, with one early example coming from William Hosokawa (1915-2007), a Nisei journalist who, in an attempt to put Japanese and American involvement in China on an equal footing, argued in 1941 that the presence of foreign technical advisors and experts in Chongqing and Nanjing meant that “both Chinese governments are under

²¹ Bingham Dai, “Divided Loyalty in War: A Study of Cooperation with the Enemy” *Psychiatry Interpersonal and Biological Processes* vol. 7, no. 4 (1944), p. 327 and 340.

²² Don Bate, *Wang Ching-wei: Puppet or Patriot* (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour, 1941). Bate was, by some reports, a paid propagandist for Japan by virtue of his employment by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. See “War in China,” *Propaganda Analysis: A Bulletin to Help the Intelligent Citizen Detect and Analyze Propaganda* vol. II no. 5 (February 1939), p. 3.

²³ Jianyue Chen, “Chen Gongbo: A National Traitor or a Collaborationist Nationalist? A Case Study of Chinese Wartime Collaborationism,” *The Chinese Historical Review* vol 13, no. 2 (Fall, 2006) is one example.

the influence of mentor governments to a not inconsiderable degree.”²⁴ This was also the path pursued by former RNG education minister Li Shengwu 李聖五 (1899-1985) in attempting to explain to his son, years after the fact, his decision to take office under the Japanese. “[If] Wang and I were traitors because we collaborated with a foreign power, so were Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Ze-dong,” Li insisted. For Li, the difference between the three was that, “their patrons won in World War II and our patron lost.”²⁵ What is actually lost here, rather self-servingly, is the brutal reality of the Japanese military invasion that was being carried out against the Chinese people over the course of the war.

For this study, I am inspired by more recent efforts in Chinese studies. Historian Marie-Claire Bergère took up the notion of great man as product of society in her 1994 study of Sun Yat-sen, who she deemed “a pure product of maritime China, the China of coastal provinces and overseas communities, open to foreign influences.” Bergère positions her study as an attempt to uncover “the real Sun Yat-sen,” who has remained lost between the myth-making of the Chinese academy and the piecemeal de-mythification that has come in response from Western specialists.²⁶

Historian Robert Bickers, on the other hand, directed his gaze much further downward in his study of Richard Maurice Tinkler, a British policeman employed by the Shanghai Municipal Police who patrolled the International Settlement during the interwar period. Bickers offers what he called “a biography of a nobody” as a means of

²⁴ William Hosokawa, “China and Her Foreign Advisers,” *The Far Eastern Review* (July 1941), p. 226. My gratitude to Greg Robinson of l’Université du Québec à Montréal for providing me with this reference.

²⁵ See Charles N. Li, *The Bitter Sea: Coming of Age in a China Before Mao* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), p. 38.

²⁶ Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 2-4.

understanding what “empire life” meant to “ordinary Britons, and what it means to today to their relatives, descendants, and neighbours.”²⁷

What is on offer here—a biographical study of four figures who lived through the occupation—adopts elements of the above approaches in an effort to understand the context from which collaboration emerged, the factors that shaped how it unfolded, and the troubled legacy of the occupation and how it has been mis-remembered. In this, I am inspired by Bergère’s effort at navigating between the shoals of hagiography and de-mythification, in this case trying to avoid the binary of patriot or puppet as put forward by Bate, or resistance versus collaboration more broadly. Produced over the course of the war, these black-and-white binaries have found a long life in the Chinese academy where history can be offered up as a moral lesson in good and evil.

Biography has the potential to complicate these easy judgments, although as Bate’s offering shows it can just as easily be bent to other purposes. Instead of making a black and white determination over an individual’s wartime activities, I cast my gaze over the whole of the twentieth century, asking what these individual lives mean for the history of the Republican era, how they crossed the 1937 divide and carried out their collaboration, and how they faced the consequences thereafter. As per Bickers, who focused his attentions on the anonymous but essential policemen who played such a role in making empire work, asking what such a career might mean to the person who pursued it, I consider the more internal question of how the decision to collaborate was made

²⁷ Robert Bickers, *Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), p. 4.

palatable—how it may have made sense, regardless of how insensible it may have seemed to anyone else, then or since.²⁸

Biography, then, is both an appropriate choice and an effective choice to examine these questions. As I will show in the literature review below, studies of collaboration in recent years have deepened scholarly understanding of wartime occupation, but the figure of the collaborator remains unclear, understood (if at all) more as an abstract “alternate elite” than an individual. Although collaboration remained the choice of the minority, its acceptability ranged across the Chinese political spectrum, with the top leadership of the RNG including disillusioned communists, demoralized Nationalist Party officials and much in between; accordingly, understanding the decision-making process for such a diverse range of figures requires the more individual approach that is offered by biography. Historian Gerald Bunker, whose work I discuss below, might have missed the mark when he insisted in his study that, “history is made by men and not mechanistic forces.”²⁹ For the individuals I have selected for my study, their choices reflect the struggle of ordinary people caught up in what could be described as “mechanistic forces,” but quite apart from their role in “making history,” it is surely true that the history of the war in China can be best *understood* through studying the lives and experiences of those who actually lived through it.

²⁸ Brian G. Martin provides something of a counter-example in his study of Zhou Fohai, in which he examines the longer course of Zhou’s career and concludes that his decision to collaborate was not a matter of consistency with his earlier activities, but rather was the contingent outcome of Zhou’s reflections on China’s predicament as of 1937. See Brian G. Martin, “The Dilemmas of a Civilian Politician in Time of War: Zhou Fohai and the First Stage of the Sino-Japanese War, July-December 1937,” *Twentieth-Century China*, vol. 39, no. 2 (May 2014), p. 144-145.

²⁹ Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 4.

1.3 Literature Review

Within the literature on wartime collaboration and the history of Republican China, biographical studies are relatively few in number. This review of the literature will focus on works on collaboration in Chinese and English, especially biographical works, with the goal of highlighting how the role of collaborators, both individually and as a group, has been neglected. In the case of the Chinese literature, this has stemmed largely from the model of “history as moral lesson,” as mentioned above by Bergère, which pervades much of Chinese historical writing and spares little patience for considering the life of a collaborator as anything other than a cautionary tale. Although English language scholarship has been less afflicted with the legacy of contempt, it has also been less prolific, both in comparison to Chinese scholarship and the work that has been done on collaboration in Europe.

An additional shortcoming of English language literature that this project aims to correct is the tendency to cut the occupation period loose from its Republican era moorings and its post-war legacy. While this tighter focus has allowed for some important conceptual innovations (Timothy Brook’s discussion of “collaborationist nationalism” being the most striking example), the consequence of this approach has been to leave the problem of collaboration and the occupied territories in relative isolation from the broader sweep of twentieth century China.³⁰ The following chapters

³⁰ Timothy Brook, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China,” in Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, eds., *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), especially p. 162.

will integrate the occupation era in Republican history, with scholarship that deals more directly with Kiang, Chu, Hao and Jiang to be reviewed in subsequent chapters.

One of the earliest academic publications from mainland China, *Wang Jingwei jituan maiguo toudi pipan ziliao xuanbian* [Selected Materials for Criticizing the Wang Jingwei Clique's Defection to the Enemy and Betrayal of the Nation], similarly illustrates this point, with the authors phrasing their critical intentions in a manner that has been repeated by subsequent authors. The purpose in publishing a document collection on the Wang regime, the authors state, is, effectively, to enable future scholars to denounce the regime.³¹ The son of Zhou Fohai 周佛海 (1897-1948), Zhou Youhai 周幼海 (1922-1985), was similarly called upon to write an excoriating preface for the publication of his father's wartime diaries.³² And historian Shi Yuanhua, author of several biographies of Wang's successor, Chen Gongbo 陳公博 (1892-1946), frames his latest work as an explicit rebuttal to scholars who have offered a more positive evaluation of Chen. "The historical fact," he writes, "is that when the Chinese race faced foreign invasion and the country was on the verge of survival or annihilation, he "boarded the pirate's ship," and all of his conduct and deeds, no matter the motivation, all brought a disastrous influence down upon the nation and the race, and because of this, he rightly cannot escape the

³¹ Nanjing daxue "Wang Jingwei wenti yanjiuzu", eds. *Wang Jingwei jituan maiguo toudi pipan ziliao xuanbian* [Selected Materials for Criticizing the Wang Jingwei Clique's Defection to the Enemy and Betrayal of the Nation] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue xuebao bianbu, 1981), inside cover and title.

³² As Zhou puts it, "Zhou was the scum of the nation, a *hanjian* who sold out the nation...the publication of his diary will provide historians researching the Wang groups betrayal of the nation and the criminal activities of the Wang regime with reliable historical material." See Cai Dejin, ed., *Zhou Fohai riji* [Diary of Zhou Fohai] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2003), p. 4.

ultimate fate of being nailed to history's pillar of shame."³³ Denunciation of this sort, which historian David P. Barrett has described as "highly formalized in its invective," should not be dismissed outright, and can also serve as a means to legitimate and authorize discussion of individual *hanjian* and the occupation state(s) they served.³⁴

Despite the prominence of these denunciations, there has been some deviation from official judgments. Where PRC researchers have deviated from these prescribed positions, they have done so in overseas publications, through the use of "individual cases," and occasionally in their early works as young scholars conducting doctoral research. On the whole, however, the official judgments on Wang and collaboration in China constitute a kind of received wisdom of which it is difficult to refuse for those who make their life in the PRC.

Historian Li Zhiyu offers the most recent case of PRC scholars taking the overseas route for offering a more considered opinion. When Li, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), sought to reconcile Wang Jingwei's brilliant early career as a revolutionary with the wartime collaboration of his later years, she adopted a biographical approach. Although she does not seek to overturn Wang's status as a *hanjian*, Li understands Wang's decision as stemming from his own personal weaknesses and the shared predicament of an intellectual Chinese politician in the military age of Republican politics.³⁵ Her lack of fixation in following up the moral denunciations that characterize most of mainland Chinese scholarship in favour of more objective adherence

³³ Shi Yuanhua, "*Luan shi nengchen*" *Chen Gongbo: Wang wei zhengquan erhao renwu* [A Capable Minister in a Chaotic World: Chen Gongbo, Second-in-Command of the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2008), p. 10.

³⁴ Communication with the author, 6th November 2008.

³⁵ Li Zhiyu, *Jingxuan: Wang Jingwei de zhengzhi shengya* [Wang Jingwei's Career in Politics] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 3 and 277.

to sources offers the chance to understand Wang more fully on his own terms, but it should come as no surprise that she published her work outside of the mainland PRC, opting instead for Oxford University Press in Hong Kong.

Research on education during the occupation is an important example of the “individual case” that seemingly stands out from the historical narrative but does little to alter the received wisdom. In particular, universities established by the occupation states have been written about by Chinese scholars under the poorly defined framework of “enslavement education” 奴化教育 (*núhuà jiàoyù*), with students at such institutions branded as “bogus students” 偽學生 (*wēi xuéshēng*) and sent for re-education at the end of the war, while their professors were similarly blacklisted. These works are overwhelmingly based on policy statements and other sources that take little or no account of the experiences of the students or faculty who actually lived through the war and experienced purported “enslavement education” firsthand.³⁶ There are individual cases in the Chinese literature that suggest an alternate framework, as shown by the pattern of protests led by National Central University (NCU) students, which were later used as evidence by NCU alumni who resented the “enslavement” label. Although Nanjing University administrators ultimately accepted the students’ position, the government insistence on Japanese atrocity, Chinese victimhood, and resistance under the

³⁶ See Cao Bihong, Xia Jun, and Shen Lan, eds., *Wang wei tongzhi qu núhuà jiàoyù yánjiū* [Research on Enslavement Education under the Administration of the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2015) and Zhang Yucheng, *Wang wei shiqi RiWei núhuà jiàoyù yánjiū* [Research on Bogus Japanese Enslavement Education during the Bogus Wang Era] (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 2007).

leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in historical narratives inhibits other points of view from emerging.³⁷

In the past fifteen years, some younger scholars have also shown a willingness to depart somewhat from the established judgments. Pan Min, an historian at Tongji University, used biography to examine the shortcomings of postwar trials of collaborators. Based on media reports and records from the Shanghai Municipal Archives, Pan narrates the life of a minor *hanjian*, Chen Jiufeng (dates unknown), whose role as a *baojia* leader in Shanghai brought him a series of legal travails that extended after the war and well into the PRC period. Finding Chen and his ascent out of poverty through education and hard work in his early years to have been representative of Chinese aspirations of success, Pan concludes that his postwar trials, though in accordance with legal procedures, were ultimately lacking in justice.³⁸ Her work on Chen, though impressive in its research and conclusions, has yet to be formally published. Given the greater restrictions to archival collections and the current administration's continued use of the war for propaganda purposes, it is likely to represent an anomaly rather than the beginnings of any further reconsideration.

The beginnings of English language historical scholarship on collaboration and the occupation period can be traced quite precisely to 1972, with the near simultaneous publication of a pair of monographs by two American scholars of Japan who approached

³⁷ Cheng Zhixiang and Wang Wu, eds., *Jiexiang zai Jiangnan: Cheng Zhixin xiansheng dansheng 90 zhounian jinian wenji* [Hometown in Jiangnan: Memorial Essays in Honour of Mr Cheng Zhixin's 90th Birthday], (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2012), p. 51-52.

³⁸ Pan Min, “‘Xiao hanjian’ de mingyun: yi Chen Jiufeng wei li” [The Fate of a Minor *Hanjian*: The Case of Chen Jiufeng] in Yan Haijian and Wang Zhilong, eds., “Kangzhan shiqi dushi minzhong richang shenghuo (1931-1945) guoji xueshu yantaohui huiyi shouce” [Conference Manual from the International Seminar on Urban Daily Life of the Masses during the War of Resistance (1931-1945)] (Nanjing: n.p., 2012), p. 252-253.

the topic through the lens of diplomatic history.³⁹ Historian John Hunter Boyle set as his task an examination of the negotiations and agreements between the two sides, hoping to cast light on Japan's wartime decision-making processes. Fittingly for the present study, Boyle began his work with a chapter dedicated to a biographical sketch of Wang Jingwei's career, from early years and ascent to national life, rivalry with Jiang Jieshi, and his political efforts to resolve the crisis with Japan from the 1930s onward.⁴⁰ Even in what is meant to be a study of diplomatic maneuverings and war-time decision-making processes, then, an understanding of the personalities and life experiences of the key players was seen as necessary, an effort, Boyle suggests, to "diminish the paradox in the seemingly abrupt transition of Wang from patriot to puppet."⁴¹ Boyle categorizes Wang's negotiations with the Japanese from 1939 to 1940 as "a period of almost unrelieved failure and capitulation," noting that prior to the assassination of his personal secretary by Nationalist agents in March 1939 during a botched attempt on his life in Hanoi, Wang was on the verge of giving up; instead, indignation at the death of his friend spurred him onward.⁴² Despite this negative evaluation, however, Boyle closed his study by underlining the need for ambivalence in judging the conduct of Wang and others who were caught up in the ambiguities of collaboration—and it is this sensitivity and

³⁹ Prior to this the subject was dealt with in passing; an example of this is William Hinton's 1966 classic, *Fanshen*, in which he dedicates a chapter to describing the process of collaboration at the village level, arguing that the collaboration of the local gentry permanently compromised the Nationalist bureaucracy in the eyes of villagers. See William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 84. Unpublished dissertations prior to this include those by Han-sheng Lin (1967), and Chia-lin Pao Tao (1971), among others, as well as a senior thesis by Orville Schell at Harvard University.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 2 of John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 14-43.

⁴¹ Boyle, *China and Japan*, p. 362.

⁴² Boyle, *China and Japan*, p. 336.

ambivalence in judgment, I suggest, that helped make Boyle's work a landmark in the field.⁴³

Published in the same year, Gerald E. Bunker's study also tracked the emergence of the Wang regime as a result of Sino-Japanese negotiations (the "peace conspiracy," as he has it). Even more than Boyle, Bunker framed his work in personal terms. "Because history is made by men and not mechanistic forces," he claimed, "no factor was so important in shaping the development of Wang's movement as the character of Wang Ching-wei himself." Despite the enormity of this claim, however, Bunker offered only a brief review of some of the themes that marked Wang's career, and in any event ended his study in 1941 without adequately exploring how Wang's collaboration operated in practice during the rest of the war years.⁴⁴

Since then, the field has grown to include examinations of race and ideology, post-war collaboration trials, as well as some attention to gender, among other topics.⁴⁵ In line with trends in historical research more generally, biography has not been of particular interest to historians of collaboration. One early effort, referenced above, was political scientist Susan H. Marsh's study of Zhou Fohai, which presented a brief outline of his life with particular reference to factors behind his decision to collaborate. Written in 1980, at a time when the field of Chinese history remained influenced by the priorities of

⁴³ Boyle, *China and Japan*, p. 362-363.

⁴⁴ Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 4-5.

⁴⁵ See So Wai-chor, "Race, Culture and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators," *Modern China* vol. 37, no. 1 (January, 2011), Charles D. Musgrave, "Cheering the Traitor: The Post-war Trial of Chen Bijun, April 1946," *Twentieth-Century China*, vol 30, no. 2 (April 2005), and Yun Xia, "Engendering Contempt for Collaborators: Anti-Hanjian Discourse Following the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945," *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring, 2013), for examples of studies that have expanded our understanding of Chinese collaboration in these areas.

the Cold War, Marsh's study was of an unpopular topic in an unpopular format, and seldom cited.⁴⁶

In the past two decades, however, researchers have gradually taken up the topic of Chinese wartime collaboration anew as part of a broader trend away from narrating the history of the twentieth century in China as the history of the Chinese revolution and building on the interest in wartime topics that emerged in China after the death of Mao. A conference held in Vancouver in 1995 on the war demonstrated that the topic had attracted the attention of a critical mass of scholars who were able to make use of local archives in China and Taiwan to tell a much more localized story of Chinese response to Japanese occupation than either Bunker or Boyle. Attendees from North America, China, and Taiwan presented on the need of reaching an accommodation with a powerful enemy, and six years later, produced an edited volume that approached collaboration from a variety of aspects, from local studies to the elite level. These works offered a more complex picture of how collaboration worked in practice, although the figure of the collaborator remained in the shadows.⁴⁷

In one foray from these years, Timothy Brook took up the impact of occupation using the Church of Christ in China (CCC) in Nanjing as a case study. He found that “occupation pushed Protestant Christianity further along the course it had already charted for itself: from a church that in 1937 was externally dependent, mission-oriented, and mission-dominated, to a church that in 1945 was moving in the direction of

⁴⁶ See Susan H. Marsh, “Chou Fo-Hai: The Making of a Collaborator” in Akira Iriye, ed., *The Chinese and the Japanese: Essays in Political and Cultural Interactions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

⁴⁷ David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932-1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

independence, union, and Chinese control...postwar Protestant Christianity is the direct heir of the accommodations that Chinese Christians had to make with Japanese imperialism.”⁴⁸ Brook’s use of what could be called a “trans-war” China approach that attends to antecedents, wartime developments, and post-war legacies and results allows him to more accurately gauge what constituted change or consistency over the course of the occupation period, and is suggestive for studies of occupation politics, society and culture.

The possibilities of such an approach can also be seen in a much more recent study of developments in women’s Yue opera in Shanghai. While examining Yue opera from the Republican period through to the reform era PRC, historian Jiang Jin identifies wartime Shanghai (1937-45) as the key period in the establishment of Yue opera as a dominant art form in the city’s popular entertainment scene. For Jiang, wartime politics and the policies of the occupation authorities represented a political and military rupture that, unexpectedly, allowed for the continuation of pre-existing cultural and social developments in popular culture in Republican-era Shanghai, including efforts to integrate women into Chinese society that dated back to the 1911 Xinhai revolution. In short, Jiang finds that the “rapid transformation of women’s Yue opera into the most popular theater in wartime China was...a ripening of these longer-term historical processes that ran through the Republican period.”⁴⁹ Needless to say, the impact of war and occupation was far from uniform, but Jiang’s attention to pre-war historical processes

⁴⁸ Timothy Brook, “Toward Independence: Christianity in China Under the Japanese Occupation, 1937-1945,” in Daniel H. Bays, ed., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 318-319.

⁴⁹ Jiang Jin, *Women Playing Men: Yue Opera and Social Change in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), p. 18-24.

is suggestive in considering how to make sense of the wartime period in the context of twentieth century Chinese history.

Where these studies have approached China's wartime experience and the occupied territories in a longer perspective, Timothy Brook has provided more of a close-up of collaboration from the bottom up. Using a series of case-studies from the Jiangnan region, Brook's study looks beneath the moral condemnation that characterizes so much of the literature on collaboration and instead examines the range of choice available to those who opted to collaborate at the local level. Having set the stage, however, Brook is frustrated in his search for the local Chinese actors who performed their roles as collaborators in the occupied town and villages of Jiangnan, finding them to be an "elusive lot," whose appearance in writings of others leave them "as wooden as the puppets people saw them as being."⁵⁰ The conundrum of wartime occupation is thus brought sharply to life, even as the collaborators themselves remain out of focus.

Finally, historian Rana Mitter has made solid contributions to the field through his reconsiderations of resistance and collaboration in the very early phase of Japan's invasion. Borrowing from the work of modern French historians, Henry Rousso among them, Mitter first took aim at the "resistancialist myth" that continues to envelope memory of the war in China. Indeed, this is an essential first step in any reconsideration of collaboration; as Mitter observes, from the "resistancialist" perspective, the only way to understand those who collaborated was to "dismiss them as being motivated by gross moral turpitude." Noting the centrality of the Japanese invasion into Manchuria during the early 1930s in the emergence of modern Chinese nationalism, Mitter called into

⁵⁰ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 14-15.

question the popular memory of a nation that rose up in resistance by examining who actually collaborated or resisted, and why.⁵¹ His findings—that the initial period of Japanese rule was based on persuasion as well as sheer brutality, that co-optation and collaboration operated along with resistance, and that the period played a key role in refining Chinese anti-imperialist sentiment into a more specific anti-Japanese nationalism—constitute an important reference point for the study of collaboration and occupation in China proper.

In his more recent major work, Mitter followed through on the implications of his previous study to produce a synthetic account of the war from 1937 to 1945 by taking collaboration seriously. Specifically, Mitter incorporates the contesting of visions (Nationalist, Communist, and Collaborationist) for China put forward by Jiang Jieshi, Mao Zedong and Wang Jingwei as a corrective to previous history that he deems “Cold War melodrama,” complete with “villains and heroes cast in black and white.” Provocatively, he announces of these three that, “each embodied a different path to the same goal: a modern, nationalist Chinese state.”⁵² While his previous work surveyed the local and provincial elites response to Japanese occupation at a galloping pace, here Mitter offers a more sustained engagement of collaboration as a response to war as seen through the role of Wang Jingwei and his close associate, Zhou Fohai.

Contextually, Mitter places this narrative of China’s war of resistance in both the broader context of the Second World War as global war, as well as within the stream of

⁵¹ Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance and Collaboration During the Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 16-17.

⁵² Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China’s World War II, 1937-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), p. 11 and 377.

Chinese history, as “a disruption to a much longer process of modernization in China,” although this is more evident in the framing of the project, rather than its actual content. In his work, in which he seeks to rescue China’s neglected status as a “secondary theatre” of the conflict in the minds of an audience more familiar with the European theatre and the Pacific War, Mitter keeps one eye on the present, as key to understanding the rise of China as a global power.⁵³

1.4 Outline

This project builds on previous studies by approaching the wartime period through three assumptions. The first, as Timothy Brook writes, is that “occupation creates collaboration.”⁵⁴ Whatever the claims made following the establishment of the various occupation state, in China, of which Wang’s was the youngest, prior to the war there were no discernible Chinese advocates of Japan’s imperial project, no calls for annexation, no echoing of Japan’s Greater East Asian mantras amongst the Chinese.⁵⁵ The Japanese invasion and occupation, by shattering the already shaky Chinese state into fragments gathered around the political centres of Chongqing and Yan’an, opened the door to various forms of Chinese collaboration and paved the way for the eventual

⁵³ Mitter (2013), p. 7-12.

⁵⁴ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 9.

⁵⁵ Rana Mitter makes a similar point in his study, arguing that there was no Chinese equivalent of the Sudetenland Nazis or the Korean Ilchinhoe to serve as a fifth column force agitating for Japanese intervention. See Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth*, p. 18.

establishment of the Re-organised National Government (RNG) under Wang Jingwei. In short, when Kiang, Chu and Hao took office in the RNG, it represented their response to events not of their choosing or design.

Attendant to this positioning of collaboration as a Chinese response to Japanese occupation is that the focus of study here is of Chinese individuals, and *not* the Japanese with whom they partnered with or worked with in various capacities within the structures of the occupation state. This is not to say that the role of the Japanese, who remain only murkily visible in the writings of the individuals examined in this study, is unimportant. Rather, the role of these Japanese individuals, advisors and interlocutors who worked in the various occupation states in China is deserving of a separate study of its own.

The second assumption is that while Japanese occupation opened the door to collaboration, it was the Nationalist state's pre-existing condition—its disunity and factionalism, its republican form and competing ideologies—that informed the ways in which collaboration unfolded and the ways in which occupation states like Wang's were established and operated. However Wang might have failed in his negotiations with the Japanese, he at least succeeded in restoring the institutions and symbols of the pre-war state to occupied territory. In this he reversed the Japanese policy in northern China and Manchuria of eliminating the influence of the Nationalist Party. In this sense, the RNG that Wang established was, by structure, symbolism and ideology, much more a recapitulation of Republican pre-war beliefs and efforts than a flat-out capitulation to Japan's colonial ambitions.

Such was the assessment of political scientist Paul M.A. Linebarger, who took a sceptical view of Wang's collaboration and the RNG, but nonetheless noted that it

conformed “precisely to antebellum practice” and was “an encouraging indication that the modern Chinese have finally come to the point where five-power republicanism is the norm.”⁵⁶ In this, the RNG and those who staffed it set themselves apart from many of the European collaborators, including Philippe Pétain in France, whose National Revolution espoused a much more backward-looking vision, and fascists like Vidkun Quisling or Anton Mussert, who maintained a more explicit ideological affinity with the invader. Such distinctions are of critical importance in analyzing the RNG, which should be viewed not as a mere puppet state called into being and strung along by its Japanese masters, but as a stage upon which China’s existing political actors in occupied territory worked and performed their craft.⁵⁷

The third assumption is that occupation and the way in which it has been written about has cast a long shadow over post-war China, and that studying this period and its subsequent commemoration has much to offer. This relevance goes beyond the individuals in question, and includes the history of the Civil War, Sino-Japanese relations and the way in which political imperatives and a politicised sense of nationalism continues to influence historical narratives.

⁵⁶ The only difference in the RNG that Linebarger detected was the addition of the Party ministries to the government cabinet, as well as the “logically desirable transference of the Ministry of Justice to the Executive *Yüan* from the Judicial, thus eliminating the anomaly of having both prosecuting and adjudicatory agencies under the same control,” a move he credited to the Minister of Justice, Li Shengwu, a well-regarded legal scholar who trained at Oxford and was a former editor at the Commercial Press. See Paul M.A. Linebarger, *The China of Chiang K'ai-shek: A Political Study* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1941), p. 206. For more recent scholarship on the judiciary under occupation that emphasizes continuity, see Xiaoqun Xu, “The Chinese Judiciary under the Japanese Occupation: Criminal and Civil Justice in Jiangsu, 1938-45,” *The Chinese Historical Review* vol. 22 no. 2 (November 2015), p. 121, which uses a case study based on the local archives of Baoshan County and those of the Songjiang District Court.

⁵⁷ Tuong Vu, “Studying the State through State Formation,” *World Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 1, (January 2010): p. 150.

As historian Arif Dirlik suggests in his call for a “critical remembering” of the war in Asia, “it is necessary to look beyond the event being commemorated to the history before and after, the history it was to produce as well as the history of which it was the product.”⁵⁸ The experiences of Kiang, Chu and Hao during the earlier years of the Republic offer insight into how they might have understood the range of options facing China once war broke out and provide the context for their wartime activities, while the subsequent historical treatment of Hao and Jiang are particularly revealing of CCP efforts to position itself at the forefront of resistance in historical writing.

The decision to undergird my study of the RNG with these three assumptions is based on an effort to re-direct the field away from the politically motivated denunciations characteristic of Chinese scholarship, which has so pervasively inserted the question of moral culpability into the foreground of any discussion of the period. Instead, I hope to move the discussion towards examining the factors that created the possibility for collaboration as a pathway forward for Chinese elites during the course of the war, who took part, how it worked in practice, and the legacy it left.

At first glance, there is little to link these individuals directly together as topics of academic study. Rather, they represent a cross-section of individuals under occupation—a Nationalist associate of Wang Jingwei in Chu, a non-Nationalist returnee to occupied China in Kiang, a military official in Hao, and a university student in Jiang—whose lives and careers provide the type of chronological breadth required to view the occupation in full, from precedent to consequence.

⁵⁸ Arif Dirlik, “Trapped in History” on the Way to Utopia: East Asia’s “Great War” Fifty Years Later,” in T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001): p. 300.

Chapter 2 will consider the prevalence of factional politics within Republican China, as seen in the career of Kiang Kang-hu. Kiang, an early advocate of gender equality and socialism in China, took up a post in the RNG as president of the Examination Yuan. There has been one serious biographical study in Chinese on Kiang, largely based on his published writings and focused on establishing his thought as the “non-scientific” socialism of a *hanjian*, and providing only vague detail on his career outside of China.⁵⁹ In this chapter, I position Kiang’s decision to joining the occupation state as the outcome of a career long pattern of factional politicking that stretched back to the Xinhai Revolution, when Kiang establishing China’s first political party, the *Zhongguo shehui dang* [Socialist Party of China]. The rest of his career was marked by period attempts, invariably thwarted, to find a place in the Chinese political arena, followed by overseas exiles when these attempts foundered.

Kiang’s life is well-documented thanks in part to the correspondence and other materials left in the North American universities where he lectured intermittently during the 1910s to 1930s.⁶⁰ Additionally, Kiang made use of his time in post-war incarceration to write an English autobiography in which he reflected on his travels and education as young man; his career as a politician, activist, and educator; and his later involvement in the RNG. Kiang’s account, which he smuggled out of prison with the help of his daughter and later sent to his wife in California, is one of only a few extant sources of the regime

⁵⁹ See Wang Peiwei, *Jiang Kanghu yanjiu* [Research on Jiang Kanghu] (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 1998).

⁶⁰ See UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library, Kanghu Jiang Papers, 1915-2008; Harvard University’s Houghton Library, Witter Brynner Additional Papers, 1900-1964; and McGill University Archives, Kiang Kang-hu Papers, among others.

written by a high official, and reveals a top-level look at the regime's operations.⁶¹

Alongside his personal correspondence, these materials offer a window into the factional politics of Republican China, viewed from the perspective of a Chinese intellectual who charted a course independent of the Nationalist Party and the CCP.

Chapter 3 considers elements of consistency between the policies of the pre-war Nationalist state and the RNG, as seen in the cultural and foreign diplomacy practice by Chu Minyi. Chu, in contrast to Kiang, spent much of his adult life closely tied to the Republican elite, and left behind a voluminous collection of published writings and records generated over the course of his career as an intellectual, a university administrator, and a high-ranking member of the Nationalist Party. While previous studies have touched on his involvement in politics or athletics independently, I will consider his efforts to represent China in an international context, and how his prewar career informed his role as the RNG foreign minister, particularly with reference to the return of foreign concessions, the end of extraterritoriality, and RNG patronage of Buddhism.⁶² As I argue, Chu, like Kiang, was well acquainted with the factional politicking of pre-war China, and there is evidence during the course of the war that he believed reconciliation between Nanjing and Chongqing was possible. This, combined

⁶¹ Kiang Kang-hu, "Such A Life" (unpublished manuscript, 1948). Other accounts include Chan Cheong-choo, *Memoirs of a Citizen of Early XX Century China*. Willowdale, Ontario: Chan, 1978, Zhao Yusong, *Sanshi nian zhengzhi fengtao qinliji* [Personal Account of Three Decades of Political Storms] (Taipei: Zongjingxiao lianfeng shubao she, 1979) and Jin Xiongbai, *Wang zhengquan de kaichang yu shouchang* [The Beginning and the End of the Wang Regime] vol. 1-3 (Taipei: Fengyun shidai, 2014), and Zhao Zunyue and Cai Dengshan, ed., *Renwang fengwei: Zhao Shuyong huiyilu* [Renwang fengwei: The Memoirs of Zhao Zunyue] (Taipei: Duli zuojia, 2016), and Zhou Fohai and Cai Dejin, ed., *Zhou Fohai riji quanbian* [The Complete Diaries of Zhou Fohai] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2003). For accounts by lower level collaborators, see the various *Wenshi ziliao* series in the PRC and the *Zhuanji wenxue* series in Taiwan.

⁶² See Huang Meizhen, Shi Yuanhua, et al, eds. *Wang wei shi hanjian* [Ten Hanjian from the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2010), p. 235-260 or Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) especially.

with the fact that he was able to continue on with his political activities and intellectual interests over the course of the occupation likely factored into his decision to serve in the RNG.

Chapter 4 takes up the issue of factional politics as seen in the military, the question of ties between the RNG and Chongqing, and the role of moral condemnation in obscuring the history of the occupation, using the case of Hao Pengju as a basis for discussion. Hao, a native of Henan, pursued a military career that saw him gradually climb the ranks through various military factions during the Republican period, with postings in Nanjing, Xi'an and elsewhere. Following the outbreak of war, he was dispatched into the occupied territories with the goal of inciting units to defect, and eventually wound up joining the RNG and being appointed governor of Huaihai province. Following the Japanese surrender, Hao made a series of dramatic defections, first back to the Nationalists, then to the CCP, and then back to the Nationalists, before finally being executed and being demonized in the PRC. Although sources on Hao are relatively scant, consisting mostly of newspaper accounts and the reminiscences of those around him, this chapter marks a shift in emphasis in the dissertation from the fragmented political structure and factional politicking of the pre-war to an analysis of how wartime occupation has been written about and commemorated in the post-war period. As Hao's case shows, condemnation as a *hanjian* was not absolute in the postwar period in the case of those who could make themselves useful to either the Nationalists or the Communists.

Chapter 5 takes up the more fully the problem of state interference and the politicization of memory as it pertains to wartime history, using the biography of Jiang Zemin and the historical treatment of his wartime classmates as a case. Jiang's ascent

from the relative backwater city of Yangzhou through his university education in occupied Nanjing have been somewhat understudied compared to his more high profile career as mayor of Shanghai and later General Secretary of the CCP, and primary sources remain scant on Jiang himself inaccessible, leaving me to turn to newspaper reports from the wartime period, and subsequent university publications. Accordingly, this chapter considers the shifting historical judgments on Jiang's university classmates and the controversy over Jiang's parentage and education in occupied China as a topic of analysis. As I show in this chapter, the ensnarement of Jiang's early years in a controversy over collaboration versus resistance reaches well beyond individual biographical and has impacted the way in which the history of occupied Nanjing itself has been written.

1.5 Conclusion

Wartime collaboration has long existed as an unresolved historical problem within the history of twentieth century China. Apart from the challenges of access to material, a major problem in addressing the period has been the challenge of moral judgment, which has tended to focus on individual collaborators or *hanjian*, thereby lending a personalized, emotional charge to a subject that was, since the outbreak of war, already mired in a binary of collaboration versus resistance.

This dissertation sets out an alternate course for considering the occupation period, taking into account the pre-war context, how occupation unfolded, and the challenge it

poses to post-war efforts to maintain a nationalist narrative of resistance. With this framework in mind, in the following pages I present biographical studies of four individuals whose lives were caught up in the occupation, examining each for what it can tell us about the occupation period and its place in Chinese history.

This begins with a reconsideration of the factional politics of Republican-era China. In an earlier study of Zhou Fohai, Susan Marsh concluded that, “The personal tragedy of Chou [Zhou] and his fellow collaborators was that they had learned their trade and universe of operations in the prewar KMT when things were in flux, and yet they were to be judged by postwar standards. The prewar conduct of the political man was learned through warlord politics.”⁶³ The warlord politicking to which Marsh referred provides a crucial backdrop for making sense of the decision to take office in the RNG for many individuals—a decision that became, with the passage of time and changes in China’s politics, increasingly difficult to comprehend.

As Japanese invasion gave way to occupation, the decision many elites made to serve in the occupation states had important elements of consistency. For the individuals studied here, personal ties with Wang Jingwei might well have played a part in their decision to serve in the occupation state he led, but that alone is not sufficient to explain their decision. More likely, their own personal circumstances, as well as their opposition to the authoritarianism of Jiang Jieshi, led them to believe that taking office in the RNG would offer them a pathway forward to advocate for their vision of China.⁶⁴

⁶³ Marsh, “Chou Fo-hai,” p. 327.

⁶⁴ Charles N. Li offers a somewhat similar explanation for his father, Li Shengwu. According to the son, Li’s decision to follow Wang, who he long idolized as “a man of letters, a charismatic orator, and a hero of the democratic revolution against the Manchu dynasty,” was in part a rejection of Jiang Jieshi, a man he deemed “at best, inane and stupid, and at worst, corrupt and pernicious,” that took place against the

Finally, the history of the occupation period became a problem in post-war China that complicates state-led efforts to promote a nationalist narrative of resistance. The experiences of those caught, for whatever reason, in occupied territory are not reducible to the binary of collaboration and resistance. When historians or the state attempt to impose such a binary, the result is distorted account of the period that leaves little room for alternative voices. Ironically, this binary of puppet versus patriot is so entrenched that marginalized voices attempting to challenge official interpretations of history have, to date, only produced accounts that invert the binary, whereby former puppets are made patriotic, and vice versa, rather than moving towards an interpretation of occupation that allows for ambiguity and complexity.

backdrop of a rising Japan that was on the verge of becoming a superpower. See Charles N. Li, *The Bitter Sea: Coming of Age in a China Before Mao* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), p. 37-38 and 150.

2. Precedents: Factional Politics and Republican China

2.1 Introduction: From Condemnation to Precedent

Over the course of the Second World War, wherever Japanese forces found their feet in China, collaboration invariably followed as the consequence of occupation. Why? At the local level, this question has already been examined, at least to some extent. In central China, Japanese occupation resulted in an overlapping web of occupation states, built on initial acts of collaboration that began at the bottom as local committees and then developed upwards. As Timothy Brook has noted, agents tasked with what came to be called “pacification work” arrived at the local level in the wake of Japanese forces, tasked with recruiting those members of the local elites who remained in the area to staff peace maintenance committees in the county capitals of Jiangnan.⁶⁵ That Chinese of various stripe stepped forward to collaborate in local committees and government offices was a direct response to the crisis brought on by Japanese invasion and, often, the flight of the local administration.

For Chinese operating at a higher political level, however, the challenge of Japanese invasion involved a more complex range of decisions and assumptions based on political norms that have not been adequately taken into consideration. Although it was Japanese occupation that opened the door for collaboration as a political decision, for those

⁶⁵ See Timothy Brook, “Occupation State Building,” in Stephen R. Mackinnon, Diana Lary and Ezra F. Vogel, eds., *China at War: Regions of China, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 24-25.

Chinese who agreed to take on national level leadership, their collaboration can best be understood as part of long-standing patterns of political fragmentation that stretched across the Republican period all the way back to the Xinhai Revolution.

Rather than examine these patterns, much of the discussion and controversy over Chinese collaborators seeks to connect motivation with moral failure. Why did they work with the Japanese? What might induce someone to join a collaborationist regime? As per the subtitle of a work by one of Wang Jingwei's American defenders—puppet or patriot—this discussion has generally revolved around an unproductive binary.⁶⁶ Were those who collaborated motivated by noble sentiments, or were they mere stooges, marionettes with the Japanese pulling the strings? Ultimately, the specifics of motivation will likely remain a subject of contention and speculation, varying from individual to individual, and to date have lacked attention to the longer-term trends within the political culture of Republican China.⁶⁷

Indeed, it is more productive to consider the historical context of Chinese politics that informs much of the criticism heaped on collaborators. A striking aspect of the derision that was reserved for those who chose to collaborate emphasises on the “backward” nature of collaborators. From a Japanese official who despaired over “old leftovers from the Qing dynasty,” to the American observer who pointed at “resurrections from the hangers-on of the ancient provincial warlords,” to the historian who disdained the “superannuated Ch'ing officials” who stepped forward, a significant feature of the

⁶⁶ A more nuanced yet still critical view of Wang Jingwei written in 1940 portrays him as a tragic figure who “practically begged” for cooperation from Japan. See Chester S. Holcombe, “The Prisoner of Nanking,” *The China Weekly Review* (10th August 1940), p. 382-383.

⁶⁷ For the inconclusive debate on Wang Jingwei's motivation for collaboration, see Wang Ke-wen, “Irreversible Verdict? Historical Assessments of Wang Jingwei in the People's Republic and Taiwan,” *Twentieth Century China* vol. 28, no. 1 (November, 2002), especially p. 64-66.

criticism directed at collaborators was the casual dismissal of them as throwbacks to an earlier age of politics. While these comments identify the “problem” of politicians from an earlier age of Chinese stepping forward, they stopped short at condemnation without asking what it was about the period that might have led to this phenomenon.⁶⁸

In the following pages, I trace the political career of one such individual, Kiang Kang-hu, to highlight the historical pattern of political fragmentation that set the stage for the eventual decision to collaborate. I position the decision reached by Kiang Kang-hu (one that was also made by many others) to renounce Jiang Jieshi’s regime in Chongqing and take office in Wang Jingwei’s in Nanjing as a matter of consistency with China’s factional prewar politics; namely, it should be understood as another instance of political fragmentation and re-alignment under the Republic. More specifically, in Kiang’s case it was one more attempt by a representative of China’s old elite to assert himself in the new politics spawned by the Xinhai Revolution. The fact that collaboration attracted as much condemnation as it did highlights the crucial context of Japanese occupation and is evidence of the extent to which China’s politics were transforming over the course of the war.

For Kiang, what has been cast as national betrayal was, after a lifetime of thwarted political ambition, one more chapter in China’s saga of fragmented politics that had been unfolding since 1911, all revolving around questions raised and left unanswered during the Xinhai Revolution about what sort of country China should be in its post-imperial

⁶⁸ Quoted in Timothy Brook, “Occupation State Building,” p. 36 and Gerald Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, p. 226.

form.⁶⁹ That is to say, since the fall of the Qing, China had yet to reconstitute itself institutionally as a unified state with any sort of procedural entryway into politics by way of civil service exams, electoral politics or other regular channels. Or rather, it existed as a unified polity in name only, a “distracted Republic of China,” to quote one observer, stitched together haphazardly under Nationalist rule and afflicted by an on-again, off-again Communist insurgency and a rash of regional warlords holding dubious loyalty to the centre.⁷⁰ In such an arrangement, the role of Jiang Jieshi was, to quote Hans van de Ven, “more the convenor of a fractious alliance than the chief of a disciplined and structured organization working towards a single purpose.”⁷¹ That top collaborators like Chen Gongbo, Zhou Fohai and Li Shiqun could make their way over the years from the Communist Party to the Nationalist Party under Jiang Jieshi and then to the RNG under Wang is less important as a testament to their perfidy, though it can certainly be taken that way, than it is to the political norms of an institutionally fragmented China.

As a result of this fragmentation, the path for those who sought political power was to shoot one’s way to the top of one of the competing warlord regimes, to cobble together a coalition within the party governments, to somehow place oneself at the head of one or another of those contending cliques or to come to power as the head of a new movement. In Kiang’s case, his model was Sun Yat-sen, who he spent his career in rough emulation of, hoping that the right organization of ideas and connections would equip him with a

⁶⁹ Hans van de Ven, *China at War: Triumph and Tragedy in the Emergence of the New China, 1937-1952* (London: Profile Books, 2017), p. 4.

⁷⁰ William Crozier, “China and the Powers: The Problems of Intervention Discussed: 1, What Hope for China,” *Current History* vol. 28, no. 2 (May, 1928), p. 205-212.

⁷¹ van de Ven, *China at War*, p. 4.

sufficiently powerful platform to carry out his ideas. Despite his efforts, however, he never quite managed to catch up with the rush of change in China's political arena.

In her study of Wang Jingwei, the historian Li Zhiyu has emphasised what she calls “the plight of the literati in a militarized age. According to Li, “It could be said that war shaped Republican history, that it shaped the politics of the Republican period.”⁷² And indeed, the period of the 1920s included a depressing number of armed civil conflicts—what were essentially a series of coups, counter coups and attempted coups: the Zhili-Anhui War (1920), the Zhili Fengtian War (1922), the Northern Expedition (1926-1928), as well as Jiang Jieshi's struggle with the New Guangxi clique (1929), the Central Plains War (1930), and so on, each one producing a defeated faction of “alternate elites” that grew the ranks of potential, if not actual, collaborators.

In broad terms, on the one side stood those whose prestige and elite status was drawn from their status under the Qing, as was the case for Kiang, and on the other those who were rising to prominence within the Nationalist Party. Each round of these struggles and the ranks of the defeated that they produced added to the “alternate elites” that historian Ronald Robinson has positioned as central to the phenomenon of collaboration.⁷³ For those who took their shot at power and missed, the consequences varied. As was the case with Kiang, those with ambition and the right connections knew that if they failed the fallout could more often than not be managed. The crucial difference for those who joined what became the RNG in 1940, of course, was that the context of Japanese

⁷² Li Zhiyu, *Jingxuan: Wang Jingwei de zhengzhi shengya* [The Startled Bow: The Political Life of Wang Jingwei] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 277.

⁷³ Ronald Robinson, “Non-European foundations of European imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration,” in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the theory of imperialism* (London: Longman Group, 1976), p. 121.

occupation marked a dramatic change in a political arena that had once permitted such manoeuvrings.

In this, I am building on the arguments made by others regarding the immediate context of collaboration. Historian Hwang Dongyoun, for example, has argued that in the case of Wang Jingwei and his collaboration with the Japanese, “the label of “*hanjian*” (“traitor”) that is usually applied to him must be seen as a term in the rhetoric of power that legitimates other ideologies.”⁷⁴ Here the comparative context is contemporary, with Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong both having their foreign patrons in the form of the British and the Americans on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Those who collaborated themselves were also known to adopt this form of argumentation on occasion. As mentioned earlier, Li Sheng-wu, offered a similar explanation to his son: “In hindsight, it is clear that Wang Jing-wei and I made a grave mistake by choosing Japanese patronage. But if Wang and I were traitors because we collaborated with a foreign power, so were Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Ze-dong. The difference was that their patrons won in World War II and our patron lost.”⁷⁵ Leaving aside the problem of any equivalency between Japan and the United States or the Soviet Union, such a justification does little to root the phenomenon of collaboration within the longer political history of Republican China and therefore has limited explanatory value.

Why should any of this matter for understanding the phenomenon of collaboration as it occurred in China? This background not only provides insight into how the decision to

⁷⁴ Hwang Dongyoun, “Wang Jingwei, the Nanjing Government and the Problem of Collaboration,” unpublished doctoral dissertation (Duke University, 1999), p. ix.

⁷⁵ Charles N. Li, *The Bitter Sea: Coming of Age in a China Before Mao* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008) p. 38.

serve a collaborationist state could be seen as an acceptable avenue forward, but also provides insight into how collaboration was carried out and how many top-level collaborators reacted to Japan's defeat in 1945, which I will examine in subsequent chapters. In the following pages, I examine Kiang's efforts to involve himself in the Chinese political arena from the Xinhai Revolution on down to his career in the RNG. By walking through Kiang's efforts to enter Chinese politics over the course of the period, in this chapter I will show how his experiences during the Republican era left him open to the idea of collaborating by the time Wang Jingwei established his regime in 1940. Or, to put it another way, I will show how the fragmented, military-dominated politics of the Republican period might have left a politically ambitious Chinese intellectual open to the offers of the Japanese.

2.2 Kiang Kang-hu

Kiang Kang-hu was the scion of an elite and accomplished family of literati that experienced a slow decline over the final decades of the Qing dynasty. Born in 1883 in Shangrao, Jiangxi province, Kiang enjoyed a comfortable upbringing thanks to the success of his paternal grandfather, Jiang Shuyun 江澍昀 (1830-1892), who held a *jinshi* 進士 degree and achieved the post of *taotai* 道台 (circuit attendant) in Tengchow, Shandong province. Although Kiang's father, Jiang Dexuan 江德宣 (1852-1910), was also an imperial scholar and held an honorary post in Jiangsu province, he was, as Kiang recalled, "more inclined to poetry and art and showed no interest in government service."

Instead, he nursed an opium habit for some three decades, which eroded his health, and in 1910 at the age of 56 he died in Nanjing.⁷⁶

For an educated member of the old elite like Kiang, the Xinhai Revolution opened the door to a new type of politics. The examination system had been abolished in 1905, and Sun Yat-sen's success in 1912 held out the possibility of eventual democracy—at least in theory, political advancement would come through party politics under a republic. It was under this framework that Kiang, firstborn son of a Qing dynasty official, made his initial, short-lived foray into republican politics. As was the case for many of his contemporaries, for Kiang the revolution and its subsequent derailment into militarist rule marked a turning point in Chinese politics—instead of a transition into a form of government modelled on the republics of the West, power passed into the waiting hands of Yuan Shikai.

For Kiang, it all began with a speech. After receiving an invitation from the Manchu bannerman Guilin 貴林 (dates unknown), Kiang travelled to Hangzhou where, on 1st June 1911, he began a lecture series for the city's female high school students in the auditorium of the Huixing Girl's Middle School 惠興女子中學 (*Huixing nuzi zhongxue*).⁷⁷ Kiang's choice of topic, women and the socialist movement, was inspired by his reading of the German socialist August Bebel's (1840-1913) work on the same topic. From Kiang's writings at the time, his advocacy for women's education was linked

⁷⁶ Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 1-6.

⁷⁷ Named in honour of the Manchu educator Huixing 惠興 (1870-1905), who committed suicide in protest of the Hangzhou's garrison's refusal to provide funding for her school, a local institution dedicated to providing basic literacy education to the daughters of local bannermen. For more on Huixing and the school, see Edward J.M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), p. 93.

with his goal of promoting socialism and was a means of bringing about overall equality between the sexes. In his travels around the world, Kiang noted, it was in the Great Powers where women enjoyed a position of equality with men as part of societies where everyone was equal and everyone supported him or herself. Not content with merely educating women to be better mothers, Kiang contrasted what he understood of the West, where he argued that both men and women could become complete individuals, with the familism of China that restricted women to the role of “virtuous wife and caring mother” 賢妻良母 (*xianqi liangmu*). Education, he believed was a means to allow women to escape the “Three Subordinations” 三從 (*sancong*), which bound them first to their fathers, then to their husbands, and finally to their sons, and become free and independent individuals.⁷⁸

Far more than his socialist activism to date, it was Kiang’s call for women’s emancipation that set in motion his break with the established order. By his own recollection, the lectures caused a firestorm and were shut down on the second day by the provincial governor, Zeng Yun 增韞 (1869-1946), who denounced Kiang for advocating a doctrine more dangerous than “fierce floods and savage beasts” 洪水猛獸 (*hongshui mengshou*), demanded his arrest, and ordered the printed copies of his lectures to be publicly burned.⁷⁹ Kiang, disguised as a porter, fled the city and sought refuge in Shanghai’s International Settlement.

⁷⁸ See Kiang Kang-hu, *Jiang Kanghu xiansheng yanshuo gao* [Speeches of Mr Kiang Kang-hu] (Hangzhou: n.p., 1912), p 1, and Kiang Kang Hu, *China and the Social Revolution* (Hughes Press: San Francisco, 1914), p. 23.

⁷⁹ Kiang Kang-hu, *Jiang Kanghu xiansheng yanshuo gao* [Speeches of Mr Kiang Kang-hu] (Hangzhou: n.p., 1912), p 13. For Zeng’s denunciation, which focused on Kiang’s criticism of the family and the status of women rather than specifically economic issues, see “Shehui zhuyi qi dei rong yu jinri ye” [How can socialism be permitted today?] *Shenbao*, 3rd June 1911.

Once there, Kiang continued in his campaign for socialism. One month later, on 10th July, Kiang organized the Chinese Socialist Club in order to promote the study of socialism. Following the outbreak of the Wuchang Uprising, the Club reorganized as the Socialist Party of China 中國社會黨 (*Zhongguo Shehui dang*, SPC) and held its first convention on 5th November 1911, with Kiang as National Secretary. The party platform, according to Kiang, reflected China's status as a largely agrarian society and a membership that had some familiarity with socialism, but could not be considered Marxist. Besides advocating common ownership over land and the means of production, the official platform had eight planks:

1. the establishment of a republican form of government;
2. the wiping out of all racial differences;
3. the abolition of all remaining forms of feudal slavery and the establishment of the principle of equality before the law;
4. the abolition of all hereditary estates;
5. the establishment of a free and universal system of co-educational schools that provided free textbooks and meals for schoolchildren;
6. the abolition of all titles and castes;
7. the levy of taxes, primarily upon the land, and the abolition of all personal taxes; and,
8. the abolition of the Army and Navy.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Kiang Kang Hu, *China and the Social Revolution* (Hughes Press: San Francisco, 1914), p 24-25. The Chinese original is available in Zhongguo di'er lishi dang'anguan, eds., *Zhongguo wu zhengfu zhuyi he Zhongguo shehuidang* [Chinese Anarchism and the Socialist Party of China] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 173.

Despite the party platform, however, the party's ideology was contested and the party membership fell into at least three camps: what Kiang identified as a radical leftwing led by Sha Gan 沙淦 (1885-1913) that opposed the state, another anarchist wing led by the Buddhist monk Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), and one led by Kiang, who tried to mediate between the two.⁸¹ Kiang's efforts at mediation ultimately failed, but they demonstrated what would become a tendency to stand between hard to reconcile groups and a willingness to entertain conflicting points of view, as when he invited Sun Yatsen to speak at the Party's headquarters in 1912, or tried to persuade Yuan Shikai that a Socialist Party was beneficial to China.⁸² The Party's broad-tent ideology, historian S.A. Smith has noted, made it a sprawling organization, difficult to lead and unsuitable as a vehicle for the personal ambitions of any single individual.⁸³

By most accounts, the SPC enjoyed a flash-in-the-pan success, attracting a surge in support and interest before being outlawed in 1913. Over the course of its operation, the party's popularity failed to translate into any lasting form of power or influence, however, since the organization did not function as a party in any meaningful sense. Instead, it operated more as a propaganda organ and a social organization, with up to 400 branches

⁸¹ Kiang's attitude to Sha Gan eventually hardened, and in 1914 he claimed that Sha, as leader of the anarchist faction, broke with the party to advocate property expropriation and assassination. "It is not at all strange," Kiang claimed, "that this organization soon became a cloak and mask for a gang of highway robbers whose acts could not be distinguished from those of other criminals." Kiang also accused Sha of organizing a Chinese Red Cross that fraudulently solicited donations before being exposed by the International Red Cross. See Kiang Kang Hu, "Socialism in China," *The Masses* (October 1914), p. 19.

⁸² See Yihua Jiang, "A Brief History of Chinese Socialist Thought in the Past Century," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* no. 6, vol. 2 (2012), p 151, Gotelind Müller-Saini, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Chinese Anarchists between National and International Concerns (1900-1930s)," in William C. Kirby, Mechtild Leutner, and Klaus Mühlhahn, eds., *Global Conjectures: China in Transnational Perspective* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), p 107, and Kiang Kanghu, "Such a Life," p. 26.

⁸³ S.A. Smith, *Like Cattle and Horses: Nationalism and Labor in Shanghai, 1895-1927* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 71

throughout China, many of which operated schools, newspapers and other organizations.⁸⁴ Even this form of rival political organization was too much for Yuan Shikai, however, and in 1913, the Party was forcibly disbanded as part of the broader crackdown against the Second Revolution. Along with Sha Gan, Chen Yilong 陳翼龍 (1886-1913), who headed the Party's Beijing branch, was placed under arrest and then decapitated on the storied execution grounds at Caishikou. Seeing other party members taken into custody as the crackdown intensified, Kiang fled first to Japan, and then on to exile in the United States where he railed against Yuan as a traitor.⁸⁵

Kiang's failure was not only the failure of his political party but also the failure of republican government that the Xinhai revolution had offered. Following the Second Revolution of 1913, the direction of Chinese politics, which had been upended by Sun Yatsen, a man whose influence consisted of his ideas and overseas organizing and not much more, moved towards strongman rule as Yuan proclaimed himself emperor, rather than the republican politics that Kiang and others had envisioned. "I am not an advocate of bullets, but I preach the possibilities of the ballot," Kiang claimed on arrival in the United States.⁸⁶ For Kiang (and for many of his fellow exiles), the death of Yuan and the failure of his poorly-conceived attempt to revive a "Chinese Empire" offered another opportunity to put forward their vision for what kind of country China would be in the wake of Xinhai.

⁸⁴ Kiang Kang Hu, *China and the Social Revolution* (San Francisco: Chinese Socialist Club, 1914), p. 26-27.

⁸⁵ "China's President is Denounced as Traitor," *San Francisco Call and Post*, 22nd December 1913.

⁸⁶ "Chinese Refugee Sage: With Price on His Head, S.C. Kiang Arrives in Seattle," *The Oregonian*, 7th December 1913.

2.3 The Soviet Union and Mongolia, 1920

By 1920, when Kiang launched his next foray into the Chinese political arena, the ground had shifted yet again. Yuan Shikai was four years in his grave and in place of his “Chinese Empire,” China was slipping into a fragmented age of rule-by-warlord. If the previous section highlighted a brief flirtation with strongman politics under Yuan, by the time Kiang returned, China’s politics were falling under the influence of a series of regional warlords with little in the way of effective centralizing authority. Having seemingly learned the lesson of his last effort in China’s politics—the need for more than intellectual muscle in any political movement—Kiang, with the support of a Chinese military officer, sought to enlist support from the Soviet Union for retaking Outer Mongolia, which he intended to use as a test bed for his socialist ideas. For Kiang’s career as an intellectual in Chinese politics, however, this was too little, too late. Whereas previously it was Yuan Shikai’s seizure of power that sidelined Kiang, this time it was the growing influence of Zhang Zuolin 張作霖 (1875-1928) who, though hardly an obvious ideological partner to the Soviet Union, was by virtue of his military clout a more credible partner to Moscow.

Following his return to China from the United States in 1920, Kiang based himself in Beijing. By doing so, he placed himself under the scrutiny of the Beiyang government, which was headed by an old friend of his father’s, Beiyang president Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855-1939), and Jin Yunpeng 靳雲鵬 (1877-1951), a warlord-turned-premier who

looked on Kiang as a dangerous revolutionary and a spy.⁸⁷ Much to Kiang's annoyance, Beiyang security agents were assigned to trail him in his comings and goings, monitor his household and report on his activities.⁸⁸ "He speaks only of socialism and has led many young students astray," reads one such report, before noting that his attempts to publish a new book had met with rejection at all of the local printers.⁸⁹ It was an awkward position to be in for Kiang as he struggled to avoid harming any of his extensive ties to various figures in Chinese politics. On receiving an invitation from Sun Yat-sen to visit Guangzhou, for example, Kiang was at pains to emphasise the "scholarly" nature of the trip, even going so far as seek the approval of President Xu Shichang prior to departing. Though he received Xu's consent, he remained cautious and non-committal in his dealings with Sun, who offered Kiang admission to the Nationalist Party and suggested he visit the Soviet Union as a party representative.

Though Kiang declined the offer to join the Nationalists, the idea of visiting the Soviet Union appealed, and he determined to go as representative of his own Socialist Party. For this, Kiang gained the support (and subsidy) of Xu Shichang and set off for Moscow to attend the Third Congress of the Communist International, which was held from 22nd June to 12th July 1921. The trip was, according to Kiang, driven by his desire to observe political and economic conditions in the newly-established states of postwar Europe. As a guest of the Soviet government, Kiang settled into Moscow's Savoy Hotel and was initially credentialed to attend the Congress' meetings as a non-voting member,

⁸⁷ Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 32.

⁸⁸ See Kiang's letter of complaint to Premier Jin Yunpeng in Wang Peiwei, ed., *Zhongguo jindai sixiangjia wenku: Jiang Kanghu juan* [Modern Chinese Thinkers Series: Jiang Kanghu] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015), p. 328.

⁸⁹ Second Historical Archives of China, ed., *Zhongguo wu zhengfu zhuyi he zhongguo shehui dang* [Chinese Anarchism and the Chinese Socialist Party] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 210.

where he spoke on labour conditions and the socialist movement in China. Although Kiang later wrote admiringly of the people he met and later recalled several productive discussions with Lenin and Trotsky, as well as other leading figures in the Soviet Union, at the time he remained guarded, even imploring one correspondent to avoid any mention of politics in letters sent to him in Moscow.⁹⁰ However, not everyone he encountered in the city came away with a particularly high opinion of him. A diplomat from the short-lived Far Eastern Republic, Marc Kasanin (1899-1972), who stayed next door to Kiang and his wife at the Savoy, mockingly described him as “the indefatigable ‘leader’ of the bogus socialist party of China.”⁹¹ Some of the other Chinese delegates were also rather hostile, accusing Kiang of being the “personal spy of the president of the reactionary Beijing government,” and he soon found his credentials revoked.⁹²

Despite the setback, Kiang carried on his discussions with various figures in the Soviet Union, including frequent meetings with Trotsky, to whom he pitched a scheme to put down a simmering revolt in Outer Mongolia. The plan depended on organizing into a fighting force some 50,000 Chinese labourers who had been dispatched by the Chinese government overland through Russia in the latter part of World War I and left scattered across Soviet territory following the Bolshevik revolution. Together with a Cantonese militarist, Huang Shilong 黃士龍 (1880-1946), Kiang proposed organizing these

⁹⁰ Kiang to Witter Bynner, 22nd July 1921, in Kiang, Kang-hu, 1883-.32 letters; 1919-1932 to Witter Bynner, Witter Bynner additional papers, 1900-1964. MS Am 1891.28 (271). Houghton Library, Harvard University. Kiang was even inspired to name his own son, who was born during the trip, in honour of Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933), the Soviet Commissar for Education. See Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 33.

⁹¹ Marc Kasanin, *China in the Twenties*, trans. Hilda Kasanina (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1973), p. 142.

⁹² Quoted in Ishikawa Yoshikiro, *The Formation of the Chinese Communist Party*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 219.

labourers under Chinese command, but with Soviet officers, to drive out the White Russian forces that were based in Outer Mongolia and reorganize the country as a buffer state between China and the Soviet Union. He wasn't the only to make such a pitch; in 1923, no less a figure than Jiang Jieshi arrived in Moscow at the behest of Sun Yatsen on a mission to entice the Soviets into establishing Soviet military bases to train troops in Ulan Bator and Urumqi. These troops, so the thinking went, could then be used in coordination with Nationalist troops in a campaign to take Beijing.⁹³ Ultimately, both men's plan came to naught and the Soviet Red Army struck a deal with Zhang Zuolin to intervene in Outer Mongolia directly instead.⁹⁴

By the time he left Russia, Kiang's political frustrations were clear—"I am quite sick," he railed in a 22nd January 1922 letter to his friend, the American poet Witter Bynner. "I am sick of politics, economics and isms, I am sick of 'Western civilization'..."⁹⁵ As a parting indignity, Soviet border guards seized his notes and papers from the trip as he exited the country to take up a tour of Europe. But beyond the personal frustration and indignity, Kiang suffered no penalty for attempting to organize a foreign military intervention on Chinese soil.

Instead, he was merely ignored. While Kiang was given a (mostly) polite reception from those he encountered in the Soviet Union, his lack of serious military clout and narrow base of support was simply not enough to inspire confidence in him as a deal-maker on par with a figure like Zhang Zuolin. By the early 1920s, the model of Sun

⁹³ van de Ven, *China at War*, p. 26.

⁹⁴ Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 35.

⁹⁵ Kiang to Witter Bynner, 22nd January 1922, in Kiang, Kang-hu, 1883-32 letters; 1919-1932 to Witter Bynner, Witter Bynner additional papers, 1900-1964. MS Am 1891.28 (271). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Yatsen and the Xinhai revolution was already giving way to a period of warlord rule that left politically ambitious intellectuals like Kiang, bereft of genuine military muscle, stranded by the wayside.

2.4 Southern University, 1922-1927

By the time of Kiang's return to China in 1922, there were few signs that the beginning of the end for the period of warlord rule was in sight. Only a year later, the Communist and Nationalist parties would unite under the umbrella of the First United Front (1923-1927) in opposition to warlords and the forces of imperialism. Having failed to attract foreign support for his vision of China in the form of a Soviet-backed takeover of Outer Mongolia, Kiang settled into a longer-term position as the inaugural president of Southern University 南方大學 (*Nanfang daxue*) in 1922. Here again he would re-open his political party, based at least in part on his status as a university president, but despite his greater prominence, his efforts were not enough to make headway in China's fragmented politics. His own unwillingness to mobilize his students left what should have been his own base of support open to poaching by China's other politics parties, and it was not long before underground Communist agitation fanned the protests that led to his resignation. Following the Nationalists' Northern Expedition, Southern University closed and Kiang departed once again for the United States.

Kiang's tenure at Southern University, which overlapped with the operations of the more well-known and radical Shanghai University, lasted from Southern's establishment

in 1922 until one year before its closure in 1927. His arrival at the school fell right in the midst of the iconoclastic student politics of the May Fourth movement of 1919 and the anti-imperialist fervor that marked the May 30th movement of 1925. The period, as historian Wen-hsin Yeh has observed, was a turbulent one in China's academic world. In 1921 and 1922, the number of cases of campus unrest, often involving violence, numbered in the hundreds as students rioted against authority figures, protested curricular requirements, and involved themselves in university personnel decisions.⁹⁶ Such protests both opened the door for Kiang's arrival in 1922, and pushed him out of office four years later.

Initially established as Shanghai College 上海專科學校 (*Shanghai zhuanke daxue*) by a trio of unknowns (Yu Zhiyang 庾志揚, Xu Qiuzheng 徐秋澄, and Chen Zhiyun 陳織雲) in the spring of 1922, the school was marketed by its founders as offering prospective students a collegiate education inspired by the latest in European and American methods.⁹⁷ Departments included Chinese, English, banking, economics, Western painting and music, as well as an affiliated middle school.⁹⁸ Later events would reveal the establishment of the school as little more than a moneymaking venture.

Indeed, it was an opportune time to open a school, with both a wild-west regulatory environment that allowed the establishment of private schools as well as a growing student population eager for opportunities in higher education. Nonetheless, the college

⁹⁶ Wen-hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 133-134.

⁹⁷ Some sources also refer to a Chen Nanqiang 陳南強. He claimed to be associated with the Southeast Advanced Teacher Training School 東南高等專科師範學校 (*Dongnan gaodeng zhuanke shifan xuexiao*), established in the spring of 1922, which was later reorganized into Shanghai University.

⁹⁸ "Chuangban zhuanke daxue zhi faqi" [Proposal to Establishment Shanghai College] *Shenbao*, 6th June 1922.

got off to an uncertain start. A series of advertisements in *Shenbao* in the months prior to the school's scheduled opening in the fall of 1922 elicited student interest as well as some public scrutiny. In early August, the editor-in-chief of the *Minguo ribao* 民國日報 (*Republican Daily News*), Shao Lizi 邵力子 (1882-1967), printed a letter from a prospective student that raised questions over the school's legitimacy.⁹⁹ A few weeks later, the influential Jiangsu Provincial Education Association went so far as to run a notice in *Shenbao* disavowing any connection to the school.¹⁰⁰ And by October, the school was being viewed with outright incredulity. "The founder of this 'college,'" observed Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896-1981), "is Chen Zhiyun, a young guy who graduated from Shanghai Teacher's College. The whole operation is a scam. I don't know how he did it, but he managed to recruit over two hundred students, most of them, I've heard, from out-of-province, and he's raked in over 8,000 yuan in tuition fees." The existence of such a school, Mao concluded, was evidence of the Shanghai Municipal Council's lax administration.¹⁰¹

Opposition to Chen also began to mount on campus—students viewed him as a grasping opportunist, ill-equipped for and uninterested in the task of managing a school.¹⁰² The result was an outburst of student activism much in keeping with the spirit

⁹⁹ Li Peiyun, Lizi, "Shanghai zhuanke daxue neirong zenyang" [What is Shanghai College about?] *Minguo ribao* "juewu" supplement vol. 8 no. 6 (1922), p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ "Jiangsu sheng jiaoyu hui lai han" [A letter from the Jiangsu Province Education Association] *Shenbao*, 23rd August 1922.

¹⁰¹ Liu Lin, ed., *Mao Dun shuxin ji* [Collected Letters of Mao Dun] (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 1987), p. 439.

¹⁰² See You Wei, "Yan Pu: Huijia xingxue nao geming," [Yan Pu: Destroying the Family, Improving Education and Waging Revolution] in Huang Huanchu, ed., *Wuxi lidai aiguo mingren* [Generations of Famed Wuxi Patriots] (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1995), p 35-36 and Yan Huaijin, "Yan Pu shengping," [Biography of Yan Pu] in Hu Hua, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi renwu* 31 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe,

of the time. Kiang, scheduled to lecture there, was approached by a delegation of students who asked him to step in as president.¹⁰³ A notice on 17th October in *Shenbao* formalized the arrangement: the school's founder, Chen Zhiyun, has reached an agreement with staff and students to invite Mr Kiang to serve as president, to which he has agreed.¹⁰⁴ Notices issued in *Shenbao* the following week added the all-important proviso that previous financial commitments made by Chen during his tenure would be honoured—by him, rather than the school.¹⁰⁵

Kiang arrived on campus on the afternoon of 24th October 1922, to attend a special meeting with the founder, Chen, approximately twenty faculty members as well as the entire student body, amounting to nearly 160 students. The meeting saw Kiang formally installed as president of what would henceforth be known as Southern University. The outgoing leadership, represented by Chen, was seen off, departing with a word of thanks to Kiang for stepping in that was only slightly spoiled by some grumbling over having been smeared by unnamed outsiders. And finally, fatefully, a self-governing student union was established.¹⁰⁶

1987), both of which provide accounts of Southern University student and Communist martyr Yan Pu 嚴朴 (1898-1949).

¹⁰³ “Zhuanke daxue qing Jiang Kanghu jiangxue” [Shanghai College invites Kiang Kang-hu to lecture] *Shenbao*, 24th June 1922.

¹⁰⁴ “Shanghai zhuanke daxue qishi” [Shanghai College Announcement] *Shenbao*, 17th October 1922.

¹⁰⁵ “Shanghai zhuanke daxue qishi” [Shanghai College Announcement] *Shenbao*, 19th and 21st October. Kiang in his autobiography simply states that he could not refuse the students' request since they had enrolled believing he was the head, while the Southern University Constitution refers obliquely to Chen severing his ties to the institution. See Kiang, “Such a Life,” p 41 and Jiang Kanghu, *Nanfang daxue xiancheng* [Southern University Constitution] (Shanghai: Nanfang daxue, 1923), p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ “Zhuanke daxue xuesheng huanying Jiang Kanghu” [Shanghai College students welcome Kiang Kang-hu], *Shenbao*, 25th October 1922.

Historian Edward S. Krebs described Southern as simply a platform for Kiang's political goals.¹⁰⁷ Certainly, Kiang himself suggested as much with one of his first acts as president, when he appointed Liu Shumei 劉樹梅 (1885-1940) as provost. Compensated with a salary of 300 yuan per month (an amount matched only by his own), Liu was tasked with the actual running of the university and representing Kiang on campus when the latter was absent on various lecture tours.¹⁰⁸ Kiang's use of Southern as a political platform, however, was limited to his own activities, and did not extend to any effort to mobilize students for political campaigns. As Kiang put it in a discussion on the responsibility of educators, "educators are not missionaries, who spread their own religion; rather, they should spread the theories and scholarship of others" and strive to strengthen students' own sense of motivation.¹⁰⁹ In this, Kiang provided a conservative scholarly vision for Southern that was distinct from the more explicit party-oriented

¹⁰⁷ Edward S. Krebs, *Shifu, Soul of Chinese Anarchism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), p. 84. Southern was also significant for Kiang's political future during the war. During his time as president, Kiang employed both Gao Guanwu, 高冠吾 (1892-1957), a relative unknown who would serve as chairman of Jiangsu province in the RNG, as well as Yang Zhuomao 楊卓茂 (dates unknown), future father-in-law of Zhou Fohai, a major figure in the RNG, who served as bursar. For a list of faculty members, see "Nanfang daxue zhi jiaoyu huiyi," [Southern University school administration meeting], *Shenbao*, 1st March 1923.

¹⁰⁸ "Nanfang daxue zhi xin qixiang" [Southern University's New Atmosphere], *Shenbao*, 25th October 1922.

¹⁰⁹ Kiang Kanghu, *Jiang Kanghu boshi yanjiang lu* [Record of Doctor Kiang Kanghu's Speeches], (Shanghai: Nanfang daxue chuban bu, 1923), p. 2-4. In his support of student scholarship, Kiang enjoyed some success in transforming what was Shanghai College into a more legitimate seat of learning as Southern University. Evidence of scholarly output can still be found in more obscure corners of China's online bookdealers. One example is Liang Yizhen 梁乙真 (1900-1951), who wrote his first book, *Qingdai funv wenxue shi* [History of Qing Dynasty Women's Literature], while a student at Southern in 1925. Other students became more socially engaged. He Jinghui 賀敬揮 (1905-1987), for example, later became involved in the women's movement in Shanghai, but she got her start along with other Southern students in managing a "Southern University School for Common Women" that specialized in providing education to illiterate women between the ages of twelve and forty. The school opened with over 90 students. See Liang Yizhen, *Qingdai funv wenxue shi* [History of Qing Dynasty Women's Literature] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927), p. 4, and "Xuewu congzai," [School News], *Shenbao*, 2nd May 1924.

politics of National Central University in Nanjing or the radical student activism of Shanghai University.

Acknowledging his own ambitions for reform in China and a desire to prepare students for this, Kiang declared that as an educator, he could not in good conscience take students who were striving for knowledge and exploit them for political purposes. “Our school doesn’t have a ban on discussing national affairs—I myself have long-held plans for fundamental reform and I speak openly about them...but sending out telegrams and seizing the limelight, leading protests or student strikes—these are all detrimental to academic work.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, the university constitution specifically forbade students from engaging in political activities under the school’s name, and Kiang was on record as opposing student involvement in political movements.¹¹¹

However heartfelt this conviction may have been, it put him at odds with the direction of Chinese politics and the passions of his own students, leaving him to become an obstacle to the flow of events in China rather than harnessing them. The result was that some of his students, who might have once viewed him as a radical figure, instead turned against him, while others went on to join other parties.¹¹² Historian Jeffrey N.

¹¹⁰ See Kiang’s “Nanda yinian lai zhi jiaoxun yu ganxiang” [One Year at Southern University—Lessons and Reflections] in Wang Peiwei, ed., *Zhongguo jindai sixiangjia wenku: Jiang Kanghu juan* [Modern Chinese Thinkers Series: Jiang Kanghu] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015), p. 358. One example of Southern students’ concern for and attention to contemporary political events can be found in the commemorative volume published by Southern students on the May 30th Movement. See Nanfang daxue xueshenghui, eds., *Wusa jinian tekan* [May 30th Commemorative Volume] (Shanghai: Nanfang daxue xueshenghui, 1926).

¹¹¹ See Kiang, “Xuesheng yundong yu guomin yundong” in Wang Peiwei, ed., *Zhongguo jindai sixiangjia wenku: Jiang Kanghu juan* [Modern Chinese Thinkers Series: Jiang Kanghu] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015), p. 360-361.

¹¹² One favoured student, Wang Muzun 王慕尊 (1904-1961), discovered that Kiang was viewed as a radical figure in some circles when his plans for further study after graduation from Southern were derailed when Japanese customs officials seized one of Kiang’s books in his luggage while stopping over while en route to the United States and forced him to return to China. See Xia Ruiting, “Yuan Guomindang

Wasserstrom has referred in passing to the radicalism of Southern University students, and indeed, Southern University students like Xu Wei 徐瑋 (1903-1928) and Ji Zhi 嵇直 (1901-1983) became involved in various progressive causes, in their case by holding evening classes out of Xu's home for local workers—both students went on to join the CCP.¹¹³ The Nationalist Party also developed a 76-strong membership within the student body as of 1924, when they addressed a joint letter to Sun Yat-sen denouncing Communists and calling for their expulsion from the Nationality Party.¹¹⁴

Kiang responded to the rising tide of student radicalism with some exasperation. “Strikes were fine for May Fourth,” he insisted, “but they aren’t some magic weapon to use all the time!”¹¹⁵ The case of Yan Pu 嚴朴 (1898-1949), a Sinology student at Southern who became involved in progressive causes, illustrates the dilemma that Kiang faced in dealing with student activism, and the degree to which Kiang involved himself in the lives of his students. Yan, according to one account, got himself arrested after “inadvertently” entering the residence of a White Russian while canvassing for donations for famine relief in the Soviet Union. In this case, Kiang personally intervened with the Shanghai Municipal Police to bail him out.

zhongyang zhengzhi xuexiao daily jiaoyuzhang Wan Muzun zhuanlue” [Biographical sketch of Guomindang Central Political Academy former acting dean of Education Wang Muzun] *Jianhu wenshi xuanji* no. 1 (1986), p. 154.

¹¹³ See Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press,) p 48 as well as Zhang Zhanwu, “Xu Wei zhuanlue,” [Biographical Sketch of Xu Wei] in Gao Sanshan, ed., *Buxiude zhanshi Zhejiang geming yinglie zhuan* #2 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1990), p. 20.

¹¹⁴ Shanghai 4th District Branch 1 Southern University to Premier Sun, 25th July 1924, Nationalist Party Archives, Record Number Han8991.

¹¹⁵ You Wei, “Yan Pu: Hui jia xing xue nao geming” [Yan Pu: Destroying the Family, Improving Education and Waging Revolution] in Huang Huanchu, ed., *Wuxi lidai aiguo mingren* [Successive Generations of Famed Wuxi Patriots] (Beijing: Hongqi chubanshe, 1995), p. 38.

Yan soon had a second encounter with the police that also required Kiang's intervention. When the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925 rocked Shanghai, Yan and a group of fifteen other Southern students set out from campus determined to take part in the protests. The group did not even make it out of the International Settlement before they were intercepted by police outside a vegetable market and arrested. Again, Kiang appeared at the station to bail them out and escort them back to campus, where he rebuked them for protesting rather than studying. Yan in particular drew his ire. "This is the second time I've had to bail you out!" Kiang exclaimed. "You've become quite the expert at staging strikes and raising a ruckus, but students are supposed to study!"¹¹⁶ Not satisfied with the Beiyang government's response to the situation, Kiang wrote to the authorities expressing his belief that the entire movement was the result of Communist agents inciting students and workers, and that he believed there was a danger of it spiraling into a second Boxer Uprising.¹¹⁷

It was an awkward position to straddle; even as he was enjoining his students to focus on their academic work, he threw himself with renewed energy into the political arena. Some of this was relatively innocuous, including using the university's press to publish several of his books: one on political theory, a four-volume set of his collected speeches on political and educational matters, and another on constitutionalism, among

¹¹⁶ Yan Huaijin, "Yan Pu shengping," [Life of Yan Pu] in Hu Hua, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi renwu zhuan* # 31 (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1987), p. 8-9.

¹¹⁷ Second Historical Archives of China, eds., *Wusa yundong yu shenggang bagong* [The May Thirtieth Movement and Labour Strikes in Hongkong and the Provinces] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1985), p. 9.

others.¹¹⁸ On top of this, on 15th June 1924, Kiang formally announced the revival of the Socialist Party of China with himself as leader.

China, Kiang declared, was divided internally between self-interested and corrupt parties on the right and extremists on the left. Externally, she was beset by imperialist, capitalist and communist interference. The urgency of the situation, he claimed, meant the Party must be revived under his leadership without delay, equipped with a platform of what Kiang dubbed “new democracy” and “new socialism.”¹¹⁹ Ultimately, the party’s platform failed to take hold amongst the public, but Kiang’s attempts to gain support led him into a political storm and dashed his career in China as an educator.

Amidst his efforts to gain the patronage of various powerbrokers, Kiang reached out to Puyi, the deposed Manchu emperor. In total, Kiang only wrote two letters seeking an audience in which he lauded his own understanding of the world and his insights into socialism. The letters themselves were harmless, betraying little more than a politician’s penchant for grubby glad-handing. Indeed, Kiang was far from being the only figure to meet with Puyi at this time—Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) also went to visit the former emperor, but the meeting was arranged by phone, thereby saving the prominent intellectual the embarrassment of an incriminating paper trail.¹²⁰ For Kiang, the meeting

¹¹⁸ See Kiang Kanghu, *Jingshi san da zhuyi yu Zhongguo* [Three Theories of Statecraft and China] (Beijing: Nanfang daxue jingxiao chubanbu, 1924), Kiang Kanghu boshi yanjianglu [A Record of Dr Kiang Kanghu’s Speeches] vol. 1-4 (Shanghai: Nanfang daxue chubanbu, 1923-24).

¹¹⁹ See Kiang, “Zhongguo shehuidang fuhuo xuanyan” [Announcement of the Revival of the Chinese Socialist Party] and “Zhongguo shehuidang zhuzhang” [Viewpoints of the Chinese Socialist Party] in Second Historical Archives of China, eds., *Zhongguo wuzhengfu zhuyi he zhongguo shehuidang* [Chinese Anarchism and the Chinese Socialist Party] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 212-218.

¹²⁰ Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi*, trans. W.J.F. Jenner (Beijing: Beijing Foreign Languages Press, 2010) p. 127 and 153.

between the two men might have passed without incident had it not been for the Beijing coup of 1924.

Political control in the north had long been in flux, and on 23rd October 1924, troops under the northern warlord, Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882-1948), deposed the prime minister and seized control of the capital. After an anxious two weeks, on the morning of 5th November, a detachment of troops loyal to Feng arrived at the Forbidden City with a demand to revise the Articles of Favourable Treatment whereby the Qing House had been able to remain in their palaces. The arrival of the troops caught the hapless emperor by surprise—he was munching on fruit with his empress when alerted to their presence—and he had little choice but to accept their demands, departing that afternoon as a private citizen for a house in the city.¹²¹

One year later, the Commission for the Disposition of Qing Imperial Assets discovered Kiang's letters seeking an audience in a desk in the Forbidden City. Stored alongside them in the same drawer were several from Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), the Manchu nobleman Jin Liang 金梁 (1878-1962) and a few others, outlining a conspiracy to overthrow the Republic and restore Puyi to the throne. When news of the discovery appeared in the press, they provoked firestorm of controversy on Southern University's Shanghai campus.

Kiang, who was in Beijing when the scandal broke, found himself the target of the Southern University Students' Association, which directed a barrage of criticism towards him. Worked into a furor, the Association met on 12th August 1925 and charged that

¹²¹ Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi*, trans. W.J.F. Jenner (Beijing: Beijing Foreign Languages Press, 2010) p. 146-148.

Kiang had “betrayed the Republic” and was hereby dismissed from his post as president, effective immediately. In his place, a committee consisting of eight Southern professors as well as the principal of the affiliated middle school would be responsible for managing the university’s affairs.¹²²

The situation provoked a split within the campus that then played out in the local press as competing groups of students and faculty placed parallel notices denouncing each other in *Shenbao* in an attempt to justify their positions for or against Kiang.¹²³ Undaunted, Kiang dug in his heels and, on the morning of the 17th August reappeared on the Shanghai campus accompanied by a band of supporters. Over the following days, Kiang, backed by a group calling itself the Southern University Autonomous Students’ Association, reoccupied the university’s administrative offices. Notices appeared again in *Shenbao* declaring that Kiang had engaged an attorney to represent him and that the staff and faculty who had joined the provisional committee to run the university were hereby dismissed, along with three student “ringleaders” who were expelled.¹²⁴ Despite this

¹²² See “Nanfang daxue xueshenghui gonggao” [Southern University Students Association Notice] as well as “Nanfang daxue zhu tongxue gongjian” [Signed and witness by Southern University University Classmates] *Shenbao*, 13th August 1925.

¹²³ See especially “Nanfang daxue xueshenghui jinji qishi,” [Emergency notice from the Southern University Student’s Association], “Nanfang daxue xuesheng zizhahui qishi,” [Notice from the Southern University Autonomous Students’ Association], “Nanfang daxue jiaoshou qishi,” [Notice from Southern University Professors], “Nanfang daxue jiaoshiyuan qishi,” [Southern University Teaching and Administrative Staff Notice], *Shenbao*, 18th August 1925, among others.

¹²⁴ “Nanfang daxue xiaozhang Jiang Kanghu qishi,” [Notice from Southern University President Kiang Kanghu] and “Cai Dingcheng da lvshi daibiao Shanghai Nanfang daxue qishi,” [Notice: Attorney Cai Dingcheng to represent Southern University], *Shenbao*, 18th August 1925. In addition to those 14 faculty members and 3 students who were expelled by Kiang, a substantial enough contingent of the more radical students departed from Southern in protest to form an entirely new school, Guomin University 國民大學, in the city. Among them was Wang Li 王力 (1900-1986), a Southern student who later became a well-regarded linguist. Wang later credited the publication of his first book to his teacher, the philosopher Li Shicen 李石岑 (1892-1934), who had also been expelled, for introducing the manuscript to the Commercial Press. Wang claimed that the shared hardship of expulsion contributed to their close relationship. See Wang Li, “Wo he shangwu yinshuguan,” [The Commercial Press and I] *Xinwen yanjiu*

show of resolve, however, the dispute was slow to settle and attacks on Kiang in *Shenbao* continued into September of that year.¹²⁵

In a letter to a friend dated 30th August, Kiang dismissed the protests as nothing more than “hot air.” By his telling, he was victim to his own success—developing the university and his growing political involvements had provoked the jealousy of the Communists and the Nationalist left, who in turn supported the protests.¹²⁶ In fact, a report from the Communist Youth League (CYL) confirms Kiang’s accusations—the movement against him had been led by Communist students and directed by the CYL, whose members later blamed Southern’s self-interested faculty (including those who left Southern to form Guomin University 國民大學 (*Guomin Daxue*)), students who were less than committed to the struggle, and an indifferent public for the failure of the campaign to expel Kiang.¹²⁷

As Kiang claimed, the protests were much overblown. When the Commission for the Disposition of Qing Imperial Assets referred the case for investigation on 19th August, Kiang was listed separately from the “conspirators,” Kang Youwei and Jin Liang. Instead, Kiang was described as “highly suspicious,” with the explicit admission that there was no evidence of his taking part in any plot to restore the emperor. Simply put, the Commission included Kiang merely on the basis that his letters to Jin Liang had been

ziliao no. 4 (1982), p. 164. The other two expelled students were Liu Jie 劉傑 and Liu Piyun 劉披雲 (1905-1983), who was the branch secretary of the Communist Youth League at Southern University.

¹²⁵ “Nanfang daxue tongxue gongjian” [Signed and witnessed by Southern University Students], by *Shenbao*, 17th September 1925.

¹²⁶ 30th August 1925, Kiang to Bynner in Witter Bynner Additional Papers, 1900-1964, MS am 1891.28 (271), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹²⁷ Shanghai shi dang’anguan, eds., *Wusa yundong* [May 30th Movement] vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1991), p. 104.

discovered in the same drawer as the others, and without further evidence, the case fell apart.¹²⁸

Although they failed to dislodge him from the school immediately, Kiang began preparations for what became another exile to North America. On 30th September 1925, in what was likely a face-saving move, Kiang departed from the Shanghai campus “on business,” leaving the school’s operations in the hands of an administrative committee.¹²⁹ By his own reckoning, the heart of his troubles was the uproar over his letter to Puyi, which he believed were instigated by everyone from Feng Yuxiang to the left wing of the Nationalist Party to the “Peking University crowd,” all of whom, he claimed, were bought or otherwise influenced by the Soviets.¹³⁰ In a long letter to Bynner dated 15th February 1926, Kiang outlined his predicament, asking for help in finding a position in the United States. Kiang’s experiences in the Soviet Union in 1921 and 1922 had left him deeply (and publicly) hostile to the Soviet Union, though he still described himself as a socialist, and he interpreted the conspiracy accusations as having been contrived by political opponents in order to derail his appointment as Minister of Education. “There is no point in explaining myself to my opponents,” he noted bitterly, “and no need to explain myself to my friends.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ See “Qingshi shanhou weiyuanhui han gaojianting qing zhencha” [Commission for the Disposition of Qing Imperial Assets request for investigation to the Chief Prosecutor] in Shanghai Nanfang daxue xueshenghui, eds., *Jiang Kanghu yinmou fubi ji Nanda qu Jiang yundong jishi* (Shanghai: n.d., 1925), p. 4-5.

¹²⁹ “Shanghai Nanfang daxue qishi,” [Shanghai Southern University Notice], *Shenbao*, 30th September 1925.

¹³⁰ Kiang Kang-hu to Witter Bynner, 15 February 1926, p 3, Witter Bynner additional papers, 1900-1964, MS Am 1891.28 (271), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³¹ Wang Peiwei, ed., *Zhongguo jindai sixiangjia wenku: Jiang Kanghu juan* [Modern Chinese Thinkers Series: Jiang Kanghu] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015), p. 389.

Late in the summer of that year, notices appeared in the local press announcing the sale of a large lot of school furniture and sundries.¹³² Southern had closed its doors. Kiang later attributed the closure to “political or economic reasons,” conditions that were quite likely exacerbated by the turmoil of the Northern Expedition that saw several other universities in the city go under, Shanghai University being the most notable example.¹³³

For Kiang, the closure closely coincided with his own departure for the United States as what he described as a “self-imposed political refugee,” leaving a country where his life had become both “boring and unsafe.”¹³⁴ As with any refugee, Kiang’s decision to leave was not without consequence. The New Social Democratic Party that he had only recently re-organized was rendered once again defunct, and the smearing he took in the press over the meeting with Puyi left a stain on his reputation as a political leader, but Kiang was left with no formal penalty to pay. On a personal level, his first wife and family, however well-provided for, were left with the difficult fact that he was leaving to permanently re-join his second wife and children in California.¹³⁵

Once again, developments in Chinese politics had shifted, favouring a more muscular form of politics that left Kiang by the wayside. The First United Front of 1923-1927 between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party was emerging as a

¹³² See display ad, *The China Press*, 24th, 25th and 26th August 1927 for the L. Moore & Co., Ltd., auction house.

¹³³ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 47.

¹³⁴ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 47.

¹³⁵ Kiang Kang-hu, *Minghe ji*, [Cry of the Crane] (Beijing: n.p.,1927). This brief document, which Kiang formally printed and distributed by post, consisted of a brief autobiography intended for his children as well as instructions regarding the disposition of his assets in China and support for his wife and children, as well as other familial exhortations.

dominant feature of Chinese politics, leaving little room for third parties like Kiang's or the warlord politicians who had once dominated much of China's political arena.

2.5 Sojourn in Canada and the Fujian Incident, 1933

By the 1930s, China was more fully under the sway of the Nationalist Party, which was enjoying the apex of its authority in what became known as the "Nanjing decade." The CCP, on the other hand, was increasingly harried by Jiang Jieshi's series of Bandit Suppression campaigns and retained a scattered influence in parts of the country's hinterlands. Between the ascendancy of Jiang's Nationalists, the retreat of the Communists, and the external pressure of Japan's takeover of Manchuria after the Mukden Incident in 1931, there was seemingly little appetite in the country for political interventions from the margins. All the more telling that factional maneuvering continued in the form of the Fujian Incident, which saw the establishment of a rival government in Fujian on 22nd November 1933, and that such maneuvering came with so few consequences.

Evidence for Kiang's involvement in the incident is circumstantial, extending little beyond being acquainted with some of the central actors. He had spent most of the past three years based in Montreal, where he was the inaugural chair of the Department of Chinese Studies at McGill University (and first Chinese to be appointed a professor in Canada), and had seemingly little direct connection with China's domestic politics

beyond the role of a concerned observer who did not hesitate to speak out.¹³⁶ In retrospect, what is striking is how moderate his commentary was during these years. In an open letter to the Japanese Foreign Office published December 1931, Kiang alternately denounced Japanese actions in China as having “certainly reached the uttermost limits of injustice and inhumanity,” warned of the fate of those who conquered China in the past only to find themselves absorbed, and referred to the current “blind brutal clique” that was leading the country, but he softened these comments with references to China and Japan’s “shared race” and “shared culture” and lengthy reminscences of his own time in Japan and Japanese acquaintances, and held out his ideal of an interdependent relationship between China and Japan. Over the next two years, Kiang continued to weigh on the conflict in various public settings, and in one instance contributed to a student-prepared booklet explaining China’s side of the conflict with an essay that denounced Japan’s “military clique and its party politicians” for its “inexcusable gross crime,” but at the same time closed with a nod to the racial and cultural bonds between China, concluding of the conflict that, “To right this great wrong is the duty of the Japanese people as well as of the Chinese.”¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Kiang’s appointment represented the first known instance of a Chinese appointed as professor, however he was preceded at McGill by Hu Tao-wei 胡道維 (1901-1957), a young specialist in Political Science who took up a post as a lecturer at McGill in 1927 while completing his doctoral dissertation at Princeton, as well as John C.B. Kwei 桂質伯 (Gui Zhibai) (1900-1979), who worked in the Gest Chinese Research Library from 1928 to 1930 and who held a Master’s degree from Columbia. For the circumstances of Kiang’s appointment and the tragically short history of the department, see Macy Zheng, “Principal Sir Arthur Currie and the Department of Chinese Studies at McGill,” *Fontanus* vol. 13 (2013), p. 75-78.

¹³⁷ Kiang Kang-hu, “How Chinese-Japanese Liberals Feel on Manchuria: Dr. Kiang, Chinese Professor at McGill and Mr. Kohra, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Tokio, Voice Frank Opinions,” *The Chinese Christian Student* vol. 23, no. 3 (December, 1931), p. 5-6, and Kiang Kang-hu, “China and Japan: An Investigation into Chinese Standard Histories,” in S. Kwauk, ed., *The Sino-Japanese Conflict* (Montreal: The Montreal Chinese Students Association, 1932), p. 5-9.

Despite such comments, Kiang was not necessarily perceived in Canada as a moderate. Prior to appointing Kiang, McGill's principal, Sir Arthur Currie, was concerned by Kiang's early advocacy of socialism, and reached out to Vincent Massey (then in Washington, D.C.) asking if he might use his contacts in the British Secret Service and "its American counterpart," to determine whether Kiang was "suspect in any way."¹³⁸ And when Kiang approached the University of British Columbia with an offer to lecture on campus while en route to China in the summer of 1933, he was politely turned away—internal correspondence shows that administrators felt that any political lecture from Kiang that might touch on "only one side of the Sino-Japanese problems" would be "highly dangerous for the university."¹³⁹ Thus rebuffed, Kiang carried on to China where he quickly became caught up in a political crisis.

In this case, it is not even entirely clear that Kiang's presence in China was intended for political organizing, although he did proclaim on departing Canada, "China, my country, is now in great danger. It is my duty to help save my people and I am going home."¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, Kiang's entanglement in the Fujian Incident constitutes important evidence of both the persistence of factional politics, and the relatively low price to pay for engaging in such politicking, even amidst China's tense international environment.

The Fujian Incident broke out on 22nd November 1933 when an assortment of political figures ("jobless politicians," in the words of one partisan who prefigured the

¹³⁸ See Sir Arthur Currie to Vincent Massey, 8th January 1930, in B87-0082/038 (15), Vincent Massey Personal Records, Massey Family fonds, University of Toronto Special Collections.

¹³⁹ Regarding UBC, see the letter from Dean Buchanan to President Klinck dated 21st February 1933, UBC General Correspondence Reel 35, 1932-1934 Correspondence, UBC Archives. It is unclear if the administrators' apprehensions were based on their familiarity with Kiang, or the simple fact that he was a Chinese scholar.

¹⁴⁰ "McGill Chinese Professor Returns to Homeland," *Lethbridge Herald*, 9th May 1933.

critique that would be leveled at those who joined the RNG less than a decade later) gathered in Fuzhou and announced the establishment of the People's Revolutionary Government of the Republic of China [PRG] 中華共和國人民革命政府 (*Zhonghua gongheguo renmin geming zhengfu*).¹⁴¹ Led by Li Jishen 李濟深 (1885-1959); Cai Tingkai 蔡廷鍇 (1892-1968); and Kiang's former student, Chen Mingshu 陳銘樞 (1889-1965), all of them officers in the 19th Route Army, as well as Jiang Guangnai 蔣光鼐 (1888-1967), governor of Fujian province, the regime represented an attempt by an alternate elite to overturn Jiang Jieshi and his policy of Japanese appeasement while suppressing the Communists.

As one Reuters correspondent noted, however, the regime received sympathy rather than support. Discontented elements from north China sent observers, but remained distrustful.¹⁴² Instead, the regime placed its hopes in a truce with nearby Communist forces and lukewarm expressions of interest from powerbrokers in Guangzhou. Even this began to quickly dissipate, however, when Nanjing launched a brutal nighttime aerial offensive on Christmas Day, with continued bombing into January 1934. On 14th January, the city of Fuzhou was surrendered as the junta was put to flight.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Hollington Tong, *Chiang Kai-Shek, Soldier and Statesman: Authorized Biography* vol. 2 (Shanghai: China Publishing Company, 1937), p. 346.

¹⁴² Gerald Yorke, *China Changes* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), p. 289.

¹⁴³ Although Nanjing tried early on in the campaign to block reporting on air force activities in Fujian, observers from the *New York Times* and Reuters noted the key role that air power played in Chiang's ability to crush the rebellion, as well as the ensuing civilian casualties. Hallett Abend suggests that the bombing campaign was inspired by the earlier Japanese assault on Chapei during the Shanghai Incident in 1932, while Gerald Yorke also highlighted the role of aircraft in extending Nanjing's reach. See Hallett Abend, *My Life in China 1926-1941* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), p. 195, Gerald Yorke, *China Changes*, p. 285, and "Many killed in attack," *The New York Times*, 27th December 1933, and "Terror Scenes in Foochow," *The New York Times*, 1st January 1934.

Whether Kiang played an actual role in the PRG or its establishment is unclear, although he did later acknowledge publicly speaking out against one-party rule while in Nanjing, and on 9th December 1933 a correspondent for Reuters in Fuzhou claimed to have interviewed an observer sent by Kiang.¹⁴⁴ What is known, however, is that on 11th January 1934, after attending a banquet hosted by Wang Jingwei (then president of the Executive Yuan), Kiang was bundled into a waiting car outside the home of Zhang Kegong 張克恭 (dates unknown), a former secretary in his Socialist Party with whom he was staying, driven to a military prison and thrown into a concrete cell. After questioning by a judge, he finally understood that he had been arrested under suspicion of spying for the Fujian government.¹⁴⁵

Kiang's arrest caused a minor uproar. In Canada, McGill requested that the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs inquire with the Nanjing government about Kiang's status, while in China, Kiang's son and daughter alerted Wang Jingwei of their father's plight, with one report suggesting that Chen Lifu 陳立夫 (1900-2001) was attempting to obtain better treatment for him.¹⁴⁶ Several days later, Chu Minyi located

¹⁴⁴ Kiang, "Such a Life," p 54, and "Short Life Predicted for Foochow Rebels," 9th December 1933, in AC 123, Box 414, Folder King, kang-hu, Seeley G. Mudd Library, Princeton University.

¹⁴⁵ Kiang, "Such a Life," p 55. In a Chinese language account of the arrest, Kiang lists the other guests at the banquet, including Zhang Jingjiang, Sun Ke, Kong Xiangxi, Ye Chucang, Huang Shaoxiong, Chen Lifu, Zeng Zhongming, and several others as "old friends of many years." See "Jiang Kanghu di gang hou yu jizhe tan zai Nanjing bei kouliu zhi jingguo" [Kiang Kanghu discusses being detained in Nanjing with journalist after his arrival in Hong Kong], *Tianguang bao*, 17th March 1934.

¹⁴⁶ See "Jiang Kanghu qianwan zai Jing bei kou," [Kiang Kanghu arrested in Nanjing last night], *Shenbao*, 13th January 1934, "Wang Chen deng yingjiu Jiang Kanghu" [Wang and Chen rescue Kiang Kanghu] *Shenbao*, 15th January 1934, and "McGill Chinese Professor Jailed at Nankin," *The Globe*, 19th January 1934.

Kiang and visited him in detention with a promise of assistance from Wang Jingwei, who was eventually able to obtain his release with a pardon after twelve days of captivity.¹⁴⁷

Publicly, Kiang denied involvement with the PRG, although he did acknowledge that one of its leaders (and a former student of his), Chen Mingshu, had been in recent contact with him. “I have nothing to do with his activity, though he much wished to have my support,” Kiang explained, adding, “I shall go deeper to the mountains and forests if he pursues me further.”¹⁴⁸ Indeed, it was not long before Kiang felt the need to further remove himself from Chinese politics. In a letter dated 1st February, Kiang described his arrest as a “tragic comedy,” and reported that he would be cancelling his lecture engagements and returning to McGill earlier than planned.¹⁴⁹ And by 9th March, Kiang grew so fearful of re-arrest that he sought the assistance of the Canadian Trade Commissioner in Shanghai, Lawrence M. Cosgrave (1890-1971), who assisted him in fleeing the city by ship for Hong Kong, moving with such haste that he left his baggage behind.¹⁵⁰

Whatever Kiang’s fears as he fled the city, as has been noted elsewhere, the consequences of the rebellion were astonishingly lenient—the army was dispersed, the midlevel officers over the rank of major sent into retirement, and the leadership given safe transport to Guangdong.¹⁵¹ Kiang himself, whatever his role, had only a brief stay in

¹⁴⁷ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 56.

¹⁴⁸ “Dr Kiang resting in hospital ward,” *Montreal Gazette*, 24th January 1934.

¹⁴⁹ “Dr Kiang Kang-hu will leave China,” *Montreal Gazette*, 27th March 1934.

¹⁵⁰ “Fears re-arrest goes to Hong Kong,” *Ottawa Journal*, 4th April 1934 and “Dr. Kiang Kang-hu flees aboard ship,” *Montreal Gazette*, 4th April 1934.

¹⁵¹ Timothy Cheek, *Propaganda and Culture in Mao’s China: Deng Tuo and the Intelligentsia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 44.

jail which was cut short with the political intervention of friends in the Nationalist Party. Even amidst the heightening threat of Japan in the northeast, factional re-alignments remained a feature of China's politics, conducted not quite with impunity, but with far lighter consequences than might be expected.

2.6 Joining the Peace Movement

Following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on 17th July 1937, full-scale war between China and Japan broke out. The heightened national crisis in turn set in motion yet another round of political fragmentation, this time setting in motion a dramatic split in the ruling Nationalist Party over the question of how to meet the Japanese invasion.¹⁵² On 18th December 1938, Wang Jingwei, who advocated peace negotiations with the Japanese, fled the wartime capital of Chongqing for Hanoi, where he settled into a secluded villa and began planning the establishment of a rival government. Back in Chongqing, the rest of the Nationalist Party rallied around Jiang Jieshi.

Kiang Kang-hu, in contrast, drifted into the peace camp while in Hongkong, where he held informal discussions with Wang Jingwei's secretary, Lin Bosheng 林伯生 (1902-1946) over the summer of 1939. In September, with Wang already in Shanghai, Kiang traveled to the city at Wang's invitation for further talks. As he later claimed, it was only

¹⁵² A legal declaration of war by China was not forthcoming until 9th December 1941, when China declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy in a co-ordinated response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. For further discussion, see Tsuchida Akia, "Declaring War as an Issue in Chinese Wartime Diplomacy" in Hans van de Ven, Diana Lary, and Stephen R. MacKinnon, eds., *Negotiating China's Destiny in World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 120 and 125-126.

after arriving in Shanghai that he formally decided to join the Peace Movement, feeling trapped after an announcement of his involvement in the local papers brought threats on his life.¹⁵³

Writing in prison after the war, Kiang claimed that his return to China in 1939 was driven by a sense of service. “I could not bear it in my mind as to be alone, safe and comfortable away from my own people...I wanted to save China; if that was impossible I wanted to serve China; if even this was not possible I wanted to suffer with China.”¹⁵⁴ In this, he was echoing the same sentiment of national service he had in 1933, when he had departed Canada only to be caught up in the Fujian Incident.

His statements immediately prior to the RNG’s establishment reveal a somewhat different rationale. After arriving in Shanghai, he began publicly advocating for peace negotiations between China and Japan. In a telegram to the Nationalist government dated on the 1939 Double Tenth National Day holiday, Kiang argued for accepting the peace conditions offered by Japan. Surveying the turmoil of the past two years, Kiang insisted that China’s goals in the War of Resistance could be achieved at the negotiating table, and that the time was ripe to set things right in the world and restore peace to East Asia.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 76-77. An unconfirmed account from Hong Kong of Kiang being threatened by an enraged, knife-wielding chef adds some credence to Kiang’s claims of danger. See “Jiang ni Kanghu xingmian yi si” [Kiang Kanghu dodges death] *Xianggang huazi ribao*, 29th March 1940. Several months later, Fu Xiao’an 傅筱庵 (1872-1940), the first mayor of Shanghai under the Japanese, suffered a similar fate, hacked to death in his sleep by his own cook. See Janet Y. Chen, *Guilty of Indigence: The Urban Poor in China, 1900-1953* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 167.

¹⁵⁴ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 74.

¹⁵⁵ Kiang Kanghu, *Jiang Kanghu dui shiju xuanyan* [Kiang Kanghu’s Declaration on the Current Political Situation] (Shanghai: Minyi she, 1939), p. 4-5.

It is at this point that the political fragmentation that had characterized China since Xinhai came more clearly to the fore. In a series of commentaries, Kiang sharpened his tone, attacking the leadership of the Nationalist and Communist parties, and holding out the possibility of an open, representative government. “The new Nationalist Party led Wang Jingwei,” Kiang wrote, “has reached out to people of all parties and all factions, as well as those without political affiliation.” By way of contrast, Kiang critiqued the Nationalist Party and government in Chongqing for their continued political oppression and dictatorial tendencies even after the supposed transition from military rule to “political tutelage,” as well as their unwillingness to deviate from the failed war effort. To members of the Communist Party, he derided the opportunism, violence and manipulation by the Soviet Union that he detected in the party’s recent past.¹⁵⁶ And to members of the other minor parties, (here Kiang mentioned Carson Zhang’s 張君勱 (1886-1969) National Socialists and Zeng Qi’s 曾琦 (1892-1951) Young China Party), he urged inter-party co-operation for the cause of peace and constitutional government to correct the ills of one-party rule.¹⁵⁷ These appeals mattered beyond offering a patina of multi-party appeal to the RNG. As historian Roger B. Jeans has noted, the defection of some leadership figures (or “alternate elites,” as I would have it) from within these two minor parties weakened them by exposing them to attack from both the Nationalists and the Communists.¹⁵⁸ With the weakening of third party alternatives, China’s politics, long

¹⁵⁶ Kiang Kanghu, *Jiang Kanghu dui shiju*, p. 8-9, 11.

¹⁵⁷ Kiang Kanghu, *Jiang Kanghu dui shiju*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁸ Roger B. Jeans, “Third Party Collaborators in Wartime China: The Case of the Chinese National Sociality Party,” in David P. Barrett, Lawrence N. Shyu, eds., *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945: Politics, Culture and Society* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 127.

characterized by fragmentation, began moving towards consolidation between the Nationalist and Communist camps in the midst of war.

2.7 In the Wang Jingwei Regime

With the inauguration of the RNG on 30th March 1940, Kiang took office as head of the Civil Service Ministry (銓敘部) and vice president of the Examination Yuan. He held both positions until 11th March 1942, when he ascended to the presidency of the Examination Yuan following the departure of Wang Yitang to the North China Political Commission. As he later claimed, both were positions he was prepared to accept because they were the least concerned with politics.¹⁵⁹

Despite the appeals for inter-party co-operation and the new political order brought about by Japanese occupation, the factionalism of Chinese politics continued, albeit within the RNG, and Kiang found himself marginalized. The most obvious indicator of this occurred as early as the inauguration ceremony itself, which was heavy on Nationalist Party symbolism and ritual, including use of the Party seal and anthem, as well as the reading of Sun Yat-sen's will, all part of the effort to portray the RNG's establishment as the "return of the government." Kiang's protests, along with those from the other non-Nationalist Party members of the government, were effective in wringing

¹⁵⁹ Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 81. The Civil Service Ministry was very much a marginal post, such that Kiang's successor as head of the Civil Service Ministry, Zhao Yusong, only accepted the assignment—"utterly inconsequential," in his words—as a fallback position when his attempt to resign as Minister of Justice and leave the government entirely was blocked by Zhou Fohai. See Zhao Yusong, *San shi nian zhengzhi fengtao qinli ji* [Personal Record of 30 Years of Political Waves] (Taipei: Xielin Yinshuguan, 1979), p. 115.

an apology from Wang for the excessive partisanship, but brought about no great change in how the RNG operated.¹⁶⁰

The frustration this may have brought was likely mitigated initially by the fact that Kiang was able to remain a high degree of consistency between his activities in the RNG and in his earlier career, with a focus on education and promoting Chinese culture. Alongside his activities in the Examination Yuan, Kiang resumed his activities in Chinese education and culture by making preparations to re-open Southern University and founding a journal, *Minyi she* [The People's Will].

Whatever misgivings he might once have held about joining the RNG were not outwardly apparent in 1940. In September, Kiang published a pair of pamphlets outlining his views for politics under the RNG. In particular, he still envisioned a political opening in which all parties would participate in government on a co-operative basis amidst a loosening of party discipline, or even party transformation. Writing of the Nationalist Party, he cited Mencius' dictum that "The people are the most important element in a nation, the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest" as he mused about the order of the three characters—*guo* [nation], *min* [people], *dang* [party]—in the Party's name.¹⁶¹

"Without the people, what of the nation? Without the nation, what of the Party?" Kiang wrote, taking the Party to stand for the sovereign. "Of these three, which shall come first?"¹⁶² Kiang's speculations in the essays, as well as his claims to have sent them

¹⁶⁰ Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 82.

¹⁶¹ James Legge, *The Life and works of Mencius: with essays and notes* (Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1875), p. 44. 民為貴，社稷次之，君為輕。

¹⁶² Kiang Kanghu, *Zhongguo de xin tizhi* [China's New Political System] (n.d.), p. 10.

to Wang for comment prior to publishing, suggest the extent to which his faith in Wang's ability (or intention) to usher in a more open and constitutional government—to contemplate transforming the *Guomindang* into the *Minguodang*—was either misplaced, or the product of gross naiveté.

In private, Kiang seemed more disillusioned. Explaining himself to Paul Linebarger, a professor of Asiatic Studies at Duke University with ties to the Office of War Information who visited Nanjing in September 1940, Kiang was pragmatic and urged him not to worry, assuring him that he had effectively hedged his bets, so to speak. “My son is an official of the Chungking government. My daughter is at Yen-an with the Communists, and when she speaks on the radio, she tells the world what a horrible person I am. But both of them are good children who will not forget the duties of filial piety. Best of all there is my wife—she is in San Francisco with a bank account. Don't be too sorry for me.”¹⁶³ Over the summer months, Kiang spent much of his time preparing for the national civil service examinations that were held on 25th October.¹⁶⁴ If nothing else, by serving in the RNG Kiang was able to fulfill an ambition he had nursed since Xinhai and

¹⁶³ Linebarger visited Nanjing and Shanghai in 1940 as a researcher and was able to freely interview major figures in the RNG. Quoted from Freda Utey, *Last Chance in China* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947), p. 294. Arthur Kleinman quotes a similar mentality, albeit quite disapprovingly, in his interviews with a Chinese whose family survived the war years by cultivating ties to the Japanese, the CCP and the Nationalists: “You covered all the numbers on the gambling table with your bets...No ideals. No constancy. Blow with the wind.” See Arthur Kleinman, *What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 84. And Jiayang Fan describes a similar case from the Civil War during her recent interview with sci-fi author Liu Cixin 劉慈欣: “Liu's paternal grandparents had two sons and no ideological allegiance to either side, and, in the hope of preserving the family line, they took a chilling but pragmatic gamble. One son joined the Nationalists and the other, Liu's father, joined the Communists.” See Jiayang Fan, “Liu Cixin's War of the Worlds: A Leading Sci-Fi Writer Takes Stock of China's Global Rise,” *The New Yorker*, 17th June 2019, accessed at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/06/24/liu-cixins-war-of-the-worlds> on 17th June 2019.

¹⁶⁴ On the procedures for these inaugural exams, see Kaoshiyuan mishu chu, eds., *Zhonghua minguo ershijiu nian shoudu gaodeng kaoshi zongbaogao* [General Report on the 1940 Capital Advanced Examination] (Nanjing: Kaoshiyuan mishu chu, 1940).

join a government that he believed offered him at least chance at implementing his political vision for the country.

By February 1941, however, Kiang realized how marginalized he was within the RNG, and his sense of frustration that the RNG under Wang had not only duplicated the government structure of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists, but also the authoritarian tendencies that had stymied him earlier in his career was more publicly apparent. Writing in his monthly, *People's Will*, Kiang focused his attention on the problem of starvation. Noting that prices for grains had skyrocketed tenfold in the past three years, Kiang lashed out at the RNG's failure to alleviate the suffering of the people:

The occupied zone is starving, the guerrilla districts are also starving, the resistance is starving and so too are those in the peace movement. Those with no source of support are starving, as are those with families, assets and employment; ordinary people and civil servants alike are starving. To ask someone near death by starvation to resist foreign aggression and to protect the country is clearly hopeless...even those paper-pushers and flag wavers can hardly be expected to do their duty on an empty stomach. If the problem of hunger is not resolved, to spend each day longing for victory and speaking of revival is sheer ignorance, if it isn't fraud.

Turning directly to the slogans of the RNG leadership and their Japanese allies, he pulled no punches. "In the West, it is said that hunger knows no law. Neither does it know of culture, education, domestic policy or foreign affairs, nor of 'good neighbors, economic cooperation, or joint anti-communism.' If you want to achieve a Sino-Japanese co-operative pact or accomplish the ideals of the East Asian Alliance, or make real the

slogans of clean governance, or turn your hands towards the cause of reviving the people, then the first task you must emphasize is feeding the people!”¹⁶⁵ It was, perhaps, the most defiant and provocative critique of the government to be openly published in occupied territory.

It was also playing with fire. Wang Jingwei maintained an attitude of suspicion towards the non-KMT elements of the RNG. One of his spy chiefs even attributed the removal from office of the Young China Party leader, Zhao Yusong, to a factional rival who passed similar pamphlets to Wang with the claim he was working against the Nationalist Party.¹⁶⁶ For Kiang, however, the exact consequences are unclear. As he recalled in his memoirs, the Propaganda Ministry eventually shut down his monthly after seizing the print copies and banning their distribution through the mail, although some of the articles were reprinted in pamphlet form and achieved circulation that way. Kiang’s need to speak out, and the subsequent closure of the journal highlighted his marginalized status.

As the war years ground onwards, the material hardships of life in occupied territory became increasingly apparent, even to Kiang, whose rank and position afforded him some protection from the poverty that surrounded him. On a personal level, Kiang’s sense of helplessness and inability to influence Wang led him to despair in his official

¹⁶⁵ Kiang Kanghu, “Esi shi da” [Starving to Death is a Serious Matter] *Minyi yuekan* no.1 vol. 9 (February, 1941), p 1, 2. In the title, Kiang reversed a quotation from the Song Neo-Confucian, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), who is said to have replied, “Death by starvation is preferable to losing one’s virtue,” [餓死事小，失節事大] when queried by a widow on the advisability of remarriage. For an English translation and commentary, see Jonathan Henshaw, “Dissent under Occupation: Kiang Kang-hu and the Problem of Hunger,” in Jonathan Henshaw, Craig A. Smith and Norman Smith, eds., “Translating the Japanese Occupation of China: A Documentary Approach,” under review at UBC Press.

¹⁶⁶ Ma Xiaotian, Wang Manyun and Huang Meizhen, *Wo suo zhidao de Wang wei tegong neimu* [All I know of the Inner Workings of Bogus Wang Regime’s Secret Service] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2010), p. 83.

duties—even as president of the Examination Yuan, tasked with recruiting and placing officials, Kiang was frustrated in his efforts to carry out his work.¹⁶⁷ After the RNG declared war on Britain and the United States in 1943, inflation became so serious that his office subordinates could no longer support themselves on their civil servant salaries. Kiang, who believed his refusal to join the KMT hobbled his ability to demand a bigger operating budget, granted them half-day leaves instead so as to allow them to take up outside work. “By the last two years of 1943 and 1944,” he recalled, “this was the only way to keep the office open.”¹⁶⁸ By 1945, in at least one instance, he personally presented the Taiwanese governor of Jiangxi province, Huang Ziqiang 黃自強 (d. 1947), with a folder full of resumes in an attempt to place people in positions within the provincial bureaucracy.¹⁶⁹

Although his political advocacy within the RNG fell on deaf ears, Kiang was more productive in the field of education. In January 1941, one month prior to his denunciatory pamphlet on hunger, Kiang re-established Southern University after being approached by

¹⁶⁷ See Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 84 and p. 88, as well as Kiang Kanghu, *Huixiang dongfang* [Reorientation] (Nanjing: Minyi yuekan she, 1941), especially p. 91-101.

¹⁶⁸ Kiang, “Such a Life,” p. 93. On the issue of wartime hardship point, Kiang might well have been writing from personal experience. After the war, Wang Manyun, an attaché who worked in the RNG’s counterinsurgency campaigns, recalled an incident in which Kiang was caught illegally transporting hog bristles (considered at that time to be a military resource) by Japanese gendarmes. As president of the Examination Yuan, Kiang was normally exempt from being searched when boarding a train as part of the privileges normally accorded at that time to anyone of ministerial-rank or higher. According to Wang, Kiang had the misfortune of boarding a train from Nanjing to Shanghai that was being used to transport Wang Jingwei himself as part of an inspection tour to one of the cleared districts. As an added security measure, the Japanese imposed additional checks and consequently discovered the bristles in two of Kiang’s suitcases. According to Wang, this was a source of great embarrassment to all involved. See Huang Meizhen, ed., *Wei ting youying lu: dui Wang wei zhengquan de huiyi* [Hidden Records of the Bogus Court: Remembering the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2010), p. 276.

¹⁶⁹ See Fu Daxing, “Wang wei shiqi Jiangxi sheng qingsuo ji” [Recollections of Jiangxi Province under the Wang Regime] in Quanguo zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, eds., *Wenshi ziliao cunqao xuanbian: Riwei zhengquan* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2002), p. 921. At the time, Huang Ziqiang was the provincial governor, and Fu was his finance minister.

several alumni of the Shanghai school with whom he had maintained contact during the 1930s.¹⁷⁰ Registered with the RNG's Social Affairs Ministry, Southern University operated under the direction of Kiang as president, as well as a board consisting of twelve other governors, all of them Chinese and all of them holding concurrent positions in the RNG.¹⁷¹ As in the 1920s, Kiang kept a relaxed grip on the school's affairs—"Exchanging ideas and acting together to govern the university and serve the country" was the motto, and under this an influential Students' Association took form.¹⁷²

Most Chinese scholarship that has deigned to mention the university has cast it under the category of "enslavement education," with some reference back to Mao's claim in *On Protracted Warfare* that in occupied territory, Chinese could only be docile and work like oxen, without the slightest whiff of Chinese-ness," or taken a swipe at its educational standards.¹⁷³ None of this appears to be based on the experiences of faculty or students.

For faculty, Kiang turned to old associates and unemployed scholars from within the occupied territories. Chen Fangke 陳方恪 (1891-1966), brother of the famed historian Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) and a well-regarded poet in his own right, served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Letters and director of the Sinology program. As with

¹⁷⁰ Alumnus Yang Zunxuan 楊尊暄 (dates unknown), played an important role in the Southern University Alumni Association in the 1930s in Shanghai. During the occupation, he also held a position under Kiang in the Personnel Department and played an important role in re-launching the alumni association on 22nd June 1940, and then the school, where he subsequently served on the Board of Governors.

¹⁷¹ Nanfang daxue xueshengji youhui, eds, *Nanfang daxue tongxuelu* [Southern University Classmate Records] (Nanjing: n.d., 1942), p. 4-5.

¹⁷² Nanfang daxue xueshengji youhui, eds, *Nanfang daxue tongxuelu* [Southern University Classmate Records] (Nanjing: n.d., 1942), p. 11.

¹⁷³ See Cao Bihong, Xia Jun and Shen Gang, eds., *Wang wei tongzhi qu nuhua jiaoyu yanjiu* [Research on Enslavement Education under the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2015), p. 49, or Zhou Lifu, Zhang Xuelian, "Lunxian shiqi de Nanjing jiaoyu," [Nanjing Education during the Occupation] *Baixia wenshi* no. 5 (December, 1988), p. 27-31.

many other Southern faculty, Chen held multiple posts; alongside his teaching, he also held a position in the Examination Yuan, maintained contact with both CCP and Nationalist underground agents in Nanjing, and was part of the effort to restore the city's premier Buddhist publishing organization, the Jinling Sutra Press 金陵刻經處 (*Jinling kejing chu*). In particular, Chen was recruited by Chongqing's National Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (*juntong*) and worked to protect their agents who set up a radio transmitter at the Press, and to collect intelligence on leadership figures in the RNG, including the mayor of Shanghai, Chen Gongbo, and Miao Bin 繆斌 (1899-1946), a senior member of the Legislative Yuan, both of whom he attempted to turn to Chongqing.¹⁷⁴

Other faculty members were more purely academic. Guan Kunhou 關堃堃 (1912-1989), a Manchu literatus, came down from Beijing to take a position at Southern in order to support his young family; he had worked for Kiang years earlier after being introduced by Jin Liang, the Manchu intermediary from Kiang's infamous meetings with Puyi.¹⁷⁵ Di Kan 狄侃 (1893-1967), who became chair of law, was a prominent lawyer and former secretary to Sun Yat-sen; he, like Yang Weizhen 楊為楨 (dates unknown, chair of Foreign Languages at Southern), also became part of the teaching staff at the

¹⁷⁴ In particular, at the end of the war, Chen arranged for Chu Minyi's commemorative stele at the Press to be covered over with lime lest its presence cause the entire compound be identified as puppet property and become subject to seizure. See Pan Yimin and Pan Rui, *Chen Fangke nianpu* [Chen Fangke: A Chronology] (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2007), p. 147-149 and p. 156. The stele remained obscured through the Cultural Revolution, thus saving it from destruction by Red Guards, and has only been uncovered once again in recent years.

¹⁷⁵ "Guan Kunhou: Cong Qingting guizu dao hongse tegong," [Guan Kunhou: From Qing Aristocrat to Red Spy] *Huanghai chenkan*, 21st April 2014, accessed online on 5th December 2016 at <http://epaper.hilizi.com/shtml/bdcb/20130416/24548.shtml>.

nearby National Central University.¹⁷⁶ The frequency of these dual or multiple appointments should be read not only as a symptom of the shortage of trained personnel in the occupied territories, but also the sheer impossibility at that time of making ends meet on a single source of income alone.

This spirit of making do or getting by also applied to the campus itself. Initially lacking any formal property or buildings at the time of opening, the university simply took over the site of the alumni association on Baixia Road, converting it to classrooms to offer Sinology courses under a Faculty of Arts and Letters. Before long, as enrolment grew, Kiang arranged a loan for the purchase of what became the new campus at 109 Shigu Road, where he re-opened the Faculty of Law and established an accounting program. In 1943, Kiang also opened an affiliated middle school and primary school.

Evidence suggests that students flocked to the opportunity to further their education. Although statistical data on student numbers is fragmentary, the trajectory is one of growth. In its first year of operation, Southern University had a student body of 192; by 1942, this had risen to 248; and in 1945, the graduating class alone numbered 122. Students, many of whom were locals whose educations were disrupted by war, attended classes in the evening to accommodate their need to work, and many received financial aid against their tuition.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ See “Sun Zhongshan mishu—Di Kan” [Sun Yatsen’s Secretary—Di Kan] *Liyang shikong*, 13th October 2010, at <http://www.lysk.net/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=163&id=11857> on 9th December 2016

¹⁷⁷ See Cao Bihong, Xia Jun and Shen Gang, eds., *Wang wei tongzhi qu nuhua jiaoyu yanjiu* [Research on Enslavement Education under the Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2015), p. 303 and Wang Shoubin, Yang Yuting and Deng Rui. “Nanfang daxue de bianqian” [Vicissitudes of Southern University] *Jianye wenshi* no. 3 (5th December 1988), p. 49.

Writing in 1988, Wang Shoubin 汪綬斌 (1921-??), who served as the leader of the Southern Students' Association (SSA), recalled his years at Southern favourably. In particular, he lauded the tradition of student activism at Southern, which he traced back to the earlier Shanghai incarnation of the school. By Wang's description, this tradition endured into the occupation era, when the SSA organized a wide range of academic and extra-curricular activities, including more politically charged protests.¹⁷⁸

The most prominent moment came on 18th December 1943, when Wang led a contingent of Southern University students as part of a wider student protest through the city against the sale of opium. Arriving in downtown Nanjing, Wang and other student leaders from National Central University led some 3,000 students to the former National Assembly building, where they gave speeches and set fire to the opium supplies they had seized from various dens in the city. It was an electrifying moment, and Wang, who became deputy leader of the "Capital City Drug Elimination Students' Federation," was at the forefront of it.¹⁷⁹

Shu Cheng 舒誠 (1921-2015) was another student worthy of attention at Southern University. A native of Fuzhou, Shu arrived in Nanjing in July 1941 after having served as head of the CCP's Organization Department and Women's Department in nearby

¹⁷⁸ Wang Shoubin, Yang Yuting and Deng Ruixiang, "Nanfang daxue de bianqian" [Vicissitudes of Southern University] *Jianye wenshi* no. 3 (5th December 1988), p 48-51. Archivist Guo Biqiang notes several "progressive students" from Southern University, and among them Wu Xueya 吳雪亞 (dates unknown) holds some claim to fame. In spring of 1945, while studying at Southern, Wu married Zhou Gao, an underground Chongqing agent who later went over to the Communists, in a public ceremony that was officiated by Kiang himself. See Guo Biqiang, "Zhou Fohai shenbian de juntong shaojiang—Zhou Gao" [Zhou Gao: The Juntong Major General at Zhou Fohai's side], *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao* no. 29 (Dec., 1989) p. 311 and 317.

¹⁷⁹ Wang Shoubin, "Minzhu doushi Wang Shoubin" [Democratic Activist Wang Shoubin] in Nanjing fenjuan bianji weiyuanhui, eds., *Jiangsu renmin geming douzheng qunying pu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2000), p. 76.

Changzhou. Under the pseudonym Jiang Xiulin, Shu entered Southern University as a student and was appointed branch secretary of the CCP underground organizations in the city, where she collected intelligence until 1944, when many of these operatives were withdrawn.¹⁸⁰

At this point, much of the information available on student activists like Wang and Shu remains fragmentary, and it is unclear what, if any, involvement Kiang might have had with them and their activities during the Occupation. The key point, however, is that Kiang's operation of Southern University provided a platform, or in some cases, a cover, for young activists like Shu and Wang, as well as scholars like Chen Fangke, to remain in the city, pursue their educational and scholarly work, as well as carry out their political activities.

2.8 Resignation and aftermath, 1944-1954

In his postwar memoirs, Kiang describes his growing discouragement and disenchantment with the RNG as he observed both the suffering of those who remained in occupied territory, and the authoritarian rule of the Nationalist Party under Wang. In 1944, with Wang hospitalized in Japan due to complications from an old bullet wound from 1935, Kiang made up his mind to withdraw from the government and traveled to Nagoya to deliver his resignation to Wang in person. By the time he arrived, however,

¹⁸⁰ Shu Cheng, Xu Qin, Shi Xuan and Lu Ping, “Kang ri zhanzheng shiqi SuWan qu dangwei zai Nanjing kaizhan dixia gongzuo gaikuang” [Brief Account of the Jiangsu-Anhui Regional Party Committee's Development of Underground Work in Nanjing During the War of Resistance Period] *Nanjing dangshi ziliao* #4 (1983), p. 73.

Wang's condition had significantly deteriorated, and Kiang relayed the message through Wang's entourage before returning to China by way of Korea and Manchukuo.

Kiang remained in Nanjing until the early summer of 1945, winding up his involvement with the government and handing over the reins of Southern University to Mei Siping 梅思平 (1896-1946), another RNG official with experience in academia.

Kiang then traveled to Beijing, where he passed the summer months with his family by his first wife and remained until his arrest on 5th December 1945. He was then sent south to stand trial.¹⁸¹

Writing in prison after the war, Kiang claimed that his return to China was driven by a sense of service. "I could not bear it in my mind as to be alone, safe and comfortable away from my own people...I wanted to save China; if that was impossible I wanted to serve China; if even this was not possible I wanted to suffer with China."¹⁸² Despite this, at his postwar trial, he pursued a somewhat different tack, claiming (to no avail) that his willingness to take office in the RNG was predicated on the belief that Wang's collaboration was based on an understanding with Jiang Jieshi. Kiang also made much of his wartime writing and conflicts with Wang, pointing to the circulation of his essays on hunger and Japanese leadership in Asia. He was somewhat more persuasive to the court

¹⁸¹ Trial records published in 2004 include a "confession" that was supposedly written by Kiang in October, 1945 after being taken into custody by the Juntong in Beiping. A report in *Shenbao* and Kiang's own memoirs indicate he was not arrested until an evening raid on his home on 5th December 1945. See Nanjing shi dang'anguan, ed., *Shenxun Wang wei hanjian bilu* [Hearing Records of the Traitors of the Bogus Wang Regime] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), p. 357 and Zhang Jianmei, "Cong Beiping jiefu Nanjing: Ju jian shisi ren qunxiang," [Sent under guard from Beiping to Nanjing: Scene of 14 Big Traitors] *Shenbao* 11th June 1946. Also important to note, Kiang's resignation from his post in the Examination Yuan went unrecorded in Liu Shoulin *et al*, eds., *Minguo zhiguan nianbiao* [Chronological Table of Republican Officials] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), p. 1049 where he is listed as president through 1945 (ie, until the RNG's dissolution).

¹⁸² Kiang, "Such a Life," p. 74.

in his claims that he had not been an active participant in any of the significant political decision-making in Nanjing.¹⁸³ On 2nd November 1946, Kiang was sentenced to life imprisonment—a lesser verdict than the permitted capital punishment, on account of the court finding he was less committed than the more extreme *hanjian*, and more lenient compared with what many officials of similar rank received. After a series of appeals (including one initiated by the procurator who sought a harsher sentence), he was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died at the Ward Road Jail in Shanghai on 7th December 1954.¹⁸⁴

2.9 Conclusion

The overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic set in motion a period of political wrangling, some three decades of on-and-off civil wars of various size, that filled the ranks of alternate elites, consisting of those who might have expected to enjoy some measure of success and advancement through the old system but now found themselves cast aside, as well as those whose lost out in political struggles with the Nationalist Party or the Communists. Only two decades after Xinhai, in 1931, one such member of the alternate elite, the deposed Manchu emperor, Puyi, became Japan's first Chinese collaborator of any prominence when he ascended onto the ersatz Manchukuo throne, guided by the firm hands of his Japanese advisors. As Japan's

¹⁸³ Nanjing shi dang'anguan, ed., *Shenxun Wang wei hanjian bilu* [Hearing Records of the Traitors of the Bogus Wang Regime] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), p. 358-359.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 367-77.

invasion continued, the scope of elite level collaboration also extended, with collaborationist regimes taking shape in Beijing and Nanjing, as well as Kalgan.

As I suggest in the preceding pages, the significance of these regimes and the people who served in them is far greater than as mere indicators of the moral character of a particular subset of Chinese intellectuals and politicians. Collaboration as a phenomenon in China was called into being as a result of Japanese occupation. This was the specific intervention that allowed figures like Kiang to step onto the political stage. The nature of their collaboration, however, was shaped by the particularities of Chinese politics as they existed in Republican China. Chief among these particularities was the prevalence of political fragmentation and competing political blocs.

These blocs were symptomatic of China's lack of a unified political structure, but also reflected competing visions for China. For Kiang in particular, his decision to join the RNG was not born out of any particular pro-Japanese sentiment, but was rooted in his particular vision for China, which could be traced back to the Xinhai Revolution and the dream of establishing a democratic republic. At a broader level, the establishment of competing collaborationist states was a continuation of the political manoeuvrings and fragmentation that characterized Chinese politics in the Republican era.

Even within the occupied territories, political fragmentation endured, abetted by the Japanese establishment of multiple collaborationist states. Puyi could don the dragon robes as he had so long desired and play the role of emperor, Liang Hongzhi 梁鴻志 (1882-1946) had his anti-Nationalist Party interregnum, and Wang Jingwei grasped the chance to lead an "orthodox" Nationalist Party, each with their own collaboration state. As I discuss in the following chapter, the parallels that existed between China's pre-war

politics and the politics of occupation offer up intriguing consistencies that point to the limitations of Japanese appeal in China, even amongst their collaborationist partners, and the endurance of pre-war policy into the wartime period.

3. Continuities: Foreign Policy in the Wang Jingwei Regime

3.1 Introduction: Influence without Autonomy

From the time of its establishment on 30th March 1940 until its dissolution on 16th August 1945, Wang Jingwei's Re-organized National Government maintained the diplomatic trappings of a normal state, with a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and ambassadors exchanged with other states (exclusively Axis powers or their client states), as well as government agencies responsible for Overseas Chinese Affairs (at the level of a stand-alone commission until 13th January 1943 and as a department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thereafter). During these years, the RNG oversaw the return of Western concessions to Chinese sovereignty, declared war on Britain and America, and practiced a cultural diplomacy with Japan that echoed Chongqing's use of Buddhism.

With the archival records of the RNG remaining sealed, in the following chapter I review the cultural and political diplomacy of the RNG through the activities of its foreign minister, Chu Minyi, with particular attention to the historical and contemporary continuities between continuities between the RNG and the pre-war Nationalist government of Jiang Jieshi.¹⁸⁵ At the level of the particular, these similarities matter in

¹⁸⁵ On the question of continuities, Lin Han-sheng provides an account of Zhou Fohai that underlines the consistent role played by Zhou in handling peace diplomacy under Jiang Jieshi and his subsequent role as one of Wang Jingwei's chief lieutenants in the negotiations to establish the RNG. See Lin Han-sheng, "Chou Fo-hai: The Diplomacy of Survival," in Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett, *Diplomats in Crisis: United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1974), p. 189.

that they make the RNG distinct from other occupation states, both in China (as in the Reformed Government 中華民國維新政府 (*Zhonghua minguo weixin zhengfu*) of Liang Hongzhi) and in Europe (most notably the Vichy regime), both of which offered an ideological break from the pre-war governments they replaced.¹⁸⁶ At the level of foreign policy, I argue that the RNG's diplomacy is an important facet of China's wartime diplomacy and must be analyzed and accounted for in order to fully understand the end of extraterritoriality and the European presence in China. At a broader level, this chapter, with its attention to the consistency with which Chu carried out his role in the RNG, points to the plausibility of the belief amongst those who, like Chu, served the occupation state believing that the RNG was but one more iteration of China's factional politics, and that the end of the war could allow a political solution to this most recent split in the Nationalist Party.¹⁸⁷

Despite the elaborate machinery of government above, the RNG languished in diplomatic isolation and remained tethered to its Japanese backers. As a result, few scholars have found the RNG's foreign policies worthy of attention. The editors of one recent volume dealing with China's foreign relations over the course of the war were

¹⁸⁶ A note on terminology regarding the Reformed Government: apart from the obvious allusion to the Meiji Restoration 明治維新, the term also has great significance within Chinese culture, as in the Hundred Days' Reform 百日維新 (*bairi weixin*), to take one example. More locally, the Vancouver-born Chinese Canadian novelist Wayson Choy 崔維新 (1939-2019), who bore the name ("Wayson," or *weixin* meaning "reform") as his own, attributed receiving the name to his grandfather, Tuey Duk-lin (1877-1945), a reform-minded Cantonese only a few years older than Liang Hongzhi who settled in Victoria, British Columbia under the name Peter King. As Choy described, "Way Sun" [*weixin*] should be understood as meaning "to rehabilitate," a promise "to reform old ways through *peaceful* [emphasis added] means," and initially was not favoured by his family for being "too idealistic" and "too distinctive" a choice for a firstborn son. See Wayson Choy, *Paper Shadows: A Chinatown Childhood* (Toronto: Viking, 1999), p. 16, 284-290.

¹⁸⁷ Here it is helpful to recall Kiang Kang-hu's comments quoted in the previous chapter (see p. 79) regarding his wife, based in the United States, and his children, one each with Yenan and Chongqing.

straightforward in their dismissal. “We do not deal with the collaborationist government in Nanjing,” they write. “Though Wang Jingwei’s government maintained some foreign relations, those relations did not amount to autonomous foreign relations. They were with allies of Japan and with countries that had fallen under de facto Nazi control, such as Vichy France.”¹⁸⁸ There is some truth in this; certainly, the states that extended diplomatic recognition to the RNG *were* limited to those in the Axis camp, including several of which were puppet regimes installed by the Germans or the Japanese.

The Axis camp, however, was not noted for acting in concert, especially in Asia. Indeed, from autumn 1944, Germany consular officials in China busied themselves burning confidential documents for fear of a Japanese takeover, while the Japanese, for their part, viewed their German allies with distrust.¹⁸⁹ Given the paucity of research on the RNG, blithe dismissal of the RNG and its role in China’s wartime diplomacy is mistaken. The absolute autonomy (or lack thereof) is also difficult criteria to apply—not easily measured, not a prerequisite for actually influencing a chain of events and, however much historians might choose not to engage with those they deem lacking in autonomy, not particularly relevant to the fact that China’s wartime diplomacy and international relations were impacted by the existence and actions of the RNG. And in fact, some scholars have taken up the topic, albeit from a piecemeal, external perspective.

Historian Guido Samarani, for example, has written of the divergent views that existed within the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis over relations with the RNG and the question

¹⁸⁸ Diana Lary, “Introduction” in Han van de Ven, Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, eds., *Negotiating China’s Destiny in World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), p. 7.

¹⁸⁹ Bernard Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai: An Untold Story of Espionage, Intrigue, and Treason in World War II* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), p. 258 and p. 216-217.

of diplomatic recognition and the fact that the RNG under Wang lobbied Japan for entry into the war against the Allies.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, historian Christine Cornet has written on the fate of the French concession, which returned to China under negotiations between Vichy France and the RNG, noting that the Vichy regime established permanent contact with the Wang regime in Nanjing in order to placate the Japanese. This event had consequence beyond the realm of diplomatic pageantry and led to the severing of ties between Vichy and Chongqing, which then turned to de Gaulle's government in exile.¹⁹¹

As this all suggests, the RNG's foreign policies had an impact on China's wartime diplomacy, and was of lasting significance. In this chapter, I outline, the RNG's foreign relations included a more formal diplomacy that enabled it to play a role internationally in the renunciation of extraterritorial privilege and the return of Western concessions in China and closely mirrored the pre-war foreign policy of the Nationalist government. The RNG also maintained a cultural diplomacy that deployed Buddhism as a means of garnering internal legitimacy in a way that paralleled Chongqing's contemporaneous use of Buddhism, and also attempted to engage with the Japanese on a more equal basis through shared regard for Buddhism.

This chapter is not based on any tranche of previously unknown or inaccessible source materials. Archives of the RNG's Ministry of Foreign Affairs remain inaccessible in Nanjing, and Chu Minyi's personal papers and other effects, seized after the war at the time of his arrest, are mostly scattered and lost to researchers. Instead, it is based on more

¹⁹⁰ Guido Samarani, "The Evolution of Fascist Italian Diplomacy During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1943," in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945: Politics, Culture and Society* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 73-77 and p. 79.

¹⁹¹ Christine Cornet, "The Bumpy End of the French Concession and French Influence in Shanghai, 1937-1946," in Christian Henriot, Wen-hsin Yeh, eds., *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai under Japanese Occupation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 263.

thoroughly engaging with available materials that have previously been neglected. In particular, I turn to the voluminous published materials, both essays and document collections that have become available in more recent years, as well as newspaper reports and government publications from the wartime period that have often been deemed not worth of attention by historians. Although paucity of archival records necessitates the modest scope of my argument, the significance of my point should be clear: the RNG's foreign policies need to be taken seriously and written back into the history of China's wartime diplomacy.

This diplomacy did not emerge from a vacuum; in many ways, it reflected the foreign policy objectives of the pre-war Nationalist government. With the relevant files still sealed, I turn to biography, focusing first on the career of Chu Minyi, whose international experience in the 1920s and 30s and subsequent role as RNG foreign minister allows me to trace the continuities between the two periods and understand how the RNG came to adopt a political diplomacy so closely in line with its avowed prewar predecessor. Furthermore, Chu's role as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and later Special Envoy to Japan, head of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association and various other similar organizations made him a central figure in the cultural diplomacy that made up an important part of the RNG's foreign relations. Finally, I discuss Chu's role at the end of the war as governor of Guangdong, where he oversaw a final transfer of administration to the RNG, in this case over the French leased-territory of Guangzhouwan, before handing over the province to Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists.

3.2 Chu Minyi

Not unlike the neglect into which the RNG itself has fallen, Chu Minyi's place in the history of Republican China is obscure, and historians have typically treated him as not particularly serious—the “Nanjing government “playboy,””—and simply relegated him to footnotes or passing mentions.¹⁹² In the following section, I suggest viewing Chu as very much a member of the rising new elite that emerged following the fall of the Qing. Like many of his future contemporaries in the Nationalist Party, Chu as a young man received an education that blended the Chinese classics and Western subjects. In Chu's case, he took up the study of medicine and became a determined advocate for scientific education in China. In Chu's role as foreign minister in the RNG, three general themes outlined below stand out from his earlier career: importing scientific expertise, exporting Chinese culture, and holding a dovish approach to China's sovereignty that favoured negotiation.

Born to a line of Chinese medical practitioners in 1884, Chu Minyi grew up in the rural Wuxing in northern Zhejiang Province. His career in “importing” scientific expertise began in 1899 when, at the age of fifteen, he began studying English and Western medicine at the American Methodist-run Soochow Hospital (also known in Chinese as the Boxi Yiyuan 博習醫院) in Suzhou, which was run by Dr William Hector

¹⁹² Poshek Fu, “Resistance in Collaboration: Chinese Cinema in Occupied Shanghai, 1941-1945” in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932-1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 186. Alternately, see Annping Chin, *Four Sister of Hofei: A History* (New York: Scribner, 2013), p. 393-396 where she describes Chu's continued involvement in the cultural sphere during the occupation, particularly among a community of kunqu aficionados whose passion for performance cut across political lines.

Park 柏樂文 (1858-1957), an American missionary who occasionally appeared in Chinese dress and emphasised co-operative relations with the local gentry.¹⁹³ The hospital had been founded to train medical assistants and to treat disease with “the very best in scientific medicine,” rather than make use of Chinese medical knowledge, which was deemed deficient in scientific diagnosis, methods of prevention and means of cure.”¹⁹⁴ Though his time there lasted only a year, the experience was formative, leading him to advocate for the adoption of Western science and technological training in his later roles as vice-chancellor of the Sino-French Institute at Lyon, as editor of *Yiyao pinglun* [The Medical Review], and as president of the Sino-French Technical Institute in Shanghai. Indeed, Chu’s exposure to Western science and medicine left such a lasting impression that, nearly half a century after he left the hospital and just prior to being executed by the Jiang Jieshi government in 1946, Chu issued a request (reportedly his last words) that his remains be donated to Soochow Hospital as a research specimen.¹⁹⁵

Following this formative time in Suzhou, Chu traveled to France to pursue further studies and eventually graduated with a doctorate in medicine (1922) and a diploma in pharmacology (1924), both from the University of Strasbourg. Along the way, he took up

¹⁹³ See “An American Mandarin” *The New York Times*, 24th June 1894, p. 17, William Joseph Haas, *China Voyager: Gist Gee’s Life in Science* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 86-89, and William Hector Park, ed., *Opinions of Over 100 Physicians on the Use of Opium in China* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1899).

¹⁹⁴ See Xu Xiaoguang, “A Successful Crusade to China: The Home Board and the China Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South 1848-1900” in Tanya Storch, ed., *Religions and Missionaries Around the Pacific, 1500-1900* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), p. 229 and *Soochow Hospital 50th Anniversary: 1883-1933*, unpaginated, as well as Walter R Lambuth, *Medical Missions: The Two-Fold Path* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1920), p. 13-18 and “A Chinese Anaesthetic” *Littell’s Living Age* 28th July 1888, p. 256.

¹⁹⁵ See “Chu ni Minyi zai Su qiangjue” [Traitor Chu Minyi executed at Suzhou], *Shenbao*, 24th August 1946.

the second great theme in his life, which revolved around “exporting” Chinese culture and representing his country to the West in a way that was accessible to both everyday people and connoisseurs. In 1909, Chu partnered with Louis Laloy (1874-1944), a French musicologist and Sinologist, to publish a short guide to Chinese shuttlecock, complete with illustrations and instructions on technique, thereby introducing French audiences to an accessible element of Chinese folk culture.¹⁹⁶ Also that year, Chu received a French patent for butterfly-inspired Chinese kites (a pattern he also favoured for neckties), which he produced by hand and sold at various exhibitions, including the *Première Exposition Internationale de Locomotion Aérienne* in Paris’ Grand Palais in October of 1909 (now known as the Paris Air Show, one of the world’s oldest and largest), the 1909 *Salon d’Alimentation*, also at the Grand Palais, and the Brussels International Exposition in 1910, where they graced the ceilings of the China Pavilion.¹⁹⁷ For this last exhibit, Chu also curated a display from Li Shizeng’s 李石增 (1881-1973) Paris Bean Curd Company (*L’usine de la Caséo-Sojaïne*), for which he served as representative.

As the only Chinese owned and operated factory in Europe, the company represented an early effort to popularize Chinese food culture in Europe. Chu’s efforts in curating the company’s samples became the subject of praise from *Shenbao* and the *Eastern Miscellany* amidst what were otherwise somewhat glum reviews of the Chinese

¹⁹⁶ Chu Minyi and Louis Laloy, “Le Volant Chinois,” *Bulletin de L’Association Amicale Franco-Chinoise* vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1910), p. 319-35. My gratitude to Ching Yuet Tang of the British Library’s Chinese Collections for publicizing this reference.

¹⁹⁷ For the patent and the neckties, see Chan Cheong-Choo, “Memoirs of a Citizen of XX Century China” unpublished (1978), p. 36 and Tsu Min-ye, “Perfectionnements dans les cerfs-volants” *Brevet d’Invention* (Paris: Office National de la Propriété Industrielle, 1909), p. 1-6. European Patent Office. For the exhibitions, see Association des industriels de la locomotion aérienne, eds., *Rapport officiel sur la première exposition internationale de locomotion aérienne* (Paris: Librairie Aéronautique, 1910), p. 117 and 126, and Edouard Mène, “La Chine a L’Exposition de Bruxelles” *Bulletin de l’Association Amicale Franco-Chinoise* Vol 2 No 4 (Oct, 1910), p. 336 and 338.

performance.¹⁹⁸ All in all, the event was no small feat; in previous years under the Qing, the Chinese exhibits had been filled with opium pipes, shoes for bound feet, and other orientalist bric-à-brac handpicked by the Imperial Maritime Customs Service of Robert Hart.¹⁹⁹

Chu made similar contributions in subsequent exhibitions in France and Belgium. In 1924, he served as deputy director under honorary director Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) for the preparatory committee of the *Exposition Chinoise d'Art Ancien et Moderne*, held at the stately Palais du Rhin in the former German section of Strasbourg. Art historian Craig Clunas characterized this exhibit as a stepping stone for the Republic of China's participation in the *Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes à Paris*, which he in turn described as “a brave, even heroic, attempt to have China...speak for and represent itself, in a context where the rest of Asia (with the significant exception of Japan), Africa and the Islamic world were spoken for and represented, if at all, by the orientalist discourse of their colonial possessors, principally France.”²⁰⁰ And in 1930, Chu served as Chinese Commissioner-General for the Chinese Pavilion in the International Exhibition at Liège, which garnered impressive results—out

¹⁹⁸ See “Bijing bolanhuichang zhi Zhongguo chupin guan” [A View of Chinese Products at the Brussels International Exposition] *Shenbao*, 14th August 1910 and “Bijing saihui ji” [Notes from the Brussels International Exposition] *Dongfang zazhi* vol 7 no. 8 (1910) quoted from Chen Zhanbiao 陳占彪, ed., *Qingmo minchu wanguo bolanhui qinliji* [Personal Accounts of the Late Qing and Early Republic International Expositions] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan chubanshe, 2010), p. 199-200.

¹⁹⁹ Hyungju Hur has noted the tendency of China and her people to be portrayed as exotic and demeaned in the early world exhibitions through the use of opium pipes or shoes for bound feet. See Hyungju Hur, “Staging Modern Statehood: World Exhibitions and the Rhetoric of Publishing in Late Qing China, 1851-1910” (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: unpublished doctoral dissertation, 2012): p. 21.

²⁰⁰ Craig Clunas, “Chinese Art and Artists in France 1924-1925” *Arts asiatiques* Tome 44, (1989), p. 100.

of 23 countries in attendance, China ranked 3rd in the prize count after Belgium and France, having bested Japan, the United States and Great Britain, among others.²⁰¹

Returning home in 1931, Chu took part in the Expédition Citroën Centre-Asie, leading a Chinese delegation that accompanied a larger French convoy from Beijing across Mongolia and Xinjiang.²⁰² Although billed as a scientific expedition, the French penchant for photographing the natives, pretensions of ethnography, and the precedent of Citroën's 1923 "Black Cruise" through Africa ensured that the convoy would make its journey through Asia in a cloud of colonial condescension. Motives for official Chinese involvement were complex, with Chu advocating participation in order to acquire French scientific and technological expertise so as to assert greater Nationalist control over border regions that remained outside of Nanjing's authority and geographically remote.²⁰³

These and others activities over the course of his career, including his leadership of the Sino-French Technical Institute, were characteristic of Chu's career as an intellectual and his co-operative relationship with foreign powers. In Chu's case, they even earned him a bevy for foreign honours and awards from the French and Belgian governments. Chu reached the height of his pre-war administrative career with his appointment as Chief Secretary of the Executive Yuan during Wang Jingwei's tenure as premier. French

²⁰¹ Guomin zhengfu canjia Biguo bolanhui daibiao chu, ed., *Zhongguo canjia Bilishi guoji bolanhui tekan* [Chinese Participation in the Belgian International Exhibition Special Edition] (Shanghai: Dadong shuju, 1932), p. 199.

²⁰² The Expedition was also referred to as the 3rd Expedition of Haardt-Audoine-Dubreuil, the Yellow Cruise, and the Sino-French Scientific Expedition, to name some of the most commonly-used names.

²⁰³ See Yang Zhongjian, *Xibei de poumian* [Profile of the Northwest] (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2003), p. 76 for a Chinese scientist's perspective on the Expedition as a chance for technological gain and scientific training, and "Chu Minyi on the 20th Academic Expedition: Detailed Description of French and Chinese Itineraries, Natural Resource Development begins in the Northwest," *Shenbao*, 14th February 1931 for an example of Chu's statements about the expedition's political and economic goals.

journalist and author Maurice Dekobra (1885-1973), who encountered Chu during this period, estimated him to be “the most popular man [in Nanjing],” and in what was surely a puff piece, Ujita Naoyoshi 宇治田直義 (1894-1969), one of Japan’s wartime China experts, later made the interesting claim in 1941 that, “even the hardboiled anti-Japanese elements in the Chungking government who advocate a fight to a finish [sic] against Japan do not make any attack on Dr Chu Min-I...he alone among the leaders of the National Government at Nanking could obtain even now a safe-conduct for a journey to and from Chungking.”²⁰⁴ Furthermore, Chu was the brother-in-law of Wang Jingwei and remained in Shanghai during the Japanese takeover of the lower Yangtse; with the establishment of the RNG he was well positioned to assume office and play a high level role in the new regime.

3.3 Groundwork: Initial contacts with foreign diplomats and establishing a state

As noted earlier, the full range of diplomatic relations that the RNG established during its years of operation was limited to those in the Axis camp. From the outset of Wang Jingwei’s peace movement and the eventual establishment of the RNG in occupied Nanjing, however, this diplomatic isolation was not a foregone conclusion. In this section, I describe the background to the RNG’s eventual diplomatic position through the activities of Chu Minyi in the period between Wang Jingwei’s flight from Chongqing in

²⁰⁴ Maurice Dekobra, *Confucius in a Tail-coat: Ancient China in Modern Costume*, trans. Metcalfe Wood (London: T. Werner Laurie Ltd., 1935), p. 90 and Naoyoshi Ujita, “Dr. Chu Min-I, China’s Ambassador to Japan,” *Contemporary Japan: A Review of Far Eastern Affairs* vol x no. 7 (July 1941), p. 886.

December 1938 until the inaugural year of the RNG's operations in 1940. During this period, Chu articulated a rationale for supporting Wang and his peace efforts, attempted to obtain foreign support and recognition for the nascent administration, and took the initial steps in what would become the RNG's cultural diplomacy. Regarding the nature of the RNG's foreign relations, I argue that (1) the RNG leadership did take an initial interest in expanding its relations beyond the realm of the Axis powers, particularly with regard to the United States and the United Kingdom, (2) that this interest was not completely unreciprocated, and (3) the RNG's foreign policy initiatives are more noteworthy not for their lack of autonomy but for their consistency with past practice of the Nationalist Party.

The shape of what would become the RNG's foreign policy outlook (beyond collaboration with Japan) came into view only over the course of several years. As historian So Wai-Chor has observed, the leadership of what became the RNG did not initially display any particular animus towards the Western powers; this emerged as a more obvious trait only with the outbreak of the Pacific War.²⁰⁵ Similarly, despite the high office he would eventually occupy, Chu's role in the peace movement was also not apparent from the beginning.

Having remained in the lower Yangtze delta as president of the Sino-French Technical Institute during the Japanese seizure of Shanghai and the subsequent march on Nanjing, Chu was well-positioned to observe the Japanese takeover firsthand. A report from the Shanghai Municipal Police indicates that Chu, along with local businessman Zhou Bangjun 周邦俊

²⁰⁵ So Wai Cho, "Race, Culture and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators," *Modern China* vol. 37, no. 69 (2011), p. 73.

(dates unknown), initially engaged in propaganda work against the Japanese.²⁰⁶ For Chu, it was the third time he experienced an invasion, having witnessed the German occupation of Belgium and the subsequent attack on Paris during the First World War during his student years in Europe. With the Japanese takeover of Shanghai and the rest of East China, the region (excepting the foreign concessions) was administered by a succession of occupation states (or statelets): first came the local “Self-Governance Committees,” and then at the municipal level the Great Way Government in Shanghai and finally the the Reformed Government of Liang Hongzhi, a confirmed critic of the Nationalist Party platform.²⁰⁷ To these regimes, Chu remained aloof.

In fact, it was only under the prodding of the students at his own institution that he finally spoke out on his connection to Wang’s peace initiative, and then only to disavow any association with it. In an announcement published in *Shenbao* in late April 1939, he emphasized his commitment to the Sino-French Institute and his reluctance to get involved with politics, instead casting himself as nothing more than an aficionado of music and opera and an advocate of hygiene and physical fitness. Regarding his brother-in-law’s peace movement, Chu denied any knowledge of Wang’s actions prior to reading about them in the

²⁰⁶ See Tan Shao Liang, “Antecedents and past activities of Dr. Chu Ming Nyi [sic],” Shanghai Municipal Police Force file no. D 9129 (C), 12th February 1940. Frederic Wakeman identifies Tan Shao Liang as one of the SMP’s most reliable political intelligence analysts, but also mentions he became a spy for the Japanese and was later assassinated (dates vary). See Frederic Wakeman Jr, *Policing Shanghai, 1927-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) p. 287 and 391. Besides being a close associate of Chu’s, Zhou Bangjun was a major figure in Shanghai’s business world during the 1930s and 40s, specializing in pharmaceuticals, and served time in prison after the war for his association with the occupation authorities before re-locating to Taiwan. A few further details on Zhou Bangjun can be gleaned from the autobiography of his grandson, New York arts figure Alan Chow. See Zhou Longzhang, *Denghuo niuyue shuo renwu My Lustrous Life* (Taipei: Dakuai, 2015), p. 31-33.

²⁰⁷ See Timothy Brook, “Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China,” in Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid, eds., *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 177.

press, and complained of rumour-mongers spreading word of his involvement such that he could barely leave his house. “My daily life,” he concluded, “is, as always, taken up with supporting the Sino-French Institute, and I am not participating in political work of any kind.”²⁰⁸ Despite the disavowals, however, Chu soon issued a volte-face with his resignation from the Sino-French Institute and attendance at the Nationalist Sixth Party Congress convened in Shanghai by Wang on 28th August 1939.

The exact details of Chu’s change of position over the spring and summer of 1939 might never be known. By the testimony of one of his former aides, Chu, at the behest of Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙 (1881-1967), was engaged in talks on behalf of Chongqing with leading Japanese intelligence officer Kenji Doihara 土肥原賢二 (1883-1948) following the fall of the city to the Japanese in 1938.²⁰⁹ Chu also reported to the Ministry of Education in Chongqing when he tendered his resignation from the Sino-French Technical Institute a year later.²¹⁰ Whatever one might make of these shifts in position and ties with Chongqing for Chu as a person, the broader significance lies in the complex factionalism that characterized the Republic of China’s fragmented politics.

²⁰⁸ Chu Minyi, “Chu Minyi qishi” [An Announcement from Chu Minyi] *Shenpao* (April 25, 26, and 27, 1939). The Japanese scholar Ujita Naoyoshi, who served as secretary to Nobuyuki Abe during the negotiations for the 1940 Sino-Japanese Basic Treaty, contradicted this in a piece on Chu in a semi-official journal in which he claimed that Chu secretly kept in touch with Wang and continued to prepare for general peace with Japan after hostilities broke out in 1937 before lamenting that, “Nothing is known to the world about his self-sacrificing efforts during those days for the cause of peace.” See Ujita Naoyoshi, “Dr. Chu Min-i, China’s Ambassador to Japan,” *Contemporary Japan: A Review of Far Eastern Affairs* vol X, no 7 (July, 1941), p. 885. The hyperbole used throughout the piece, however, leaves room to question the author’s credibility.

²⁰⁹ For a partial account of Chu’s activities at this time, see Tian Shoucheng, “Chu Minyi he Wang wei zuzhi,” *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao xuanji* vol. 3 (1981), p.91.

²¹⁰ This earned him grudging respect from the *Shanghai Post & Evening Mercury*. See “In Fairness to Dr. Chu” in “Antecedents and past activities of Dr. Chu Ming Nyi [sic],” Shanghai Municipal Police Force file no. D 9129 (C), 12th February 1940.

With his attendance at the Nationalist Party Congress convened by Wang, Chu began to articulate a rationale for the peace movement and a new foreign policy orientation for China. In a series of public messages, Chu explained his actions to his party colleagues, the wider public, and the people of Japan, alternately highlighting the need for peace and the futility of resistance, warning of the dangers of “red imperialism,” and calling for reconciliation between the Chinese and Japanese peoples. Admittedly, Chu’s decision to involve himself with his brother-in-law’s peace efforts marked a dramatic reversal from his earlier declaration in *Shenbao*, but it also pointed to some important consistencies in his worldview, his approach to politics and his vision of China’s place in the world. The impression given is more that of idealistic educator than shrewd politician.

To the wider public, he expressed his arguments for supporting the peace movement with a blend of pessimistic and wishful thinking. Chu’s stated faith in Wang’s ability to strike an equitable peace with the Japanese, and the willingness of the Japanese to be sincere partners to such a peace, was soon revealed as naiveté. In a 1939 speech, “Sino-Japanese Peace and Sino-Japanese Cultural Co-operation,” Chu outlined his vision for a rapprochement between China and Japan. Significantly, Chu drew a distinction between China’s spiritual civilization and over-emphasis on culture, which lead to backwardness and invited foreign aggression, and those countries founded on material civilization, which emphasized economics and led to a cycle of aggression and invasion.²¹¹ The breakdown between China and Japan, he continued, originated in large part due to flawed educational policies in both countries dating back to the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-

²¹¹ This lecture was reproduced in “Chu Minyi yanjiang Zhongri heping yu Zhongri wenhua hezuo,” [Chu Minyi speaks on Sino-Japanese Peace and Sino-Japanese Cultural Co-operation] *Gengsheng* no. 4, vol. 3, (1939), p. 95-96.

95), with Japanese education promoting the invasion of China. As a corrective, Chu highlighted his record in cultural co-operation between China and Western countries in the field of education and managing the return of the Boxer indemnity as a model for realizing improved ties with Japan through negotiation and co-operation, thereby underlining the consistency of his lifelong efforts to restore China's position in the world.²¹²

The mildly-phrased speech captured the hope, naïve in retrospect, that the Peace Movement could succeed in reconciling China and Japan through the good-will interventions of figures of influence on either side. Chu's argument also represented an unusual reconfiguring of the trope that the world conflict was between the spiritual civilization of East Asia, led by Japan, and the materialist and decadent West. Instead, Chu positioned China as a country undone by its spiritual civilization and, without naming Japan directly, subject to humiliation by those who had developed materially.

On a more pessimistic note, Chu expressed his despair at the dire conditions facing his countrymen, his abiding suspicion of the Soviet Union and the CCP, and his lack of faith in the international community. Chu argued against any hope of China receiving aid from abroad, be it the Soviet Union, which had so recently seen off a border skirmish with the Japanese at Lake Khasan in August 1938, or Britain and France, which were too consumed by the European war to make a contribution of any substance to China's plight in East Asia. As for the Americans, he emphasized developments between Japan and the United States to

²¹² Ibid., 96.

resolve their differences, and warned that the results of any such reconciliation were unlikely to be favourable to China's interests.²¹³

Such a perspective was not entirely unreasonable—from his vantage point in Shanghai, Chu had observed the Japanese advance as it overtook most of China's major urban centers, leaving the government isolated in far-off Chongqing. As for the prospect of aid from the Soviet Union and the intentions of the CCP, his suspicions dated back to the failure of the Wuhan coalition government between the CCP and the left wing of the Nationalists in 1928; Chu believed it was part of Moscow's ambitions to subordinate the Party and heaped scorn on the CCP.²¹⁴

To the members of the Central Supervisory Committee of the Nationalist Party in Chongqing, Chu spoke in the voice of a long-time party member and strove to contextualize his position in terms of a sense of crisis over China's position in the war, and in terms of the Nationalist Party's fractious history of division. In an effort to persuade his former colleagues to grasp the opportunity presented by Japanese peace terms, Chu claimed they presented no territorial ambitions on the part of Japan, and required from China no ceding of territory, and no reparations. "If peace brings no harm to the nation's sovereign and independent existence and war threatens to destroy the country," he asked, "why not adopt a policy of peace?"²¹⁵ More pointedly, he called for Jiang Jieshi to step down and for the Party to instead rally around Wang Jingwei. Referring to the Xi'an Incident of 1936, Chu claimed

²¹³ Chu Minyi, "Wei heping yundong gao guoren shu," [A Letter to Compatriots about the Peace Movement] *Shidai wenxuan* vol 2 no 1 (1940), p. 37-39.

²¹⁴ Tsu Zong Yung [Chu Minyi], *La Chine Nouvelle: Conférence donnée dans les universités belges* (Bruxelles: Comité Interuniversitaire Sino-Belge, 1928), p. 14 and 18.

²¹⁵ Chu Minyi, "Zhi Chongqing zhongyang zhijian weiyuanhui" [To the Central Supervisory Committee in Chongqing] in Dai Ce, ed., *Chu Minyi xiansheng zuijin yanlun ji* [A Collection of Mr Chu Minyi's Recent Political Views] (Shanghai: Jianshe, 1940): p. 2.

that the truce between the CCP and the Nationalists had essentially reduced Jiang to a captive of the Chinese communists, and consequently bound him, and the rest of the Party, to a course of war.²¹⁶

As an alternative, he sketched out a vision of peace that was based on a sort of cultural reconciliation and renewed respect between the peoples of China and Japan. Though framed in restrained language, Chu insisted peace could come about only through mutual respect and understanding and pointed to Japan's recent behaviour to explain the origins of the war. Japan's massive arms build-up in recent years, he charged, was in Chinese eyes nothing but a prelude to wholesale invasion. The recent interaction between their two countries provided much evidence of Japan's exploitative behaviour, and was responsible for the fear and loathing of Japan that had developed in the Chinese psyche. Politically and economically, Japanese exploitation had not only alienated China and made the international community uneasy, but had made talk of co-operation with Japan repellent. And finally, in terms of culture and education, although Japan's development had come from the adoption of ancient Chinese culture and Western culture, the Japanese education system had yet to establish cultural understanding between the two. Instead, Japanese education promoted invading and bullying China, and therefore stood at cross-purposes with the anti-imperialism of China's education system.²¹⁷

Despite this grim analysis, Chu maintained that the time had come when the two countries could work in complementary roles with each other. Through the last two years of

²¹⁶ Chu Minyi, "Zhi Chongqing zhongyang zhijian weiyuanhui" [To the Central Supervisory Committee in Chongqing] in Dai Ce, ed., *Chu Minyi xiansheng zuijin yanlun ji* [A Collection of Mr Chu Minyi's Recent Political Views] (Shanghai: Jianshe, 1940): p. 1 and 3.

²¹⁷ Chu Minyi, "Zhongri heping de jichu," [Foundations of Sino-Japanese Peace] *Huanan gonglun* no. 1, vol. 2 (1939), p. 219.

war, he argued, Japan had realized the impossibility of maintaining peace in East Asia even if China were conquered, and knew that the Chinese people could not be bullied. China, on the other hand, had realized that a policy of “befriending distant states while fighting those nearby” was not enough to resolve the conflict, and that Japan’s strength could be used in aid of China’s national construction. To resolve the conflict, he offered a three-fold prescription: (1) only through the renunciation of armed aggression or revenge could both countries ensure their national security, (2) only through mutual benefit could there be economic co-operation in a prosperous East Asia, and (3) only through bringing together Japanese and Chinese culture and improving the education system could there be mutual understanding between the Japanese and Chinese peoples.²¹⁸

Less openly, Chu also approached both the British and the American consulates in Shanghai in an effort to gain international support for a re-organized government under Wang’s leadership. In late 1939, offering what the British ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr (1882-1951), deemed to be a “clever argument,” Chu outlined the embryonic foreign policy orientation of the proposed regime and appealed to British self-interest by advancing the argument that the interests of third powers in China could be most easily and effectively preserved through co-operation with a peace government under Wang Jingwei. Although available only as a translated copy held in UK Foreign Office records, the memo is worth quoting at length:

It may be said that the aims of Mr. Wang vis-à-vis Japan are really the same as those cherished by the Chongqing Government namely, the existence of China as a free and independent nation. The methods are different, however. The latter

²¹⁸ Chu Minyi, “Zhongri heping de jichu,” [Foundations of Sino-Japanese Peace] *Huanan gonglun* no. 1, vol. 2 (1939), p. 219.

considers impossible the maintenance of China's sovereignty and the recover of China's "occupied territories" unless through continuation of the unequal war and a problematic intervention, while the former is willing to make peaceful negotiations through mutual sincerity and understanding for attainment of the same objects... While China needs the understanding and sympathy and even assistance of Third Powers, either in prosecuting the war or in making an honourable peace, the maintenance and protection of Third Power rights and interests in China, especially in the occupied areas, require not only friendly relations with the Chungking Government, but even more so with Mr. Wang's Government, when it is established. So it appears to be mutually beneficial and desirable for representatives of Third Powers and Mr. Wang to exchange views for a better understanding.²¹⁹

As historian Rana Mitter has observed, in the early stages of the war British officials remained hopeful of preserving British interests and viewed the emergence of puppet regimes in the Yangzi Valley as cause for concern.²²⁰ This necessitated a certain degree of practicality in dealing with the emergence of the new regime. British diplomatic officials in Nanjing, for example, were receptive to unofficial contact with RNG officials and maintained contacts with Xu Liang 徐良 (1893-1951), Chu's stand-in as foreign minister in 1941 during the latter's tenure as ambassador to Japan, who assured them that there would be no active hostility towards Britain or America.²²¹ At the local level, the

²¹⁹ Chu Minyi, "Memorandum," 1940 FO 371/24659 Foreign Office Files for China 1938-1948.

²²⁰ See Rana Mitter, "British Diplomacy and Changing Views of Chinese Governmental Capability Across the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," in van de Ven, *Negotiating China's Destiny*, p. 37-38.

²²¹ A.G.N. Ogden, "Conditions in Nanking since the new government was formally recognized by Japan," 18th January 1941, p. 2 in Nanking Government—recognition of (Folder 1) 1941, FO 371/27668, Foreign Office Files for China, 1938-1948. In particular, Xu discounted the influence of Tang Liang-li and

Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC) even signed an accord on policing with the RNG-appointed Mayor of Shanghai, Chen Gongbo, as late as 1941.²²² With this in mind, Chu's emphasis on maintaining the rights and interests of "Third Powers" in occupied territory appear to be a calculated effort to allay such concerns and bolster the impending regime's international stature.

Chu's memo also served as the basis for his approach to the United States. In a meeting on 19th January 1940, the American ambassador, Nelson T. Johnson, (1887-1954), gave Chu short shrift, stating that while he would convey Chu's remarks to his superiors, the American government took no interest in Chinese domestic affairs and would not be held responsible for mediating between Wang and Chongqing.²²³

The fact that these overtures were ultimately ignored or rebuffed is not the point; rather, that the leadership of the RNG considered them worth making is an indicator that the RNG's eventual fate of remaining tethered to Japan and the other Axis powers was not pre-determined by Wang and his comrades but the outcome of wartime events as they

Keswick, both of whom were well-known for their dislike of the British and had influence in the RNG's Ministry of Propaganda and media.

²²² Details of contacts with Chen can be found in "Visit of Shanghai mayor to H.M. Consul-General," 1941, FO 371/27713, Foreign Office Files for China, 1938-1948. The accord were publicized in a newspaper report that featured W.J. Keswick, chairman of the SMC, and G. Godfrey Phillips, SMC Commissioner General, toasting their RNG counterpart with champagne. See "Western Area Police Accord: Gambling Dens and Illegitimate Business Must Cease, Galaxy of Officials Attend Ceremony," *North China Herald*, 5th February 1941.

²²³ FRUS 1940 vol 4, p. 271. It should be noted that there was also a segment of opinion in the United States that espoused a hands-off approach to the conflict in Asia and on the specific question of recognizing the RNG advocated taking a more wait-and-see approach. Former Undersecretary of State and U.S. Ambassador to Japan WR Castle, for one, criticized the State Department's denunciation of the RNG, and argued that Washington would be better served by staying silent on the question and waiting to see how events unfold. See W.R. Castle, "Neutrality in the Chinese-Japanese War," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 210 *When the War Ends* (July 1940), p. 125.

unfolded. Attempts to gain broader recognition also continued after the establishment of the RNG on 31st March 1940, when Chu took office as Minister of Foreign Affairs.²²⁴

The role represented a daunting undertaking—besides the challenges of soliciting international recognition for a new regime, the office carried with it more than a hint of personal danger: only a little over a year had passed since the foreign minister in the Reformed Government of Liang Hongzhi was gunned down by a team of assassins.²²⁵ Despite the failure to gain immediate recognition from the Japanese, however, there were some reasons for optimism at the beginning of Chu's tenure. On 3rd August 1940, Chu as foreign minister welcomed a Spanish Economic Mission, led by Lieutenant General Alberto Castro Girona (1875-1969) to Nanjing—the first delegation of foreign officials to visit the newly-restored capital since the regime's establishment.²²⁶

According to historian Florentino Rodao García, Spanish diplomacy was “facing a disjuncture which went beyond choosing between Wang Jingwei and Jiang Jieshi. The decision, rather, was between friendship with Japan or the benefit of extraterritoriality which Jiang Jieshi would provide.” In an attempt to resolve this disjuncture, the Spanish

²²⁴ For continued overtures from the RNG's foreign ministry, see Edwin F. Stanton, *A Brief Authority: Excursions of a Common Man in an Uncommon World* (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1957), p. 130-131 and 134-135, in which he briefly describes his encounters as an American consular official with an RNG emissary and eventually with Wang Jingwei himself.

²²⁵ Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 59-65.

²²⁶ “Nanking Greets Spanish Economic Mission,” *North China Herald*, 7th August 1940. In an odd coincidence, the Spanish delegation overlapped with an American delegation to Japan that also passed through Nanjing at the invitation of the Japanese government. Led by former United States Army major general John F. O’Ryan (1874-1961), the Mission’s activities were followed with some interest in Washington, DC, but ultimately its credibility was undermined by its sponsorship by the Japan Economic Federation and O’Ryan’s lack of depth in East Asian international relations. Instead, from Nanjing’s perspective, it was the Spanish visit that held greater promise. See “Correspondence concerning the mission between General O’Ryan and President Roosevelt and comments on the same by Cordell Hull” in *Japan and America, c1930-1955 The Pacific War and the Occupation of Japan Series Two: The O’Ryan Mission to Japan and Occupied China, 1940 The Whitney Diary; Correspondence and Papers of Dr Whitney, General O’Ryan and other members of the Economic and Trade Mission.*

dangled the prospect of diplomatic recognition over Nanjing and Chongqing in an attempt to recoup Spanish extraterritoriality and other privileges. Girona was evidently not particularly informed on Chinese politics—on encountering a portrait of Sun Yat-sen in Nanjing, the military man reportedly inquired as to who this individual was and showed no sign of recognition upon receiving an explanation. Nevertheless, the Mission bore fruit: the Spanish succeeded in extracting an offer from Chongqing to purchase arms and mercury, which was sufficient to delay but not divert the Spanish from recognizing Nanjing the following year.²²⁷

As the above demonstrates, the international outlook and foreign policy of the RNG was not irretrievably pre-determined by Nanjing's ties with Japan. In his public statements between 1938-1940, Chu showed hostility only to the Soviet Union, the CCP, and Jiang Jieshi. Certainly, his contacts with British and American diplomats suggested a relatively friendly attitude to both countries, and there were signs that the RNG's isolation from the non-Axis camp was not necessarily a foregone conclusion, as seen in the interest of Franco's Axis-friendly Spain or the somewhat open-minded attention of Clark Kerr when presented with the possibility of preserving British interests in China.

3.4 Political Diplomacy

The full course of Chu's tenure as foreign minister lasted from March 1940 until April 1945, with an 11-month break beginning in December 1940 when he served as

²²⁷ My deepest gratitude to Professor Florentino Rodao Garcia for providing me with the relevant chapter of his research in English translation. See "From Allies to Enemies: Spain, Japan, and the Axis and World War II," p. 121-127; copy in possession of the author.

ambassador to Japan. In this section, I extend the question of diplomatic recognition as considered in the previous section and focus on the political diplomacy of the RNG under Chu, with particular attention to the end of extraterritoriality and the return of the European concessions. While most accounts pay only the barest attention to the RNG's foreign policy efforts, in this section I argue that the process of retrocession that saw the end of the European colonial presence in China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) cannot be fully understood without taking into account the role of the RNG.

Despite the setbacks in obtaining diplomatic recognition, Chu oversaw a re-alignment in the RNG's international position, as demonstrated by the Sino-Japanese Basic Treaty of 1940 and the Sino-Japanese alliance in 1943, as well as the retrocession of the foreign territories within occupied territory. In the *Zhongguo Waijiao Nianjian* 中國外交年鑑 [China Foreign Affairs Yearbook], RNG diplomat Wu Kejun 吳克峻 (dates unknown) explicitly positioned the RNG's foreign policy squarely in line with Nationalist Party policy statements dating back to the First Party Congress of 1924, held in Guangzhou.²²⁸ The major point of departure, of course, was the not insignificant political re-alignment towards Japan, with diplomatic recognition (much delayed) by the Axis powers of Italy and Germany, plus Spain in 1941, as well as support, at the rhetorical level, from the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose, who visited Nanjing and Shanghai in 1943.²²⁹

²²⁸ Wu Kejun et al, eds. *Zhongguo waijiao nianjian* [China Foreign Affairs Yearbook] (Nanjing: Santong shuju, 1941), p. 1.

²²⁹ Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and several other German-occupied states followed suit. See Wu Kejun, *Zhongguo waijiao*, p. 296. It is not clear, as a practical matter, whether the RNG even dispatched diplomats to all of these countries. In Europe, it appears that the RNG's ambassadors consisted of Wang Deyin 王德寅 in Berlin and Wang Deyan 王德炎 in Madrid, both sons of the North China Political Affairs

This re-alignment took form with the *Zhongri jiben guanxi tiaoyue* 中日記本關係條約 [Sino-Japanese Basic Treaty] of 30th November 1940. Despite his status as foreign minister, Chu's role in the agreement was marginal; instead, John Hunter Boyle records Zhou Fohai and Mei Siping 梅思平 (1896-1946) as the chief negotiators, and in any event, the Treaty was signed not by Chu, but by Wang Jingwei, as President of the Executive Yuan, and the Japanese envoy to Nanjing, Abe Nobuyuki 阿部信行 (1875-1953).²³⁰ The Treaty came with a long series of protocols, understandings, and secret agreements carving out special rights for continued Japanese military operations in China, such that even Shigemitsu Mamoru 重光 葵 (1887-1957), the Japanese diplomat who replaced Abe shortly after the Treaty was signed, acknowledged after the war that it was “an involved, grotesque agreement.”²³¹ While the Treaty's terms would be softened somewhat with the 1943 Sino-Japanese Treaty of Alliance, also signed by Wang, it was nonetheless used to great effect by Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists to stain the RNG's image in the eyes of the Chinese public. The failure of even the Japanese to recognise their own creation led to a hardening of views against the RNG after the summer of 1940, when the

Council Chairman, Wang Yitang. A somewhat gossipy account of their postwar exile in Spain can be found in Miguel Chang [Zhang Baoqing], *Dizhonghai xiaofeng canyue: Huayi yingren Mige'er Zhang de fushengji* [Morning Breeze and Waning Moon on the Mediterranean: A Brief Record of the Floating Life of Chinese Filmmaker Miguel Chang] vol 2 (Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 2008), p. 34-41. For Bose's speeches in support of the RNG, see Arun, ed., *Testament of Subhas Bose: Being a Complete and Authentic Record of Netaji's Broadcast Speeches, Press Statements, etc., 1942-1945* (Delhi: Rajkamal Publications, 1946), p. 217-221.

²³⁰ John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 298 and Second Historical Archives of China, eds., *Zhonghua minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian* vol 5, no. 2 shang (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 1997), p. 226-229.

²³¹ See Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and her Destiny*, trans. Oswald White (London: Hutchinson, 1958), p. 201. For the full text of the Treaty, see Ma Zhendu and Zhao Yueqin, eds., *Wang wei zhengquan* [The Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), p. 785-805.

window of opportunity for recognition beyond the Axis camp contracted, and with the attack on Pearl Harbour slammed shut for good.

Instead, what remained for Chu and the RNG was the retrocession of the foreign settlements that dotted the China coast. Although most accounts attribute this to negotiations between Chongqing and the Western powers and slight the role of the Japanese and the RNG, I argue that the series of retrocessions began with the RNG in 1940, before wartime negotiations began in earnest with Chongqing. Events in occupied territory, in other words, preceded the diplomatic process between Chongqing, London and Washington and thereby provided added incentive to complete the restoration of full sovereignty to China.

As American propaganda directives suggest, competition to take credit for this process during the war necessitated the downplaying of the RNG's role. "Disregard political moves of Wang Ching-wei," insisted one such injunction from early 1943. "To attack Japanese and their puppets frontally builds up their importance too much," another warned.²³² This wartime emphasis on averting the eyes from events in occupied territory has infected subsequent scholarship and led to a misapprehension of the process. As Robert Bickers notes, "The years of the Pacific War saw the retrocession of nearly all the remaining concessions and settlements, sometimes twice over, for good measure: for the formal treaties abolishing extraterritoriality and these islets of foreign power, signed by the British and Americans in Chongqing on 11 January 1943, had their doubles in Nanjing in the performance of anti-imperialist nationalism by the stooge administrations

²³² Office of War Information, "Guidance for Far Eastern News for the Week January 17-23 Inclusive," 16th January 1943, p. 2 and Office of War Information, "Weekly Propaganda Directive," 20th March 1943, p. 2 in Paul M.A. Linebarger Papers, Reel 2 16.125, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

that took over the International Settlement and the French concession that summer.”²³³ In fact, however, as I show below, the beginnings of this process began not in Chongqing and still less with any treaties in 1943, but earlier and further north, just off the Shandong coast on the British-leased Liugong Island in 1940.

It was on this island, a minor holdover used by the British as part of their naval presence in China, that the RNG scored a symbolic victory over its Chongqing rivals and made its first move towards ending European rule in China. In a case of particularly unfortunate timing for the British, the leasehold over the island, which they retained after the retrocession of the treaty port of Weihaiwei on 30th September 1930, came up for renewal every ten years. Chongqing pre-emptively gave its consent for a renewal on 15th March 1940, some two weeks prior to the RNG’s establishment and well in advance of the lease’s expiry, but on 28th September 1940, a *démarche* from Chu Minyi countermanding Chongqing’s position was delivered to the British Consul-General in Shanghai.

The Nationalists of Jiang Jieshi, or as Chu would have it, “the Chongqing political authority,” were not to be heeded in this matter. “This is the only legal government of the Republic of China,” he declared, in reference to Nanjing. “In the name of the government of the Republic of China I hereby declare that the government has no intention of extending the period in question.”²³⁴ To underline the point, three days later a squad of Chinese sailors and Japanese marines landed on the island to take over its administration,

²³³ Robert Bickers, *Out of China: How the Chinese Ended the Era of Western Domination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 207-208.

²³⁴ Chu Minyi to His Majesty’s Ambassador, 28th September 1940, in Foreign Office Files for China, 1938-1948, FO 371/24675, Naval facilities at Weihaiwei. Japanese military operations on Hong Kong frontier. Assembly of aircraft in Hong Kong, Lashio and India and Burma for Chinese Government. Sino-Soviet trade relations, Sino-Soviet Commercial Agreement, etc.

and Chu issued a declaration that Nanjing would not recognise any diplomatic agreements concluded by Chongqing.²³⁵

Press reports at the time remained dismissive. “Nanking roared in falsetto,” went one report. “For the first time in its brief existence the Nanking regime stood face to face, from behind Japanese skirts, with the British lion.”²³⁶ The British, for their part, did not deign to respond directly to Chu’s declaration, but were also unwilling to risk a confrontation in East Asia with a regnant Japan over territory that was of limited strategic import. Instead, in a face-saving manoeuvre, the British withdrew their forces and transferred their naval depot to Hong Kong, but notified the Japanese government that they reserved their rights to the island.²³⁷

Further research in the archives of Nanjing’s Foreign Ministry will be required before it will be possible to determine the impetus and specifics of Chu’s intervention in the lease and thereby make any conclusion on the RNG’s autonomy. The point here, rather, is that the RNG cannot be written out of the process that brought an end to extraterritoriality and the European presence in China. The next step in this process occurred in Tianjin and was spurred by negotiations between Nanjing and Tokyo.

The return of the foreign concessions was formally promised in Article 7 of the Basic Treaty.²³⁸ This process took place concession-by-concession, agreement-by-agreement, and gathered pace from 1942 until 1945, roughly tracking Japan’s declining position in

²³⁵ “Liukung Islands Lease Not to Be Renewed,” *The North China Herald*, 9th October 1940.

²³⁶ “Nanking Refuses to Renew British Lease,” *The China Weekly Review*, 5th October 1940.

²³⁷ “Mr J. Arnold Urges U.S. to Abandon Passive Resistance Policy in Orient,” *The China Weekly Review*, 16th November 1940.

²³⁸ See Second Historical Archives of China, eds., *Zhonghua minguo shi dang’an ziliao huibian* vol 5, no. 2 shang (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 1997), p. 227.

the war. In a statement dated 18th March 1942, Chu reported to Wang Jingwei on the Japanese intention to begin dismantling the system of extraterritoriality and foreign concessions in occupied territory by handing over administration of the British concessions in Tianjin and Guangzhou.²³⁹ Three days later, Chu traveled by rail to Beijing as part of a trip to attend the handover ceremony for the British concession in Tianjin. The stopover in Beijing, then under the administration of the Huabei zhengwu weiyuanhui 華北政務委員會 [North China Political Council, NCPC], led by Wang Yitang 王揖唐 (1877-1948), was in part to receive a newly-discovered cache of Sun Yat-sen relics—most notably his liver, as well as other organ samples, preserved in formaldehyde in a pair of canisters, medical records and various personal effects that had been stored and forgotten at the Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMC) since Sun's death from cancer in 1925.

Upon arriving in Beijing, Chu was met at the train station by a large retinue including Wang Yitang and various high officials in the NCPC, German and Italian diplomats, and the Japanese military authorities. Such publicity was important—after all, it was only a few years earlier, in 1935, that Nationalist Party activities had been effectively suppressed in Hebei province (including Beijing and Tianjin) under the terms of the He-Umezu Agreement of 1935, while now the white star, blue sky and red earth flag of the Nationalist Party was once fluttering over the former British concession once more.

²³⁹ The general agreement to end extraterritoriality and return concessions was signed between Wang Jingwei himself and Shigemitsu Mamoru. The subsequent treaties for concessions in Tianjin, Guangzhou, Xiamen and Shanghai were signed by Chu. See Ma and Zhao, eds., *Wang wei zhengquan* [The Bogus Wang Regime] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), p. 870-884.

In a statement to the press, Chu framed the impending return of the concessions as a product of Sino-Japanese cooperation and proof of Japanese sincerity. The RNG, he argued, was carrying out the teachings of the late Sun Yat-sen, while the Japanese, in working to establish a New Order in East Asia, were realizing their own iteration of Sun's Pan-Asianism.²⁴⁰ At a symbolic level, these claims, as well as the Nationalist pageantry of the occasion, held under the auspices of a rival occupation state, represented an important assertion of influence for Chu and the RNG.

Following the handover formalities in Tianjin, Chu made the return trip to Nanjing, basking in the crowds of onlookers who gathered on the station platforms as the train bore south.²⁴¹ On arriving on 29th March in Nanjing, he was met by Wang Jingwei and other top leaders of the RNG at the train station. Echoing the pomp of Sun's funeral procession in 1929, the group, led by Wang, proceeded directly to Purple Mountain, where the preserved remains were ceremonially interred in Sun Yatsen's mausoleum.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Xuanchuanbu, ed. *Jieguan JinYue Ying zujie xingzhengquan shilu* [Assuming Administrative Control of British Concessions in Tianjin and Guangzhou: A Record] (Nanjing: Xuanchuanbu, 1942), p. 19.

²⁴¹ Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Kaisheng, who accompanied Chu on the trip, described the crowds as numbering in the thousands. See Wu Kaisheng with Wu Lilan and Lin Qi, eds., *Wu Kaisheng boshi zhuanji* [Biography of Dr Wu Kaisheng] (Hong Kong: Xianggang dadi chuban yinshua gongsi, 1993), p. 165. Wu was an interesting figure. He graduated with a doctorate of law from the University of Lyon in 1924 and later joined the Nationalist diplomatic corps as a representative to the League of Nations and as Chinese Envoy to Switzerland, during which time he came to know Chu Minyi. He also enjoyed a prominent career as a lawyer in Shanghai prior to joining the RNG. Despite differing somewhat in logistical details, Li Jingwu provides roughly the same account of the trip. See Li Jingwu, "You tan guairen guaishi," [To Speak again of Strange People and Strange Events] *Zhongwai zazhi* no. 19, vol. 4 (April, 1976), p. 59.

²⁴² Chu Minyi, "Fengying Guofu yizang laijing jingguo" [Honoured to Bear the Father of the Nation's Remains to the Capital] *Da Yazhou zhuyi* vol. 4 no. 4 (1942), p. 18-19. A portion of the preserved remains were also given to Dr Tang Yuhan 湯于翰 (1913-2014), also known as Tang Qiping 湯齊平 or Hans Tang, who served as head of the Sino-Belgian Radium Institute (中比鐳釘治療院) and spent much of his later career in Hong Kong. See Hu Duoia, ed., *Zhongshan ling dang'an shiliao xuanbian* [Selected Archival Records from Zhongshan Mausoleum] (Nanjing: Jiangsu gujichubanshe, 1986), p. 520-521.

Politically, Chu used his mission to Beijing and Tianjin as part of an effort to burnish the RNG's credentials not only as patriotic heirs to Sun Yat-sen, but as China's rightful government as well.²⁴³ The return of the concessions, as well as the emphasis on Sun Yat-sen, were part of a struggle not only to wrest political legitimacy from Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists in Chongqing, but also to bring the rival North China Political Council to heel as part of the jurisdictional squabbles and rivalries of the wider occupied territories.²⁴⁴

Despite this symbolic victory, however, the facts on the ground remained complicated. Though the administration was returned to Chinese hands, Japan's commitment to return the concessions was marred by the persistence of special rights for the Japanese military and the requirement for Chinese officials to deal with the presence of Japanese commanders and advisors in the newly-returned territories. This has led some historians to ignore Chu and the RNG's efforts to end extraterritoriality and reclaim the concessions. John Hunter Boyle argued, incorrectly, that the move to abrogate the unequal treaties came at the American initiative, with the Japanese merely playing catch-up.²⁴⁵ However much historians have glossed over these arrangements between Japan and the RNG, they had a real impact on China's wartime diplomacy.

²⁴³ On the rivalry between Chongqing and Nanjing over the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, see Yue Du, "Sun Yat-sen as Guofu: Competition over Nationalist Party Orthodoxy in the Second Sino-Japanese War," *Modern China* vol. 45, no. 2 (March 2019), p. 201-235.

²⁴⁴ An overview of the rivalry between the RNG and the NCPC, see Yu Zidao, Cao Zhenwei, Shi Yuanhua, and Zhang Yun, eds., *Wang wei zhengquan quanshi* [Complete History of the Bogus Wang Regime] vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 1206-1209. This institutional rivalry may have extended even to a personal level—Chu reportedly entertained ambitions of supplanting Wang and taking the helm of the NCPC himself. See Cai Dengshan, ed., *Wang Jingwei jituan* [The Wang Jingwei Clique] (Taipei: Duli zuojia, 2014), p. 254-257.

²⁴⁵ Boyle, *China and Japan at War*, p. 309.

The Vichy decision in May 1943 to return the French concession in Shanghai to the RNG, for example, was also not without international repercussion. In response, Chongqing severed relations with Vichy in August 1943 and, in an act of retaliation, seized control of the portion of the Haiphong-Kunming Railway that ran through Chinese territory. French sensitivities over this decision proved so strong that Chongqing found itself in a diplomatic confrontation with representatives of Charles de Gaulle's French Committee of National Liberation.²⁴⁶ Thanks to the standoff, it required some months of diplomatic wrangling before Chongqing recognized de Gaulle's faction as the rightful French government instead.²⁴⁷

As historian Ma Xiaohua has argued, these later negotiations in fact took place with both the Allies and the Japanese aware of and competing with each other in an effort to buttress their support within China.²⁴⁸ It was only on 10th October 1942—seven months after Tianjin was restored—that the Allies announced a firm commitment to abolish extraterritoriality and other special rights in China, thus abandoning their previous position that this should occur only after the war's end. Even this commitment came with the caveat that Hong Kong's status as a Crown Colony be excluded, thus preserving British colonial rule.

²⁴⁶ T.G. Li with Roman Rome, *A China Past: Military and Diplomatic Memoirs* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), p. 225-226.

²⁴⁷ Wasserstein, *Secret War*, p. 241-242. By way of contrast, Marianne Bastid-Bruguière averts her eyes to the role of the RNG and the French Concession in Shanghai in her chronology of French wartime diplomacy in East Asia and merely notes the change in recognition on the part of Chongqing. See Marie Bastid-Bruguière, "France's Deluded Quest for Allies: Safeguarding Territorial Sovereignty and the Balance of Power in East Asia," in van de Ven, *Negotiating China's Destiny*, p. 12.

²⁴⁸ Ma Xiaohua, "The Invisible War between the United States and Japan over China: A Study of the Abolition of Extraterritoriality in 1943," *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* no 15 (1998), p. 98.

By the time the Allies came around, in other words, it was to renounce control of territory that they no longer actually held, and that was in fact already in the process of being turned over (at least nominally) to the RNG or, as was the case with the British concessions in Tianjin and Guangzhou, already returned. Japan's Treaty of Alliance with the RNG, signed by Wang on 9th January 1943, was early enough to steal the show from the Allied agreement two days later, though the popular support these moves might have yielded for the RNG dissipated quickly in the face of Japan's refusal to allow genuine autonomy.

The Allies eventually did legally renounce their rights, but it was in a broader context that included the treaties with the Japanese, signed by Chu as foreign minister of the RNG and capped with lavish celebrations marking the end of extraterritoriality and the individual retrocessions.²⁴⁹ In doing so, the RNG played a part in drawing to a close the old system of extraterritoriality and treaty port privilege.

3.5 Cultural Diplomacy

In the previous section, I emphasised the consistency of approach between the RNG's foreign policy efforts to recover the Western settlements and leased territories and pre-war Nationalist policy. In the following section I turn to the RNG's cultural diplomacy, which found its equivalent in that deployed by Chongqing. Under Chu, the

²⁴⁹ Li Han-sheng records an interview with the widow of Chen Gongbo in California in 1969 in which she recalled the 1943 return of concessions as the happiest moment in Nanjing for the RNG leadership. See Lin Han-sheng, "Wang Ching-wei and Chinese Collaboration, 1940-1945," *Peace and Change* vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1972) pg 27.

RNG practised a cultural diplomacy that was at once a bid for legitimacy at home as well as a way of emphasising a shared appreciation of Buddhism as the basis for cultural exchange between China and Japan. In this, the RNG's embrace of Buddhism was similar in form to Chongqing's, albeit directed towards different diplomatic ends.

For Chu, Buddhism was a common theme that ran through his involvement in cultural organizations during the occupation and reflected an effort to re-envision the relationship between China and Japan. At a personal level, Chu found Buddhism meaningful and complementary to his embrace of science, while at the level of politics he embraced Buddhism as a channel through which China had formerly influenced Japan, and could again relate with it on terms of mutual respect. With this objective, Chu served as Chairman of the Executive Yuan's Wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui 文物保管委員會 [Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Relics, CPCPR], and of the Zhongri wenhua xiehui 中日文化協會 [Sino-Japanese Cultural Association, SJCA], along with several other smaller intellectual and cultural organizations.

Chu's interest in Buddhism dated back at least as far as 1935, when he had spearheaded a fundraising campaign to solicit donations from the Nationalist Party leadership for a monument in honour of Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), the reformist monk who had worked to promote a brand of Buddhism during the republic that was both scientific and aligned with the Nationalist Party and the Three Principles of the People.²⁵⁰ For Chu, the Buddhist scriptures were also a matter of personal expression; in 1939, for

²⁵⁰ Details on the donors and other aspects of the monument's construction were recorded on a tablet erected on the site, a rubbing of which survives in the Rare Book Room of Shanghai's Fudan University. See Chu Minyi, *Chongjian Sheshan Taixu ting ji* [Record of the Reconstruction of the Mount She Taixu Pavilion], (1935). For Taixu's Buddhism, see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 65-66.

example, he prepared a copy of the *Diamond Sutra* in his own calligraphy to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his mother's passing. At the time, such an interest in Buddhism was not unusual among China's Nationalist elites. Chu's mother-in-law, Wei Yuelang 衛月朗 (1869-1945), was also a fervent devotee, as were other party members, including Chu's former patron, Zhang Jingjiang, or the party ideologue Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891-1949) both of whom came to espouse a belief in Buddhism later in life.²⁵¹

Chu also exhibited his interest in Buddhism more publicly. In 1940, just prior to the establishment of the RNG, Chu provided the calligraphy for the Jiran stele 寂然上人碑 (*Jiran shangren bei*). Erected on the grounds of Nanjing's Qixia Temple, the Jiran stele commemorates the life of Master Jiran, who worked with Chu during the construction of the Taixu Pavilion in 1935, and who played an important role during the Nanjing Massacre by operating a shelter for refugees on the temple grounds.²⁵² The stele, which records the life of Jiran as well as his actions during the massacre, describes the refugees packing the streets and provides a neutrally-phrased lament for the tragedy of war. At a political level, Chu's commemoration of Jiran was not only part of the close association with Buddhism that he emphasised while in office, but also a discreet expression of where his sympathies lay in the war.

Xue Yu, a Hongkong-based scholar of Buddhism, has argued that grassroots Buddhist activities inside and outside occupied territory were substantially the same,

²⁵¹ For discussion of Zhang Jingjiang's turn towards Buddhism, see Nelson Chang, Laurence Chang with Song Luxia, *The Zhangs from Nanxun: A One Hundred and Fifty Year Chronicle of a Chinese Family* (Denver: CF Press, 2010), p. 260-261.

²⁵² Long Xiang and Xu Yehai, eds., *Nanjing Qixiashan zhen shi lu: Nanjing Qixia gu si mo ya shike* [Record of the Steles of Nanjing Qixiashan Temple] vol. 2 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2009), p. 129.

differing only in the political purposes to which they were put by the authorities whom they happened to fall under.²⁵³ To extend this argument beyond grassroots activities, I argue that the efforts made by political authorities in Chongqing and Nanjing to rally believers to their cause also bore parallels. In November 1939, Jiang Jieshi and other leaders of the Chongqing Nationalists provided financial support and official endorsement for Taixu to lead a Buddhist delegation to Burma, India and other Southeast Asian countries. The delegation sought international support for Chinese resistance against Japan, and was given a high-profile official send-off and reception following Taixu's return to China seven months later. Xue also recounts the use of Buddhist prayer rituals as part of Chongqing's efforts to rally believers to the cause of resistance, citing a 49-day long ceremony held in Chongqing from December 1942 to January 1943 that was attended by much of the government's top leadership.²⁵⁴

At the same time, this intermingling of religion and politics also occurred in occupied territory under the auspices of the RNG—the East Asian Buddhist Conference, which Chu chaired in April 1941, being a case in point. The event brought together key figures in the RNG, led by Chu, as well as the Japanese ambassador and lay Buddhists, mostly from the surrounding region. As might be expected, given the officials involved, the conference culminated in a call for peace between China and Japan and the inauguration of the New Order in East Asia, although not before including another discreet act of commemoration, in this case a brief visit for the assembled delegates to Pude Temple, significant mainly as the site of a mass grave containing 6,468 Chinese

²⁵³ Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressors, 1931-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 175-176.

²⁵⁴ Xue Yu, *Buddhism*, p. 92-94 and 116.

killed during the Nanjing massacre. The language used in these instances remained mostly non-partisan, couched in Buddhist terms of relieving the souls (*chaodu*) of the war dead of both China *and* Japan.

As Xue Yu observes, the conference was indeed “highly politicized,” but it was politicized in a particularly Nationalist way, taking place mostly in Nanjing’s National Great Hall (whose construction Chu oversaw as Chief Secretary of the Executive Yuan in the mid-1930s) and leaving time for delegates to make the trek out to Purple Mountain to pay their respects at Sun Yat-sen’s Mausoleum.²⁵⁵ As was the case for the authorities in Chongqing, the Nanjing leadership built on the intermingling of religious and political activities that had been apparent during Nationalist rule in the 1920s and 30s.

In July 1940, Chu, having served as Chairman of the Board of the Sino-Foreign Cultural Association 中外文化協會 (*Zhongwai wenhua xiehui*) prior to the war, was appointed as Chairman of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association, a government-backed cultural organization staffed by some of the leading figures in the RNG and the Japanese community. With a mandate to promote “friendship and good neighborliness” between China and Japan, the Association was headquartered in the buildings of an amateur arts association for civil servants (the *gongyu lianhun she* 公餘聯歡社) that Chu helped found in 1934, and grew to have branches in Shanghai, Suzhou, Guangzhou, Wuhan and other cities within the occupied territories.²⁵⁶ The association, in addition to operating a library

²⁵⁵ Zhongzhi zongjiao datong lianmeng, Zhongri wenhua xiehui, and Rihua fojiao lianmeng, eds., *Dongya fojiao dahui jiyao* [Summary of the East Asian Buddhist Conference] (Nanjing: s.n., 1941), p. iii, iv and 15.

²⁵⁶ See “Zhongri wenhua xiehui zhangcheng,” [SJCA Constitution] *Zhongbao yuekan* no. 15 (1940), p. 30.

and providing Japanese lessons, also hosted various cultural activities and published a variety of books, pamphlets, and journals.

Alongside these activities, Chu used the Association to further his project of re-configuring the relationship between China and Japan. In September 1941, while serving as Special Envoy to Japan, Chu briefly returned to China with a nearly 2-metre tall statue of Kūkai 空海 (774-835), a Japanese monk whose sojourn to China during the Tang dynasty earned him the title *Hongfa dashi* 弘法大師, or Great Propagator of Buddhist Teaching. The selection of Master Hongfa, as Chu called him, had particular significance; in a commemorative publication to mark the statue's unveiling on the grounds of the SJCA, Chu underlined Hongfa's role in cultural exchange between the two countries. "The circulation of culture," he wrote, "does not drive itself, but requires a person who is more often than not a source of culture; for the introduction and exchange of Chinese and Japanese culture, Master Hongfa is just such a person."²⁵⁷ Positioned near the entrance to the SJCA's main building, the statue was a tangible statement of Chu's vision for cultural exchange between China and Japan.

Chu followed up on this gesture when he completed his term as ambassador to Japan and returned to China; traveling by ship, he arrived in Shanghai accompanied by a 9-metre tall, 11-faced statue of Guanyin, known as the Donglai Guanyin 東來觀音 [Guanyin of the East] that he was delivering to Nanjing. Chu obtained the Guanyin from the East in Nagoya through his friendship with a retired Japanese athlete who shared his interest in Buddhism. As he explained, the purpose of bringing the statue was in order to

²⁵⁷ Chu Minyi, "Hongfa dashi tongxiang laihua zhigan" [Record of Feelings on the Statue of Master Hongfa Coming to China] in *Hongfa dashi jinian tekan* (N.P., Zhongri wenhua xiehui, 1941), p. 7.

use Buddhism to dispel preconceptions and foster friendship between the peoples of China and Japan. Shortly after the Eastern Guanyin's arrival, Chu and the RNG sent a "Thousand-Hands Guanyin" to Nagoya as a reciprocal gesture.²⁵⁸

Beneath these high-level efforts at fostering friendship between China and Japan, Chu's activities also took on a more substantial significance through a series of construction projects sponsored by the SJCA in Nanjing to restore various Buddhist sites that had sustained damage during the Japanese attack on the city. These included temples, with Jiming Temple the most prominent among them, as well as the Jinling Sutra Press, one of the most important publishers for Buddhist texts during the Republican era.²⁵⁹

In April, 1941, the Wang government established the Executive Yuan Committee on the Preservation of Cultural Relics (CPCR), with then-Foreign Minister Xu Liang as chair. The committee was staffed with a mixture of academics from National Central University, Fan Zhongyun and Li Shengwu among them, as well as various Nanjing officials and the formerly-famous Manchu Pu Dong 溥侗 (1877-1952), who composed the melody for the Qing-era anthem, *Gong Jin'ou* 鞏金甌 [Grasping the Cup of Solid Gold] in 1911, just in time for the dynasty's collapse. In addition, the CPCR operated a museum on the former site of Academia Sinica and had a research department and special

²⁵⁸ Chu Minyi, *Fengying Dong lai Guanyin jinian ce* [Welcoming Guanyin from the East Commemorative Booklet] (n.d., n.s.), p. 14. While the Guanyin from the East has been destroyed, its counterpart remains in Nagoya's Peace Park.

²⁵⁹ Pan Yimin and Pan Rui, *Chen Fangke nianpu* [Cheng Fangque: A Chronology] (Nanchang, Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2007), p. 147-149. A 1943 stele commemorating the restoration work remains on site at the Press, located in the courtyard of the burial site of Yang Wenhui, as of 2017. Information on the restoration of other sites under the RNG can also be gleaned from extant, on-site steles.

subcommittees on astronomy, natural science, and libraries staffed by Japanese and Chinese experts.²⁶⁰

First and foremost, the committee was tasked with taking possession of cultural sites, books and manuscripts, and research equipment that had fallen into Japanese hands over the course of the invasion. Much of the material had been collected by Shinjo Shinzo 新城新藏 (1873-1938), an astronomer and head of the Japanese-funded Shanghai Academy of Natural Sciences, who led a team of research staff through occupied territory in the early months of 1938 in an effort to preserve and organize the cultural objects that had been swept up by the Japanese military.²⁶¹ These collections, the vast majority of which never left the country, were then turned over to the CPCPR in several batches following its establishment.

Historian Meng Guoxiang has suggested that the establishment of the committee amounted to little more than a propaganda move on the part of the Japanese ambassador to Nanjing, Honda Kumatarō 本多 熊太郎 (1874-1948), and that the Japanese transfer of various collections to the CPCPR was simply a means of lending prestige to the Nanjing government and softening the Chinese people's will to resist.²⁶² According to Meng, from May 1941, onwards, the Committee received nearly a million books, maps,

²⁶⁰ A portion of the library's collections are recorded in Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui tushu zhuanmen weiyuanhui tushuguan, ed., *Tushu zhuanmen weiyuanhui tushuguan tushu fenlei mulu* [Library of the Special Committee on Books] (Nanjing: s.n. 1943), which includes a substantial selection of works by and about Sun Yatsen, the Three Principles of the People, and the Nationalist Party.

²⁶¹ Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui bowu zhuanmen weiyuanhui, ed. *Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui bowu zhuanmen weiyuanhui gaikuang* [Survey of the Natural Sciences Committee of the Executive Yuan Committee on the Preservation of Cultural Relics] (Nanjing: Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui, 1941), p. 11. Shinzo died in Nanjing in the midst of these efforts.

²⁶² Meng Guoxiang, *Nanjing wenhua de jienan (1937-1945)* [Cultural Disaster in Nanjing: 1937-1945] (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 2007), p. 258.

paintings, manuscripts and other objects from the Japanese, much of which, he writes, was returned because the Japanese simply couldn't be bothered with shipping back to Japan. Furthermore, Meng makes much of the terminology used to describe their return, *yijiāo* (移交), rather than *guīhuán* (歸還), which thereby sidestepped the question of who these objects originally belonged to, and suggests that such nuances reveal Japanese insincerity.²⁶³ Certainly, while the correspondence regarding the committee's establishment contains some rather supine language from Xu Liang (Chu's successor as ambassador to Japan who initially chaired the committee), thanking the Japanese for their efforts, the CPRC nevertheless served as an important platform for cultural preservation within the territory under Nanjing's control.²⁶⁴

Following his return to the Foreign Ministry in October 1941, Chu was appointed chairman of the CPRC. One year into his tenure, in December 1942, while Japanese troops were overseeing the construction of a Shinto shrine just outside Nanjing's Zhonghua Gate on the southern bank of the Qinhuai River, they came across an important archaeological discovery. In the course of the excavation, Chinese workers uncovered a copper case containing bone fragments and other relics of the monk Xuanzang, famed for bringing Buddhist scriptures to China from India during the Tang dynasty. The excavation site had been home to the Da Bao'en si 大報恩寺 [Temple of Gratitude Repaid] and Nanjing's famed Porcelain Tower during the Ming dynasty, and it was in this period that the site came to house the relics, but amidst the turmoil and destruction of

²⁶³ Meng's statistics are based on access to files held in the Second Historical Archives of China that have since been sealed. See Meng, p. 256-258.

²⁶⁴ See Xingzheng yuan mishu chu, ed. *Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui niankan* [Executive Yuan Committee on the Preservation of Cultural Relics Annual] (Nanjing: Xingzheng yuan wenwu baoguan weiyuanhui niankan she, 1942), p. 3.

the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1964), the relics were presumed lost. By the time the Japanese seized Nanjing in 1937, the site had been repurposed as a munitions factory by the warlord Sun Chuanfang 孫傳芳 (1885-1935), and therefore remained under Japanese military jurisdiction during the occupation.²⁶⁵

After learning of the relic's discovery, Chu met with the Japanese authorities to survey the excavated items and secured an oral commitment that they would be turned over to the CPCRC.²⁶⁶ The hand-over ceremony, held on 23rd February 1943 at the excavation site, was attended by the various diplomatic officials, including representatives from Germany and Italy, the new Japanese ambassador to Nanjing, Shigemitsu Mamoru as well as various Nanjing officials, and was followed by a reception ceremony held by the CPCRC at their museum near Jiming Temple, where the relics would be displayed until the completion of a purpose-built reliquary tower elsewhere in the city.²⁶⁷

As head of the committee and foreign minister, Chu oversaw their return and undertook the construction of a dedicated memorial hall in which to reinter the bones. To do so, he partnered with Mamoru in a fund-raising effort that culminated in the

²⁶⁵ Ji Shi, "Riwei shiqi Xuanzang yigu zai Ning faxian de qianqianhouhou," [The Whole Story of the Discovery of the Bones of Xuanzang in Nanjing during the Japanese Puppet Era] *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao* #38 (1991), p. 86. In contrast, a Japanese report credits the discovery to Japanese troops of the Takamori Unit and omits any mention of Chinese workers. See "Chinese Priest's Relics Discovered in Nanking," *Nippon Times* 15th September 1944.

²⁶⁶ Xuanzang fashi dinggu feng'an choubei chu, ed., *Tang Xuanzang fashi gu ta fajue fengyi jingguo chuance* [Excavating and Transferring Master Tang Xuanzang's Reliquary Tower] (Nanjing: Xuanzang fashi dinggu feng'an choubei chu, 1943), p. 1. Among the officials in attendance were German Ambassador Ernst Woermann and the Italian Charge d'Affaires Pier Pasquale Spinelli. See "Nanking Sets up Tower to Keep Buddha's Relics," *Nippon Times*, 9th July 1944.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

construction of the 7-storey reliquary that still exists in Nanjing today.²⁶⁸ In a ceremony held on 4th October 1944, one portion of the bones were reinterred in the base of the tower, with the remaining portions to be distributed amongst temples in Xi'an, Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Tokyo.²⁶⁹

3.6 Handing over Guangdong

The death of Wang Jingwei on 10th November 1944 set in motion a series of changes in the leadership of the RNG. With the outcome of the war increasingly clear and the end of the RNG's existence on the horizon, Wang's successor, Chen Gongbo, took office as acting President with the slogan, "The Party cannot be divided and the Nation must be united" (*dang bu ke fen, guo bi tongyi* 黨不可分，國必統一). Other members of the national government took up posts in the provinces in preparation for the coming transition. As is the case with much of his occupation era activities, Chu's role in these final months underline the argument made in this chapter regarding the consistency of the RNG's political and cultural diplomacy with that of the pre-war Nationalist government and that of Chongqing. More than that, however, this section also highlights the argument in the previous chapter regarding the RNG's place within Republican-era Chinese history

²⁶⁸ The reliquary was subject to a low-key restoration project, supposedly for the first since 1944, in April of 2015. See http://news.xinhuanet.com/local/2015-04/13/c_1114952812.htm, accessed on May 1st, 2015.

²⁶⁹ For an eyewitness description of the return of the relics and their subsequent distribution, see Zhang Heng, "Zai Nanjing faxian de Tang Xuanzang yigu" [The Discovery of Tang Xuanzang's Bones in Nanjing], *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao xuanji* #10 (1982), p. 227-229.

as but one more iteration of factional politics within a fragmented state. As I suggest in the following pages, this contention is not merely an analytical framework imposed in retrospect, but a reflection of how Chinese elites like Chu who served in the occupation state might have understood their environment or rationalized their choices.

For Chu, the transition following Wang's death meant a departure from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was replaced by Li Shengwu. On 26th April, 1945, Chu took take up a dual appointments as Governor of Guangdong and director of the local Pacification headquarters. It was his final post in the RNG, and one that he accepted in an effort to steer the province (and himself) through the transition of the war's end and the return of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalists, who would place him under arrest.

Historian Zhang Yun has placed Chu's move to the governorship in the context of the great re-shuffling in the regime that took place after Wang died in 1944. According to Zhang, Chu accepted the position out of a desire to create a power base for himself independent of Nanjing that would provide him with refuge after the Japanese surrender.²⁷⁰ This is an oversimplification.

In fact, there is evidence that the position was one that Chu accepted out of familial obligation rather than self-interest. Guangdong had long been of special interest to Chen Bijun, the wife of Wang Jingwei, who spent the occupation shuttling back and forth between the provincial capital and Nanjing. Several of her relatives had taken posts in the local administration, and the governorship had been held by one of her brothers or another since 1940. The first to take office, Chen Yaozu 陳耀祖 (1892-1944), had his

²⁷⁰ Zhang Yun, "Wang wei zhengquan de fumie yu hanjian de shenpan" [The Collapse of the Wang Regime and the Hanjian Trials] in Fudan daxue lishi xi Zhongguo xiandai shi yanjiushi eds., *Wang Jingwei hanjian zhengquan de xingwang* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1987), p. 455.

tenure brought to an end by an assassin's bullet on 4th April 1944; he was replaced by another member of the Chen clan, Chen Chunpu 陳春圃 (1898-1966), who eased himself into the still-warm governor's seat with understandable reluctance.²⁷¹ His tenure was short—with Wang's death a few months later, in November 1944, he began voicing his desire to quit.²⁷² Chen Bijun initially turned to yet another brother, Chen Changzu 陳昌祖 (1904-1994), who she had cared for since he was a child, to fill the post. But Chen, who was serving then as president of National Central University in Nanjing, managed to fend off her demands, made before a funereal portrait of Wang Jingwei in her Shanghai residence, that he accept the position. Only after his staunch refusal did she then turn to Chu Minyi, who was confirmed for the position on 16th April 1945.²⁷³ A bolthole it was not.

In fact, with Japan losing the war and Guangdong a possible landing place for American forces, moving from Nanjing to Guangzhou to take office as governor was not without personal risk. Chu's public statements, as recorded in the local newspaper, are filled with concern for the safety of the people and exhortations that the provincial administration remain in place and active during the approaching transition. Postwar considerations may have been an additional, albeit unstated, factor, in the sense that

²⁷¹ *Shenbao* reports that the attack took place in the course of his official duties. Other sources indicate he was felled clutching a bauble while perusing the offerings at a local antique market. See “Bei xiongtu juji: Yue Chen shengzhang shishi zhongshu chi junjing yanxing jixiong” [Struck by a Sniper Attack: Guangdong Governor Chen Dead; the Centre orders police and army to capture the culprit] *Shenbao*, April 6, 1944 and “Yue wei sheng zhuxi fuzhu jingguo” [The Assassination of Guangdong Province's Bogus Governor] *Zhonghua jidujiao weili gonghui tongxun* no. 21 (1944), p. 32.

²⁷² Nanjing shi dang'anguan, eds., *Shenxun Wang wei hanjian bilu* [Trial Records of the Bogus Wang Traitors] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), p. 286. Also see Cai, Zhou, *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 954.

²⁷³ Chan Cheong-Choo, *Memoirs of a Citizen of Early XX Century China* (Willowdale, ON.: Chan, 1978), p. 159 and Cai, Zhou, *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 1009.

successfully returning the province, and the security forces that went with it, to Nationalist rule could improve Chu's position with Jiang Jieshi when the war came to a close.

This is not inconsistent with a belief that the Nationalists in Chongqing and Nanjing were divided only on the question of Japan. Following the establishment of the RNG, Chu maintained a belief that reconciliation between Nanjing and Chongqing was possible. Conversing in Shanghai with Royal Arch Gunnison (1910-1946), an interned American journalist, during an inspection of the Chapei Internment Camp in 1943, Chu argued that the two factions were bound to reunite. "Chiang and Wang," he claimed, "are not fundamental enemies." Instead, he suggested that peace would be restored in China once the two men were able to reach some form of compromise.²⁷⁴ This was not merely a matter of idle speculating on Chu's part. Many years later, Chu's former deputy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, James Woo Kai-Seng 吳凱聲 (1900-1997), recalled that Chu facilitated talks between Wang Jingwei and the Chongqing Nationalists on co-operating or even merging the two regimes using Sun Ke's mistress, Lan Ni 藍妮 (1912-1996), who was then living in Shanghai, as an intermediary.²⁷⁵ At the very least, by 1945, with Wang's passing and Japan heading for defeat, Chu might well have accepted the

²⁷⁴ Royal Arch Gunnison, *So Sorry, No Peace* (New York: The Viking Press, 1944), p. 253.

²⁷⁵ Wu Kaisheng (James Woo Kai Seng) and Ding Xuzeng, "Wo suo zhidao de Chu Minyi" [The Chu Minyi that I Knew] *Zhongshan fengyu* no. 1 (2003), p. 48. By the 1980s, Woo had restored his reputation enough to be professionally active in China, but his account of the wartime period is difficult to verify. At his trial, for example, he argued that he co-operated with Chongqing during the war, and succeeded in having his sentence reduced from ten years to five. See "Wei dashi Wu Kaisheng mankou dixia gongzuo tichu zhengming wenjian," [Bogus Ambassador Wu Kaisheng speaks of underground work, presents documentary evidence] *Shenbao* 13th July 1946, and "Wu Kaisheng hanjian an gaipan tuxing wu nian" [Wu Kaisheng re-sentenced in hanjian case to five years] *Shenbao*, 1st August 1948, and "Wu Kaisheng, Xie Baosheng liang ni zaisheng" [Retrial for Two Traitors: Wu Kaisheng and Xie Baosheng] *Shanghai Da Gong bao*, 13th July 1946.

governorship in the belief that turning over the provincial administration intact would count in his favour for any post-war settlement.

Despite these calculations, Chu did not arrive in the province until July 6th, three full months after his appointment. It was a time of particular tension for the RNG leadership, with Germany defeated, and rumours rife of a possible American landing in China, a possibility made more tangible as American forces occupied the Philippines and Okinawa. As he related to the press on the eve of his departure from Nanjing, his arrival in the province had been delayed, first by the death of his mother-in-law, Wei Yuelang, on 27th May 1945 in Nanjing, and then by minor surgery. When he was finally able to leave the capital for Guangzhou, he frankly admitted his apprehensions of being unequal to the task ahead, but spoke of his determination to protect the province and its residents. Alluding to Guangdong's uniqueness, its historic importance as the heartland of the Chinese revolution and the birthplace of both Sun Yat-sen and Wang Jingwei, as well as the dangers the province faced, Chu projected his intentions to govern as a sort of custodian over the province. Rather than advancing a specific policy direction, he would "take the pulse of the province before making his policy prescriptions," and vowed to do his utmost to preserve the province's vitality and stabilize the livelihoods of its people.²⁷⁶

At his swearing-in on 9th July 1945, Chu's address to the attending officials and press on his intentions for the province revolved around the theme of maintaining stability and order in the province. He expressed his appreciation for the provincial authorities' success in doing so until his arrival, but also called for *lixing* 力行 [vigorous action] and

²⁷⁶ "Guangdong shengzhang Chu Minyi zuo cheng ji fei di shengyuan" [Guangdong Governor Chu Minyi Flies to the Provincial Capital Yesterday], *Gongzheng bao*, 7th July 1945.

shiying 適應 [adaptability]. Recalling Wang Jingwei's expectations for civil servants, he exhorted them to not only fulfill their duties, but to pursue them actively and to "leave no task undone." Alongside this, he emphasized the need to guide the province along its course of development.²⁷⁷ It was a challenging moment to take over the province, with the Japanese occupation forces still a very tangible presence, even as their defeat in the war had become only a matter of time.

From his arrival in Guangdong until the Japanese surrender, Chu governed the province for some five weeks. Material from the period is scant, but from what is available it appears he spent the time promoting the cultural interests that had defined his earlier career, as well as preparing the province for the transition ahead. One of his first acts after arriving was to deliver a portion of sacred relics, skull fragments from the Buddhist monk Xuanzang, to Guangzhou's Liurong Temple 六榕寺 [Temple of the Six Bamians] where they were temporarily interred in a ceremony overseen by the temple's elderly abbot, Tie Chan 鐵禪 (1865-1946).²⁷⁸ Chu also found time to lecture on and demonstrate his taiji calisthenics at an event organized by the provincial Education Bureau and the local branch of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Association.²⁷⁹ Finally, on 28th July Chu also oversaw the return of the French leased territory of Guangzhouwan, with its sleepy administrative headquarters at Fort-Bayard, to Chinese administration. The transfer marked the final chapter in the RNG's role in ending European rule in China,

²⁷⁷ "Chu shengzhang xuanshi jiuzhi jiuren hou fabiao tanhua" [Governor Chu sworn-in; issues statement after assuming office], *Gongzheng bao*, 10th July 1945.

²⁷⁸ "Sanzang fashi dinggu juxin yingjie dianli" [Welcoming Ceremony held for Xuanzang Skull Fragments], *Gongzheng bao*, 11th July 1945. Tie was later charged as a collaborator.

²⁷⁹ "Shengzhang shifan taiji ticao" [Governor demonstrates Tai-ji exercises], *Gongzheng bao*, 7th August 1945.

although little changed on the ground. The territory's French expatriates remained imprisoned, languishing in the vaults of the Banque de l'Indochine, while Chu appointed local opium kingpin Tsang Hoc-Tam 陳學談 (1882-1966)—a complex figure not unlike Du Yuesheng who had ties to Chongqing—to a formal post in the new Chinese administration. Ever the survivor, Tsang remained influential after the Chongqing Nationalist takeover saw the territory reconstituted as the municipality of Zhanjiang, and then served as both a local police chief and Zhanjiang's representative in the National Assembly.²⁸⁰

Chu's larger task, however, was overseeing the political transition. Some of these efforts took place prior to the Japanese surrender, when the province was struck by bombing raids and racked with rumours of an attack by forces loyal to Chongqing or an impending American invasion. After a particularly severe 3-day bombing raid on the city by American B-52 bombers that began on 12th July, Chu issued a declaration as governor and director of the Pacification Bureau warning that those who took advantage of the disruption brought by the bombing to loot or spread rumours would be strictly punished.²⁸¹ Chu also adopted a grassroots approach, first organizing a sporting benefit for a local hospital, and then convening a meeting on 4th August with local elites in the city of Guangzhou to solicit funds for medical supplies. With memories of the raids fresh

²⁸⁰ “Ri jiaohuan Guangzhouwan zujie Chu shengzhang te fabiao tanhua” [Japan hands over Guangzhouwan Concession, Governor Chu issues special talk] *Gongzheng bao* 28th July 1945 and “Guangdong sheng zhengfu juxing yi er san ci shengzheng huiyi” [Guangdong Provincial Government Holds 123rd Governmental Meeting] *Zhongshan ribao*, 21st July 1945. For a broader overview of the concession and a detailed accounting of its demise, see Steven Pieragastini, “State and Smuggling in Modern China: The Case of Guangzhouwan/Zhanjiang,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* no. 25 (December 2017), p. 122-125.

²⁸¹ “Sheng fu sui shu hui bugao yancheng raoluan zhi'an daitu” [Provincial Govt and Pacification Bureau Jointly Declare Severe Punishment for evildoers who disturb public order], *Gongzheng bao*, 22nd July 1945.

in mind, the meeting was part of an attempt to enlist the city's social organizations and elites in the government's relief efforts for refugees, and yielded 17 million in pledged donations.²⁸²

Nine days later, just before the Japanese surrender, Chu took office as commander of the local garrison command, a step that he described as an effort to maintain public order, and warned again of harsh consequences for those who took advantage of the uncertain situation.²⁸³ With the power vacuum left by the Japanese surrender on 15th August, 1945, the issue of public order became all the more urgent, leading to a series of messages from Chu and other members of the provincial government calling for officials to remain in their posts and for citizens to co-operate in maintaining the peace.²⁸⁴ Four days later, he addressed provincial government officials, announcing to them the dissolution of the Nanjing government, and exhorting them to remain at their posts and to do their utmost to fulfill their duties until they were taken over by the returning government.²⁸⁵

²⁸² For the sporting event, see “Chu shengzhang guanhuai cishan, faqi paiqiusai choukuan” [Governor Chu embraces charity, sponsors volleyball fundraising competition] *Gongzheng bao*, 1st August 1945, “Paiqiu bisai mingri juxing” [Volleyball match to be held soon], *Gongzheng bao*, 8th August 1945, and “Jinri paiqiu cishan sai yuanlaodui dui shengliandui” [Today's Charitable Volleyball Match: Old Guard vs Provincial United], *Gongzheng bao*, 11th August 1945. For the meeting, see “Chu shengzhang zhao shenshang chahui zuhui jiuji bei zai shimin” [Governor Chu convenes local elites at tea party to fundraise for refugees], *Gongzheng bao*, 8th August 8, 1945. Given the circumstances, the fate of the pledged funds is uncertain.

²⁸³ “Zuo Guangzhou jingbei siling jiuzhi” [Guangzhou Garrison Command takes office yesterday] *Gongzheng bao* 12th August 1945.

²⁸⁴ “Sheng jingwuchu tongling suo shu jinshou gangwei” [Provincial garrison orders officials to remain in their posts] (August 16, 1945) and “Guangdongsheng zhengfu, zhu Guangzhou suiqingzhuren gongshu bugao” [Guangdong Provincial Government and the Guangzhou Pacification Office Joint Notice] *Gongzheng bao*, 19th August 1945.

²⁸⁵ “Chu shengzhang te xunmian suoshu yanshou zhiwu weichi zhi'an,” [Governor Chu exhorts officials to remain in their posts and maintain law and order] *Gongzheng bao* 20th August 1945.

On 20th August, an agent of the Military Statistics Bureau, Zheng Jiemin 鄭介民 (1897-1959), visited Chu at the Governor's Residence, urging him to depart the city for Chongqing, where Jiang Jieshi was waiting to meet with him, an offer to which he warily demurred.²⁸⁶ That same day, Chu cabled Jiang to report on the situation in the city. Having been urged by Chen Gongbo to turn over the province as soon as possible, Chu noted that Luo Zhuoying 羅卓英 (1896-1961), the Nationalist general who had been slated to take charge as Chairman of the province, had yet to arrive. "Advance units and shock brigades," he reported, "have disregarded Your Excellency's order to remain in position, and have been entering the province to take over the military and the government." Invoking the danger these units, as well as various "bandits," posed to public order in the province, Chu urged Jiang to speed up the arrival of his replacement, or appoint someone else who could take charge, and pledged to do his utmost to maintain the situation until then.²⁸⁷

More plaintively, he also appealed to armed forces within the province not to take any independent actions or attempt to enter the city of Guangzhou without explicit orders from Jiang so as to avoid disturbing the public order or causing misunderstanding.²⁸⁸ Dated 20th August, it would be his last public statement until his trial; on the next day, Zhao Guizhang 招桂章 (1889-1953), who had hitherto served as his subordinate in the

²⁸⁶ Zhu Jinyuan and Chen Zuen, *Wang wei shoushen jishi* [Trial Records of the Bogus Wang Group] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 80.

²⁸⁷ "Chu shengzhang zhi dian Jiang weiyuanzhang cuqing Luo zhuxi li Yue" [Governor Chu telegrams Chiang to hasten Chairman Luo's arrival in the province], *Gongzheng bao*, 21st August 1945.

²⁸⁸ "Guangzhou jingbei silingbu bugao" [Notice from the Guangzhou Garrison Command], *Gongzheng bao*, 23rd August 1945.

local garrison command, was appointed by Jiang as head of the newly-established Guangzhou Advance Forces General Command and then took charge of the city.²⁸⁹

Two days later, Zheng Jiemin again appeared at Chu's residence, this time bearing a telegram from Jiang Jieshi. Written in a familiar tone, the telegram stated that Chu would be punished for "going over to the enemy while the whole country resisted," but noted that in light of his many years of work for the revolution his case could be treated leniently. Now, with China having emerged victorious, Jiang hoped to discuss post-war arrangements, and had arranged a plane to bring Chu and Chen Bijun to Chongqing in the next few days.²⁹⁰ After some delay, the two agreed to depart from Guangzhou on 12th September, but on leaving the city were taken into custody and instead flown north to Nanjing in preparation for trial.

3.7 Conclusion

At the level of biography, Chu's activities in the RNG as representative of his country to the outside world presents a series of intriguing overlaps with his prewar career. Although drawn more deeply into the political sphere as foreign minister than was the case for his activities prior to 1940, Chu's interests in Buddhism and his adherence to

²⁸⁹ "Guangzhou xianqian jun zongsilingbu chengli, Zhao zongsiling jie junzheng" [Guangzhou Advance Forces General Command Headquarters established, Commander Zhao takes over military and government], *Gongzheng bao*, 24th August 1945. Nonetheless, Zhao was soon taken into custody, put on trial and sentenced by the returning Nationalists for his role in the RNG. See "Yue junshi jujian: Zhao ni Guizhang deng panxing," [Arch Military Traitors in Guangdong: Traitor Zhao Guizhang and others sentenced] *Shanghai Da Gongbao*, 28th February 1947.

²⁹⁰ Zhu Jinyuan and Chen Zuen, *Wang wei shoushen jishi* [Trial Records of the Bogus Wang Group] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 80 and 81.

the Nationalist Party all found expression during the occupation and shaped the cultural and political diplomacy Chu practiced as foreign minister for the RNG.

In Chinese history, the history of the occupation, and the RNG's role in it, has yet to be reckoned with, and has instead, to borrow a phrase from historian Henry Rousso, been placed in parentheses. In France, the Vichy regime suffered a similar fate after its dissolution when a triumphant Charles de Gaulle arrived in Paris, declaring that Vichy "was and is null and void."²⁹¹ Such sentiment finds its scholarly equivalent in the continued skirting of the occupation and the RNG in research on wartime China.

This chapter has emphasised the significance of the RNG's foreign policy in the context of wartime China and, in line with the arguments presented in Chapter 2, argued that the political and cultural diplomacy practiced by Chu Minyi should be seen as evidence of consistency, as a direct outgrowth of that practiced by the Nationalist Party in prewar China. In this regard, RNG's foreign policy agenda also dove-tailed neatly with the pre-war career of Chu Minyi, who had served on committees for the retrocession of the Belgian concession in Tianjin in the early 1930s. The RNG's quest to restore China's sovereignty and end the existence of foreign concessions and leased territories along China's coast built on Nationalist Party efforts that long pre-dated the war. Similarities are also visible in the promotion of Buddhism, long popular amongst Nationalist Party elites, which Chu embarked on as part of his cultural diplomacy.

The arguments of this chapter are not limited, however, to highlighting genealogical ties between Nanjing and Chongqing that have already been sketched out in brief in other scholarship. As historian David P. Barrett observed, "Both in its major features and in the

²⁹¹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since World War II*, (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 16-17.

principal problems it confronted, the Wang regime closely resembled the Nationalist Government, both as it existed prior to the outbreak of war in 1937 and as it existed in its southwest China redoubt.”²⁹² More than any family resemblance, the significance of the RNG’s foreign policy in particular is its role in the process that ended Western privilege in China in the form of extraterritoriality and foreign concessions.

This effort, which was in motion prior to the outbreak of war, might well have fallen by the wayside as an increasingly embattled Chongqing sought support from the very powers who had for so long guarded their rights and privileges in some of China’s most important centres. Instead, the tempo of declarations and agreements from Western capitals to restore territory they no longer controlled to Chinese control appeared in concert with the agreements signed by Nanjing. The agreements signed by Chongqing (which, combined with the Japanese failure to honour their commitments, prevented an unvarnished victory for the RNG) ensured that following the end of the war there would not be a restoration of the status quo ante bellum. Strikingly, all of the concessions and leased territories that were handed over to RNG administration remained in Chinese hands after the war. In this regard, it is surely significant that the only territory that was not transferred to the RNG during Japanese occupation—the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong—was also the only one that remained in foreign hands after the war and, in something of an irony, provided a refuge for ex-RNG officials and their families who fled the PRC.²⁹³

²⁹² David P. Barrett, “The Wang Jingwei Regime, 1940-1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China,” in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932-1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 103.

²⁹³ These included Chen Kan, son of Chen Gongbo; Fan Zhongyun, deposed president of National Central University; Li Shengwu, who served as Minister of Education; Liu Qiong, the widow of Huaihai Governor Hao Pengju; as well as Wang Jingwei’s children, among others.

This is not to overstate the accomplishments of the RNG, nor to idealise the experience of serving the occupation state in Nanjing by bestowing laurels for any diplomatic achievements, but only to highlight its overlooked influence on how the war unfolded. Despite the return of administrative control over the former concessions, the continued Japanese occupation of China greatly diminished the RNG's prestige, undercut its diplomatic efforts, and disillusioned Japan's supposed diplomatic partners.

Primary sources on how the occupation was experienced by those who served the occupation state are scant and interpreting what little is available is challenging, but a letter from a senior official under Chu indicates a high level of frustration and disappointment. Writing less than a year after the RNG's establishment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director-General for the Americas (and former lecturer at McGill), Hu Tao-wei, offered a rather bleak assessment of morale within the government: "Nanking is good for nobody's health, but I have to hang onto it just the same," he wrote. "Everybody is just wasting his life in maintaining his life; so I am doing the same thing...Everything here remains what it has been. Politics seems slow-moving, and our gov't is not a going-concern anyway."²⁹⁴ Evidently dissatisfied, Hu left the Ministry to return to academia, serving as Dean of the College of Business and Law at Nanjing's National Central University, where his daughter was a student. Whatever the motivations of those who, like Hu, took office in the RNG, it is clear they did not take much pleasure in it.

²⁹⁴ Tao-Wei Hu, Letter to Warren S. Hunsberger, in *Japan and America, c1930-1955 The Pacific War and the Occupation of Japan Series Two: The O'Ryan Mission to Japan and Occupied China, 1940 The Whitney Diary; Correspondence and Papers of Dr Whitney, General O'Ryan and other members of the Economic and Trade Mission*. T.W. Hu worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1940-1942. In the years prior to the war, he authored *The Case for China: Abolition of Special Foreign Privileges and Immunities* (Beijing: Peking Express Press, 1926), among other works.

Finally, this chapter has also examined Chu's role in the return of Guangdong province to Nationalist rule under Jiang Jieshi. Whatever his objections to Jiang, Chu evidently viewed himself as a Nationalist and despite the wartime divide between Nanjing and Chongqing, worked toward co-operation between the two. At the end of the war, Chu worked to facilitate the province's smooth transition, urging Jiang to appoint a replacement and readily giving way when Jiang appointed Chu's subordinate, Zhao Guizhang, to replace him.

That Chu's belief in an eventual political solution to the split between Nanjing and Chongqing proved false was a personal tragedy for Chu. In his earlier career, Chu enjoyed great success as a cultural mediator, promoting Chinese culture in Europe and helping China adapt and adopt from Europe in roles that benefited from his cosmopolitan mindset and education. It was a cosmopolitan mindset that influenced even his choice of dress, leading him to appear over the years dressed in finely cut Western suits, sleek leather riding boots brought back from France, or austere Sun Yat-sen suits, depending on the occasion. At his post-war trial in the Jiangsu Superior Court, Chu swept into the Suzhou courtroom clad in traditional Chinese scholar's robes and a jaunty beret, lending a certain Parisian air to the grim proceedings. As he quickly discovered, however, his contributions, arguments and explanations—along with the consistencies highlighted above—all counted for little in a trial that focused narrowly on the fact of his participation in an outlawed regime. On the morning of 23rd August 1946, having exhausted multiple appeals, he was executed by firing squad.

Apart from his wife, few (then or now) saw fit to speak in his defence. In this, politics may well have played a part. On July 5th 1946, in support of what would be Chu's

final appeal, Xian Guansheng 洗冠生 (1887-1952), the founder of Kwan Sun Yuen Co. 冠生園公司, who had a longtime relationship with Chu, traveled to Nanjing to provide evidence regarding Chu's role in rescuing several employees who were arrested by the Japanese kempeitai as the company moved their operations into the interior.²⁹⁵ Xian's appearance in Nanjing aroused enough negative attention that he issued a denial in the press that he was trying to "rescue" the "arch-traitor."²⁹⁶ According to the Jiangsu Superior Court, however, these kinds of interventions were irrelevant. With regard to testimony by Xian and others who received Chu's aid, the Court ruled in 1946 that even if it could be proven that Chu's actions were of benefit to the people, this did not necessitate a reduction of his [death] sentence or provide grounds for a new trial. The guilty verdict from the charge of conspiring with an enemy country and plotting against the nation was sufficient to maintain a guilty verdict and sentence of execution.²⁹⁷ In the end, it was left to old family friends, the proprietors of Suzhou's Caizhizhai Sweet Shop

²⁹⁵ It should be noted that Chu's relationship with Xian and the company (which remains in operation today) was longstanding, dating back at least to 1934, and at one point in time Chu even served as chairman of the Board of Directors. When one of the company managers, Xue Shouling 薛壽齡 (1888-1943), passed away in late 1943, Chu expressed his condolences to the family, who included Chu's calligraphy in the opening pages of Xue's obituary book. See Cheng Daosheng and Yu Shao'an, "Xian Guansheng yu Guansheng yuan," [Xian Guansheng and Kwan Sun Yuen] *Sichuan wenshi ziliao jicui no. 3 jingji gongshang bian* (1996), p. 529-530, and Xue Xiaoyuan, Xue Shuangyuan and Xue Shunyuan, "Xue Shouling xiansheng fugao" [Obituary of Mr Xue Shouling] (N.p.: n.p., 1943), unpaginated.

²⁹⁶ See "Xian Guansheng: wei Chu ni zuozheng," [Xian Guansheng testifies on Behalf of Traitor Chu] *Ta Kung Pao*, 5th July 1946 and Mao Sheng, "Xian Guansheng fu jing weile kai zhidian," [Xian Guansheng visits the capital to open a branch store] *Haitao* no. 20, (1946), p. 10.

²⁹⁷ "Chu ni Minyi jinchen qiangjue: shenqing zaisheng Su Gao Yuan caiding bohui," [Traitor Chu Minyi executed this morning: Jiangsu Superior Court rules against a retrial] *Shenbao*, 23rd August 1946.

采芝齋, to see to his funeral arrangements.²⁹⁸ Chu's final plea that his remains be donated to the Soochow Hospital went unheeded; instead, he was buried in Shanghai.

None of this should distract from the fact that the political norm of factionalism and fragmentation that characterized Chinese pre-war politics would have guided many of the assumptions made by Chu and his colleagues when they took office in the RNG. That Chu faced the consequences when these assumptions proved out-dated in 1946 suggests how greatly China was transformed over the course of the war, moving away from the fractured state where such factional politics were the norm to one that demanded greater unity, at least in theory. In the following chapter, I turn to the case of Hao Pengju, onetime governor of Huaihai province, and his subordinates as they navigated the end of the war and the emergence of these new politics norms that began rendering pre-war factional politicking obsolete.

²⁹⁸ Xu Sen, "Caizhizhai tangguo dian shi" [History of the Caizhizhai Sweet Shop] *Suzhou shizhi ziliao xuanji* no. 7 (1987), p. 102-103.

4. Realignments: From Occupation to Civil War

4.1 Introduction: The Persistence of Warlord Politics

The declaration of surrender by the Japanese Emperor on 15th August 1945 may have brought an end to the Second World War, but in China the ensuing peace proved fleeting. As I have suggested in the previous two chapters, the establishment of occupation states in China such as the RNG was reflective of the longer pattern of political fragmentation and factional politics that characterized the Republican era. In other words, the RNG was part of a long-term breakdown of the Chinese state that also, through the intervention of Japanese invasion, eventuated in the ersatz Empire of Manchukuo, the North China Political Affairs Council, the Mongol United Autonomous Government 蒙疆聯合自治政府 (*Mengjiang lianhe zizhi zhengfu*) of Prince Demchugdongrub (1902-1966), and various other occupation states. And as shown by the career of Chu Minyi, many of the policies and politics of the RNG were also traceable back to important antecedents in the period.

In this chapter, I examine the politics of occupation and their legacy in the post-war period through the lens of factional politics and political fragmentation, in this case exploring how these patterns persisted after the Japanese surrender in 1945, as well as how they have been re-conceptualized. As I discuss below, the occupation period saw the partial re-emergence of Feng Yuxiang's Northwest Army as a power bloc within the RNG, albeit under the leadership of a clutch of Feng's former lieutenants, chief among them Hao Pengju. As Hao's experience suggests, the pattern of political fragmentation

and factional switching that I have described in the previous chapters persisted at least until Hao's capture by Communist forces in 1947. As I argue, however, this sort of "warlord politics," engaged in by both sides of the emerging Civil War, posed a challenge to a conventional narrative of collaboration versus resistance. In the case of Hao, subsequent authors have resolved this challenge by instead invoking Hao as a symbol of moral failure.

Before proceeding, a brief interjection: in previous chapters, and in most of the scholarship on Chinese collaboration during the Second World War, the emphasis has been on civilian figures rather than military officials. Ren Yuandao 任援道 (1891-1980), for example, held high positions in first the Reformed Government and then played a role in the RNG's pacification campaigns before returning with his troops to the Chongqing fold at the end of the war, yet he remains nearly unknown, and the tens of thousands who served under him remain nameless and faceless ciphers.²⁹⁹ At the end of the war, politicians and intellectuals who served in the various occupation states and their institutions faced criminal prosecution, with most of the leading occupation officials

²⁹³ Ren Yuandao remains worthy of further research. According to one account, Ren returned his allegiance to Jiang Jieshi only in 1942, following the arrival in Nanjing of his brother, Ren Xiping (dates unknown), who had been dispatched by Chongqing's *Juntong* (Zhou Fohai notes in his diary that Ren Xiping was a Chongqing operative). See Zhou Fohai and Cai Dejin, eds., *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 802-803 and Zheng Renjia, "Ren Yuandao," accessed at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/6/06121301.htm> on 10th September 2018. An account by Ren Yuandao's son, Ren Zuxin, however, claims that Ren Yuandao joined the Reformed Government of Liang Hongzhi upon its formation in 1938 on orders from Song Ziwen and Jiang Jieshi, whom he had known since the Xinhai Revolution. Ren then continued to operate in Nanjing under Wang Jingwei's RNG. According to this account, Ren Yuandao successfully resisted Zhou Fohai's efforts to sideline him in 1940 by revealing his Chongqing connections to Wang Jingwei, and then was appointed by Chongqing to maintain order in and around Nanjing following the Japanese surrender before taking up an appointment in the Taihu region, tasked with eliminating communists, at the end of 1945. Ren retired soon after, moving first to Hong Kong before ending his days in Scarborough, Ontario. All of this is difficult to verify, although Zhou did record in his diary in 1940 that Ren was "extremely capable, but not easy to deal with," which might lend credence to the idea of a rivalry between the two in the early days of the RNG. See Ren Yuandao, *Qingping ci zhuxi* [Annotated Qingping Poetry] (Xinbei: Shangyi shuwei keji yinshua, 2013), p. 6-7 and 356-357, and Zhou and Cai, *Zhou Fohai riji*, p. 322. Further research is required, but if the account by Ren's son proves accurate, the idea that the man in charge of one of the RNG's main military forces was a Chongqing agent, and known as such to Wang Jingwei, is quite significant.

sentenced to life imprisonment or execution; their role in Chinese political life ended abruptly after the Japanese surrender. Military collaboration, however, was the far more common phenomenon, numbering in the hundreds of thousands over the course of the war, yet the numbers subjected to any kind of formal judicial process either in the postwar trials in Suzhou, Nanjing and elsewhere, as was the case for the politicians, or in various other courts-martial, were far fewer. This chapter serves as a preliminary corrective by offering a case study of a military official whose became caught up in the politics of occupation.

As a period in Chinese history, recent scholarship points to the utility of being observant to the persistence of armed conflict after the Japanese surrender in 1945 and on into the latter half of the 1940s. This involves, as Hans van de Ven puts it, not “artificially separating China’s War of Resistance from the Nationalist-communist civil war,” and instead considering an enduring phenomenon—the Chinese people at war—that persisted until as late, for example, as the temporary armistice that paused the Korean War in 1953.³⁰⁰ So late a date goes beyond the end of the political fragmentation I describe, but it is indicative of the importance of examining broader political patterns and conflicts across conventional periodizations.

Unlike the end of the war, the endpoint in the political fragmentation I describe took place more gradually. On the day the war ended, these patterns still appeared very much in place. Japanese occupation states operated out of Nanjing, Beijing, Changchun (Xinjing) and Zhangjiakou (Kalgan); the Chinese Nationalists of Jiang Jieshi ruled from Chongqing, and the Chinese Communists were secure in Yen’an. Military figures like

³⁰⁰ Hans van de Ven, *China at War*, p. 5.

Long Yun 龍雲 (1884-1962) and Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883-1960) maintained their own fiefdoms from Kunming and Taiyuan, respectively.

That this all would change was not immediately apparent when the Japanese surrendered in 1945, and China's political practitioners were slow to adapt. Space for warlord-managed fiefdoms and military cliques in China was greatly undermined during the Second World War, with the country dividing along a largely Nationalist-Communist divide over the course of the Civil War, and then finally withered away entirely with the establishment of CCP rule in 1949.

As General He Yingqin reported, Japanese forces, which numbered some 1,283,000 at the time of the formal surrender ceremony in Nanjing on 9th September 1945, remained undefeated and at their posts throughout the China theatre, awaiting the arrival of Chinese army troops from the interior.³⁰¹ Much beleaguered, they began trickling into occupied territory, by airlift, truck transport, or on foot, to begin the task of taking over from the Japanese and their local collaborators. At the same time, Communist forces made their own bid for territory, rushing to gain positional advantage over Chongqing troops as a power vacuum beckoned in the occupied territories.

In Nanjing, Chen Gongbo, the RNG's acting Chairman (and successor to the now-deceased Wang Jingwei) convened a meeting of the Central Political Council, which passed a motion to dissolve the government and leave in its place a Nanjing Provisional Political Affairs Committee 南京臨時政務委員會 (*Nanjing linshi zhengwu weiyuanhui*) tasked with maintaining order and "calmly awaiting reorganization in service to the

³⁰¹ He Yingqing, *Report on the Acceptance of the Japanese Surrender* (Nanjing: International Department, Ministry of Information, 1946), p. 4.

country.”³⁰² Beneath the bureaucratic declaration, however, uncertainty lurked. Chen and the other RNG ministers in Nanjing had debated over whether to rally their troops to contend with the Nationalists and the Communists as a force to reckon with, or try to throw in their lot with Chongqing. While the latter option prevailed, uncertainty remained for the civilian leadership.

In contrast to José P. Laurel (1891-1959) of the Philippines or Aung-san (1915-1947) of Burma, there are few instances of individuals who emerged from Japan’s various occupation states in China who managed to maintain a role in political life over the course of the post-war transition period. A day before Chongqing forces were to arrive in Nanjing, Chen Gongbo and a handful of associates flew to Japan to ride out the transition—this was an option taken by (or available to) only a very select few. Though some, like Chen Qun 陳群 (1890-1945), Kiang’s successor as president of the Examination Yuan, ended their lives in despair, others seemed to believe that a political solution to their predicament remained possible and remained in post, making no effort to be inconspicuous or avoid arrest.³⁰³ Kiang Kang-hu was arrested late at night at his family home in Beijing, where he had settled into retirement.³⁰⁴ On the outskirts of

³⁰² “Nanjing guomin zhengfu jiesan gaiwei linshi zhengweihui chexiao wu yuan ji waibu yidai jieshu,” [Nanjing National Government Dissolved, Changed into Provisional Political Committee, Five Yuans Repealed, Foreign Ministry Awaiting Termination] *Shenbao* 17th August 1945.

³⁰³ For a window into the wartime activities of Chen Qun, see the elegantly translated account by Zhu Yayun, “2012: Remembering the Bibliophile Huang Shang,” in William Sima and Zhu Yayun, eds., *The China Heritage Annual 2017* accessed at <http://chinaheritage.net/annual/2017/reform/dreaming-of-jiangnan/on-the-depository-of-extant-ancient-writings/> on 6th May 2018.

³⁰⁴ Trial records published in 2004 include a “confession” that was supposedly written by Kiang in October, 1945 after being taken into custody by the Juntong in Beijing. A report in *Shenbao* and Kiang’s own memoirs indicate he was not arrested until an evening raid on his home on 5th December 1945. See Nanjing shi dang’anguan, ed., *Shenxun Wang wei hanjian bilu* [Hearing Records of the Traitors of the Bogus Wang Regime] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), p. 357 and Zhang Jianmei, “Cong Beijing jiefu Nanjing: Ju jian shisi ren qunxiang,” [Sent under guard from Beijing to Nanjing: Scene of 14 Big Traitors] *Shenbao* 11th June 1946. Also important to note, Kiang’s resignation from his post in the

Nanjing, Li Shengwu, who had served as Minister of Justice, of Education and lastly, as Chu's successor in Foreign Affairs, was marched from his mansion into a waiting jeep by agents from Chongqing before the eyes of his startled son.³⁰⁵ Chan Cheong-choo, the President of National Central University, gamely reported to the offices of a newly-arrived Chongqing bureaucrat, only to be deprived of the car he arrived in and subsequently much of his property.³⁰⁶ In Shanghai, the RNG-appointed mayor, Zhou Fohai, secured an appointment from Chongqing as Commander of the Nanjing-Shanghai Area Special Action Unit and, as historian Gerald Bunker argued, even briefly appeared as though he would navigate the transition relatively unscathed. Zhou's luck finally ran out once ordered to report to Chongqing, and he later died in prison in Nanjing while serving a life sentence.³⁰⁷ And as mentioned in the previous chapter, far to the south, Chu Minyi made a similar attempt at stage-managing the return of Guangdong Province to Jiang Jieshi's forces, only realizing his impending arrest while being ferried in an open watercraft out to a waiting seaplane on the Pearl River on 12th September 1945.³⁰⁸ Such scenes, which took place across the country in the weeks and months following Japan's surrender, were indicative of the consolidation that was taking place in China's civilian politics.

Examination Yuan went unrecorded in Liu Shoulin *et al*, eds., *Minguo zhiguan nianbiao* [Chronological Table of Republican Officials] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), p. 1049 where he is listed as president through 1945 (ie, until the RNG's dissolution).

³⁰⁵ Charles N. Li, *The Bitter Sea*, p. 33.

³⁰⁶ Chan Cheong-choo, "Memoirs of a Citizen," p. 161.

³⁰⁷ Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy*, p. 280-283.

³⁰⁸ Zhu Jinyuan and Chen Zuen, *Wang wei shoushen jishi* [Trial Records of the Bogus Wang Group] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988), p. 80 and 81.

Despite the swift collapse of the various occupation states, however, military collaborators were more difficult to elbow aside and continued to play a role in Chinese politics. In the case selected for this chapter, Hao Pengju and his military clique's relative longevity in Chinese politics provide an exemplary example of the more general phenomenon of fragmented politics and factional politicking that I have identified in the preceding pages (Wu Huawen 吳化文 (1904-1962) is the nearest counter-example; while Hao defected to *and* from the Communist camp after the war, Wu defected *to* it, where he remained). Other collaborationist military figures who faced similar circumstances include Sun Liangcheng 孫良誠 (1893-1952), Zhang Lanfeng 張嵐峰 (1902-1952), and various others.³⁰⁹

Warlords like Hao and others potentially faced a double stigma. Not only could they be condemned as collaborators, but they also emerged from another condemned class: warlords. In the words of the American war correspondent Jack Beldon, China's warlords were "a fascinating group of half-educated, *dispossessed* [emphasis added] farm boys who suddenly rose from obscurity between 1911 and 1926 and almost overnight became field marshals, generalissimos and warlords, with dominion over regions as large and populous as many modern European states." As Beldon noted, "These quondam rulers of China have a bad reputation abroad...[and] high ideals of a romantic, if somewhat confused, nature."³¹⁰ And among those "warlords" who served in the collaborationist camp, Hao held a relatively distinctive position as one of the "last men standing," enduring as a force to reckon with until 1947.

³⁰⁹ Both Sun and Zhang died in captivity in unclear circumstances.

³¹⁰ Jack Beldon, *China Shakes the World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 324-325.

Sources on Hao are scant; he left nothing by way of private writings, nor was prosecuted alongside other officials of the occupation states. What remains—newspaper accounts, propaganda pieces, secondary scholarship, and reminiscence pieces of those who knew him (mostly written and published as part of the “literary and historical materials” serials produced by various local or provincial agencies)—makes the process of assembling a biography of Hao as much an exercise in identifying what we cannot know as in determining the basic facts of his life—even the circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear.³¹¹

In surveying the course of Hao Pengju’s career, two themes become apparent—that of an individual navigating the fragmented political landscape of Republican China, as well as a certain alienation (or dispossession, as Beldon would have it), or lack of enduring tie to any particular faction or institution. In a 1945 essay, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote of collaboration as “a phenomenon of disintegration,” attractive to those he dubbed “internal exiles,” or who were not firmly moored and thus susceptible to what he described as a “phenomenon of disassimilation.”³¹² For Sartre, this was a matter of culture or mentality and the circumstances of particular individuals, and it is not clear that any significant number of such individuals who sincerely believed in the Japanese imperial project could be found within the ranks of the occupation states in China proper. Despite this, Sartre’s reflections on the question which frames his essay—What is a

³¹¹ While most sources indicate he was shot while trying to escape in 1947, Zhang Runsan, writing in 1963 in his position as a member of the Henan Provincial Political Consultative Conference, reports that Hao was executed during the Campaign to Suppress Counter-revolutionaries in the early 1950s. See Zhang Runsan, “Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju,” [The Fickle Hao Pengju] *Henan wenshi ziliao* no. 30 (1989), p. 94.

³¹² Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Aftermath of War (Situations III)*, translated by Chris Turner (London: Seagull Books, 2008), p. 44-49.

Collaborator?—are worthy of consideration in terms of those Chinese who were not strongly tied to any particular institution of the Nationalist state of Jiang Jieshi, or any other political faction—those who, like Hao, slipped between the organizational cracks and factions in Chinese political life.

As the course of Hao's career suggests, it might be more accurate to say that rather than a matter of individuals as internal exiles, or disassimilated segments of the population, these were actors in a time when the nation and its institutions were so fragmented as to be unable to serve as a point around which to rally—or could only do so for a limited segment of the population. With the spread of Japanese occupation, most those who had been more directly affiliated with Jiang Jieshi and the institutions of his administration over the course of the 1920s and 30s could follow Jiang's Nationalist to Chongqing and take the path of armed resistance to Japan. For a military officer like Hao, China's fragmented politics left no obvious national institution to cleave to; his career path ascending the ranks in the Northwest Army of Feng Yuxiang proved to be a dead end, one faction among many that would eventually be eliminated over the course of the Republican era and the war with Japan.

4.2 Hao Pengju

Hao Pengju was born in 1903 in Wenxiang County in present-day Lingbao, a walled city situated on the southern shore of the Yellow River in the northwest corner of Henan Province. Located on the route between Luoyang and Xi'an, the city was small, but not without some claim to fame—in 1902, the Empress Dowager Cixi and the Guangxu

Emperor reportedly overnighted there while en route back to Beijing after fleeing the capital during the Boxer Uprising, but for the most part Lingbao remains something of a backwater in a province that has long been wracked by hardship. Flooding from the Yellow River was a routine occurrence, and only two years prior to Hao's birth, Wenxiang was struck by both famine *and* flood.³¹³

Details on his early life are scant, consisting only of an account compiled in the 1980s by Jia Tongran 賈同然 (dates unknown), an otherwise unknown employee in the editorial offices for the Lingbao County Gazetteer; a biography written by Zheng Renjia (a frequent contributor to the Taiwan-based *Zhuanji wenxue*); and an unfinished account written by Hao's son, Hao Tien-Shou, whose knowledge of his father came mostly through his mother, a returned student from Japan and native of Wuhan named Liu Qiong 劉瓊 (1917-1999). Jia, whose family may have been amongst Hao's earliest benefactors, presents an image of a teenaged Hao who escaped the grinding poverty he was born into, thanks to his own sharp wit and the timely intervention of local benefactors.

As per the above, Hao's mother died when he was young, and his father, Hao Fu 郝福 (dates unknown) was long-employed as a night watchman at the town's South Gate. It was thanks to the introduction of a certain Jia Qijun 賈其俊 (dates unknown), that Hao was able to obtain the beginnings of an education when he was sent to a local school run by Xi Borang 席伯讓 as a *gongyi* (servant) to study and work.³¹⁴ Hao's son, on the other

³¹³ "Zoushu huilu" [Record of Memorials] *Shenbao* 11th July 1901, and "Ben guang jiefeng dianyin," [Despatches Received by this Office] *Shenbao* 19th August 1901 and Jia Tongran, "Wenxiang xiancheng shimo" [Wenxiang County Town from Beginning to End] *Sanmenxia wenshi ziliao: Tianbao Dingcheng kaiyuan lai* no. 14 (2005), p. 189.

³¹⁴ Jia Tongran, "Hao Pengju jianli" [Biographical Notes on Hao Pengju] *Lingbao wenshi* no. 1 (1986), p. 50.

hand, describes his father being taken to Huashan by an uncle at the age of six where he was taught and cared for by a Buddhist hermit who lived high up on the sacred peaks, in a place accessible only by pulling oneself upward with the chains that marked the mountain paths, for the next ten years.³¹⁵ In either event, the impoverished background makes it all the more striking that Hao gained an education and developed something of a literary aptitude.

Accounts of Hao's subsequent life also vary widely in their details, but the general trajectory suggests an escape from poverty and native place by means of a rudimentary education and opportunities for advancement in the army. Sometime after 1917, Hao traveled east to Luoyang. His departure from his native place allowed him to escape a hardscrabble existence and, once there, he enrolled at a local institution, the Henan Provincial Fourth Normal School 河南省立第四師範學校 (*Henan shengli disi shifan xuexiao*), now known as Luoyang Normal University. Inspired by the French model of the *écolé normale*, the education provided by such universities marked a break with the classically-oriented education of pre-1911 China. In the 1920s, as with many other institutions of higher learning, students at the Fourth Normal School became caught up in the patriotic fervor that washed over the country as part of the May Fourth Movement, organizing strikes and boycotts of Japanese goods, and staging dramatic productions like *Wuwang guochi* 毋忘國恥 [Never Forget National Humiliation] or *Jianshang* 奸商 [The Profiteer].³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Hao Tien-Shou, "My Family's Biography," unpublished, p. 3. Copy in possession of the author.

³¹⁶ Zhao Qihan, "Luoyang shifan xueyuan fazhan licheng" [Milestones in the Development of Luoyang Normal University], in Ma Yueling, ed., *Luoyang wenshi ziliao* 25 (2004), p. 150-151.

It is not known what Hao made of his own educational experiences, but looked at from the full course of his career, his status as a graduate of a normal school likely equipped him with a broader view of the world and his potential in it, and set him on a path that led away from the confines of his native place and his local connections there, and upward into the world of China's fragmented politics. Such ambition was evident even in his name. Known as a child as Hao Mian (郝勉), at adulthood he received the courtesy name Tengxiao (騰霄), but is most widely known by the name he took for himself: Pengju, chosen in admiration for the Song dynasty general Yue Fei, who styled himself with the same name, conjuring up imagery of a legendary roc soaring into the heavens.³¹⁷ Such ambition in turn led Hao far from his native place. As Jia reports, even with the death of his father, Hao did not return home for the expected obsequies, but simply sent funds to have his father's remains temporarily preserved in a cave until a more lavish funeral could be conducted. Instead, in 1922 he enlisted in the army of Feng Yuxiang and, according to Jia, reportedly vowed not to return to his native place until he established himself as a high official.³¹⁸ Such time never came, and in the pursuit of his military career over the coming years, Hao returned to his hometown but once or twice.

The early 1920s was a time of expansion for Feng Yuxiang's forces in Henan, and Hao advanced rapidly from his initial position as a new recruit in an artillery battalion to serving as a confidential messenger and then into the Northwest Army's newly-established Officer Training School in Zhangjiakou as part of its inaugural class of

³¹⁷ Zheng Renjia (Kwan Kwok Huen), "Hao Pengju (1903-1947)," accessed on 10th April 2018 at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/10/10191701.htm>.

³¹⁸ Jia Tongran, "Hao Pengju er, san shi" [A few things about Hao Pengju] *Lingbao wenshi* no. 1 (1986), p. 52-53.

officer cadets.³¹⁹ The school proved to be Hao's point-of-entry into the world of China's factional politics. His time there coincided with the First United Front (1923-1927), and Soviet support for the Chinese Nationalists and for the Northwest Army clique of Feng Yuxiang. In 1925, Hao, still a cadet, was selected to pursue advanced training in the Soviet Union alongside other Chinese students affiliated with the CCP and the Nationalists (among them was Wang Jingwei's future secretary, Lin Bosheng, who studied at Moscow's Sun Yat-sen University, although it is unclear if the two men met at this time). Traveling first to Moscow, Hao then continued on to Kiev, where he studied at what was likely the Kiev Military Academy, and where he reportedly joined the Nationalist Party in 1926.³²⁰

Accounts of his time in the Soviet Union differ over why he returned to China, with some describing an ideological clash and others stating that he simply returned to China after completing his training program. A more detailed account, albeit third-hand, for example, recounts a fight that broke out after a fellow student likened Hao to a beggar. This, along with making remarks critical of the Soviet system during their study program's political training courses, led to Hao being disciplined by the study group's Russian commissar and eventually expelled from the Soviet Union.³²¹ Such an explanation for Hao's departure is broadly consistent with the account provided by his

³¹⁹ Zheng Renjia (Kwan Kwok Huen), "Hao Pengju (1903-1947)," accessed on 10th April 2018 at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/10/10191701.htm>.

³²⁰ Wang Zhitao, *Cong gongchan guoji guilai de junshi jiaoguan* [Returned Military Instructors from the Communist International] (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 2015), p. 38. Another account suggests that it was the Communist Party that Hao joined. See Zhu Jingru, "Wo renshi de Hao Pengju" [The Hao Pengju I Knew] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao* no. 6 (1986), p. 30. Zhu states that his knowledge of events came directly from Hao.

³²¹ Xiahou further notes that the announcement of Hao's expulsion was met with protests and a hunger strike by his fellow students. See Xiahou Xuwu, "Hao Pengju liu Su bei zhu ji," [An Account of Hao Pengju's Expulsion from the Soviet Union] *Minguo chungiu* no. 5 (1997), p. 50.

son, who noted that his father was invited to join the Communist Party while there, but refused and returned to China shortly before his graduation date.³²²

Following his return to China from the Soviet Union in 1927, Hao resumed his career with Feng Yuxiang and took command of an artillery regiment, stationed in Kaifeng as part of the 25th Division, then under the command of Zhang Zizhong 張自忠 (1891-1940). Hao's exact movements over the course of the Central Plains War between Feng Yuxiang, Yan Xishan and Jiang Jieshi are uncertain—one source suggests, somewhat improbably and without explanation, that he operated a bathhouse and brothel in the city of Zhengzhou, but this is entirely uncorroborated.³²³

Instead, Hao next emerged under the command of Liang Guanying 梁冠英 (1895-1968), who later recalled Hao's arrival as part of an effort by Jiang Jieshi to destabilize his command and thereby create an opening for taking charge. "Jiang exploited the problems between Hao and I," Liang wrote, noting that he had dismissed Hao from a posting some years earlier over disciplinary problems.³²⁴ Zhang Runsan, by contrast, suggested that the conflict between the two stemmed from one over Hao's growing

³²² Hao Tien-Shou, "Biography of My Family," p. 4. Zheng Renjia, in contrast, records Hao as traveling first to Kiev and then on to Moscow for advanced training, and makes no mention of any expulsion. See Zheng Renjia (Kwan Kwok Huen), "Hao Pengju (1903-1947)," accessed on 10th April 2018 at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/10/10191701.htm>.

³²³ See Zheng Renjia (Kwan Kwok Huen), "Hao Pengju (1903-1947)," accessed on 10th April 2018 at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/10/10191701.htm>.

³²⁴ Liang Guanying, "Ershiwu lu jun shou Jiang Jieshi shoubian he bei xiaomie de jingguo" [The Course of Jiang Jieshi's Reorganization and Destruction of the Twenty-fifth Route Army], *Wenshi ziliao xuanji hedingben* no 18, vol. 52 (2011), p. 306. Among the problems mentioned was an assault on an elderly physician.

popularity, and was part of Hao's effort to take over command with the support of other disaffected officers.³²⁵

Whatever the motivation, Hao failed to oust Liang, and in 1936, enrolled on an auditing basis at the military academy in Nanjing with the permission of Jiang Jieshi. In mid-September 1937, following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, he also accepted a post as General Director at the hastily organized Central School of Governance Special Training Camp for Returned Chinese Students from Japan 中央政治學校特別訓練班 (*Zhongyang zhengzhi xuexiao tebie xunlian ban*), tasked with inculcating patriotism amongst Chinese students who left Japan after the outbreak of war and returned to China in order to prepare for national service.

With a student body of some 600 or 700 students, it was an arena in which a charismatic leader could attract a following, and Hao, by then an accomplished speaker, made a good impression. As one student, Jia Bingren, recalled, both Hao and Wang Jingwei, who came to speak at the Camp, were favourably received. "Wang Jingwei had a rare eloquence," Jia recalled, "and our director, Hao Pengju...had also mastered the art of speaking and dealing with people in a way that garnered respect."³²⁶ Apart from the formal task of training and mobilizing the personnel necessary for the war effort, for Hao, it was an opportunity to cultivate the cadre of loyalists so necessary for navigating

³²⁵ Zhang Runsan, "Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju," [The Erratic Hao Pengju], *Sanmenxia wenshi ziliao Tianbao Dingcheng Kaiyuan* no. 14 (2005), p. 479-480.

³²⁶ Jia Bingren, "Kangzhan chuqi jianwen pianduan," [Things Seen and Heard in the Early Phase of the Resistance War] *Baoji wenshi ziliao* no. 3 (1985), p. 7. Jia attributes Hao's departure to a general reorganizing of government organizations following the inauguration of the United Front and the Training Camp's relocation to Lushan, Jiangxi Province and then on to Jianglin, Hubei Province.

China's factional politics, and a handful of the students did in fact follow him into service under him in the RNG.³²⁷

It was also here that he met and fell in love with Liu Qiong, who at that time was a student in the Camp.³²⁸ According to Zhu Jingru, who recalls discussions directly with Hao Pengju, Hao and Liu carried on a brief affair before the Training Camp withdrew from its original campus at Xiaolingwei in Nanjing in late 1937, at which time the couple parted ways, Liu to her hometown of Wuhan, where she married an otherwise unknown regimental commander, Li Changzhi 李昌志 (dates unknown), and Hao to Xi'an where he returned to the 25th Route Army under Liang Zhongying. His departure from the Camp came after a leadership reshuffle; as one student recalled, Hao was less than deferential towards the incoming leader, Kang Ze 康澤 (1904-1967). When students protested the Camp's upcoming move from Nanjing to Hubei, Kang held Hao responsible for the disorder, and he was forced to appear before the students, urging them with tears in his eyes to comply, lest something untoward occur, before being dismissed from his post.³²⁹

In any event, the pair was soon reunited when Li was transferred to Xi'an with Liu in tow. By 1939, Hao and Liu had resumed their affair; shortly thereafter, a pregnant Liu abruptly left her husband, whose furious complaints traveled up the chain of command

³²⁷ See Zheng Yayu, *Zhaobizhai manbi* [Notes from the Screen Wall Studio] (Guiyang: Sanlian shudian Guiyang lianyihui, 2001), p. 316.

³²⁸ Liu's name appears on a student roster from 1938. See Liu Ri tongxue hui, eds., *Zhongyang zhengzhi xuexiao tebie xunlian ban liu Ri xuesheng xunlian ban xue yuan tongxun lu* [Central School of Governance Special Training Camp for Returned Chinese Students from Japan] (Wuhan: Liu Ri tongxue hui, 1938), p. 50. The volume consulted is a Taipei reprint from 1966 held in the Stanford University libraries. I am indebted to Sarah Basham for her assistance in obtaining this volume.

³²⁹ Liu Fuying, "Kangzhan chuqi Guomindang sheli Zhongyang zhengzhi xuexiao texunban de pianduan" [Events from the Guomindang's Central Political Academy Special Training Camp during the Early Phase of the Resistance War] *Guangzhou wenshi ziliao* no. 27 (1982), p. 144.

and reached Hu Zongnan, who ordered Hao's arrest in 1940. With Hao in jail, Liu gave birth alone in Xi'an, and then relocated with her child to Chongqing, where she enrolled as a student. Hao, for his part, remained in jail for nearly a year, and on regaining his freedom, left the city (and, by one account, his former wife and children).³³⁰

The impact of the affair extended well beyond the private lives of those involved, however, and, as I explain below, was part of the personal context in which Hao joined Wang Jingwei and the RNG in Nanjing in 1941. The broader point, however, remains that for Hao and other Chinese military officers, the fragmented state of Chinese politics, with its myriad factional divisions and loyalties, offered little by way of institutions to cleave to for those not in either of the two camps that coalesced in Chongqing and Yanan over the course of the Japanese invasion. Hao, having emerged from poverty in Henan and made a career for himself within the Northwest Army, found little purchase within the Nationalist camp, and instead continued through the war years clawing himself forward through North China's factional rivalries.

4.3 In the Occupation State

As I have suggested in the preceding chapters, China's political fragmentation and factional politics provide the backdrop and context necessary for understanding how individuals like Hao Pengju came to join the RNG. A further important factor, in line

³³⁰ According to Zhu, Liu enrolled at National Central University; other accounts have her at Fudan. See Zhu Jingru, "Wo renshi de Hao Pengju," p. 30-31.

with Sartre's perspective, is that of personal circumstance, which in the case of Hao provided strong reasons for breaking with his past allegiances in the Nationalist and turning to Wang Jingwei.

Contrary to somewhat fantastical reports claiming that Hao escaped from prison through bribing his guards, who then joined him in fleeing to Nanjing, Hu records in his diary that he met with Hao in Xi'an on January 12th 1941 and dispatched him to Baotou with orders to incite puppet troops to rebel and return to the Nationalist camp. Before long, a message from Jiang Jieshi, dated April 24th 1941, demanded to know how it was that Hao managed to escape, even after instructions had been sent to deal with him according to military law, which suggests that Hu dispatched Hao on his own initiative.³³¹

According to Zhao Xiukun, whose knowledge of events comes from conversations in 1947 with Hao's lieutenant, Bi Shuwen 畢書文 (1908-1951), Hao was instructed by Hu to leverage his connections with other Northwest Army officials who had already defected; to expand his power so as to restrain the development of Communist forces; and, if circumstances required, to defect to the puppet forces.³³² Hao, for his part, reportedly painted a somewhat different picture of events in a 1946 interview with a pro-CCP journalist, claiming that his move was based on frustration with the Nationalist's prioritizing attacks on the Communists over fighting the Japanese up until about 1941:

The authorities sent me to western Suiyuan to serve as deputy-commander in the 4th Army under Fu Zuoyi as well as local general-director for popular mobilization,

³³¹ See Liu Shih-ming, "Puppet Troops Revisited: A Case Study of the Northwestern Army during the Anti-Japanese War," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* vol. 7, no. 1 (2013), p. 92.

³³² Zhao Xiukun, "Kangzhan shiqi peidu yishi yiwen," p. 109.

specially tasked with carrying out blockade work in the Shaan-Gan-Ning Border Region, until, in 1942, under pressure from the authorities, I had no choice but to slip behind enemy lines to seek out some means of serving my country. Who could have expected, with the absurd call to “save the country by twisted means” 曲線救國 (*quxian jiuguo*), reaching a fever pitch and Nationalist units behind enemy lines using this as an absurd pretext to go over to the enemy one after another, that even I would be reduced to bearing the shame of “saving the country by twisted means.” For these reasons, every time I recall this period I am filled with shame, and so when the Japanese surrendered in August last year, who could have thought I would receive orders from the central government to reorganize my armies as the 6th Route Army and wage the Civil War. It is hard to imagine anything more flagrant and outrageous.³³³

This was not an unheard-of suggestion; as William Hinton describes in his study of Lucheng in the south of Shanxi Province, such moves were part of Jiang Jieshi’s “Trojan Horse” policy, whereby whole units went over to the Japanese. As Hinton writes, “With the approval of their own high command, unit after unit of the Nationalist Army went over to the enemy and took up garrison duty at strategic points where they would be in a position to take control of all the occupied areas once the Japanese were finally brought to their knees by forces outside China.”³³⁴ Whether this was in fact a matter of national policy formulated at the top, or an attempt to leverage a trend that developed at the local level requires further research, but at the very least it eventually became an acceptable

³³³ As reprinted in Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju*, p. 73.

³³⁴ Hinton, *Fanshen*, p. 79.

option for Hu Zongnan. In a much later diary entry, dated February 20th 1944, Hu described his fears that the puppet armies had been drawn away by Mao, adding, “We once planned on using the puppet armies to hold onto strongholds in Hebei, but now that is impossible.”³³⁵ In any event, Hao did not remain in Baotou for long. By March 1941 he appeared in Nanjing and, as Hu noted tersely in his diary: “Japanese broadcasts [reveal] that Hao Pengju has become a *hanjian*.”³³⁶

On arriving in Nanjing, Hao let it be known to some that he broke with Hu after the latter had poached his wife.³³⁷ Most accounts have pointed to some acquaintance or another of Hao’s, crediting that person as an intermediary who introduced Hao to Wang Jingwei. One such possible intermediary is Miao Bin, a deeply ambiguous figure who eventually rose to the rank of vice-president of the RNG’s Examination Yuan and who in early 1945 held talks with Japanese Prime Minister Koiso Kuniaki 小磯 國昭 (1880-1950) in which he presented himself as an emissary of Chongqing.³³⁸ Other accounts, including that of Hao’s son, point to Lin Bosheng, who was a close confidant of Wang Jingwei and held office as the Minister of Propaganda. As mentioned earlier, Lin studied

³³⁵ Hu Zongnan and Cai Shengqi, Chen Shiju, eds., *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji* [Hu Tsung-nan’s Diaries] shang (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2015), p. 308.

³³⁶ Hu Zongnan and Cai Shengqi, Chen Shiju, eds., *Hu Zongnan xiansheng riji* [Hu Tsung-nan’s Diaries] shang (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2015), p. 6 and 24. Zheng Renjia, by contrast, states that Hao traveled to Nanjing a year earlier in March 1940, where he joined the RNG after meetings with Zhou Fohai. Zheng Renjia (Kwan Kwok Huen), “Hao Pengju (1903-1947),” accessed on 10th April 2018 at <http://www.history.com.tw/pe/10/10191701.htm>.

³³⁷ Zhang Hui, *Long Yusheng xiansheng nianpu* [Chronology of the Life of Mr Long Yusheng] (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2001), p. 135.

³³⁸ For further discussion of Miao, see Frederic Wakeman Jr., “*Hanjian* (Traitor)! Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai,” in Yeh Wen-hsin, ed., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 323-324. Zhang Runsan, who served with Hao in Xuzhou, believed Miao was the intermediary. See Zhang Runsan, “Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju,” [The Erratic Hao Pengju], *Sanmenxia wenshi ziliao Tianbao Dingcheng Kaiyuan* no. 14 (2005), p. 482.

in the Soviet Union at the same time as Hao, but was based at Moscow's Sun Yat-sen University.³³⁹ In either case, there is no direct evidence that Hao was familiar with either of these two men.

Another possible intermediary is Zhou Fohai, who played a key role in recruiting many of the RNG's officials. On March 4th 1940, a few weeks prior to the establishment of the RNG, Zhou recorded a meeting with Hao Pengju in his diary, although what the two men discussed is unclear. Not long after that meeting, Hao returned to Xi'an, where Hu Zongnan arrested him. Zhou and Hao developed an apparent rapport, and by September 17th 1941, with Hao appointed as Chief of Staff of the RNG's First Army Group, Zhou was lavish in his praise. "A fine young soldier, so full of talent, who will make a vital contribution to the Peace Movement," he wrote in his diary. "We should put him to good use."³⁴⁰ And so they did.

As was common in a state that suffered from a shortage of able staff, Hao assumed a variety of roles during his time in Nanjing. Some were rather minor, as when he was appointed to the local Henan native place association to oversee relief efforts and donations of foodstuffs when the province was wracked by famine in 1943.³⁴¹ Somewhat more consequential was Hao's role as Education Director in the Central Army Officers Training Corps 中央陸軍將校訓練團 (*Zhongyang lujun jiangxiao xunliantuan*). This

³³⁹ For an account that suggests Lin was the intermediary, see Zhao Xiukun, "Kangzhan shiqi peidu yishi yiwen" [Things Seen and Heard in the Wartime Provisional Capital] *Chongqing wenshi ziliao* no. 44 (1996), p. 109, as well as Hao Tien-Shou, "Biography of My Family," p. 6-7.

³⁴⁰ Zhou Fohai and Cai Dejin, ed., *Zhou Fohai riji* vol 1, p. 256 and 519.

³⁴¹ This post is mentioned briefly in Zhang Runsan, "Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju," p. 478.

position allowed him to assemble a cadre of followers and play a role in both the factional politicking of the occupation era and the early stages of the Civil War.

4.4 Governor of Huaihai Province

Xuzhou and its environs, taken to include the region known as Xuhai in the northern portion of Jiangsu Province and the eastern portion of Anhui Province, was a contested area. As historian Cai Dejin observed, it was nominally part of Wang Kemin's North China Political Commission (NCPC) and run out of Beijing, but in actuality was managed exclusively by the Japanese Navy as a "special zone," even after its supposed return to Nanjing's jurisdiction in January 1942.³⁴² The establishment of a provincial government on January 15th 1944, with Hao appointed as governor, was the culmination of Nanjing's efforts to strengthen its authority over the region.

Viewed retrospectively, the RNG's state-building in Xuzhou and the surrounding environs was a process that unfolded over several administrative iterations. This process was built on the earliest efforts to restore order following the Japanese assault on the city with the establishment in 1938 of a local Order Maintenance Committee, led by Li Aitang 李藹堂 (dates unknown), a local ringleader for the Green Gang who previously served as president of the Tongshan Chamber of Commerce.³⁴³ Subsequent to this came a Subei Administrative Office in 1939, and finally, a nominally RNG-directed Suhuai

³⁴² Zhou Fohai and Cai Dejin, ed., *Zhou Fohai riji* vol 1, p. 558. See Cai's commentary in footnote 1.

³⁴³ Pan Min, "Riwei shiqi Jiangsu xian zhen "weichihui" yanjiu," [Research on the Japanese Puppet County and Township Order Maintenance Committees in Jiangsu Province] *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu* no. 3 (2002), p. 146.

Special Administrative Office in 1942 under Hao Peng 郝鵬 (dates unknown), a former Beiyang official and appointee from the north.

The establishment of first Suhuai and then Huaihai Province tracked the growth of Nanjing's efforts to gain control over the historically strategic region, and was accompanied by a flow of personnel and agencies from Nanjing into the province, although change did not occur overnight.³⁴⁴ Instead, a series of personnel changes and “re-brandings” occurred as Nanjing made its influence felt and attempted to wrest the region away from the NCPC.

In 1942, for example, with Hao Peng still in place as the Chief Executive of Suhuai, the NCPC-affiliated New People's Association 新民會 (*Xinminhui*) in Xuzhou was dissolved, and in its stead a branch of the Nanjing-based East Asian League was established—according to one member, the leadership figures in the two groups remained the same.³⁴⁵ The following year, on September 9th 1943, Nanjing announced the removal of Hao Peng as Suhuai Chief Executive. The elder Hao would be “promoted,” upward and out of the way, and replaced by Hao Pengju, who was dispatched from Nanjing to take up the post of Chief Executive, before being appointed Governor of Huaihai upon

³⁴⁴ One example included the Xuzhou Engineering Department, once under the North China Construction Office, before being handed over to the Suhuai Administration in 1943. See “Suhuai gongshu jieguan: Xuzhou gongcheng chu” [Suhuai Administrative Office takes over Xuzhou Construction Office] *Shenbao*, 5th August 1943.

³⁴⁵ Su Jianhong, “Donglian jingli ji,” [Account of my experiences in the East Asian League] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao: wei Huaihai sheng zhuanji* no. 6 (1986), p. 108-109. According to one report, the League later became involved in supporting student-lead anti-opium protests in the Xuzhou area in late 1943. See “Suhuai ge xian zhankai judu yundong,” [Counties in Suhuai commence anti-drug campaign] *Shenbao*, 1st January 1945. Further details on the protests will be covered in Chapter 5.

the establishment of the new province.³⁴⁶ This was followed by the arrival in Xuzhou of branch offices from various organs of the RNG, including the Central News Agency and the Central Reserve Bank, the former to improve local reporting and liaising with Nanjing, and the latter in order to promote the circulation of the RNG-issued currency, with residents given until the month of May of that year to turn in their previous currency for exchange.³⁴⁷ Hao, for his part, emphasized that the new government would closely adhere to any and all directives from Nanjing.³⁴⁸

Despite this, the actual degree of control that Hao (and by extension, the RNG) was able to exert is uncertain. Following the province's establishment, Hao enjoyed a flurry of positive press reports, and even post-war accounts suggest he was uncowed in the face of the Japanese. As one writer recalled after the war, Hao, during his time in Nanjing, always acted as though he didn't have much time for the Japanese, and even his cadets were exempt from saluting them at the city's gates as other Chinese residents were required to do.³⁴⁹ A wartime report indicates a similar dynamic applied under Hao in Xuzhou. According to the reporter, who accompanied Hao from the city centre out to Tongshan County, even the city's Japanese residents doffed their caps in respect upon

³⁴⁶ "Suhuai xingzheng zhangguan: Hao Pengju xuren, Hao Peng ren guomin zhengwu canzan," [Chief Executive of Suhuai: Hao Pengju assumes post, Hao Peng appointed as administrative attache] *Shenbao*, 3rd September 1943.

³⁴⁷ See "Zhongyang she Xu fenshe chengli," [Central News Agency Xuzhou Branch established] *Shenbao*, 1st January 1944 and "Zhou zongcai zhici," [Address by Chairman Zhou] *Shenbao*, 21st February 1944 and "Huaihai tongmao jiaohuan zhanxian zaizhi," *Shenbao*, 3rd May 1944.

³⁴⁸ "Huaihai sheng Hao shengzhang tan shizheng fangzhen," [Governor Hao of Huaihai Provinces discusses administrative policy] *Shenbao*, 6th February 1944.

³⁴⁹ Zhang Runsan, "Fanfu wu chang de Hao Pengju," p. 77-78.

seeing the governor's car pass by, although this, too, might have been more rhetorical flourish than reflection of reality.³⁵⁰

At a more individual level, the establishment of Huaihai Province also reflected the emergence of a faction, centered on Hao himself. As he put it to one prospective aide, “Nothing can be counted on, only power is real.”³⁵¹ And so, in pragmatic fashion, Hao set about seeding the ranks of his administration with loyalists and long-time associates, right down to the leadership of the local hospital.³⁵² Bi Shuwen, who accompanied Hao from Xi'an to Nanjing and served with him in the Training Corps, was appointed Mayor of Xuzhou. Other loyalists included Jia Zhifang 賈植芳 (1915-2008), one of Hao's students in 1937 from the Returned Students' Training Camp who later enjoyed a prominent post-war literary career; in early 1945, Jia accepted a post in the government bureaucracy as an advisor to the province.³⁵³ This pattern is more apparent in looking at the military forces under Hao's command, where all four of the divisions were led by a succession of former Northwest Army officers, including Mie Tingbin 乜廷賓 (1905-

³⁵⁰ Yi Fei, “Tongshan yuejun ji” [Reviewing the Troops in Tongshan] *Shenbao* 24th April 1945.

³⁵¹ Zhang Runsan, “Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju,” [The Fickle Hao Pengju] *Henan wenshi ziliao* no. 30 (1989), p. 78.

³⁵² Wang Biyun, for example, was a fellow townsman of Hao's, and served in the Central Army Officers Training Corps before following Hao to Xuzhou where he became the deputy administrator of the provincial hospital. See Zhang Runsan, “Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju,” [The Fickle Hao Pengju] *Henan wenshi ziliao* no. 30 (1989), p. 77, and Teng Kaijun, “Huaihai sheng yiyuan,” [Huaihai Provincial Hospital] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao: wei Huaihai sheng zhuanji* no. 6 (1986), p. 22.

³⁵³ Song Binghui, *Yige Zhongguo zhishifenzi de xiaoxiang: Jia Zhifang huazhuan* [Portrait of a Chinese Intellectual: The Life of Jia Zhifang in Pictures] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2004), p. 36-37, although this is explained away as being done for the purposes of inciting Hao to revolt. See also Wei Shiyong, *Hu Feng: Shiren lixiang yu zhengzhi fengbao* [Hu Feng: Poetic Ideals, Political Storm] (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2017), p. 242-243. Wei also cites interviews with Wang Kang (1917-2006), a former official in the Xinhua News Agency and the CCP Propaganda Department who took part in the 1955 investigation of Chinese poet Hu Feng, to the effect that everything Hao did was beneficial to the Party; this appears to be a transcription error and is likely in reference to Jia instead. See Wei, *Hu Feng*, p. 444.

1974), Zhang Qi 張奇 (1904-1985) (a former Training Corps official), Li Zezhou 李澤洲 (dates unknown), Li Tiemin 李鉄民 (dates unknown), Zeng Jirui 曾紀瑞 (1902-1951), and Liu Boyang 劉柏揚 (dates unknown), all of whom also held appointments in the provincial bureaucracy.

In the run-up to the province's establishment, rumour had it that Hao intended to establish a Huaihai University; this would have provided him a ready training ground for training up and cultivating local youth who could then form a cadre of provincial bureaucrats and security officials. Despite Hao's aspirations, however, a series of telegrams from Wang Jingwei in Nanjing first advised caution, pointing to the example of the now-defunct Zhejiang University, and then barred the idea outright due to the wartime scarcity of funds and staffing.³⁵⁴ Instead, less than a month after the province's establishment, Hao upgraded Xuzhou's existing Training School and established a more modest Xuzhou Academy that was subsequently re-named as Huaihai Political Training Academy in 1945.³⁵⁵

The academy was small, with an inaugural class of some eighty students who were provided with uniforms and meals, and were assigned to positions within the province's security forces after training periods that lasted only a number of months. Hao oversaw

³⁵⁴ The RNG-established Zhejiang University operated only briefly, from 1943 until it shuttered its doors in 1944. For Wang's communications to Hao, see "Wang Jingwei dian Hao Pengji wen ni chuangban daxue dan jinri rencai shebei liang jun quefa, Zhejiang daxue qianchekejian jipan shenzhong," Wang Zhaoming shiliao, Wang Zhaoming yu Wang zhengfu ge sheng shizhang handian 3, 118-010100-0021-014, 3rd December 1943, and "Wang Zhaoming dian Hao Pengju deng benri guofang huiyi yijue guoli ji shengli daxue zai zhanshi shebei buyi dei xian chengli xueyuan ni ci ge sheng choubei daxue ke jizhong ren cai liang li xianban yi xueyuan," Wang Zhaoming shiliao, Wang Zhaoming yu Wang zhengfu ge sheng shizhang handian 3, 118-010100-0021-005, 16th December 1943.

³⁵⁵ For further detail on the administration and admission procedures, see Meng Qingheng, "Huaihai xueyuan," [Huaihai College] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao: wei Huaihai sheng zhuanji* no. 6 (1986), p. 19-21.

its operations in his capacity as director, with one of his division commanders, Zhang Qi, and another confidant, Zhang Runsan 張潤三 (b. 1902), who served under Hao at the Central Army Officers Training Corps in Nanjing, appointed as deputy directors.³⁵⁶

Though far too small to qualify as a faction of any great significance in the o of Chinese history, they did, as a coterie of loyalists that Hao surrounded himself with as he made his way through the convoluted politics of occupation, reflect the factionalized politics of the RNG and the fractured nature of China during the Republican era. In contrast to his earlier career, however, by this time Hao was leading his own entourage, rather than playing a subordinate role as he had prior to the war.

It was also a position that afforded Hao an important bargaining chip for future events. When the Japanese surrendered, Hao kept an open mind about how to best preserve his position; as he reportedly told his officers: “We can’t let pass any opportunity to establish ties with any side.”³⁵⁷ Sources on the rationale behind Hao’s decision to return to the Nationalist fold are scant, although Zhang Runsan suggests it was a matter as simple as an announcement from Chongqing designating Hao as commander of the Sixth Route Army, which was made up of none other than the forces already under his control.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Zhang Runsan, “Fanfu wuchang de Hao Pengju,” p. 79.

³⁵⁷ Bo Han, “Sijin Xuzhou cedong Hao Pengju bu qiyi,” [Four Times into Xuzhou to Incite Hao Pengju’s Forces to Rise Up] in *Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bianshen weiyuanhui*, eds., *Jiefang zhanzheng shiqi Guomindang jun qiyi toucheng: Hu Su Wan Zhe Gan Min diqu* (Beijing: Jiefang chubanshe, 1994), p. 328.

³⁵⁸ Zhang Runsan, “Wo suo zhidao de Hao Pengju,” p. 82.

4.5 China Democratic Allied Army

On January 14th 1946, this arrangement fell apart and the next episode of Hao Pengju's migration across China's factional politics opened, spelled out with a bold declaration announcing the establishment of the China Democratic Allied Army (CDAA). Addressed to "Chairman Jiang in Chongqing and Chairman Mao in Yanan," as well as Zhang Lan 張瀾 (1872-1955), Chairman of the China Democratic League, and others, the text was issued in response to the Double Tenth Agreement of 1945, which was an ultimately failed effort to resolve the conflict between the Nationalist and Communist parties.³⁵⁹ The text gave a brief account of Hao's career, including his surprise after the Japanese surrender at escaping sanction and instead receiving a commission in the Nationalist Army and orders to advance northwards as part of the civil war. Now, unwilling to "pile new mistakes on top of old ones," Hao's forces were withdrawing from the civil war, returning their arms to the people, and vowing to struggle for peace and democracy to the end.³⁶⁰

The move earned Hao a friendly reception from Chen Yi 陳毅 (1901-1972), Commander of the New Fourth Army and the Shandong military area, who was quoted as

³⁵⁹ Further detail can be found in Edmund S.K. Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China, 1929-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 264.

³⁶⁰ Hao Pengju *et al*, "Zhongguo minzhu lianmeng jun: tuichu neizhan yonghu minzhu xuanyan," [China United Democratic Army: Declaration of Withdrawal from the Civil War and Upholding Democracy] in Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds., *Xiaomie Hao Pengju* p. 70-71.

saying that it represented one of the largest defections from Nationalist forces.³⁶¹ Despite this, it is important to recognize what Hao's declaration was not—a wholesale commitment to the CCP cause. Indeed, one searches in vain for any statements or indicators from Hao before or immediately after his announcement that suggests any particular fervor for Communist ideology. Instead, Hao and his officers in their public statements limited themselves to little more than an opposition to civil war and a desire for peace and democracy, calls that can be read as sincere, or as an unwillingness to risk his position by committing his men to battle on either side.

Beneath the flurry of publicity, tensions soon emerged. Tellingly, CCP dispatches and references usually (but not always) diminished Hao's role and the name of his army from the national to the regional, first referring to them as the Democratic United Army, and then as the *Huazhong minzhu lianjun* 華中民主聯軍 (Central China Democratic United Army), which Hao appears to have grudgingly accepted. More serious was the friction that developed over the role of political advisors that were dispatched by the CCP in order to carry out reform and political education. Recalling Hao's refusal to accept reform, one former CCP advisor recalled Hao constantly reminding his officers of their independence, operating on equal footing with the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army.³⁶²

³⁶¹ For Chen Yi's assessment, see Deng Xuchu, "Liu Shuzhou tongzhi zai 'Minzhu lianjun'," [Comrade Liu Shuzhou in the Democratic Allied Army] *Qingjiang wenshi ziliao* no. 7 (1987), p. 10-11.

³⁶² Deng Xuchu, "Liu Shuzhou tongzhi zai 'minzhu lianjun,'" [Comrade Liu Shuzhou in the Democratic United Army] *Jingjiang wenshi ziliao*, no. 7 (1987), p. 10. Deng himself was the Propaganda and Education Section chief in the CCP liaison group, and later became Party Secretary of Shanghai's Jiaotong University.

According to Zhang Runsan, a colleague of Hao's in the Central Army Officers Training Corps in Nanjing who later served as director of the political department in Hao's CDAA, suggests further pressure came from Chen Yi directly.³⁶³ Zhang also knew Chen Yi well from their days at the Sino-French Institute in Beijing and, according to Zhang, rumours of the CDAA's impending dissolution began to spread as early as April and May, 1946, when began Hao showing signs of frustration with the Communists and Chen Yi's demands. "General Chen came here with three demands," Hao complained at one point, "First, that I leave the troops and go to Yen-an for study; second, that we disperse our forces, stationing one battalion per county; and third, that we lend them [the CCP] our artillery. I told him that was impossible, that if he was going to do that he may as well send people in to disarm us and be done with it."³⁶⁴ Here again, the desire to preserve his hold over his own forces, his own faction, appears to have driven his break with the Communists.

4.6 Endgame

³⁶³ Although Hao initially proclaimed himself leader of the Chinese Democratic United Army [Zhonghua minzhu lianjun] but, according to Zhang Qi, this was seen as too grand a title by Chen Yi, who suggested reversing the first two characters and going by the Central China Democratic United Army [Huazhong minzhu lianjun] instead. The new usage stuck, and was formally announced on 21st August 1946. See Fan Xueceng, "Hao Pengju beipan renmin zishi qiguo," [Hao Pengju eats the fruits of betraying the people] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao: wei Huaihai sheng zhuan ji* no. 6 (1986), p. 79, and Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds., *Xiaomie Hao Pengju* p. 94-95.

³⁶⁴ Zhang Runsan, "Huiyi Chen Yi tongzhi," [Remembering Comrade Chen Yi] in *Henan wenshi ziliao xuanji* no. 2 (1979), p. 18.

Hao's return to the Nationalist fold in 1947, which earned him the position of pacification commander, marked the final chapter in his foray in China's factional politics. The move prompted raised eyebrows amongst some of his erstwhile associates. Zhou Fohai, then languishing in Nanjing's Laohuqiao [Tiger's Bridge] prison, recalled Hao's desire at the time of the Japanese surrender to reconcile with the Nationalists in Chongqing (and his fear of being unforgiven), and noted his puzzlement at the switching back and forth in his diary entry for 2nd February 1947: "It is hard to make heads or tails of what is going on."³⁶⁵ Others were less charitable. John Beal, an American official in the Marshall Mission to China viewed the move with disdain—"the most blatant type of old war-lord deal," as he observed on hearing the news. Not denying that characterization, Lee Wei-kuo 李惟果 (1903-1992), who then served as vice-minister in the Ministry of Publicity [ie., propaganda] explained the advantages of the deal, as a means of both defending Xuzhou from the Communist advance and giving the Nationalists space to re-take Zaozhuang in southern Shandong.³⁶⁶ And for Hao, the switch enabled him a last desperate chance to hold onto his command and his troops. Despite the persistent of factionalism and political fragmentation as practical matters, the practice of this brand of politics had fallen into disrepute.

In any event, this latest re-alignment did not last long. Hao, holed up at Dongtai County's Baita Town alongside the Longhai Rail line, came under attack days later, and after a day of battle his forces buckled. On 7th February 1947, with his troops scattered, Hao was captured and brought for a final audience with Chen Yi, after which he was sent

³⁶⁵ Zhou Fohai and Wen Fei, ed., *Zhou Fohai mi dang* [Secret Files of Zhou Fohai] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2012), p. 216-217.

³⁶⁶ John Robinson Beal, *Marshall in China* (Toronto: Doubleday & Company, 1970), p. 354.

in a convoy along with other captured Nationalist officials, bound for the Northeast. While accounts vary about what happened next (some claim he was shot trying to escape), it appears likely he was executed while en route by a vengeful CCP officer worried that the convoy might be disrupted before reaching its destination.³⁶⁷

4.7 Myth

As the the previous section indicates, Hao Pengju’s career of factional shifting presented a particular challenge for both the Nationalists and the Communists, particularly the latter, during the post-war period. This challenge went well beyond the realm of military calculation: how to explain the willingness of either party to co-operate with someone who had been tarred as a *hanjian* through service in the occupation state of Wang Jingwei?

For the Communists, the response to this challenge took form in what I describe as the “myth” of Hao Pengju, built on the back of his supposed moral failings and consisting of various statements in official media and commemorative publications that have circulated in China during the post-war period. The way in which this particular type of myth-making operates is particularly pernicious, obscuring not only our efforts to understand Hao’s own career but, as I argue, the politics of occupation and with it the binary of resistance and collaboration as well. In the subsequent pages, I examine the

³⁶⁷ Bo Han, “Sijin Xuzhou cedong Hao Pengju bu qiyi,” p. 339. Bo writes that the official in question, Wang Shaoyong 王少庸 (1908-1985), personally described these events to him in August 1953 over a meal in Qingdao. I have opted to use this account in part on the basis of its specificity of names and dates.

process of myth-making surrounding Hao Pengju as it occurred, with particular attention to its political purpose, its developments and the broader consequences for understanding the war that such myth-making can carry.

Historian Paul Cohen has written of the myth-making surrounding the Boxer Uprising, analyzing its development as a function of political imperatives. Mythologizers, he writes, “start out with an understanding of the past... Their purpose, however, is not to enlarge upon or deepen this understanding. Rather, it is to draw on it to serve the political, ideological rhetorical and/or emotional needs of the present.” The means by which such myths are crafted, he suggests, are not necessarily through “out-and-out falsification,” but “distortion, oversimplification, and omission of material that doesn’t serve its purpose or runs counter to it.”³⁶⁸

Such is the case with Hao Pengju, with the added proviso that this myth-making has been subtly updated over time in response to the shifting needs and taboos of the CCP, with new evidence or information interpreted to serve the over-arching political framework rather than advance new understandings or revising old ones. In fact, this is one of the striking characteristics of the myth, one that has made actual scholarship on Hao so difficult, with its multiple re-workings, one on top of the other, each presented as authoritative declarations with scant attention paid to the need to explain away any changes in understanding beyond moral depravity.

Part of what has allowed this myth to persist is Hao’s relative obscurity. He remains mostly unknown in Western scholarship on either the Second World War in China or the Chinese Civil War. If he is known at all, it is in the context of John Birch’s death at the

³⁶⁸ Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 213-214.

hands of Communist guerrillas on August 25th 1945 while en route to Xuzhou to meet with Hao. This in turn became wrapped up in the founding myths of the eponymous John Birch Society, an organization that emerged as a vehicle for the radical right in post-war American politics. Even in this context, however, Hao remains obscure, and his actual contact with Birch was limited to a brief eulogy at his burial.³⁶⁹

There has been a certain amount of attention paid to Hao in PRC scholarship, on the other hand, and various articles and accounts can be readily found by online, typically written for popular audiences. This, alongside the commemorative volume issued to mark the fortieth anniversary of Hao's "annihilation," makes up what I describe as the "myth" of Hao Pengju that marks him as a consummate opportunist, always ready to switch sides (or *fanfu wuchang* to use the most consistently applied Chinese epithet), a *hanjian*, and, by some accounts, a rapist. This last condemnation has the added utility of resonating with the broader meaning of *jian*, with its connotation of rape and sexual illicitness.

In China today, research on the occupation or a figure like Hao Pengju remains challenging. When I contacted the Xuzhou Municipal Archives inquiring about material they might have, an archivist responded to my questions, which surprised me, and explained that all of their files on that period had been transferred to the Second Historical Archives and were unavailable, which did not. As a result, we are left with the myth of Hao Pengju, and what it can tell us as we try to chart the way in which the category of *hanjian* has been used for political effect.

³⁶⁹ For an account of Birch's death, his connection to Hao Pengju and the subsequent myth-making of the John Birch Society under retired candyman Robert W. Welch, Jr., see Terry E. Lutz, *John Birch: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 189 and 217, *passim*.

The foundations of the myth of Hao Pengju were set in 1946, when Hao led the China Democratic Allied Army and was aligned with the CCP. In contrast to other political or intellectual collaborators, Hao was not put on trial; his myth would evolve over the years without leaving him the opportunity to speak in his own defence as other former officials of the RNG were able to do. Instead, what passes for an official verdict on Hao Pengju from the CCP came in the form of two articles published by relatively high-ranking CCP organs. These were in turn followed by a 1987 internally circulated “commemorative volume” that celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the successful campaign of annihilation against Hao Pengju.³⁷⁰ Between them, these reflect the official stance and framework in which writers in the People’s Republic have interpreted Hao.

But first, it is worth noting the official position held by the CCP on Hao and other former members of the Northwest Army during the Civil War period. In a 1946 *People’s Daily* article outlining the Northwest Army’s past, present and way forward, party propagandists argued most of the Northwest Army had made a contribution during the war and that, owing to the impoverished background of most of them officers and troops, the Army reflected the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist demands of the peasantry. Hao was positioned in this analysis in a positive light, as someone who had been forced, as the phrase goes, to “lose his footing” 失足 (*shizu*) but only for a time; he had since returned to the fold and now was even described as “closely aligned” with the Revolution. Others, however, had forgotten their backgrounds and, reflecting a certain peasant type of backwardness and conservatism, chosen instead to ally with landlords and capitalists in

³⁷⁰ Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju—jinian Baitabeng tao Hao zhanyi shengli sishi zhounian* [Annihilating Hao Pengju—Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Victorious Baitabeng Campaign Against Hao] (Donghai: Zhonggong Donghai xian wei dangshi bangongshi, 1987).

oppressing the people, and even becoming warlords. The way forward, so the argument concluded, was for the Northwest Army to ally with the people and against Jiang Jieshi, and against American imperialism.³⁷¹

Closer to the local level, Hao's efforts at "reform" drew praise. One editorial described Hao's program for reforming the army as "truly implementing the spirit of 'seeking truth through facts' to lead the army towards becoming a people's army that 'serves the people.'" If carried out, these reforms would surely make the army "a powerful force on the people's defensive lines of the Shandong Liberated Areas."³⁷² Zhu Kejing 朱克靖 (1895-1947), who served as the CCP liaison officer to Hao, also offered a positive, less conditional assessment only a few weeks before Hao broke with the CCP (and had Zhu arrested).

Writing to mark the one-year anniversary of Hao's break with the Nationalists, Zhu described the "concrete progress" he observed, noting improved political training, recruitment, as well as the unifying mood of fraternal revolutionary affection. "Under the wise and resourceful leadership of General Hao," Zhu wrote, "the year's progress and growth has been a source of comfort and delight for me."³⁷³ (It should be noted here that this rosy public assessment contrasts with one written much later by another liaison officer who insisted that although progress was made amongst the troops, Hao warned his

³⁷¹ "Xibei jun de lishi xianzhuang ji qi chulu" [Northwest Army's Past, Present and Way Forward] *Renmin ribao*, 31st October 1946.

³⁷² See "Jieshao yige gaizao jundui de minzhu de xunlian yaoling," [Introducing Democratic Essentials for Reforming an Army], reprinted in Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju*, p. 84 and 86.

³⁷³ Zhu Kejing, "Jinian Hao bu qiyi yizhounian: Huazhong minzhu lianjun zai aiguo ziwei zhanzheng zhong de chengchang," [Commemorating the 1st Anniversary of the Uprising of Hao's Army: Birth of the East China Democratic United Army in the Midst of the Patriotic War of Self-Defence] reprinted in Dan Zhendao, Fan Jisu, and Shi Hongyang, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju*, p. 109-112.

officers from having any contact with the CCP emissaries and was utterly insincere about reform).³⁷⁴ Within a month, however, Zhu would be arrested by Hao, and CCP propagandists would be scrambling to explain the sudden change of events. The image of Hao as enlightened and reformist warlord was ruined.

The response to Hao's defection, which came in the form of two articles, required careful handling, not only due to the continued military significance of former occupation state officials, but also since this represented a *volte-face* from the all-too-recent assessments of Hao described above. One indicator of the sensitivity is the relative lack of emphasis on Hao's occupation activities; service to the CCP effectively "absolved" Hao of that particular sin. As others have observed, even in the present-day, the mention of a figure or organization connected with the puppet state invariably includes reference to being a *hanjian* or part of a bogus (*wei*) organization. In part, this was in keeping with the CCP's recent willingness to collaborate with Hao. But the lack of denunciation along these lines in the official responses, where Hao's moral character was assailed for having given in to his warlord nature and betrayed the Communist cause, has additional significance. As a matter of internal discipline, Hao's defection from the Communist cause required a stern denunciation lest others follow his example and allow themselves to be lured back to the Nationalist camp. Yet as a matter of external propaganda, Hao was hardly the only "former *hanjian*" to have been welcomed into the Communist ranks, nor was he the only one the CCP might have wished to recruit, making treatment of his wartime record a matter of some sensitivity.

³⁷⁴ Deng Xuchu, "Liu Shuzhou tongzhi zai "minzhu lianjun,""[Comrade Liu Shuzhou in the Democratic United Army] *Jingjiang wenshi ziliao*, no. 7 (1987), p. 10.

Among these potential recruits, Hao's former comrade-in-arms under the RNG, Wu Haowen, for example, occupied an important position in southern Shandong province, and in February 1947, when Hao was eliminated, CCP operatives were making preparations for his defection to the Communist side, only for Wu to cut off contact with them in the following month as the political winds shifted—Wu and Hao were old friends from their days in the Northwest Army, and in early 1945, Hao supplied Wu with much-needed armaments from his own supplies.³⁷⁵ For Wu and others former-collaborators-turned-Nationalists, too much emphasis on the wartime past might have been off-putting and in denouncing Hao, the CCP's propagandists had to restrain themselves from making an issue of his wartime role. Availing themselves of the *hanjian* epithet, although the most obvious means of discrediting him might even have raised questions over the CCP leadership's wisdom in recruited Hao in the first place.

The first article, written by Zhang Jian 張劍 (dates unknown) and issued by Xinhua, offers a preliminary response by the CCP to Hao's defection, introducing him as “traitor-to-the-people Hao Pengju.” It describes the encounter between Chen Yi and Hao following the latter's capture by CCP forces in a village outside of Linyi after the battle on February 13th 1947 that scattered Hao's forces, and attempts to assure readers of the CCP's competence and control over the situation in the face of alarming political developments. Entitled “Chen junzhang cijian Hao ni Pengju tanhua ji” 陳軍長賜見郝逆鵬舉談話記 (A Record of the Audience Granted to the Traitor Hao Pengju by

³⁷⁵ See Zhongguo renmin jiefang jun Jinan qu zhengzhi bu “Jinan zhanyi zhong Wu Huawen qiyi” bianxiezu, eds., *Jinan zhanyi zhong Wu Huawen qiyi* [The Wu Huawen Uprising during the Battle for Jinan] (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1987), p. 362, and Fan Xueceng, “Hao Pengju beipan renmin zishi qi guo,” [Hao Pengju eats the fruits of betraying the People] *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao: wei Huaihai sheng zhuanji* no. 6 (1986), p. 66

Commander Chen Yi), the account ostensibly records the dialogue between Chen and Hao, and sends a none-too-subtle warning to those whose faith in the CCP's ultimate victory might be wavering and a promise to those who might consider joining their ranks. The meeting between the two men opens as it closes, with Hao abject in his apologies to the people, the Party, and to Chen himself. Chen Yi attacks Hao for being "a model opportunist," leading nothing more than an "old-fashioned warlord army" that was "utterly incapable of undertaking the great task of democratic struggle without first being thoroughly reformed."³⁷⁶ Perhaps reflecting the personal relations involved, Chen Yi also accuses Hao of murdering several of the CCP liaison officers that had been dispatched to his Army, a charge for which Hao expresses his regret.³⁷⁷

The article also emphasized Hao's sheer unreasonableness in defecting through references to the positive treatment he received from the CCP and the poor prospects he faced under the Nationalists. Chen in his speech frequently emphasizes the munificence of the Party in its treatment of Hao, its provisioning of his forces, and so on, points that Hao readily acknowledged. "Whether it was the Party, the government, the Army or the People in the liberated territory, Party Central or the Commander himself, we were always very well taken care of," Hao reportedly agreed, bobbing his head, "This is true." Despite this, Hao explained, he had felt his own position to be insecure and had allowed himself to be persuaded by Jiang's political inducements.

³⁷⁶ Zhang Jian, "Chen junzhang cijian Hao ni Pengju tanhua ji" [A Record of the Audience granted to the Traitor Hao Pengju by Commander Chen] *Linyi wenshi ziliao* no. 3 (1983), p. 4.

³⁷⁷ The main liaison officer, Zhu Kejing 朱克靖 (1895-1947), quoted earlier, was actually transported to Suzhou, where he was executed in a Nationalist-run prison in late 1947.

Finally, Chen Yi also avails himself of the opportunity to re-state the Party's democratic bona fides, its all-knowing nature and enlightened policies for those wishing to join the cause, all in contrast to the Nationalists. Emphasizing that he had previously looked on Hao and his forces as “welcome to join [the CCP] and free to go” 來則歡迎去則歡送 (*lai ze huanying, qu ze huansong*), Chen's line of questioning with Hao highlights for the reader the sheer stubbornness and irrationality that led Hao to defect. The Nationalists, on the other hand, are painted as lacking in confidence and aware of their impending defeat, relying on trickery to lure Hao to their side, with Chen making a point of offering Hao an opportunity to explicitly disavow his previously-stated criticisms of the Party.³⁷⁸

The second statement, in the form of a lengthy editorial—“Hao Pengju shijian de jiaoxun” 郝鵬舉事件的教訓 (Lessons from the Hao Pengju Incident), was published in the *Liberation Daily* in 1947 and reprinted in other outlets soon after. Where the first article feels preliminary, the second article, written with a surer hand, delivers a more confident verdict on Hao's actions, explicitly mentioning his status as a *hanjian* (along with Zhang Lanfeng, another Northwest Army official military recently captured by CCP forces) only to dismiss it, and doubles down on the matter of betraying the people.

Drafted by Lu Dingyi 陸定一 (1906-1996), who served as both the paper's editor and head of the CCP Propaganda Department, this piece has endured as a verdict on Hao amongst post-war authors, who either explicitly quote from it or adopt its language and stance. Apart from sheer authoritativeness, as a statement from an official organ like the

³⁷⁸ Zhang Jian, “Chen junzhang cijian Hao ni Pengju tanhua ji” [A Record of the Audience granted to the Traitor Hao Pengju by Commander Chen] *Linyi wenshi ziliao* no. 3 (1983), p. 2-3.

Liberation Daily, the editorial also demonstrates the high importance CCP leaders placed on appropriately interpreting and condemning Hao amidst the ongoing Civil War.

Though not necessarily apparent to the ordinary reading public at the time, all of the paper's important editorials were reviewed by Mao himself prior to publication; the fact that this piece also underwent review by Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai underlines its significance to the CCP leadership.³⁷⁹ By and large, the editorial echoes the earlier commentary by Zhang Jian, outlining the necessity of the “old-style feudal warlord armies” to undergo a process of revolutionary reform in order to become “people's armies” if the lessons of the Hao Pengju incident were to be heeded.³⁸⁰

In contrast to Sartre, who likened collaboration as a social phenomenon, somewhat akin to murder or arson, the editorial takes aim at Hao as an individual, attacking his moral character and drawing particular lessons as a conclusion. And although framed as “lessons,” there is little by way of an admission of having made a mistake beyond urging caution in dealing with such “feudal warlords,” doubling down on the importance of revolutionary transformation when bringing people into the CCP cause.

Finally, the commemorative volume issued in 1987 provides the most comprehensive statement of the myth of Hao Pengju. Reprinting a series of memoirs and historical documents in the way of newspaper extracts, telegrams, and other statements, the volume includes a great deal of material that would not be easily accessible otherwise, and includes minimal explicit editorializing beyond an introduction that casts

³⁷⁹ Chen Qingquan and Song Guangwei, *Lu Dingyi zhuan* [Biography of Lu Dingyi] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1999), p. 334.

³⁸⁰ “Hao Pengju shijian de jiaoxun” [Lessons of the Hao Pengju Incident] *Renmin ribao*, 17th February 1947.

the campaign against Hao as an important chapter in the civil war, worthy of remembrance.

The selection of documents, however, does act to sharpen the emphasis on Hao's moral character. This is done not only through the foreword, which categorizes Hao as a turncoat and an opportunist, capable of the uttering the most beautiful words while conducting the most heinous acts, but also through an extract from the confessions of Zhong Boyao 仲伯尧 (d. 1951), who labels Hao a rapist—almost certainly in reference to his affair with Liu Qiong, though her name isn't mentioned. The accusation wasn't new (nor is there any indication that Liu Qiong herself made such a claim), and has been repeated in various pieces of memoir material over the years, but it was the most official instance of it, included in a confession made closest to the date of the supposed events.³⁸¹

All of this is not to suggest that the myth of Hao Pengju has eliminated the possibility of alternate interpretations or *uses* of Hao. Zhang Runsan, whose published account of Hao remains within the bounds of conventional interpretation, nonetheless hints at the possibility of a more positive private assessment by noting that his knowledge of Hao stems from their time on a committee working for famine relief in Henan—something of an unconventional opening for an account of a villainous *hanjian*. Other writers have sought to explain their association with Hao by claiming a patriotic motive—that is, by drawing close to Hao or served under him precisely because of his “fickle nature,” believing they could draw him back into the Resistance camp. Hao, so the thinking went, was not really committed to the Japanese cause. This is the line taken

³⁸¹ Zhong's status as a criminal was explicitly referenced in the confession, as was his later execution in Yang County during the Campaign Against Counter-Revolutionaries in 1951. Elsewhere in the volume, Zhong is identified as a Nationalist agent who incited Hao to defect back to Jiang Jieshi in 1945. See Dan, Fan, and Shi, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju*, unpaginated foreword, p. 148 and 167-169.

by Zhang Hui in his chronology of Long Yusheng 龍榆生 (1902-1966), a scholar of Chinese poetry who taught at National Central University in Nanjing and also tutored Hao's children.³⁸² Jia Zhifang, to cite another example, later claimed that he had, on his own initiative, urged Hao to steer a middle course and keep his distance from the Japanese.³⁸³ In both instances, Hao is used instrumentally, as evidence of some "patriotic" motive or intention, while Hao's own status as a *hanjian*—or the very category itself—remains un-examined.

Leaving aside the account of Hao's son, accounts written outside of the PRC also offer room for less rigid interpretation. Taiwanese author Liu Jie 劉捷 (1911-2004) provides an interesting counter-perspective in his memoirs, written long after the war and published in Taipei in 1998. Liu held a variety of roles during the war that drew on his fluency in Chinese and Japanese, and in Xuzhou served in the local police forces as a liaison officer before becoming Hao's personal secretary and the publisher for the *Xuzhou ribao* 徐州日報 (Xuzhou Daily). Liu, who returned to his native Taiwan after the war, recalled Hao with reverence, (referring to him as "my master" or "Governor Hao"), and expressed concern for Hao's fate as a person following the Japanese surrender.³⁸⁴ Not only does Liu present a divergent view of Hao, but he also recalls a much more complex picture of the politics of occupation, describing, for example, the plight of villagers who farmed for the new regime by day, and owed their rents and taxes to the old regime by

³⁸² Zhang Hui, *Long Yusheng xiansheng nianpu* [Chronology of the Life of Mr Long Yusheng] (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2001), p. 135-136.

³⁸³ Wei, *Hu Feng*, p. 243.

³⁸⁴ Liu Jie, *Wode chanhui lu* [My Confessions] (Taipei: Chiu Ko Publishing Co., 1998), p. 113, *passim*.

night.³⁸⁵ While further research to ascertain conditions on the ground and the realities of daily life are clearly needed, the major divergence with mainland accounts that Liu provides underlines the need for casting a more critical eye on the post-war myth-making that has constrained the development of Chinese-language historiography of wartime Xuzhou, and attending to the complexity of occupation.

The myth of Hao Pengju (and the mentality behind it), narrowly focused on his supposed moral failings to explain and contextualize his service in the RNG and postwar switching between the Nationalist and Communist camps, acts to inhibit more nuanced examinations. Such mythology has deep roots within how the war has been narrated within China. Describing the discourse that took hold in China in the 1930s, historian Rana Mitter has noted the disappearance of any space between the two poles of nationalist commitment and treachery.³⁸⁶ As Mitter notes, the effects of this are not limited only to those who collaborated, but also inhibited honest appraisals of the resistance, which was bathed in a “constructed image of heroism.” This can be seen for example, in the treatment of two of Hao’s close associates, whose eventual entry into the Communist Party has afforded them not only a sympathetic historical treatment but, more importantly, also obscured their actual experience under occupation and their decision to serve the occupation state of Wang Jingwei.

Mie Tingbin, for example, escaped the moral opprobrium of collaboration and association with Hao by secretly joining the Communist Party just prior to the Japanese surrender, as described many years later by one of his subordinates, Wu Junying 武俊英

³⁸⁵ Liu Jie, *Wode chanhui lu*, p. 108.

³⁸⁶ Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth*, p. 226.

(dates unknown). Using his position as the First Division Commander in Hao's forces, Mie passed on intelligence to CCP operatives and in 1946, during the leadership meetings Hao convened with his top officers, spoke out (in gendered rather than ideological terms) against breaking with the Communists.³⁸⁷ "We aren't bitches 婊子 (*biaozi*)," Mie argued. "We've already thrown in our lot with the Communists. Why should we go back to Jiang Jieshi?"³⁸⁸ As a result, in Mie's case, the question of how he initially donned the uniform of the occupation state and served under Hao can simply be waved away. "From start to finish, he [Mie] and the men he led fought in order to protect the nation's territory," Wu wrote. "Later, owing to the twists and turns of history 歷史曲折 (*lishi quzhe*), he served as first division commander in the army of Hao Pengju." And after 1949, Mie went on to enjoy a successful career, eventually rising to the rank of deputy director in the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Civil Affairs.³⁸⁹

Also noteworthy is the case of Zhang Qi. While Mie remained relatively anonymous after 1949, commemorated only in a stray reminiscence in an obscure local publication, Zhang became the longest-serving mayor of Zigong, Sichuan, where he held office for seventeen years (1950-1967). Zhang was posthumously honoured with a commemorative publication prepared by the local party history committee, timed to coincide with the

³⁸⁷ It should be noted that this was not an uncommon line of argument. Another report mentions one of Hao's commanders arguing against returning to Jiang Jieshi in similar terms, asking, "Is this not the same as a wife who takes a lover?" See "Hao Pengju wuchi panli renmin, buxia guan bing yuanhen bu man," [Hao Pengju shamelessly betrays the people, officers and soldier resentful and discontent] *Dazhong ribao*, 15th February 1947, reprinted in Dan, Fan, and Shi, eds. *Xiaomie Hao Pengju*, p. 139.

³⁸⁸ Wu Junying, "Gangzheng shizhang Mie Tingbin," [The Honourable Commander Mie Tingbin] *Jingxian wenshi ziliao* no. 3 (1995), p. 61. Another source quotes Mie as laughingly agreeing with categorizing Wang Jingwei as a political whore. See Bo Han, "Sijin Xuzhou cedong Hao Pengju bu qiyi," p. 332.

³⁸⁹ Wu Junying, "Gangzheng shizhang Mie Tingbin," p. 58-59.

fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the PRC.³⁹⁰ Similar to Mie, the circumstances of Zhang's arrival in occupied Nanjing and subsequent service in the RNG remain a topic of discretion in the hands of the editors, merely a matter of Zhang following Hao to Nanjing in 1943 after a serious personal falling out with an officer in his previous unit. Once there, Zhang "placed his faith in Wang Jingwei's bogus government" and served under Hao at the Central Army Officers Training Corps, before becoming a Security Chief in the newly-established Huaihai Province in 1944.³⁹¹ It was the sort of record that would be utterly denounced were it not for the fact that Zhang later became a Communist; with that, his earlier actions (as with those of Mie) could be viewed in a sympathetic light.

It is important to note the position taken on both men is not even that they became *hanjian* by happenstance and were later redeemed, but rather that they were purportedly true patriots all along, motivated by the best of intentions. Assessing whether the two were made retrospectively righteous through eventual membership in the Communist Party, or actually acted honourably throughout the occupation is beyond the scope of this section and might in fact be impossible to determine. Instead, the point is that no other figure who served in the RNG has been accorded such understanding with regard to personal detail, extenuating circumstances beyond a certain select few: those who eventually joined the Communist Party.

³⁹⁰ Hu Xuehong, ed., *Cong jiangjun dao shizhang* [From General to Mayor] (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1999), p. 1.

³⁹¹ An account in the same volume by one of Zhang's relations goes into somewhat more detail about the poverty and hardship Zhang found himself in prior to joining the Wang regime. See Hu Xuehong, ed., *Cong jiangjun dao shizhang*, p. 192 and 285.

Even in more recent years, the myth of Hao Pengju continues to serve as the framework for viewing Hao and his wartime role, even if the parameters have loosened. In 2003, for example, a stele was “rediscovered” just outside Xuzhou City, on the east side of the Ligu Ore Mine in Tongshan County. Half buried in the mud, the stele reportedly marked the site of a “ten thousand-man pit” at Yanggu Hill, used by the Japanese to bury miners who died during an epidemic. Written vertically along the face of the stele in large characters were the words “Monument to the Martyred Chinese Labourers of Ligu Mine” 利國礦山中國勞工殉職紀念塔 (Ligu Kuangshan Zhongguo Laogong xunzhi jinian ta), with another inscription along the side, reading “Governor of Huaihai” followed by a series of gash marks, almost assuredly obscuring the name Hao Pengju, who was the province’s only governor.

According to the report, the Japanese deceived poverty-stricken locals into working the mine, where conditions were terrible, while Hao erected the stele in 1945 as a means of displaying his “humanity” and thereby further deceiving the people.³⁹² Detail on the stele is scant but, as in the case of the Jiran Stele, mentioned in Chapter 3, the specific vandalism it suffered is revealing. Obscuring Hao’s name, but not that of the province he led, points to the strength of taboo attached to Hao’s person, as well as the degree of control in post-war China, not only over the content of wartime commemoration but over who is allowed to commit the very act of commemoration as well. In Hao’s case, regardless of the intent of the person who chiseled away his name (ie, whether this was

³⁹² Sun Huabei, “Xuzhou faxian ‘Zhongguo laogong xunzhi bei,’” [‘Stele to Martyred Chinese Labourers’ discovered in Xuzhou] *Yangzi wanbao*, 23rd February 2003, accessed on July 27th 2018 at <http://news.sohu.com/85/41/news147954185.shtml>. A more recent but less descriptive account of the stele on the Jiangsu Phoenix website states that Hao erected the stele in order to “conceal the truth” and curry favour with the Japanese invaders. See “Kangzhan zai Xuzhou, jingji lüeduo,” [The Resistance War in Xuzhou, Economic Plunder] accessed on 27th July 2018 at <https://js.ifeng.com/special/xzkz/3-6.shtml>.

an attempt to erase Hao, or to preserve the stele, or both), Hao's name could not be allowed to remain on a stele commemorating Chinese dead, even if the name of Huaihai Province—entirely the creation of the RNG—did not present a similar problem. By the time of the stele's "rediscovery," however, Hao's name had become a secondary point of interest, interpreted as a sign of his perfidiousness, but was secondary to the stele's greater value as evidence of Japanese atrocity. As of 2018, it has even been used as a site of patriotic education.³⁹³

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to use the case of Hao Pengju to make a number of broader points about the politics of occupation during the Second World War in China, as well as the way in which political imperatives have impacted how this history has been recounted in the PRC.

In terms of periodization and the stain of having served the occupation state, what sets the Hao case apart from the politicians, the intellectuals and others, is that the pattern of factional politics and political fragmentation persisted after the Japanese surrender and into the Civil War. Due to the exigencies of the era, collaboration itself left less of a stain for military officials whose services were still required than it did for the politicians, who

³⁹³ See also Pan Liusheng, Qiu Yunhua, eds., *Zhongguo lishi wenhua mingcun: Jiangsu Ligu* [Ligu, Jiangsu: A Famed Village in Chinese History and Culture] (Beijing: Zhishi chanquan chubanshe, 2018), p. 28 and 176-178. This account of the monument is more expansive than the above reports, which are quoted verbatim, and also includes a description of Hao as a famous *hanjian* in Chinese history.

were in any event opponents or at least competitors and therefore eligible for elimination under the brass knuckle rules of Chinese politics, even under peacetime circumstances.

This is not to suggest there was no stigma. One example comes from the memoirs of Xu Hongci 徐洪慈 (1933-2008), who was the son of a minor Huaihai official and spent his earliest years in Kunshan. In his memoirs, Xu took a disdainful view of his father, Xu Yunsun 徐雲蓀 (1905-1958), a former civil servant in Shanghai whose fall into poverty was triggered by the Japanese takeover of the International Settlement and the subsequent loss of his position in 1941. Fleeing into the countryside, the elder Xu made a meager living raising chickens and reselling lumber, often for use in making coffins, until a pest wiped out the family's brood of chickens in late 1944. It was through the intervention of Fang Huanru 方煥如 (dates unknown), a family friend who served as Director of Government Affairs in the Huaihai government, that Xu came to serve in the RNG. As Xu writes, "Desperate, he had no alternative but to accept Fang Huanru's offer and was assigned as director of logistics in Su County, where he supplied the Eighth Route Army and apparently made some money."³⁹⁴ Scorning his father as "introverted and cowardly," Xu's judgment on his father is stark: "Father's attitude towards the Japanese torments me.

³⁹⁴ Fang joined the Communist Party in the 1920s, then fled to the Soviet Union from Shanghai in 1927, where he was classified as a Trotskyite and forced to flee once more, this time joining the Nationalist Party, which dispatched him to Shanghai, before finally defecting to the RNG. After the war, Fang was arrested and remained in prison after 1949, eventually joining a group of six other inmates, including Bishop Jin Luxian, who were organized for work on various translation projects in Beijing's Qincheng Prison. As described by Jin, when Fang died in the prison in the early 1970s, apparently after gorging himself on some twenty peaches, his daughters declined to retrieve his remains. See Jin Luxian, *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian, Volume One: Learning and Relearning, 1916-1982*, translated by William Hanbury-Tenison (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), p. 236 and 255-256.

I was young and didn't understand what was going on. But if I had been an adult, I'm sure we would have had a fight."³⁹⁵

Rather than making a particular judgment about the decision of Xu's father to enter the Huaihai provincial bureaucracy, the point is that these histories have remained raw well into the postwar period (a point I take up in the following chapter), both for those who lived through the war and often their descendants as well.³⁹⁶ Half a century after the war ended, as Xu sat down to write the memoirs of his tumultuous life, much of it spent in one or another of the PRC's prisons or labour camps, he continued to flail, with humiliation and incomprehension, at the impossible position that occupation presented his father with so many years before.

At the same time, it is important to recall that political imperatives could also be used to overwhelm the moral condemnation that was normally deployed against former RNG officials. Returning to Hao Pengju, he reportedly faced greater official censure for his affair with Liu Qiong than he ever did for collaborating with the Japanese. For that affair, he was sentenced to nearly a year's imprisonment and subsequently ordered to leave Xi'an, whereas at the end of the war, both the Nationalists and the Communists (and, potentially, the Americans) all expressed interest in cooperation. For Hao and other military officials who carried on the factional politics of the Republican era, the years 1937 and 1945 hardly marked transition points of any great significance; they simply

³⁹⁵ Xu Hongci and Erling Hoh, ed., *No Wall to High: One Man's Extraordinary Escape from Mao's Infamous Labour Camps*, trans. by Erling Hoh (London: Rider Books, 2017), p. 5-9. An earlier Chinese version of this book was published in Hong Kong by Paul Lee (Lee Bo or Lee Po), one of the booksellers who was abducted from that city by PRC agents and transported to the mainland in the spring of 2016.

³⁹⁶ See, for example, the account written by Scott Tong, grandson of Carleton Sun Ditang 孫迪堂 (1906-1958), a minor occupation official in Wuhan, in which he details the reluctance of some members of his family to see their family history of wartime collaboration committed to print. Scott Tong, *A Village With My Name: A Family History of China's Opening to the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 81, *passim*.

carried on in the factional politicking that had defined their earlier careers, and in Hao's case, he managed to carry on until 1947. However fierce the condemnation of collaborators in the contemporary press and subsequent historical writing, practical considerations and the political imperatives of the Nationalist and Communist Parties remained paramount.

It was because the stigma of collaboration remained in play that it became necessary to craft a convincing explanation and narrative—what I call the myth of Hao Pengju—to provide an explanation for why a figure like Hao (or Wu Huawen) managed to remain active in Chinese public life due to their military usefulness. This type of mythology surrounding the war has inhibited a fuller understanding of figures like Hao, as well as those around him—Mie Tingbin, Zhang Qi, and others—as well as the broader politics of occupation and resistance, and in some cases has led to awkward rewriting. In Hao's case, this meant crafting a narrative first of a former warlord bent on reform, and then the image which endures today of a fiendishly opportunistic villain who switched sides on a whim.

In the following chapter, I turn to the problem of historical commemoration and the rewriting of history, taking the experience of university students in occupied Nanjing, who were not branded as *hanjian* but became caught up in the post-war condemnation of the RNG by virtue of their education, and redeemed in part through the rise of CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin.

5. Commemoration: History and the State

5.1 Introduction: Controversy and Myth

In the previous chapter, I discussed the impact of the state in re-shaping and influencing historical and moral judgment using the case of Hao Pengju with particular reference to his post-war career. I further suggested that the factional switching for which Hao earned his notoriety was in fact a long-standing pattern in the politics of Republican China that became increasingly unacceptable over the course of the war and subjected to moral condemnation through the politically-motivated myth-making of the CCP.

This myth-making, which in the case of Hao Pengju rendered a morally-complex military official caught up in the factional switching of the Republican-era into a despised rapist, extends well beyond any one individual figure and has endured well beyond the Civil War period, and in fact still characterizes much of the historical writing on the occupation period in the PRC. Despite the persistence of this mode of myth-making, however, with its heavy insistence on a binary of good and evil, the occupation remains subject to a fascination that points towards the unsatisfying explanatory power of the old myths.

In this chapter, I consider how the state has preserved a binary narrative of the war that emphasizes heroic resistance versus the moral failure of collaboration on the one hand, and the ways in which individuals and groups have found ways in which to narrate

and commemorate their own experiences within this wartime framework on the other. By necessity, this exploration takes place over a long stretch of time by examining the ways in which state taboos and interests have shaped accounts of the wartime period until at least as recently as the Era of Reform and Opening (ie, the 1980s and onward). To explore these problems, I examine the controversies over the background and wartime years of Jiang Zemin, as well as his later role in the rehabilitation of his fellow National Central University (NCU) alumni. Drawing on alumni memoirs, newspaper clippings and university histories, as well as reports held in American libraries, in this section I argue that efforts to commemorate the wartime past remain mired in the politics of the present, where moral judgment and the wartime binary of collaboration versus resistance endures.

Unlike the individuals referenced in previous chapters, Jiang Zemin has been the subject of multiple biographies and profiles in both Chinese and English, so I will be sparing in the level of biographical detail provided here. The purpose of the following sections is not to present an alternate account of Jiang—censorship and archival controls in the PRC make such an effort near impossible. Instead, I deal with the specifics of his background—his parentage, university education, and the slow revelation of his wartime experiences—that have become topics of controversy and, to some extent, innuendo, as well as the broader context of the protests that unfolded at NCU, where he obtained his education. The controversy of Jiang, I argue, has unfolded within the constraints of the wartime binary of collaboration versus resistance or good versus evil that has characterized much of the historical writing on occupation in the PRC, and are reflective of the failure to set aside nationalist narratives and examine the occupation period with attention to its ambiguity and complexity.

5.2 Jiang Zemin

In this section, I take up the accusations and rumours regarding Jiang's parentage. In particular, lack of transparency or documentation over his parentage, early upbringing and later adoption have taken form as a bold accusation: that Jiang is in fact the son of a *hanjian*, who supposedly held office as the vice-minister of Propaganda in the RNG. Although accounts of Jiang's background leave questions unanswered, I argue that there is no persuasive evidence to suggest his biological father was in fact vice-minister of propaganda. The more significant issue at hand is that this controversy is symptomatic of an effort to centre official narratives of the war on a heroic, CCP-led resistance.

Political scientist Bruce Gilley made the first major English-language foray into Jiang's early years while posted to Hong Kong as a reporter with the now-defunct *Far Eastern Economic Review*.³⁹⁷ Based on various secondary sources as well as interviews with residents of Jiang Zemin's hometown, including the principal of Yangzhou Middle School, which Jiang attended, Gilley traces Jiang's early years from early education in Yangzhou, his adoption by his communist "martyr" uncle, education at NCU in occupied Nanjing, and subsequent post-war career leading up to his presidency.

More significant for this study is the window into the life of Jiang Zemin that comes from Robert Lawrence Kuhn, an American investment banker with a doctorate in anatomy and experience as an advisor to the Chinese government. Researched with the aid of high-ranking figures in the government, including the vice premier and former

³⁹⁷ Gilley has since earned a measure of notoriety through his writings on colonialism. See Vimal Patel, "Last Fall This Scholar Defended Colonialism. Now He's Defending Himself," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 21st March 2018, accessed at <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Last-Fall-This-Scholar/242880> on 3rd June 2019.

chairman of the State Development Planning Commission and a minister from the State Council Information officer, among others, Kuhn's book revealed previously unknown details about Jiang's early life, gleaned through interviews with Jiang's adoptive sister, Jiang Zehui 江澤慧 (b. 1938) his college roommate in Nanjing, Tong Zonghai 童宗海 (1924-2008), his political mentor, Wang Daohan 汪道涵 (1915-2005), and various other officials.³⁹⁸ Tong, it is worth noting, is Kuhn's only source for his account of Jiang's activities as a student in Nanjing.

Kuhn's study is significant to this chapter not so much for the biographical detail it provides, but for its status as an account of Jiang as the PRC state would have it. By his own account, Kuhn sets out to provide "the facts," about a Jiang often dismissed by his critics as a transitional figure not on par with Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping, arguing that Jiang became, "an agent of change, effecting the transition from a traumatized society to a stable, confident, prosperous country rapidly ascending the New World Order."³⁹⁹ Although fluent in neither written or spoken Chinese, Kuhn describes himself as a *lao pengyou* 老朋友 [Old Friend] of China, one who roots for China "like a loyal fan of a local sports team," and was driven to write against the misconceptions that "China is inherently hostile to America," and that Jiang himself is "a dictator."⁴⁰⁰

Reviewers have not been kind. Bruce Gilley, who authored an earlier biography of Jiang, accused him of "willful naiveté about China's political system and its leadership," stating that Kuhn "holds fast to a miraculous story of a hard-working American who

³⁹⁸ Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China*, p. 685.

³⁹⁹ Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China*, p. 1 and 13.

⁴⁰⁰ Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China*, p. 691 and 693.

strikes up a friendship with a CCP leader and reveals him to be a kind and gentle man whose story the world should know.” Noting the ready approval and distribution granted by state censors, Gilley argues that the book was in fact intended for the Chinese market by those who oversaw the project, reintroduced from abroad by means of *chukou zhuan neixiao* 出口轉內銷 (“exporting in order to reimport”).⁴⁰¹

It is as an export intended for reimport that Kuhn’s book is of interest here, since it is through this export/import maneuver, used to provide an authoritative statement on Jiang’s life, including his wartime role, that we are able to obtain insight into the role of the state in crafting narratives of the Second World War, the occupation period, and the role of the Communist Party. This is not to say that Kuhn’s work is pure boilerplate propaganda—there are important insights into Jiang’s background that were previously unknown, as well as divergences between Kuhn’s account and “official” Chinese perspectives on aspects of the war.⁴⁰² But the high level of access given to Kuhn and, as per Gilley, its swift approval and distribution in Chinese format must be taken as at least tacit state approval—this is the most authoritative account to date.

⁴⁰¹ See this exchange of letters between Kuhn and Gilley after the publication of the latter’s review: Kuhn, Robert Lawrence and Bruce Gilley, “One Country, Two Prisms,” *Foreign Affairs* vol 85, no. 1 (January/February 2006), p. 169. For another example of exporting in order to reimport, see the memoirs of Wu Kaisheng, quoted earlier, which were released by a Hong Kong-based publisher that was closely tied to the Shanghai Office of the Local Gazetteer, of which Wu was an employee. In the book, Wu makes a point of thanking the government for its enlightened policy towards intellectuals and its fair assessment (after long scrutiny) of his own background, and also includes a poem written in honour of Jiang Zemin. See Wu Kaisheng, *Wu Kaisheng boshi xuanji*, p. 199-200 and 292.

⁴⁰² One eye-catching example is the figure given by Kuhn for the number of victims in the Nanjing Massacre: some 60,000 out of a municipal population of 100,000. This figure survived into the Chinese translation, but not without the addition of a translator’s note giving the “official” figures, which state that those murdered individually *and* buried number 150,000, with an additional 190,000 falling victim to mass killings and live burials. See Luobote Laolunsi Ku’er, *Ta gaibianle Zhongguo: Jiang Zemin zhuan* [The Man who Changed China] translated by Tan Zheng and Yu Haijiang (Shanghai: Shiji chuban jituan, 2005), p. 25.

What follows is a brief account of what could be called the uncontested facts of Jiang's early years, before I turn to a discussion of the historical controversy that has sprouted up within the binary framework of collaboration versus resistance that the war has typically been narrated within.

Jiang Zemin was born on 17th August 1926 in Yangzhou to Jiang Shijun 江世俊 (1895-1973) and Wu Yueqing 吴月卿 (1897-1977). Jiang's grandfather, Jiang Shixi 江石溪 (1870-1933), enjoyed a career as a scholar and a businessman, and by the time of Jiang's birth was able to maintain a well-appointed courtyard house for his children and grandchildren not far from the Grand Canal.⁴⁰³

The Yangzhou in which Jiang grew up provided an environment that, while rich in local culture, retained the character of a provincial backwater, thereby affording Jiang a relatively sheltered childhood.⁴⁰⁴ Somewhat more generously, Bruce Gilley, described the city as a “quiet and cultured refuge” from the turmoil of the 1920s and 30s.⁴⁰⁵ Despite this sheltered position, however, war cast its pall over Yangzhou, and the Jiang family, slowly but steadily over the course of the 1930s, and with it the collaboration (and anxiety about collaboration) that is wartime occupation entails.

⁴⁰³ See Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), p. 20-21.

⁴⁰⁴ As Lucie B. Olivová has suggested, it was only with the development of a road network and the construction of a bridge spanning the Yangtze River in the 2005 that the city was more firmly connected to the rest of Jiangsu province and began to overcome its status apart. See Lucie B. Olivová, “Building History and the Preservation of Yangzhou,” in Lucie Olivová and Vibeke Børdahl, eds., *Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), p. 29.

⁴⁰⁵ Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China's New Elite* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 6.

One early example of this came in 1934, when Yangzhou residents' sense of pride in the city was stung by the publication of *Xianhua Yangzhou* 閒話揚州 [Idle Talk on Yangzhou] by Yi Junzuo 易君左 (1899-1972), a writer who served as Education Commissioner of Jiangsu Province. Yi, who spent a brief time period of time sheltering in Yangzhou in the aftermath of the 1932 Japanese attack on Shanghai, came away unimpressed. Published in Shanghai, where regional prejudice towards northern Jiangsu endures even today, Yi's work provoked an uproar by skewering the character and morals of Yangzhou people while stirring their indignation with its references to a Qing-dynasty era massacre in the city, as well as its supposed role as both training ground for China's prostitutes and a source of collaborators for the Japanese.⁴⁰⁶

Two years later, in 1936, it was the theme of resistance that came to the fore as a young Jiang Zemin prepared an essay for admission to Yangzhou Middle School in which he wrote approvingly of Zhang Xueliang 張學良 (1901-2001) for his role during the Xi'an Incident of that same year, in which Jiang Jieshi was held captive by two of his own generals, Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng 楊虎城 (1893-1949), until he agreed to suspend his campaigns against the Communists and prepare for resistance against Japan.⁴⁰⁷

The following year brought the war home more directly for Jiang. In 1937, the Jiangsu provincial administration retreated through the hinterland, passing through Yangzhou, followed not long after by the arrival of Japanese troops, who took the city on

⁴⁰⁶ See Antonia Finnane, "A Place in the Nation: Yangzhou and the *Idle Talk* Controversy of 1934," *Journal of Asian Studies* no. 53, vol. 4 (November 1994), p. 1158.

⁴⁰⁷ Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 12.

14th December 1937. The campus of Yangzhou Middle School was taken over, with many of its students dispersed to provisional campuses elsewhere, and Jiang himself left to continue his studies along with a small number of his fellow students in the city's suburbs. Some months later, in 1938, the Japanese placed the city under the jurisdiction of the newly-established Reformed Government in Nanjing, which included Yangzhou within its purview.⁴⁰⁸

It was in the midst of this occupation that the Jiang family experienced its most high-profile loss in the form of an event that became the source of future controversy—the death of Jiang Zemin's uncle, Jiang Shangqing 江上青 (1911-1939). Jiang Shangqing had a track record of involvement in the Communist Party, which he joined in 1928 and for which he was jailed in 1932, before founding and writing for radical Marxist journals. Eventually, he became the vice-principal of the Anhui Anti-Japanese Military Academy and by 1939 was involved in United Front work and serving as a propagandist with the Eighth Route Army. It was in this capacity that he died, gunned down not by the Japanese but by local bandits, while riding on horseback through the village of Little Bay in northeastern Anhui on 29th July 1939.⁴⁰⁹

Drawing on Kuhn's account, the consequences for young Jiang were twofold. First, his birthparents offered him for adoption to Jiang Shangqing's widow, thereby ensuring the fallen Jiang would have a male heir to carry on the line. What this meant at a personal level is unclear. On the most immediate level, Kuhn notes that the adoption “hardly

⁴⁰⁸ Olivová, “Building History and the Preservation of Yangzhou,” p. 19, and Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁹ See Luobote Laolunsi Ku'en, *Ta gaibianle Zhongguo*, p. 26. The name of the village is left unclear in Kuhn, but Gilley identifies it as “Little Bay.” See Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 18.

changed Jiang Zemin's life." According to Gilley, however, Jiang's birth mother, Wu Yueqing, "died a broken woman in Yangzhou in the 1980s."⁴¹⁰ However this re-arrangement might have unfolded *within* the family unit, it is not particularly relevant beyond the personal.

More significant than the changed relationship with his birth parents was the association that Jiang gained with his fallen uncle. Despite having died a meaningless death, shot seemingly at random by local Chinese bandits, Jiang Shangqing was apparently refashioned as a "revolutionary martyr." Accordingly, as a consequence of his adoption, the young Jiang was in turn able to claim a revolutionary heritage as the child of a "heroic Communist martyr," with all the privileges such a background would accord him in the early years of the PRC. And as Kuhn reports, this adoption also carried significance for the wartime politics of occupation. "It is my hope that this child can carry out his father's mission," Jiang's biological father reportedly stated at the adoption ceremony, "and take revenge on our evil enemies [ie, the Japanese]."⁴¹¹ With that, the death of Jiang Shangqing and Jiang Zemin's adoption were re-fashioned within the context of China's War of Resistance against Japan.

Many decades later, this tragedy formed part of the basis for later debates about Jiang and his wartime past. Official accounts have emphasized patriotism, revolution, and resistance, as with Kuhn who headed his chapter on Jiang's college years with the heading "I Am a Patriot," to which critics have responded, mostly via rumour and innuendo, with the contention that he was not.

⁴¹⁰ See Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China*, p 31 and Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 7.

⁴¹¹ Luobote Laolunsi Ku'en, *Ta gaibianle Zhongguo*, p. 27-28.

If the authorized account of Jiang Zemin outlined his patriotic credentials, the critiques attempted to paint him as a fraud and a traitor, or at the very least the son of a *hanjian*. In this, the controversy unfolded within a similar binary framework to that which Don Bate was working within when he penned his propagandist account, *Wang Ching-wei, Puppet or Patriot*. Where Wang remains very much condemned in Chinese-language scholarship, with his defenders pushed to (mostly) fringe positions in online essays hosted by foreign servers, the condemnation and attacks on Jiang occupy a similar (but not identical) position, circulated online and ephemeral, seldom making it into scholarly works or mainstream publishing.

Even without making explicit the accusations surrounding Jiang's birth parents, Gilley's account leaves questions unanswered about what might otherwise be considered rather standard biographical information about an individual. Jiang's biological father, Gilley writes, died under what could be called mysterious circumstances in 1973, at a time when his son had long since ceased to mention him. Given the elder Jiang's age of 78, his death might well have been a natural one, but considering the fact that three other members of the family had been subject to political criticism in the years prior, there is some grounds for suspicion regarding the exact circumstances in which he passed.⁴¹²

What has emerged to fill the gap is nothing short of inflammatory. An account in a Falun Gong-affiliated biography from 2005 and various other essays since have proliferated online, and make a number of claims related to the Jiang family's position during the war: that Jiang Shijun served as a vice-minister of propaganda in the RNG; that Jiang Zemin's admission to NCU in September 1943 came about due to these

⁴¹² Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 54.

connections; that Jiang himself attended a summer training camp directed by Li Shiqun 李士群 (1905-1943), a one-time Communist-turned-Nationalist turned-collaborationist who served as director of the RNG's security agency, run out of #76 Jessfield Road in Shanghai; and so on.⁴¹³

Some of these rumours have even crossed over into scholarly work. One recent work by a group of Japanese scholars includes speculation regarding what they perceived as Jiang's "hostility towards Japan," as though such an attitude were to be wondered at in a Chinese man of Jiang's age and experience. The explanations offered range from the odd (that he was bitten by a Japanese military dog as a child) to the more serious charge that his biological father was a *hanjian* in the RNG.⁴¹⁴

More authoritative is the attention granted by Cheng Li, a well-connected political scientist at the Brookings Institution with expertise in elite Chinese leadership politics, in his description of the suspicions Beijing's other so-called "princelings" hold regarding Jiang Zemin's background. In a discreetly-placed footnote, Li writes: "Jiang's father, Jiang Shijun, was not a CCP official, but rather a Kuomintang propagandist in the 1940s. But Jiang has always claimed that he came from the family of his uncle and foster father, Jiang Shangqing, a communist martyr."⁴¹⁵ Li's claim is left unsourced.

PRC sources have provided further only the barest of details in light of the persistent questions regarding Jiang's background. A 2013 report written on the publication of

⁴¹³ See Dajiyuan bianjibu, eds., *Jiang Zemin qi ren* [The real story of Jiang Zemin] (San Diego, CA: Boda chubanshe, 2005), p. 12-22 and "Zhenshi de Jiang Zemin" [The Real Jiang Zeming] accessed at <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/12/5/13/n3587759.htm> on 15th October 2018, to take one example.

⁴¹⁴ Ryosei Kokubun, Yoshihide Soeya, Akio Takahara, and Shin Kawashima, eds., *Japan-China Relations in the Modern Era*, translated by Keith Krulak (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 167.

⁴¹⁵ Cheng Li, *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2016), p. 19 and p 405, footnote 52.

Jiang Zemin yu Yangzhou 江澤民與揚州 (Jiang Zemin and Yangzhou), a photo collection detailing Jiang's links with his hometown, cast him as a responsible intellectual who supported his brother's involvement in revolutionary activity. Though brief, the report addressed the rumours of collaboration directly: "When Yangzhou fell, [Jiang Shijun] preferred to become a furniture seller to get by rather than take office in a bogus regime." Following the war, the report continues, the elder Jiang worked for the Yangzhou Subei Jiulei Gongsi 揚州蘇北酒類公司 (Yangzhou Subei Spirits Company).⁴¹⁶

That evidence of the elder Jiang's role would be obscured in China is perhaps understandable—tampering with records, barring access, use of pseudonyms and various other means of censorship regarding so sensitive a topic would not be unheard of, but there is also a definite lack of evidence in overseas sources that otherwise do document the leadership and personnel of the RNG.⁴¹⁷

One source, for example, is the bilingual edition of *The National Government of China, organization and personnel*, issued in October 1941, and available on the shelves of the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago. Amongst the listings of officials on the National Political Council and other assorted bodies there is no trace of a Jiang Shijun or a Jiang Guanqian. Listings for the RNG's propaganda apparatus (or publicity,

⁴¹⁶ The photo collection referred to is Zhonggong Yangzhou shiwei, eds., *Jiang Zemin yu Yangzhou* [Jiang Zemin and Yangzhou] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013). The report is "Jiang Zemin yu Yangzhou" [Jiang Zemin and Yangzhou], *Phoenix Weekly*, accessed at <http://www.ifengweekly.com/detil.php?id=970> on 16th September 2018.

⁴¹⁷ On the use of pseudonyms in the Ministry of Propaganda, see Zhang Kebiao with Chen Fukan, Shang Shangqing, eds., *Zhang Kebiao wenji* [Collected Works of Zhang Kebiao] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 2003), p. 193, 196 and 207. It should be noted that Zhang's is probably the best personal account of the RNG's Ministry of Propaganda.

to use the RNG's translation), include the minister, Lin Bosheng, as well as Guo Xiufeng 郭秀峰 (b. 1904), the administrative vice-minister, Zhou Huaren 周化人 (1903-1976), the political vice-minister, and Tang Leang-li 湯良禮 (1901-1975), the Indonesian-born Director General of the International Publicity Board.⁴¹⁸

Admittedly, this was released relatively early in the RNG's existence. Another source worth considering is a report prepared by the American Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) (predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency). Compiled on January 12th 1945 and entitled "Structure and Personnel of the Nanking Puppet Government (and Hong Kong Administration)," this once-restricted document draws on a yearbook published in Nanjing in November 1943, monitored radio broadcasts, newspapers and periodicals from occupied China, and "other miscellaneous and published sources" to describe the structure of the government and list "the most prominent officials compiled from sources available up to 1 January 1945." This document lists Lin Bosheng as the former minister, Chang Ko-min (dates unknown) as former vice-minister, Liang Xiuyu 梁秀予 (dates unknown) as Chief of the Shanghai Propaganda Bureau, Tang Leang-li as Minister of the International Bureau, and Guo Xiufeng as Chief of the Central Telegraph Bureau (likely a reference to the *Zhongyang dianxun she* 中央電訊社, the RNG's Central News Agency).⁴¹⁹ As with the above-

⁴¹⁸ Compilation Bureau, ed., *The National Government of China, Organization and Personnel* (Nanjing: Compilation Bureau, International Publicity Board, 1941), unpaginated.

⁴¹⁹ United States Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch. *Structure and Personnel of the Nanking Puppet Government (and Hong Kong administration)*. 1945, p. 19

mentioned source, nowhere in this document is there any mention of a Jiang Shijun or Jiang Guanqian.⁴²⁰

Instead, we are left with a controversy, one that is somewhat intractable, but whose answer is likely to be of greater political than scholarly interest. What is more relevant to this chapter than whatever the elder Jiang might have done, however, is the binary of patriot or traitor into which both the elder and the younger Jiang's wartime activities are framed.

5.3 National Central University

A more significant aspect of the controversy that has attached itself to Jiang stems from his student days at the RNG-established NCU in Nanjing from 1943 to 1945.⁴²¹ According to the binary rhetoric that took shape during the wartime period and intensified following the return of the Chongqing Nationalists at war's end, NCU was simply one more institution of an entirely illegitimate occupation state bent on

⁴²⁰ From available records, there are only two people with the last name Jiang known to have been employed in the Ministry of Propaganda. One, Jiang Julin 江菊林 (dates unknown), was a mid-ranking propagandist who appears in the memoir, written long after the war, of the remarkably long-lived literatus and former RNG official Zhang Kebiao 章克標 (1900-2007), primarily in the context of accompanying Zhang on trips to Nanjing's dance halls on the banks of the Qinhuai River. The other, Jiang Qijun 江其濬 (dates unknown) was appointed as chief of the Ministry's General Service Department on 27th January 1945, not long after the departure of long-time propaganda minister Lin Bosheng. Apart from a shared last name, there is no evidence that either person bore any connection with the family of Jiang Zemin. See Zhang Kebiao, *Zhang Kebiao wenji*, p. 203-204, and Liu Shoulin, Wan Renyuan, Wang Yuwen, Kong Qingtai, eds., *Minguo zhiguan nianbiao* [Chronological Tables of Republican Officials] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), p. 1083.

⁴²¹ See Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 20 and Kuhn, *The Man who Changed China*, p. 34.

propagating “enslavement education,” with Jiang’s presence there taken as grounds for questioning his loyalties.

One author, Lu Jiaping, goes so far as to claim that both Jiang Zemin and his biological father were *hanjian*. Per Lu, while the elder Jiang supposedly joined the Reformed Government of Liang Hongzhi in the early days of the occupation and went on to become Vice-Minister of Propaganda in the RNG, Jiang Zemin himself supposedly joined an anti-communist, collaborationist organization while a student at NCU, even meeting with top leaders of the RNG’s intelligence agency (either Li Shiqun or the previously mentioned Ding Mocun, again according to Lu).⁴²² As per the previous section, this appears unlikely. The more interesting issue revolves around Jiang’s involvement in a series of anti-opium protests that broke out in Nanjing that have become part of a narrative of CCP-led resistance against the Japanese in later PRC writing.

In this section, I argue that the anti-opium protests have been amplified disproportionately due to the involvement of students who, like Jiang, later joined the CCP. Instead, these protests must be evaluated within the context of Nanjing’s longer history of student protest, the eruption of student activism earlier in 1943, prior to Jiang’s arrival on campus, and the prevailing atmosphere of anti-Anglo-American propaganda that RNG officials promoted.

Scholarship on the protests has been limited, both in terms of quantity and in terms of the insight it gives into the actual complexity of occupation. Jing Shenghong, for example, has written in laudatory terms, arguing that, “the Nanjing student youth

⁴²² Lu Jiaping, “Guanyu Jiang Zemin de ‘er jian er jia’ he zhengzhi zhapian wenti yu yaoqiu diaocha de huyu,” [On the Political Fraud of Jiang Zemin’s “Two Traitors, Two Fakes,” and a Call for an Investigation], accessed at <http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/10/1/9/n2781579.htm> on 10th September 2018.

movements instigated and lead by Chinese Communist underground organizations were the most glorious chapter of the Nanjing people's resistance during the period of Japanese puppet rule."⁴²³ Little exists in English language scholarship, but what does exist focuses on the anti-opium protests, treating them in isolation from the longer history of Nanjing's history of student movements.⁴²⁴ In fact, the complexity of how NCU operated during the occupation and the roles available options available to those who studied and taught there was considerably more complex than post-war accounts have suggested.

Situated in the fallen capital of Nanjing, NCU was the premier institution of higher education in occupied territory and was very much a creature of the Japanese invasion, which exposed divisions within the ruling Nationalist Party as well as between China's Nationalist and Communist camps.⁴²⁵ After Wang Jingwei established the RNG, one of the major steps his government took was the re-opening of institutions of higher education, and NCU was the first among them to begin operation as part of an attempt to co-opt the legacy of the pre-war university of the same name that had evacuated with

⁴²³ Jing Shenghong, *Nanjing lunxian ba nian shi (zengding ban)* [History of Nanjing's Eight-Year Occupation] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013), p. 1121.

⁴²⁴ See Mark S. Eykholt, "Resistance to Opium as a Social Evil in Wartime China," in Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), p. 364-366.

⁴²⁵ NCU's administration was entirely Chinese, while the faculty consisted of 149 Chinese professors and lecturers. Japanese faculty members numbered only 15. Ilse Martin (Fang), a German scholar, taught briefly at NCU in 1945. National Shanghai University, in contrast, appears to have had a much stronger Japanese influence in its administrative structure. See Wang Dezi, ed. *Nanjing daxue bainian shi* [100 Years of Nanjing University] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2005), p. 245, and Zhao Zhengping, "Xuyan" [Foreword] in *Guoli Shanghai daxue yaolan* [Overview of National Shanghai University], (Shanghai: n.p., 1943), p. 1.

Jiang Jieshi to Chongqing three years earlier.⁴²⁶ This was followed in turn by the “re-opening” of National Shanghai University, National Zhejiang University and Guangdong Provincial University, among others, all part of a restoration in an education system that had been disrupted by the war, something that Jiang was no stranger to, having seen his high education in Yangzhou interrupted by the Japanese takeover.⁴²⁷

When the RNG’s Education Minister called for the “re-opening” of NCU on April 9, 1940, he therefore cast his appeal in a tone of consistency that was also applied to other aspects of the RNG’s educational efforts. In his first year-end review, for example, NCU’s inaugural president, Fan Zhongyun 樊仲雲 (1901-1989), took care to position Nanjing’s NCU as direct successor to its pre-war incarnation, even offering a critique of Chinese education in line with that of Jiang Jieshi, who had sought to extend Nationalist control across higher education in the 1930s.⁴²⁸ Pre-war education, Fan sniffed, had students reading Shakespeare and Milton when they couldn’t read a reference text without a dictionary. Fan’s critique, with his worry that, “after the chaos of war, many students would have yet to complete even a middle-school level of education,” was part of a conservative, Nationalist Party vision for education that emphasized broad-based training in Chinese, English, Japanese, mathematics and other subjects, as well as a sense of campus discipline that discouraged student involvement with politics.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Zhao Mingzhong, Shao Ling, eds., *Wang wei zhengfu xingzheng yuan huiyilu* [Meeting Records of the Bogus Wang Regime’s Executive Yuan] vol. 2 (Beijing: Dang’an chubanshe, 1992), p. 52.

⁴²⁷ See Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink*, p. 13-14.

⁴²⁸ For more on Chiang’s efforts and his critique of Chinese education, see Wen-hsin Yeh, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 173-176 and 180-181.

⁴²⁹ Fan Zhongyun, “Yi nian laide zhongyang daxue” [The First Year of Central University] in Guoli Zhongyang Daxue, eds. *Guoli zhongyang daxue yaolan* [National Central University: An Overview]

For youth in occupied territory, the re-opening of NCU and the chance at higher education represented a return to order that had been disrupted by the cataclysmic impact of the Nanjing Massacre and the arrival of Japanese troops elsewhere in China. Entrance at NCU was granted on the basis of examinations, while advanced students could gain enrolment on a transfer basis. Among the student body were many from impoverished families who were dependent on the school's financial subsidies. Others, like Alfred Hoffmann, a German Sinologist who attended as an advanced student, came from the RNG's Axis allies and took up their studies on a short-term basis.⁴³⁰

Amongst the inaugural class, recruitment was brisk and corruption rife; during the summer of 1940, some 3000 students sat for the inaugural entrance examinations conducted in Nanjing, Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Wuhan and Guangzhou, with many attempting to gain admission through bribery. In late August, the incoming class of 674 students, gathered on the site of the former Central Political Academy to commence their studies.⁴³¹

No less a figure than Wang Jingwei himself was initially scheduled to speak at the school's re-opening ceremony; when he was unable to attend, his foreign minister, Chu

(Nanjing: Nanjing yinshuguan, 1941), p. 3-4. In the summer of 1940, Wang criticized student involvement in politics and instructed NCU faculty to be on guard against efforts to exploit the students, especially by Communist infiltration. See Wang Jingwei, "Dui Zhongyang daxue zhiyuan zhici" [Instructions to the Faculty of National Central University] in Ho Mang Hang, ed., *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zhengzhi lunshu* vol. 12 (n.p.: n.p., 1990), p. 2298.

⁴³⁰ See Wang Dezi, ed. *Nanjing daxue bainian shi* [100 Years of Nanjing University] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2005), p. 242 and Chan Cheong-choo, *Memoirs of a Citizen of Early XX Century China* (Willowdale, ON: Chan, 1978), p. 157 for commentary on subsidies, which were available according to both need and scholastic performance. As for Alfred Hoffmann, he went on to enjoy a prominent post-war career in Germany at the Ruhr University Bochum where he supervised the doctoral studies of Wolfgang Kubin, who has in turn become one of Germany's most eminent Sinologists.

⁴³¹ For the reference to corruption, see Wang Jingwei, "Dui Zhongyang daxue zhiyuan zhici" [Instructions to the Faculty of National Central University] in Ho Mang Hang, ed., *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zhengzhi lunshu* vol. 12 (n.p.: n.p., 1990), p. 2298.

Minyi, spoke in his stead, appearing in the campus's flag-bedecked assembly hall to expound on the university motto, given by Wang, of “*zhenzhi lixing*” 真知力行 (true knowledge and vigorous practice).⁴³² The motto, as Chu recalled, had a long lineage, taking inspiration from both Sun Yat-sen's observation that “knowledge is difficult, practice is easy,” as well as from the Ming dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming's call for the unity of knowledge and practice.⁴³³ Equipped with such a pedigree in both classical Chinese thought and Wang's own political prestige, the motto spread throughout campus, inspiring a “True Knowledge” and a “Vigorous Practice” hall, a “True Knowledge” campus journal, as well as becoming grist for the writings of various university officials.⁴³⁴

Such regard for official pronouncements and attention were part of the close ties between the government and the university, and underlined the campus's status as a place of political significance and factional competition. Although the university president, Fan Zhongyun, claimed that the campus should remain free of political entanglements, he

⁴³² Xie Runmin, “Wang wei shiqi de guoli zhongyang daxue” [National Central University during the Bogus Wang Era] in *Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi quanguo weiyuanhui wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui*, ed., *Wenshi ziliao cunqao xuanbian* [Selections of Literary and Historical Materials] vol 24 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2002), p. 153. Very few of NCU's staff or faculty members have left any written account of their campus experiences; in addition to Xie, another rare exception is Yang Yizhou, a Japanese-passport holding Taiwanese intellectual. See Yang Yizhou, *Shou nan zhe* [The Sufferer] trans. Zhang Liangze (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1990), p. 91-92.

⁴³³ Chu Minyi, “Zhen zhi li xing” [True knowledge and vigorous practice] *Qiaowu jikan* #3 (15th Dec. 1940), p. 11-17.

⁴³⁴ See an article written by university vice president Qian Weizong, “Daxue jiaoyu yinggai yi ‘zhenzhi lixing’ wei zhongxin xunlian zhi wu jian” [My views on why university education should be based on the motto of True Knowledge and Vigorous Practice] *Jiaoyu jianshe* [Establishing Education] no 1 vol 1 (1940): p. 1-4 and later reportage of a talk by university president Chen Zhu in “Wang zhuxi de jingshen bu si” [The Spirit of Chairman Wang Lives on] *Zhongda Zhoukan* [National Central University Weekly] (December 4, 1944), p. 1.

himself held an appointment as a political attaché.⁴³⁵ Fan also maintained frequent contact with the RNG finance minister, who headed a political faction that competed with Wang Jingwei's "Palace clique" for influence.⁴³⁶ When Fan was toppled in mid-1943, Wang then attempted to handpick his successor by inviting (to no avail) Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967) down from Beijing to lead the institution, which Wang described in laudatory terms as "a model for the whole country."⁴³⁷ And of the university's three subsequent presidents, only one was strictly a scholar, while the others had close government ties, including one, Chan Cheong-choo, whose most obvious qualification for the post was his status as Wang's brother-in-law. Even the chair of the Chinese department, Long Yusheng, who enjoyed renown as a poet, was not without close government ties—Wang Jingwei counted him a friend, and Long for his part spent time tutoring Wang's children.⁴³⁸ Such were the entanglements of academic life.

It was this privileged space within occupied territory that both afforded NCU students a platform for airing their grievances via protests and ensured that such actions

⁴³⁵ Fan Zhongyun, "Yi nian laide zhongyang daxue" [The First Year of Central University] in Guoli Zhongyang Daxue, eds. *Guoli zhongyang daxue yaolan* [National Central University: An Overview] (Nanjing: Nanjing yinshuguan, 1941), p. 4.

⁴³⁶ See David P. Barrett, "The Wang Jingwei Regime, 1940-1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China," p. 104 in David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932-1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001) on factional competition between the Wang-centered Palace Clique and Zhou Fohai and his allies within the RNG.

⁴³⁷ On 1st July 1943, Wang wrote to Zhu Shen 朱深 (1879-1943), who was in the midst of what would be a very short, five-month tenure as Chief Executive of the North China Political Affairs Council, asking him to forward a message to Zhou urging him to make the move to Nanjing. See Wang Zhaoming *yu* Wang zhengfu ge sheng shi zhang dianhan (4), 118-010100-0022-010, Academia Historica, Taiwan.

⁴³⁸ Zhang Shouping, "Ciren Long Muxun xiansheng" [The Poet, Mr Long Muxun] in Zhang Hui, ed., *Ren han lu xue ji: Long Yusheng de shengping yu xueshu* [Scholarly Records from the Studio of Enduring Cold: The Life and Learning of Long Yusheng] (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2014), p. 79, and John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War 1937-1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 396. Long also served on the committee to re-open NCU.

had political and historic consequence. And for Jiang Zemin in the 1990s, whose rise to office took place after the suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, it also offered an opportunity to burnish his patriotic credentials by conjuring up a history of youthful street protest of his own.

Protests surrounding NCU came in three waves, with the first occurring *prior* to Jiang's arrival in the fall of 1943. The initial outburst of campus activism, fueled by allegations of corruption against NCU's president, Fan Zhongyun, was not only very much in line with the prewar tradition of rowdy student protest in Nanjing that Wang Jingwei forewarned the NCU faculty of in 1940, but also resonated with local conflict that simmered elsewhere in occupied China.⁴³⁹ As Kiang Kang-hu warned in 1941, starvation was a serious issue in the occupied territories, and along with the problem of hunger came local conflicts and scandals over the food supply.⁴⁴⁰ This was an issue to which RNG officials were attentive, as demonstrated by Chen Gongbo when, as mayor of Shanghai in 1941, he surprised his counterparts on the Shanghai Municipal Council by approaching them for discussions on the city's food supply.⁴⁴¹

On campus, NCU students made Fan their target, and on 31st May 1943 took to the street, enraged by the poor quality of food in the campus canteen, which they attributed to Fan and his alleged embezzling of funds. Through the direction of Li Wenzhai 李文齋

⁴³⁹ For the pre-war history of NCU student protests, see Charles D. Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual and Response in Nanjing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), p. 218-230. For the warning from Wang, see Wang Jingwei, "Dui Zhongyang daxue zhiyuan zhici" [Instructions to the Faculty of National Central University] in Ho Mang Hang, ed., *Wang Jingwei xiansheng zhengzhi lunshu* vol. 12 (n.p.: n.p., 1990), p. 2290.

⁴⁴⁰ First published in *Minyi yuekan* vol. 1, no. 9 (15th February 1941), p. 1-3; reprinted in Kiang Kang-hu, *Huixiang dongfang* [Return to the Orient] (Nanjing: *Minyi she*, April 1941): p. 97-101.

⁴⁴¹ See Norwood F. Allman and Douglas Clark, ed., *Shanghai Lawyer: The Memoirs of America's China Spymaster* (Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2017), p. 328.

(1900-1988), a Chongqing Nationalist underground operative, and the assistance of Okada Akira 岡田晃 (1918-2017), a young Japanese diplomat studying at NCU with contacts in the occupation forces, NCU students took over the campus and marched unobstructed, in the middle of the night, on Wang Jingwei's official residence to petition for Fan's removal. After delivering their petition to Wang, the students then returned to campus where they settled in for several days of strikes.⁴⁴²

Propaganda Minister and Youth Corps Leader Lin Bosheng directed the government response. His close relationship with Wang Jingwei and dual role in government gave him a platform for influencing youth affairs, and after meeting with students, he acceded to student demands to launch an investigation.⁴⁴³ The report, issued 8th June 1943, dismissed the corruption allegations but criticized Fan for poor management and, crucially, losing control of the students. His departure from office and replacement by Li Shengwu, the Minister of Education, was announced the same day.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² Nanjing zhongda (40-45) lianluo chu, eds., "Zhongyang daxue xiaoyou hui zhuankan" [Central University Alumni Association Special Issue] (Nanjing: n.p., 1990), p. 22. Li Wenzhai mentions his role in orchestrating the protests in an internal report dated November 8th 1943, and again in a newspaper article four years later to complain about the poor treatment of former agents who had risked their lives. See Li Wenzhai, "Yige dixia gongzuozhe de zibai," [Confession of an Underground Operative] *Dadao bao* (Nanjing), 15th January 1947, and Li Wenzhai, *Li Wenzhai xiansheng yanlun huibian* [Collected Works of Mr Li Wenzhai] (Taipei: Wenhua yinshua, 1986), p. 49-53. In the report, Li mentions a Communist-incited student protest in March 1943 that went nowhere, prior to the movement in late May that toppled Fan, which Li describes as instigated by Nationalist comrades at NCU under his direction.

⁴⁴³ Lin began serving as one of Wang's secretaries in 1924. In 1939, he nearly became a martyr for the movement when two assailants beat him with a club on Hong Kong Island in what was almost certainly retaliation for his role in publicizing Wang's 1938 *Yandian* telegram advising peace talks with Japan. See Lawrence M.W. Chiu, "The *South China Daily News* and Wang Jingwei's Peace Movement, 1939-1941," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* vol. 50 (2010), p. 344 and 348.

⁴⁴⁴ See Zhao Mingzhong, Shao Ling, eds., *Wang wei zhengfu xingzheng yuan huiyilu* [Meeting Records of the Bogus Wang Regime's Executive Yuan] vol. 19 (Beijing: Dang'an chubanshe, 1992), p. 452-454 and "Xiandai xuesheng xiuxue jiuguo zhi tu" [Modern students study the path to national salvation] *Shenbao*, June 6, 1943. Li Shengwu and Fan Zhongyun crossed paths once again after the war in Hongkong, where Li served as editor-in-chief at the Chung Hwa Book Company, with Fan working under him as an editor.

Viewed as a student protest against a university administrator, it might be tempting to conclude that this was simply a matter of campus politics, however raucous. The broader context of a dwindling food supply under enemy occupation lent the movement national significance, however, as did the bold decision to march on the official residence of Wang Jingwei. And as though to underline the sensitivity of food, it is worth noting an additional corruption scandal that erupted later in 1943, claiming the careers of both the RNG's Minister for Foodstuffs, Gu Baoheng 顧寶衡 (1903-1985), and his deputy early the following year, marking a rare instance in the RNG's history saw that members of the national leadership removed from office in response to public protest.⁴⁴⁵

For this initial round of campus protest, the young Jiang Zemin was uninvolved—he had yet to even arrive in Nanjing—and there is no evidence from the 1940s of CCP leadership in how events unfolded, although accounts dating from the 1980s and onward would increasingly take up this claim. This is not to preclude the possibility of involvement categorically, but simply to state that the tumult of the period and the lack of archival access that has prevailed since the war leaves little on which to support such claims.

The second wave of campus activism occurred after Jiang had settled into campus, and has been taken up both as part of Jiang's patriotic credentials in the biography by Kuhn and other PRC publications. Beginning on the night of 17th December 1943, a

⁴⁴⁵ For an account of the scandal, written by two former officials, see Xu Xilin and Zhao Tianyi, “1943 nian ‘liangshi tanwu an’ zhenxiang,” [The Truth about the 1943 Food Grains Corruption Case] *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao* no. 29 (Dec., 1989), p. 289-295. A good example of the pervasive problem of food under occupation can be found in Toby Lincoln's study of Wuxi, which deals with the efforts of local government, the RNG and the Red Swastika Society to manage food supply. See Toby Lincoln, “From Riots to Relief: Rice, Local Government and Charities in Occupied Central China,” in Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, ed., *Food and War in Mid-Twentieth-Century East Asia* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), p. 11-28.

series of protests by students from NCU and other institutions within the city erupted against the sale of opium, eventually spreading to other cities within the occupied territories, including Bengbu, Shanghai, Xuzhou and (quite likely) other occupied regions as well.⁴⁴⁶ In Xuzhou, for example, word of the protests evoked a quick response from Hao Pengju who, as Chief Executive of Suhuai, issued a prohibition on opium and gambling three days later, with the region's chapters of the Greater East Asian League subsequently lending their support to anti-drug initiatives.⁴⁴⁷

Here again there is a deeper historical background, a contemporary resonance, and the ever-present ambiguity of occupation. Some months before the student protests broke out, an unsigned June 3rd 1943 *Shenbao* editorial emphasised the link between the history of the Opium War, resistance to Anglo-American imperialism, and the present struggle for a free and independent China and a free and independent East Asia. Calling for an anti-drug campaign, the authors argued that any such campaign “cannot rely from top-to-bottom on government decree and punishment, nor can it rely on a popular movement lacking in power and prestige. Rather, there must be harsh laws and severe punishments, along with community leaders coming together to supervise and direct, in order for [the campaign] to have a realistic impact.”⁴⁴⁸ This is, by and large, not far from what actually occurred later in 1943 and into 1944.

⁴⁴⁶ For a detailed account of the protests in Nanjing, see Mark S. Eykholt, “Resistance to Opium as a Social Evil in Wartime China” in Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 360-379. For a report from Bengbu, see “Shoudu qingshaonian qingdu guangbo,” [Youth in the Capital Publicize Drug Purge] *Shenbao*, 6th January 1944.

⁴⁴⁷ See “Suhuai qu yanjin yan du,” [Suhuai Region Prohibits Opium and Gambling] *Shenbao*, 21st December 1943 and “Suhuai ge xian zhankai judu yundong,” [Counties in Suhuai launch anti-drug movement] *Shenbao*, 5th January 1944.

⁴⁴⁸ “Kuoda judu,” [Expanding Resistance to Drugs] *Shenbao*, 3rd June 1943.

In this, the role of the RNG, its policies and its propaganda provides important context. As I argued in my discussion of Chu Minyi, the foreign policy orientation of Wang's peace movement was not antagonistic towards Britain and America from the outset. Rather, the tone and orientation of the leadership gradually shifted before the RNG ultimately declared war on 9th January 1943.⁴⁴⁹ As historian So Wai Chor has noted, however, the RNG included figures like Tang Leang-li (not to mention L.K. Kentwell), who espoused a particularly pungent brand of anti-British, anti-American sentiment.⁴⁵⁰ Tang, who held various posts in the RNG, including as vice-minister of foreign affairs and Director General of the International Publicity Bureau, had predicted back in 1936 that "the British were in for a rude awakening," and with the establishment of the RNG in 1940 he wasted little time in raising the question of Western privilege in China.⁴⁵¹ In a statement released after the signing of the Basic Treaty with Japan, Tang wrote in December 1940 that the pact envisioned the return of concessions held by Japan and a renunciation of extraterritoriality, adding, "it is hoped that Third Powers will not be long before they take similar steps and voluntarily agree to the immediate retrocession of their Concessions and extra-legal privileges."⁴⁵² For an RNG leadership shy of confronting

⁴⁴⁹ So Wai Chor, "Race, Culture, and the Anglo-American Powers: The Views of Chinese Collaborators," *Modern China* vol 37, no. 1 (January 2011), p. 77.

⁴⁵⁰ So, "Race, Culture, and the Anglo-American Powers," p. 83-84. In the case of Tang, his prejudices also included anti-Semitism. See Irene Eber, ed. *Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1933-1947: A Selection of Documents* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), p. 412-418. For the career of L.K. Kentwell, see Bernard Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai: An Untold Story of Espionage, Intrigue, and Treason* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), p. 183-194.

⁴⁵¹ Emily Hahn, *China to Me: A Partial Autobiography* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1946), p. 37.

⁴⁵² "Treaty Defended: Tang Leang-li Replies To Critics," *South China Morning Post*, 25th December 1940.

Japan directly, a student protest movement garbed in anti-Anglo-American rhetoric could offer an appealing avenue for channeling student passions.

Such sentiments came to the fore, for example, with the 1942 centennial anniversary of the First Opium War, which found Tang in a rather more fiery mood. Only complete eradication of all Anglo-American aggressive influence will ensure for China complete independence and freedom,” he wrote in a statement that listed British crimes ranging from the sale of opium to the annexation of Burma and the Wanh sien Incident in which British gunboats clashed with local Chinese troops in the midst of fighting related to the Northern Expedition.⁴⁵³ From 1942, a Chinese National Anti-Anglo-American Association began operating in Shanghai, with regular performances of an adaptation of Sergei Tetrayakov’s “Roar! China,” which recounted the Incident; calls for the elimination of Anglo-American influence in the city; and later, urging people to support the war effort.⁴⁵⁴ Audiences in the occupied territories were treated to artistic representations of the period in both film (see *Eternity*, released in 1943) and cartoon format.⁴⁵⁵ And yet it is necessary to exercise a degree of caution in interpreting the significance of these activities, not only in terms of their ability to reach ordinary people within occupied territory, but also the way in which such propaganda might have been interpreted by

⁴⁵³ “Nanking Pact Opened Way for British Exploitation,” *Syonan Shimbun*, 1st September 1942.

⁴⁵⁴ See “Fan yingmei xiehui dingqi yan ‘Jiang zhou qixue ji’” [Anti-Anglo-American Association schedules performances of ‘Jiang zhou qixue ji’] *Shenbao*, 21st November 1942, “Fan yingmei xiehui qingqiu gongbuju wanquan xiaoqing zujie yingmei seci” [Anti-Anglo-American Association lobbies the Municipal Council to completely eliminate Anglo American influence] *Shenbao*, 30th December 1942, and “Yonghu canzhan,” [Endorsement of Entering the War] *Shenbao*, 13th January 1943.

⁴⁵⁵ For the complex messaging of *Eternity*, see Po-shek Fu, “The Ambiguity of Entertainment: Chinese Cinema in Japanese-Occupied Shanghai, 1941 to 1945,” *Cinema Journal* vol. 37, no. 1 (Autumn, 1997), p. 75. See also Zhonghua minzu fan YingMei xiehui, eds., *Yapian zhanzheng shihua* [Pictorial History of the Opium War] (Shanghai: n.p., 1942).

those who were exposed to it. Li Shiyu 李時雨 (b. 1908), one of Chen Gongbo's top aides in the Shanghai Mayor's office and a Communist spy, recalled the ambiguity that occupation demanded of such representations in his memoir of the war years when he described the content of a journal he edited, stating, "Although I openly attacked Anglo-American imperialism and didn't touch Japanese imperialism, I believe readers could not help but think of Japan along with all of the other big powers...in our essays, we pointed to the West to curse the East by exposing British, French and American imperialism in order to expose the Japanese brutal rule of the Japanese puppet authorities."⁴⁵⁶

All of this to say that when students at NCU and other schools in Nanjing took up the idea of protesting against opium and other "social ills" in occupied territory, they were placing themselves into a very complex political dynamic in which individual students like Jiang Zemin, and those associated with CCP organizations, played only one small part among many others. These other factors that must be considered include the RNG's efforts to gain control over opium sales and the revenue they represented, the anti-Anglo-American propaganda that circulated in Nanjing and Shanghai, Lin Bosheng's desire to mobilize students as political muscle, and the sheer ambiguity of political action under occupation.⁴⁵⁷ In addition to these particular issues of the moment, in taking up Lin's call, the students were also building on a tradition of protest that dated back to the

⁴⁵⁶ Li's journal, *Xiandao* [The Harbinger], operated out of Shanghai with the support of the Mayor's Office and ran from May to December 1942. See *Li Shiyu Diying shiwu nian—Li Shiyu huiyilu* [Fifteen Years in the Enemy Camp: Memoirs of Li Shiyu] (Haikou: Nanhai chuban gongsi, 2011), p. 152-153.

⁴⁵⁷ Control of opium revenues is discussed in Motohiro Kobayashi, "An Opium Tug-of-War: Japan versus the Wang Jingwei Regime," in Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), esp. p. 352-354.

pre-war period, and had only months before manifested itself with a precedent-setting march on Wang's residence that succeeded in toppling the NCU president.

Among the students were those directly affiliated with underground Communist organizations, their classmates at NCU (Jiang among them) as well as those from other schools and universities who took advantage of Lin's official sanction and threw themselves into the movement to destroy local opium dens. Marching students, including Lin's own son and those of other RNG officials, invoked Lin's sanction and (reportedly) mouthed regime slogans as they streamed into the city centre.⁴⁵⁸ As mentioned, the protests reverberated well beyond Nanjing, where they brought about the downfall of local drug kingpin Cao Yucheng 曹玉成 (d. 1944), who was arrested when students raided his drug den in January, and then brought to trial and executed on 20th April 1944. Perhaps most prominently, a report in *Shenbao* described events in Shanghai, where over thousand students gathered on December 27, first dispatching a delegation to petition the municipal government for a ban on opium-smoking, gambling and dance halls, and then marching through the city's pleasure quarters, much as their peers in Nanjing had done.⁴⁵⁹

The students also succeeded in catching the attention of the Japanese who, at least in the press, tended to position the protests rather self-servingly, as part of the awakening of

⁴⁵⁸ See He Chongyin, ed., *Li Enyu jinian ji* [Collected Essays in Memory of Li Enyu] (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaotong daxue chubanshe, 1999): p. 229-230 and 235. For the dispute over opium revenues, see Motohiro Kobayashi, "An Opium Tug-of-War: Japan versus the Wang Jingwei Regime" in Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 344-359, and Brian G. Martin, "'In My Heart I Opposed Opium': Opium and the Politics of the Wang Jingwei Government, 1940-45," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* vol 2 no. 2 (2003): p. 365-410. For the involvement of Lin Bosheng and Chen Gongbo's sons, email between the author and Chen Kan, dated March 14, 2015.

⁴⁵⁹ "Wan yu qingnian xuesheng zuo qingyuan youxing xiaoqing Hu shi yanduwu." [Over ten thousand student youth] *Shenbao*, 28th December 1943.

Chinese youth brought about by the Greater East Asian war.⁴⁶⁰ In a number of reports, Japanese propagandists took the turmoil in stride, crediting the students for “swinging their weight” into the municipal authorities’ clean-up campaign against opium smoking, gambling and dancing.⁴⁶¹ For some five months after the protest initially erupted, the *Nippon Daily* described with suitable respect the unfolding of events, beginning with an account of students congregating before the bronze statue of the Sun Yat-sen in downtown Nanjing, where they “adopted a resolution urging the destruction of American and Britain,” and “emphasized the necessity for unification of all the young people of Greater East Asia.”⁴⁶² Zhong Renshou 鍾任壽 (1902-1979), a Taiwanese Hakka in the upper ranks of the RNG’s Ministry of Propaganda, was also quoted in the Japanese press, describing the protests as part of a “Greater East Asia Youth Rally,” with the campaign against opium smoking, dancing and gambling already national in scope.⁴⁶³ Some months later, in a report dated 30th April 1944, the Japanese journalist Hideo Nagasawa described the sheer explosiveness of the movement which, he claimed, had over 500,000 students from 80 odd schools in the three days after the initial protest in Nanjing. Even in Shanghai, he observed, where patriotic youth were “under the heaviest Anglo-American influence,” the movement still attracted some 10,000 students who rallied under a

⁴⁶⁰ “Jing fandu jufan Cao Yucheng qiangjue” [Nanjing Drug Kingpin Executed] *Shenbao* 21st April 1940.

⁴⁶¹ “Students Join Nanking Clean-Up Campaign Against Opium Smoking, Gambling, Dancing,” *Nippon Times*, 21st December 1943.

⁴⁶² “Joint Declaration Stirs Young China,” *Nippon Times*, 14th January 1944.

⁴⁶³ “Youths of East Asia Speak: Movements Being Started in All Nations for Training Future Leaders,” *Nippon Times*, 5th February 1944. For a brief description of Ren and his work in theatre and propaganda in the RG, see Chiu Kun-liang, “Funi yu kangdi: Wang Jingwei zhengquan de xijujie” [Collaboration and Resistance: Theatrical Circles under the Wang Jingwei Regime] *Xiju yanjiu* no. 15 (January 2015), p. 122.

platform that promised allegiance to Wang Jingwei and Chen Gongbo in their efforts to build a new China and a new Shanghai, respectively, and demanded the elimination of opium-smoking, the expulsion of corrupt officials and predatory merchants, and so on. “Unstinting respect and admiration are due to Chinese students,” Hideo concluded, “We can feel their fervor as co-workers in the building up of the Greater East Asia Common Prosperity Region.”⁴⁶⁴ Such was the ambiguity of protest under occupation.

The third and final wave of protest broke out only after the Japanese emperor announced his country’s surrender on 15th August 1945, which cast the whole of occupied China into flux. The RNG responded a day later, formally dissolving itself and leaving the Provisional Nanjing Political Affairs Committee in its place. As the situation in Nanjing tilted towards confusion, the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi began preparing their return from Chongqing, hastened by the fear of a power vacuum in which the CCP might seize control. As mentioned earlier, in the ensuing ten days, Nanjing’s mayor was arrested by a Chongqing Nationalist agent; the head of the Examination Yuan committed suicide; and Chen Gongbo, Wang’s successor and acting President after his death in 1944, fled to Japan under an assumed name. Japanese defeat instantly discredited the RNG cause, leaving the civilian leadership facing the prospect of arrest, or worse; many were put on trial as traitors and sentenced to death or life imprisonment, although as I suggest in the previous chapter, military collaborators fared better.

Ironically, the return of the Nationalist government from Chongqing led to a final wave of student protest and discontent. This time, students took to the streets in response to being caught up in Chongqing’s attempt to cement its hold over recently occupied territory

⁴⁶⁴ Hideo Nagasawa, “Crusade Against Three Evils: China’s Youth Movement Now Grown Into Social Campaign, *Nippon Times*, 30th April 1944.

through what became effectively a policy of lustration, not unlike that which occurred in France or Germany after the war. In China, however, this was disastrously carried out, especially in cities like Nanjing and Shanghai, where residents had a much different experience of the war than those who retreated to Chongqing. However much of an outcry that there might have been in certain quarters of the press to punish those connected to the RNG, there were those who maintained a quiet sense of ambivalence. Qin Liankui 秦聯奎 (1888-1959), a Shanghai lawyer of some renown, was said to have privately complained that the law was such that “anyone who had so much as eaten a meal in occupied territory could be found guilty of treason,” even as he refused to defend those who found themselves put on trial.⁴⁶⁵ As historian Diana Lary has observed, for many in Shanghai, the takeover “felt more like the onslaught of a plague of locusts than a liberation.”⁴⁶⁶ This plague involved not only the widespread seizure of assets and the disbaring of lawyers and members of other professions but, crucially for the students, the closure of schools and universities as well.⁴⁶⁷

At NCU, this measure came as something of a surprise. The faculty initially proposed merging their school with that in Chongqing, only to be met with hoots of derision—Chongqing academics (to say nothing of the leadership) were in no mood to deal leniently with their Nanjing counterparts, and the campus was taken over and

⁴⁶⁵ Qin tactfully declined to represent those who were put on trial for collaboration, saying, “If I win this type of case, I will do my country a disservice; if I lose, I will do my client a disservice. I prefer to remain poor rather than suffer from a bad conscience.” See the family history written by Qin’s son, Frank Ching, *Ancestors: 900 Years in the Life of a Chinese Family* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1988), p. 455 and 459.

⁴⁶⁶ Diana Lary, *China’s Civil War: A Social History 1945-1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 45-46.

⁴⁶⁷ See “Yanzheng funi jiaoyu ren yuan” [Strictly Punish Traitorous Education Personnel] *Chongqing Da Gong Bao*, 23rd September 1945.

shuttered.⁴⁶⁸ As a result, students found their studies abruptly interrupted, with Jiang and several of his classmates transferred to Shanghai. At the time, Nationalist policy tarred them and everyone else who studied under the RNG with the very same epithet used to deride the recently dissolved occupation state: bogus, or *wèi*, and ordered them to attend a form of political screening or re-education at a series of “provisional colleges” in order to resume their education or have their credentials recognized.”⁴⁶⁹ As a policy, this had significance throughout the former occupied territories, as students (and others) bore the stigma with which the returning Nationalist authorities viewed them, although student response varied.

In Beijing, for example, John Leighton Stuart weighed in with a warning that in the north, students were joining the Communist cause in frustration over what they saw as unfair treatment from the government.⁴⁷⁰ Elsewhere, the policy may have been applied more lightly, perhaps according to grade. As one student at Kunshan Middle School in Jiangsu province recalled of the screening, “I didn’t really understand the purpose of this and simply filled in the forms.”⁴⁷¹ Further south, students in Guangzhou also objected to the requisite exams for those who had attended university under occupation, as one writer described it, simply in order “to avoid from [sic] working with the Japanese, and to

⁴⁶⁸ “Zhongyang daxue jiaoshou xiu yu hanjian weiwu,” [National Central University faculty ashamed to be associated with hanjian] *Chongqing Xinhua ribao*, 17th September 1945. Many NCU faculty members were branded cultural traitors and put on trial after the war.

⁴⁶⁹ For details on the screening programs, see Song Enrong and Zhang Xian, eds. *Zhonghua minguo jiaoyu fagui xuanbian* [Selected Education Legislation in the Republic of China] (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), p. 684-695.

⁴⁷⁰ “Students Protest Government Ruling,” *The China Weekly Review*, 24th November 1945.

⁴⁷¹ Xu Hongci, *No Wall Too High*, p. 12.

obtain some knowledge for playing an important part in the rebuilding of our country in the future.”⁴⁷²

But in Shanghai and Nanjing, the response was protests, which broke out on 6th October 1945, with CCP activists (Jiang among them) playing a major part. “They didn’t know what to do with us,” Jiang’s NCU roommate recalled, referring to the returning authorities. “Students from NCU had gained valuable experience in negotiating with the government during the student movements, so we caused headaches for the Ministry of Education in Nanjing.” As Jiang’s biographer, Kuhn, describes it, this was the first act of resistance Jiang participated in that was openly led by the CCP. Success came in March 1946, as the government relaxed its policies and the interim universities wrapped up their operations.⁴⁷³

Taken as a whole, the history of student movements in the occupied territories and Jiang’s involvement in them was considerably more complex than a glorious chapter of popular resistance led and organized by the CCP. When Jiang arrived on campus and began his involvement in the campaign against opium, he was taking his place in a student body that had recently been fired up by a Chongqing agent and succeeded in taking over campus, managing a march on the residence of Wang Jingwei, and negotiating with the government while running a student strike. The subsequent movement was deeply implicated in the political aspirations of the RNG’s leadership, whether in terms of controlling the revenues from opium sales or more broadly

⁴⁷² See Cheah Seen Hooi’s letter to the editor, “Puppet Students,” *South China Morning Post & the Hongkong Telegraph*, 2nd February 1946 and C.C. Hsiung’s letter of reply, in which he derided the students on both moral and academic grounds, C.C. Hsiung, letter to the editor, “Puppet Students,” *South China Morning Post & the Hongkong Telegraph*, 7th February 1946.

⁴⁷³ Ku’ en, *Ta gaibianle Zhongguo*, p. 39-40.

harnessing Nanjing's youth as political capital. Within such a context of competing political agendas, attributing an event as complex as the anti-opium campaign to the leadership of any one group or party is a gross simplification of the complexity of life under occupation. In the subsequent section, I turn to a broader examination of how these protests have been remembered and written about in mainland scholarship, with particular attention to the role of Jiang Zemin and his rise to national leadership in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989.

5.4 Commemoration

With the end of the student protests and the onset of the Civil War, the wartime student protests could have been taken up as part of a narrative of heroic resistance by the returning Nationalist state; instead, they sank into historical obscurity. Not only were they ignored by the returning Nationalists, but the CCP and its activists as well, with no record of any attempt to commemorate student actions. Understanding this neglect and the circumstances with which the protests were returned to history highlights the politicized nature of the war in postwar China, and provides crucial context to understanding wartime commemoration in China.

The Nationalists' post-war neglect of the protests was of a piece with its faltering effort to memorialize the war in the 1945-49 interim.⁴⁷⁴ In November of 1946, Li Wenzhai, the Nationalist agent who instigated the protests against Fan Zhongyun, returned to Nanjing,

⁴⁷⁴ Jonathan Henshaw, "That which is written in stone: Nanjing's Monuments and Chinese Commemoration of the Second World War," *Modern China*, forthcoming.

this time as a delegate to the recently-convened National Assembly. Having left the capital on 28th August 1943, Li was shocked to encounter on his return a former colleague from his days in the underground, Jiang Shangwei 蔣尚為 (dates unknown), who insisted on hosting him for dinner at his home. Once there, Li met with several of the other former agents and civilians who had aided them in their wartime work, and was indignant and outraged to discover the fate they had met since his departure three years before, and the way in which the returning Nationalist regime had cast them aside.

Moved by their suffering and troubled by his conscience, Li wrote to a local paper, identifying himself as the agent who instigated the student protests against Fan, and attempted to highlight the plight of his former colleagues. Some of the cases Li mentioned were unambiguous, local operatives like Chen Birang 陳必讓 and Ni Wanhao 倪萬浩 (dates unknown), mere teenagers, who had been captured and tortured by the Japanese Kempeitai after his departure, and still suffered from various ailments, or Li Zhenyuan 李鎮遠 (dates unknown), who was tortured by the Japanese and lost the use of his legs.

Others were more ambiguous, as in the case of Xi Shuji 奚樹基 (b. 1908), an attorney who remained in Nanjing as an undercover agent while teaching politics at NCU. After the war, when he attempted to resume practicing as an attorney, Xi faced prosecution in the Nanjing High Court for having held official posts in the RNG, despite having received certification recognizing his wartime role from the *Zhongtong* and the Ministry of Justice.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁵ Xi's difficulties are complex. Certainly, Li recognized him as part of the Nationalist underground in Nanjing, but Xi was later sentenced to two years and six months for having held official posts in the RNG—what he had actually done in those posts was never made clear. See “Lvshi Xi Shuji xi dixia gongzuozhe” [Attorney Xi Shuji is an underground agent] *Nanjing Zhaobao*, November 7th 1946, in which Xi proclaims his innocence, arguing that he had accepted orders to remain in the city, where he had organized guerrilla units and organized social movements while working as a lawyer as cover. For his sentence, see “Wei shenpanzhang Xi Shuji pan tuxing er nian liu yue” [Bogus Judge Xi Shuji sentenced to

While it remains unclear whether Li succeeded in improving the circumstances of his former colleagues, his account marks the first effort to take credit for the beginning of student protests in occupied Nanjing, and is the first known insider account to have been published after the war.⁴⁷⁶ And an account later that year by the writer Tao Juyin 陶菊隱 (1898-1989), who remained in Shanghai during the occupation, appeared to offer the last word on the students, this time from an outsider, describing the 1943/44 anti-opium protests that spread to Shanghai in dismissive terms and claiming they were nothing more than a result of factional politics in Nanjing.⁴⁷⁷ From then on, the NCU alumni and the history of student protest in the occupied territories disappeared from the public record.

This remained unchanged in the early decades of the People's Republic, when the CCP rewrote history to place itself at the center of a resistance against Japan that led to the success of the Chinese Communist revolution. The anti-Opium protests of 1943, with their close affiliation to Wang Jingwei, fit poorly into such narratives and, as Lynn Spillman and Xiaohong Xu have argued, “Chinese public discourse in this period provided little space for claims-making carrier groups not associated with the center, if indeed they could have formed at all.”⁴⁷⁸ Jiang Zemin, who joined the CCP in 1946, took a

two years and six months] *Nanjing heping ribao*, 22nd September 1947. Xi appealed the next day, and although the results of the appeal are unknown, Xi eventually found his way to Taiwan post-1949 and remained active in official circles. See “Jing li wei houxuanren zhong faxian hanjian Xi Shuji,” *Shenbao*, 23rd November 1947.

⁴⁷⁶ See “Yige dixia gongzuozhe de zibai,” [Confessions of an Underground Agent], *Nanjing Dadao bao*, 15th January 1947.

⁴⁷⁷ Tao Juyin, “Tian liang qian de gudao” [Solitary Island Before the Dawn] *Xin Zhonghua* [New China] no 4 vol 20 (Summer, 1947), p. 41.

⁴⁷⁸ Xiaohong Xu and Lynne Spillman, “Political Centres, Progressive Narrative and Cultural Trauma: Coming to Terms with the Nanjing Massacre in China, 1937-1979,” in Mikyoung Kim and Barry Schwartz, eds., *Northeast Asia's Difficult Past: Essays in Collective Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p. 103.

position in a Shanghai food factory, where he met the man who became his political mentor, Wang Daohan, and began building his career as a CCP official. At this point, he had little reason or time for nostalgia about wartime protests. And for the rest of the NCU alumni, the Mao years, with their revolutionary fervor and obsession with internal enemies, made their university background not something to be commemorated but hidden, lest it expose them to political attack.

Their disappearance was partly a matter of condemnation and marginalization, partly self-protection as repeated political campaigns felled even those with the most communist of credentials. The CCP's wartime spy chief, Pan Hannian 潘漢年 (1906-1977), died during a lengthy prison term after the Party accused him in 1955 of colluding with Wang Jingwei during the war. Guan Lu 關露 (1907-1982), a leftist author who used her position in wartime Shanghai's cultural sphere to gather intelligence, endured years of political persecution for her misunderstood role during the occupation period before committing suicide in 1982.⁴⁷⁹ For those who had actually held allegiance to the occupation state, China's postwar environment offered no motivation to remember apart from the forced confessions of Maoist political campaigns.

Such was the message delivered to Li Shengwu, the erudite and ambitious international jurist who had served as acting-President of NCU and Minister of Education, and who nursed dreams of a return to political life in China from his postwar exile in Hong Kong. Following his son's exploratory return to China in 1957, a representative of the Committee on Overseas Chinese Affairs informed Li in no uncertain terms that any attempt to return to

⁴⁷⁹ For details on Pan, see Joseph K.S. Yick, "Communist-Puppet Collaboration in Japanese-Occupied China: Pan Hannian and Li Shiqun, 1939-43," *Intelligence and National Security* Vol. 16 No. 4 (Winter, 2001), p. 61-88. A brief introduction to Guan is found in Nicole Huang, *Women, War, Domesticity: Shanghai Literature and Popular Culture of the 1940s* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 97-103.

mainland soil would be met with imprisonment.⁴⁸⁰ And in contrast to the conservative politics of France under Charles de Gaulle, the CCP's victory in 1949 meant that former occupation officials would be condemned not only for their collaboration but also for their anti-communism.

Since the 1980s, however, Chinese scholars have struggled more openly with the history of the occupation, and the field has developed accordingly in discernible stages. Rana Mitter outlined a process that is undoubtedly familiar to those working on contentious topics in authoritarian states, whereby a topic is “first, considered off-limits, then a set of documents relating to that topic is published with minimal commentary, and finally monographs begin to appear, still staying within official guidelines but opening up a field for consideration.”⁴⁸¹ This schematic, which suggests a top-down, elite-driven process in which formerly off-limits topics become possible to write about, can serve as a general guide to developments in the post-Mao era. The slow rehabilitation of the NCU students, however, provides an important example of how the history of the occupation period has evolved. Grassroots commemoration was an important driver, yet it remained ensnared by the state's determination to control wartime narratives.

At the beginning of this process, professional historians worked with caution, compiling document collections that provided a selective glimpse into the RNG's operations. One early compilation, published in 1981, carried the defensive proviso that editors' motivation in compiling the book was to provide material for criticizing

⁴⁸⁰ Charles N. Li, *The Bitter Sea: Coming of Age in a China Before Mao* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), p. 241-242.

⁴⁸¹ Rana Mitter, “Old Ghosts, New Memories: China's Changing War History in the Era of Post-Mao Politics” *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 38 No. 1 (January 2003), p. 121.

collaborators more effectively.⁴⁸² Similarly, when the diaries of Zhou Fohai, a major RNG political figure, were first published in 1986, they carried a blistering critique from his son. “The coffin has been sealed and the verdict delivered,” he declared, “Zhou Fohai was the scum of the Chinese nation, a traitorous thief who sold out the country. Publishing his diaries will provide researchers of the traitorous Wang clique and the evil activities of the bogus Wang regime more historical material for their reference.”⁴⁸³ However sincere, these denunciations are a clear indicator of the awareness that merely expressing academic interest in collaboration was enough to arouse suspicion of stealthily attempting to “reverse the verdict,” and it is likely that the inclusion of this sort of denunciation both eased legitimized the publication of the diaries and shielded the younger Zhou from political attack.

In official commemoration, the NCU alumni remained obscure. The first post-war history of Nanjing University, published in 1982 for the school’s 80th anniversary at a time when Jiang Zemin held a seat on the Standing Committee, made no mention of NCU. Instead, the editors played it safe by preparing a document collection with minimal editorial comment. In charting the history of Nanjing University, the editors cobbled together an institutional lineage over four time periods and including over half a dozen schools, conveniently circumventing occupied Nanjing. Some of these linkages appear contrived, with the authors navigating through a maze of institutions, leaving the selection of 1902 as

⁴⁸² Nanjing daxue “Wang Jingwei wenti yanjiuzu”, eds. *Wang Jingwei jituan maiguo toudi pipan ziliao xuanbian* (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue xuebao bianbu, 1981), overleaf.

⁴⁸³ Zhou Zhiyou, “Guanyu Zhou Fohai riji” [About the Diaries of Zhou Fohai] in *Zhou Fohai riji quanbian* [Complete Diaries of Zhou Fohai] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2003), p. 4. See Zhu Yuqi’s *Panni rensheng: Zhou Fohai zhi zi Zhou Youhai chuanqi* [Life of a Rebel: A Biography of Zhou Youhai, Son of Zhou Fohai] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005) focuses on the life of Zhou Youhai (1922-1985) to provide a rare account of life in the People’s Republic as the descendant of a wartime collaborator.

the “founding year” of Nanjing University arbitrarily based on the establishment of an obscure teacher’s college.⁴⁸⁴

NCU alumni who thumbed through this version of the university history would find nothing to reflect their own experiences or alma mater. At an institutional level, nearly four full decades after the war, narratives of the occupation period remained locked in a framework that downplayed local agency and dismissed the role of the Nationalist Party in favor of resistance under the CCP. As Parks Coble has observed, accounts from the occupied territories were sharply prescribed, often adopting the form of a confession, for indeed that is what they often were, written in prison or amidst the turbulence of the Maoist campaigns of the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s by those who the state regarded as “enemies of the people.”⁴⁸⁵

One such writer, E Jizhao 鄂基肇 (1920-2013), offered a rare account of his time as a student in the Nanjing Municipal Youth Association. E’s account, written in 1963 but published in 1981 as “an aid in researching the evil history of the bogus Wang regime,” casts the Association as a mere plaything of competing factions within the occupied territories, replete with opportunists who did not buy the RNG’s rhetoric but nonetheless looked to it as a means of getting ahead.⁴⁸⁶ E touched briefly on the Association’s involvement in the protests against NCU President Fan Zhongyun in 1943, in which he resisted the effort by one faction of RNG officials to make Zhou Fohai the protestors’

⁴⁸⁴ Nanjing daxue xiao qing bangongshi xiaoshi ziliao bianjizu, ed., *Nanjing daxue xiaoshi ziliao xuanji* [Selected Materials on the History of Nanjing University] (Nanjing: n.d., 1982), p. 3-4.

⁴⁸⁵ Parks M. Coble, “China’s “New Remembering” of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937-1945,” *The China Quarterly* No. 190 (June, 2007), p. 394-410.

⁴⁸⁶ E Jizhao, “Wang wei zhengquan de ‘Nanjing shi qingnian xiehui’” [The Bogus Wang Regime’s Nanjing Municipal Youth Association] *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao* no. 3 (1981), p. 114 and 123.

target, and emphasized that the organization folded prior to the larger protests against opium later that year. “I was a delinquent youth who went astray,” he wrote, “and am endlessly ashamed to think of it today.”⁴⁸⁷

A second student account, published in 1983, brought to life the student protests against the returning Nationalist government’s decision in the fall of 1945 to screen students educated under the RNG at various “provisional universities” before recognizing their credentials. This account, written by three former protestors, describes how the government’s screening program, along with coverage in the *National Salvation Daily* deriding the youths as “bogus” students and “little traitors,” had drawn their ire and triggered protests led by underground CCP activists.⁴⁸⁸

Former RNG officials framed their accounts as criticisms of Nanjing’s factionalism, leaving no room for agency on the part of the students. One of Youth Corps Leader Lin Bosheng’s deputies in the Propaganda Ministry, Guo Xiufeng, placed the anti-opium protests in the context of Lin’s long-standing ambition to organize the students as political muscle. These efforts reached a high point during the RNG’s New Citizens Campaign, with Lin mobilizing the students as part of an internal power struggle. “On the surface,” he recalled, “the movement was self-started by the students, but in actuality, everything was orchestrated by Lin Bosheng from behind the scenes.”⁴⁸⁹ His assessment was blunt: “The

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁸⁸ Yu Boqing, Yan Jiqing and Yang Shihou, “Fan zhenshen douzheng” [The Struggle Against Political Screening] in Gongqingtuan Jiangsu shengwei, *Jinling fengyu* [Trials and Hardship in Nanjing] (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1983), p. 4.

⁴⁸⁹ Guo Xiufeng, “Wang wei shiqi de xin guomin yundong” [The New Citizens Campaign in the Bogus Wang Era], *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao xuanji* no 12 (1983), p. 185.

students were fooled; [Lin Bosheng] simply exploited them.”⁴⁹⁰ Another official, who had served first on the committee that re-opened NCU and later as deputy secretary of the New Citizens Campaign Promotional Committee, took a similar stance, describing the anti-opium protests as orchestrated by Lin and a product of his ambitions to influence education.⁴⁹¹

These accounts, with their alternating denunciation and confession, upheld old certainties even as they broke new ground. None of the authors questioned the CCP’s role in leading the resistance, the corruption of Jiang Jieshi’s Nationalist Party, or the moral failure and betrayal of Wang Jingwei and the occupation state he led. The more difficult questions posed by enemy occupation did not emerge, and the binary of resistance versus collaboration remained intact. But despite this, the very act of recalling Chinese experiences of the Second World War, particularly as they unfolded within the occupied territories and under Wang Jingwei’s RNG, helped open the door for the NCU alumni to claim a place within official commemorations of the war.

From the 1980s and early 1990s, the terrain began to shift, and the NCU alumni were able to begin their return to official history. In 1983, the NCU alumni organized their first, low-profile gathering of a few dozen alumni intending to strengthen friendship and, as they put it, to “create a new situation,” all in order to “contribute their energies towards the Four Modernizations” of Deng Xiaoping.⁴⁹² By 1990, their gatherings had grown in size and spread to other cities in China. As their contacts expanded to include alumni in

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 184.

⁴⁹¹ Dai Yingfu, “Wang Jingwei xin guomin yundong neimu” [The Inside Story of Wang Jingwei’s New Citizens Campaign] *Jiangsu wenshi ziliao* no 29 (1989), p. 270 and 274.

⁴⁹² Nanjing Zhongyang Daxue (1940-1945 nian) xiaoyou hui, eds. “Xiaoyou tongxun lu” [Alumni Directory], (Nanjing, n.p., 1983), back cover. This initial compilation lists 248 alumni in Nanjing.

Taiwan and overseas, the NCU alumni also succeeded in cultivating connections with local figures in Nanjing's local educational establishment as well as the provincial government, some of whom had studied however briefly at NCU. The simple act of attending the alumni meetings, as Jiang Zemin (by then mayor of Shanghai) first did at an alumni breakfast in 1988, offered a form of tacit acceptance that was unparalleled amongst students educated at other universities under the RNG, and the alumni began to display a greater sense of pride in commemorating their wartime past. Even E Jizhao, who had written with such shame in 1963, was cast in a different light. E's detention of the NCU dormitory master while the students took over the campus to demand the removal of the university president in 1943 earned him an honorable mention in a privately printed 1990 commemorative volume. Support from Jiang Zemin and the determination of the alumni to commemorate their experiences with pride laid the groundwork for the re-appearance of the NCU alumni in official history.⁴⁹³

China's market-oriented reforms also played a part in this process. From 1986 to 1989, Chinese universities faced a funding shortfall of up to 25%, and by 1992, university administrators were formally mandated by the State Education Commission to look to broader sectors of society to make up the difference.⁴⁹⁴ With university administrators casting about for funds, the NCU alumni were able to step back onto history's stage with a well-timed monetary donation. Their return was marked with a five-page subsection in the 1992 school history, timed to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Nanjing University.

⁴⁹³ These included Sun Han, deputy secretary of the Jiangsu Provincial Government, Yao Yumo of the Nanjing Municipal Committee for Rural-Urban Development, and Liu Dajun of Nanjing Agricultural University. See Nanjing zhongda (40-45) lianluo chu, eds., "Zhongyang daxue xiaoyou hui zhuankan" [Central University Alumni Association Special Issue] (Nanjing: n.p., 1990), p. 6-10.

⁴⁹⁴ Yin Qiping and Gordon White, "The 'Marketisation' of Chinese Higher Education: A Critical Assessment" *Comparative Education* vol. 30, no. 3 (1994), p. 219 and 222-223.

The new section, headed “The Operations of Nanjing Central University in the Occupied Zone from Beginning to End,” presented a brief outline of the school as well as a narrative account that covered the student protests and the screening program instituted by the returning Chongqing Nationalists after NCU closed in 1945, but with no mention of Jiang Zemin.⁴⁹⁵

The narrative emphasized a division between treatment of the school, which was established by order of Wang Jingwei’s “bogus National Government,” and that of the students. The editors write: “Under an iron boot, most students at Nanjing NCU witnessed all kinds of violent behavior by the Japanese army, came to hate Japanese militarism, and were utterly unwilling to be slaves without a nation; on the one hand, they were industrious in their studies, deeply believing the day would come when they could serve their country, and on the other, used every type of method to engage in progressive resistance against the Japanese.”⁴⁹⁶ Nanjing, the editors state, was the center of Japan’s military operations in China as well as the capital of the Wang regime, and, as such, became a place of heated struggle between contending political factions. As a site of higher education, the NCU campus also became an important test of strength for competing factions. The Wang regime openly exerted its influence to win over students and increase its strength, while the Chongqing Nationalists and its Three Principles of the People Youth Corps energetically took to underground activities on campus. At this stage, the editors admit, the CCP’s underground organization was “re-establishing” itself, and, rather than working under a

⁴⁹⁵ Nanjing daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu, ed. *Nanjing daxue shi* [The History of Nanjing University 1902-1992] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1992), p. 201-202.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198 and 200.

unified leadership, instead relied on activists sent in from the surrounding region and extra-Party organizations.⁴⁹⁷

While the attention paid to NCU broke new ground in acknowledging a long-neglected aspect of the war and the competing factions and loyalties at play in occupied territory, the editors of the 1992 history still took care to note ways in which the CCP and its proxies played a prominent part in leading the anti-Japanese struggle. However circumspect, this inclusion in the official history of Nanjing University is striking in comparison to the wider state of the field in the early 1990s.

It was only one year later, in 1993, that Chinese historian Cai Dejin published his *Lishi de guaitai: Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu shimo* 歷史的怪胎：汪精衛國民政府始末 (*History's Freak: Wang Jingwei's National Government from Beginning to End*), a landmark study that was the most comprehensive account of the RNG to date. Though the book detailed much of Nanjing politics at an elite level, it did so with such unrelenting hostility towards Wang and his associates that it left little room for acknowledging individual agency, the complexities of life and politics under enemy occupation, or any sort of broader context. For Cai, the occupation state was simply a detested puppet.⁴⁹⁸

Political strictures aside, Cai's emotional contempt for the RNG was seemingly heartfelt. As a child, he experienced the war as a refugee, roaming the countryside with his

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

⁴⁹⁸ Regarding Japanese demands over the establishment of Nanjing's Central Reserve Bank, for example, Cai states: "Since the Wang regime itself was a puppet regime; it therefore...took its orders [from Japan] and carried them out." See Cai Dejin, *Lishi de guaitai: Wang Jingwei guomin zhengfu shimou* [History's Freak: Wang Jingwei's National Government from Beginning to End] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1993), p. 147. To be fair to Cai, whatever he might have privately thought of Wang and the RNG, as a PRC-based historian it would have been dangerous for him to write about it in any other way.

mother and sisters, where they hid in temples and farms, once coming across a village strewn with corpses, with not a living soul in sight. These villages haunted Cai's thoughts for five decades, driving him to lead a group of students on a research trip in 1993 across that same countryside in a fruitless effort to locate them once more.⁴⁹⁹ Cai himself made explicit the links between these experiences and his academic work, recalling a talk he had attended at the National History Institute in Taiwan by an un-named American scholar who "accepted Wang Jingwei's viewpoint, that resistance only caused greater harm for the nation, and if they hadn't resisted the hardship would have been lessened." Seated in the audience, he lamented, were "young people, who had never experienced the battlefield, never known the bitterness of being a slave without a country, of being a refugee during the War of Resistance." For Cai, the debate revolved around an emotional binary. "If Wang Jingwei is patriotic," he asked, "were those martyrs who lost their lives resisting Japan traitors?"⁵⁰⁰ As with many of his generation, Cai's experiences left a visceral hostility that shaped his scholarship.

But despite the strength of this hostility, financial considerations helped ease the way for acknowledging the NCU alumni in the official histories of Nanjing University. A recently published account of a meeting in 1987 between Cheng Zhixin 程志新 (1923-1996), an NCU alumnus who became a wealthy industrialist in Taiwan after 1949, and Lu Yurong 陆渝蓉 (b. 1932), then-Party Secretary of Nanjing University, outlines how the

⁴⁹⁹ Wang Jingyuan, "Houji" [Afterword] in Cai Dejin, ed., *Tao ni ji* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 2005), p. 440-441.

⁵⁰⁰ Cai Dejin, "Guanyu kangzhan shiqi Wang Jingwei yu Wang wei zhengquan de jige wenti zhi wo jian" [My views on a few questions regarding Wang Jingwei during the War of Resistance and the Bogus Wang Regime] *Tao ni ji* (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 2005), p. 366-367.

wealth of some key alumni and Nanjing University's dire financial straits brought about the change.

The account describes an encounter between Cheng and Party Secretary Lu in which Cheng lamented the “orphaned” status of the NCU alumni. While admitting the political difficulties of granting recognition to students educated under the RNG, Cheng also underlined the fact that by geography and school history, Nanjing University was one of the institutions that was closest in “bloodline” to the alumni group.⁵⁰¹ More importantly, Cheng took care to note that in the 1980s, Nanjing University struggled financially, with the school's food supplies running so low as to compel school authorities to approach the provincial party secretary for emergency supplies. The university officials, Cheng wrote, were eager to harness the support of their alumni.⁵⁰²

In considering the question of recognition, the eventual conclusion Lu reached, which was endorsed by then-President of Nanjing University Qu Qinyue 曲欽岳 (b. 1935), is worth quoting in full:

The bogus Wang regime was a bogus *hanjian* [traitor to the Han Chinese] regime that sold out the country, especially with regard to the main people responsible for the government, but Nanjing Central University was definitely not a Japanese school, *nor was it a product of enslavement education* [emphasis added]. Life for ordinary people in the occupied zone was extremely difficult, and students in the occupied zone suffered along with them. At the same time, the students of Nanjing Central University

⁵⁰¹ Cheng Zhixiang and Wang Wu, eds., *Jiexiang zai Jiangnan: Cheng Zhixin xiansheng dansheng 90 zhounian jinian wenji* [Hometown in Jiangnan: Memorial Essays in Honour of Mr Cheng Zhixin's 90th Birthday], (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2012), p. 51-52.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

never gave up any available opportunity to struggle. Knowledge should not be divided by political criteria, and so many innocent students should not be “beaten with the same club.” This kind of complete rejection, one size-fits-all method would be harmful to both *economic* [emphasis added] construction and social development.⁵⁰³

Cheng notes this consensus was passed on to the State Education Commission for approval and, although there is no indication of an official response, the more formal reception offered to the alumni at their 1988 Annual Reunion suggests that the decision received at least tacit approval from the national body. Qu and Lu used the occasion to address a crowd of some 240 NCU alumni, announcing their formal recognition as alumni of Nanjing University, and two years later, Jiang Zemin, newly-minted as General Secretary of the CCP, offered his additional sanction by hosting the alumni at the Zhongnanhai 中南海 state leaders’ compound in Beijing.⁵⁰⁴

Recognition of the alumni took concrete form three years later with the construction of the Building of Knowledge and Practice, which the university built with funds donated by Cheng Zhixin and the other alumni. For the NCU alumni, the building was an exchange that left a public testament to their role in the history of Nanjing University; in return for providing funds for construction, material, and design, the university administration undertook to maintain and preserve the building, including its name and memorial plaque, for alumni and academic activities.⁵⁰⁵ This building, the first on campus to be funded by

⁵⁰³ Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁰⁴ Nanjing zhongyang daxue (40-45) xiaoyou, eds., “Qiannian juhui jiniankan” [Millenium Gathering Commemorative Volume] (n.p., 2000), p. 36.

⁵⁰⁵ See Qu Qinyue *et al*, “Juanzeng “Zhixing lou” caoyishu” [Draft Endowment Agreement for the Building of Knowledge and Practice] in *Xiaoyou* #1 (1992): p. 145.

alumni contributions, was established as an alumni affairs office and formally opened in a special ceremony on October 8 1993.

As a commemorative space, the building's establishment was not only an act of commemoration that marked the existence of NCU and honored the contributions of its students; it was also an act of selective forgetting. The building name, agreed to by both the NCU alumni and the Nanjing University administration, had a studied ambiguity to it, echoing as it did the university motto of "true knowledge and vigorous practice" given by Wang Jingwei in 1940. But in the era of Jiang Zemin, five decades later, the phrase was instead attributed to the Chinese educator Tao Xingzhi 陶行知 (1891-1946) who, like Wang, echoed Wang Yangming and Sun Yatsen in making his claim that "practice is the beginning of knowledge, and knowledge is the result of practice."⁵⁰⁶ Left unspoken amongst the various explanations of the relationship between knowledge and practice was the most obvious historical tie that the phrase had to the institution that was opened under Wang Jingwei.

While the openness of the 1980s provided the context in which this change of status for NCU alumni occurred, it is important to consider the nature of the shift. The NCU case represented a unique, but limited refashioning; students from Kiang Kang-hu's Southern University in Nanjing, to take one example, also helped lead the anti-opium protests, yet their efforts at postwar commemoration came to nothing more than a stray article in a local periodical. Alumni of other institutions were even less successful; National Zhejiang University closed well before the war ended, Guangdong Provincial University saw precious few students graduate, and the president of Shanghai University

⁵⁰⁶ Cheng and Wu, eds., *Jiixiang zai Jiangnan*, p. 59.

reacted with incomprehension when an occupation-era alumnus approached him in the late 1990s about possible recognition.⁵⁰⁷ Lacking the successor institution, the financial resources, and most importantly, the backing of the state in the form of a political patron-alumnus like Jiang Zemin to facilitate their rehabilitation, the alumni of these institutions found that their experiences could not be recuperated into a CCP-directed national résistancialist narrative.

NCU's recuperation also left the analytical categories for understanding the occupied territories ("resistance" and "collaboration") untouched. Instead, the NCU student protestors were re-categorized in accordance with the national narrative of CCP-led resistance. From the patriotic youth who took to the streets of Nanjing to the bogus students of the immediate postwar period and the exploited dupes of Lin Bosheng and the Nanjing occupation state in the early 1980s, by 1992 they were refashioned once again into defiant patriots. The backdrop to this most recent switch, which took place in the latter half of the relatively free-wheeling late 1980s, came about not because of scholarly developments in the Chinese academy, where historians like Cai Dejin who had lived through the war remained hostile. Rather, it was due to a convergence of interests between the cash-strapped authorities of Nanjing University, the ambitions of the NCU alumni, and the political needs of the state under Jiang Zemin.

⁵⁰⁷ Yang Yuting, Wang Shoubin, Deng Ruixiang, "Nangfang daxue de bianqian" [Vicissitudes of Southern University] *Jianye wenshi* #3 (1988), p. 48-51. Wang Shoubin was the leader of the Southern University Student Association and played a prominent leadership role in the protests, along with fellow Southern student Li Hua and Yang Xiaozhou. After the war, Wang joined the Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party. Southern University was disbanded and its founder, Kiang Kanghu, sentenced to life in prison. Regarding Shanghai University, Li Xun frames the issue in simple terms: "It is absolutely wrong that some overseas works on China's history of education list the puppet "National Shanghai University" in the history of Shanghai University," in Li Xun, "Wang wei shiqi chouban wei 'guoli shanghai daxue' shimou" [The Beginning and the End of the Bogus National Shanghai University during the Bogus Wang Regime] *Shanghai daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* vol. 9, no. 6 (Nov., 2002), p. 95. See also Li Xun, "Wancheng Qian Xiaozhang jiaoban de renwu," [Completing the Assignment from President Qian] *Xinmin wanbao*, 24th August 2010.

In the wake of the Tiananmen protests of 1989, the Chinese government increasingly emphasized patriotism within the education system. According to political scientist Suisheng Zhao, the Patriotic Education Campaign, which began as a series of policy recommendations in 1991, targeted students from kindergarten to university in an effort to make patriotism the focus of educational reform. Zhao noted the shift in emphasis from previous campaigns by describing the effort as “a state-led effort to rebuild the legitimacy of the post-Tiananmen leadership in a way that would permit the CCP’s rule to continue on the basis of non-Communist ideology rather than Marxism or anti-traditional iconoclasm.”⁵⁰⁸ The non-Communist ideological substitute, of course, was patriotism, and narratives of the war and the CCP’s resistance came to take pride of place.

Against the backdrop of the campaign, discussion of NCU and the history of the occupation period showed signs of fragmentation. Plans to publish the newly-discovered diary of Wang Jingwei, which were announced in November of 1987, inexplicably failed, and in any event, over the next two decades, a younger cohort of scholars emerged who would turn their attention beyond the high-level politics of leading officials within the occupied territories.⁵⁰⁹ At the same time, the NCU alumni continued their efforts to

⁵⁰⁸ Suisheng Zhao, “State-led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* vol 31, no. 3 (1998), p. 292 and 296.

⁵⁰⁹ This is not to say that senior scholars did not continue with the direction of their previous research. Shi Yuanhua, for example, who began his studies on Wang Jingwei’s Nanjing government in the late 1970s, maintained a steady output of studies and biographies of Chen Gongbo, released in 1986, 1992, 1997, 1999 and 2008. For details, see Shi Yuanhua, “*Luanshi nengchen*” *Chen Gongbo* [Chen Gongbo: A Capable Minister in a Chaotic World] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2008), p 376-377. Similarly, in 1992, Cai Dejin likewise followed up on his 1986 publication of Zhou Fohai’s diaries with the biographical *Zhao qin mu chu: Zhou Fohai* [The Turncoat Zhou Fohai] (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1992). For details on the recovery of Wang’s diary and plans to publish it, see Cai Dejin, “Tan tan Wang Jingwei riji” [Discussing Wang Jingwei’s Diary] in Cai Dejin, ed., *Tao ni ji* [Collected Works Denouncing the Traitors] (Lanzhou: Lanzhou University Press, 2005), p 123-127. It is worth noting that Wang’s “diary” is, despite the name, actually closer to a datebook than a diary in content, and in any event has entered circulation in partial form.

commemorate their experiences alongside the development of state-led commemoration that interwove the leadership of the CCP, nationalism, and resistance.

In a collection of essays by contemporary intellectuals in honor of their mentors, Wang Hui 汪暉 (b. 1959), an influential thinker often associated by scholars with China's New Left, described the veneration his graduate supervisor, Zhang Shicheng 章石承 (1910-1990), had for his mentor, the wartime head of Chinese literature at NCU, Long Yusheng. Wang's essay, which was first published in 1996, provides an account of the 73-year old Zhang privately entrusting him with the task of locating the long-deceased Long's grave and bowing three times before it as a sign of respect. Looking back at Long's decision to remain in occupied territory teaching at NCU, Wang calls for a shift away from foregrounding moral judgment.⁵¹⁰ "The passage of time cannot change the existence of right and wrong," he acknowledges, "but apart from this, might there not be compassion for the vicissitudes of life?"⁵¹¹ Wang's sentiments, cautiously phrased and aimed at a relatively obscure intellectual who was imprisoned as a *hanjian* by the Nationalists, nonetheless indicate the possibilities of moving beyond wartime binaries and condemnation based on external political criteria to the consideration of individual circumstances.

From the available material, the NCU alumni evidently paid attention to the broader political direction in the country and valued the possibilities of official commemoration. In October, 1997, alumni in Beijing printed a memorial book for one of their number, Wang

⁵¹⁰ For a more recent debate on the question of moral judgment, see Timothy Brook, "Hesitating before the Judgment of History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 1 (February, 2012): 103-114, and John Whittier Treat, "Choosing to Collaborate: Yi Kwang-su and the Moral Subject in Colonial Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 1 (February, 2012), p. 81-102.

⁵¹¹ Wang Hui, "Ming'an zhijian: ji Zhang Shicheng xiansheng," [Between Darkness and Light: Remembering Mr Zhang Shicheng] in Zhang Chuntian, Zhang Yaorong, eds., *Ling yi zhong xueshu shi: ershi shi ji xueshu xinzhuan* [A Scholastic History of Another Kind: Passing the Academic Torch through the 20th Century] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2012), p. 143.

Jiamo 王嘉模 (1923-1995), who passed away in 1995. In recounting the protests, the alumni re-cast the relationship between Youth Corps Leader Lin Bosheng and the students in somewhat ambiguous terms. While former Nanjing officials saw the students as exploited, former protestor Pan Tian 潘田 (1921-2002) countered that the officials “wanted to exploit us, and although we didn’t want to be used for their purposes, we still wanted to achieve our goal of mobilizing the masses and developing patriotic, anti-Japanese, progressive forces.”⁵¹² Although printed unofficially, the commemorative book gave prominent place to the calligraphy of state leader Wang Daohan on the cover and included a color photo of Jiang Zemin, now ensconced as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, visiting the alumnus in the opening pages.⁵¹³ Such features were not simply stylistic; they suggested official sanction. Just as the NCU alumni had invoked the name of Lin Bosheng when marching through the streets of Nanjing in 1943, so too did they call upon the names of state leaders in commemorating their comrades in the 1990s.

It was in this context that Jiang Zemin wrote a 1998 memorial eulogizing his fallen classmates. Far from mere nostalgia, the memorial was part of the Patriotic Education campaign’s pursuit of Chinese history as a tool to buttress the Party’s legitimacy. More specifically, it re-cast the role of the NCU students, and especially the anti-opium protests, as part of an anti-Japanese resistance led by the CCP. Indeed, by 2000, Jiang appeared in an alumni commemorative volume, not merely as a supportive alumnus as in previous

⁵¹² Pan Tian, “Jiamo yongyuan huo zao women de xin zhong” [Jiamo lives forever in our hearts] in Wang Jiamo jinianji bianjizu, eds. *Wang Jiamo jinianji* [Wang Jiamo Memorial Essays] (Beijing: Nanjing zhongyang daxue (1940-1945) xiaoyou hui, 1997) p. 7.

⁵¹³ Wang Jiamo jinianji bianjizu, eds. *Wang Jiamo jinianji* [Wang Jiamo Memorial Essays] (Beijing: Nanjing zhongyang daxue (1940-1945) xiaoyou hui, 1997).

volumes, but as having taken active part in the 1943 anti-opium protests and been close friends with one of its long-dead leaders.⁵¹⁴

A few years later, in April 2002, the NCU alumni printed an unofficial two-volume collection of school history and personal reminiscences, this time giving prominent place to Jiang's memorial. Free of space considerations and direct official oversight, these accounts of the school's history and individual student experiences reveal the complexity of the occupation period as well as the alumni's desire in their old age to present themselves as being on "the right side" of history. Some essays, such as Chen Xiuliang's 陳修良 (1907-1998) "History proves he was a good Party member" emphasize the spotless revolutionary credentials of the student leaders. Others, like that of Wang Jiamo's widow, Fu Jijia 傅積嘉 (dates unknown) reveal a more gradual shift in attitude over the course of the war, with Wang initially idealizing Nationalist Chongqing as the seat of anti-Japanese resistance before turning to the CCP.⁵¹⁵ Similarly, the overview of anti-Japanese activities on campus suggests underground Chongqing-affiliated organizations were active from 1940 through to early 1942, and then again from 1944, though with much less success in the latter period.⁵¹⁶

In contrast to these more nuanced accounts, a new official history of Nanjing University appeared in the same month, this time to commemorate the school's centennial. Coverage of NCU had expanded by a few pages, and included more detailed information

⁵¹⁴ Nanjing zhongyang daxue (40-45) xiaoyou, eds., "Qiannian juhui jiniankan" [Millenium Gathering Commemorative Volume] (n.p., 2000), p. 20.

⁵¹⁵ See Chen Xiuliang, "Lishi zhengming ta shi yige hao dangyuan" [History proves he was a good Party member] p. 19, and Fu Jijia, "Wo jing wo fu, wo ai wo fu" [I respect my husband, I love my husband] p. 149, in Wang Jiamo jinianji bianjizu, eds. *Wang Jiamo jinianji* [Wang Jiamo Memorial Essays] (Beijing: Nanjing zhongyang daxue (1940-1945) xiaoyou hui, 1997).

⁵¹⁶ Nanjing zhongyang daxue (1940-1945) xiaoyou hui, eds. *Kangri zhanzheng shiqi Nanjing zhongyang daxue shiji* [Chronicle of Nanjing National Central University during the War of Resistance Against Japan] (Nanjing: unknown, 2002), p. 47.

on the size and composition of the student body, as well as specific events from the various protests. Significantly, the coverage of anti-Japanese activities on campus also shifted. While the previous history described the campus as an arena of competition between the Nanjing government, the Chongqing-affiliated Three Principles of the People Youth Corps, and various CCP organizations sent in from outside Nanjing, the new history contained no such language and highlighted instead the primacy of the CCP in the campus environment. “Students’ and teachers’ patriotic, anti-Japanese activities began spontaneously,” the editors claimed, “but were sporadic and unable to rally supporters. Later, when the CCP’s underground organizations entered the campus and contacted each of the patriotic social organizations to commence anti-Japanese activities...the results became impressive.”⁵¹⁷ As a narrative, the official history’s emphasis on the role of CCP-led resistance set it apart from both the previous official history as well as the work of younger scholars.

Rather than challenge the standpoints laid down in previous scholarship directly, younger researchers shifted their focus. This resulted in studies of collaboration at the grassroots level as carried out by local elites, or as seen in the operations of somewhat more peripheral branches of the occupation state, with the Central Reserve Bank being the most prominent object of study, to various literary organizations making up the rest. These more low-profile topics allowed more leeway with which to navigate the state-backed narrative and present a more nuanced account of how collaboration may have made sense at the local level, and how collaboration was carried out in practice.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁷ Wang Dezi, ed. *Nanjing daxue bainian shi* [100 Years of Nanjing University] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2005), p. 248.

⁵¹⁸ For collaboration at the local level, see Pan Min, *Jiangsu Riwei jiceng zhengquan yanjiu (1937-1945)* [Research on Japanese Puppet Local Administration (1937-1945)] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), p. 8 and p. 212-224. For a study of the RNG’s Central Reserve Bank, see Zhu Peixi, *Jisheng yu*

For the post-Tiananmen period, the NCU alumni continued to play an important role, especially by commemorating their experiences in the form of memoir literature. But while their efforts prior to the publication of the 1992 history expanded narratives of the occupation to include their own experiences, in the following years their experiences were taken up as part of a state-backed form of official commemoration that revolved around CCP-led resistance. This new narrative not only downplayed the complexities and rivalries of life in the occupied territories, but also reduced the agency of the students. By foregrounding the Party's predominant role in leading resistance against the Japanese, the NCU alumni also set themselves apart from members of the younger generation of scholars, some of whom were willing to ground their approach to life in the occupied territories in individual circumstances and context.

Although the postwar trials of collaborators in France and China marked a highpoint in the shared French and Chinese experiences of occupation, as Margherita Zanasi suggested, the historiography of the NCU students and the RNG demonstrates how greatly the historiography of the occupation period has diverged in France and China. Timothy Brook has framed this divergence as a matter of the Chinese being at "a much earlier stage of coming to terms with their occupation" than the French. This lag, he suggests, has emerged as a result of both China's continued sense of grievance over Japan's failure to adequately acknowledge its wartime aggression or make appropriate compensation, and a popular unwillingness to re-examine the past that has played into the CCP's continued exploitation

gongsheng: Wang wei zhongyang chubei yinhang yanjiu [Parasitic and Symbiotic: Research on the Bogus Wang Regime's Central Reserve Bank], (Shanghai: Tongji daxue chubanshe, 2012), p. 168.

of resistance narratives to sustain its own legitimacy.⁵¹⁹ But in looking below the surface of this situation, it is important to recall that French progress in “coming to terms” with the occupation remains, despite its prominence in academic literature on collaboration, an exceptional case. For the countries that endured German and Japanese occupation, the construction of occupation narratives has been deeply contingent upon the role of the state and post-occupation events. There is no pre-determined outcome.

As the case of the NCU alumni suggests, and in line with recent research on France and Italy, the public commemoration of occupation has been shaped by specific changes in the social, political and scholarly environment of the postwar period.⁵²⁰ The history of commemoration, in other words, can tell us much about both the commemorators and the commemorated. As a grassroots effort, the NCU alumni’s struggle for rehabilitation provides a point of comparison between French and Chinese experiences of occupation as well as a window into the practice of history and commemoration. The NCU alumni’s changing status has reinforced the wartime categories of collaboration and resistance, rather than critically analyzing them to account for the complexities of life under enemy occupation. This is in large part due to the interference of a state that, unlike France, continues to stake part of its legitimacy on the claim of having spearheaded uncompromising resistance to the occupier.

For scholars of memory and collaboration, the NCU alumni’s experience is instructive, pointing to the ways in which the PRC, as a postwar successor state, has remained deeply

⁵¹⁹ Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 6.

⁵²⁰ See Rebecca Clifford, *Commemorating the Holocaust: The Dilemmas of Remembrance in France and Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 6-7.

invested in the wartime binary of collaboration versus resistance, seeking to manipulate and control commemoration of the period even decades after the end of the war. In the French and Chinese cases, this has led to some intriguing parallels, with both countries' presidents addressing their wartime experiences during the 1990s, but the crucial fact remains that memory of the occupation in both countries has been deeply shaped by the role of the state, either in its absence or its overwhelming presence.⁵²¹

In Maoist China, the wartime period remained overshadowed by the revolutionary narrative on the one hand, and the silence of self-preservation on the other.⁵²² It was only in the more freewheeling 1980s, after the death of Mao and the turn to a politics of reform and opening, that Chinese researchers began to cast their attentions en masse upon life and politics in the occupied territories, with the often-explicit goal of maintaining the condemnatory framework of collaboration and resistance that originated during the wartime period. Within this framework, the NCU alumni were able to carve out an eventual place for themselves within the official histories of Nanjing University. Far from being a scholarly development, however, it was instead a matter of commemoration by transaction, whereby those who had once been shunned by the university were, after a substantial financial donation, suddenly lauded for their patriotic resistance against Japan.

Since then, competing narratives have emerged as the NCU alumni continued to document their own experiences. Non-academic influences like the Patriotic Education Campaign and Jiang Zemin's revelations in 1997 of his own wartime experiences have co-

⁵²¹ Éric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy: An Ever Present Past*, trans. Nathan Bracher (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998), p. 124-155.

⁵²² Wang Jingwei's wife, Chen Bijun (1891-1959), presents an intriguing example of a *hanjian* defiantly refusing to confess her guilt. Imprisoned after the war, she reportedly rejected an offer of early release in exchange for denouncing her husband. See Charles D. Musgrove, "Cheering the Traitor: The Post-War Trial of Chen Bijun, April 1946," *Twentieth Century China* vol 30, no 2 (April 2005), p. 24.

opted the efforts of the NCU alumni in order to maintain official narrative of the occupation, which gives pride of place to underground CCP activists. Unfortunately, much of what has been published recently on the NCU students simply inverts the category in which the students are cast from one of “collaboration” to “resistance,” effectively leaving both halves of the binary un-interrogated. The resulting literature only reinforces a genre of historical writing in which those who “resisted” are heroes, and those who “collaborated” are, by definition, villains. Such a literature admits no room for a nuanced examination of Youth Corps Leader Lin Bosheng's role in instigating the anti-opium protests, or of the relationship between the Nanjing Education minister and the Chongqing operative who directed the protests that toppled NCU's president, and can therefore make no real sense of the complexity and contradiction of enemy occupation.⁵²³ As a result, scholarship on student movements and education in the occupied territories remains stunted.

Similarly, prospects for further scholarly developments in China along the lines of France appear limited, despite the presence of scholars with an interest in the field. Current president Xi Jinping remains willing to wield wartime history as a source of legitimacy, as per the recent increase in wartime anniversaries and the decree that China's war against Japan began in 1931, rather than 1937, when war was actually declared. Importantly, he has the clout to reframe it, in marked contrast to Nicolas Sarkozy's efforts a decade ago, which were dismissed and derided as *l'histoire bling-bling*, for example.⁵²⁴ This insistence on defending history as the basis for legitimacy ensures that the regime will exert influence

⁵²³ At his trial in 1947, Li Shengwu, the Education Minister, indicated that he was fully aware that it was a Chongqing operative who orchestrated the march on Wang's residence. See Nanjing shi dang'anguan, ed. *Shenxun Wang wei hanjian bilu* [Records of the Bogus Wang Traitors on Trial] vol 1 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), p. 552-555, 607-608, and 629.

⁵²⁴ Richard J. Golsan, *The Vichy Past in France Today: Corruptions of Memory* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017) p. xi.

over China's various "vectors of memory" to either reject alternative narratives that acknowledge the complexity of experiences endured by those in occupied territory or co-opt them, as in the case of NCU. In contrast to Europe, where Pieter Lagrou finds that local groups had to "speak a language that post-war society was ready to understand," it remains necessary in China to speak a language that the *state* is ready to understand.⁵²⁵ Unless official commemoration abandons the binaries of collaboration versus resistance and patriotism versus betrayal, alternate narratives of the war that acknowledge realities on the ground will remain subject to the same types of contortions as those experienced by the NCU alumni.

Until such time, the history of the occupation will remain a sore point in China, too conspicuous to overlook yet too sensitive to look into. In Nanjing, the Building of Knowledge and Practice, built with funds from NCU alumni, remains on campus as a testament to their relationship with Nanjing University, but for the past several years a carefully pruned hedge has precisely covered the plaque explaining the building's origins. Despite the passage of time, for the state, the period remains fraught.

5.5 Conclusion

In the PRC, treatment of wartime collaboration is part of a problem in historical writing that extends well beyond those who actually collaborated, and impacts broader accounts of the occupation period and the Second World War in China. As shown in this

⁵²⁵ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 304.

chapter, closer examination of Jiang Zemin, his classmates at NCU, and how these topics have been written about point to the persistence of the wartime binary of resistance versus collaboration in the PRC, and the strength of the state to shape historical narratives to its own purposes while excluding others.

Despite the strength of the state, however, its myth-making remains subject to challenge—within limits. In the case of Jiang Zemin, this has come in the form of questioning over his personal background and ties to the occupation state under which he is educated. Although the accusation that he is the son of an RNG official has yet to be supported by any evidence, what is striking about the claim is how it maintains the binary of resistance versus collaboration or hero versus villain that is so characteristic of the state narrative of the war. That Jiang's authorized biography, with its bold claim, "I was a patriot," has been met with the diametrically opposed accusation of being a *hanjian* is not only ironic, but also revealing of the failure to take a more nuanced and complex view of the range of choices available to those who lived under Japanese occupation.

This uncompromising outlook on the occupation period has also influenced the history of the premier institution of higher education in occupied territory, National Central University. For NCU's alumni, their decision to further their education during the war came back to haunt them in the postwar period, when a paranoid Chongqing government found itself struggling to assert control over a population it patently did not trust. For many of the NCU alumni, this suspicion and neglect endured well after the war through the political campaigns and turmoil of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and only began to change in the 1980s. By this time, however, three decades of Communist rule had already inculcated certain

political redlines that dictated not only who could be commemorated and how such commemoration could occur.

These efforts by NCU alumni to commemorate their experiences were soon taken up by the state, in the form of Jiang Zemin, who used the wartime protests to burnish his own patriotic credentials following the suppression of the student protests of 1989. In this case, the problem is not one of the CCP appropriating for itself the role of leading the resistance, although there are elements of that. Rather, the problem lies in an accounting of the occupation period that narrates everything through the lens of collaboration or resistance. Maintaining this binary narrative results in a history of occupation shorn of complexity, with some events pulled out of context and others downplayed or omitted, in order to cobble together a narrative that emphasizes the students' Communist credentials and the CCP's leadership role. The result is a flattened view of the period, free from nuance and ambiguity.

To more fully make sense of the occupation—including the NCU protests, the role of Jiang, and much else—it is necessary to read this ambiguity and larger context back into the narrative. In this particular case, it requires considering the longer history of student protest, the role of Nationalist operatives or Japanese friends, or the impact of the RNG's propaganda campaigns and factional leadership struggles, among numerous other factors, as relevant to how events in the occupied territories unfolded. At a broader level, it involves looking beyond the various iterations of moral judgments that were rendered during the war, in its immediate aftermath and the years since, and viewing the history of the occupation through close engagement with the contextual factors and historical backdrop that conditioned people to act in the way in which they did.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Occupation in Retrospect

In this dissertation, I have offered a fresh approach to wartime collaboration as a problem in the history of twentieth-century China. This has consisted of a trans-war China framework that examines the pre-war context, how collaboration unfolded, and how narratives of the war were subsequently reconstructed to emphasize a nationalist binary of collaboration versus resistance. To navigate through these issues, I have taken a biographical approach that de-emphasizes moral failure as a causal explanation for collaboration, and instead considered how Republican China's fragmentation and factional politics has provided norms and precedents for the behaviour of those who chose to serve in the RNG.

Mainstream writing on the topic in the PRC has long emphasized moral failure as an explanation for those Chinese who did not place themselves unambiguously in the camp of armed resistance. Stepping outside of resistance, in either thought or deed, ran the risk of having ones' entire identity reduced to being a *hanjian*, an epithet loaded with shame, moral opprobium and wounded nationalism. Such an approach maps comfortably onto established practice in the writing of history in China. As historian Mao Haijian frankly acknowledges, "Chinese history writing strongly emphasizes the appraisal of historical figures. Open any work of history, and it is clear who were the righteous and the wrong,

the loyal and the traitorous, the good and the bad.”⁵²⁶ Among the disadvantages of this personalized approach on flawed individuals, with its emphasis on condemnation, is that it consigns occupied China and many of those in it to the status of historical aberration, leaving little space (or reason) for analyzing the period within the longer sweep of twentieth century Chinese politics or the broader phenomenon of occupation as it occurred in other places or times.

Shifting from this approach to one that produces historical knowledge is not a straightforward task. Jubin Hu, whose background in the historical research office of the China Film Archive in Beijing and later scholarly training at Latrobe University in Australia gives him an unusual vantage point, highlighted the challenge of both political risk and humiliation in examining occupation-era cinema for scholars in China.⁵²⁷ As Hu writes:

the research itself has become a political issue, rather than a matter of purely academic debate. In the eyes of Chinese film researchers, the cinema of Japanese-occupied Shanghai and Manchuria is the record and evidence of a humiliating episode for the Chinese nation, a humiliation that these researchers are loath to face up to. Moreover, they seem to feel that studying the wartime cinema of Shanghai and

⁵²⁶ As Mao puts it, his discussion of this mode of historical writing is part of an effort to reconsider whether or not the Manchu aristocrat Kišan 琦善 (1786-1854) was in fact a traitor. Interestingly, although Mao offered a more generous interpretation of Kišan and described his condemnations at the hands of historians as “warnings towards those who might support cooperation” with foreign powers, he still took care to draw a contrast between Kišan and Wang Jingwei, “who switched allegiances to the Japanese.” Haijian Mao and Joseph Lawson, ed., *The Qing Empire and the Opium War: the Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty*, translated by Joseph Lawson, Craig Smith and Peter Lavelle (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 1 and 21.

⁵²⁷ Sensitivity over this topic is not in any way a particularly Chinese phenomenon. Bernard Wasserstein’s experience of being sued by Hilaire du Berrier, a Monte Carlo-based American aged 90 who took great exception to the account of collaboration in Wasserstein’s book, provides a vivid non-Chinese example of the emotional sting that the charge of collaboration still carries, even decades after the war’s end. See Bernard Wasserstein, *Secret War in Shanghai: Treachery, Subversion and Collaboration in the Second World War*, reprint (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2017), p. x.

Manchuria might implicate them in a project of legitimization...and this is a political risk they simply are not willing to take.⁵²⁸

Behind this political risk sits the state, with its ability to cordon off access to archives and enforce political taboos and norms, as the case of Jiang Zemin and his NCU classmates suggests. Rather than something that has “become” a political issue, however, the portrayal and disposition of those who served in Japan’s various occupation states has *always* been a political issue of such degree that it has impacted even those who merely lived under the RNG.

6.2 Occupation in Context

In lieu of moral condemnation, what I have proposed instead in this dissertation is an effort to locate Chinese collaboration in the context of 20th century Chinese history, positioning it as a response to Japanese invasion that emerged from the political fragmentation of the pre-war era, as a means to preserve Republican policies wherever possible through the occupation period, and as a lingering problem that complicates Nationalist and the Communist attempts to retrospectively cast themselves as the leaders of a nation united in resistance in the post-war era. Viewed in these terms, collaboration becomes more than just a morality tale of a few bad Chinese, but a topic of historical study that can inform our views of how the Second World War unfolded in China, the legacy it left and, in broader terms, how societies experience occupation.

⁵²⁸ Jubin Hu, *Projecting a Nation: Chinese National Cinema Before 1949* (Hongkong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), p. 116.

In particular, the careers of Kiang Kang-hu, Chu Minyi, and Hao Pengju all fit into the framework of political fragmentation and factional politics that developed following the fall of the Qing and persisted through the Republican period. For Kiang, this was expressed in his decades long efforts to enter the political arena under his own banner. From an elite position under the Qing, Kiang's lonely career through the Republican period was one of marginalization. This persisted through the war years and into his short-lived career as an official in the Nationalist-dominated RNG. Chu Minyi, who tracked much more closely to the Nationalist Party elite as he rotated back and forth between political and intellectual pursuits, was also no stranger to factional politics, thanks to his long-standing relations to competing power blocs within the party. Factional politics was no less a factor in the career of Hao Pengju, whose climb up through the ranks carried him through the 1920s and 30s, even persisting after the war's conclusion. Hao's departure for the occupied territories, initially on the orders of Hu Zongnan, and his subsequent role after the war, first in the service of the Nationalist, then the Communists, and then back to the Nationalists, prior to his execution, point to how political interest and factional politicking were at play in how former RNG officials met their fate after the war.

In the PRC, Kiang, Chu, and Hao have all been subject to various types of character assassination, Kiang as a non-entity, Chu as a clownish figure of mockery, and Hao as a rapist. This aligns, if not in the specifics, with the dismissal directed towards those in the occupation state by many non-Chinese observers as well. To take one example, Judith and Arthur Hart Burling, long-time residents of Shanghai who experienced internment by the Japanese before returning to the United States, offered up rather searing indictments

in a short popular article in 1945 that characterized “China’s Quislings” as mere grafters, bandits, and stooges.⁵²⁹ Joseph Wechsberg, to take another, derided Wang as the “oriental oboe” in the Axis orchestra, with Tojo Hidecki waving the baton.⁵³⁰ Such denunciations make entertaining copy, but generate little historical understanding.

Instead, it is useful to consider how the framework of collaboration versus resistance, with its emphasis on moral judgment, has shaped popular and scholarly perceptions of the history of occupation in China. For this, I have turned to the biographies of Hao Pengju and the men he led, as well as Jiang Zemin and his NCU classmates. In the case of Hao, much of his career is relatively unremarkable—the story of a young man who grew up in impoverished circumstances and slowly claws his way upward through the factional politics of Republican China by way of the military. This mode of politicking endured through the occupation, but his role as a former collaborator has presented a problem for postwar authors in the PRC who have struggled to explain his brief alliance with CCP forces under the command of Chen Yi. Rather than address the complexities of the period in which he lived, PRC accounts have focused on Hao as an individual, condemning him as not only a particularly fickle and erratic breed of *hanjian*, but as a rapist as well.

Taken at face value, such an accounting leaves much unanswered, particularly with regard to the circumstances by which Hao entered occupied territory during the war, and why either the Nationalists or the CCP would have any desire to accept such an individual into their ranks after the war. The subsequent laudatory treatment of those serving under Hao who made their way into the Communist camp and remained there

⁵²⁹ Judith and Arthur Hart Burling, “China’s Quislings Have No Face,” *Town & Country* vol. 100 (June 1945), p. 65 and 109.

⁵³⁰ Wechsberg interviewed Wang in Hanoi and Shanghai in 1939, and again in Nanjing in 1940. See Joseph Wechsberg, “China’s Quisling,” *Collier’s* (21st August 1943), p. 16.

casts further skepticism on the moral approach. Instead, these accounts point to the political realism of both the CCP and the Nationalists in taking on those who, through strength of arms, could be of use in the Civil War, and casting aside those who were not.

In the case of Jiang Zemin and the NCU students, their postwar accounting reinforces a sense of a politically-imposed collaboration-resistance binary. Their initial condemnation by the returning Chongqing Nationalist government was met with protests and a softening of the requirements for political screening, but the black mark of having been educated under the RNG remained for decades after the war. Their eventual rehabilitation was a protracted process that required years of organizing and a large financial donation, and was greatly helped along by Jiang Zemin's ascension to power after the 1989 protests at Tiananmen. Even with rehabilitation achieved, however, the resulting "history" was a questionable one that managed to somehow insert the CCP into the forefront of resistance, crowding out the role of other students, other protests, and the complex motivations of other players in the politics of occupied Nanjing.

6.3 Conclusion

As suggested at the beginning of this dissertation, the phenomenon of wartime collaboration was an inevitable outcome of Japanese invasion, yet the specific form it took was guided by the factional politics and fragmented state of pre-war Republican China. In the case of the RNG, this meant an adherence, with some judicious updating, to the Republican form of government, the symbolism of the Nationalist Party, its

investment in the figure of Sun Yat-sen and his Three Principles of the People, and certain aspects of its cultural and foreign diplomacy. That the complexity of occupation has since then been shoehorned into the binary of resistance and collaboration, with heavy moral condemnation apportioned out to those deemed to have collaborated, has done much to inhibit understanding of the period and its legacy.

Admittedly, the need for further research remains. Greater archival access will facilitate more detailed studies on the RNG's diplomacy, on the role of military units sent into occupied territory, on the history of education under occupation, and on the role of underground agents and student movements, as well as fill in some of the biographical lacunae regarding the figures discussed in this study. Further study is also necessary to examine in greater detail the legacy of occupation and how it has been recounted, particularly in terms of the impact on the Civil War and Sino-Japanese relations, and how Chinese experiences of occupation compare with those elsewhere.⁵³¹ Nonetheless, this study points towards the importance of further integrating the occupation era within the history of twentieth century China, rather than attempting to grapple with the period within the neat wartime periodization of 1937 to 1945, disconnected to that which came before and that which came after.

⁵³¹ For an important comparative study that examines how the Chinese discourse on collaboration was influenced by the French, see Margherita Zanasi's "Globalizing Hanjian: The Suzhou Trials and the Post-World War II Discourse on Collaboration," *The American Historical Review* vol. 113, no. 3 (Jun., 2008), p. 731-751.

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