

The Manchurian Myth

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Nationalism, Resistance, and
Collaboration in Modern China

Rana Mitter

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For my parents

*Puis ils s'en allèrent sur la route tous les quatre
La Loreley les implorait et ses yeux brillaient comme des astres
Chevaliers laissez-moi monter sur ce rocher si haut
Pour voir encore mon beau château
Pour me mirer encore dans le fleuve
Puis j'irai au couvent des vierges et des veuves*

Guillaume Apollinaire, *La Loreley*

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Note on the Text

I have used pinyin and Hepburn romanizations for Chinese and Japanese terms respectively. The only exceptions are certain Chinese names that are better known in English in other romanizations: thus, Chiang Kaishek (rather than Jiang Jieshi), KMT (GMD or Guomindang), Kwantung (Guandong), and Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan). However, rather than “Peiping,” I have referred to the city of Beiping, the name given to Beijing by the Nationalist government between 1928 and 1949. A list of abbreviations used in the notes is provided at the start of the notes.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Crisis or Catalyst?

In May 1932, A. T. Steele, an American journalist commissioned by the *New York Times*, came to the end of a wet, muddy, and often dangerous journey. He had spent over a week trekking across the ill-maintained back roads of Manchukuo, the puppet state established by the Japanese army in Northeast China in 1932. Steele had entered the Japanese-occupied region illegally, but he considered the risk to be worthwhile in his enthusiasm to chase down a big story: a face-to-face meeting with the renowned Manchurian Chinese resistance leader Ma Zhanshan. In the months after the first Japanese attack, Ma had come to public attention through a series of heroic telegrams he had sent describing his campaign of resistance to the Japanese in northern Heilongjiang province. These telegrams were published in the national Chinese press but reached as far as the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva. When the League sent a Commission of Enquiry in 1932 to explore the truth of the situation in Manchuria, they made a meeting with Ma Zhanshan one of their chief requests (although the meeting never actually took place). So Steele's nose for a scoop told him that finding Ma Zhanshan would allow him to write a story that could have an impact on the world's understanding of the rapidly unfolding clash between China and Japan.¹

The outline of that clash is well-known even today: on 18 September 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army launched an invasion of Manchuria, the northeastern provinces of China. These events soon became known to the world as the "Manchurian Incident." Soon afterward, they set up a state there that they called "Manchukuo," independent in name but in

fact run by the invaders. The crisis immediately caused a storm of nationalist protest in the rest of China, as well as giving rise to a popular resistance movement in Manchuria itself (one dominated by the Communist Party) that was stimulated by the Japanese army's use of terror tactics to control the region.

Or rather, this is the myth. The account of the occupation of Manchuria summarized above is by no means fabricated; it contains important elements of truth. Rather, calling it a "myth" means that the widely accepted version of events is a constructed narrative that has been manipulated to reflect a particular political agenda. The construction of such myths is now commonly accepted as integral to the process of nation building, and indeed the building of communities in general. However, a closer examination of how and why the myth of Manchurian Chinese resistance to the Japanese occupation was developed sheds new light on wider questions in twentieth-century Chinese history.

This book has two main aims. The first is to examine the reality of the occupation during the period when the Japanese-created state of Manchukuo was established and stabilized (1931–33). Among the questions to be answered are the following: Who collaborated with the Japanese, who resisted them, and why? What were conditions like in the occupied zone during the period when the Japanese were establishing their rule? What happened to the northeastern (Manchurian) Chinese who fled the invaders and went into exile? The second aim is to demonstrate the importance of the events of the early 1930s in the formation of modern Chinese nationalism. This study suggests that the occupation presented China with a crisis different from previous instances of foreign intervention, as it demanded for the first time a clear choice between acquiescence and resistance to a full-scale occupation. Crucially, this study aims to put choices by the Manchurian Chinese themselves at the center of the emergent nationalism that arose from the crisis. Northeastern nationalists who fled Manchuria tried to pressure the government in Nanjing into sending troops to retake their homeland, and they chose to exert this pressure by portraying the crisis as an issue of national concern for all Chinese. Using the techniques and assumptions of modern nationalist ideology, these activists created the powerful and effective image of a resistance to the Japanese that had risen up spontaneously in Manchuria. This image has not been erased from the collective Chinese memory even today.

The Manchurian nationalist activists made their own individual contribution to the discourse of Chinese nationalism: they supplied a positive element that had previously been lacking. Until the early 1930s, Chi-

nese nationalist activism had been based on primarily negative images: the humiliation of China at the Versailles Conference of 1919, the shooting down of Chinese workers and students in the May Thirtieth Incident of 1925, the supposed sterility of traditional Chinese culture that was at the heart of the May Fourth Movement. The Manchurian propagandists provided a new and popularly resonant image of resistance heroes in Manchuria who had stood up to the Japanese, allowing nationalism to be expressed in a new and different way from 1931 onward and encouraging the replacement of “imperialism” in general with Japan in particular as its chief target. This new consciousness did not permeate everywhere at the same level (for instance, it was always a more urban than rural phenomenon), and its effectiveness waxed and waned over the period leading up to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. But it did provide a new narrative and language of resistance that helped to sustain phenomena such as the National Salvation Movement of the mid-1930s, and the nationalist fiction of writers such as Xiao Jun. The successful pervasion of the resistance image in the popular Chinese imagination hints at why its mythical elements have remained undisturbed for so long.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive history of Manchukuo, even for the 1931 to 1933 period, nor is it a study of the diplomatic history of the Manchurian crisis. It focuses on the actions of three sections of northeastern Chinese society during those years: collaborators with the Japanese, nationalist exiles from the occupation who promoted resistance, and resistance fighters on the ground in the occupied zone. In doing so, it draws on the many excellent studies of aspects of this period that exist already, as well as attempting to tackle some of the analytical problems that have dogged this topic. Broadly speaking, Western literature has concentrated on the crisis as an exercise in policy making, either by the Chinese, the Japanese, or the League of Nations. For a grassroots view of the occupation and its consequences, one must turn to the Chinese and Japanese literature. Yet this too is problematic. For the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and particularly in the People's Republic, deviations from the standard account with which this chapter began have been few in number, although it has become possible in recent years to obtain primary sources that enable one to question that view.² In Japan, to cite the words of Gavan McCormack, “the Manchukuo experience remains today drifting unassimilated and unabsorbed, largely still not understood, just beneath the surface of the contemporary Japanese state.”³ The debates of postwar

Japanese historiography, which feed into much larger questions of war guilt and left-right divisions that still scar Japanese society, make the topic of Japan's imperial past difficult for that country to deal with.⁴ This study cannot claim to solve these problems, but it aims to contribute to a more nuanced and less politically charged analysis of the meaning of Manchukuo.

The Manchurian Crisis

This book deals with the first phase of the Manchurian crisis, from the occupation of southern Manchuria in 1931 to the signing of the Tanggu Truce in 1933. This was the period during which the groups touched by the crisis made their most important decisions about what was to happen to the Northeast; they included the Chinese government, the Japanese army and government, the League of Nations and the western powers, and, as this study stresses, the Chinese inhabitants of the region themselves. As this study is thematic rather than chronological in its treatment, a short narrative summary of the events of the crisis during this period is provided here.

Shortly after 10:30 P.M. on 18 September 1931, a bomb exploded on a railway line outside the city of Shenyang (often referred to in Western reports of the time by its old Manchu name of Mukden), the regional capital of northeastern China. The Japanese Kwantung Army garrison, directed by two junior officers, Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishirō, claimed that Chinese soldiers had set off the explosion, intending to wreck a Japanese train that was due on that section of the line. The army then used this event as a pretext to launch a full-scale occupation of much of southern Manchuria.⁵ In fact, the Manchurian Incident had been engineered by Ishiwara, Itagaki, and the men under their command. The occupation, which was carried out in a matter of days, took the government in Tokyo under the liberal prime minister Wakatsuki Reijirō by surprise. The Wakatsuki cabinet soon fell, at least in part because of internal disputes over what policy the administration should adopt toward the Manchurian coup. Its successor governments in Tokyo, regardless of the misgivings of individual politicians toward their army's actions in Northeast China, felt obliged to defend the occupation against all critics. Emboldened, the Kwantung Army pushed into northern Manchuria in November 1931, and by February 1932 had at least nominal control over the whole region. In March of that year, the occu-

piers formally proclaimed a separate state in the region, named Manchukuo (in Chinese Manzhouguo, in Japanese Manshūkoku).

Meanwhile, the head of the Nationalist government in Nanjing, Chiang Kaishek, had to make a swift decision about his strategic priorities. Judging that it was not possible to reverse the occupation using force, Chiang ordered Zhang Xueliang, the regional militarist who had held sway over the Northeast, to follow a policy of “nonresistance” to the Japanese. Instead, the Chinese government would take their case to the League of Nations, which they hoped would rule against Japan and provide international pressure for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Manchuria. China and Japan presented their cases to the League Assembly in Geneva from late 1931 to mid-1932: China protested that its national sovereignty had been violated by a foreign aggressor, whereas Japan claimed that it was assisting a newly independent state in Manchuria that wished to throw off the tyranny of corrupt Chinese rule.⁶

The Japanese occupation was widely seen as the first real test for the League of Nations, set up in the aftermath of World War I. However, the organization was hobbled by various factors: the United States had never entered the League, and Britain and France, the main powers within it, were not keen to deploy force, particularly in East Asia, if they could avoid it. Britain wanted to keep on good terms with Japan, which was still nominally an allied power, although the British policy of simultaneous friendliness with Chiang Kaishek caused an ultimately unsustainable strain on British policy.⁷ In any case, in late 1931, as noted by David Dutton, “Japan was widely seen to have a strong case against China,” and Sir John Simon, the British foreign secretary, informed the Cabinet that Japan had the right to send troops into China.⁸ Henry Stimson, the U.S. secretary of state, made displeased noises about Japan’s action, but Republican foreign policy in the 1920s had depended heavily on keeping Japan friendly, in particular not undermining the liberal Japanese foreign minister Shidehara Kijūrō; and the Americans were keen to maintain that diplomatic balance in the early 1930s.⁹

In February 1932, the League of Nations sent a Commission of Enquiry under Lord Lytton to China, including Manchuria, to judge the situation. In the opinion of many Chinese circles, the commission’s presence offered a chance to lobby for China’s case, which was aided by the fact that the Japanese-controlled Manchukuo authorities remained petulant throughout the period of the Commissioners’ visit. The commission was split in its final report, with Lytton wishing strongly to condemn the Japanese, and Claudel, the French representative, urging recognition of Manchukuo; the compromise that resulted pleased

nobody. While it required the withdrawal of Japanese troops, it also condemned Zhang Xueliang's regime and allowed the Japanese generous treaty rights.¹⁰ Sir John Simon was able to portray the report as stressing faults on both side, which earned him the sobriquet "Man of Manchukuo" and infuriated both China and Japan.¹¹ Japan eventually withdrew from the League on 24 February 1933, but this was cold comfort to political circles in China, which were now convinced of the hollowness of the international structures that had been set up with such fanfare over the last decade and a half.

It hardly mattered. The events of 1932 had made it quite clear that the writ of the Japanese army was the only one that ran in Manchuria, and the army and its supporters claimed that Manchukuo had come into being as a culmination of the desire of the people of the Northeast (Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Manchus, and Mongols alike) for independence from Chinese warlord rule. In fact, it is highly unlikely the "state" would ever have been formed had it not been for the Manchurian Incident, and throughout Manchukuo's fourteen-year history it was the Japanese who remained in overall control. Yet (as chaps. 3 and 4 will show), the Kwantung Army managed to obtain widespread collaboration from the locals in its new possession, largely by persuading local elites that cooperation would enable ordinary life to carry on as usual. Japanese rule in Manchukuo became much harsher, particularly after the promotion of mass migration to the "state" after 1936 and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, but in the initial period the Japanese were keen to use persuasion rather than coercion where they could in order to stabilize the new state.

Diplomatically, the Japanese had little success in gaining recognition for Manchukuo. Gestures such as inviting Puyi, the last Qing Emperor, to come out of forced retirement to take up the position of chief executive (1932–34) and then emperor (1934–45) of the new state did nothing to warm the attitude of either Nanjing or the international community. However, a combination of negotiations and threats resulted in the signing of a Sino-Japanese agreement on 31 May 1933 at Tanggu, a harbor city about thirty miles from Tianjin. The terms of the Tanggu Truce provided for a demilitarized zone in the Beiping-Tianjin area and in effect meant that Nanjing implicitly recognized Manchukuo. Chiang Kaishek also agreed to crack down on anti-Japanese agitation in the part of China under his control, meaning that criticism of the Japanese occupation of the Northeast became more difficult.

Most Chinese within and outside Manchuria had to accept the Japanese occupation as a *fait accompli*, whether willingly or not. However, a

resistance movement did arise in the region. Its best-known member was Ma Zhanshan, a local militarist from northern Heilongjiang who held off the Japanese advance at the Nonni River near Qiqihaer for a few days in November 1931. This action led to Ma being lionized by nationalists in intramural China who wanted to shame Chiang Kaishek into reversing his nonresistance policy; among these nationalists were members of the Northeast National Salvation Society (NNSS), a political pressure group made up of northeasterners in exile from their homeland (see chap. 5). Yet although it made many valiant attempts to fight the invaders, the resistance never gained full military support from Nanjing, and by late 1932 many of its leaders had left the Northeast for unoccupied China or the USSR, driven out by the superior numbers of Japanese collaborationists and Japanese technology.¹² It is against this political background that the events detailed in this study took place.

Terms and Framework

In discussing the significance of the Manchurian crisis in China, terms such as “nationalism,” “collaboration,” and “resistance” are all crucial, and it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the theoretical and historical basis that explains the entry of these ideas into the political discourse of twentieth-century China.

CHINESE COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND NATIONALISM

What does it mean to be a nationalist? To be a nationalist is not to abandon other loyalties to region, family, or workplace. Nor is it necessarily to be a martyr or an altruist; one of the themes of this book is that adherents of nationalism such as the activists of the NNSS were able to combine nationalism with a dedication to their much more localized cause of recapturing the Northeast. Nationalism need not be romanticized. But it must be defined.

First, we need to define what the nation is. This study will work on the following basis: that the nation is a type of constructed political identity; that it is specifically modern and that to speak of a premodern nation is probably anachronistic; that it is a phenomenon that emerges in the European-dominated part of the post-Enlightenment world;

and that it is posited on a citizenry and people who are self-aware subjects. In the Chinese context, I will maintain that *nation* is an appropriate term to use in the context of political developments of the early twentieth century, mainly because the activists who were instrumental in those developments consciously accepted and adapted the term that was their translation of the imported concept of “nation” (mostly, although not exclusively, rendered as *minzu*), along with its ideological baggage. This is not to deny premodern precursors that paved the way for the nation. James Watson’s work, for example, shows lucidly how premodern collective identification emerged in China, but he states, “National identity presupposes the formation of a modern, media-conscious state system and the promotion of an ideology of nationalism among common citizens.”¹³

I therefore use the term *nationalism* in this study to mean the ideology based on the concept of the nation outlined at the beginning of this section, which can include, but is not limited to, an ideology of the nation-state. However, it must be noted that whatever basis is accepted for the components of nationalism, views also vary on how all-encompassing nationalism is. Discussing France, Robert Tombs states, “It [is] desirable and necessary to make a clear distinction between the sentiment of nationhood and the ideology of nationalism . . . The latter promoted the values and interests of the nation to a position of primacy, subordinating or even excluding from consideration other loyalties or beliefs.”¹⁴ Benjamin Schwartz defines nationalism as the “commitment to the preservation and advancement of the societal entity known as the nation” over “all other values and beliefs.”¹⁵ However, not all definitions of nationalism are so categorical on the need to prioritize the nation as a unique site of attachment above all others. Prasenjit Duara suggests that the radical break that some scholars suggest exists between nationalism and premodern communal identities is overstated, and proposes that Chinese nationalism can best be conceptualized by viewing “national identity as founded upon fluid relationships; it thus both resembles and is interchangeable with other political identities.”¹⁶ Duara suggests that most recent analyses of nationalism not only take the dominance of the nation-state as given but wrongly propose it as a radically new mode of consciousness. He maintains that the “social whole” of historical China is not much different from the “social whole” of modern nationalism, and that nationalism has become confused with “the ideology of the nation-state.”¹⁷ The latter idea is also found in the work of John Fitzgerald, who has dealt subtly with the separation between state and nation in

Chinese political thought.¹⁸ Furthermore, even where the term “nation” is accepted, different strata of society will have very different concepts of what it means, an idea that is behind Homi Bhabha’s definition of the nation as “a site of contention.”¹⁹

Arthur Waldron has also questioned the way in which much discussion of the questions of Chinese history in the 1920s and 1930s takes nationalism as a given. This discussion, he argues, then uses nationalism to explain other phenomena, rather than asking from first principles whether “the European concept of nationalism really speaks to the issues of modern Chinese history.”²⁰ Of course, the theories that explain the phenomenon in Europe are neither comprehensive nor monolithic. To take two well-known works, Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner both stress the importance of literate culture as a vector of nationalism, but Anderson goes on to link the phenomenon to “pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen” in the New World reexporting nationalism back to Europe, whereas Gellner stresses the phenomenon’s European origins.²¹ Peter Alter summarizes what he considers to be the agreed “structural components” of nationalism, and lists consciousness of uniqueness, shared sociocultural attitudes, common mission, and disrespect for other peoples.²² Yet the latter “agreed” point would be disputed by Anderson, who takes a far more positive view of nationalism than do Gellner and Alter.

Waldron suggests that social breakdown was the key motivating factor for such phenomena as growing antifoignism in China in the 1920s, and refers to nationalism, at least until 1925, as being “almost a fifth wheel.”²³ He prefers to speak of state building as occurring separately from nationalism rather than in tandem with it, and suggests not that war causes nationalism but that the experience of social breakdown creates the space for such an idea to manifest itself; the long-standing tradition that gave shape to that idea was not so much a sense of nation as a perception of China as a “social reality.”²⁴ This uncertainty surrounding the concept of nationhood in China is also noted by Xiaobing Tang, who states of the late Qing discourse of nationalism: “The nation . . . was more an ideological projection strategically resorted to in an age of imperialist intrusion than an actual functioning institution.”²⁵ However, even if the nation-state was dysfunctional, this did not invalidate the *idea* of nation as a site for primary loyalty. One does not have to confine oneself to Chinese examples to make this point: in an example that shows the division at its most extreme, Simon Schama characterizes the Dutch in the seventeenth century as having “come into being as a nation

expressly to avoid becoming a state.”²⁶ He goes on to suggest, “Dutch patriotism was not the cause, but the consequence of the revolt against Spain. Irrespective of its invention after the fact, it became a powerful focus of allegiance.”²⁷

However, is there *some* significant difference either in the quality or the strength of the national, as opposed to the premodern, community? I maintain that there is. The greater strength is in part a function of its development during the twentieth century, when phenomena such as mass communications and education have made the task of propagandists for *any* type of political identity easier (as with pan-Islamist or fundamentalist Christian communities, to give other contemporary non-nationalist examples). But the construction of the idea of the nation still has elements inherent to it that encourage the formation of deep-rooted attachment, in particular the concept of the national citizen as self-aware component of a national whole. This is not to say that the exercising of this concept is inevitably successful; clearly the debate about the “shallowness” of contemporary Chinese nationalism shows up some of the areas where it has fallen short. But the concept *a priori* demands a higher level of attachment as part of its self-presentation than does the following of rituals, however deeply ingrained, that mark the premodern Chinese communal identity. “Nation” (*minzu*), it should also be cautioned, meant very different things even to the elites who propagated the term in China: it was primarily a citizen-based concept for Liang Qichao, a race-based one for Sun Yatsen, and a class-based one for Mao Zedong. Nonetheless, the basic concept of “nation” as a new, modern type of political identity runs through all their constructions of the term.

What, then, was the historical path that allowed the concept of the nation to find a foothold in late-nineteenth-century China? Michael Ng-Quinn suggests that from early on, the Chinese had an attachment to their state based on the need for “physical survival, national distinctiveness, and primacy.”²⁸ Early sources show that the Chinese had a concept of a world outside their own; while this world might be defined as “all under heaven” (*tianxia*), to call this a universal concept ignores the fact that the Chinese still noted points of difference between themselves and others. Tsung-i Dow points out that the Confucian canon contains divisions between “civilized” and “uncivilized,” suggesting the understanding of external referents early on.²⁹ Centuries later, Rolf Trauzettel suggests, the Song ruling elites engendered a new patriotism by extending the existing language of kinship relationships that had been retained over centuries even while dynastic rule became increasingly depersonal-

ized, with the teachings of the Yongjia school providing a basis for the transfer of loyalty from the pseudo-universal (*tianxia*) to the state (*guo*).³⁰ In other words, there was an extension of loyalty within a defined community at the same time that the bounds of that community were tightened. But the explanation for *why* this should happen at this particular time is that the Jin invasions from the north created a conflict of loyalty, forcing the Song court to develop some doctrinal means to bolster its own position.³¹ Crisis was a catalyst for the formation of community; but this was not yet a *national* community of self-aware citizens.

The Chinese were not alone in believing that their culture was the center of world civilization. After all, American self-definition, which developed throughout the period when nationalism was an established phenomenon in the West, also relies heavily on a conception of exceptionalism. This should not be confused with uniqueness. To cite Daniel Bell: "Uniqueness is not 'exceptionalism.' All nations are to some extent unique. But the idea of exceptionalism, as it has been used to describe American history and institutions, assumes not only that the United States has been unlike other nations, but that it is exceptional in the sense of being exemplary."³² From the American Revolution on, the concept emerged that America "as a social and political model" was an inevitably superior point of reference for the Old World, and that combination of assumed superiority and presumed universalism of values is a dominant thread in American political culture today.³³

Similarly, one of the threads in Chinese "universalism" was that Chinese culture could be transmitted to any outside group willing to accept it (or have it forced upon them). In his essay on the "inner world" of 1830, Mark Elvin uses Li Ruzhen's novel *Destinies of Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jinghuayuan*) to draw some conclusions about what it meant to be Chinese "before the Western invasion of Chinese culture." A character in the novel, Duo the Helmsman, says, "The fact of the matter is that our China must be regarded as the root of all other countries." Elvin suggests that "the modern West was, simply by making China conscious of its existence, to destroy this self-ennobling vision." Specifically, it would destroy "the central cultural dream of traditional Chinese society . . . that China was the center of world civilization, the only place where life was lived properly."³⁴ To operate, this change in thinking acknowledged as a reality a Chinese community that was bounded (however extensively) and therefore in some ways cognate with other similar political and cultural communities, laying the seedbed for the imported concept and vocabulary of nationhood. Crisis, and in particular attack from

those outside, helped sharpen the defined boundaries of that community; and over the centuries China faced repeated crises that would make those definitions ever clearer.

However, common identification is not merely an elite phenomenon. Anthropology has made highly significant contributions in recent years to the idea that there is a long-standing concept of “Chineseness” based on culture and community. Myron Cohen states, “Embedded in China’s late traditional culture [i.e., that of the Qing era] was a representation of that country’s social and political arrangements so strongly developed as to convey to the Chinese people a quite firm sense of their involvement in them.” He suggests that continuing “diffusion and acculturation” led to a Han dominance that standardized Chinese culture; times when the state was strong provided a “security umbrella” for more Han migration, whereas times when it was weak led to chaos and more refugee migration. For Cohen, rituals, which filter down to local levels, are the cement that create a national consciousness: “Rituals firmly linked China’s common people to a national culture through their emulation of *local* elites.” Cohen builds on the work of James L. Watson, who suggests that images of the “Jade Emperor and his bureaucracy” were “relatively standardized throughout China,” and that this standardization was encouraged by the state.³⁵

Prasenjit Duara adds a cautionary note on this topic: while the culture itself may have been standardized, he suggests that symbols within it, such as Guandi, the God of War, had different meanings for different strata of society. The flexibility of Guandi’s symbolism meant that he was “probably the most popular god worshiped in the villages of North China.”³⁶ The Han immigrants to Manchuria from North China were mostly from Hebei and Shandong, and even though they might have come to the region as exiles, they still erected temples to the same beliefs.³⁷ Qing official participation also took place, as in North China, and the military governor participated in annual worship at the temple of Guandi as well as the altars of the Gods of Soil and Grains (Shejitan) and the God of Agriculture (Xiannongtan). This connection with a wider community grew through the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, particularly during the massive immigration from North China in the 1920s. Thus awareness of a cultural community existed alongside the alienation from that community that had made the migrants come to the Northeast in the first place.

Cohen sees “no necessary contradiction between a consciousness of national identification grounded in an elaborate cultural construction

and a more recently developed nationalistic consciousness.”³⁸ But in the case of China, he suggests, the rejection of traditional culture by the nationalistic elite meant that modern nationalism was robbed of cultural resonance. Lucian Pye, agreeing that Chinese nationalism is weak, suggests that the “primordial” (ethnic, linguistic, and cultural) values of China are so strong that they actually block “the formation of a distinct sense of modern nationalism.”³⁹ These analyses allow a great deal of overlap between cultural community and nation and are an attractive way of approaching the issue, avoiding the unnecessary “either/or” dichotomy of those who demand that a modern identity *must* exclude and supersede all premodern ones.⁴⁰

However, political elites *did* repeatedly choose nationalism rather than cultural identity as the means to empower themselves during the crises of the late Qing and throughout the Republic. This was not in itself a sign that the premodern conceptions of collective identification had been rejected or that the modern ones associated with nationalism were not reinterpreted and adapted by the Chinese who used them; in this context Prasenjit Duara has proposed a fruitful concept of the “East Asian modern,” suggesting that thinkers such as Kang Youwei could use the terminology of the modern project imported into China within the wider parameters of the Confucian paradigm.⁴¹ Nor was the rejection of tradition, often stated as having occurred during the May Fourth Movement, absolute. My analysis in chapter 6 will suggest that Manchurian propagandists in exile in Beiping were nationalists, yet used thinking that had come from the indigenous Chinese tradition combined with ideas imported and adapted from abroad. Yan Baohang and Wang Zhuoran, future leaders of the NNSS, had studied at Beijing University, heart of the iconoclastic May Fourth Movement, as well as abroad. Yet their language is also reminiscent of Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, members of the National Essence (*guocui*) School, and other thinkers who aimed not to reject traditional Chinese culture but to adapt it. Their commitment to nationalism was in no way incompatible with their other identities; in fact, they meshed seamlessly. But it must be remembered that the idea of nationalism *was* a foreign one. Whether it was Yan Fu adapting the ideas of Herbert Spencer, or Liang Qichao adapting Meiji political texts that had in turn come from Europe, the concept that there existed a world system of nation states, national consciousness, and national identity that claimed to command overarching loyalty was imported, even though these ideas took root within the context of the preexisting Chinese concept of a wider cultural community.

Those who had power to attack China, observed the Qing thinkers, derived their strength from their unity as nations, and China should likewise reconstitute its polity in that form. It was this elite form of nationalist discourse (which Sun Yatsen, for one, analyzed in great detail) that national political activists worked with, and that the NNSS followed in its turn.

Furthermore, political and urban circles responded to nationalist language for a number of reasons. The spread of journalism and new schools that looked for fresh texts after the abolition of the examination system in 1905 was a factor in its growth; Liang Qichao in particular popularized the new terms.⁴² Not everyone who read newspapers using this language was necessarily ready to respond to it, but no reader would be unaware of it. Literate readers might or might not respond to an appeal to them as members of the nation, but they would certainly have an understanding of the term.⁴³ Education and military service were other factors opening up horizons: many of the nationalist activists in Shenyang who later joined the NNSS went to college, some outside the Northeast and even abroad, and many soldiers, whether officers or not, served in campaigns as far off as Fujian.

In summary, although there were long-standing, premodern Chinese collective identifications, the use of the concepts *nation* and *nationalism* emerged only in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth. This study will suggest that in the 1930s, nationalist activists chose to use this particular form of political identity because it best suited their purposes, and they adapted it freely when they needed to; they were not in thrall to the idea of the nation as a predefined package, which they had to take or leave in its entirety. The NNSS in particular set up a series of powerful tropes of resistance to Japan that were spread through the apparatus of national ideology; these tropes were not all-pervasive, since they fell at many of the hurdles that the modern project encountered elsewhere in early-twentieth-century China, yet they set down markers that would ultimately prove to be of great and lasting power. Additionally, just as premodern identity in the form of rituals was often defined at the elite level but reappropriated when it reached the grass roots, so national identity, once out of the grasp of the nationalist elite, emerged at the popular level looking similar to its elite form in some ways, and very different in others. Which leads to the final point: to some extent it does not matter all that much whether the identity described in this book is nationalist or not, although I believe that it is. To be nationalist is not, after all, a question of merit or morality. What is interesting, rather, is

the way national identity was used for very practical and tangible political purposes; and showing how that was done is the core of the book.

JAPANESE IMPERIALISM RECONSIDERED

It is surely not an act of glossing over the very real atrocities that took place during the period of the Japanese wartime empire, the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, to question how useful it is to regard Japanese imperialism through the whole 1931 to 1945 period as being homogeneous in nature and monolithic in practice. The recognition of regional variations in the nature of Japanese imperialism allows us to make judgments about the nature of individual colonial experiences. This follows the lead of researchers in other aspects of modern Chinese history, where the importance of recognizing regional diversity has informed much new research on the nature of the Chinese Communists, for example.⁴⁴

Japanese imperialist encroachment was essentially disjointed, and few now subscribe to a “conspiracy theory” analysis of Japanese imperialism. Instead, the expansion of Japanese power is explained by a combination of power-group conflicts and logrolling by power cartels.⁴⁵ To consider the Manchurian occupation as being simply one fourteen-year-long orgy of destruction is misleading. As a comparison, one may consider studies on Japanese rule in Korea and Taiwan. E. Patricia Tsurumi and Michael Robinson’s studies of education and publication policy in colonial Taiwan and Korea, respectively, demonstrate considerable variation in Japanese policy, both chronologically and socially.⁴⁶ In Taiwan, the colonial administration took care to co-opt enough of the local elites to ensure that their rule went smoothly, and in 1945, at the end of the period of Japanese rule, there was far less resentment than in Korea. Even in Korea, the Japanese annexation was finessed with the help of a collaborationist party in the Korean Diet (and a collaborationist militia, the Ilchinhoe, which became almost embarrassing in its enthusiasm to submit Korea to Japanese rule).⁴⁷ What these examples indicate is that even where the colonial experience was brutal, harsh, and oppressive, Japanese control did not tend to rely for long-term control on military force alone. Stationing large numbers of troops and carrying out coercion primarily by force was costly and ineffective; it was much easier to co-opt local collaborators.⁴⁸ Naturally, rational economic considerations are not the only incentives to empire. But the Rape of Nanjing and the “Three Alls” policy (two of the most notorious atrocities of the

Sino-Japanese War) were not the actions of an economically rational imperialist, and it is worth noting that it was in China south of the Wall that anti-Japanese resistance arose as a mass phenomenon—and not in Manchuria, where imperialism was longer lasting but relatively more collaborative, at least in its initial phase.

The role of anti-imperialism as a powerful idea in twentieth-century China is undeniable, but as with the rise of nationalism, one must not confuse the assertion that it was powerful with the assumption that it was therefore spontaneous or inevitable. For example, much of the evidence for popular anti-imperialism in Manchuria in the 1920s rests on popular demonstrations, but other sources also reveal that it was quite common for Zhang Zuolin and other local power brokers to engineer demonstrations to give themselves political leverage (or a way out of an awkward situation they chose not to deal with).⁴⁹ In short, we should be aware of using anti-imperialism as a blanket explanation for nationalism.

RESISTANCIALISM AND COLLABORATION: DEFINITIONS AND PRACTICE

Resistance has become a powerful theme in China, as elsewhere, in connection with the war, and Chang-tai Hung's magisterial study of popular culture during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 to 1945 has illuminated many of the media and techniques used by propagandists during the war to help create this discourse of resistance.⁵⁰ In popular memory, the perceptions unraveled by Hung have often been projected backward; thus one of the most prevalent myths about the occupation of Manchuria is that there was widespread resistance to the Japanese occupation, led by the armed forces generally known as *yiyongjun* (righteous armies). The collective memory of the period has it as a given that such resistance not only ran at a high level but also attracted popular sympathy. Subsequent chapters of this book will deal with the heroic actions of many resistance fighters who undertook what must have seemed to be hopeless campaigns against the Japanese invaders. But I will also show that the levels of resistance and support for the resistance before the outbreak of total war have been exaggerated in popular memory. This type of misperception about the nature of resistance during wartime is not exclusive to China, and I will follow the example of historians of modern France by referring to it as "resistancialism." Henry Rousso, in defining his use of the term, states that it includes "the construction of an object of memory, the 'Resistance,' whose signifi-

cance transcended by far the sum of its active parts (the small groups of guerrilla partisans who did the actual fighting)” as well as “the identification of this ‘Resistance’ with the nation as a whole.”⁵¹ Chapters 5 and 6 will deal with the resistancialist phenomenon in 1930s China in detail.

Having asserted that the Japanese managed to obtain collaborative support from the population of the Northeast, it is necessary to define “collaboration.” “Collaboration,” points out Anil Seal in his discussion of India under British imperial rule, “is a slippery term which may apply at any level between acquiescence and resignation.”⁵² In his innovative study of intellectual choices in occupied Shanghai, Poshek Fu uses Paul Jankowski’s study of collaboration in occupied Marseille to draw a distinction between “hard” and “soft” collaboration.⁵³ I will draw additionally on Ronald Robinson’s “excentric” theory of collaboration as a model to try and account for the phenomenon in the Northeast.

Robinson characterizes collaboration as a “bargain” between two sides at the empire’s periphery. Empire simply becomes unaffordable if the return gained is not many times higher than the investment of resources and personnel put into it. The theory emphasizes that it is not enough to think of the purpose and practice of empire from the metropole’s point of view; one has to bring in the periphery as well.⁵⁴ This interpretation is now commonplace in the field of imperial history, as is the idea of local collaboration as a *sine qua non* of imperial control. The British Empire was the first area of concentrated study on this topic: however, the concept is also valuable for understanding the experience of those who encountered Japanese imperialism.⁵⁵

Some Manchurian nationalists in exile in Beijing were able to make the distinction between different types of collaborator.⁵⁶ But for the most part, their resistancialist image was able to function only in terms of dichotomy; thus collaboration was an anomaly in the face of a Chinese-Japanese conflict. The only way to deal with the collaborators in this model was to dismiss them as being motivated by gross moral turpitude. Linguistic difference also masks a key point. Just as “resistance” or “volunteers” does not quite translate the “loyal and righteous” elements of *yiyongjun*, “collaborator” does not carry the full force of *hanjian*, the standard term used by the resistancialists to refer to those who cooperated with the Japanese, and which has overtones not just of treachery but suggests “a person so irredeemably subhuman as to forfeit all claims of being Chinese.”⁵⁷ But how well does this dismissive language explain the activities of collaborators?

In constructing a resistancialism that sets up China in opposition to Japan and thereby necessarily posits Japan as Other, the propagandists

had to erase memories of the multiple examples of previous Chinese interaction with the Japanese. Yuan Shikai, for one, used Japanese help in setting up a police force, and Sun Yatsen let the Japanese know that he might be willing to grant them concessions beyond even what was required by the Twenty-one Demands (the harsh demands Japan made of China in 1915) if they would support him in his bid for power, although he would not necessarily have fulfilled this promise. The new nationalist narrative, fueled by a starkly dichotomized resistancialism, had to obliterate these anomalies, but they continued to exist.

Why should the Manchurians collaborate with the Japanese? First, it is important to make a distinction between “fifth columnism” and even active collaboration. To take a well-known European example, the Nazis in the Sudetenland acted as a fifth column in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, actively agitating for the assimilation of the region into the German Reich. In Korea, the Ilchinhoe played this role with regard to the Japanese empire. In contrast, there seems to have been no such activity in France before 1940, even on the part of French fascist organizations such as the Croix de Feu; however, once the German occupation was a *fait accompli*, there was an enthusiastic clique of French politicians who sought active collaboration with the Germans for their so-called National Revolution. Despite decades of local Chinese collaboration with Japanese dominance in the Northeast before 1931, the Manchurian case seems to belong to the French rather than the Czech type. The Manchurian Incident was planned and executed within the framework of the Kwantung Army, without even authorization from the government in Tokyo, let alone Chinese involvement. However, once the coup had happened, the dynamics of domestic Manchurian politics meant that the Japanese were able to find collaborators for their new “state” in the Northeast.

Traditional Chinese thought contributed to sanctioning elite collaboration with outsiders. Although the Confucian worldview had a strong tradition of loyalty and refusal to serve unjust rulers, it also gave high priority to management of society, even when the ruling political authority was far from ideal. This ethic had operated during previous periods of foreign rule, in particular the Mongol and Manchu periods. According to Frederick W. Mote, for the majority of Chinese elites under the Yuan dynasty, “Chinese civilization knew only one criterion for legitimating a new dynasty, and the Mongols could be seen as meeting that test. The Mandate of Heaven theory did not demand that China’s rulers be Chinese, only that they accepted the conceptual framework on

which the Chinese imperial institution rested (*cheng*) and that they bring all the Chinese under one unified rule (*t'ung*).⁵⁸ During the early Qing, the Kangxi emperor expended great effort to incorporate himself into the dominant culture, issuing a sixteen-point Sacred Edict in 1670 that legitimized his rule in Confucian terms.⁵⁹ The ruling dynasties in these cases ending up taking on many aspects of the Chinese culture they had conquered, even while maintaining their own distinct ethnic identities; while this did not happen to the Japanese in occupied Manchuria in the 1930s, the structures of government they set up owed a great deal to traditional Chinese governance, which would in turn smooth the process of legitimizing cooperation by elites.

One danger of overreliance on the excentric model of collaboration is that it tends to reduce empire to an exercise in rational choice theory and excludes both its more economically irrational aspects, visible in Ishiwara Kanji's pan-Asianist plans, and the occasions where it is politically or indeed humanly irrational, such as the Rape of Nanjing. However, Ronald Robinson's wide-ranging and self-declared nonpejorative definition of collaborators as rational actors in the dynamics of empire is highly useful. That definition includes the many Chinese who took jobs with companies in Manchuria run by the South Manchurian Railway, thereby accepting the collaborative "bargain" of higher wages and better working conditions than were available in North China.⁶⁰

These models of nationalism, resistance, imperialism, and collaboration pose the danger of drawing us into neat, packaged conclusions based more on theory than on evidence. This study stresses at all times that it was people, whether individuals or groups, who made decisions and affected the course of events. This in turn makes another warning necessary. We will go on to look beneath the surface of myths of national resistance in China, and we know enough about the importance of war to national identity in many societies not to be surprised at the bare fact that the rhetoric of resistance was not a literal reporting of what happened on the ground. There is a danger, however, of taking that point one step too far and cynically concluding that *none* of the story of Chinese resistance to Japanese imperialism has any real basis. That would be a profound misreading of the evidence presented here. This book deals with people faced with difficult, often intolerable choices, and who often resisted invasion against insuperable odds. The rhetoric that surrounded the resistance fighters was constructed, but that does not make the feelings of national pride and purpose that they inspired any less genuine or heartfelt. Let us turn to their stories.

CHAPTER 2

Reform and Reaction

*Northeast China under Zhang Xueliang,
1928–1931*

The Northeast of China has been known since the mid-seventeenth century as “the Three Eastern Provinces” (Dongsansheng: Fengtian, renamed Liaoning between 1929 and 1931; Jilin; and Heilongjiang). It is a grim place, today marked by gray industrial landscapes, separated by stretches of stark plains and mountains, but in earlier centuries it was even more of a wilderness. The homeland of the Manchus, whose Qing dynasty conquered China in the seventeenth century, the Northeast was, from the mid-seventeenth century until the late eighteenth century, supposed to be off-limits to the Han Chinese. Yet in practice this regulation was often broken, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, political exiles and those who had been victims of economic circumstances or natural disasters were regularly crossing the “willow palisades” into the region.¹ As the Qing declined and the threat from the imperialist powers grew, the government in Beijing changed its policy and encouraged settlers to go to the Northeast and settle in untouched territory before the Russians extended their influence into the area. The great power conflict, however, was not so easily avoided. In the late nineteenth century, the Qing were forced to grant Russia railway and territorial concessions in the southern part of the region; Japanese fears of Russian expansion in the Pacific led to a war between the two nations in 1904–05, which ended in a victory for the Japanese that shocked not only Russia but all those in the West who assumed that an Asian power must inevitably lose to a European one. Japan took over the rights that Russia had previously held, and set up a structure combining a smaller, formally

annexed area known as the Kwantung (Guandong) Leased Zone and a much larger region where it exercised informal imperialism through the South Manchurian Railway Company. A garrison, known as the Kwantung Army, was assigned to the region to protect Japanese interests there.

Manchuria also became a site of political experimentation during the late Qing. In 1906, the imperial commission headed by the prominent officials Xu Shichang and Zaizhen toured the region and then advocated a whole series of reforms, including strengthened defenses against Japan and Russia, the establishment of civil authority in Jilin, and the improvement of regional finances and policing. The establishment of provincial assemblies followed shortly afterward.² However, there was still a division, here as elsewhere in China, between the spheres of influence of the provincial assemblies and the local councils whose role intersected with that of the senior bodies only rarely, if at all.³ The efforts at reform proved insufficient to save the imperial system.

In the period immediately following the 1911 revolution, the main power brokers in the region, such as Governor-General Zhao Erxun, stayed in power. Only in the following years did the jostling for influence in the region grow, with the result that Zhang Zuolin, a militarist from Fengtian province, rose to become the ruler of the Three Eastern Provinces, and for a time much of North China. During the ten years that he was in power (1918–28), Zhang launched a series of military campaigns, all ultimately unsuccessful, aimed at installing himself as ruler of the whole of China. His military expenses left the region with a huge fiscal deficit. Civilian elites in the region were unhappy at the way in which Zhang raised taxes and overrode their newly constituted assemblies, and even some of his military subordinates, notably Guo Songling in 1925, attempted to overthrow him. That Zhang survived was due in large part to his being sponsored by Japan, which provided him with both money and advisers. In the end, Zhang showed signs of rebellion against Japan, and renegade Japanese officers assassinated him with a bomb on a train on 4 June 1928.⁴ Zhang Zuolin was succeeded by his son Zhang Xueliang. The younger Zhang had to deal with a multitude of problems, political, social, and economic, and his efforts were interrupted after only three years by the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, which began on 18 September 1931. This chapter aims to explain the background to that occupation, including the various elite strata in the region, with whom Zhang Xueliang had to deal, the significance of local banditry, relations between Zhang and foreign powers, negotiations between Zhang and Chiang Kaishek, and finally, Zhang's efforts at reform.

Zhang Xueliang's attempts to consolidate his control failed for several reasons. First, he espoused the rhetoric of cutting military spending and building up the regional infrastructure, yet the figures presented below show that in reality neither the proportions of military expenditures nor the size of the deficit fell. His three years in power were also marked by continuing military activity, including a successful intervention on Chiang Kaishek's behalf in 1930, which followed a disastrous defeat at the hands of the USSR in 1929. In the face of these events, Zhang's activities that were intended to strengthen the infrastructure, including his encouragement of nationalist education, did little to stop a stream of criticism from civilians and militarists. However, Zhang might yet have turned the situation around had it not been for the increasing anxiety of Japanese leaders. The Japanese were concerned at Zhang's moves to assume control over the regional industries and railways, the income from which was especially important to Japan after the Great Depression hit in 1929. While it was military force that ended Zhang's rule abruptly in 1931, the effects of Japanese propaganda in preceding years on local elites (including that published in the most widely read regional newspaper, the Japanese-owned *Shengjing shibao*) had smoothed the way for acceptance—whether reluctant, passive, or even active—of the occupation when it came. What happened to Zhang Xueliang echoed the fate of Yuan Shikai in the years 1912 to 1916, when the latter's moves to centralize the Chinese state led to his simultaneously alienating both civilians, whose provincial assemblies he abolished, and militarists, whose armies he attempted to dissolve.⁵ Both men came to grief during the transitional phases of the reforms they wished to make. Nonetheless, there were real changes during Zhang's rule, including increases in political awareness, a rise in the level of education, and greater availability of foreign goods, that increased people's conception of themselves as part of a larger polity, particularly among urban dwellers. This increased awareness, along with a sense of international crisis caused by clashes with Japan and the USSR, acted as a spur to the nationalism that would become a factor among exiles during the Japanese occupation after 1931.

Regional Characteristics

Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces in 1931 covered 380,000 square miles of territory. The central third of the region consists of plains, with the Xing'an range extending around the border

areas from the west to the northeast, and the Changbaishan mountains following the border from the east to the southeast. West of the Xing'an mountains is an area that is geographically part of Mongolia and consists of steppe. The most fertile areas are the alluvial plain that spreads from the gulf of Liaodong up to Changchun, and the areas near the Sungari and Nonni Rivers in northern Jilin and Heilongjiang. The area shows a great seasonal variation in climate. Average temperatures in July are around 24 degrees Celsius, whereas in winter they average -12 degrees Celsius in southern Manchuria and -24 degrees in the far north.⁶

There had been no official census of the area by 1931, but the Research Bureau of the South Manchurian Railway (SMR) estimated the population in 1930 at 34.4 million people (15.2 million in Liaoning, 9.1 million in Jilin, and 5.3 million in Heilongjiang).⁷ Population density varied from 212 persons per square mile in Liaoning to 89 persons in Jilin to 23 in Heilongjiang. The population was over 90 percent Han Chinese by 1931, with Manchus making up around 3 percent, Mongols around 6 percent, and Koreans, Russians, and Japanese the rest.⁸

The Northeast was primarily an agricultural region. After the Qing decided to encourage people to move to Manchuria in the late nineteenth century, prospective settlers were offered free land and financial assistance. Even though these offers often turned out to be fraudulent or their promises of generosity exaggerated, settlers still found that their chances of succeeding in agriculture in the Northeast were better than on the crowded North China plains. At the time of the Japanese occupation, the Manchurian economy was predominantly agricultural; in 1930, soybean products made up 60 percent of the region's total exports. In contrast, industrialization was at a low level in 1931, mostly concentrated in the Japanese-controlled city of Dairen, Harbin, and in the zones controlled by the SMR and Chinese Eastern Railway (CER).⁹ However, since the early 1920s a military-industrial complex of a sort had built up, centered on Zhang Zuolin's need for modern armaments. The Shenyang arsenal, founded in 1919, produced rifles and ammunition, and its 20,000 well-trained employees worked at high capacity throughout the Zhili-Fengtian wars, producing 400,000 rounds a day at its peak in 1924-25.¹⁰

The population was overwhelmingly rural. Urban censuses were not carried out until the Japanese occupation. However, the SMR compiled approximate figures for the major cities in 1935, which give some idea of their relative size compared to the population as a whole. Shenyang, the largest city, had 527,241 inhabitants; Harbin, 458,379; Changchun (renamed Xinjing in 1932 when it was made the new capital of the

Japanese-controlled “state” of Manchukuo), 311,521; Yingkou, 129,310; Jilin, 128,754; and Qiqihaer, 96,652.¹¹

Rivers and roads remained the principal means of transport in the 1920s and 1930s. The Amur, Sungari, and Nonni Rivers were all lifelines for trade in the region, even when frozen over between October and March, when they were used as routes for sleighs or carts. Roads were generally uncovered and in a poor state of repair in 1931.¹² However, the twentieth century also saw rapid growth in railway construction. The CER, built by Russia, had over 1,500 miles of track by 1904; the southern part of the line was ceded to Japan in the Treaty of Portsmouth that concluded the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, and became the South Manchurian Railway. Between 1924 and 1931, serious attempts were made by Chinese entrepreneurs to build competing railways, and over 800 miles of new track was constructed.¹³

Elite Strata in the Northeast

The starting points for understanding Manchurian reactions to the occupation are the behavior and attitudes of local elites in the Northeast. In the following section I will discuss three key groups—military power brokers, nationalists, and civilians who were alienated from the Zhang regime—and the significance of interprovincial rivalries. This discussion will illustrate the significance of intraregional relationships between the social groups who had to make choices about their actions in 1931.

MILITARY POWER BROKERS

Zhang Xueliang (1901–) was not only the central figure in politics of the Northeast in the late 1920s but a power broker of significance in Chinese politics as a whole. He was born in Taian county, Fengtian, and was given both a traditional and Western education by tutors hired by his father. In 1916, Zhang Zuolin became military governor (*dujun*) of Fengtian, and the adolescent Zhang Xueliang started to attend the Shenyang YMCA, which (as we will see below) was run by northeastern political activists who were heavily committed to Chinese nationalism. In addition, there were foreign teachers and students at the YMCA. All this gave the son an exposure to a range of ideas that

his father had never had a chance to understand, let alone accept or reject. In an interview given to Japan's NHK Television in August 1990, Zhang mused that he had originally thought at this time of studying medicine at the SMR Medical College or even in America. However, in the end he entered the Three Eastern Provinces Military Academy, graduated in 1918, and started a military career. By 1925, he was lieutenant-general (*zhongjiang*) in the army, and he used his position to speak out in support of policies his father did not necessarily favor. Relations between them were often stormy, and in the wake of the 1925 rebellion of Guo Songling, with whom Zhang Xueliang had had close relations, Zhang Zuolin threatened to have his son executed and was only dissuaded by old comrades. Yet Zhang Xueliang did not stop making waves. In the Tianjin *Da gongbao* of 13 January 1927, for example, Zhang stated, "In China's affairs both in the north and south, war has been caused by the people of the country not being able to unite their internal government."¹⁴ By declaring an open attachment to nationalism, he alienated associates of his father's, such as Zhang Zongchang and Yang Yuting, and his conflict with them would break out after Zhang Zuolin's assassination.

Local militarism in the Northeast was heavily factionalized, and each clique retained both civilian and military followers. The old comrades-in-arms of Zhang Zuolin were categorized by Japanese commentators as the "old faction"; Zhang Zuoxiang and Zhang Jinghui, for example, had been close to Zhang Zuolin from his earliest days, had risen to power alongside him in the 1920s, and had amassed large fortunes for themselves. However, although these men were subordinate to Zhang Zuolin, at least in formal terms, they were also power brokers in their own right, with troops and an economic base under their control. Some, like Zhang Zuoxiang and Wan Fulin, stayed loyal to Zhang Xueliang after he had assumed power. Others attempted to obtain power for themselves. In this aim, they were often aided by Japan, which was uneasy about Zhang Xueliang's enthusiasm for the Nationalist cause. Japanese maneuvers in turn further encouraged Zhang to develop links with Nanjing.

Zhang Zuoxiang (1881–1949), among the most important of Zhang's associates, was born near Jinzhou, Fengtian. At sixteen, he fled his village to escape a family feud and became a bricklayer in Shenyang; but after becoming involved in 1901 in an incident that ended with his stabbing another man, he fled to Xinmin, where he joined local troops led by Zhang Zuolin. These troops were among those regularized (at least

nominally) into the provincial structure by Governor-General Zhao Erxun in 1911–12, and Zhang Zuoxiang rose in the new military, at one point attending the Fengtian Military Academy. During the 1920s, he remained a close ally of Zhang Zuolin's, serving as military governor (*dujun*) of Jilin, and when Zhang was assassinated in 1928 Zhang Zuoxiang used his authority to preserve power for Zhang Xueliang, who was stationed outside Manchuria and needed time to return.¹⁵

Wan Fulin (1880–1951), Zhang Xueliang's other second-in-command, was born in 1880 in Changling county, Jilin. Coming from a poor farming family, he joined a local militia of around fifty men. The group's leaders turned to banditry until they were incorporated into local militarist Wu Junsheng's troops in 1900, and from then on, Wan rose in the ranks and became a trusted associate of Wu's while also maintaining links with Zhang Xueliang's modernizing faction. After Zhang Zuolin's death, Wan was appointed as military affairs supervisor (*duban*) for Heilongjiang. He rose to the newly created position of provincial chairman (*zhuxi*) in 1929, which he held at the time of the Manchurian Incident.¹⁶ These two men were crucial to Zhang Xueliang's efforts to consolidate his rule.

One internal threat to that consolidation came soon after Zhang Zuolin's assassination, a rebellion by his father's old associate Zhang Zongchang, which showed that the younger Zhang could not necessarily rely on power brokers who had been associated with Zhang Zuolin's Fengxi clique in the past. Zhang Zongchang was a former bandit who had served in Zhang Zuolin's army, as had his associate Chu Yupu. When Zhang Zuolin was assassinated in 1928, Zhang and Chu launched a Japanese-backed attack on the Northeast from Tangshan, near Beijing, where they had been stationed with their 60,000 troops. The conflict lasted from 2 to 8 August, ending in defeat for the rebels, but the experience made Zhang Xueliang even more determined to reform the Fengtian Army, against the wishes of many of the senior officers.¹⁷

However, the most significant opposition to Zhang came from his father's former chief of staff, Yang Yuting (1885–1929), and his associate Chang Yinhuai (?–1929). Yang was born in Hebei, but his family moved to Faku county in Fengtian when he was very young. He was an adept student, rising through the system, and in 1909 he was chosen to study at the Japanese Military Academy (*Shikkan gakkō*). During the early Republic, he joined Zhang Zuolin's administration and slowly became one of his trusted allies. In 1925, Zhang Zuolin's senior commander Guo Songling rebelled, in part because of his opposition to Yang's advocacy of continued militarism even after the failure of Fengtian troops in the

second Fengtian-Zhili War of 1924–25. Yang was chosen by Zhang Zuolin to lead the ultimately successful counterrebellion and became Zhang's chief of staff.¹⁸

By 1927, Yang was engaged in negotiations with the Japanese, some of whom thought he might be a suitable future leader for the Northeast. Those negotiations were coordinated by his subordinate Zhao Xinbo, later the first Chinese mayor of Shenyang after the Japanese occupation. Yang saw Zhang Zuolin's sudden death as an opportunity to develop his role as a political heavyweight. During the negotiations of 1928 with Nanjing, Yang reversed his previous leaning toward Japan and was in fact more enthusiastic for speedy unification with Nanjing than was Zhang Xueliang. Yang hoped thereby to increase his own prestige with Chiang Kaishek, although after unification had taken place he reestablished his close contact with Japan.¹⁹ Appointments was another area in which Yang asserted himself. When Zhang Xueliang wished to appoint one of his own supporters as the new governor of the Eastern Special Zone (the area around Harbin that had been made autonomous in its role as the hub of the CER), Yang made Zhang Jinghui, an old crony of Zhang Zuolin's from their bandit days, the de facto governor instead.²⁰

However, it was another piece of favoritism that was to be Yang's downfall. One of his close friends was Chang Yinhuai, who had been appointed governor of Heilongjiang by Zhang Xueliang in 1928. Chang's contempt for Zhang became more and more open, until it reached the stage where he would lend money to Yang for ordnance expenses, but not to Zhang, and had started building up his own private army.²¹ On 10 January 1929, Chang and Yang went to see Zhang Xueliang, demanding that he create the new post of Northeastern Railway supervisor (*Dongbei tiehu duban*), to be filled by Chang. They stated that they wished to take control of the CER (administered under joint Chinese and Soviet management). Zhang said that he would have to think before taking such a drastic step. When the two had left, Zhang Xueliang instructed his police chief Gao Jiye to arrest and execute them. The order was carried out.²²

M. S. Myers, the U.S. consul in Shenyang, cabled his superiors in Beijing with his interpretation of the execution. He mentioned that a telegram had been sent to Nanjing by Zhang Xueliang justifying the action, and that he had appended the signatures of many regional power brokers, including Zhang Zuoxiang, Wan Fulin, Zhang Jinghui, Mo Dehui, Shen Honglie, Tang Yulin, and Yuan Jinkai.²³ Yet, the consul noted, "the elimination of the two most powerful and probably able members of the Fengtien Party[,] . . . although strengthening the position of the

existing head of this territory for the time being, may later result in the breakup of that party through internal and external agencies.”²⁴

The consul was right. Although Zhang’s action had the effect of stopping Yang’s intrigues, it was ultimately more a sign of Zhang’s weakness than his strength. His control was insufficient to enable him to reach a satisfactory resolution of the problem without recourse to terror tactics. Furthermore, he stirred up more resentment, as the assassination of Yang Yuting affected the careers of many of the officials in the region who had previously benefited from Yang’s patronage. Some, like Zhang Jinghui, were saved by the fact that they were old associates of the elder Zhang and had built up power bases of their own. Others were not as fortunate. Zang Shiyi, for example, had graduated from the Japanese Military Academy and become a close associate of Yang’s; he had to wait until Zhang Xueliang moved to Beiping to take up his position as deputy commander of Nationalist forces before gaining office as chairman of the Liaoning provincial government.²⁵ Zhao Xinbo only achieved the office of mayor of Shenyang under the post-1931 Japanese-controlled administration. It is worth noting how many of the signatories of Zhang’s telegram to Nanjing justifying the executions of Yang Yuting and Chang Yinhuai later collaborated with the Japanese, among them Zhang Jinghui, Tang Yulin, and Yuan Jinkai; even some of those who showed loyalty to Zhang Xueliang at this point did not continue to do so later on.

In summary, Zhang Xueliang did not exercise strong control over local militarists any more than his father had done. When Guo Songling had rebelled in 1925, Zhang Zuolin’s support bled away swiftly, and it was only Japanese intervention that had enabled him to regain power.²⁶ His son was to find that in many cases his rule was tolerated rather than actively supported. This was one reason that, after initial hesitation, he decided to accept the support of Nanjing.

THE KMT AND THE NATIONALIST ACTIVISTS

During the 1920s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Manchurian Provincial branch made attempts to mobilize workers in the cities of the Northeast. These efforts were largely a failure because the majority of workers were not sufficiently dissatisfied with their (often Japanese-controlled) working conditions, and because the CCP activists were not northerners but outsiders sent in by the party.²⁷ The Nationalist Party (KMT), unlike the CCP, used local activists in its cam-

paings in the Northeast, and was reasonably successful in its expansion there during the 1920s.²⁸ Inspired by the May Thirtieth Movement, initial contacts between middle-school (teenaged) students in Shenyang and KMT headquarters in Canton led to the party recruiting over 2,000 members by late 1927. The party organized rallies in regional cities that attracted up to 10,000 supporters. Zhang Zuolin moved from lukewarm support for the Nationalist cause in the early 1920s to outright hostility, and most of its main leaders were arrested during 1927. Suspicion of the party was fueled by rumors from Japanese intelligence that Guo Songling's abortive rebellion had had both KMT and Soviet backing.²⁹ Among the most prominent leaders was Qian Gonglai, who was a professor at the Shendao school in Shenyang.³⁰ He was arrested as a "Bolshevist agitator" in March 1927, but not before he had developed "a large following among the local students and intelligentsia."³¹ Key to the continuing existence of the KMT in the region, though, was Zhang Xueliang's semiofficial support for the party; he supplied funds to maintain the Nationalist newspaper in the region, the *Dongsansheng minbao*, even when his father publicly attacked the KMT. Therefore, when Zhang Xueliang affiliated himself with Nanjing in 1928, "it was actually the climax of quite a long relationship."³²

The organizations with which Qian was associated, such as the Shendao school and the local YMCA, were the breeding grounds for a group of young activists who would become increasingly influential in the years to follow. They had been influenced by the ideas of the nationalistic May Fourth and May Thirtieth Movements, and some of them had even studied abroad, from where they brought back ideas of social reform. Most of them were from Fengtian. Once Zhang Xueliang and his followers had set up a base in exile in Beiping after 1931, these intellectuals would be the founders and key movers of the Northeast National Salvation Society, or NNSS (*Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiu-guohui*), the most important propaganda organization to favor the military recapture of the Northeast in defiance of Chiang Kaishek's nonaggression strategy. (I have used an abbreviated translation of the Chinese title, but it is worth noting that the *minzhong* element suggests a populist flavor to the organization and its goals that was reflected in its activities.) Who were these activists and what were their common experiences and motivations?

Yan Baohang (1895–1968) was born in a village in Haicheng county, Fengtian. He came from a poor background but was able to attend the village school, and he performed well enough to encourage a member of

the local elite to pay for him to attend primary school. From 1913 to 1918, he studied at the Teacher Training College in Shenyang, where he came under various influences: he converted to Christianity but also came into contact with nationalist ideas and participated in protests against the Twenty-one Demands in 1915. In 1916, he became active in the Shenyang YMCA.³³ Missionary schools in the second and third decade of the twentieth century had many “new urban patriots and reformers” among their students, and Fengtian had the seventh highest concentration of Protestants of any Chinese province in 1919, with Christianity being represented chiefly by the YMCA, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the China Inland Mission.³⁴ The YMCA in particular was noted for its attention to “urban and labour problems,” and was “one of the few Christian organizations in China in which Chinese leaders played a decisive role.”³⁵ Yan was one of these. Here and at college Yan met other young activists, including Wang Zhuoran, Du Zhongyuan, and Gao Chongmin, interested in education as a means for reviving China.³⁶

After graduating, Yan tried out his new teaching methods in various Fengtian schools, explaining current affairs using songs and drama as well as stressing the importance of physical education. In 1918, Yan and some of his classmates set up a free school in Shenyang for poor children, which was supported by the YMCA and funds from Guo Songling’s wife.³⁷ This school was widely admired, and Zhang Xueliang gave it his support as well, but by 1919 Yan’s activities for the YMCA were becoming so time-consuming that he was unable to continue as the school’s director. In 1920, the YMCA sent him to Beijing for training at their student section, and while in the capital he had a further opportunity to develop his ideas on nationalism.³⁸

Yan’s nationalism was not indiscriminately antforeign. His continued involvement with the YMCA meant that he did not involve himself with the intellectual movement behind the Anti-Religion League that sprang up in March 1922—supported by, among others, Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Wang Jingwei, Dai Jitao, and Li Dazhao—to oppose the World Student Christian Conference organized by the YMCA in Beijing.³⁹ Once back in Shenyang, he set up a weekly “Wednesday Group” at the YMCA to discuss “new thought and new culture,” as well as a Social Problems Research Group, a Travel Group, and a Movie Group, which attracted the participation of younger people who might not initially have been politically active. While continuing to advocate nationalism, Yan appears to have been able to maintain local respect because of his educational activities. In 1925, when Fengtian students demonstrated

in sympathy with the May Thirtieth strikers, Yan was called in by the city authorities, and he successfully mediated the conflict.⁴⁰ Shortly afterward, the YMCA awarded Yan a scholarship to go to Edinburgh University, where he studied for a certificate in Social Studies. While in Europe, he traveled widely, including visits to Denmark and Moscow.⁴¹

Back in Shenyang in 1929, Yan, together with his friends Lu Guangji, Gao Chongmin, Wang Huayi, and Che Xiangchen, formed the Liaoning Provincial Nationalist Foreign Affairs Association (*Liaoningsheng guomin waijiao xiehui*), later renamed the Northeastern Nationalist Foreign Affairs Association. This organization, whose core members later formed the NNSS, was supported by Zhang Xueliang, and it held its meetings in the Liaoning Chamber of Commerce building.⁴² Their aim was to “seek China’s freedom and equal status,” which in the Northeast meant agitating against the Japanese presence. By 1931, the group had forty-six branches. Yan also set up within the YMCA a Liaoning Anti-Opium Association, and a Liaoning Provincial Nationalist Educational Advancement Association (*Liaoningsheng guomin changshi cujinhui*), and on 5 May 1930 Yan and Che Xiangchen organized propaganda teams to publicize a declared “Anti-Opium Day.” Meanwhile, throughout 1930, the Educational Advancement Association’s speakers went out on fourteen occasions to talk about “exposing various crimes and secret plans the Japanese had for invading the Northeast,” addressing audiences estimated to be more than 21,000 people.⁴³ Yan would put these techniques to good use after 1931 when he became one of the heads of the NNSS’s propaganda section.⁴⁴ The legalization of the KMT in the Northeast after 1929 meant that the nationalist activists all became party members; Yan Baohang and his friends Lu Guangji, Che Xiangchen, Du Zhongyuan, Wang Huayi, Zhao Yushi, and Wang Zhuoran were among thirteen delegates sent to Nanjing for the KMT national conference in May 1931.⁴⁵

Lu Guangji (1894–) had an early career very similar to Yan’s. Born in 1894 in Haicheng county, he came to Shenyang at the age of fifteen and graduated from the Teacher Training College in 1918. He then taught in an SMR-zone Chinese school, but in 1919 returned to teach in Haicheng. In 1922, he attended a national YMCA meeting in Shenyang as a representative of the Fengtian educational community. Soon afterward, he was dismissed from teaching for supporting student protesters, and he went to Shenyang, where his classmate Yan Baohang used his influence with Zhang Xueliang to obtain Lu a job as a schools inspector. In this capacity, Lu attended a conference on “education for national salvation” in Changsha in 1925, although the plans he brought back for educational

reform in the Northeast were never put into practice because of the outbreak of Guo Songling's rebellion. In 1926, Lu left education for business, obtaining a job as manager at a local printing firm. By 1929, he had been elected deputy head of the Fengtian Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁶ He frequently met Zhang Xueliang, who liked to make use of the Chamber to organize anti-Japanese protests that he could not officially be seen to be involved with, and was also heavily involved with the Foreign Affairs and Anti-Opium Associations.

One activist with specialized talents was Chen Xianzhou (1895–1969). Born in Huanren county, Fengtian, Chen's family, who were handicraft manufacturers, went bankrupt during the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War, and he had to move in with relatives, who paid for his education. Chen entered Huanren Teacher Training College in 1915, where he learned Japanese. In 1919, he won a scholarship to Sendai Industrial College, where he studied electrical engineering and also became active in Chinese overseas student groups agitating for the return of Port Arthur and Dairen to China. He graduated in 1924, and was employed by the Shenyang municipal administration to negotiate with the Japanese on the building of a new tram line. He managed to have it built in a year for less than 2 million yuan, and in 1927 was asked to perform the same service in Harbin. Under Zhang Xueliang's administration, Chen was given permission to restructure the Northeast's telecommunications and broadcasting network. To the one previously existing transmitter, in the Imperial Palace in Shenyang, Chen added another twelve, including ones in Harbin, Qiqihaer, Yingkou, and Changchun. After the Manchurian Incident, Chen became a committee member of the NNSS in Beiping and advised resistance armies on the techniques of operating field radios.⁴⁷

Du Zhongyuan (1897–1943) was born in Huaide county, then located in Fengtian but now in Jilin. He came from a poor village family, but local elite members helped to pay for his education, and in 1911 he passed entrance examinations for the Fengtian Provincial Teacher Training College, where he studied science and foreign languages, including English and Japanese. In 1915, he returned to Huaide, where he became an English teacher. However, he developed an interest in the porcelain industry, and noting that it was dominated in the Northeast by the Japanese, he decided to start up a Chinese firm that could break into the market. To train for this enterprise, he attended the Tokyo Industrial College from 1917 to 1923, after which he returned to the Northeast and set up a porcelain manufacturing firm in Shenyang with the help of loans from friends. In 1929, Zhang Xueliang authorized a loan of 120,000 yuan from the Border Industrial Bank to support the factory. Du became a

prominent local figure, being elected deputy chairman of the Liaoning Chamber of Commerce in 1927 and chairman in 1929.⁴⁸

Du's time in Japan had been spent largely in the company of other Chinese overseas students, and this heightened his developing ideas on nationalism. In 1923, Du led a group of 29 Chinese students who returned to Fengtian to protest to Zhang Zuolin's government about continuing Japanese control of the Kwantung Leased Territory. Denied entry to Shenyang by Wang Yongjiang, then the city's mayor, the petitioners went instead to Beijing, where they were granted access to president Li Yuanhong, who listened to their case but was unable to act. Du then showed the flair for publicity that would stand him in good stead during his time as head of external propaganda for the NNSS. He briefed the press on their petition (a relatively new form of lobbying in the early 1920s), moved on to organize a demonstration at Beijing University, then went to Tianjin and drew large crowds for his public speeches; some of the crowds ended up attacking Japanese factories in response to Du's words. Du then returned to Japan to finish his course.⁴⁹ Du became friends during the 1920s with Yan Baohang, Lu Guangji, and the other nationalists who formed a circle around Zhang Xueliang. In 1930, on a visit to Shanghai, he made the connection that would prove to be most crucial from 1931 to 1933 when the NNSS was operating. Du had originally made the trip to solicit capital for the porcelain factory, without much success, but he also met Zou Taofen, editor of the popular magazine *Shenghuo zhounkan* (Life Weekly), for which he started writing regular articles, giving him his first base in the popular media.

Che Xiangchen (1898–1971) was from Faku county, Fengtian, the son of a local elite family: his father was a scholar and local philanthropist. Che started attending the Beijing University extension school in 1918 and became caught up in political activities, taking part in the street demonstrations around 4 May 1919. After Beijing University, he studied at Zhongguo University and wrote a thesis in 1923 entitled “Breaking Down Superstition” (a theme popular with those involved in KMT politics). He also helped set up a night school at the university, and after graduation, took this idea to the Shenyang YMCA, where Yan Baohang, who was then general secretary, encouraged him to develop it and helped Che establish schools for delinquent and disadvantaged children. In September 1928, Che set up a Fengtian Association for the Encouragement of Popular Education; by July 1929 it had sponsored 41 schools in cities with 1,700 students, and over 200 rural schools with 7,000 students.⁵⁰ Che, together with Yan Baohang and Zhang Xiluan, also organized the

Liaoning Association for the Encouragement of Nationalist Education, which encouraged high school and university students to go out to public places on holidays and spread nationalist propaganda.⁵¹

Wang Huayi (1899–1965) was born in Liaozhong county, Fengtian. Although his father was a poor farmer, his grandfather had been a local teacher, and it was to his grandparents' family that Wang was sent to live at the age of ten when his family was unable to pay for his education. He eventually passed into the Fengtian Teacher Training College in 1916, which allowed him to study without paying fees and also provided him with board. Wang graduated in 1921. At the college, one of his fellow students had been Yan Baohang, who introduced Wang to the YMCA and involved him in his activities for the promotion of education. In addition, at the YMCA he became friendly with Zhang Xueliang, who had proved an enthusiastic participant in the organization's social and cultural activities. Wang took up office in the Liaoning Education Association and broadened his horizons with a period of study in Shanghai in 1926. His close association with Zhang Xueliang paid off after 1928, when he was made deputy head of the Liaoning Education Department, where he enthusiastically pursued his brief of educational reform.

Wang Zhuoran (1893–1967?) was born in Fushun county, Fengtian, in 1893, in a farming village. However, he was able to attend teacher training colleges in Beijing and Shenyang from 1918, where he met Yan, Du, Lu, Wang Huayi, and other activists at the YMCA. From 1923–28, he studied at Columbia University in New York, where he held a scholarship, and traveled in England, returning to Shenyang in 1928. He became tutor to Zhang Xueliang's children and was active in the Northeastern Nationalist Foreign Affairs Association.⁵²

The dominance of a Liaoning, and specifically Shenyang-based, core meant that nationalist activism was primarily a localized and urban phenomenon in the Northeast. This is reflected in the relative ease with which the Japanese managed to co-opt local elites in the aftermath of their occupation of 1931. Nonetheless, the common experience of this group provided a preexisting and well-defined core of individuals who would agitate for the military recapture of the Northeast after 1931.

ALIENATED CIVILIANS

It is sometimes asked why Zhang Xueliang's control of the Northeast was so easily destroyed. Perhaps it is more illuminating to ask who had any vested interest in its continuation. I have mentioned

the nationalist activists who had firmly tied their fortunes to Zhang, but this group, urban, educated, and politically aligned, was exceptional. The elites at county level and below felt little loyalty to Zhang, and the provincial elites who had sent members to the assemblies that were later dissolved were actively prejudiced against the Zhangs.

Zhang Zuolin's administration was characterized by large amounts of military spending and frequent campaigns. Between 1922 and 1924, Zhang took part in the Fengtian-Zhili Wars. The prudent financial management of Zhang's finance minister, Wang Yongjiang, meant that even in 1923 the budget could cope with this, although some 50 percent of revenue went for military spending; Fengtian's revenue was 26.8 million yuan, with expenditure at 18.2 million yuan, of which 13.9 million, around 76 percent, went to the military, as opposed to 3 percent spent on education.⁵³ But by 1925, Fengtian's income was only 23 million yuan, yet military spending had risen to 51 million.⁵⁴ Zhang Zuolin attempted to deal with this by printing money, which sent inflation rocketing. On 1 March 1927 there were 6.71 Fengtian dollars to one Japanese gold yen, but by February 1928 this had fallen to 40 dollars to the yen.⁵⁵ "Chang Tso-lin," notes Ronald Suleski, "drained the provincial economy in order to pay his troops fighting in China proper."⁵⁶

Local civilian elite members became ever more resentful of the combination of increased military spending and rising inflation. In addition, Zhang sought to silence their complaints by neutralizing the region's provincial assemblies. Although the assemblies continued to meet, they had little power and were frequently overruled.⁵⁷ Zhang Zuolin had insisted on Wang Yongjiang raising ever greater amounts of revenue for his wars of conquest. Although disruption and lack of order in the region had meant that Manchuria had always been taxed at a relatively low level, the *rates* of increases in taxation in the 1920s were still very steep. The land tax had increased from 8 yuan per *shang* in 1922 to 100 yuan per *shang* in 1928, which meant a rise from 3–4 percent of total crops to 25–28 percent.⁵⁸ Arthur Waldron suggests that the collapse of finances in Beijing after the 1924 Fengtian-Zhili War destroyed faith in the government among the "still-nascent middle classes."⁵⁹ The war caused similar economic chaos in the Northeast. Inflation led to businesses closing and high unemployment: an investigation by the Shenyang Chamber of Commerce in February 1928 showed that in total, "5,089 businesses were forced to close, among them 456 sundry goods shops, 416 restaurants, 165 factories, 157 machine shops, 142 rice shops, 116 foreign goods stores, and 83 general stores."⁶⁰

Zhang Xueliang's rhetoric on assuming power promised changes, including "the development of industry and commerce," "the pursuit of education," and "utmost efforts to maintain peace."⁶¹ However, the figures suggest that the pattern of spending under his rule did not greatly alter. Total regional expenditure in 1930 was 144.2 million yuan, of which 98.6 million went on the army (68.3 percent), as opposed to 4.7 million on education (3.26 percent) and .34 million on construction projects (.24 percent). The regional revenue from taxes and other governmental income such as fines was 122 million yuan, which meant a 22 million yuan deficit. Only 8.3 million yuan (6.8 percent) of this was from direct taxation (mostly land tax), with the salt gabelle proving the most lucrative source of revenue at 45.9 million (37.3 percent). The Japanese noted after their occupation that "if so large an amount were not spent for military purposes, the finance of the Three Eastern Provinces would show a good surplus."⁶²

Having said that, the taxation system existing before 1931 was heavily criticized for its arbitrariness and complexity. According to the Japanese-produced *Manchurian Year Book*, "Prior to the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident there were great varieties of taxes and in Fengtien Province there were 47 taxation items and 18 kinds of taxes, in Kirin Province 41 taxation items and 14 kinds of taxes, and in Heilungkiang Province 67 taxation items and 19 kinds of taxes."⁶³ Also adding to the potential for abuse was the diffusion of taxing authority; thus the land tax and deed tax were to be collected by the magistrate, but cattle taxes were contracted out to individual tax farmers. Tax offices and police stations collected yet other taxes. The collecting agencies and individuals also demanded a proportion of the income for themselves as payment for their services.⁶⁴

Many of the civilians who had served in Zhang Zuolin's government became disillusioned with the rule of the militarists, and they felt uneasy about Zhang Xueliang's alliance with Nanjing for the same reason: they regarded Chiang Kaishek as nothing more than another warlord. There was a long tradition of elite contact with Japan in the region, and many of those elites saw Japan as the rational alternative for an alliance. Yu Chonghan, who had in effect been foreign minister to Zhang until his resignation in 1927, had had a long relationship with the Japanese. During the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War, he was a spy for Japan, and he remained in close contact with Tokyo during his career as an official in Beijing and the Northeast. Chen Xinbo, an adviser to Yang Yuting, was a former senior legal adviser to Zhang Zuolin. However, he also had long-standing connections with Japan, having worked as a schoolteacher in Dairen (part of the Kwantung Leased Territory), and then

studied at Meiji University, where he qualified in law.⁶⁵ Yuan Jinkai, former minister of civil affairs for Zhang Zuolin, was “a mentor figure to the civilian clique” in the 1920s.⁶⁶ Born in Liaoyang county in the 1870s, he was a scholar who had gone on to become head of the conservative faction in the joint provincial assembly.⁶⁷ However, after Zhang Xueliang had come to power, he was, in the words of a Japanese report, “demoted by the ‘new faction’ and completely lost his power. He was exalted to being a member of the Northeastern Governmental Affairs Committee [*Dongbei zhengwu weiyuanhui*: the highest political body in the Northeast after 1928] and a committee member in the Nanjing Government’s Control Yuan, but from the start he was treated as a relic of the past [*kotto*].” As a result, he became disillusioned with Zhang Xueliang and “moved up into this independence movement.”⁶⁸ Prominent people like Yuan, and others less famous but equally resentful, were waiting for an opportunity to regain the influence they had lost. For many, the Japanese occupation proved to be that opportunity.

LIAONING VERSUS JILIN

In addition to the social and ideological divisions mentioned above, there were also regional divisions in the Northeast that exacerbated problems. The Jilinese elites had always resented their domination by Fengtian. In 1919, during the struggle for control between power brokers that marked the early Republic in the Northeast, Jilin leader Meng Enyuan suggested that it might be preferable to be ruled by the Japanese rather than by Zhang, a sentiment that should be kept in mind when judging the swiftness with which Jilin separated itself from the rule of Zhang Xueliang after the Japanese occupation of 1931. In 1923, a “Jilin Independence Movement” formed, which contained “disaffected members of the local elite of officials, gentry and merchants who enjoyed strong support among local groups, including coal miners.” However, it is difficult to know just how popular this movement was, as estimates of its membership vary wildly between 2,500 and 15,000. Throughout the 1920s, attempts by Jilinners to assert themselves were suppressed. The establishment of a joint provincial assembly in which Fengtian was dominant displeased the Jilin elites, leading Zhang Zuolin to declare that they might choose their own governor. However, their choice, the Jilin separatist Yu Yuanpu, was promptly disallowed.⁶⁹

Under Zhang Xueliang, Jilin did not gain much influence. The Northeastern Governmental Affairs Committee set up as a supreme

body for the region in 1928 was dominated by Fengtian; even the governor of Jilin, Zhang Zuoxiang, was Fengtianese and a corrupt old ally of Zhang Zuolin's to boot.⁷⁰ Yet paradoxically, Zhang's control over the other provinces was tenuous below the level of the highest appointments. In 1930, when Zhang Xueliang made a report to the KMT conference on the Northeast, supposedly in his capacity as ruler of the Three Eastern Provinces, he prefaced his remarks about finances with the comment "I can't give detailed explanations about Jilin and Heilongjiang, so I'll talk specifically about Liaoning."⁷¹ (Fengtian was renamed Liaoning between 1929 and 1931; the Japanese changed the name back after the occupation.) Regional resources were mostly spent in Liaoning, leading to much lower standards of communications, education, and public order in Jilin and Heilongjiang, which in turn alienated the more remote provinces yet further from the regional government in Shenyang and left them unimpressed by the call of nationalism and their central government thousands of miles away in Jiangsu. This was despite the fact that Zhang Xueliang's report to the KMT Congress in 1930 stated that while Liaoning and Heilongjiang were in deficit, Jilin was running a surplus, suggesting that revenues from Jilin were subsidizing spending in the other two provinces.⁷² Heilongjiang, with a much smaller population and much weaker provincial identity, as well as less stable finances, did not harbor such strong feelings against Liaoning.⁷³

THE BANDIT TRADITION

Banditry was a long-standing and integral part of life in the Northeast, a frontier area settled by exiles and the destitute, and an understanding of the phenomenon is crucial to any analysis of the region's society. It is important to have one thought in mind in particular when considering the outlaws' origins and operations: bandits were violent. They might be co-opted by local elites and they might in some cases be relied on to redress injustice (although the interpretation of "social banditry" does not explain the majority of bandit behavior). But in the last resort, bandits were "people who [had] come together to deprive other people of property by violence or the threat of violence."⁷⁴ It was their expertise with the exercise of violence that would make them so useful to both sides after the Manchurian crisis broke out in 1931.

For centuries, the Manchus attempted to keep their homelands separate from the rest of China, and it was only in the early to mid-nineteenth century that large-scale Sinicization began. The nature of the immigrants

to the Northeast defined the society that developed there. Exiled officials and land-hungry peasants knew that they could expect a hard and demanding life, but one relatively free from official supervision, at least compared to life in China south of the Wall.⁷⁵ By the late Qing, Manchuria was, for the most part, no longer the wilderness that it had been forty years earlier. But the traditions of banditry and outlawry were never far below the surface, not least because the government had found that the simplest way to assimilate the region into the polity was to declare local structures of government—run by local power brokers who were often bandits—to be legitimate.⁷⁶ Between 1885 and 1907, reforms of the administrative and military structures of the Northeast were set in motion by the Qing court, with added urgency after the Boxer rebellion. Yet by 1919, only seven battalions in Fengtian, one in Jilin, and none in Heilongjiang had been retrained according to the New Army regulations.⁷⁷ There grew up a system of local defense based on militias, as elsewhere in China. However, the indistinct boundary between the heterodox and orthodox spheres existed in the context of the militias also.

Who co-opted bandits, and how did they do it? Local magistrates were charged with maintenance of local order, and would be penalized for having too many bandits in their districts. This left them several options. The hardest was eliminating bandit groups, which involved expenditure and personnel. Easiest of all was simply not to report bandit raids, but this would not work if bandit activity became too great. It was sometimes possible to push bandits into another magistrate's jurisdiction. However, "cooptation was a favorite bandit pacification strategy."⁷⁸ The evaluation of county magistrates rested on their performance in collecting tax revenues. They were often found to be "appropriating vast revenues to raise men in the name of suppression, then taking the easy way out by enrolling the bandits as soldiers."⁷⁹

The Republic saw a more fluid relationship developing between soldiers and bandits, not just in the Northeast but all over China. Diana Lary and R. G. Tiedemann both conclude that the 1911 revolution and the social breakdown following the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 contributed to this transformation. The late Qing had seen a growing militarization and increase in the number of soldiers. This led to a breakdown in central authority in the early Republic and reduced the amount of control that could prevent soldiers moving between a military life and one of banditry. It has also been noted that between 1895 and 1932 there were no external enemies for the Chinese armies to fight. This meant that the recruits' attention was turned inward instead, and their tasks of internal

pacification could and did turn into depredations on the ordinary people.⁸⁰ “Soldier banditry [*bingfei*]” emerged in North China: as Tiedemann notes, “The term ‘soldier bandits’ refers to large militarized collectivities which, as a result of frequent warlord strife, alternated between regular army service and banditry in a vicious cycle of recruitment, desertion, disbandment and reenlistment.”⁸¹ Warlord armies actively recruited from among the Shandong bandits, for instance, and soldier-bandit chiefs such as Sun Tieying and Liu Guitang alternated “frequently between brigandage and government service.”⁸² In Manchuria, by the 1920s the huge buildup of the armed forces by Zhang Zuolin meant that discharges led to an increase in banditry. In his report to the KMT National Congress in December 1930, Zhang Xueliang talked about his attempt to cut the size of the military: “Only three or four thousand men were dismissed, but the Northeast’s banditry crisis then flared up. Most of the bandit chiefs are former military officers—let’s not beat about the bush—and they have a deep knowledge of how the military works, so bandit extermination is no easy task.”⁸³

It was not just Chinese officialdom that was prepared to make its peace with the bandits. From the late Qing onward, bandits became a tool in the Japanese campaign to establish a permanent presence in the region. After the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War, Japanese agents were sent to cooperate with the local militarists and bandits in forming a “Manchurian volunteer force” and “East Asian volunteer force” (*Manzhou yiyongjun* and *Dongya yiyongjun*); *yiyongjun* was the word later used to label the anti-Japanese resistance forces that would emerge after September 1931.⁸⁴ Zhang Zuolin, for example, served first with the Russian and then the Japanese volunteers (*yiyun*) during the 1904–05 war. Throughout the Republican period, the Japanese maintained political officers, as well as adventurers (*tairiku gōrō*: lit., “mainland gangster”) acting semiofficially, who would don Chinese clothing and serve with the bandits. Two examples were Date Junnosuke (known as Zhang Zonghuan) and Matsumoto Yōnosuke (known as Xiao Tianlong), who received the protection of the Japanese military and were encouraged to carry out raids that would give the Japanese further excuse to increase their influence in the region: according to Phil Billingsley, “Matsumoto’s usefulness seems to have lain in nothing more than causing trouble by kidnapping travelers, seducing women, and so on.” In the areas bordering the Kwantung Leased Territory, the number of bandit incidents (according to Chinese reports) rose from 9 in 1906 to 368 in 1929 to 1,600 in the last quarter of 1931 alone. Thus by 1931, there was a history of some

decades' standing of bandit cooperation with the Japanese. This influence was used at least once to bolster the Manchukuo regime after 1931. Kohinata Hakurō, known as Shang Xudong or Xiao Bailong, was so well-disguised that he remained a well-known "Chinese" bandit even after the occupation. In spring 1933, he negotiated with the Kwantung Army for volunteers in southern Manchuria, where his influence was strong, to migrate south of the Great Wall.⁸⁵

Foreign Relations

JAPAN'S PRESENCE IN THE NORTHEAST

Since the late nineteenth century, Japan had had a close relationship with the Northeast, and in particular, with the southern part. At the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, the Kwantung peninsula was ceded by Russia to Japan, which set up a Leased Territory around the port of Dairen (Dalian), with the Kwantung Army stationed on its territory. Other parts of southern Manchuria adjacent to the Kwantung Leased Territory also came under Japanese control. In this case, they became the base for the South Manchurian Railway (SMR). The railway was the project of Baron Gotō Shimpei, who had been a senior colonial official in Taiwan and who now cherished the idea of using the development of a railway network as a means of extending Japanese influence in the area.

The SMR was the most visible manifestation of the Japanese presence in Manchuria during the first two and a half decades of the century. It is therefore important to understand the image of itself and of Japanese influence that the company conveyed. For a start, despite his experiences in Taiwan, Gotō was at pains to stress that the railway was not meant to symbolize a colonial relationship between Japan and the Northeast; he stated that he did not intend "to treat South Manchuria as I [did] Formosa."⁸⁶ Gotō had even been to visit senior local officials to reassure them of the SMR's good faith.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Japanese agencies in the Northeast were part of what has been termed an "informal empire."⁸⁸ Japan had entered the imperial game late, but its decisive victories in the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War and the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War had quickly made it into a major force in East Asia. Although some smaller acquisitions such as Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910) were fully colonized, this option was problematic in Manchuria. Fear of foreign intervention led Tokyo to forbid the Kwantung Army from formally annexing the region in 1931, and it

moved instead to set up the nominally independent “Manchukuo.”⁸⁹ Nonetheless, from 1905 onward, the SMR was inextricably associated with the military privileges that allowed the Kwantung Army to be stationed nearby to protect its interests.

The moment in 1931 when the Kwantung Army began occupation of Manchuria can be seen as part of a process that had started at the beginning of the century. This process was not, as the Chinese government would maintain at the time (and sometimes even today), a carefully coordinated plan for invasion by degrees; the actual act of occupation precipitated by Kwantung Army officers Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishirō was not approved by the General Command in Tokyo or the liberal Wakatsuki cabinet. However, Japanese military, cultural, and economic bodies in the region had created an atmosphere that promoted acquiescence for the occupation, both in terms of increasing the Japanese conviction that Japan had special rights and responsibilities in the region, and in transmitting some elements of that conviction to certain sectors in Manchurian Chinese society, allowing collaboration to emerge. In the next section I will examine two institutions that contributed to developing that atmosphere, the South Manchurian Railway and the influential Shenyang daily newspaper *Shengjing shibao*.

THE SOUTH MANCHURIAN RAILWAY

Between its foundation in 1907 and the Manchurian Incident of 1931, the SMR developed rapidly and became increasingly profitable. It ran 700 miles of track in total, divided between five lines. In addition, it had rights over land “attached” to the lines, which encompassed 105 cities and towns of various sizes.⁹⁰ The SMR’s control over these zones meant that they provided not just railway services but also administration and social services. By autumn 1924, “the company had expanded its workforce to 37,685 . . . nearly three-quarters of this workforce were local Chinese.”⁹¹ It also provided expensive facilities such as “the well-equipped hospitals in such centers as Mukden, Tieling, Ch’ang-ch’un and Dairen.”⁹² It was also remarked upon that the railway was free of the rake-offs and *likin* (tariff) payments that characterized the areas under Chinese administration.⁹³

However, the growth of nationalism in the 1920s caused the SMR problems. In April 1924, Chinese intellectuals in Shenyang demanded that Japanese-managed educational institutions in the SMR zone be handed over to China, and in August 1925 students at the SMR Medical

College walked out in protest at the unequal treaties.⁹⁴ Nonetheless, it should be noted that, as the experience of Qian Gonglai, Yan Baohang, and others showed, nationalism in 1920s Manchuria was always more successful among the urban, educated elites, who were relatively few in number, than among the population at large. Resentment against the Japanese even among the elites did not necessarily last. One should also note that a decade later, when the occupation was complete, not only did the proportion of Chinese students from Manchuria studying in Japan between 1934 and 1937 increase “considerably,” but so did the number of students from the rest of China.⁹⁵ On occasion, there were mass anti-Japanese demonstrations, such as the protest in September 1927 in Shenyang against the building of a new Japanese consulate in the Linjiang area, which drew 60,000 people.⁹⁶ However, even here the interpretation is not simple. From August 1927, Zhang Zuolin began orchestrating supposedly spontaneous demonstrations against further Japanese development in the region. His reasoning was that he could then claim that although he himself did not wish to stop any Japanese projects, the popular will would not permit them.⁹⁷ One contemporary author (one biased against the Chinese, it should be noted) sniffed that the Linjiang event was “plainly engineered by the Chinese authorities.”⁹⁸

Chong-sik Lee notes, “The living conditions among the Chinese population in the Kwantung Leased Territory were much better than those in China proper, and this was true throughout the region”: a combination of better conditions than in intramural China and the lure of Japanese-sponsored industrial and mining employment, he suggests, led to the large influx of immigrants to the region.⁹⁹ The Japanese made use of the newly available labor force, deliberately operating a development strategy that required the hiring of large amounts of unskilled Chinese labor, despite the modern equipment used.¹⁰⁰ This was in large part because of a reluctance to create large-scale unemployment, since the employees were simultaneously consumers of Japanese goods.¹⁰¹ Also, while the working conditions of manual laborers in Japanese employment were poor by contemporary standards, they were not necessarily worse and were possibly better than those endured by factory workers in Japan itself, such as in the example of women aged twelve to thirty-five who worked in the silk factories of Nagano, where the mortality rate, exacerbated by lung disease, was 23 per 1,000 (as opposed to the normal 7 per 1,000 for this age group).¹⁰²

The tactics pursued by the SMR were part of a strategy to secure Japan’s position in the region; they were often managed by leftist

employees, who mixed uneasily with the Kwantung Army officers who reflected a side of the imperial presence many of the progressive-minded Japanese preferred to forget. The SMR was to “manage a wide range of cultural and administrative activities of a nonthreatening nature,” which would serve “to gain a foothold in southern Manchuria that appeared neither to threaten imperial China nor to alarm the foreign powers, yet gave Japan the capability to strengthen its security.”¹⁰³ While the Chinese population of Manchuria had doubled between 1908 and 1928, the population of the SMR zone had increased sixteen times. The reason offered by one commentator was that taxes were light and not arbitrary and social conditions were good. All this had to be paid for, and the SMR was able to use its resources to pay for services in the railway zone “to make up for excess expenditure over tax revenue.”¹⁰⁴ Nor was it only urban areas that saw growth under the Japanese administration. A survey comparing agricultural growth rates in the Japanese-run Liaodong peninsula and Shandong-Hebei between 1906 and 1942 concludes, “Japanese administration of Liaotung, while naturally considering Japanese influences first, still effectively preserved order, peace, and protection of Chinese property and human lives . . . The important land survey and land tax reform provided additional security for the property holder and made land transactions more convenient and profitable.” The result was farm production that grew at a rate far higher than the population growth, as well as higher crop yields.¹⁰⁵

THE SHENGJING SHIBAO

Another aspect of the Japanese presence in the Northeast was the Japanese-controlled press. It is noteworthy that newspaper circulation figures among the northeastern readership suggest that nationalism may not have been all-pervasive in the 1920s. In 1926, the pro-KMT newspaper in the Northeast, the *Dongsansheng minbao*, despite being the second most popular in the region, had only 8,000 readers, as compared to 30,000 for the top-placed *Shengjing shibao*.¹⁰⁶ The *Shibao*, edited by Kikuchi Teiji, was Japanese-owned, but its writers and distribution staff were mostly Chinese. Why would Chinese readers favor such a paper?

In chapters 5 and 6, I suggest that the popularity of anti-Japanese newspapers in Beiping and Shanghai after 1931 was due in part to their understanding and responding to the feelings of their readers. The same would appear to be true of the *Shengjing shibao*. It is clear that the news-

paper was very far from being a crude propaganda organ for the Japanese presence in the region, yet it offered analysis that resonated with its readers' desire for stability while undermining Zhang Xueliang's government and its association with continuing militarism. Naturally, sympathy with a newspaper's editorial stance is very far from being the only reason why a reader might favor it, but there does tend to be a correlation (although by no means a direct equivalence) between the views of a publication and those of its readership, particularly when, as in the Northeast, there was a choice of newspapers.

One editorial titled "Can we hope for peace in the current situation?" analyzed a lull in the 1930 civil war, when Chiang Kaishek was under threat from the alliance of Yan Xishan and Feng Yuxiang, and both sides hoped to draw in Zhang Xueliang:

Northeastern leader Zhang . . . has repeatedly proclaimed his neutrality and urged peace, and has taken on responsibility for mediation . . . Both sides are agreed on the *need* for peace, but that's something inevitable. Even if one side *advocates* peace, they do not necessarily *desire* peace . . . To talk about this in a commonsense way, in everything there is an atmosphere first, and only then we can see the reality. For example, at the beginning of this civil war, both sides transferred their troops and sent forth their generals, and people knew the war clouds were looming; but in everyday dealings, they absolutely had to deny recognition of it. The result was that the atmosphere became mother of the reality. The current atmosphere suggesting peace is likewise because of the awareness of both sides of the possibility that there may *be* peace. But in this conflict between north and south . . . the south says, "Now we are celebrating our victory in the war, and must not make peace with the north yet"; and the north then says, "We are still negotiating and organizing a government, so we are not yet happy to discuss peace with the south" . . . So where does this atmosphere come from? People are taking advantage of the fact that both sides are operating with clandestine maneuvers [as opposed to open warfare] to spread this atmosphere. However, it is a long night and a slow process, and we do not know when there will be the light of peace.¹⁰⁷

The desire for peace was a recurring one, and editorials used it to criticize the governing powers, as in the article "The Masses Hope for Peace":

Only China has had a situation where there was a revolution to get rid of the people's distress, yet because of the revolution, the people's distress was deepened further. In seventeen years, we still have to say that the revolution is not yet completed . . . The strength of the military is all-powerful, and they pay no attention to the terrible fate of the

masses . . . What people absolutely hope for is peace. But peace does not have a long-lasting nature. What is called peace is always temporary . . . So what the masses hope for is a more developed peace . . . Using the masses as its premise, it will give no pretexts to reactionaries. The government that the masses will trust is definitely not that of useless politicoes . . . Recently, we hear, Chiang Kaishek has become aware of this. On the battlefield, he has suggested to the KMT and the government that they should decide to hold a Fourth Congress, to resolve to establish a full or provisional constitution, and to convene a National People's Conference . . . But even if he does make peace, then it is still just a plan for a temporary cessation of hostilities, and the people's suffering will still be endless.¹⁰⁸

Yet the *Shibao* did not simply attack Zhang and Chiang. On occasion, it supported Chiang, although somewhat backhandedly, as in this endorsement of his anti-Communist campaign of May 1931:

Now Chairman Chiang has gone to Jiangxi . . . Chairman Chiang's involvement with this bandit extermination appears very extensive . . . [But] . . . these questions are in the minds of the 400 million people of this country . . . There is a general suspicion, saying that he is . . . calling together the 19th Army to attack and recover Guangdong . . . But *we* believe that Chairman Chiang really *is* eliminating bandits . . . To what extent can we call this elimination? This question is worth researching. In the areas where a large army has arrived, the Communist bandits went deep into the mountains. Really we cannot call this pacification. If one only roots out bandit nests in one or two places, then it seems to us that one cannot consider the matter resolved. There is no one among the masses who does not support the government. Nothing but 100 percent support; therefore we hope enthusiastically to follow politics, and to follow the life of the party, which is working on exterminating the bandits. But the requirements of politics and the lessons of history are that if a country has many troops and does not economize on its expenses, then there is no way that it can set itself on a steady path. If politics does not set itself on a steady path, then there is no way that it can stop the bandits in their tracks.¹⁰⁹

The newspaper was not above a touch of humor, even after the Manchurian Incident, in situations where it might have been frowned upon. In April 1932, Ma Zhanshan, the famous resistance fighter who had been persuaded to collaborate with the Japanese, defected again and announced that he would relaunch his campaign of resistance, making him the most wanted man in Manchukuo, bar none. On 26 April 1932, the *Shengjing shibao* ran the following headline in large type: MA ZHANSHAN ARRESTED AND HELD BY JAPANESE POLICE.¹¹⁰ One had to read the

story below it to find out, “however, this Ma Zhanshan is not the famous general, but a 37-year-old beef trader” who had been arrested for running down some passersby with his cart and injuring them. The Kwantung Army might not have taken too kindly to this sort of frivolity, but at least the newspaper’s readers were not simply being fed propaganda.

It was not only in the political sphere that the Japanese aimed to influence readers. One journal, *Dongbei wenhua* (Northeastern Culture), which was Japanese-sponsored and published in Dairen, regularly wrote about the commercial and cultural additions that the Japanese presence had brought to the region. For example: “In the center of the city of Dairen . . . there is a three-storied, iron-girdered, concrete, large modern shopping area. This is Dairen’s shopping complex, occupying 12,000 square meters . . . with more than 200 stores . . . But the [businesses] are very different from an American complex. Recently [in the United States], small underfunded stores have been oppressed by the economically powerful capitalist department-store style of management . . . [However, in Dairen], using the combined strength of the controlling body, they planned that the small retailers’ trade should be secure and prosperous, . . . [and] each stockholder manages a store.”¹¹¹ Louise Young has pointed out the close relationship between modernity and imperialism in the Japanese political culture of the early twentieth century; this extract from *Dongbei wenhua* reflects the fact that even a seemingly neutral topic such as a shopping complex could be used to score political points in the cultural sphere of the imperial project.¹¹²

OTHER JAPANESE COMMUNITIES IN MANCHURIA

There were other groups of Japanese who lived in Northeast China in the early twentieth century. Right up until 1931, the Kwantung Army remained small, with only just over 10,000 men.¹¹³ The main stream of thought in the army was that Manchuria would have to be annexed and placed under direct Japanese control.¹¹⁴ This ran at odds with the thoughts of many Japanese settlers in Manchuria, typified by the Manchurian Youth League (*Manshū seinen renmei*), set up in 1928. The League aimed to deal with the threat of growing Chinese nationalism by advocating a loosening of ties with Japan and support for Zhang Xueliang, encouraging the formation of a separate state in Manchuria.¹¹⁵ Despite their disparity when it came to means, however, both groups were very concerned at the prospect that their special

position in the Northeast would fall victim to growing antiforeign feeling. This nationalist sentiment on the Chinese side was articulated by the likes of Yan Baohang and other activists and groups surrounding Zhang Xueliang. Although, as noted above, this phenomenon was primarily urban and Liaoning-centered, it was precisely in these places that the Japanese expatriates were most likely to be found; the SMR zone was, as its name suggested, in the southern part of the region where the urban, educated sections of the Manchurian Chinese population most likely to be receptive to emerging modern ideas of nationalism were located.

Both the army and the settlers aspired to set up a Japanese-controlled Manchuria that would make use of the existing Chinese local government structures. The catalyst to their hopes came after 1929, with the arrival of two junior Japanese officers in the Kwantung Army, Ishiwara Kanji and Itagaki Seishirō. Inspired by Nichiren Buddhism and pan-Asianism, they rejected the orthodoxy of the General Headquarters in Tokyo and planned a coup that would sever the Northeast's association with Nanjing. Ishiwara also advocated that Japan should take over northern Manchuria, even though it had not had any historical presence there.¹¹⁶ The two officers engineered the Manchurian Incident on 18 September 1931, which gave them the chance to put their ideas into practice.

THE USSR AND THE CER INCIDENT

The Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) was the main trunk route for northern Manchuria, the equivalent of the SMR in the south, although without the latter's extensive social and political role. Originally built as a joint venture between the Qing and the Russians, shared responsibility for it was taken on by the successor governments of the Chinese Republic and the Soviet Union. The CER's hub was in Harbin, with routes running east to Suifenhe, west to Manzhouli, and south to Changchun. To ease the railway administration's task, Harbin was made an autonomous Special Zone, separate from the other provinces. Beginning in 1914, a treaty agreement operated that gave the Russians assigned places on Harbin's municipal council.¹¹⁷ A treaty signed in 1924 formalized the sharing of railway rights and responsibilities between the USSR and China, a matter that would come to have significance in the wake of the Japanese occupation eight years later.¹¹⁸

Between 1925 and 1927, however, Zhang Zuolin engaged in a string of provocations intended to remove all Soviet influence from the railway.

In 1927, a compromise agreement was reached, but it was an uneasy truce rather than a comprehensive settlement.¹¹⁹ In 1929, the authorities in the Northeast tried to remove Soviet influence from the CER and seize all rights to the railway themselves. These actions provoked the USSR into military retaliation. Although this caused the Soviets some political embarrassment, as they were widely perceived as behaving like the imperialist powers they had always denounced, in military terms they won a convincing victory.¹²⁰

CCP-influenced accounts of why the CER Incident of 1929 took place downplay the role of Zhang Xueliang (treated as a hero for his later abduction of Chiang Kaishek during the 1936 Xi'an Incident) and stress the provocative actions of Zhang Jinghui, the governor of the Special Zone (who later collaborated with the Japanese). Zhang Jinghui had shared Zhang Zuolin's fierce anti-Communism in the latter's final days; furthermore, Harbin had a large international trading community and a large White Russian population, so that its newspapers were always filled with stories about the Soviet menace. Therefore he may well have intended to goad the Soviets.

But Zhang Xueliang and Chiang Kaishek were also worried at the Communist propaganda activities carried on by local Soviet consulates under the cover of diplomatic activity.¹²¹ (All Soviet consulates in South China had already been closed by Chiang after the Canton uprising of 1927.)¹²² Therefore, the first moves against the Soviets employed by the CER came with Zhang Xueliang's approval. On 9 January 1929, reported George Hanson, the U.S. consul in Harbin, "the Soviet officials received a shock when the local Chinese authorities, acting on instructions from Mukden, took over by force and without compensation the city's telephone system which had been installed at an expense of over local \$1,000,000 and managed by the Chinese Eastern Railway."¹²³ Over the next two months, Zhang Xueliang replied aggressively to the Soviet protests. When Melnikov, the Soviet consul in Harbin, accused the Harbin authorities of having violated Chinese-Soviet treaties by the seizure, Zhang replied that "the agreements only related to the railway and not to telephones," and that "the Chinese only resorted to this action to prevent impairment of its [*sic*] sovereignty."¹²⁴ M. S. Myers, the U.S. consul in Shenyang, had no doubt that the northeastern authorities had the aim of taking over the railway.

At the end of May 1929, Zhang Jinghui, using as a pretext the fact that the Soviet consul in Harbin was holding a propaganda conference, surrounded the consulate and arrested thirty-nine of its employees, including

CER officials, trade delegates, and coal and oil dealers. The Chinese demanded that the number of Soviet CER representatives be reduced and that the Soviets stop spreading Communism in the region. The Soviets demanded that their prisoners be freed. Negotiations to resolve this "CER Incident" went on throughout June and July. While the incident continued to occupy Zhang and the northeasterners, the American consul in Nanjing noted "a surprising slackness of public interest at Nanking concerning [the] Manchurian crisis. Chinese officials here appear unperturbed."¹²⁵ Even an international conflict such as the CER Incident registered as only a regional problem. Three years later, during a more serious "Manchurian crisis," it would be necessary for northeastern propagandists to provoke some who shared a "surprising slackness of public interest" at the Japanese occupation into treating it as a matter of national concern.

Troops built up as negotiations went on through summer and autumn, and fighting finally broke out in the autumn. Once provoked, the Soviets were prepared to use harsh tactics to get their way, in particular, air raids on strategic targets. On 9 September, the Suifenhe railway station was destroyed; "casualties estimated at from 30 to 100," declared Hanson. "Town in panic." On 18 November, the railway line "between Tsagan . . . and Chalainor" in northern Heilongjiang was bombed and communications cut off. And on 20 November, reported Myers, "according to confidential information received from official source, Chinese lost 2,000 men killed up to yesterday on the western front. Twenty-seven Soviet aircraft are reported to have dropped more than 300 bombs which did much damage."¹²⁶

The Soviets, meanwhile, attempted to negotiate a settlement of the dispute. Zhang and the northeasterners, realizing that they had taken on too large a proposition, were keen to end the conflict, but Nanjing delayed and nitpicked at the provisions of the draft treaty proposed by the Soviets. The German Foreign Ministry had been asked to mediate between the two sides, and felt that Nanjing's "evasive answer . . . shows that Nanking is much less concerned with an early settlement than is Mukden."¹²⁷ A treaty was finally agreed upon in December, one of the conditions of which was that the Soviets would pick a new head of the CER; and it was then formally signed by representatives of the USSR and Zhang at Khabarovsk on 22 December.¹²⁸

The CER Incident had shown that relations between the USSR and China were uneasy at best. Zhang Xueliang's Northeastern Army had not distinguished itself in battle, as its thorough defeat showed. This experience may have contributed to Zhang's reluctance to fight the Japa-

nese in 1931. The Soviets' willingness to fight in this instance later acted as a temporary deterrent to Japan's advance into northern Manchuria in 1931. It was not for some months that the Japanese realized that the action against Zhang's troops had actually been an exceptional show of strength during a period when the USSR more generally felt that it was in a weak position internationally and should avoid becoming involved in conflict.¹²⁹ While it seems unlikely that Nanjing deliberately precipitated the Incident, officials in Nanjing may not have been unhappy that Zhang Xueliang had been shown that his power had limits; they felt the conflict "would engage his forces and bring home to him his need for support, moral if not also practical, from Nanking."¹³⁰

Zhang Xueliang's Relations with Chiang Kaishek

NEGOTIATING AN ALLIANCE WITH NANJING

In the spring of 1928, Zhang Xueliang and Chiang Kaishek both had powerful motivations for forming an alliance. Chiang Kaishek, who wished to concentrate his forces against enemy warlords and the Communists in the south, was anxious to avoid conflict in the Northeast. Zhang Xueliang had for several years indicated that he had sympathy for the Nationalist cause. Now, in addition to being in favor of reunification, he was under pressure from rivals within Manchuria as well as from the USSR and Japan and had a host of social problems to deal with. At this point, the economy of Manchuria was still growing, placing Zhang in a stronger negotiating position, although the depression would later drive down the prices of the agricultural products on which the region depended. Nonetheless, the negotiations that led to Zhang's official declaration of assimilation into the Republic in December 1928 were not straightforward, because of the pressure from different groups that was brought to bear.

In July 1928, Chiang Kaishek's representative Kong Fanwei met Zhang Xueliang in Beiping and formally proposed that the Three Eastern Provinces come under the jurisdiction of the Nanjing government. In July a negotiation committee was set up, before which Zhang laid down the conditions under which he would accept affiliation. The principal one was that branch positions in the KMT in the region be held by northeasterners.¹³¹ While willing to support unification, Zhang

Xueliang was nonetheless aware that he was a power broker in his own right, and was anxious to prevent Nanjing interlopers from eating away at his political base.

Japanese concern about these negotiations soon became apparent. The consul in Shenyang, Hayashi Kyujirō, demanded that Zhang stick to the terms of railway agreements, highly favorable to the Japanese, previously orally arranged with Zhang Zuolin. Zhang Xueliang claimed to have no knowledge of such agreements. Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi sent a letter to Zhang offering military and financial assistance and warning him against the “communist” Nanjing government. Zhang, now worried about outside interference, announced that he would delay his affiliation to the KMT, causing Chiang in turn to send his representative Fang Benren to pressure him into a speedy declaration of alliance. On 26 July, Zhang hedged his bets by declaring loyalty to the KMT but agreeing to delay formal affiliation for three months.¹³² Yet at this point, according to Japanese diplomatic records, Zhang Xueliang was secretly encouraging the Japanese to offer him a better deal than Nanjing while telling Nanjing that the Japanese were pressuring him not to affiliate with them. Meanwhile Zhang Zuoxiang and Yang Yuting pressured Zhang to unite with Nanjing as quickly as possible. In the end, the Tanaka government decided that it was not worth attempting to make a pact with Zhang because of the boycotts this would cause to Japanese trade elsewhere, as well as the international criticism it would engender, and they broke off negotiations.¹³³

The Nanjing government continued to apply pressure throughout the autumn of 1928. The KMT gave Zhang Xueliang national status, appointing him to the Central Executive Committee on 8 October, and making him commander in chief of the Northeastern Border Defense Army on 26 November. Yet he was also warned that if he did not declare formal affiliation soon, “it would be hard to avoid the suspicion that he was insincere.”¹³⁴ Student organizations in Heilongjiang and Jilin also publicly advocated unity with the south. Zhang made various gestures to appease his detractors, such as the release of local KMT leader Qian Gonglai, who had been arrested in 1927. Finally, Zhang made his official declaration of affiliation of the region with the Nanjing government in the Fengtian Government Hall on 29 December 1928.¹³⁵ In some senses, the declaration was something of an anticlimax; for the most part, the officials of the old regime, including Zhang Zuoxiang and Wan Fulin, stayed in place, although nominally becoming KMT members. While the KMT could operate branches legally in the Northeast, Nanjing’s direct influence was

small. Nonetheless, at least Chiang and Zhang were now in alliance, although they were not to find one another reliable partners in the years to come. Myers, the U.S. consul in Shenyang, called the changes in the structure of the government in the Northeast “nominal,” and Hanson, the consul in Harbin, noted that when the KMT flag was raised at Harbin, “no particular enthusiasm over the event was expressed by the local Chinese residents,” and “as far as internal affairs are concerned, Nanking will have little voice in Manchuria matters.”¹³⁶ Meanwhile, Edwin Neville, the U.S. chargé in Tokyo, declared with regard to the alliance that “the Japanese had come to regard it as inevitable.”¹³⁷ But for the Kwantung Army, even a small voice in Manchurian affairs for Nanjing was too much. It moved farther down the path to the coup of 1931.

ZHANG XUELIANG AND THE CIVIL WAR

The civil war in North China in 1929–30 showed some of the pressures that Zhang Xueliang was under. The civilian elites in Manchuria had been alienated from the Zhang regime by the financially crippling wars of conquest of the 1920s. They now found it hard to put their faith in the new agenda professed by Zhang Xueliang, which involved improving the regional infrastructure, because of his entry into the conflict in North China between March 1929 and November 1930. Yet Chiang Kaishek’s continued mistrust of Zhang Xueliang was fueled by the latter’s continuing months of refusal to become involved in that same civil war. In this conflict, Chiang Kaishek was opposed by various forces, including Yan Xishan, Feng Yuxiang, Li Zongren, and the Reorganization and Western Hills cliques of the KMT. Zhang Xueliang was aware that both sides wanted him to enter the conflict because the forces under his command were sufficiently powerful to sway the outcome of the war.¹³⁸ At the same time, he knew that entering the war could cause his base of support in the Northeast to weaken.

On 1 March 1930, Zhang issued a telegram setting out his position of nonintervention. Nanjing continued to pressure him, appointing him Deputy Forces commander on 30 June 1930. Zhang was eventually forced into action. Yan Xishan and Wang Jingwei set up an anti-Chiang “people’s government” in Beiping on 8 September 1930. Zhang Xueliang refused to participate and sent Nanjing a telegram condemning the Beiping government. By this time, Zhang had already become convinced that he had to enter the war, as the continuing conflict had become a threat to national unity. Once he had entered, the conflict was

quickly finished and Yan's Beiping government was dissolved. Zhang Xueliang's contribution to the result led to his being feted in Nanjing. Yet Zhang's long delay in entering the conflict, as well as the speed with which the war was ended once he had entered, convinced Chiang that he was a rival who exhibited the uncomfortable combination of being unreliable and powerful. This explains some of Chiang's reluctance to commit troops to reclaim Zhang's domain in September 1931. Zhang recognized the ambiguity of his position in the civil war. When asked why he had finally decided to participate in the conflict, he said, "I had a role in reducing the people's misery." But then he added: "In truth, however, it was to maintain Chiang Kaishek's control."¹³⁹

The civil war gave sections of the elite who were against Zhang a reason to criticize him. One editorial, written after Zhang had finally entered the war and helped conclude it, interpreted his long refusal to become involved as a sign that he had merely been waiting for the right moment to strike all along. It appeared in *Dongbei wenhua*, the Japanese-sponsored Chinese periodical mentioned earlier, which had editorial views that echoed those of the *Shengjing shibao*:

When Chiang [Kaishek] and Yan [Xishan] split, each of them wished to win over Zhang of Fengtian as their ally, to use him to gain publicity for their unworthy cause. But Zhang turned them down, using the phrase, "I do not wish to take part in a civil war . . ." However, those in the know were aware early on that Zhang was watching their flank like a tiger and was not really unwilling to take part in a civil war. He "nourished his spirit and stayed alert," desiring [to gain] the profits of someone who "snatches the fish from the center of the pond."¹⁴⁰

Previous editorials in the same journal show hostility not just to Zhang Xueliang but also to militarism in general. One article, purporting to be an analysis of "the psychology of the key figures in this civil war," played on the fears of the civilian elites who had been disenfranchised and forced into unsuccessful wars by militarist rulers in the previous decade and a half. Chiang Kaishek is dismissed as a warlord:

The fact that Chiang has been attacked is entirely because of his own aggressiveness . . . Although he claims that he is reducing the number of troops he has, he in fact is expanding them . . . He desires to bring the whole nation under his military domain, submissive under his "iron hooves."¹⁴¹

Chiang was simply not to be trusted, warned the author:

With one hand, Chiang promoted Hu Hanmin and Xu Chongzhi, then drove Hu Hanmin out, then brought him back to make use of him. So-called friends and so-called enemies come together and separate on no more than a temporary [basis]. It changes unpredictably, every time going beyond what people might expect. When someone says that Chiang and Zhang can collaborate from start to finish, who can believe it?¹⁴²

They were also unconvinced by Zhang's new affiliation to the KMT:

Not only was Zhang Xueliang unconnected to the party most of the time, but wasn't he originally well-known as a mover *against* the party? There's no way to conceal the fact that Zhang cannot gain any trust within the party. Moreover, in Zhang's area of jurisdiction, the party was banned, wasn't it?¹⁴³

For those elite members who had been members of the provincial assemblies weakened by the elder Zhang, and who had lost their positions in the factional struggles as Zhang Xueliang took over, these statements had some basis in fact.

The relationship between Zhang Xueliang and Chiang Kaishek is complex here, particularly in light of the knowledge that Zhang accepted Chiang Kaishek's policy of nonresistance to the Japanese after the occupation in 1931. We may never know the full details of what went through his mind, but it is worth considering some of the assessments of his motivations made by informed observers. Nelson T. Johnson, American Minister in China, explained Zhang's long period of neutrality in the following terms:

1. Chang Hsueh-liang remembered that his father had never been able to find an ally south of the Great Wall whom he could trust;
2. He suspected Marshal Feng Yu-hsiang (the "Christian General") not only because he had been his father's enemy in 1926, but also because of his former flirtations with Soviet Russia; while Yen Hsi-shan had fought his father in 1927;
3. But he also distrusted General Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang as at present constituted, because he did not believe in the latter's policy of making the Government a party monopoly . . . besides, it was Chiang who had forced his father to retreat from Beiping in 1928;
4. He feared that if he took sides, he might cause a split among his own followers. It is well known, for example, that the influential old governor of Kirin, General Chang Tso-hsiang, was in favor of conservative neutrality; that the governor of Heilungkiang, General Wan Fu-lin, advocated supporting Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan; while a small group of younger men favored the

- Nanking Government in the hope of gaining lucrative jobs and rapid advancement;
5. Manchuria was by far the most prosperous and tranquil part of China and stood everything to lose and very little to gain by active participation in the civil war;
 6. Japan doubtless encouraged Chang's neutral policy as it would be against her interests to see Manchuria become a pawn in the senseless struggle for power between the great military groups.¹⁴⁴

This suggests that Zhang Xueliang would have been better off not entering the war at all. Yet his decision to mobilize troops and send them to Tianjin on 19 September 1930 was in part motivated by a desire to restrain Chiang Kaishek, not to help him. Various factors, according to consular reports, weighed in his mind. They included the mutiny in mid-August 1930 of a brigade of the Northeastern Army under Ma Dingfu, which, it was alleged, had been instigated by agents of Chiang Kaishek bribing Ma to come over to the Nationalist side. Chiang denied knowledge of the plot, but Zhang became wary of him. Following this, the Nationalists captured Jinan on 15 August, and "shortly afterwards Chiang Kai-shek is said to have boasted that he would be 'in Peiping in a month.'" This is supposed to have alarmed Zhang on the grounds that while he did not like Yan Xishan's Shanxi faction, he preferred them to the KMT because they were "less meddlesome." Zhang was also worried about the growth of Communism in North China, and felt that he was better equipped to control it than Chiang, who had proved ineffective at doing so in South China. Finally, Zhang wished to retain control over the Beiping-Shenyang railway, "the most efficient and most profitable of all railroads in China."¹⁴⁵

In practice, Zhang's recovery of the North Chinese territory was smooth and actually saved the anti-KMT troops from being destroyed by the Nationalist army. The level of complicity between militarist factions during this period can be seen in the way in which Zhang's officials and troops took over from Yan Xishan's; the

gradual and unobtrusive substitution of the Shansi forces and civil authorities by Mukden took place with exemplary order and discipline. Many Shansi officials remained until relieved by their successors and the whole procedure was executed with the utmost good nature and cordiality, some of the 'invaders' even being entertained by the retiring officials! . . . It is obvious, of course, that a major operation of this nature could not have been carried out so peacefully if there had not been a full and friendly understanding between Shansi and the Mukden-Kuominchun [Zhang Xueliang's] faction. But to what extent had Nanking been taken into their confidence?¹⁴⁶

Ironically, then, Zhang's intervention on behalf of the KMT in 1930 may have served to increase Chiang Kaishek's mistrust of him rather than prove his loyalty, particularly as Zhang did not intervene in the war until Chiang's victory was fairly assured. "Chiang and his advisers," wrote Johnson, "must know by now that the Young Marshal [Zhang Xueliang] may acknowledge Nanking's sovereignty so long as it suits his interests to do so, but that he will not tolerate any curtailment of the complete autonomy of the North."¹⁴⁷ Just two months later, Johnson was able to report that, at least on the surface, the two leaders were cooperating much more thoroughly, as Zhang agreed to let Nanjing take control of the salt and tobacco revenues of the Northeast and to limit his army to 150,000 men.¹⁴⁸ But old suspicions die hard, and when the Japanese occupied Manchuria less than a year later, it seems hard not to believe that among the many feelings that ran through Chiang Kaishek's mind was that of *schadenfreude*.

Reform Policies under Zhang Xueliang

In the face of the Northern Expedition (which brought Chiang Kaishek to power in 1926–28), Japanese expansion, a potential threat from the USSR, and domestic unrest, Zhang Xueliang felt that there was an urgent need for reform. In the *Guowen zhoubao* of 21 June 1928, Zhang announced that his key goals for the region were "strongly to maintain peace," "to advocate and encourage the development of industry and trade," and "to promote education."¹⁴⁹ In his report to the KMT Congress in December 1930, by which time the depression had begun to affect Manchuria's economy, Zhang stressed these goals once again while noting that he required subsidies from the central government to have any hope of carrying them out.¹⁵⁰ The following section examines some of the areas in which Zhang attempted reforms and the effects that his efforts had on politics and administration, local government, the military, the economy, and education.

POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

Although the Northeast was nominally under the control of the Nanjing government after December 1928, Zhang was anxious not to lose actual control of his fiefdom. The highest administrative body in the region was the Northeastern Governmental Affairs Committee (*Dongbei zhengwu weiyuanhui*), headed by Zhang Xueliang; this

body was supposed to come under the jurisdiction of the central government in Nanjing. However, the composition of the committee looked remarkably similar to its predecessor body in the autonomous regional government, the Northeast Peace Protection Committee. Chiang Kaishek's nominee Fang Benren was the new member, representing the central government. But the other twelve seats went to such long-standing regional figures as Wan Fulin (governor of Heilongjiang), Zhang Zuoxiang (governor of Jilin), Di Wenxuan (governor of Fengtian), and other current and former officials, some of whom would switch allegiance to the Japanese after 1931, such as Zhang Jinghui and Yuan Jinkai. Zhang had stated as a condition of his affiliation to Nanjing that northeasterners should remain in control of their own region, and on this point he obtained what he had demanded. As stated in a report by the *Shengjing shibao*'s publishers, "[The committee] was organized with the elder statesmen [*genrō*] of Zhang Zuolin's old Fengtian clique, and it is clear that it is the highest organ of government of that clique." Therefore, the report concluded, "one cannot say anything other than that Zhang Zuolin's position will be maintained even after [his death]." One criticism that had some bite to it was that the influence of Fengtian province was extremely strong: "There is just one person on the committee who comes from Heilongjiang. The cooperation of Fengtian and Jilin province in the politics of the Northeast is being maintained."¹⁵¹ In fact, even Jilin's influence was not that great; for example, the governor of Jilin, Zhang Zuoxiang, and the governor of the Special Zone, Zhang Jinghui, were both Fengtianese.

But to claim, as the *Shengjing shibao* report did, that the old Fengtian warlords and his father's policies were the primary influence on Zhang Xueliang was unfair. The assassination of Yang Yuting had been only the most extreme example of the way in which Zhang's policies had infuriated some of his father's old associates. The nationalists who advised Zhang had begun to advocate "popular consciousness and strength," as well as old slogans that had been popularized by the self-strengthening movement of the previous century, such as "a rich country and a powerful military [*fuqiao qiangbing*]."¹⁵² Zhang, in tandem with his advisers, was serious about promulgating political reforms, but the actual execution was sometimes impractical. In February 1929, for example, Liaoning passed a law forbidding officials to take bribes, which had little effect but caused resentment among senior figures for whom rake-offs were a way of life. The activists' nationalistic bent also led them to act against the Japanese, whom they saw as the greatest threat in the region. Under their influence, from June to August

1930, the Liaoning Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Agriculture and Mining, and Education each issued a “secret order to boycott the purchase of Japanese goods” and a “declaration of intent to recover authority over education in the SMR-attached areas.”¹⁵³ The increase in such activities encouraged elements in the Kwantung Army to contemplate annexation of the region before anti-Japanese action became any more serious.

However, when Zhang’s nationalist advisers’ ideas were made into official policy, their political effect was to alienate many groups. Education reforms, for instance, were more visibly effective in prestigious establishments such as Northeastern University in Fengtian, used by elite members’ children, rather than in primary education. Even spending on primary education remained concentrated in Liaoning, with Jilin and Heilongjiang at a distinct disadvantage (as the section on education below suggests).¹⁵⁴ The military reforms alarmed many of the warlords who had been more or less loyal members of Zhang Zuolin’s coterie, as they saw the reduction in troops as an attempt to destroy their power bases. The whole project alarmed the Japanese, who saw Zhang’s railway and trade proposals as a threat to their economic domination of the Northeast (as they were meant to be) and who worried that the spread of Chinese nationalist thought would lead to their eventual expulsion from the area.

CURRENCY REFORMS

In the decade leading up to the Manchurian crisis, the currency of the whole country, and not just the Northeast, was in a state of flux. Coins, ingots, and notes were all in circulation, but their value differed from region to region. In 1929, the Kemmerer Commission recommended that a currency based on the gold standard be introduced, although ironically it was in that year that the depression began, leading to the discrediting of the gold standard internationally.¹⁵⁵

The Northeast, like other regions, had many competing currencies, and the Japanese and Russians added to the complication by circulating gold yen notes and ruble notes in southern and northern Manchuria respectively from the beginning of the century. In 1920, Zhang Zuolin’s government set up the Three Eastern Provinces Bank, which aimed to issue a unified currency that would supersede the foreign currencies in circulation, and issue notes against its silver reserves. These reserves were held in the form of large silver coins, known as *dayangyin* (literally “large foreign silver”); many of the coins had the likeness of Yuan Shikai on

them, leading to them being known as “Yuan Shikai dollars.” However, the new notes were circulated only in northern Manchuria, which meant that the unification of the whole region’s currency was not achieved.

Instead, currencies varied by province. Fengtian province used the Fengtian dollar (Fengtianpiao). From 1905, a number of banks attempted to issue this note, often against inadequate reserves, leading Zhang Zuolin’s government to restrict the number of issuing banks to four from 1924 and just three from 1929.¹⁵⁶ The Fengtian dollar was not a freely convertible currency, and its status as the “private currency of the North-Eastern authorities” meant that it was prone to abuse by the issuers and its value fluctuated greatly: in 1929, between 7,760 yuan and 2,670 yuan for 100 gold yen.¹⁵⁷ This fluctuation, which followed the hyperinflation of 1928, convinced the regional government, now under the control of Zhang Xueliang, that they had to introduce a new currency in the region. On 17 May 1929 it was decided that new notes, termed cash silver standard (*xiandayang*), would be issued, this time with adequate reserves, 70 percent in various forms of silver and the rest in securities.¹⁵⁸ Zhang announced in June 1929 that he would not devalue the currency, and declared that those who spread rumors to the contrary would be severely dealt with. He also made a major bond issue, denominated in *xiandayang*, in summer 1929, which helped speed up the recall of dollars, allowing people to use them to purchase the new bonds. These measures went some way toward stabilizing the currency.¹⁵⁹ In addition, there were a number of spending cuts, said to have saved 25 million yuan a year.¹⁶⁰ (However, as is shown below, the percentage of spending in such areas as the military was not substantially reduced in comparison to previous years.) While these actions did help keep the currency afloat, the memory of the previous years of instability proved much harder to erase from people’s minds, easing the way for the Japanese currency reforms that followed the occupation. Confidence in currencies is fragile and assaults on it can be long-lasting in their effects: the notorious hyperinflation in Weimar Germany lasted only months in 1923, but the memory of it paved the way for the rise of fascism and later on for the strong Deutschmark policy of the post–World War II period.

Northern Manchuria, centered on Harbin, was dominated by Russian currency until the 1917 revolution. Japanese and local Chinese currencies then entered the market and gradually found favor with the population. By 1925, there were five banks authorized to issue Harbin silver-standard dollars (*dayangpiao*).¹⁶¹ The Harbin silver-standard dollar was affected by the same problems of low reserves and political insta-

bility as the Fengtian currency, but the authorities took stronger measures earlier on to prevent it from collapsing. Even after the CER Incident of 1929 had disrupted trade and diplomacy in northern Manchuria, the Harbin currency fell only from an average value of 73.27 gold yen to 100 dollars in 1928 to 56.34 gold yen to 100 dollars in December 1929.¹⁶² In Jilin, the provincial authorities had issued official notes (*guantie*) since 1898, which were still in circulation in the late 1920s. The Jilin currency had also been used in Heilongjiang, but in 1904 the Guangxin Company was set up to administer the issue of paper currency, and by the late 1920s this was limited to official notes (*guantie*) and silver-standard dollars, both Harbin and Guangxin, but circulating at the same value.¹⁶³

The Japanese also played an important role in the currency market. The Bank of Chōsen (Korea) opened a branch at Andong in 1909, and the notes it issued began to be circulated in Manchuria. In 1917, the Japanese government made the Bank of Chōsen the central banking organization for Japanese commerce in the region and gave it the sole right to issue gold notes (*jinpiao*). The gold notes were compulsory legal tender in the Kwantung Leased Territory, which was under direct Japanese colonial administration, but the notes were also used in Chinese territory, Harbin, and even Vladivostok. The other main Japanese bank was the Yokohama Specie Bank, which began operating in 1900 and began to issue notes guaranteed against a reserve of old silver yen coins. These notes were issued from Dairen but again circulated throughout the Northeast.¹⁶⁴

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS

The Northeastern Governmental Affairs Committee was the central administrative body for the region, but it did not have direct control over the numerous counties and smaller units that made up the aspect of the authorities with which the majority of the Northeast's population had contact. Local government in the Northeast was affected by the reforms that the Nanjing government attempted to implement in the late 1920s. However, the strong tradition of local autonomy and self-defense in Manchuria, encouraged by widespread banditry and the relatively late date at which the region had been settled, also profoundly affected the way in which local government was administered. Zhang's period of rule saw particular features of local government develop in the Northeast.

On 15 September 1928, Zhang promulgated the Provincial Government and County Organization Law (*Shengfu xianqu zuzhifa*), which reordered the structure of government along lines approved by Nanjing.¹⁶⁵ All county government was to be under the control of a provincial supervisor (*sheng zhengfu zhihui landu*). The supervisor's department should appoint a county magistrate (*xianzhang*) in charge of each county. "The county government," continued the statute, "will manage matters dealing with setting up an administration and policing, taxes, communications, information-gathering, and investigations." Each county was also required to set up the following departments: police (including a public health section), finance (taxes, loan flotations), construction (land registry, public works, building infrastructure), and education. Some areas were required to have separate public health and land registry sections. Each county was expected to elect a council (*canyihui*). The statute stated further, "It will be organized on the basis of election of members by the people of the county, and the period of members' office shall be three years, with one-third of the council being elected annually." Among the council's duties were supervision of finances and the flotation of loans as required and the setting up of regulations specific to the county. However, if a magistrate was found to have violated any law and was consequently forced to resign, the council might not choose a replacement itself, but should request that the provincial authorities investigate and decide what to do. The conservative faction of the KMT, which had come to the fore in Nanjing by 1928, had insisted that appointment of magistrates be controlled by the center. The system was duplicated at lower levels of administration. Each county consisted of several wards (*qu*), and the inhabitants of each ward were supposed to elect a ward head (*quzhang*) as well as a committee of five representatives to support him. Similarly, villages (*cun*) and neighborhoods (*li*) were expected to choose heads, with one deputy also elected for each one hundred households (*hu*).¹⁶⁶

The law had been drafted with the intention of putting into place the first stage of the program that Sun Yatsen had proposed in his 1924 tract "Principles for the Establishment of the Nation" (*Jianguo dagang*). The establishment of a functioning system of local government was aimed at developing the "tutelage" phase of constitutional development, under the leadership of the KMT. The idea was that people would first learn to govern themselves at the lowest, most immediate levels of control and then gradually at higher, more remote levels of government. However, the tract had been written during the KMT's cooperation with the Soviet

Union, when the party's left-wing elements had been dominant. By 1928, the dominance of a centralizing philosophy in the KMT stifled the possibility of any real local autonomy. During late 1928 and early 1929, resolutions were passed throughout China that aimed to put off the implementation of popular elections to local assemblies, supposedly until "no later than 1933." In the meantime, power would remain with the magistrate. Heads of wards were to be appointed directly by the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs. Services such as policing were to be organized by national administrative bodies, not by agents of self-government agencies.¹⁶⁷ In practice, the much-vaunted move to self-government failed to take place on any significant scale, being halted for the most part in 1929.

Philip Kuhn has noted the phenomenon by which Nanjing used the appointment of magistrates and the officials under them, under the pretext of moving toward self-government, as an excuse to tighten the central government's own bureaucratic control.¹⁶⁸ From 1932, this tendency on the part of China directly under Nanjing's control was combined with the anti-CCP campaigns, giving Chiang Kaishek's actions the legitimization of national security. However, the situation was different in the Northeast. With the delay in implementation of self-government, control of the appointment of magistrates should have reverted to Zhang's regional central government in Shenyang, although some self-government structures were established in certain counties, primarily in Liaoning.

However, this did not mean that Shenyang was given a free hand to micromanage administration at a county level, even where they did set up self-government structures. The Zhang regime's level of centralized control remained weak outside its home base; thus tax demands, for instance, were far more likely to be fulfilled in Fengtian, where the Fengtian-dominated army and other structures of control could be easily mobilized, than in Jilin. Japanese reports from the early Manchukuo period frequently record that counties in the more remote parts of all three provinces had gone for years with no formal system of tax collection. Many of the local administrators in the region had been formally appointed by the authorities in Shenyang in the late Qing and early Republic, but in practice this often meant that an existing administration, frequently run by local strongmen or bandits, was legitimized without any substantial change in its nature.¹⁶⁹

The frontier characteristics of Manchurian society meant that even into the 1920s, local elites often enjoyed a high degree of local autonomy, rooted less in any constitutional position they held than in their status as local power brokers. Banditry also remained a widespread

phenomenon, so much so that it scarcely qualifies as a heterodox sector of society in the Northeast. The effect of this was multifold. First, the boundary between the orthodox and heterodox spheres of authority in the region were less clearly defined than elsewhere in China (and the rest of China was hardly a stranger to banditry).¹⁷⁰ Together with lack of widespread educational facilities, this was a major reason why it was difficult for nationalism to find popular roots in the region; reports of the reactions of county magistrates in the wake of the Japanese occupation in 1931 show repeatedly that their primary concern was *local* law and order, with little concern about the significance of the occupation on a national level.¹⁷¹ One of the most immediate consequences of the lawless atmosphere prevalent in the region was that most villages had had long experience in setting up militias and storing caches of weapons. All these factors contributed to a de facto autonomy for local elites, who were co-opted by the Japanese in the initial phase of their occupation.

MILITARY REFORMS

Many of the problems that Zhang Xueliang inherited from his father had to do with the military. He wished to reduce the amount of money spent on it, but found himself in need of a substantial army and unable to deal with the high unemployment that would be caused by mass demobilization. He never solved the problem. Although Zhang had affiliated his regime with the Nanjing government, he and Chiang Kaishek did not trust one another, and Zhang was unwilling to reduce his military strength to the point where he might become vulnerable to a coup by one of his rivals. In the words of a hostile Japanese report:

The appointment of Chang Hsueh-liang as the Deputy-Commander-in-Chief of the National Army and Navy, under the Nanking Government, in one respect, obliged him to further expand his military strength because of the necessity to restrain the influence of the Nanking government. Such a statement may sound paradoxical, but in the case of China it was merely a natural development.¹⁷²

As Zhang was made commander of the Beiping-Tianjin region in 1929, his opportunities for cutting troops became even fewer. In addition, the civil war of 1930 showed that Chiang himself might need to call on Zhang's large army. After Zhang Xueliang's agreement to cooperate with Nanjing in 1928, he was appointed commander in chief of the Northeastern Border Defense Army, with Zhang Zuoxiang and Wan Fulin as his deputy com-

manders. Although it was headquartered at Shenyang, the army's sphere of operations extended to the Beiping-Tianjin region. The army was divided into two sections, the National Defense Army, which was intended to prevent the invasion of Manchuria by foreign aggressors, and the Provincial Army, which was stationed in each province to maintain local order. The former comprised 30 infantry and 6 cavalry brigades with 10 artillery regiments, whereas the latter had 19 infantry and 7 cavalry brigades.¹⁷³

Zhang did in fact dismiss a small portion of his troops in the course of his reforms, but noted that the 3–4,000 newly discharged soldiers became bandits, making an expansion of this policy unattractive to him.¹⁷⁴ He concentrated instead on improving the quality of the Northeastern Army. The number of regiments was reduced, and rebellious and conservative commanders were removed where feasible.¹⁷⁵ Zhang also diverted funds to develop further the region's ordnance factories and air force. By the time of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, the ordnance factories had over 1,000 technicians and 20,000 workers. The air force, begun under Zhang Zuolin in 1920, had over 100 aircraft by 1931 and nearly 100 pilots, and had even seen action during a brief anti-Chiang uprising in spring 1931.¹⁷⁶ However, the CER Incident of 1929 showed that the reformed army still had a long way to go, as the campaign ended with a clear victory for the Soviet troops. Kwantung Army assessments of the strength of the Northeastern Army show that on the eve of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, troop numbers were still substantial. There were estimated to be 250,000 regular soldiers and 80,000 irregulars. Of the regulars, 110,000 were stationed in North China around Beiping and Tianjin, with an additional 140,000 in Manchuria, Shenyang alone having a garrison of 14–20,000. By contrast, the Kwantung Army had only around 1,000 troops near Shenyang.¹⁷⁷ For Zhang Xueliang to maintain an army of this size made substantial demands on the region's resources.

Zhang also set up a Northeastern Student Corps (*Dongbei xueshengdui*), headed by one of his newly appointed senior commanders, Wang Yizhe, which committed its members to three years' study.¹⁷⁸ Encouraged by Yan Baohang and other intellectuals who had been trained in the benefits of social education, Zhang Xueliang planned to raise the educational level of the army. Zhang paid particular attention to the Northeast Military Academy (*Dongbei jiangwutang*), which had its main branch in Shenyang. Between 1919 and 1928, some 3,557 men had graduated from the academy. But between 1928 and September 1930, there were more graduates than in the previous nine

years put together, with 4,038 passing through. Zhang had succeeded in his aim of raising the educational level of the officers, but at the cost of alienating many of the “old faction” of militarists, who saw no need for the new training regime and perceived it as a threat to their position.¹⁷⁹

ECONOMIC REFORMS

The Northeast had always been a fertile area, and as noted above, its relative affluence had encouraged immigration from North China in the early part of the twentieth century. Yet Japan was the main beneficiary of that prosperity. Seventy percent of the region's imports were goods made by Japanese-owned concerns, as were 75 percent of the exports.¹⁸⁰ Zhang Xueliang was determined to reverse Japan's economic dominance. At first, his efforts to stabilize the local finances and encourage investment had some success, but the impact of the depression on the Northeast after 1930 was such that most of what he had achieved was reversed.

Agriculture had always been the mainstay of the region's prosperity, with soybeans the principal export. Zhang had opened up areas for land reclamation so as to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who were still entering the region annually, and production increased until it reached a peak of 18.4 million tons of agricultural products in 1929.¹⁸¹ Soybeans accounted for 59 percent of the region's total exports in 1931, and they were exported not only to the Japanese market, where they were essential as fertilizer, but to the British Empire and Europe.¹⁸² Even when the depression first hit in 1929, the Northeast, like the rest of China, was protected because its currency was on a silver standard that protected prices from deflation. However, mass devaluations combined with newly imposed tariff barriers worldwide combined to make the Northeast's agricultural sector uncompetitive by 1931 and brought farm prices right down, leading to severe economic hardship throughout the region.¹⁸³ The export-led growth on which Zhang had pinned his hopes for improving the region's infrastructure was destroyed.

By the end of the 1920s, Japanese investment in the Northeast was worth 1,400 million yen. Although Japanese expansion hindered the growth of Chinese industry in the region, the civil war had also caused a great deal of Chinese investment capital to return south of the Wall.¹⁸⁴ Traditionally, the region had developed only light industries, most of them related to agricultural products (soybean oil extraction, liquor dis-

tillation, flour production). Heavy industry sponsored by the Japanese developed strongly in the south of Manchuria after 1905, such as the mining project in Fushun owned by the SMR. The glass, ceramics, and steel industries also expanded under Japanese management. The Japanese did actively try to stifle Chinese competition, as in the case of cotton mills set up by Zhang Zuolin, which were outperformed by hastily set up Japanese mills. However, one Chinese source of industrial goods that stayed in business, not least because of the funds assigned it by the Zhang family, was the Shenyang arsenal. Its main product was armaments, but it also extended its scope to chemicals and machinery.¹⁸⁵ For the most part, however, Zhang Xueliang was unable to significantly break down the Japanese stranglehold on heavy industry.

The Japanese were keen to build more railways in the region, but Zhang started refusing them permission, aiming to expand his own rail system. In particular, he aimed to reduce the region's dependence on the Japanese-controlled port of Dairen (Dalian) by developing rail routes to an alternative port at Huludao. Other foreign powers, worried about Japanese influence in the Northeast, had tried to sponsor rival railways in the region, and as early as 1910 China received a \$40 million loan from the United States to connect Huludao to the Beijing-Shenyang line.¹⁸⁶ Further work commenced on lines to Huludao in July 1930, with the aim of providing 8,000 kilometers of new track in the next ten years in order to compete directly with the SMR. Although the Incident of 1931 stopped work on these lines, even by that early point it was clear that the use of Huludao was taking business away from the Japanese railway, with a drop in the daily rate of goods transported by the SMR from 20,000 to 15,000 tons between 1929 and 1931.¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, Kimura Eiichi, a director of the SMR, admitted privately that the new lines were not the principal cause of the reduction in the SMR's profits: "The Depression is. The public thinks the income earned in the good old days is normal, but the fall in income for the parallel Chinese lines is greater."¹⁸⁸

Japanese economic nervousness at these actions against their privileged position in the Northeast precipitated their move to occupy the region. Akira Iriye characterizes the conflict as "a clash of forces between an industrial country going through severe economic difficulties and a predominantly agricultural society determined to regain and retain national rights."¹⁸⁹ The Japanese were suffering as the world depression closed off markets to them, and they believed that "but for Chinese attacks on their vested rights they would not be suffering so much."¹⁹⁰ The

domestic climate in Japan changed to the point where the Kwantung Army officers could feel more confident that their coup would receive popular support at home.

EDUCATION REFORMS

One of the key means by which Zhang Xueliang's regime aimed to propagate nationalist thought was the educational system. To do this effectively, the region had to improve its hitherto unimpressive level of education. During the late Qing and early Republic, "the Northeast's . . . cultural and educational enterprises . . . were not very developed." Some advances were made during Zhang Zuolin's rule. In 1923, under pressure from his finance minister, Wang Yongjiang, Zhang opened Northeastern University (*Dongbei daxue*). The university made a point of employing department heads who had studied abroad, such as Wang Zhaofan, who had studied literature in the United States, and Zhao Houda, who had studied engineering in Germany. Zhang Xueliang was devoted to the university, spending over 1 million yuan on it in 1929 alone, and by 1931 it had over 2,000 staff members and students.¹⁹¹ "Its educational standards were," according to one contemporary commentator, "superior to those of the Japanese-run higher educational facilities in Manchuria."¹⁹² It also had a strongly patriotic element, including the singing of nationalist songs as part of its basic curriculum. Student nationalism would prove a powerful element in Zhang Xueliang's political arsenal when the school was forced to go into exile. However, this was a facility that primarily appealed to the better-off, more educated elites. Jilin had decided to establish its own institution, and Jilin University started operations in 1928. A proportion of Heilongjiang's spending on higher education went to fund Northeastern University, even though it was located in Fengtian, and a higher education facility actually based in the province, the Heilongjiang Special College of Law and Politics, did not open until 1930.¹⁹³

Zhang Xueliang was also concerned about improving the quality of primary and secondary education in the Northeast. In general, the nationalists who advised Zhang could see the importance of education as a means of spreading their ideology, as their establishment of the Society for the Promotion of Basic Nationalist Education in Shenyang in 1929 shows.¹⁹⁴ In 1928, Zhang set in motion reforms that were to allow students six years at the lower level of education, six years at the middle level, and four years of higher education. The total number of primary schools (*xiaoxue*) increased by 11 percent between 1926 and 1929.¹⁹⁵

Even Japanese assessments of Zhang Xueliang's education policy give him credit for a high level of improvement. But he was starting from a low level, particularly in Jilin and Heilongjiang, which had suffered from the long-running bias toward Fengtian, visible in spending as in other matters. A Japanese report stated, "To carry out the renewal and resurgence of education, naturally in every county, education agencies, education committees, and education offices were set up."¹⁹⁶ Zhang's education policy was influenced by the KMT, probably the most direct influence the party had in controlling the Northeast. Zhang Xueliang took care to emphasize the new importance of the Three People's Principles when reporting on the state of the reforms at the KMT conference in December 1931, since he was trying to persuade the central government to provide the Northeast with more subsidies.¹⁹⁷ County councils set up schools under their control, while in the countryside, schools were set up in the villages with loan funds or with benefactions from wealthy local donors.¹⁹⁸

As Liaoning had always had the most extensive network of schools, nationalist propaganda via textbooks was more easily spread there than in the other northeastern provinces. After the occupation, the nationalist campaign in exile was run by a Liaoning nucleus, and the most vociferous supporters of Zhang Xueliang and the campaign to recover the "lost provinces" were Liaoning students. There was thus a self-perpetuating element in the predominance of Liaoning. In 1929, private and publicly funded schools together totaled around 10,000.¹⁹⁹ There were over 641,000 pupils, of whom the vast majority were at primary level; in 1929, total spending on schools at all levels was 16,351,501 yuan.²⁰⁰ "Jilin's cultural level does not reach that of Fengtian," read one report.²⁰¹ Where Liaoning had around 10,000 schools for its population of 15.2 million, Jilin had only 1,729 schools for 9.2 million people.²⁰² There were also around 2,000 local schools, with around 30,000 pupils. Jilin's provincial educational spending was at significantly lower levels than in Liaoning: 421,642 yuan in 1927, 383,233 yuan in 1928, and 511,184 yuan in 1929. Heilongjiang was in an even worse situation. Because it was a border area subject to frequent attacks, "the people moved around and it became difficult to gather students together. In the border counties of Lubu, Guanwei, and Mohe at the beginning of the fall school session of 1929, it was impossible to open the schools in accordance with the regulations." Many counties did have local private schools, "but [the teaching there provided] nothing more than a parochial education very far removed from real society." Total educational spending for Heilongjiang

in 1929 was a dismal 152,154 yuan, and even that included a contribution to Northeastern University in Fengtian.²⁰³

The SMR provided education in the areas under its jurisdiction for Chinese students. SMR regulations stipulated that “for primary and middle schools, Japanese and Chinese should have separate education, but for specialist and university education, they should study together.”²⁰⁴ The educational system that was employed even in the schools for Chinese pupils was a Japanese one.²⁰⁵ Although the schools did have the benefit of generous SMR subsidies, they had relatively few pupils: 10 primary schools had 6,332 pupils in 1936.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, they provided a means of gaining favorable press publicity in areas of the Northeast where the Japanese did not have direct control.

Conclusion

Zhang Xueliang had ambitious projects in mind when he gained power in 1928. He aimed to affiliate the Northeast to the Nanjing government and reduce the Japanese presence. He also wished to improve the Manchurian local infrastructure and gain the confidence of the provincial elites whom his father had alienated. Some progress was made toward these goals, but in each case the results hardly matched up to the efforts expended on them. The alliance with Chiang Kaishek was characterized by mutual distrust. The depression destroyed the agricultural exports on which Manchuria's phenomenal growth depended, and with it the hope of earnings that would pay for Zhang's projects. Both civilian and military elites in the region found it hard to trust Zhang, with events such as the assassination of Yang Yuting and the 1930 entry into the civil war suggesting to them that despite the rhetoric, he was his father's son. Above all, the Japanese became ever more alarmed at the prospect of a nationalist regime with designs on their “special position” gaining power. In 1931, they could see that there was a threat to their position, but that Zhang's reforms were not yet either complete or popular. At the same time, the domestic mood in Japan was ready for an attack on China, which was being blamed in part for worsening Japan's economic hardship. All these factors culminated in the coup of 18 September 1931.

Yet the real changes taking place in the Northeast in the 1920s, as elsewhere in China, must not be discounted. There was a widening of the

political realm, an increase in the readership of the press, and an increase in the number of children attending schools that taught the new nationalist (which should not necessarily be equated with the KMT) curriculum.²⁰⁷ The factors listed were primarily urban: newspapers, advertising, and a new availability of consumer goods in cities heightened awareness of outside presences, both positive and negative, in the region. These factors all opened a space for previously unimagined ideas of how to live, organize, and see oneself. The growing threat of international conflict, particularly acute in Manchuria, which was stuck between Japan and the USSR, increased the sense of crisis that led many to embrace nationalism. The next five chapters will show how the issue of nationalism was reflected in the choices made by different Manchurian Chinese groups in the face of the Japanese occupation.

CHAPTER 3

Staying On

*Co-optation of the Northeastern Provincial Elites,
1931–1932*

The days and weeks after the Manchurian Incident were marked by widespread cooperation between the Japanese invaders and the local Chinese leaders. In many places there was valiant fighting by Chinese opposed to the occupation, but as it was not centrally coordinated it had little overall effect. Although the training and high mechanization of the Kwantung Army was crucial to the speed and efficiency with which it staged the Manchurian Incident, with relatively few troops in the area it could not have retained control over an area of 350,000 square miles with a population of 30 million by relying on its own strength alone.¹ The Kwantung Army had never been a large force before 1931; during 1930–31, it had only just over 10,000 men, although that figure rose dramatically to 64,900 by late 1931, and 114,100 by 1933.² But in the initial period of the occupation, the army's behavior was heavily affected by Chinese actions and, in some cases, refusal to act. Thus the Japanese co-optation of Manchurian Chinese elite members at a provincial and local level, making them part of the new regime, was encouraged by the policy of nonresistance to the Japanese advocated by Nanjing and followed by prominent members of the Zhang Xueliang administration, who might have been expected to oppose the Kwantung Army's incursions.

This chapter deals with the initial contacts between the Manchurian Chinese provincial leaders and the Japanese military and suggests that a combination of necessity and political calculation underpinned the agreement by many Chinese elites to collaborate with the invaders. Although previous studies have dealt with the Japanese motivations and

actions in depth, relatively little has been written about the Chinese side of the negotiations in the period September to December 1931, and this chapter deals with that topic in detail; it then assesses the impact of the ideology of the Kingly Way (Wangdao), with which the Japanese attempted to inculcate the inhabitants of the new state.

Initial Response: Nonresistance

When the Manchurian Incident broke out, Zhang Xueliang was in Beiping in his capacity as North China garrison commander. On the night of 18 September, he was at the opera watching a performance by the noted singer Mei Lanfang. His deputies were also away from Shenyang: Wan Fulin was in Beiping and Zhang Zuoxiang was attending his father's funeral in Jinzhou.³ In the absence of the most senior provincial commanders at the time of the Incident, the Japanese managed to secure cooperation from the acting commanders very quickly. In Shenyang the Eastern Borders Garrison commander Yu Zhishan, and in Changchun the acting provincial forces commander Xi Xia, both quickly went over to the Japanese. Although the Northeastern Army had around 100–130,000 troops in the Northeast itself, compared to a Japanese force of 40–50,000 (including the army sent in from Korea), Chiang Kaishek hastily issued a nonresistance order to troops in the Northeast, and this order was confirmed by Zhang Xueliang. Troops were not to fight back against the Japanese but to wait for a negotiated settlement. Meanwhile, the Japanese secured high-level provincial elite cooperation in just a few weeks. On 10 November 1931, Zhang Zuolin's former civil affairs minister Yuan Jinkai was made chairman of the committee in charge of Japanese-controlled Liaoning. However, on 16 December the formerly existing post of governor was reestablished and a previous holder of this post under Zhang Xueliang, Zang Shiyi, was appointed. This then made Yuan Jinkai's post as chairman redundant. Xi Xia was made governor of Jilin.⁴

Unfortunately, we still do not have detailed information on the decision not to resist the Japanese. Nonetheless, Chiang Kaishek's reluctance to fight is not difficult to understand: worried about factions ranged against him in South China and the reformation of Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan's alliance in North China, and facing the threat of the CCP in Jiangxi, he was in no position to take on yet another opponent. But even Zhang Xueliang did not enjoy as much of an advantage

as it might appear at first. He had nearly 250,000 men under his command, but only between 100,000 and 130,000 were in the Northeast, the rest being stationed in Hebei. Japanese training and aid to the Zhang regime meant that the Kwantung Army would have made a shrewd assessment of the tactics and equipment available to the Northeastern Army. It is also possible that Zhang and Chiang may have believed that the League of Nations or the Wakatsuki government in Tokyo would restrain the occupiers.⁵

There is a postscript that may shed some light on the matter, however. At the end of December 1931, when Jinzhou, the last redoubt of Zhang Xueliang's troops in the Northeast, was about to fall, Zhang decided to withdraw his troops. According to Nelson Johnson, American Minister in China, Counselor Yano of the Japanese Legation at Beiping had had informal discussions with Zhang, in which he had said that Jinzhou would inevitably fall to the Japanese and that "the Tokyo Foreign Office would gain prestige and be better able to shape events to the advantage of China if the Chinese avoid[ed] a clash by withdrawing voluntarily." It was also suggested that some of Zhang's followers might be reappointed to official positions in the new government in Shenyang. "Chang is believed to have been led to his present decision by these inducements," concluded Johnson, "along with the bitter hostility toward him at Nanking and the lack of support from that quarter."⁶ In other words, Zhang was effectively blackmailed by both sides into nonresistance. Certainly in December 1931, with no prospect of international intervention, and with the Nanjing government in turmoil after the temporary resignation of Chiang Kaishek, Zhang's options were limited.

However, these speculations lead us back to the fact that we really do not know what Zhang's rationale was for nonresistance. Therefore, we must take it as a given and move onto exploring its effect on the occupiers and the occupied.

The Japanese Goals in the Occupation

How did the Japanese manage to gain effective control of southern Manchuria so swiftly? The government in Tokyo, headed by premier Wakatsuki Reijirō, was appalled to hear the news of the coup; disagreement over policy between the Kwantung Army and the Japanese consular authorities in the Northeast was so venomous that soldiers

were assigned to keep the Japanese consul in Shenyang under lock and key during the events of 18 September. If there had been significant resistance by the majority of the population of the Northeast, Tokyo would have been far more likely to order the Kwantung Army to withdraw.⁷ Without the co-optation of significant numbers of Chinese Manchurian elite members, the Kwantung Army would have found it much harder to exercise a sufficient level of control. Nor was the co-optation policy an ad hoc measure. There were elements of the army who had positively advocated governing the region through cooperation with “local power-holders” as part of their strategy.⁸ This chapter looks at the Japanese techniques of co-optation at the provincial level in 1931–32.

Although I will concentrate on Chinese reactions to the occupation in the period 1931 to 1933, in order to set the Chinese response in context it is necessary at this point to explain the background to the Japanese thinking during the occupation.⁹ The Kwantung Army elements who launched the Incident of 18 September 1931 and the subsequent takeover originally aimed to enact a simple military occupation, in which “local Chinese officials would be granted a considerable degree of autonomy in exchange for their cooperation.”¹⁰ However, Tokyo’s rejection of annexation in fear of a potential Soviet counterattack quickly led to the coup leaders resorting to “the subterfuge of Manchurian independence.”¹¹

The improvised nature of the original coup and the subsequent pattern of occupation led to arguments between the different sections of the Japanese community in the region. This in turn prevented a fully coordinated plan or legitimisation from emerging, particularly in the early period of the occupation. Referring to this period, Akira Iriye notes, “What emerges . . . is an almost total absence of ideology as a driving force behind military action.”¹² This may have actually helped the occupiers, as it meant that many areas of life in the Northeast were not immediately affected by the occupation, leading to greater acquiescence from the population. Yet ultimately, as the section at the end of this chapter will suggest, this improvisation of policy was one factor that prevented there being sufficient attachment within the community to the idea of “Manchukuo nationalism” to allow it to take root.

Coordination of the occupation was placed in the hands of the Kwantung Army Special Affairs Unit (Tokumubu), operating via the General Affairs Board of the Council of State under Komai Tokuzō. Komai Tokuzō was born near Kyoto, and from an early age had been consumed with a desire to go to China.¹³ Having trained as an agriculturalist, he

joined the SMR, and worked for the company during Zhang Zuolin's rule. He became acquainted with Zhang and debated with him and other local leaders on questions such as Mongol land rights and the Guo Songling rebellion, becoming particularly friendly with Yu Chonghan and Zhang Jinghui. After the Incident of 18 September 1931, he was appointed as a financial adviser to the Kwantung Army, a very senior position with direct access to Honjō Shigeru, the Japanese commander in the Northeast: "in fact, [Komai] was a top-level adviser to the army on politics and economics in Manchuria."¹⁴ Komai was responsible for the strategies of co-opting local elites, which was "essential to the structure of power designed by the Kwantung Army."¹⁵ As early as January 1932, Kwantung Army documents stated that the new state would have a "centralized dictatorship imbued with the political authority of our empire."¹⁶ In practice, however, there were many areas where centralization was subordinated to devolution.

The Kwantung Army early on had declared that it was in favor of a heavily planned economy: one document states, "In view of the evils of an uncontrolled capitalist economy, we will use whatever state power is necessary to control that economy."¹⁷ Even as late as 1 March 1933, however, the Manchukuo government's published plan for economic construction was "vague and general," although it was made clear that the government intended to control strategic industries and aim for agricultural self-sufficiency.¹⁸ This lack of decisions on the planning policy in the new state explains why so little appeared to change in economic terms in the initial phase of the occupation. Yet there were fierce debates between the various factions in the Japanese community in Manchuria. First, the SMR was unhappy at the occupation, which jeopardized the Railway's independence, and senior figures including Vice-President Eguchi Teijo resigned in protest. The takeover and reorganization of the SMR by the Kwantung Army was completed by 1934, but there were still many Japanese railway employees who deeply resented the army's actions. Also impatient at the controlling faction within the Kwantung Army was the Yūhōkai group, under the leadership of Kasagi Yoshiaki. He advocated ideas of ethnic harmony and a genuine autonomy for Manchuria that ran at odds with the ideas of Komai and the Kwantung Army commanders, but he had sufficient influence to create trouble for the leadership. In particular, he was a friend of Yu Chonghan's and thus instrumental in attracting Manchurian Chinese support for the new state. Much later, in 1934, Kasagi and his supporters voiced objections to the army's policy of land appropriation in Yilan county, a policy that led

to an uprising.¹⁹ In general, there was a somewhat paradoxical tendency for leftist intellectuals from Japan to emigrate to Manchuria, where there was at least for a time a more tolerant attitude toward their politics than in Japan itself. Yet these thinkers, such as the writer Tachibana Shiraki, were ultimately trapped in a dead end, attempting to square an impossible intellectual circle which argued that Japan's colonial presence had in some way led to the liberation of the Manchurian Chinese peasantry.²⁰ And in the end, for all their agonizing, little consciousness of these debates among the Japanese filtered down to the level of the local Chinese.

Persuasion and Force: The First Phase of the Occupation

The invaders used a potent combination of violence and persuasion to bring prominent Manchurian Chinese provincial leaders over to their side during the initial phase of the occupation. Some power brokers refused to cooperate and left for exile in North China. However, enough collaborators came forward to enable the Japanese to quickly set up structures of control within their new possession. The following section outlines the development of those structures.

THE CAPTURE OF THE MAIN CITIES

The main Japanese forces moved into the principal cities of the SMR region first. In a telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nanjing, Robert E. Lewis, adviser to the ministry, declared that he had proof that the Japanese had sent large numbers of prepared troops into Manchuria from the initial invasion of 18 September:

On Friday night September eighteenth the Japanese Army sent from Korea into Manchuria through Antung seven army railway trains fully loaded with soldiers. On Saturday night September nineteenth [*sic*] Japanese army sent four additional trains loaded with soldiers in to [*sic*] Manchuria at the same point . . . Japanese occupied every Chinese public office in Antung excepting the customs house which has Europeans in it, also placed guard over Chinese customs superintendent to prevent his free action.²¹

The Japanese, according to Lewis's sources, had been swift to seize control of key facilities and people:

[The Japanese] arrested superintendent of schools and forbid [*sic*] teaching of Dr Sun Yatsen's principles. Japanese army occupied Kirin seventy nine miles east of the south Manchuria railway zone on September nineteenth [*sic*] they seized and held the telegraph office telephone office wireless station provincial arsenal waterworks plant Bank of China Kirin Provincial Bank police headquarters and subdivisions Kuo Ming Tang [*sic*] Party headquarters and all other public offices. Search and seizure was conducted of non-military population. Troops and military cadets were disarmed when captured and the arms and munitions of the Chinese arsenal were removed by Japanese including modern rifles field guns heavy guns military motor trucks.²²

The capture of Shenyang was over in a day. The *Shengjing shibao*, whose ownership naturally made it partisan toward the Japanese, reported that "the people stood in the streets as if they were watching a festival."²³ Military force and soothing reports in the media were combined to persuade people to continue life as normal. Many shops and businesses closed down temporarily in the first days after the occupation, worried about a breakdown in order and attacks from the Japanese military. But a week after the initial occupation, it was reported that the Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture in Shenyang were operating once more, and that public order had been restored sufficiently to encourage traders to open up again.²⁴ On the second day after the occupation, the Kwantung Army installed Colonel Doihara Kenji as the new mayor of Shenyang, but on 20 October it handed over the post to Zhao Xinbo, by that point a legal adviser to the Kwantung Army.²⁵ Zhao had been a member of Yang Yuting's clique and had been left without any official post after Yang's assassination by Zhang Xueliang's agents in 1929.²⁶ Now that Zhang Xueliang had been ousted, Zhao saw his chance to return to power.

The capture of Changchun took a little longer, but not by much. On 23 September, the Japanese army put to the Jilin forces their demands for surrender.²⁷ The acting commander, Xi Xia, agreed to this demand, allowing "the province fortunately to escape the horrors of war."²⁸ However, some of his troops were less inclined to give in and continued to resist.²⁹ In the ensuing clashes, 200 Chinese soldiers and around 10 civilians were killed.³⁰ "At 4 P.M. on the 23rd, the Japanese army made strong use of their armaments, causing Xi Xia concern. So that afternoon, he met [Japanese] commander Tamon, and said that the present situation

was “serious[;] . . . only he himself could take responsibility for removing the Jilin army’s weapons . . . As a result, at 2 P.M. [the next day], they handed over 1,200 rifles, 11 machine-guns and 6 mortars.”³¹ After that, the regular city police were given permission to maintain public order, although they were ultimately under Japanese control.³² On 24 September, Xi Xia announced to the provincial assembly and the Chamber of Commerce that the old government had been dissolved, and that he would be heading a new Jilin governor’s office.³³ There would be no “maintenance committees” in Jilin; Xi Xia would exercise control on his own. However, in practice his power was limited, as his actions were all subject to veto by the Kwantung Army.³⁴ Additionally, for several months northern Jilin remained under the control of rebel forces based in Bin county, denying Xi Xia complete control of the region.³⁵

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CO-OPTATION

The Japanese occupation led to the removal of the Northeastern Governmental Affairs Council, the structure under Zhang Xueliang that had exercised control, at least nominally, over the region. The Japanese did not wish to create a new cross-provincial authority until there was at least the appearance of sufficient popular demand for an independent state. Their interim measure was to establish provincial authorities headed by important Chinese regional personalities, although ultimately these were under Japanese control. In Fengtian, the authority was originally ostensibly charged only with the maintenance of public order, although by December 1931 it was declared to be a full provincial government. In Jilin, Xi Xia declared an independent provincial government from the start. In the Special Zone, Zhang Jinghui also declared autonomy, although he stayed in contact with Zhang Xueliang for several months after the occupation.

At the provincial level, as shown in chapter 2, Zhang Xueliang’s control of the Northeast was very far from being absolute, and many of the notable figures in the region had long and close ties with Japan. Although Wang Yongjiang, the most prominent of Zhang Zuolin’s civilian advisers with Japanese links, had died in 1927, other members of the group were still living in the region in 1931. Yu Chonghan, a former foreign minister under Zhang Zuolin, had for many years received a regular retainer as an “adviser” to the Japanese.³⁶ He was in retirement in Liaoyuan when the Incident broke out but in November 1931 was quickly persuaded to return to Shenyang and make a pro-Japanese

statement, a declaration that tallied with the beliefs Yu had held for many years. The way in which the Zhangs had “squandered the regional assets on expanding their armies in a futile quest for national supremacy through military conquest” had alienated them from many of the civilian elite members in the Northeast, such as Yu.³⁷ The Japanese also managed to suggest to various other interest groups that cooperation with them would be advantageous: imperial restorationists such as Zheng Xiaoxu, who became the first Manchukuo prime minister, were persuaded that support for the Japanese would mean a revival of the Qing dynasty, whereas stateless White Russians in Harbin were persuaded that they would be protected against KMT street fighters who assaulted them in the name of nationalism.³⁸

One of the main motivations for many regional military power brokers to collaborate must have been the seeming continuity that cooperation with the Japanese offered them: it meant that they could minimize the effect that the occupation had on their personal spheres of influence, and it was natural that this option would seem attractive in comparison with a powerless life in exile in Beiping. Many people continued in similar-sounding roles before and after September 1931. Zang Shiyi was acting governor of Liaoning province under Zhang Xueliang, and, from December 1931, governor of Fengtian province under the Japanese. Zhang Jinghui was commander of the Harbin Special Zone under Zhang, and remained so under the Japanese. Xi Xia was deputy governor of Jilin under Zhang; with the forced exile of his superior, Zhang Zuoxiang, in Jinzhou, Xi Xia succeeded to the top post. This list emphasizes that it was very senior people who were swift to cooperate with the Kwantung Army. Later, critics would attack the credentials of the officials who had gone over to the Japanese by characterizing them as “left-over literati,” but in reality, there was no great withdrawal of talented administrators who, in traditional Chinese style, refused to serve the new rulers.³⁹ For example, Zhang Zuoxiang, the governor of Jilin who stayed loyal to Zhang Xueliang, had a reputation for abuse of his authority: a Japanese businessman in 1932 claimed that two-thirds of the businesses in Jilin had been run by Zhang Zuoxiang’s relatives.⁴⁰

In the initial phase of occupation, the co-optation of the provincial elites by means of the public order committees was very successful in bringing much of southern Manchuria under Japanese control without wide-scale bloodshed, although there was savage bombing in some of the cities. On 24 September 1931, a Liaoning public order maintenance committee was set up, and a Jilin provincial government followed on 26 September. Liaoning did not have a provincial government at this stage,

because prominent local elite members such as Yuan Jinkai and Zang Shiyi at first had qualms about being seen to turn against the previous regime so unequivocally, particularly when they were unsure whether the Northeastern Army might shortly be sent in to retake the region. But they were prepared to serve on a committee ostensibly dedicated to the neutral task of maintaining public order.⁴¹ Xi Xia in Jilin had no such worries and exercised control over the traditionally less powerful local Jilin elites. A committee similar to the Liaoning one was set up by Zhang Jinghui in Harbin on 27 September.⁴² The Kwantung Army decided to set up a Control Bureau (Tōchibu) to coordinate these new bodies, and Komai Tokuzō was placed in charge. He was given sole control of the bureau, so that “if it were successful, then it would be the Kwantung Army’s success, but if by some chance it should fail, then Komai alone could take the responsibility.”⁴³ The following year, Komai would in fact resign after the failure of his policy to persuade Heilongjiang militarist commander Ma Zhanshan to cooperate with the Japanese. However, this policy seemed to be working at first, and was helped immeasurably by Chiang Kaishek and Zhang Xueliang’s policy of nonresistance.

FORMING THE LIAONING PUBLIC ORDER MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

As mentioned above, the Japanese wanted a cross-provincial administrative structure to appear to emerge from the spontaneous will of the northeastern local elites. Therefore, in the initial phase of the occupation, the Japanese exercised control through the medium of public order maintenance committees (*zhi'an weichi weiyuanhui*): “reorganization of local administrative organs was undertaken by utilizing the traditional self-governing bodies.”⁴⁴ There was a long-standing tradition in China of local elites being called upon to form organizations that dealt with local social issues, such as policing, fire fighting, and so forth.⁴⁵ Such ad hoc organizations had been legitimized and had flourished during a time of deep crisis for the Qing dynasty, the Taiping Rebellion.⁴⁶ In 1931, another time of crisis, local elites were called upon again to deal with the most immediate task at hand, the maintenance of public order. In the Northeast in particular, there was also a long tradition of self-reliance when it came to local defense.⁴⁷ The maintenance of public order was a task that was invaluable for uniting people at all levels of society, since it was both clearly necessary and not overtly political. In the

nineteenth century, the local social organizations had proved to be a training ground for the development of a local elite activism that would eventually contribute to the downfall of the Qing dynasty.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, the Japanese used the ostensibly neutral public order maintenance committees to propagate declarations of Manchurian independence by local elite members. These declarations were part of their campaign to assert that there was a genuine grassroots demand for an autonomous Northeast. The provincial public order maintenance committee that was set up in Shenyang was reproduced tens of times over at county level all over the region (as will be seen in chap. 4).

The strategy of co-optation, with overall supervision by a centrally controlled Self-Government Guiding Board, was not improvised. In 1929, the Kwantung Army had set up a research group to consider the best method of governing an occupied Northeast, and had produced a document titled "Study on the Administration of Occupied Manchuria."⁴⁹ Among the suggestions in it were that a new Japanese-controlled central military government should be set up, but that "local governments were to be preserved to administer local affairs . . . Chinese civil officials below *hsien* directors were to remain in their posts or be replaced by other Chinese."⁵⁰ This principle was reaffirmed in two Kwantung Army documents produced after the occupation, "Fundamental Policy for a Settlement of the Manchurian Question," dated 24 October 1931, and "Draft of the General Principles Concerning the Establishment of the Manchuria-Mongolia Free State," dated 7 November 1931.⁵¹ Both stressed the importance of continuing to use the existing self-government structures, the latter stating that "the Chinese have traditionally been people who value face, so that should it become outwardly clear that they are subject to Japanese interference or supervision, the authority of the administrators would not be effective."⁵²

Only eight days after the explosion on the railway tracks in Shenyang, it was being reported that a Liaoning provincial public order maintenance committee was being set up.⁵³ Its members were selected with care, so as to bring the necessary level of authority to the committee. Yuan Jinkai, former chief secretary to the departments of military and civil affairs and governor of Fengtian, was now taken up by the Kwantung Army and placed in charge of their newly formed public order maintenance committee.⁵⁴ Its aim was stated as being "to maintain local order and all finance and businesses as normal, and to set up police and militias to take responsibility for public order." Other local notables

were recruited to a series of similar committees: a Liaoning United People's Provisional Committee, a Northeastern Gentry and People's Committee for Discussion of a Resolution to the Current Situation, and so forth. On 28 September, both the Liaoning Committee and Xi Xia's Jilin administration made a "declaration of independence" and set up new government departments under Chinese officials.⁵⁵

However, it became clear early on to the Japanese that Yuan Jinkai was not up to the job of chairman: a contemporary Japanese commentator noted that "his attitude seemed half-thought out and puzzling to counties outside the provincial capital."⁵⁶ Specifically, Yuan was still unwilling to formally declare a Liaoning provincial government.⁵⁷ So the Kwantung Army turned to the other surviving member of the triad of elders from Zhang Zuolin's administration, Yu Chonghan. There had been suggestions from the earliest days after the Manchurian Incident that Yu was "moving toward participation."⁵⁸ Yu had had a long history of working with the Japanese, dating back to the Russo-Japanese War, when he had been a spy for them. He would have been an automatic choice for membership of the council from the very beginning had it not been for the fact that he was recuperating from a serious illness at his home in Liaoyuan.⁵⁹ When it became clear that local leaders had lost confidence in Yuan Jinkai's judgment, soundings were taken among the heads of the provinces, and they recommended that Yu Chonghan be brought out of retirement to serve on the committee, if his health would stand it.

On 1 November, Morita Fukumatsu of the Fengtian Japanese Residents' Association was sent to Yu's home to see how ill he really was. After Morita had explained the situation on the Committee, he and Yu talked about a policy to unify the Northeast and the use of the Kingly Way (Wangdao) as an doctrine to underpin the new state.⁶⁰ Yu agreed to emerge from retirement, and on 3 November, he traveled to Shenyang, where he had a meeting with Honjō. Yu outlined the eight points that he felt would lead to a "paradise" of Sino-Japanese cooperation; they included reform of the local police, tax and salary systems, and nonmilitarism.⁶¹ Yu was then placed in charge of the committee, and Yuan was made subordinate to him.⁶² By the end of 1931, the committee members who had had doubts about declaring an autonomous government, thinking that the Northeast might be retaken in an attack by Zhang Xueliang, had been persuaded to advocate separation from Nanjing's rule.

REASSURING THE ELITES

An interview that Xi Xia gave to the *Shengjing shibao* on 14 October 1931 gives some idea of the agenda that the Chinese elites assumed lay behind the Japanese occupation. It is worth remembering that the *Shibao* had a large readership, and that Xi Xia's interview was meant to reassure the educated, primarily urban elites who might otherwise be tempted into resistance. These extracts give a flavor of the propaganda aimed at them:

Japanese reporters: What will be the position of the prominent people in the previous government?

Xi Xia: Local officials belonging to the provincial government will carry on as before, and likewise, the officials in the public offices will carry on.

Japanese reporters: Are there going to be any alterations in military expenses or taxes?

Xi Xia: We won't need as much in military expenses as previously. Tax [collection] in Jilin has always been rather low, because the levying method was poor, so I intend to reform it.

Japanese reporters: If defeated soldiers surrender, how will you treat them?

Xi Xia: The good ones may stay and be retrained. The bad ones have joined bandit groups and have not returned to the right path.

Japanese reporters: If Zhang Xueliang returns to Shenyang, what will his position be?

Xi Xia: . . . He must first abandon Nanjing.

Japanese reporters: What negotiations has the new government undertaken with the Japanese?

Xi Xia: None.

Japanese reporters: Does the government intend to undertake negotiations on the unresolved problems of the Northeast that concern Jilin?

Xi Xia: The new government is bound to maintain public order, so it will deal with matters that concern Jilin, and not matters that concern other provinces.⁶³

These were carefully phrased questions, with answers that were designed to reassure. On the one hand, there was an assurance of continuity, with the statement that officials and soldiers of the previous regime need have no fear for their jobs. On the other hand, pledges to reform the finances of the region and reduce expenditures would please those civilian elites who still mistrusted Zhang Xueliang because of his father's

reckless spending in the 1920s. The statements were reassuringly bland to the point of disingenuousness; the invitation to Zhang Xueliang to return once he rejected Nanjing was clearly one that was exceedingly unlikely to be taken up, and to state that the new government had had no contact with “the Japanese” might be technically true if it was the government in Tokyo that was meant, but the statement carefully ignored the controlling role that the Kwantung Army now had in the region.

Nonetheless, readers of the interview could deduce that the new rulers clearly wanted to bring the elites over to their side by using such conciliatory language; they had the option of all-out confrontation and had not taken it, instead implying that their quarrel was with Zhang Xueliang alone and not with the Manchurian Chinese people. In addition, when Xi Xia was asked if Zhang Xueliang had sent any letters or subordinates to the Northeast, he denied it. This may or may not be true; we know that Zhang was certainly in contact with Zhang Jinghui, for instance.⁶⁴ But to the reader of this article, published less than four weeks after the explosion on the railway tracks near Shenyang, it would be credible that Zhang Xueliang had not even tried to contact the new regime. After all, it was a fact that he had ordered troops not to resist the Japanese; faced with that order from the supreme commander of the region, why should anyone else feel an obligation to oppose the Japanese? It was reported on 21 September that Nanjing had yet to decide on a policy in response to the Manchurian Incident.⁶⁵ If the central government was ambiguous about its response in the face of the occupation of a large section of its territory, locals might reason, what right did it have to expect unflinching loyalty from the inhabitants of that territory? In contrast, the Japanese claimed to offer a combination of continuity, public order, and reform to those who cooperated with them, with the possibility of violent conflict with those who did not. With this choice before them, it is less surprising that so many of the regional elites decided to cooperate with Japan.

THE ASSAULT ON JINZHOU

The Japanese capture of Jinzhou showed most starkly how brutal the occupiers could be if they did not get their way. Jinzhou is in the southernmost part of Liaoning province, on the route to Shanhaiguan, the pass that separated Manchuria from intramural China. It became the site of the last stand “outside the pass” (*guanwai*, i.e., in the Northeast) of Zhang Xueliang’s Northeastern Army in the autumn of

1931. The Japanese tried to bully the city into submission by bombing it on 8 October, but they forbore from launching an all-out attack immediately.⁶⁶ Even though Shenyang and Changchun had fallen quickly, the army still had plenty to do there in the first months of occupation, as well as having trouble farther north with Ma Zhanshan and the other resistance fighters.⁶⁷ But when superior arms, inducements to collaboration, and the weather had combined to reduce the threat in Jilin and Heilongjiang, the Kwantung Army turned its attention more fully to Zhang's last redoubt.

In late November, the Japanese had in fact withdrawn their troops from Jinzhou into the SMR zone but had called on the Chinese government to declare a neutral area around the city.⁶⁸ When the Chinese refused, the Kwantung Army, while declaring that it would not attack, began to send aircraft to circle Jinzhou. The Japanese ambassador in Washington stepped up the pressure in a private meeting with the U.S. secretary of state Henry Stimson, suggesting that the Chinese refusal had embarrassed the liberal forces in Tokyo led by Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijurō and "it would be very difficult to withhold the army from advancing again." Stimson replied that any such moves by the army would convince the American public that Japan's excuse for her incursions, namely that she was combating bandit attacks, was a ruse "to destroy the last fragment of Chinese authority in Manchuria." Stimson also pointed out that "it would be extremely difficult to ask China (which was evidently what he wanted me to do) to withdraw her army from her own territory."⁶⁹

Certainly pressure was coming even from within the Nanjing leadership itself to oppose the Japanese encroachment. On the day that the ambassador was meeting Stimson in Washington, the Nationalist minister of finance, T. V. Soong (Song Ziwen), sent a telegram to Zhang Xueliang advising that "any Japanese attack on Jinzhou should be offered utmost resistance."⁷⁰ Nelson Johnson, the American Minister in China, expressed the view that Zhang would resist at Jinzhou if only to "reassure the students and public in general, some of whom clamor for military action," despite the "attitude of his old generals of the Fengtien clique who desire his resignation to enable them to 'sell out' to the Japanese."⁷¹

Yet it had become clear to all observers that the Japanese were intent on taking Jinzhou, whether they were provided with a fig leaf of provocation or not. Their tactics of intimidation became more blatant as they dropped air torpedoes on disused sections of railway track on 10 December, disrupting traffic on the Beiping-Shenyang rail route and hinting

that populated areas might be next.⁷² On 18 December, Japanese aircraft bombed Dongliao, killing three Chinese and throwing the city into a panic.⁷³ The Japanese actions were all the more effective when contrasted with the paralysis that seemed to have gripped forces outside the Northeast. The internal politics of the Nanjing government had led Chiang Kaishek to resign on 15 December, and although he would return to office the following month, it was the weak interim government under Sun Ke that presided over the culmination of the Jinzhou crisis. Preoccupied with its own survival, the government had neither time nor resources to spare for the Northeast. In addition, Stimson's strong words in private to the Japanese ambassador belied the State Department's public attitude toward interference in the conflict. On 21 December, Hawkling Yen, the Chinese chargé in Washington, saw Stanley Hornbeck, chief of the Department of Far Eastern Affairs at the State Department. Yen told Hornbeck that a Japanese attack on Jinzhou was imminent and asked the United States to protest "in anticipation of" it. Hornbeck in effect refused, stating that the State Department was "already publicly on record with regard to the matter."⁷⁴ Nor was any other Western power more ready to advocate strong measures against the invaders.

The sequel was inevitable. On 22 December, the Japanese military headquarters in Shenyang announced that they had begun an antibandit drive west of the Liao River, and that they would remove anyone who interfered with it. They added that if the Chinese force at Jinzhou withdrew, it would not be molested.⁷⁵ The Kwantung Army then advanced. It took only a matter of days to drive back the defending Chinese troops. On 30 December, reports came in that Zhang Xueliang was withdrawing his troops from Jinzhou. Two days later, the American Minister in China, Nelson Johnson, reported the following scene: "Chinchow Railway station resembles beehive, every possible car being pressed into service and loaded with troops, animals, baggage, to last inch space."⁷⁶ The last Chinese troop train left Jinzhou at eleven in the morning on New Year's Day 1932, and with it, the last vestiges of Zhang Xueliang's power in the Northeast.⁷⁷

HARBIN AND THE SPECIAL ZONE

The case of Zhang Jinghui gives us a different perspective on cooperation with the Japanese. Zhang Jinghui later became a prominent figure in the Manchukuo government, holding positions as governor of Heilongjiang and, eventually, prime minister. However, his route to

cooperation with the Japanese was different from that of Yu Chonghan. For a start, he was a former bandit and old comrade-in-arms of Zhang Zuolin, and one of the same warlords whom Wang Yongjiang and his followers had opposed in the 1920s. With Zhang Xueliang's accession to power, Zhang Jinghui found himself less at the center of affairs. He had no ideological reason to favor Japan or the separatists; as an old advocate of Zhang Zuolin's expansionist policies, he was if anything opposed to separatism. Furthermore, Harbin was in a special position. As the hub of the CER, it was an autonomous city and had a large number of Soviet nationals among its population. Even had Zhang desired to, moving closer to the Japanese could have proved provocative to an already nervous USSR, which was prepared to let Japan overrun areas previously dominated by the SMR but regarded any moves further north with deep suspicion. Since early 1931, marshals Blyukher and Voroshilov had been strengthening their armies in the Soviet Far East in preparation for an attack by the Japanese.⁷⁸ Harbin was the beginning of the danger point as far as the Soviets were concerned, especially as Zhang Jinghui had a history of anti-Communism, highlighted in the CER Incident of 1929, when he arrested Soviet residents of Harbin and provoked the USSR into military action (see chap. 2).

Nonetheless, by January 1932 Zhang Jinghui was firmly under Japanese control. The usual explanation for this has been that Zhang was a fellow traveler all along who had been biding his time until the Japanese had sent him enough support and it was safe to declare his true allegiance. In this version of events, Zhang was aware that anti-Japanese resistance fighter Ma Zhanshan was active in the area and might attack if Zhang made too blatant a pro-Japanese move; Zhang needed the Japanese to provide men, supposedly for policing purposes, to give him enough strength to be able to declare his loyalty to the occupiers.⁷⁹

However, the evidence suggests that this interpretation is a post hoc explanation of events: because Zhang eventually collaborated, he must have intended to do so from the first. Examination of the documents recording Zhang's actions in the period following the Manchurian Incident suggest that he was in fact uncertain which direction he should turn, and that the Kwantung Army had to push him hard. Although Harbin had remained calm after receiving the news of the Manchurian Incident, Zhang Jinghui reported, "the people are afraid, something that is hard to avoid. I must issue orders to maintain local order with the utmost strictness."⁸⁰ Zhang Jinghui cabled Zhang Xueliang on 25 September to tell him that the Japanese had now occupied the Jilin-Liaoyuan area, but that "banks and agencies are all functioning as normal; [the Japanese] have just sent soldiers to observe . . . Local public order is still be-

ing maintained by the police.”⁸¹ The Japanese had further tried to assuage local feelings by having aircraft drop handbills announcing that the occupation was in retaliation for the action of Chinese troops against the Japanese and had nothing to do with the ordinary people of the town.⁸²

Zhang Jinghui was forced to tread a difficult path, trying to avoid committing himself to either side until it was clear who would win, while protecting his own base in Harbin. On 20 September, the same day that Nanjing sent out its message to all provincial and city administrations ordering them not to resist the Japanese, Zhang issued his own statement to calm down the commercial community. The care with which it has been written is almost tangible. It refers to reports of “unrestrained activities on the part of the Japanese” and hastens to add that “[sources for] the news have been cut off, so the real situation is not yet clear.”⁸³ He then made the argument most likely to appeal to the ordinary inhabitants of the city, particularly its commercial classes. Harbin, he stated, was an international commercial city and needed to maintain public order, so he was calling together all the city agencies and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss that issue specifically. “The maintenance of this city’s public order will be undertaken by the military and police agencies, and all merchants and others should carry on their business peacefully,” he noted. “Do not believe rumors, and do not panic without cause and therefore bring about financial damage.”⁸⁴

On 22 September, Zhang Xueliang sent Zhang Jinghui a cable ordering him not to resist the Japanese even in the face of provocation.⁸⁵ But the same day, Wang Ruihua, Zhang Jinghui’s police and security chief, sent in some worrisome news. It appeared that the Japanese had covertly supplied guns to local Soviet citizens attached to the CER, encouraging them to pass them on to local Chinese, who would then riot and give the Japanese an excuse to mobilize in Harbin. Thus far, Wang had managed to keep control of the situation, but it was an ominous sign.⁸⁶ Zhang Xueliang’s advice was to assign 100 police officers solely to protect Japanese nationals, but not to use troops.⁸⁷ In this way, the Japanese hope of provoking an outrage against their citizens that would justify the mobilization of troops might be foiled. Zhang Xueliang also enjoined Zhang Jinghui not to provoke the Soviets.⁸⁸ It was becoming harder and harder for the Special Zone authorities to satisfy all sides and not lose their grip on power, but they did their best with another cagily phrased announcement in Chinese and Russian, written on 20 September and issued shortly afterward. It stated again that “the true situation is unclear,” and, in euphemistic language eerily foreshadowing conflicts that would

occur many decades later, coyly acknowledged that “an attack situation has arisen” (*fasheng gongji qingshi*).⁸⁹ It pointed out that the authorities had restored telephone and railway services and assured all foreigners that the zone officials “take complete responsibility for their safety.”⁹⁰

On 22–23 September, Zhang Jinghui was called to Shenyang by the Japanese for a briefing.⁹¹ On 27 September, Zhang Jinghui cabled Zhang Xueliang to let the latter know that he had set up a public order maintenance committee, headed by himself; his police chief and chief of intelligence, Wang Ruihua; and the local militarist Ding Chao. He explained this by saying that the Japanese were moving slowly north and therefore the Soviets were waiting to make their own move. To avoid giving any side an excuse to attack, Zhang had called together representatives of all the bodies in the city, and they had agreed to set up a committee. Within days of its establishment, he stated, the situation had calmed considerably.⁹²

Zhang Jinghui now found himself in an awkward situation. He had formed a public order maintenance committee on 27 September, and the next day declared that Harbin had rejected Nanjing’s rule.⁹³ Nonetheless, the establishment of the Harbin committee was not a signal for a complete break with Zhang Xueliang, as it had been in Liaoning and Jilin. Zhang Jinghui continued to stay in touch with Zhang Xueliang, and vice versa, until early 1932, when Zhang Jinghui committed himself irrevocably to the Japanese. With few troops of his own, Zhang could hardly afford to turn the Japanese down, but he also may have assumed until quite late that Zhang Xueliang would send troops into the Northeast.⁹⁴

The Kwantung Army was not appeased by Zhang’s actions and continued to agitate for a military takeover of Harbin. Wang Ruihua details the Special Zone police department’s efforts to prevent the Japanese from provoking an incident. On 21 September and successive days, the Japanese consulate in Harbin and other Japanese-run offices were bombed, but only when nobody was inside, suggesting to Wang that the explosives had been planted by the Japanese themselves. In October, all Japanese expatriates were issued with warnings that “in a dangerous situation, they should stay inside their houses and run up a Japanese flag or a white cloth. In fact, the expatriates were perfectly safe, and so nobody at all did this.”⁹⁵ Japanese newspapers fomented rumors that caused the Harbin *dayang* to fall precipitately, although action by the authorities managed to stop it from collapsing.⁹⁶ By early November, it seemed that the Japanese were coming whether the Special Zone authorities wanted them or not. On 29 October, it was reported that the Japanese were shipping arms to Dalian, saying that they were needed for

antibandit attacks. On 5 November, Wang told Zhang that a Colonel Kawasaki had been sent to Harbin to convert the Special Services (*Tokumu kikan*) offices into a special military agency. All the while, the Japanese had been putting advertisements into the local White Russian press, advocating a Manchu-Mongol state. It was all a disgrace, concluded Wang, and they should act to regain Chinese control.⁹⁷

One author says that “Zhang Jinghui’s bandit background had caused him to form a selfish outlook on the world.”⁹⁸ This statement is no doubt correct, but the author draws the conclusion that it was Zhang’s selfish nature that had led him into swift and irrevocable collaboration with the Japanese. In fact, in a sense he gives Zhang too much credit. Unlike that of Yu Chonghan, Zhang Jinghui’s attachment to the Japanese owed nothing to ideology or conviction. Zhang’s career in the world of Manchurian banditry and militarism had taught him the importance of a powerful patron, and in the autumn of 1931 it was unclear which of the two patrons he might choose between would win. If Nanjing or Zhang Xueliang had sent troops to recover the Northeast, or if local commanders had not been ordered not to resist, then Zhang’s response might have been to oppose the Japanese as long as possible. As it was, the dwindling possibility of help from the south, and the fear of the Soviets to the north, led Zhang (and Wang Ruihua, who had condemned Japanese pressure tactics as a “disgrace”) to cooperate with the Kwantung Army.

THE SOVIET FACTOR

The reaction of the USSR to the crisis in Harbin is worth examining, not only in itself but also to judge its effect on the behavior of Zhang Jinghui. Zhang Jinghui was associated with the “fervent, even violent anti-Communis[m]” that had marked Zhang Zuolin’s last years in power.⁹⁹ He had sparked the fighting during the CER Incident in 1929 by arresting many of the Soviet officials in Harbin. During the autumn of 1931, his actions were partly informed by concern for what the USSR might do in response to actions by him or the Japanese. The Soviets themselves were also concerned about the significance of the Japanese occupation of southern Manchuria.

Wang Ruihua made regular intelligence reports to Zhang Jinghui on this topic, which were crucial in shaping the latter’s reactions. Officially the Soviet reaction to the Japanese occupation of southern Manchuria was one of condemnation. When they first heard about the Manchurian Incident, the Far East Command at Chita immediately mobilized

troops, sending 15 aircraft and a motorized division to Dauriya, just on the Soviet side of the Sino-Soviet border, where they had already stationed the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-sixth Divisions of the Red Army, 5 fighter aircraft, 6 tanks, 2 armored cars, and 60 six-wheelers.¹⁰⁰ Thirty-five thousand troops were stationed outside Manzhouli, just across the Sino-Soviet border.¹⁰¹ The Soviets were prepared for the worst.¹⁰²

But they did not plan to precipitate conflict. Intelligence reports made it clear that the Soviets would not actively oppose the Japanese actions unless they encroached into the area controlled by the CER. On 23 September 1931, there was a meeting between directors of the CER and unnamed Soviet notables. The Soviets warned that "if Japan were to occupy Harbin, we could not act rashly, and our government's protests in days to come concerning China would be no more than a formality."¹⁰³ In December, consuls in Manchuria were instructed to express feelings of goodwill toward the Chinese, so as not to hamper Soviet opportunities for developing trade, but Wang saw this as the reverse side of a policy decision by Moscow. Only the most extreme circumstances would now bring the USSR into conflict with Japan; the instability of the Soviet economy and the unfinished state of the Five Year Plan, together with the first of Stalin's purges that weakened the Red Army, made it imperative to maintain the peace, at least for the time being.¹⁰⁴

It was clear by early December that a full-scale Soviet assault on the Japanese was not forthcoming; political considerations aside, the Red Army was not going to launch an attack in the depths of a Manchurian winter. The prospect of the Japanese being repelled from the region by Soviet force was therefore removed, and given the choice, Zhang preferred the Japanese. At the same time, the prospect of the Soviet officials who were resident in Harbin using subterfuge to whip up support for their own agenda was both plausible and unwelcome. The local Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was hardly a great threat (at this point it had fewer than 2,000 members in the whole Northeast), but with Soviet backing it might become much more formidable.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Nanjing's continuation of the policy of nonresistance meant that there was little prospect of rescue from the south. In the circumstances, it becomes clear why Zhang aligned himself more and more clearly with the Japanese as the months went by. Anti-Soviet, well-funded, powerful, and present for the long term whether Zhang liked it or not, the Japanese were his only realistic option for an alliance.

The attitude of the USSR to the Manchurian crisis erred on the side of caution beyond even these early events. For example, its behavior in the Chinese consulate incident of April 1932 was far removed from the

anti-imperialism that it professed. When the resistance fighter Ma Zhanshan, who had temporarily pledged allegiance to the newly established Manchukuo, defected back to the resistance, he sent a long telegram to Nanjing on 12 April 1932 declaring his dedication to the nationalist struggle (see chap. 5). The telegram was sent from the Chinese consulate at Blagoveshchensk, on the Amur River opposite the Chinese town of Heihe; at this point there were no formal diplomatic ties between China and the USSR, but under the 1929 Khabarovsk Protocol there were a few Chinese consuls stationed in the Soviet Far East, and Soviet consuls in Manchuria. On 21 April, Chinese consuls and negotiators in the USSR cabled Nanjing to inform them of the following development: Moscow had declared that the Blagoveshchensk consul's permission to Ma to use the consular telegram service was "disruptive to the Soviet Union's policy of neutrality" and that they had "already requested the Manchukuo government to remove the consul and substitute another."¹⁰⁶ Nanjing was naturally concerned that this was perilously close to recognition of the Manchukuo government by the USSR, and Ma Zhanshan himself cabled Nanjing to protest the Soviet policy.¹⁰⁷ Yet Moscow had no enthusiasm for the specter of Japanese expansion, and a year later the concern of the Foreign Ministry in Nanjing was that Ma Zhanshan and other resistance leaders were now being used as Trojan horses for Soviet foreign policy. Foreign Minister Luo Wengan passed on reports from Ambassador Yan Huiqing (who had taken up office after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and China in September 1932) in Moscow that the Soviets had met Ma Zhanshan, Wang Delin, Su Bingwen, and Li Du on their way back from their European tour in spring 1933. In those reports it was claimed that the USSR was paying the resistance leaders US\$600,000 in twelve installments as a fee for rearming and subverting Japanese rule in Manchukuo. In addition, some money would go to local fighters based in Xinjiang, an area of traditional Russian interest, which did not please Nanjing.¹⁰⁸ The USSR was not a predictable ally to either side.

Manchukuo Nationalism, the Kingly Way, and Elite Collaboration

The Japanese did not simply rely on a network of collaborators to hold their new creation together. At least in the initial phase of the occupation, they claimed to base Manchukuo on the idea of

“popular will” rather than imperial sovereignty, and this produced a plethora of organizations and structures that aimed to create a national identity for the new state.¹⁰⁹

Did “Manchukuo nationalism” then appear in the occupied Northeast? Although this study concentrates on the initial period of occupation and not the whole 1931 to 1945 period, it seems safe to say that it did not. This chapter and the next suggest that, for the most part, lack of Japanese involvement at a local level meant that their presence led to acquiescence rather than resistance. But this also meant that attempts to spread an ideology for the new state were unable to penetrate very far. This, tied with general Japanese arrogance mixed with real brutality, particularly in the later Manchukuo period, and a continuing lack of order at the periphery, caused problems too. But finally, one has to keep in mind that fourteen years is a very short time to form a nation. In 1861, Massimo d’Azeglio, formerly premier of the state of Piedmont, observed, “We have made Italy; now we have to make Italians.”¹¹⁰ Well over a century after Italy was unified, there are still strong separatist forces within that country, so perhaps it is simply unreasonable to expect to find signs of “nation-ness” in Manchuria by 1945.

The need to come up with a unifying ideology at all was rather sudden, since the Kwantung Army had originally intended to annex the Northeast, not set up an independent state. There were Manchurian Japanese expatriates such as the scholar Tachibana Shiraki and members of the Manchurian Youth League (*Manshū seinen renmei*) who advocated “pan-Asian cooperation and Confucian principles of government.”¹¹¹ But these ideas, which contributed to the attempt to provide ideological legitimacy for the regime, were not visible in administration.¹¹² This was an obstacle to their gaining wide acceptance or even recognition. Organizations such as the Concordia Society (Xiehehui), founded in 1932 and relaunched in 1934, did little to popularize the idea of Manchukuo among the people at large.¹¹³

The philosophy of the Kingly Way (Wangdao) expressed by the co-opted Chinese elites and approved by the new government drew on Chinese tradition and had little specifically northeastern about it, although the scholar Tachibana Shiraki had worked out a justification for the new state based on its tenets, which posited that Manchukuo was “a Sino-Japanese alliance for independence and [had] mass Chinese support for Zhang [Xueliang’s] ouster.”¹¹⁴ In his interview with Morita Fukumatsu, Yu Chonghan advocated that “the key point is to set up a new, independent state, cut off from the authority of the old landlords

and Nanjing.” At the heart of this concept, he went on, was the Kingly Way; it might appear that these words were ancient, but because they had “Eastern spirit and culture” they would continue to have new meaning, value, and content. However, Yu’s conceptualization of what the Kingly Way meant was never clearly articulated. In part, it revolved around an undefined generality: “improving people using the will of the people as a basis.” Elsewhere, it seemed to be used, without definition, to justify a series of policies that Yu favored (as did the new administration). A severance of relations with Zhang Xueliang and Nanjing was necessary, he stated, because the people of the Northeast had had their livelihoods disrupted over the last twenty years “for the sake of one man and his family.” The new Kingly Way system involved “smashing the old warlord politics”; instead “one should hoist the flag of reform clearly by abolishing the people’s unfair tax burden and rearranging the tax system.”¹¹⁵ The desired effects of the Kingly Way are listed without any real explanation of what made it different from simple good governance.

Yu, we should note, had particular reason to think kindly of the Japanese. Between 1925 and 1932, Yu Chonghan received regular dividends of 20,000 yen in his capacity as a director of the SMR-owned Zhenxing (Prosperity) iron ore company.¹¹⁶ Although the company had been set up in 1916 as a “joint venture,” the articles of incorporation stated that the iron ore produced might only be sold to the SMR.¹¹⁷ In return, the SMR-owned Anshan iron and steel works made sure that the directors of the company did not go without. To emphasize that Yu’s involvement was not merely that of an investor who would be liable to normal commercial risk, it was stated in the accompanying annual letter of confirmation to him that if the dividends fell short of the required sum, then the difference would be made up by the SMR. Yu’s position as a director contributed to maintaining his favorable attitude toward the Japanese. In his interview with Morita, Yu expressed the view, not entirely disinterestedly, that “it would be a pity if the forms of cooperative enterprises changed.”¹¹⁸

But it would be overcynical to suggest that the relationship between Yu and his Japanese sponsors was purely mercenary, a point made by the correspondence surrounding Yu’s death in 1932. In November 1932, Yu became fatally ill and was taken to hospital in Dalian. The director of the Zhenxing company sent an internal memo stating, “This gentleman has for many years had a close relationship with this company, and has from first to last worked hard on the company’s projects. His hospital expenses will be around 600 yen, and the above-mentioned amount will

be borne by the company. Please deal with this.”¹¹⁹ On 16 November, Yu died. In a memo to Count Hayashi Hirotarō of the SMR, Kamata Yanosuke, the general manager of the Zhenxing company, said of him, “For fifteen years, this gentleman expended all his heart and strength for closeness between the Chinese and the Japanese, and between the Japanese and the Manchurians, and his efforts were very great.”¹²⁰ He pledged a funeral gift of 10,000 yen, adding his admiration that Yu had managed “to ignore his oppression by the old warlords (*junfa*).”¹²¹ Yu Chonghan had a longer and more lasting connection with Japan than was typical among the elite members, but it seems that the relationship between him and his Japanese contacts was one of mutual respect. Coupled with the fact that his own people had refused to follow his recommendations while he was in office, and had ignored him when he went into retirement, it is perhaps unsurprising that he was more emotionally tied to a separate Northeast under Japanese supervision than he was to a new Chinese nationalism sponsored by men he regarded as warlords. In other words, it may not be fair to say that Yu’s advocacy of the Kingly Way was insincere, but it should nonetheless be noted that it was closely tied up with his personal interests and expressed emotionally rather than intellectually.

Yu Chonghan was not the only prominent collaborator to have accepted Japanese money before 1931. In November 1925, Ma Longtan, the former supervisor of the Sipingkai-Taonan railway, was given 20,000 yen.¹²² On 21 October 1931, Ma was reported to have become chairman of a new Chinese Manchurian Independent Self-Government Committee dedicated to setting up “a new paradise for Chinese and Japanese.”¹²³ Xie Jieshi, a former Qing official who had been a foreign affairs adviser during Zhang Xun’s extremely short-lived restoration in 1917, was living in Tianjin in the 1920s.¹²⁴ In a document dated 3 July 1928 and marked “extremely confidential,” Japanese consul Hayashi Kyujirō ordered SMR deputy director Matsuoka Yōsuke to make a payment of 3,000 yen to Xie.¹²⁵ In September 1931 Xie would become chief negotiator for Xi Xia, the governor of Jilin under the Japanese, and later foreign minister of Manchukuo.¹²⁶ Although it is difficult to know how widespread the policy of Japanese payments to Chinese elite members was, it appears that several prominent collaborators had a financial incentive to feel favorable toward the new regime.

For a more carefully considered view of the Kingly Way, one must turn to Zheng Xiaoxu, the first prime minister of Manchukuo.¹²⁷ Zheng was not a native northeasterner but a diehard Qing loyalist in the service

of the deposed emperor Puyi, who was persuaded by Kwantung Army officials that the new state might be the route to restoration of the imperial house. Born in Fujian in 1859, Zheng joined the bureaucracy and held positions as a local official until 1911 in Wuhan, Jiangnan, and Guangxi. He had refused to recognize the Republic and wrote prodigiously, producing pieces highly critical of the new Republican leaders, whom he characterized as “a bunch of thieves.”¹²⁸ In 1923, he joined Puyi’s court in Tianjin, where his lobbying on behalf of the former emperor’s entourage brought him to the attention of the Japanese and led to the Kwantung Army installing him as first prime minister of its new state in March 1932.

The purpose of co-opting Zheng into the new state was for him to articulate the ideological basis of the Kingly Way. While the occupiers’ attachment to the concept was somewhat sudden, Zheng had first written on this topic as far back as 1882, in an essay titled “A Sage Within, a King Without” (*Neisheng waiwang*). During his period at the court in exile, Zheng formulated his political ideas in the context of the Republic, in words at least partly prescient: “The great Qing was destroyed by the Republic, the Republic will be destroyed by Communism, and Communism will be destroyed by joint control [*gongguan*].”¹²⁹ By joint control, Zheng meant joint administration between a revived imperial government and foreign powers who would be played off against one another.¹³⁰ Later, Zheng would state that the Kingly Way had previously been hindered by “modern powers all teaching their people ‘patriotism’ [*aiguozhuyi*] and ‘military popular education.’”¹³¹

This latter statement points up a key contradiction within the concept of the Kingly Way that may have militated against its becoming a truly effective discourse for creating a Manchukuo nationalism. The Kingly Way is certainly a vague concept, but that in itself is no barrier to effectiveness: the lack of definition of *die deutsche Seele* in Germany or *Yamato-damashii* in Japan actually contributed to a flexibility of meaning that fueled rather than hindered the development of nationalist ideology. Nonetheless, it appears that what formalization the ideas of the Kingly Way were given was intended to counteract the ideas of nationalism altogether. The immediate concern was to neutralize the effects of Chinese nationalism in the preceding period, but the universalistic explanations given of the Kingly Way suggest that it simultaneously hindered a Manchukuo nationalism from forming. The basis of the Kingly Way was Confucian-Mencian; it made very little attempt to tie itself specifically to

the Northeast, or to provide a genealogy for the new state. It was also strongly antimodern, another hindrance to the essentially modern idea of nationalism.

A Japanese scholar, Yano Jin'ichi, attempted to reconcile the anti-nationalism of Zheng Xiaoxu with the formation of a new "state." Yano, like so many of the other Japanese involved with the Manchukuo project, had spent many years in China, teaching in Beijing between 1905 and 1911 after his graduation from Tokyo University. He spent the rest of his career at Kyoto University, retiring in 1932, after which he went straight to Manchuria as an adviser to the Kwantung Army. "The years 1932–1933," notes Joshua Fogel, "saw Yano pen a flurry of books and articles on *wang-tao* [Wangdao] in Manchuria."¹³² Following is one example, in which Yano commented on Zheng's statement above that patriotism and military education are incompatible with the Kingly Way, and whose abundance of double negatives suggests a writer valiantly but unsuccessfully attempting to square circles:

[Zheng] says that the object of patriotism is the mind to regard foreign countries as enemies, and military education of the people is a forerunner of war preparation; that such are the policies for national establishment or expansion, but are incompatible with Wangtao[,] which aims at the harmony and friendship of the human race and the peace of the world. Of course such narrow patriotism as described by Premier Cheng is against Wangtao . . . But the stage of Wangtao not yet being perfect, it is not absolutely necessary to recognize no independent nation . . . As the denial of independent nations is not absolutely necessary, it is not necessary to deny patriotism . . . Premier Cheng has said that military education of the people is against Wangtao, but it cannot be said that military education of the people is absolutely against Wangtao . . . Military education of the people as for subjugating bandits that cause suffering to the people is not necessarily to be despised by Wangtao.¹³³

Attempts to spread the concept of the Kingly Way were hindered by the disruption caused in schools by the occupation. The textbooks introduced by the Zhang regime, with their emphasis on the Three People's Principles, were anathema. Instead, on 25 March 1932 the new regime declared that "in the curriculum of every school should be embodied the fundamental principle of Li Chiao or Confucianism, and any text-book containing any hint of political instigation should be abolished altogether."¹³⁴ This is an extract from a school primer for Chinese language class:

The main principle on which our Manchukuo has been set up is to be in accordance with heaven and to bring the people peace [*shuntian anmin*]. Desiring to bring it to realization is implementation of the Kingly Way. The Kingly Way was originally the great method of basic state control through benevolence and proper behavior [*li*] . . . In ancient times, Yao and Shun . . . used the Kingly Way to rule the state, and the empire was at peace, and it was said to be a flourishing time. Is this not a good proof [of the Kingly Way's effectiveness]?¹³⁵

Only occasionally did the hastily written textbooks, which were distributed in increasing numbers between 1932 and 1935, mention any specifically northeastern element, as in: "Manchuria . . . has special customs and ceremonies, different from the customs of China[,], . . . and this is the basis of their opposition and independence from one another."¹³⁶

Despite the occupiers' efforts, there does not appear to have been wide penetration of the ideas that were supposed to underpin the new state. The case of Tieling county is suggestive: it had historically been a "county where education flourished," and "it was near to the SMR zone, so it had close links with Japanese culture and [knowledge of] the Japanese language was widespread." In late 1933, investigators of the county made an assessment as to how far popular consciousness of the new state had gone: they estimated that 90 percent of the locals had only a basic level of education about the new state or no knowledge at all, while just 10 percent "had a knowledge level of complete awareness about the new state." Nor did awareness of the new state necessarily indicate attachment to it. The report on the administration of Taian county in 1933 made the following observation:

In the past, the people parroted the phrase "benevolent government" [*renzheng*], even though benevolent government really had little influence on their lives. What really directly affects people's lives is a reduction in taxes, the maintenance of public order, and a flourishing livelihood, whether you call that "benevolent government" or the "Kingly Way" [*Wangdao*].

The report is frank about the need for further improvement in the administration of justice and finances, and the maintenance of public order: "The benefits of the Kingly Way government have yet to reach the people's lives." Improve on that, it was suggested, and "we hope that then the people's thoughts will naturally be stabilized."¹³⁷

Nonetheless, it should be noted that there are interpretations of the Manchukuo experience that offer alternatives to the nationalist one. Prasenjit Duara has presented a compelling picture of the use by the

Japanese in Manchukuo of the traditional Morality Society as a vehicle for spreading “classical morality.” But although the occupiers had their own agenda for the Society, the experience of women involved with this movement, as they revealed in their accounts of their activities, was perceived by themselves as fruitful and liberating rather than exploitative.¹³⁸ It must be remembered that the use of the term “collaboration” to describe many of the activities mentioned in this chapter, while convenient, carries with it the implication of deviation from a nationalist norm. However, those carrying out these activities did not necessarily recognize or accept that norm.

Conclusion

For the most part, information about the Manchurian Incident and the subsequent occupation have come from the Japanese point of view. That view emphasizes the conflicts between Japanese military factions, feverish and secret plots, and the influence on officers of pan-Asianism and Nichiren Buddhism. It is salutary to note just how little of all this appears to have filtered through to the view on the Chinese side. The overall impression one might gain of the initial phase of the implementation of the occupation was that it was improvised rather than ideological, with trappings such as the Kingly Way and the Concordia Society tacked on rather haphazardly later. This is not to say that, for the most part, it was irrational. Co-optation of provincial elites was made a priority, and although there were many notable acts of resistance, cooperation with the Japanese became the norm. To that extent, it should be acknowledged, the Kwantung Army had laid the administrative foundations for its new possession effectively in the years 1931 to 1933 at the provincial level. The next chapter will explore the impact of the occupation lower down, at the county level, and assess its effectiveness there.

CHAPTER 4

Shrapnel and Social Spending

Local Elite Collaboration in Manchukuo, 1931–1933

The Kwantung Army increased its numbers massively in 1931, from a little over 10,000 at the start of the year to nearly 65,000 by the end.¹ But even a massively increased troop presence was not enough to give it complete control over the vast area it occupied. In many cases, although the Kwantung Army nominally held control of a certain area, resistance fighters were in charge in practice. Even when this was not the case, however, the scale of their task made it necessary for the occupiers to work through the structures that already existed. Furthermore, the Japanese occupiers were fueled by a curious and self-deluding mixture of imperialistic opportunism and pan-Asian idealism. This meant that they were wedded emotionally, as well as pragmatically, to the idea that their new conquest should appear to include widespread cooperation from the local Chinese. Ishiwara and Itagaki, when planning their coup, felt that the “Japanese administration would be possible within the existing means of the local Chinese governments.”²

Thus, although the Japanese aimed to create a whole new structure at the “national” level in their newly created state of Manchukuo, at the local level they relied heavily on the agencies they had inherited from the Zhang Xueliang period. In some counties, such as Tieling, near Shenyang, they had relatively little trouble in organizing local officials, under a magistrate, and in policing and maintaining order in the county themselves. In others, such as Taonan in northern Liaoning, a heavy military presence maintained order. However, as at the provincial level, the Japanese were keen that, as far as possible, the situation should be seen

as business as usual; a reassured population would be a docile population. Yet the Japanese could also be extremely brutal when they chose. The villagers of Pingdingshan and Tulongshan who came into conflict with the Kwantung Army could attest to the pitiless nature of the occupiers' reprisals.

This chapter outlines the process of co-optation of county-level Chinese officials by the Japanese, emphasizing that the latter used both persuasion (through social welfare projects, financial reform, and tax remissions) and force to stabilize local government during the period 1931 to 1933. It also considers the differing nature of the problems that the Japanese faced in Liaoning, where their level of control was relatively high, and in Jilin and Heilongjiang, where it was weaker.

Techniques and Tactics of Control

LOCAL PUBLIC ORDER

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEES

Following the Manchurian Incident, the main problem with county-level administration was how to stop the structures that still existed from falling apart. In a version of its policy at provincial level, the Kwantung Army's strategy was to encourage local elite members to form committees. These elites were anxious that their community not be destroyed by conflict with the Japanese. In some cases, it was not attacks by the Japanese themselves that caused the damage; rather, the terrified population, including many of the local officials, anticipated conflict and fled, leading to a breakdown in local order that in turn encouraged raids by bandits who saw easy pickings. The committees aimed to avoid this by setting up a local structure of law enforcement that would keep life going in normal fashion. The Kwantung Army was also in favor of this where practical, as the maintenance of local autonomous law enforcement saved it having to assign scarce personnel to garrison an area. These committees, having been set up ostensibly for a nonpartisan purpose (the maintenance of public order) then proved a useful vehicle that aided the Japanese in organizing their campaign to persuade outsiders of the legitimacy of Manchurian independence. At the same time, many of the structures of local government were preserved, such as the appointment of Chinese magistrates to run counties; and changes were proposed as natural extensions of the system embodied in the Local Gov-

ernment Reorganization Law that Nanjing had passed in 1928, but which had been stillborn in practice.

The new authorities dedicated a high proportion of their tax revenues to the maintenance of order. In 1932–33, the first fiscal year of the Manchukuo regime, “for the work of peace preservation, the Government appropriated M.Y [Manchukuo yuan] 42,420,000 for the army and M.Y 12,638,000 for the police forces out of the total national budget of M.Y 137,957,000, or some total 40% of the total estimates during the first fiscal year.”⁷³ (See below for more detail on the Manchukuo currency.) However, the Japanese demanded that much of the restoration of order be carried out by the local authorities. Many did so with alacrity. In Liaoyang county, for instance, immediately after the Incident, “people were extremely worried.”⁷⁴ The county magistrate brought together local elite members and police officials and set up a public order maintenance committee, impressing on them the importance of protecting Japanese nationals in order to avoid “misunderstandings” that might bring forceful Japanese intervention in the county. For the time being, the local Japanese consular representative and police officials said that they would not interfere, which allowed Liaoyang’s Chinese officials to carry on as before. By 5 October 1931, the committee could say, “The Japanese army and police have not yet advanced into the county town even one step . . . and the people’s minds are at peace.”⁷⁵

In areas where they felt the local officials were trustworthy, or where Japanese troops were, in case of emergency, close enough to be brought in, counties were allowed to keep their arsenals. On 19 September, Japanese troops entered Haicheng county town on the pretext of protecting Japanese nationals living there. But the next day, a delegation of local police officials led by police chief (*gonganju zhang*) Cui Wenkai visited the Japanese commander and “requested that he return their rifles, so that they could maintain public order in the area and protect Japanese nationals.”⁷⁶ The commander agreed to their request, and once they had restored order “all the merchants traded peacefully as usual.”⁷⁷

In Tieling county, close to Shenyang, the magistrate took responsibility for public order after the Incident. Tieling had for a long time been an area heavily influenced by Japan, having been occupied during the Russo-Japanese War and made an SMR-affiliated area afterward. Now its magistrate ordered the education department to make sure that students continued to attend classes, and the students “were forbidden to cause trouble outside”; he commissioned the police corps (*gonggandui*) to stamp out bandit activity and prevent anti-Japanese speeches and demonstrations. Merchants were told to carry on business as usual and

forbidden to raise prices; prices were soon stabilized. In short, the magistrate expressed satisfaction that without the need for Japanese troops to enter the city, calm had been restored, although there were still problems with 1,000 or so men under the leadership of Wang Yizhe, who made raids from the surrounding area.⁸ The magistrate carried out wholesale reforms of the police during 1932, which contributed to the reduction in the number of bandit raids from 94 in 1932 to 42 in the first eight months of 1933, with the near-complete elimination of bandits in the area by August 1933.⁹

Local defense could also be organized using historical precedent. In Liaozhong county, it was reported on 9 October 1931 that since the Incident “the merchants had been extremely frightened, and the people’s minds were unsettled.”¹⁰ So the county magistrate called together a conference to set up a committee. Heads of local organizations (*tuanti*) and local elite members set up a peace preservation committee (*baoran weiyuanhui*), which aimed to maintain public order in the area. Among the stipulations set out for it were that each major village should have a resident militia of forty men, and each ward should appoint a militia chief with responsibility for exterminating bandits. Each village should also have a mounted militia chief (*mading*) with 14 followers.¹¹ Militias had likewise been set up in Shenyang county to engage in antibandit activities and protect all foreign nationals, “to avoid . . . causing any misunderstandings.”¹²

In Liaoyuan county, the local elites came to an agreement with Japanese consular officials that the county would undertake to provide local law enforcement and that the Kwantung Army would not interfere. Public order was chaotic in the wake of the Incident. The local police (*jingcha*) of the entire county had only 40 rifles, and the public security bureau (*gonganju*) had only 200, as well as 4 mortars. Many police officials had fled on 22 September, and replacements had had to be brought in from neighboring counties. Meanwhile, the chaos had caused many bankers to flee as well, leading to a financial crisis. To add to the area’s troubles, around 3,000 bandits were active in the area. Xu Weixin, Liaoyuan county magistrate, first established a public order maintenance committee on 20 September 1931, recruiting local merchants to serve under him. The Japanese army withdrew on 23 September, handing over authority to the committee. Organization of local law enforcement took place here, as in other counties, on the basis of existing structures, but often with better funding. Among the authorities’ first priorities was paying police expenses and salaries. They also set up a joint committee on finances (*jinyong lianhe weiyuanhui*), which took upon itself the neglected

task of collecting grain taxes. In the eight wards of the county, over 1,000 men were recruited to the militia (*ziweituan*), which supplemented the Japanese army. From November, the committee found it had enough revenues to be able to fund mounted patrols in the area, which further reduced the threat of banditry. By January 1931, Xu was able to report that “we have fortunately overcome our difficulties.”¹³

In this case, the local Chinese officials gave police expenditures a high priority, making it clear that restoring public order was the most important task of the local government. While the Japanese kept their troops in the area in case of trouble, they were able to leave the active work of bandit suppression to the local law enforcement organizations. This was not dissimilar to the structures existing elsewhere in China, where the regular army (*lujun*) and provincial protection armies (*shengfangjun* or *jingbeidui*) might both be stationed in a province, with the former more concerned with keeping communications open and the latter concentrating on antibandit operations.¹⁴ Troops would habitually use an antibandit campaign as a pretext for demanding that the locals keep them fed and supplied, and this meant that those locals did not welcome the prospect of a long stay by the military.¹⁵

Changtu was another county that succeeded in restoring public order. Changtu was on the Mongolian border, and the population was a mixture of Han Chinese and Mongols. Banditry became rife after the Incident, and thirteen “righteous” members of the local elite came together to form a public order maintenance committee. After a couple of months, they “reached an understanding” with the Japanese and were given permission to organize a law enforcement effort in tandem with the Japanese troops in the area. In the county town, to combat bandit raids, “merchant militias” were formed (*shangmin getuan*) that cooperated with the countryside militias. However, this measure proved insufficient on its own to deter bandits because the Changtu county town was not walled and was therefore vulnerable. So an electric fence was erected around the town, which proved extremely effective.¹⁶ Having taken this rather drastic measure to prevent bandit incursions into the county town, the Changtu local administration took measures to stabilize local prices and restart tax collection. As in Liaoyuan, the county made paying police salaries a priority. Police patrols (*zijingtuan*) were set up by the commercial community in each ward; the division in the county town had 200 men. Each village was also made to support 20–30 men as a standing militia, with all men aged between nineteen and forty forming an irregular militia.

This technique of encouraging local autonomy in law enforcement

was not always successful. In January 1932, the magistrate of Suizhong county reported to Fengtian provincial governor Zang Shiyi on Japanese weapon confiscations in his area. Originally, there had been over 400 police troops in the county, and two types of militia, the standing militia (*changzhuding*) and the irregular militia (*sanzaiding*). (The former were a commissioned group of 8 to 10 men in each village, whereas the latter encompassed all males aged eighteen and forty, who were only on standby duty.) In the bandit-ridden conditions immediately after the Incident, the magistrate gave orders for standing militias to be formed throughout the county, 450 men in total, to be known collectively as the self-defense peace protection corps (*zimei baoandui*). The tradition of local self-defense leagues was a long-standing one in the Northeast, as elsewhere in China. This action, combined with the activities of the irregular militia, meant that after several months there was no more bandit activity. However, in late December 1931, Mo Fushan, the head of the county police, fled south of the Wall, leading to a bandit resurgence that brought intervention by the Japanese army, although its troops once more began to withdraw by January 1932. The magistrate, writing on 20 January 1932, stated that “in general, the minds of the merchants are fairly settled,” but he refused to rule out the possibility of trouble in the future.¹⁷

At a county level, the establishment of public order committees served several purposes. The committees provided a structure for the local elites to become involved in maintaining local social order, which both saved the Japanese the effort of having to do it and implicitly co-opted the elite members into working with the occupiers. Having secured that cooperation, the Japanese had a point from which they could later exercise leverage to make support for their regime much more explicit, when they required county administrations to declare independence from Nanjing and adherence to a separate Northeast.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

It is clear that local Chambers of Commerce (*shanghui*) were among the most frequently co-opted agencies, offering support to the Japanese and making demands of them. In Shenyang, the Chamber of Commerce put its support behind the new Japanese-backed currency on 7 January 1932, and on 22 January the Haicheng county chamber requested loans to support businesses that were going under. On 12 February, the Shenyang chamber expressed dissatisfaction at the level of expense it was being asked to bear for the local militia, which they had

been sponsoring up to that point, and requested that the municipal authorities take on the costs; a report of 14 February states that the request was granted. In the aftermath of the Japanese capture of Harbin, it was the city's chamber that entertained the leading Japanese notables, Tamon and Ohashi, at dinner on 16 February, giving them a welcoming speech. And on 19 April, it was recorded that the Fengtian chamber was preparing to welcome the Lytton Commission from the League of Nations. The role of the chambers appeared to be officially approved: on 3 March, the enterprise office ordered every county to open up a chamber, some of which had closed during the Incident.¹⁸

The Fengtian Chamber of Commerce was prepared to undertake lobbying. On 24 March 1932, it was reported that the chamber had requested the authorities for a reduction in levies and taxes, saying, "The people's difficulties must be alleviated. Every county has had enough of depredations by the military and the bandits, and the people cannot make a living, so most of their houses sit empty."¹⁹ The heads of forty county chambers had earlier come to Shenyang, on 21 March, to hold a conference to request the provincial authorities to reduce the burden on the people and also to request the banks to reduce interest on the loans made to farmers and traders. They wanted the provincial government to set up ways to help firms in counties to avoid closures. On the afternoon of the 21st, in the conference room of the commercial affairs office they had a "working tea," with over fifty delegates. They elected Fang Xudong as acting chairman, and they came up with four proposals:

1. To hold a large general meeting of delegates in Qiqihaer.
2. To request the provincial government to support firms and reduce taxes and levies, and to elect delegates to go and make the request.
3. To write in the names of all the chambers of commerce to request the banks to reduce interest rates on loans.
4. To hold the first conference within seven days, to prepare for discussions on the matter above.²⁰

Although the deliberations of this particular meeting are not further recorded, it is noted in the section on taxation below that the Japanese implemented various tax reductions and abolitions to co-opt local support.

THE POLITICIZATION OF THE PUBLIC ORDER COMMITTEES

Even if Komai Tokuzō and other Kwantung Army leaders were not genuinely committed to ethnic harmony or autonomy in Manchukuo, they were nonetheless eager that agitation for the new

state should come as much as possible from local Chinese. We have seen that elite members at both provincial and county levels were organized into public order preservation committees. The next step was the politicization of these committees. On 1 October 1931, a body calling itself the Northeastern Gentry and People's Crisis Policy Resolution Discussion Group made an announcement. It declared that discussion groups "all around the Northeast" had resolved on a policy of independent self-government: "We now have an unprecedented opportunity, having suffered under violent warlord rule, to set up a new independent government. We are opposed to the Zhang Xueliang-linked Jinzhou government as well as the warlord Chiang Kaishek. This is a genuine resolution of the popular will."²¹

That last statement is clearly not to be taken literally; the issue of Manchurian self-government was not going to be put to a popular vote any more than Zhang Xueliang's government had been. Nonetheless, the use of the phrase "popular will" reflects one aspect of the Kwantung Army's attempt to make the Manchurian occupation seem more than a simple act of conquest. Sadako Ogata observes that in the early phase of the occupation, the Kwantung Army repeatedly used "popular will" as a justification for its actions. This marked a sharp and notable contrast with political authority in Japan itself, which derived from the sovereign presence of the emperor, and not from the people. After Manchukuo became an "empire" in 1934, "popular will" was excised from the state ideology, replaced by authority derived from the Japanese emperor.²² These Japanese ideological maneuvers, however, had little relevance for the local elites in county administrations. They did have a choice about their reaction to the Japanese occupation, albeit an unenviable one, and a proportion did choose to leave for Beiping or join the resistance within Manchuria. But most stayed where they were. The local elite members who cooperated with the Japanese probably had differing motivations: some considered that the Japanese offered a chance for a new start for the region; others realized that the occupiers were there to stay for a long time and they had little choice but to work with them. The fact remains that the Japanese were successful in recruiting sufficient local elites at provincial and county levels to keep control over the Northeast with limited, although steadily increasing, troop numbers while carrying out their plans to detach the region from China. To that extent, their plan of working through public order maintenance committees that would later become politicized was effective.

Certainly what we know of the views of some prominent committee

members does not suggest that they had been forced into making pro-Japanese statements. Yu Chonghan was interviewed by Morita Fukumatsu on behalf of the Japanese during the period 1–3 November 1931, and the report of the interview was made a restricted circulation document, which suggests that the Japanese had not manufactured its contents. In it, Yu talked about the importance of separatism, which had been advocated by some civilian elite leaders, including Wang Yongjiang, in the 1920s.²³ It is therefore not inconsistent that Yu advocated the same policy in 1931. Yu also said that it was necessary to abandon warlord politics and entrust border defenses to Japan while reconstituting the region's infrastructure.²⁴ Again, this position is not incompatible with his position in the mid-1920s. While we do not have such detailed interviews with elite members at the county level, we are able to see how the reports of peace preservation carried out under the supervision of the Japanese also led to the politicization of the committees. On 12 December 1931, the Liaoyuan county public order maintenance committee metamorphosed into a self-government executive committee (*zizhi zhixing weiyuanhui*), as had the public order maintenance committee in Changtu county on 16 November 1931.²⁵ These executive committees were placed under the control of a central body, the Fengtian Local Self-Government Directorate (*Fengtian difang zizhi zhidaobu*), which was nominally headed by Yu Chonghan but otherwise run entirely by Japanese.²⁶ This division shows a recurrent tendency in the initial phase of the occupation. The upper echelons of the new government were very heavily skewed toward the Japanese participants. It is clear that the Kwantung Army and SMR participants dominated the new regime at the top. However, the Japanese did not exercise a similar level of control at the local level.

This did not mean that the Japanese failed to make moves to prevent local decisions becoming subversive or inconvenient. The “self-government” movement, born (and stillborn) under the KMT government in 1928, was adapted as a vehicle for control. The Self-Government Directorate (*zizhi zhidaobu*) under Yu Chonghan declared that each county should set up a “county self-government directive committee” and a “county self-government executive committee,” with a Japanese in charge of the former. The experiment started in twenty-one counties along the SMR railway line. One account states that “[the Japanese advisers] organized a reactionary armed force of powerful local collaborators to oppress the people.” However, this hostile interpretation ignores the fact that many magistrates reported, as we have seen, that

often it was possible to carry on administration as normal, and when the Japanese did intervene it was for purposes such as antibandit campaigns, which earned local approval. A “self-government training school” was also set up to instruct Chinese local officials in implementation of the new government’s directives.²⁷ Elements in the Kwantung Army advocated promoting a Japanese-trained and -dominated but Chinese-operated administration that would be free of the endemic corruption of the warlord period.²⁸ It is worth noting that a British postwar assessment generally scathing of the whole Manchukuo project praises “the positive achievements of the Japanese in the spheres of finance and currency,” which “at least to some degree benefited the people in general.”²⁹

A claimed Japanese superiority was stressed in almost all the Chinese-Japanese interactions that underpinned the administration in Fengtian, and in Manchukuo as a whole, and the “state” could in no way be considered to be the partnership of equals that the Japanese had claimed in some of its propaganda. But neither was the administration always the “hell on earth” (*diyu*) described in contemporary writings and many retrospective accounts, which goes some way toward explaining the widespread level of collaboration.

THE CASE OF TAIAN COUNTY: FROM REBELLION TO CONFORMITY

The case of Taian county in Liaoning shows many of the typical features of the Japanese attempt to gain control at the county level when it worked (events such as the Pingdingshan massacre, discussed below, show the reverse side of these tactics). Combining the use of force with a planned administrative and social policy to gain control of the region, the occupiers sought to deal both with the cause and effect of banditry and establish a local regime favorable to themselves, but nonetheless leave local law enforcement and its costs in Chinese hands as far as possible.³⁰

Taian county was no stranger to banditry. A poor and disaster-prone area, it was flooded in 1929, and the local officials were all shipped out to Yingkou, leaving the field open for bandits to occupy the county town. “Loyal soldiers had to be formed into militias” and sent in to retake the town. A similar combination of floods and “bandits” (the latter might well have called themselves resistance fighters) hit the area at the time of the Incident. It was not until October 1932 that “the county yamen was

transferred from the temporary office at Dahushan and order was gradually restored.”³¹

Immediately after the Incident, the county authorities decided to try and solve Taian’s crisis by raising funds with a bond issue. An official Manchukuo report noted, “In November [1931] they issued bonds in the total amount of 260,000 yuan, which did give them temporary relief.”³² But because there were no funds backing the bonds, their value dropped. (There was precedent in the Northeast, as elsewhere in China, for bonds being used as a means to extort money, as in 1926 when Zhang Zuolin’s government issued “currency regularization” bonds that were supposed to raise 12 million yuan from “commercial circles,” but were abandoned the following year as even threats failed to ensure more than a 20 percent take-up.)³³ By February 1932 “people were extremely unhappy,” and by March the bonds were valueless, as financial support efforts failed and officials decided not to interfere despite people’s rising feelings. Wang Dianyan, a reformed bandit who had become head of the police corps, realized that the situation was becoming dangerous and “tried for several days to cool the situation down by taking on the role of an executive official [in charge of the situation].”³⁴ Then Japanese officials, considering that the situation was now a matter of national importance, came down to the county, but the crisis continued and county officials fled to Dahushan. Japanese troops were sent in, and in their attacks on the county town the yamen building was destroyed.³⁵ Nonetheless, the opponents of the new regime held out.

On 13 July 1932, the county magistrate, Fang Xiangxue, resigned and local official Deng Bingwu took over. He set up a temporary county yamen in Dahushan and took advantage of his association with the Japanese to strengthen his control by installing a new set of local officials. A reconstruction program was begun; because the county was bankrupt, all costs had to come either from provincial relief funding or from loans. Using troops transferred from Yingkou and Fengtian, Deng initiated a “roads plan” in September 1932 aimed at retaking Taian county town and then connecting it with Dahushan. With the help of Japanese army engineers and the loan of military freight trains, the road and an accompanying telephone connection had been completed by October 12–13.³⁶ The use of military resources is not coincidental. This operation meant that in the event of any future attempts to cause trouble in the area, troops could be moved and orders could be sent with a speed not previously feasible.

Local law enforcement in Taian was carried out in the now familiar

pattern. On 17 October 1932, a public order maintenance committee was set up that, beginning in 1933, also served as a bandit suppression office (*qingxiangju*). By 1933, the number of people in the police corps and countryside militias numbered 1,400. Social policy was also used as a tool of control. It was noted that the tax burdens imposed on residents of the county in previous years had been extremely high, and reforms had been instituted so that “when it came to county tax revenues, approximately half of the total income of the county was loans and relief funds.”³⁷ Not stated, but clearly implied, was the fact that if the county went back into rebel control, the half of its income stream that came from the Japanese-controlled provincial government would be cut off, providing an incentive for farmers and townsfolk to tolerate the new regime and oppose attempts to remove it.

VIOLENT COERCION AND REPRISALS

The Japanese wanted to establish their new possession with a minimum of expenditure or military effort. However, on occasion they showed their willingness to use intensely brutal methods. The most notorious incident of this in this period was the massacre on 16 September 1932 at Pingdingshan, near the industrial city of Fushun in Fengtian, in reprisal for a resistance raid that the Japanese suspected had originated nearby. Edward Hunter, a reporter for the Internews agency based in Beijing, filed a report on 30 November 1932, having carried out an undercover investigation of the rumored massacre. His report began:

The Fushun massacre in which almost 3,000 men, women, and children lost their lives is true. I have just returned to this prosperous city whose wealth is based upon the largest open cut coal mine in the world, after touring surrounding territory where houses were put to the torch by Japanese soldiers and their inhabitants mowed down mercilessly by Japanese machine guns.³⁸

Hunter's report is pages long and goes into great detail. He was escorted to the villages by locals who had witnessed the massacre. He asked them what had provoked the killings:

The answer is always the same: reprisal against villagers because rebels who attacked Fushun in mid-September causing a 350,000 yen damage, killing several Japanese, passed through that district. But even the Japanese admit that the insurgents did not come from these villages, they came from Hsinpin district, forty miles eastward, and consisted of Red Spears, primitive-minded folk whose main equipment was red

pointed lances. They had organized themselves in a secret volunteer corps.³⁹

Hunter noted that the first of the villages that had been targeted was only eight miles from the SMR railway station at Fushun, but was an area considered so dangerous that foreign consular authorities forbade their citizens from going there, and which “Japanese and Manchukuo officials equally attempt to cut off.” He described the scene that he saw in the village:

Chinese villages are always noisy. This one was silent and dumb as a grave, without menfolk, women, or children. The charred remnants of beams and roofs literally [*sic*] flooded the space inside the blackened walls. Each home duplicated the preceding. I entered one threshold [*sic*] and walked over roof tiles, pieces of shattered dishes, bent oiltins which served as water carriers, and smashed effigies of the kitchen gods.⁴⁰

Hunter interviewed locals whose relatives had been victims of the Fushun massacre. He was struck by the “precision” of the army’s actions, shocked by “the discipline with which the reprisal was carried out in its most horrifying aspect, like the regularity of the South Manchuria railway train.” Nine villages became victims of the reprisals, including one ten miles from Fushun, which had been burned by the Japanese some six days before the events at Pingdingshan.

What had happened to provoke such an attack? A fortnight before the massacre, according to the locals interviewed by Hunter, 14 Japanese soldiers were fired on as they left the village of Datongzhou, and 4 were killed. Later, six trucks full of Japanese came to the village of Mengjiatun nearby and burned three houses, moving on to bayonet or shoot 20 villagers in Datongzhou. Aircraft also bombed the village of Mengjiakou. The next day, the Japanese returned and burned the hundred or so houses that made up Datongzhou. “According to the villagers,” the report went on, “almost 6,000 Red Spears and other rebels came from the Hsinpin region forty miles away for the attack on Fushun.” They attacked Fushun at 11 P.M., finally fleeing at around 3 A.M., and were barely pursued by the garrison of 600 or so Japanese soldiers. The latter instead carried out reprisals against the villages on the route that the Red Spears had taken. Hunter reported what he was told by one villager:

A man named Foo arrived [at my village] all covered with blood but uninjured [*sic*] in any way. He was pale and spoke incoherently,

repeating himself [*sic*] continuously, telling of the massacre from which he miraculously escaped. He told of being led from his home by the Japanese: he carried his aged mother on his back, Chinese style. The throng was ordered not to leave the hillside because the search was being made for Red Spears, anybody found in that vicinity being classified as Red Spears and summarily killed while there, their homes systematically burned. Then the Japanese told them that they would be photographed; instead of cameras, machine guns, and instead of lenses there were bullets. Foo said that his mother was among the first killed; he slipped and she fell [*sic*] on top of him. Suddenly he heard a Korean shout that the Japanese had gone, and to stand. He could not; and those who did received another hail of machine gun fire . . . Foo's mother had saved the son's life, her blood disguising him as dead.⁴¹

As the Red Spears had not been from that immediate district, the locals told Hunter, reprisals were carried out because they had not informed the Japanese that the rebels were coming.

The Japanese used violent coercion on multiple occasions, mostly in the context of trying to root out resistance activity but also in the process of appropriating land. However, the most notorious incidents of this sort occurred after the Tanggu Truce of 31 May 1933, which in effect ceded unofficial recognition of Manchukuo by Nanjing. In other words, the Kwantung Army waited until Manchukuo had become relatively stable under its rule, and it had concluded a treaty that conceded de facto recognition of the new entity: only then did it carry out actions likely to meet more widespread opposition. Among these actions were mass resettlements, primarily of ethnic minorities who were believed to be associated with the resistance: from only 8 such resettlements in 1933, the number rose to 3,261 in 1935 (and yet further after the Tokyo government established a scheme for poor Japanese farmers to emigrate en masse to Manchuria).⁴² In 1934–35, villagers in Tulongshan, in Yilan county, kept up several months of armed resistance to the Japanese who were attempting to force them to sell their land, ending with the deaths of over 600 of them (as well as several tens of Japanese soldiers and local police).⁴³ The Japanese had previously managed to buy off many of the locals, and the resisters primarily consisted of those who had not received sufficient (or any) recompense for their lost land. However, the leader of the uprising, Xie Wendong, held out until 1939 but then “surrendered and announced his loyalty to the government of Manchukuo,” whereupon “he was first made a foreman at the Mishan coal mine and was later appointed the chief of a model village in Linkou-xiang of Donggan province.”⁴⁴ Even in cases of outright uprisings such as Tulongshan, the Japanese used co-optation as their preferred option if they could.

Finally, a brief note on perhaps the most notorious aspect of the period of Japanese rule in Manchuria, the bacteriological experimentation center at Pingfan, near Harbin. Prisoners were used for horrific “experiments,” including live burials in ice that ended with the victims’ freezing to death and surgical operations conducted without anesthetic. In one of the great obscenities of the post-World War II settlement, the Allied governments were complicit in later protecting some of the Japanese scientists responsible. Yet the Pingfan “Unit 731,” as the station was known, was by its nature secret.⁴⁵ Although rumors of what went on there filtered out into nearby villages, these had little effect on wider perceptions of Manchukuo at the time; it was only after 1945 that the truth about Unit 731 came out. For this reason, Pingfan, despite showing the appalling lengths to which the Japanese army could go, is not critical to the discussion of the balance between coercion and persuasion in the establishment of Manchukuo.

The two cases of Taian and Pingdingshan show the contrast in the Kwantung Army’s tactics in setting up its new state. It is misleading to maintain, as does much Chinese scholarship, that violent coercion was the first option or norm in the establishment of Manchukuo, just as is it untrue to claim, as some Japanese Manchukuo apologists have done, that the Kwantung Army was not responsible for countless acts of brutality. Both violence and co-optation were aspects of the Japanese imperialist project in the region and resemble the combination of coercive and persuasive pressures used by colonizing powers elsewhere.

Social Reorganization and Reform

POLICE AND MILITIA REORGANIZATION

The occupiers stated their intent to implement reforms in the Northeast. Yet it should be noted that both the ideas and methods used were not newly introduced, but drew on late Qing and Republican Chinese traditions. For example, in areas that were deemed trustworthy, officials were encouraged to set up local militias, in accordance with the local tradition of self-defense that had emerged in Manchuria’s frontier society. By doing so, the Japanese both saved money and troop power and also reassured local elites that the new rulers would not be a threat to their traditional spheres of power. The Chinese were aware that the autonomy granted them was fragile, as shown by the reports of the magistrates of Liaoyuan and Shenyang that declared they had made

great efforts to protect Japanese nationals so as to avoid “misunderstandings” that might force Japanese military intervention.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, where such “misunderstandings” were avoided, it seems that the Japanese were content to leave administration mostly in local hands, although with increasing levels of Japanese supervision as time went on.

In the area of salary reform, tradition was again drawn upon. In 1909, the Qing had attempted to deal with increasing levels of illicit fee-taking by public officials; the strategy was to increase pay and ban fee taking. However, the reform failed, as the increases in salary came nowhere near covering the deficit caused by the ban on illegal fees.⁴⁷ Yu Chonghan, in his conversations explaining his political views to Morita Fukumatsu in November 1931, observed that the same problem still existed: greedy local officials were created by the system, and those who had enough money to eat and clothe themselves did not usually succumb to the temptation of corruption. A typical monthly salary for a county policeman, said Yu, was around 8 *dayang*. “You can’t even buy tobacco with that, let alone eat, or support a wife and children . . . It’s like handing over an official license to commit wrong acts indiscriminately.” Yu also blamed the meager salaries earned by magistrates and other local officials, from which 30 to 50 percent might be deducted in “military expenses” anyway. Although magistrates in well-connected places such as Shenyang and Liaoyang earned 360 yuan a month, magistrates in more remote places had to survive on less and were driven into corruption. Better then to have a system of full salaries, where rewards and penalties would be fixed. Yu even advocated that the currently existing police corps and military were beyond hope: “[their] bad habits are so deeply ingrained that there is no possibility of correcting them.”⁴⁸ His hope of replacing them all with new “honest” recruits was impractical in the short term. But securing local finances with loans or subsidies meant that local security forces could be paid enough to uphold the new regime.

TAXATION AND FINANCE REFORM

The Kwantung Army’s economic aims for Manchukuo were varied and often inconsistent. The army made a great show of its reluctance to allow the allegedly corrupt *zaibatsu* (finance combine) capitalism on the home islands to take root in the new state, yet also courted individual businessmen and firms, encouraging them to invest there.⁴⁹ These differences were not completely reconciled, and the economic ex-

plotation of Manchukuo was never as successful as the army would have wished.⁵⁰ But, as with other aspects of the Manchukuo project, the debates taking place between the various Japanese factions were rarely apparent to the territory's Chinese inhabitants. The following sections explore the different facets of economic reform as perceived by local Chinese from 1931 to 1933.

The Japanese made use of the tax system to attempt to add credibility to their occupation. Their main reason for reform was not altruistic; once the tax system had been unified, they intended to enforce collection and let Manchukuo pay for itself. However, the strategy used in the initial phase of the occupation was to alter the tax structure in a way that might appease the local population.

The most radical changes were initially made in Liaoning, where a raft of miscellaneous taxes that had grown up during the rule of the Zhangs was abolished (including the taxes on ginseng, timber, Mongolian salt, tobacco, and wine, and a surtax on the tobacco and wine tax) or reduced (production tax and soybean tax were halved). The reforms were later carried out in Jilin and Heilongjiang as well. Because the Manchukuo government had reduced the former separate provincial governments to administrative divisions with no autonomy, many other taxes were administered at a local level: these included the land tax, cattle tax, and business tax. In the immediate period after the occupation, the Japanese assumed that their cuts had been effective in reducing the tax burden of the ordinary people because of the sharp reductions in tax revenues between the 1930–31 and 1931–32 fiscal years. They calculated that Fengtian had lost 775,000 yuan through abolished taxes and 5,973,000 in reduced taxes; for Jilin, the figures were 2,221,000 yuan for abolished taxes and 629,000 yuan through reduced ones.⁵¹

The Japanese aim was for the central government to control local finances, but they acknowledged that to achieve this would be very difficult. In the midst of the political difficulties of setting up the new state, the Japanese found that tax revenues were insufficient, and in December 1932 a 30 million yen National Establishment Bond (*kenkokukuen*) was floated in Japan to provide extra revenue. But in September 1932, a division was made between Manchukuo “national” taxes and local taxes; the former were taxes that had been collected before 1931 either for the provinces or on behalf of Nanjing, and the latter were to provide financing for the county and city administrations. In the former category came the land tax, customs taxes, and business tax, which were unified and administered from Xinjing (as Changchun was renamed when it became the capital of

Manchukuo in 1932), whereas vehicle and entertainment taxes were administered by counties. The division was achieved by 1933, although further investigation of the tax situation was planned. Of the ordinary revenue recorded in the Manchukuo budget for the 1933 fiscal year, the highest proportion of the 108.6 million yuan collected in taxes came from customs revenue (49.6 million yuan) and the salt tax (20.7 million yuan), as opposed to 4.3 million yuan from the land tax and 4.6 million yuan from the business tax.⁵² Thus indirect taxes remained a high proportion of revenue.

Although in the years of his rule Zhang Xueliang had had some success with stabilizing the local finances, the years of deficit spending under Zhang Zuolin had taken their toll on public confidence, and any crisis was likely to cause chaos in local markets. Therefore, the public order committees were also at pains to prevent rumors spreading and causing panic. This was a concern in both Liaoyang and Liaozhong, and in the latter county they “sent to the countryside . . . local elite members who went to each ward to announce the true situation and the circumstances regarding public order at the county boundaries.”⁵³ Public order committees, dominated as they were by representatives of the commercial community, were particularly concerned by the effect of rumormongering on the stability of the currency, and Liaozhong made it clear that speculators in the Fengtian dollar and *dayang* bonds would be punished. The Japanese had made moves early on to gain control of monetary policy in the region; in a letter to Yuan Jinkai dated 11 October 1931, Honjō states that the official Three Eastern Provinces Bank should be set up under rules laid down by the Japanese military, whose powers would include the right to start and stop operations.⁵⁴

Restoration of order was also important for the financial health of the commercial community in Hailong county: local elite member Wang Yintang requested of the committee that he be permitted to negotiate with the Japanese “so as to save the merchants’ livelihoods.”⁵⁵ They had had grave difficulties since the closing of the Shenyang-Hailong railway. This railway ran alongside major grain-producing areas, and people’s lives and livelihoods depended on the easy transportation of foodstuffs. Local financing had also been halted by the Incident, causing cash flow problems for the peasants, and many shops had ceased to operate. As we have seen, local Chambers of Commerce at times joined with their provincial counterparts to increase their lobbying power to have taxes reduced and aid to failing businesses boosted.

The Manchukuo government also sought revenue from the establishment of an Opium Monopoly Bureau in November 1932. Opium had

been widely used in the Northeast, as elsewhere in China, for many decades, but the Japanese regularized its sale, designating poppy-growing districts, buying the opium at fixed prices, and then distributing it to licensed wholesalers who sold it to licensed retailers. Ostensibly, the system was made official so as to restrict sales to registered addicts. In practice, the whole opium system was a racket: far from reducing the consumption of narcotics in Manchukuo, the authorities increased the amount of land assigned to poppy cultivation from 941,000 hectares in 1933 to 1,030,000 hectares in 1937. Yet there is little proof for one popular Chinese propaganda statement of the time, that the Japanese were deliberately pushing drugs to keep the population docile: as F. C. Jones notes, "After all they needed Chinese labour in their factories and drug addicts do not make even moderately good workmen."⁵⁶

AGRICULTURE

The Kwantung Army announced wide-ranging plans for the development of agriculture in the Northeast. Ramon Myers observes, "The state's aim was to achieve self-sufficiency in food and raw produce production, and simultaneously to expand exports . . . Cotton cultivation was to cover an area of 750,000 acres . . . Wheat cultivation was to be increased to 5,750,000 acres."⁵⁷ However, in practice, "between 1932 and 1937 agricultural policy was vague" and "the existing land tenure system was to be left intact . . . The reason for this was not to touch those large landowning interests for fear of alienating their Chinese collaborators."⁵⁸ Nakagane Katsuji agrees that "although the state exercised great control over commodity and service markets, factor markets for land, labor and capital were another matter. The state did not restrict the movement of workers, except between Manchukuo and China proper. The state allowed land to be freely sold."⁵⁹

Myers has carried out a detailed study on socioeconomic changes in Manchurian villages during the Republic, with particular emphasis on the Manchukuo period. He uses Japanese materials surveying thirty-seven villages to suggest various patterns. First, he notes that "the average land size farmed per household exceeded the average amount of land owned, indicating that even poor families with little property somehow rented land to farm." Second, compared with other provinces, villagers in Manchuria were much more likely to be landlords, tenants, or laborers, and much less likely to be owner-cultivators. Third, 50 percent of households had originally come from Shandong, and 15 percent from

Hebei; in villages settled between 1909 and 1936, 61.6 percent of villagers had had to move three times before arriving in the village where they were surveyed. Perhaps most important, the area showed high social mobility; in villages settled since 1909, almost 50 percent of owner-cultivators had become landlords, and a third of tenants had become owner-cultivators. Although land ownership was "exceedingly unequal," it did not become more so as villages became longer established.⁶⁰ During the initial period of the occupation, the Japanese made no real effort to change this system, thus ensuring that the rural dwellers would be less motivated to rebel against their rule, since by accepting the status quo they could preserve their property.⁶¹ Property appropriations, after all, were to be behind many of the incidents where the Japanese responded with violence, as in Tulongshan in 1934–35.

Agricultural prices were still in a depressed state at the time of the occupation. Myers notes that the economy of Manchuria was "in a phase of dynamic growth" in the years prior to 1931; among the indicators he cites are the 2,300 kilometers of railway track built since 1915 and the increase in agricultural crop exports from 1.5 million to 3.7 million tons between 1921 and 1929.⁶² However, the depression brought agricultural prices tumbling down in 1929; they bottomed out in 1931 and did not rise again until 1935.⁶³ Although the effects of the depression went some way to spur the Kwantung Army into taking Manchuria in 1931, the level of farm prices does not seem to have been much affected by the occupation, instead mirroring the rise and fall of world agricultural prices.

CURRENCY ADJUSTMENTS AFTER THE OCCUPATION

Banking was one of the first services to be resumed after the occupation had begun. The Japanese banks in Shenyang reopened on 21 September, and on the advice of the city's Peace Preservation Committee, the Bank of China and Bank of Communications were reopened on 28 September. The Japanese were warier about opening up the two major regional banks, the Provincial Bank of the Three Eastern Provinces and the Frontier Bank, but on 15 October these reopened for business under Japanese military supervision "on condition that the supply of war funds to enemies would be prevented, that the banks would give banking facilities to the public and try to stabilize the currency price for the protection of the public and the interests of commerce, and that upon the establishment of a new government, they would be transferred to it in the existing condition." Honjō made it clear to Yuan Jinkai that the Kwantung Army would

take an active role in approving or suspending banking activity. In contrast, the Jilin Provincial Bank reopened on 24 September, with other banks in Changchun reopening on 28 September. The swiftness of Xi Xia to collaborate with the Japanese meant that there was less disruption to commercial life in Changchun than in Shenyang. The situation in Heilongjiang was not so calm, largely because of the resistance campaign of Ma Zhanshan (see chap. 5), and the same went for Harbin. It was late February 1932 before the currency in northern Manchuria was stabilized at a rate of 81.6 silver yen to 100 Harbin silver-standard dollars (*dayang*), the pre-Incident rate, compared to a low of 67.5 yen to 100 dollars in October 1931.⁶⁴

The formal establishment of the “state” of Manchukuo led to the foundation of a central bank. The provincial banks were merged during the spring of 1932 to provide a capitalization of 30 million yuan. In addition, a loan was obtained from the Bank of Chōsen, and arrangements made on 7 May 1932 for cooperation with the Mitsui and Mitsubishi *zaibatsu*. A new currency law was issued on 11 June 1932, regulations for converting the old currencies to the new were announced on 28 June, and the new Central Bank was opened on 1 July.⁶⁵

The Central Bank adopted the silver standard as the basis for the new currency, the Manchukuo yuan. The yuan, a decimal currency, was fixed at a value of 23.91 grams of pure silver, approximately the same weight of silver found in the old Yuan Shikai dollar (after 1935, it was removed from the silver standard and fixed at a parity against the yen). In practice, the currency was circulated as banknotes, varying from half to 100 yuan, supplemented by nickel and silver coins for smaller amounts. To maintain the currency's value, certain measures were taken: the bullion or foreign currency reserves that guaranteed the currency had to be at least 30 percent of the issue amount, and the balance of the issue had to be held in government-guaranteed or other secure bonds and notes. Money supply figures had to be furnished daily to the government, which appointed auditors. The Manchukuo yuan replaced the old competing and largely inconvertible currencies, but since it was not possible instantly to withdraw all the old notes, a two-year transitional scheme was set up by which the old notes would be exchanged for the new currency at a fixed rate.⁶⁶

SOCIAL SPENDING

In the first Manchukuo budget, it was stated that “in the expenditure, it will be seen that attention is given first to the maintenance of peace and order in the country, to improve the policing system under a unified organization, to guarantee the payment to troops and

police forces, and to obtain appropriations for the expenses of the Peace Preservation Committee and bandit subjugation in summer.⁶⁷ Subsidies to cities and counties were also included. This central budget reflected the priority that also existed at the local level: keeping rebellion at bay.

How did localities pay the costs of these newly revitalized enforcement agencies? In some cases, the reform of tax collection released resources that had previously been unavailable. But in Changtu, for example, the extreme poverty of the local people meant that they could not support local expenses with their own tax resources alone, and large sums of money had to be spent by the province for welfare relief. The diversion by the Japanese of large sums from their new treasury to stricken areas was an incentive to cooperation by the locals, which was exercised along with stricter law enforcement. In Changtu, 50–60,000 people had come into the county, fleeing famine and other disasters, and the finance department had to provide 50,000 yuan in relief funds. Living conditions of the refugees were extremely unhygienic, and the mortality rate, especially among children, was high. Extra funding was provided for Western-style medical clinics beginning in December 1931, which led to a sharp drop in the death rate.⁶⁸ By funding social projects of this sort, the occupiers tried to generate goodwill for themselves, as the SMR had done with their social welfare projects in previous decades.

Health policy was also used as a tool in Taian county (discussed above). A report by health officials declared that people lived in very unhygienic conditions, and that medical facilities were practically nonexistent. An investigation carried out in September 1932 after the recapture of the town from the rebel government showed that 70 percent of the population suffered from some sort of eye disease. In January 1933, a program was begun that the Japanese believed had elsewhere proved effective in reducing the levels of disease.⁶⁹ Similarly, the Japanese used health policy in Taonan county to spread their influence. A survey after the occupation revealed that the dusty atmosphere near the Mongolian border meant that, as in Taian, 60–70 percent of people in the county suffered from eye disease, in this case trachoma. The Japanese funded further research on the problem and started a health education campaign. Spreading information was not easy, but “fortunately . . . in many schools they make a real effort to popularize public health thought [via the children].”⁷⁰

Taonan county is of particular interest in that it was the home base of Zhang Haipeng, one of the first regional commanders to switch allegiance to the Japanese. He would later be instrumental in the Kwantung

Army's campaign to expand into Heilongjiang in November 1931. A Manchukuo government report stated that the county seemed destined for chaos, until Zhang Haipeng realized that "if there were a conflict, there would inevitably be huge sacrifices on both sides" and came to an agreement with the Kwantung Army. Zhang set up a self-government leadership department (*zizhi zhidaobu*) in the county, which later became a self-government committee (*zizhi weiyuanhui*). Large numbers of troops remained stationed in the county, and they served to maintain public order. Once again, regular payment of police salaries was made a priority for the newly stabilized county finance department: after the Manchukuo government was established, the police's "monthly salaries were no longer subject to several months of delay." But welfare spending allowances were increased too: flooding of croplands in the summer of 1932 prompted the central and provincial government to offer relief payments as well as loans of 100,000 yuan to act as capital to purchase seed for planting the following spring.⁷¹ As before, the use of welfare payments was not a Japanese innovation, as there was a long-standing tradition both of governmental and unofficial assistance to distressed areas during the imperial period. But the Japanese were able to take on and expand an existing tradition.

However, these social welfare activities on the part of the Japanese, particularly in the field of health, were predicated on certain assumptions, for instance, that Western medical methods were invariably superior to traditional Chinese ones, and that the Chinese themselves were disinclined to behave hygienically unless encouraged to do so by others.⁷² (The same prejudices were, of course, held by many European and American health workers in China at the time.) For this reason, it is impossible to know how far even the most well-intentioned Japanese welfare practices were really effective in capturing the hearts and minds of the local Chinese population. Perhaps some flavor of the thoughts that went through their minds can be seen in a story told by W. Lewisohn, a correspondent for the English-language *North China Daily News*, who visited Manchukuo in 1935. He reported that at the end of his trip he traveled with a group of Chinese across the border:

And here I had a striking example of the value of good roads as propaganda. My fellow-passengers having shaken off the dust of Manchoukuo and become proper "Chungkuo jen" [Chinese] once more started suddenly to converse freely and cheerfully cursed the Japanese. Yet as we bumped and crashed over the execrable road until

we were nearly thrown out of the truck, they one and all loudly and heartily agreed with the sentiments expressed by one of the passengers: "Aiya, if this was still in Manchoukuo, it would be a proper road. They are not allowed to steal the road-making money there!"⁷³

"Good roads as propaganda" expresses a wider pattern in the way in which the Japanese exercised formal and informal empire.⁷⁴ Their road building, Dōjinkai (Japanese cultural affairs agency) hospitals, and Boxer Scholarships (funded by indemnities paid to the Japanese by the Qing government after the failed Boxer Uprising of 1900) were all attempts to project their presence as a positive force in the areas they had conquered; while they were hardly entirely convincing, there were elements of their project that did resonate even with those who resented their presence.

The ultimate fiscal aim of the Japanese occupation was to make Manchuria pay for itself. But in practice, the planners realized that the changes could not all be introduced at once, and that they should give priority to those changes that seemed likely to secure cooperation. Administrative and spending policy could be a powerful tool for engendering cooperation with the local elites and complaisance from the ordinary people. Proper pay for local police and militias was a way of ensuring the goodwill of the people who were at the front line maintaining local order. Provision of health care, even if patronizingly organized, demonstrated a more constructive side to the spending policy. The realization that these reforms were in large part paid for by a Japanese purse also reminded the recipients that to get rid of the Japanese was to invite back higher taxation and risk the return of those aspects of the former regime they had disliked. As Manchukuo developed and the Japanese became concerned that they were paying more into the region than it was providing for them (a problem they never solved), taxes would be raised and the strength of a much larger Kwantung Army used to stifle discontent. Conditions during the Pacific War period (1937–45) in particular became very harsh. But none of this could be foreseen during the initial phase of the occupation.

Problems of Co-optation in Jilin and Heilongjiang

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN JILIN

It is worth noting that there were factors in counties in Jilin that show some essential differences in the way the two provinces were treated. Jilin had traditionally resented the domination of its politics by Fengtian, and this had reached an apogee during Zhang Zuolin's rule, when the Jilin provincial assemblies' choices for local representatives were regularly overridden by the rulers in Shenyang. In addition, the Fengtian domination of the region meant that Jilin's infrastructure had never been fully developed. Therefore the Japanese found it an area with poorly developed local government structures, poor communications, and a severe lack of public order. In this section I will discuss how the Japanese tried to apply the methods of coercion and co-optation that had worked in Liaoning to a Jilin county, and the reasons they were less successful.

The case of Ning'an county gives some indications of the similarities and differences in the techniques used by the occupiers. Ning'an had been a base for the Jilin Anti-Japanese Resistance Army (led by Li Du: see chap. 5) until 1932, and since then the new administration under a Chinese magistrate had made attempts to stabilize the county. However, devolution was hampered here more than in some of the Liaoning counties discussed above, as local government reorganization in 1929 had been stopped midway; although ward offices had been set up, they had been ordered to cease operation before a full system of village administration could be implemented. Acheng county, located in a remote part of Jilin, had had the same experience: its self-government structures were halted in 1929, although the Japanese did set up a "hundred-household" (*bailu*) security system after 1931. A Japanese investigator of Ning'an for the Manchukuo government declared, "If we do not set up village offices, then it really will be difficult to hope for any local development."⁷⁵

Because Ning'an had historically been a peripheral place with no tradition of self-government, the Japanese were unable to devolve responsibility to the locals to the same extent that they had in counties in Liaoning in or near the SMR zone. Disruption had meant that collection of levies and taxes had fallen by the wayside, and the establishment of a new police authority was linked to tax-gathering powers.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, a surveyor writing as late as 1933 believed that "the policy of central government subsidies

or loans cannot be stopped.”⁷⁷ Most of the county’s spending still went toward policing, as banditry remained rife, leaving little for other projects such as education or road building. In November 1932 the Kwantung Army had wanted twenty units of a peace protection corps (*baoundui*) to be set up, but recruitment was proving hard.⁷⁸ In the meantime, the gendarmerie (*kempeitai*) and consular police kept surveillance over the county.

There were attempts to engineer social change. The Harbin and Jilin paper currency had been replaced by a Japanese-backed gold note (*jinpiao*) whose “strength now . . . pushes down all other currencies.” In the health sphere, the police had set up a public health scheme that aimed to reduce the pandemic infections that overcame the area every spring. Nonetheless, the investigator concluded that “life has got a lot harder for local people here since the Incident.”⁷⁹ The Japanese mixture of force and social policy was proving much harder to implement in this area where, unlike Fengtian, there were far fewer local administrative structures to which they could devolve responsibility, and where outsiders, whether Fengtianese or Japanese, were resented.

THE JAPANESE MOVE INTO HEILONGJIANG

The Japanese had succeeded in carrying out their occupation of the former SMR zone and surrounding areas in a short period after the Manchurian Incident. However, they were warier of expanding north beyond Harbin, since they would be entering territory dominated by the Chinese Eastern Railway, traditionally an area of Russian influence. Ishiwara Kanji commissioned the Kwantung Army’s chief of intelligence in Heilongjiang province, Major Hayashi Yoshihide, to find some tactic to extend Japanese influence north without provoking the USSR, allegedly remarking to him, “It would be good if you could find a way to pull the Japanese into Heilongjiang.”⁸⁰ In fact, as noted above, it became clear relatively quickly that the USSR was not strong enough to oppose Japanese moves northward and would do nothing more than issue diplomatic protests in the event of their entry into Heilongjiang.⁸¹ Nonetheless, for the Japanese simply to have occupied northern Manchuria would have destroyed the effect of the painstakingly constructed excuses for their occupation of southern Manchuria that they had issued to the League of Nations and the press and governments all over the world. Therefore it was necessary to arrange for Japanese troops to enter Heilongjiang at the invitation of the inhabitants. To this end, the techniques of co-optation of local elites that had proved suc-

cessful in Liaoning and Jilin became, if anything, even more essential when applied to the Japanese plan to expand northward.

One local militarist whose cooperation the Japanese had secured was Zhang Haipeng, a senior garrison commander stationed in Taonan county, Liaoning. Once most of Liaoning had been brought under Japanese control, Zhang was requested by Tamon, the local Japanese commander, to advance his troops into Heilongjiang to take over there; when Zhang's Chinese troops had control of the province, they could invite the Japanese military to give them assistance. However, the plan was subjected to a temporary setback between 6 and 8 November 1931, when troops under Ma Zhanshan, a local military commander whose troops had been stationed at Heihe, near the Soviet border, blocked off a crucial railway bridge over the Nonni River, preventing Zhang's troops from advancing. After a short battle, Ma's troops withdrew and both Zhang's soldiers and a unit of the Kwantung Army were able to move farther into Heilongjiang. (For a more detailed analysis of Ma Zhanshan's campaign, see chap. 7.)

The main Japanese target in the north was Qiqihaer, at that time the provincial capital of Heilongjiang. In early November, the Japanese used their main contact in the city, police chief Liu Shengyun, to set up a public order maintenance committee. When Ma Zhanshan, having withdrawn from the bridge at the Nonni River, then launched an attempt to capture Qiqihaer on 15 November, the Japanese were confident enough in their Chinese ally in the city to evacuate their personnel while entrusting the maintenance of public order to Liu.⁸² Despite requests from local elite members not to continue his defense of the city and thus spare it from being attacked by the Japanese, Ma continued to fight until his defeat on 18 November, after which he withdrew to his base area of Hailun. However, deserters from his army continued to cause disruption by raiding the city for supplies. Under the instructions of Hayashi, the Kwantung Army remained stationed outside the city so as not to give the townsfolk the impression of a full-scale Japanese occupation; the problem of the restoration of public order within Qiqihaer was solved by Liu Shengyun's deployment of his police force, who drove the city's fire trucks around repeatedly to create the impression that there were more police present than was in fact the case.⁸³

The principal problem for the Japanese liaison officers, led by Hayashi, in Qiqihaer itself was not the resistance forces but infighting within local elite circles. Many local power brokers had seen the occupation as an opportunity to settle old scores or obtain new influence.

For instance, although Zhang Jinghui had been nominated by the Kwantung Army as the new governor of occupied Heilongjiang, he refused to leave his power base in Harbin to come to Qiqihaer and informed Hayashi that he felt that Ma Zhanshan was the only regional figure with sufficient prestige to restore order in the province. In lieu of coming to the provincial capital himself, Zhang sent a division of his troops to Qiqihaer and also dispatched his deputy police chief, Ying Shun, to act as his representative.⁸⁴ Zhang's continuing refusal to assume power gave Ying Shun the idea that he might seize power for himself, although this attempt was swiftly quashed by Hayashi. In the meantime, a delegation from the Qiqihaer public order maintenance committee informed the Japanese on 24 November that they would prefer Zhang Haipeng to be installed as governor, a request probably influenced by the fact that Gao Xiang, local manager of the *Shengjing shibao* and a member of the committee, was also Zhang Haipeng's adoptive son. The Kwantung Army refused the request.⁸⁵ This medley of competing interests among the local elites did little to calm the febrile political atmosphere in the province.

Outside Qiqihaer, it took longer for the Japanese to remove the influence of elements opposed to them, with Ma Zhanshan remaining a particularly powerful local figure until late 1932 (he briefly cooperated with the Japanese between February and April 1932). Qiqihaer's grain supply, for instance, remained erratic while Ma's supporters retained control of the routes from crop-producing areas to the city.⁸⁶ It should be noted, however, that this embargo may well have been unpopular with the farmers who had lost their main market for agricultural produce. In Japanese reports on the restoration of public order and the establishment of local government at county level in Heilongjiang, as in Jilin, there are frequent references to resistance activity interfering with the establishment of local administrative structures, preventing the level of local autonomy that had been possible in Liaoning. For instance, it was only by early 1933 that the Japanese were able to report that in Keshan county "people's minds had been calmed" after an initial panic when the Japanese approached, followed by a series of bandit raids. The combination of incentives and enforcement that has been noted before was used by the government in Heilongjiang also. The new administration provided subsidies to ease local revenue deficits, but at the same time made efforts to ensure that the local population was exposed to propaganda about the new regime by setting up schools and other bodies to spread information about Manchukuo.⁸⁷ Suihua county had had

particular problems, since it lay midway between Hailun and Harbin, which meant that Ma Zhanshan's troops had crossed its territory frequently during his attack on Harbin in early 1932. It was not until Ma had been defeated in late 1932 that a county magistrate who would cooperate with the Japanese could be installed and the process of setting up a local administration responsible to the new government could be carried out.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, although the Japanese did not manage to eliminate all opposition, there was no significant alternative to their administration left in Heilongjiang by the end of 1932.

Conclusion

The Japanese occupiers exercised control at the county level during 1931 to 1933 in a relatively light-handed way. This did not prevent them from using troops to put down opposition harshly at any sign of dissent, but it meant that in the main they were able to save resources by allowing preexisting local structures of control to continue. The local elite who cooperated with the Japanese knew little about the school of thought within the Kwantung Army that had actively encouraged the use of collaborators to "prove" that Manchukuo was a genuinely cooperative enterprise between the Japanese and the locals. Yet the collaborative bargain that the latter were offered, allowing them to continue life largely as before, proved tempting to many, and made more abstract ideological commitments, such as nationalism, beside the point.

CHAPTER 5

Selling Salvation

*The Campaigns of the Northeast National
Salvation Society, 1931–1933*

Chinese nationalism in the 1930s became more concrete as the Japanese became identified as the single enemy against whom to unite; even Mao Zedong, the doyen of class warfare, agonized between 1931 and 1934 over whether the Japanese invasion of Manchuria meant that Japan should be singled out for special opprobrium in his writings, rather than being lumped in with “imperialism” in general, although he never quite made the leap.¹ The change in thinking came about in significant part because the Manchurian crisis produced a group of activists who needed to promote nationalism to bring about their political ends and found a new and positive way of doing so. In previous uprisings where nationalist ideas provided the motive power, such as the May Fourth and May Thirtieth Movements, and even the National Products Movement, the activists had an ambivalent relationship with the imperialist who might simultaneously be oppressor and employer, educator, or healer. The activists in these cases had to deal with the imperialists on their doorsteps: this proximity complicated the antinationalist rhetoric that fueled the ideology. Furthermore, colonization in Shanghai, Guangzhou, or Tianjin was never total, and this allowed those activists a space into which they could retreat or fall back. Anti-imperialist writers and politicians continued to live and work in these cities, although circumstances might force particular individuals to flee or go into hiding. Ironically, many nationalist activists actually took advantage of imperialist space within Chinese territory, such as the International Settlement in Shanghai, to publish and engage in politics banned by the Chinese government.²

The occupation of Manchuria, in contrast, allowed no such spaces for coexistence between nationalists and imperialists. Nationalist activists who refused to join the resistance had no choice but to leave their homeland and go into exile if they wished to continue to agitate against the Japanese (in a way that had not been true of the more ambiguous Japanese presence in Manchuria from 1905 to 1931). This displacement meant that the northeastern nationalist activists were forced, from the Manchurian Incident onward, into a “nationalism of necessity”: they *had* to engender a full-scale public perception that the Manchurian crisis was of concern to all Chinese, and thereby encourage Nanjing to send troops to retake the region, otherwise they would never return home to their sphere of influence (which, as stated in chap. 2, they had been keen to keep as autonomous as possible until 1931).

This chapter looks at the activities of northeastern nationalist activists who went into exile south of the Great Wall from 1931 to 1933, concentrating on the activities of the Northeastern National Salvation Society (NNSS; *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguoahui*).³ This group is little-known, yet it had significant input into many of the anti-Japanese activities of the time, including student petitions to Nanjing and the editorial content of Zou Taofen’s renowned *Shenghuo zhoukan* magazine, as well as the factional politics within the KMT. This chapter deals with the chronology and mechanics of the group’s activities, while the next chapter analyses the nationalist discourse they created.

The NNSS played a vital role not just in transmitting but also in shaping the images that conveyed perceptions of the Manchurian conflict to the outside world. Popular outrage did not automatically follow the nonresistance policy in Manchuria; there was a significant upsurge in protest to Nanjing about the nonresistance policy after propagandists had had a chance to spread their message for a few months. Although there was a swift reaction to the Manchurian Incident from politically active groups such as students, many other sectors of society took longer to take up the issue; and even the reaction of the former groups was based on tropes heavily influenced by the NNSS. One of the NNSS’s stated goals was to supply the resistance armies and carry out political and military liaison with them. In practice, they were more successful at providing money and spreading nationalist propaganda within the resistance camp than they were at improving the resistance’s military strategy or providing matériel. But more effective than their liaisons with the resistance armies were the NNSS’s contributions, in the form of propaganda, to the development of Chinese nationalism.

The northeasterners' main contribution to the building of nationalism was a resistancialist construction, by which they supplied propaganda based on the core of resistance activities in the Northeast, and in particular, the Heilongjiang resistance fighter Ma Zhanshan. The reality of the resistance's activities—switching sides, raiding villages—was subsumed into a narrative that portrayed its members as nationalist heroes beloved by the people. The time was right for such a construct, with its positive theme that could rally public opinion. Techniques including press coverage, popular drama, public speeches, and petitioning were all used to add bulk to the movement. Some of these phenomena have been studied before. But the significance of the specifically northeastern contribution to them needs to be further illuminated.⁴

The introduction of this new type of propaganda did not simply bring about a superficial shift in Chinese popular thinking between September 1931 and May 1933, but laid the ground for the ideas and images that would make resistance a powerful concept in years to come. Nicholas John Cull, in his analysis of British propaganda aimed at pressuring the United States into World War II during the period 1939 to 1941, notes that the propaganda alone could not bring about American participation; that depended on Japanese and German military policy. But after Pearl Harbor, the “gardening” work done by British propagandists over previous years made an alliance with Britain a salable and popular policy.⁵ The spread of images of resistance by the northeastern propagandists had a similar “slow-burn” effect that took root in public opinion even when it might temporarily seem (as in the lull in Sino-Japanese relations in 1934–35) that resistance had been eclipsed or forgotten.

The Foundation and Aims of the NNSS

The core of the NNSS consisted of the Shenyang-based nationalist intellectuals who had advised Zhang Xueliang on his reform efforts in the 1928 to 1931 period.⁶ They had several distinguishing features. Many of them had studied abroad, and most were from Liaoning and the Shenyang area in particular. Almost all of them had held high-level office between 1928 and 1931; Gao Chongmin had been head of the Liaoning Chamber of Agriculture, Che Xiangchen had been chairman of the Liaoning Association for the Promotion of Nationalist Education, and Yan Baohang had been general secretary of the Shenyang

YMCA.⁷ Their nationalist convictions and track record of interest in educational and modernization issues would provide a motivating force for their activities in exile from the Northeast. Yet their association with Zhang Xueliang made them associates of a faction that was, if not inimical to Chiang Kaishek, at least a potential threat to him, and which therefore made him suspicious that the NNSS was an organization whose actual aim might be to undermine his rule.

The NNSS was formed swiftly in response to the Manchurian Incident of 18 September 1931. On 19 September, Wang Huayi, former secretary of the Liaoning Educational Association, recorded in his diary that the news was the talk of the northeastern community in Beiping: "Yesterday I got to bed late. At 4 A.M., the teahouse was still buzzing . . . At first I thought that Zhang Xueliang's illness might have taken a turn for the worse, but I asked around a bit and found out that there were problems in the Northeast."⁸

Wang rushed to see Zhang Xueliang in the hospital, where he was being treated, according to rumors, for opium addiction. Wang then met Gao Chongmin, Yan Baohang, Chen Xianzhou, and other prominent northeastern nationalist activists and told them that he had visited Zhang Xueliang and been authorized to set up a resistance organization.⁹ On 26 September, they announced the formation of the NNSS. It drew on three main groups: a Northeastern Students' National Salvation Society, which in turn was able to draw on the more than 4,000 Manchurian students who were at college in Beiping, a Northeastern Native-Place (*tongxiang*) National Salvation Society, and an Anti-Japan National Salvation Society, under the control of Gao Chongmin.

The first congress of the NNSS was held the next day, 27 September, and was attended by around 400 delegates, the majority of them students.¹⁰ The following were elected to the executive: Lu Guangji and Gao Chongmin in charge of administrative affairs, Wang Huayi and Peng Zhenguo in charge of military affairs, and Du Zhongyuan and Yan Baohang in charge of propaganda.¹¹ The meeting was acrimonious, as the majority of those present favored immediate military action to retake the Northeast, whereas the minority who followed Chiang Kaishek's line preferred to wait for instructions from Nanjing. Eventually, the pro-Nanjing element was forced to leave; one of them, Mei Fuguang, would later be involved with the faction behind the Northeastern Association (*Dongbei xiehui*), a rival group associated with the CC clique that distrusted the NNSS's links with Zhang Xueliang. The

NNSS then made several policy declarations, among them that its membership would not be limited to northeasterners, and that it would “plan to carry out the mobilization of northeastern militias, deserting soldiers, and bandits to form an anti-Japanese guerrilla force.”¹²

POLITICAL AND MILITARY LIAISON IN THE NORTHEAST

In making contact with the resistance, the NNSS felt it was necessary to give military leadership to the volunteers, who had no unified command. On frequent occasions, NNSS members would plead with Zhang Xueliang to take the lead in organizing the resistance forces, but his delicate political relationship with Chiang Kaishek meant that he never offered more than clandestine support. Sometimes Zhang’s public attitude contradicted his actions in private. Wang Huayi, for instance, records that on 5 November 1931 Zhang telephoned the Beiping railway station to try, unsuccessfully, to stop the NNSS demonstrating in front of waiting passengers. On 9 May 1932, Zhang told Wang that Nanjing was still advising him to be cautious: Wang “exhorted Zhang on behalf of our comrades and all the resistance armies to advocate resistance strongly, that he couldn’t yield.”¹³ In the absence of positive leadership from Zhang, the NNSS members took it upon themselves to stimulate resistance.

The NNSS’s support took two main forms. First, they provided direct military advice as well as some supply of matériel. This type of support was concentrated on Fengtian, although it was never very successful because of the lack of coordination and support from Nanjing. Second, they provided financial support, as well as political liaison, that involved nationalist propagandists being sent out to work with the resistance armies. Support of this type went to resistance fighters based all over the Northeast, including Ma Zhanshan in Heilongjiang and Li Du in Jilin.

MILITARY LIAISON

In the initial period after the occupation, NNSS committee member Huang Xiansheng was placed in charge of recruiting resistance fighters in Liaoning to supplement the efforts of the Northeastern Army, part of which was still stationed in Jinzhou.¹⁴ At the time of the Manchurian Incident, Huang had been commander of the Twentieth Infantry Company of the Northeastern Army, as well as Shenyang police chief, and had been an associate of Yan Baohang and Che Xi-

angchen's before 1931. After the Incident, Huang ordered his men to retreat to Jinzhou while he himself went to Beiping to consult his friends before returning to Jinzhou.¹⁵ Huang recruited volunteer forces of around 50,000 in north and west Liaoning by the end of 1931, collectively named the Northeast People's Anti-Japanese National Salvation Army, including 7,000 led by the local bandit Zhang Haitian (known as Lao Beifeng or "Old North Wind") and his deputy, Xiang Qingshan.¹⁶ Wang Xiliang writes that "Zhang [Xueliang] did not just give a cash reward to Xiang Qingshan and Zhang Haitian, but also, via Huang Xiansheng, made Xiang Qingshan commander of the First Company of the National Salvation Army, and Zhang Haitian commander of the Second."¹⁷ Although this first volunteer force had some individual successes, such as the assassination of collaborating militarists Ling Yinqing and Zhang Xuecheng, the withdrawal of the Northeastern Army from Jinzhou at the beginning of January 1932 left this first gathering of the resistance scattered and stranded.

Although the NNSS continued to give financial and political advice to Ma Zhanshan, Li Du, Wang Delin, and other resistance leaders, after the fall of Jinzhou they resolved to build up resistance strength more directly under their strategic control in Liaoning. The main commander they worked with was Tang Juwu, an infantry commander from the Donghua area, who came to Beiping to consult Zhang Xueliang in October 1931. On 5 April 1932, Huang Xiansheng made contact with Tang in Huanren county, Liaoning, bringing him a letter of introduction from the NNSS and an 80,747 yuan donation.¹⁸ They then set up a Liaoning People's National Salvation Society (*Liaoning minzhong jiuguohui*). Tang Juwu was in charge of its military section, named the Liaoning People's Self-Defense Army (SDA; *Ziweijun*), but the liaison with Beiping was through NNSS member Huang Yuzhou.¹⁹ The SDA officially announced its existence on 21 April 1932, and it clashed repeatedly with the Japanese army between May and August 1932, when Japanese pressure meant that Tang was forced to withdraw almost all the army to an area south of the Great Wall.²⁰

The SDA was the main force through which the NNSS attempted to provide a united leadership for the resistance armies. At a session of the NNSS committee from 28 May to 1 June 1932, Li Chunhua was delegated to try and instill unified lines of command and to divide the SDA into five large areas of operation within Liaoning, each covering around seven counties. Wang Ju and Shao Yuchun note, "A few of the military regions and forces were reformed and restructured according to these regulations, but the majority of resistance armies maintained their

original, individual structures.” There were only a few occasions when the NNSS could cooperate with the resistance to smuggle large amounts of military matériel into the Northeast, and even these took place after the SDA had had to wind down. Because of access problems, large deliveries were limited to the Liaodong region. In October 1932, Li Chunhua led a convoy of 20 trucks into Liaodong carrying 8 mortars, 4 heavy machine guns, 2,000 mortar shells, 500 hand grenades, 300,000 bullets, and a radio transmitter. In June 1933, the same area received 4 mortars, 5 machine guns, over 300 pistols, and over 2,000 rifles. Although “we do not have accurate statistics on the amounts of ammunition and supplies that the NNSS provided for the resistance,” write Wang and Shao, the total amount they spent was over 387,000 yuan.²¹ In summary, direct NNSS military assistance does not appear to have made a great deal of difference to the operation of the SDA, and in comparison with the massive resources available to the Kwantung Army the supplies smuggled in could in any case have had only symbolic value.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND POLITICAL LIAISON

In general, the strength of the NNSS lay in monetary rather than strategic support. Despite the lack of official support for the NNSS and its parallel organization in Shanghai, the Support Society (its full name was the Liaoning-Jilin-Heilongjiang Support Society: *Liao-Ji-Hei minzhong bouyuanhui*), the activists did a creditable job trying to keep the volunteers supplied. Between April 1932 and July 1933, for example, Wang Delin was given 86,091 yuan, Ding Chao and Li Du 52,773 yuan, and Ma Zhanshan 234,509 yuan, the latter being the largest allocation to any resistance leader and an indication of how important Ma was in the exiled activists’ thinking. In total, the sums disbursed to resistance armies were around 1.8 million yuan (*dayang*).²² Most of their help went to Liaoning groups rather than those in Jilin and Heilongjiang; while the restrictions of geography always made this likely, Wang Huayi did express private concern that some might see this as provincial bias.²³

The NNSS did not need only to supply and attempt to train the resistance. They sent out political workers to indoctrinate the fighters in the nationalist significance of their resistance and coordinate individual acts of defiance against the Japanese with the larger NNSS agenda for the recapture of the Northeast. One of Wang Huayi’s first decisions was to organize a section of the student corps to return to the Northeast to

do political work.²⁴ Later, Yan Baohang and Du Zhongyuan were given control of the NNSS's propaganda, "including political training and sending political personnel 'inside.'"²⁵ By January 1932, there were around 70 military and political advisers in the Northeast, rising through the year to 156, which, in the words of volunteer commander Li Chunhua, "made the link between the national salvation army and the NNSS even closer."²⁶

The political work was divided among 11 main districts. Although records do not reveal the names of the workers, we know how many were sent to each: 38 to the 4 districts of Liaoning (6 to Shenyang), 35 to the 3 districts of Jilin, 12 to the 2 districts of Heilongjiang, and 2 to the Harbin Special Zone. In addition, 5 mobile squads were sent to these areas additionally as needed; squads A to D had 15, 28, 21, and 50 members respectively, with a team of 6 stationed near Harbin, led by Che Xiangchen.²⁷

Political activists also seem to have emerged in the Northeast itself. For example, the coauthor of Ma Zhanshan's telegrams describing his campaign, according to Japanese intelligence, was Han Shuye, Ma's Japanese-educated chief-of-staff. (However, the Japanese also noted that Han had contact with nationalists in Beijing, and he may have met members of the NNSS from early on.)²⁸ The contacts between the resistance armies and the NNSS swiftly began to flourish, with NNSS activists going out to the front line and resistance leaders or their representatives coming to Beijing, often being introduced clandestinely to Zhang Xueliang. (The feasibility of these journeys suggests that the border was somewhat porous, as policing its entire length was not a valid proposition.)

What form did the political activities carried out by the NNSS and other visitors to the resistance take? Information is scarce, but there are a few reports that enable us to form some idea.

Liu Shizhou, a nationalist writer, spent a month in Ma Zhanshan's base at Hailun from November to December 1931 and later wrote a report on what he had seen there. It should, however, be remembered that Hailun was not necessarily typical of all resistance bases; it was a town in its own right and was a particular focus of attention while Liu was there because it was the provisional headquarters of the Heilongjiang government loyal to Zhang Xueliang.²⁹ First Ma's troops set up a provisional government. According to Liu,

Every county hired 200–300 people to be trained as a peace protection corps [*baopandui*], so as to maintain public order in the area. When every office of the provincial government had moved over to Hailun, they took over the schools and carried on business as usual.

The provincial government deputies who arrived at Hailun mostly slept right in the offices of the Guangxin company.³⁰

Then the nationalist activists arrived at Hailun:

They got news from Nanjing and Tokyo from the military radio station and published a wall-newspaper daily, posting it up around the city daily and sending it to every county. They also published work policy and other announcements, and each day sent special representatives to each county. There were two or three special representatives for each county, and in each one they organized a people's self-defense army and acted with great vigor.³¹

Ma went on to defect to the Japanese in February 1932, then left them again in April. One fighter in Ma Zhanshan's camp later recalled a propaganda visit from Che Xiangchen after Ma had redefected. Although the opinion this writer gives at the end is necessarily retrospective, his description of the technique that Che Xiangchen used is illuminating:

Late in April 1932, Beiping NNSS official Che Xiangchen . . . came several thousand miles to Heihe. He brought secret orders from Zhang Xueliang, as well as the NNSS's warm wishes for Ma Zhanshan. One morning in early May, the troops in Heihe were called together in the square . . . Then General Ma gave a special feast, and all officers ranked major or above came to it. Che Xiangchen spoke: "In one corner of the land of China, to have several thousand men gather together to resist the Japanese really is a matter of great celebration for the Chinese nation. Everyone should unite and adhere to the general's patriotic spirit." Che Xiangchen's visit really inspired General Ma and spurred him on. He determinedly fought the Japanese dwarfs to the end.³²

However, the NNSS also needed propaganda for use in China south of the Great Wall, and it became quite clear that the resistance was being supported for its propaganda value as much as for its actual fighting. In February 1932, for example, Che was instructed by the NNSS to let Ma Zhanshan know that the society was particularly keen on a good show of resistance during the visit of the League of Nations Commission of Enquiry under Lord Lytton, to counter Japanese stories that there was very little resistance, and they also "especially hoped that Ma Zhanshan could issue a special telegram."³³ Che also took the opportunity to talk to Ma's soldiers about the necessity of resistance.³⁴ His advice was also exercised on Li Du during that trip, who likewise produced a letter that was careful to stress both the role of the resistance fighters and of the NNSS:³⁵

[Che Xiangchen] has trudged 10,000 li . . . with this patriotic spirit; he can truly rescue the destiny of the nation and not be ashamed of his service as a soldier! The bitter war has already been going for a year since the time that I rose up to righteousness [i.e., began resistance]. I have resolutely protected the border area through very many difficulties, relying on my officers and men to be aware of the main points of the great righteousness [of our cause], preferring to sacrifice themselves for the country and emphatically not surrendering themselves in a servile manner. Moreover, comrades from all over the country have flooded back [into the Northeast]. My army at first had only one company and now has over 100,000 [men], which is sufficient to show that the enthusiasm of the people of the Three Provinces still exists. On the day that the large army within the pass is mobilized, the dwarf bandits [i.e., Japanese] will be eliminated. We are only waiting for an early announcement of an order to attack the rebels so as to extend our great righteousness. We especially hope that the noble-minded people of the NNSS will create a backup force, a ray of light in these Three Provinces.³⁶

(The contents of resistance propaganda will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.) Resistance leaders were not always compliant, but sometimes came to the NNSS to remonstrate and negotiate for more support. In November 1932, a disgruntled Tang Juwu came clandestinely from the Northeast to Beiping to see his patrons, and Wang Huayi and Zhu Qinglan had to persuade him to return to Manchuria without letting anyone see him away from his command post.³⁷

Attempts to encourage people outside the resistance armies to rise up against the Japanese appear to have been less successful: Huang Yuzhou was sent out in October 1931 to encourage the police and local militias to rebel, and he went to, among other places, Tieling, Fushun, Hailong, Qingyuan, and Tonghua. "However, because the situation was chaotic, and it was difficult for [the people] to tell good from bad," note Wang and Shao, "he had great difficulties."³⁸

A continual worry for the NNSS was that the resistance fighters supplied themselves by raiding town and village dwellers, which laid the raiders open to bad publicity and prevented them from generating a truly mass movement (as well as opening up those they had raided to Japanese reprisals, as the Pingdingshan massacre, described in chap. 4, shows).³⁹ They never managed to resolve the problem, although they came up with several proposals that aimed to deal with it. In a letter to the second military district (of five), Wang Huayi requested, "When you borrow [from the people] food, bullets, or weapons, or any items needed for the military, give them a receipt."⁴⁰ On 7 May 1932, the NNSS came up with a

statute on the levels of taxation that the resistance should levy on people in the areas they controlled. They also deduced, probably correctly, that one of the disincentives to joining the resistance was that there was no support for the families of resisters who were killed in action. The NNSS issued detailed plans for a pension scheme, which would pay for maintenance of spouses and education of children for up to twenty-five years, the whole administration to be borne by the local government. However, the successful implementation of these plans would have depended on the resistance volunteers gaining long-term control over areas of the Northeast, which they failed to do, unlike the CCP in Jiangxi or Yan'an. Furthermore, the plans were never even attempted, as the NNSS proposed them to the KMT Financial Regulatory Committee, which rejected them.⁴¹ The NNSS had thus had the satisfaction of being able to claim that it had come up with ideas to support the resistance and that it was the fault of Nanjing that they had remained unimplemented.

THE SUPPORT SOCIETY

The NNSS was the main organization in the north of China that agitated for active resistance to the occupation of Manchuria. In the south, however, interest in the fate of the Northeast was initially of concern mainly to more politically active groups. These included students and some business leaders such as Wang Xiaolai of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce (who organized a boycott of Japanese goods that reached its peak between late 1931 and early 1932).⁴² This changed after the Shanghai Incident of February 1932. The Japanese navy launched an attack on Shanghai after Japanese businesses in the city had protested the continuing Chinese boycott against them. Although Chiang Kaishek once again advocated nonresistance, the locally garrisoned Nineteenth Route Army under Cai Tingkai fought back and put up a much better performance than the Japanese had expected. At the beginning of March 1932, a truce was signed that favored the Japanese, and from this point, active support for the Nineteenth Route Army's resistance was no longer possible: "Popular ardor dimmed when the Shanghai fighting ceased," notes Parks Coble.⁴³ But the northeasterners hoped to work on the passions that they knew the anti-Japanese issue could arouse in the south, and turn them toward Manchuria. In practice, however, the immediate effect of their actions was not to spread the NNSS's influence but rather to stimulate the establishment in April 1932 of a new Shanghai-based organization.

The organization was the Liaoning-Jilin-Heilongjiang Support Society (*Liao-Ji-Hei minzhong houyuanhui*: hereafter referred to as the “Support Society”). Despite its name, it was not headed by a native north-easterner, but by Zhu Qinglan, who had been born in Shaoxing, in Zhejiang province. Under the Republic, he had been military governor of Heilongjiang, governor of Guangdong, and, from 1922, chief executive of the Harbin Special Zone at Zhang Zuolin’s invitation.⁴⁴ He returned south in 1926, where he took up social activism; in November 1931 he set up a committee in Shanghai for the relief of northeastern refugees.⁴⁵ In February 1932, NNSS fund-raisers had found their efforts of little avail in a Shanghai transfixed by its own Japanese problem; despite the boycott, the linkage between the two regions’ plights had not yet been made solid in people’s minds. Only Zhu Qinglan had come through with a donation of 10,000 yuan, which just matched the NNSS’s own donation to Cai Tingkai’s troops.⁴⁶ (His support for resistance was not restricted to the Northeast; in May 1933 Zhu was also believed to have donated 100,000 yuan to Feng Yuxiang’s People’s Anti-Japanese Allied Army.)⁴⁷

After the establishment of Manchukuo in March 1932, Zhu advocated resistance and set up the Northeastern Volunteer Army Support Society (*Dongbei yiyongjun houyuanhui*). He became convinced that Zhang Xueliang had been bullied into nonresistance, and cabled Zhang to request that he take the initiative and lead a force to recapture the Northeast. Zhang sent a representative to see Zhu in Shanghai and gave the new organization his support, although he recommended that they rename it the “Liaoning-Jilin-Heilongjiang People’s Support Society,” since open advocacy of aid to the volunteers would quickly lead Nanjing to shut it down.⁴⁸

Many of the activities that the Support Society undertook were very similar to those carried out by the NNSS: welfare relief, fund-raising, liaison with the resistance in the Northeast, and so forth. For example, in July 1932 the Society sent a delegation of six people to the Northeast to investigate the situation of Ma Zhanshan, Wang Delin, Feng Zhanhai, and other resistance leaders who had also been receiving aid from the NNSS.⁴⁹ Zhang Xueliang persuaded the two groups that it made sense to coordinate their activities. There were protests from some NNSS members who felt that the Support Society was a front for the section of the KMT that backed Chiang Kaishek’s nonresistance policy (one of Zhu’s selling points was that he had excellent connections with the factions of the KMT that were hostile to the NNSS), but in August 1932 it

was agreed to set up a united command for the resistance armies shared between the two societies, under Zhu's command. A statement was made to clarify the areas of responsibility of the two groups: the Support Society would concentrate on distribution of funds to the resistance and welfare duties, while the NNSS would help Zhu Qinglan to coordinate anti-Japanese activities. Liaison between the two groups was made easier by Zhu relocating to Beiping.⁵⁰ However, the efforts at military training by the NNSS, led by Zhu Qinglan, were not very successful, particularly in the matter of setting up a unified command. One of the main opportunities for Zhu's forces to show their capabilities was as part of a support operation for Zhang Xueliang's halfhearted defense of Rehe in February 1933 against 20,000 Japanese troops. As Coble describes it, "The forces of Chu Ch'ing-lan melted away, often defecting at the first sign of battle . . . Chu Ch'ing-lan's troops behaved so poorly that Chang Hsueh-liang ordered his arrest."⁵¹ Yet this was hypocritical of Zhang Xueliang, whose own efforts had been less than wholehearted. As long as Zhang maintained this attitude, meaningful support for the resistance from outside would remain difficult to obtain.⁵²

The contacts that Zhu Qinglan had within the KMT meant that the doors of prominent party figures were opened to the NNSS in late 1932 to early 1933. Even within the section of the KMT loyal to Chiang (as opposed to the Guangdong faction that was violently opposed to his rule), many factions were uneasy about the nonresistance policy, and the NNSS and Support Society were able to take advantage of this. Foreign Minister Luo Wengan was one of the Nanjing politicians most associated with the idea of resistance to Japan, and the Support Society undertook to keep him informed about the volunteers' activities. Zhu Qinglan's fund-raising skills remained paramount in the south, where he was better known and more trusted than the NNSS activists.⁵³ Wang Huayi acknowledged, "It is an important issue that the Beiping side needs Shanghai's economic support."⁵⁴ Yet until both societies dissolved themselves under pressure from Nanjing in 1933, there remained a lack of synergy between the two organizations, with NNSS members complaining that they resented the new structure.⁵⁵

COMMUNISM

The question of the NNSS's attitude to Communism (both Chinese and Soviet) is worth examining briefly. Years after the Manchurian crisis was over, Yan Baohang would maintain that there had been strong CCP activity within the NNSS.⁵⁶ Yet examination of the ed-

itorials in the NNSS's own journal suggests an immediate impression that is fiercely anti-Communist (editorialist Cui Weizhou was a member of the China Youth Party, which was strongly opposed to Communism and was based on a self-consciously European definition of nationalism).⁵⁷ Cui warned that "the Red Russian tiger is looking on from the north," and that China "has been deceived in the past year by the USSR."⁵⁸ There seems to have been some CCP activism within the group, although it is difficult to say how much. However, Yan himself still maintained as late as 1964 that he and other leading figures in the NNSS were "non-partisan."⁵⁹ Pragmatism seems to have been the order of the day where CCP involvement was concerned. On 2 October 1932, activist Huang Yuzhou in Beiping was arrested for printing Communist propaganda, but was released two days later after appealing to Zhang Xueliang for protection.⁶⁰ However, Wang Huayi decided that it was safer not to have Huang around, and on 12 October sent him on mission to Shenyang "to avoid having people criticize him."⁶¹ There seems to have been CCP activity within the NNSS, but it was not a significant element of the group's strategy or image, particularly as its publicity officially supported the KMT (as will be noted in chap. 6, dogma gleaned from the philosophy of Zeng Qi, founder of the China Youth Party, was more significant).

INTERNAL POLITICS WITHIN THE NORTHEASTERN COMMUNITY

The reformist, urban elite associated with Zhang Xueliang, which made up the core of the NNSS, found itself the target of resentment from other sections of the northeastern community on occasion. One development in late 1932 exposes some of those divisions. Wan Fulin, one of Zhang Zuolin's old comrades-in-arms and deputy to Zhang Xueliang before 1931, wanted to discuss the problems of coordination of the resistance forces in the three provinces. Wang Huayi noted that because Ma Zhanshan and Li Du led their own resistance forces in Heilongjiang and Jilin respectively, "only the Liaoning resistance forces are led by the NNSS," although there were of course frequent contacts with resistance leaders in the other provinces.⁶²

However, Wan Fulin was dissatisfied with these arrangements. He and other Jilinners planned to set up a Jilin general command in Beiping rather as the Liaoning fighters had, to be made up of military officials and local elite members who had fled to Beiping. Both they and a group of former Heilongjiang officials wished to set up an organization within

the NNSS. Wang Huayi noted that the NNSS did not approve of the move: "The comrades [of the NNSS] were not in agreement with this procedure, which had a name but no reality and a superstructure but no base, but they wouldn't obstruct their colleagues from Jilin and Heilongjiang from organizing anything for themselves."⁶³

However, Wang could see that this attitude might fuel the anti-Liaoning feeling already present among sections of the northeastern community:

The NNSS is a united body and is not purely for Liaoning people. However, Liaoning people fled to Beiping in large numbers quite early on; therefore [Liaoning] people are comparatively numerous in this organization, and the organization of a regional resistance army was its chief cause. There is a section of the Jilin *tongxiang* [people from the same native place] who have taken note of these priorities, and they have a lot of opinions on Liaoning people's monopolization of it.⁶⁴

Wang noted that the Jilin general command did briefly emerge but broke up because it lacked solid support. However, the NNSS's contacts with Ma Zhanshan and Li Du show that the splits in the movement were not merely along provincial lines. Furthermore, Wan Fulin's attempts to reduce Liaoning dominance may not have been entirely disingenuous. At the time of the Manchurian Incident, he had been in Beiping, leaving the provincial government at Qiqihaer in the hands of his son Wan Guobin. When the Japanese invaded, Wan Guobin fled, having first looted the provincial treasury. Ma Zhanshan kept up resistance to the Japanese in Heilongjiang from October to December 1931, then joined the Manchukuo regime from January to April 1932. Kwantung Army intelligence noted that during Ma's time as governor of occupied Heilongjiang, he made sure to eliminate as much of the Wan family's influence as possible.⁶⁵ Although Ma had returned to the resistance in April 1932, Wan may well still have been resentful at the way in which Ma had managed to upstage him, and the former's attempts to set up a rival Jilin and Heilongjiang command may have been a means of reasserting his influence and undermining NNSS support for Ma.

The NNSS's Propaganda Activities

The NNSS created a popular image of resistance to the Japanese based on an idealized, resistancialist image of the Manchurian volunteer fighters, and in particular Ma Zhanshan of Heilongjiang. In

this worldview, the ambiguities in the situation in the Northeast were smoothed out and the issue was portrayed simply as the quixotic struggle of valiant nationalist warriors against a ruthless invader, fighting on despite the lack of support from their own government. From the earliest days of the conflict, the telegrams issued in the names of Ma Zhan-shan and other resistance leaders, which were carefully composed by NNSS and other nationalist undercover political agents, shaped the press's and, through it, the public's perception of what was happening in the Northeast. The creation and distribution of this discourse was a complex process, and it will be described in detail in chapter 6.

This section will examine the effect that this creation of a resistancialist discourse had outside Manchuria, in China and beyond. It examines the way in which NNSS activists propagated their image of the resistance through the press and among students as well as using other methods of publicity to engender popular interest and concern. It also examines how the activists used developments in domestic and international politics to try to strengthen their position, exploiting KMT factional battles and the arrival of the League of Nations Commission of Enquiry.

THE PRESS

Although one cannot straightforwardly take press editorials as a reflection of public opinion, there is clearly some correlation between the two. Parks Coble notes that "if press coverage is any indication, the policy of 'first internal pacification, then external resistance,' dominated public discussion in 1932."⁶⁶ Furthermore, the overwhelming tenor of that coverage was hostile to the policy, both in the leftist press and in that normally loyal to Chiang Kaishek. Only the liberal *Duli pinglun*, edited by Hu Shi, voiced support for the government's line and favored a compromise solution on Manchuria. In particular, *Shenghuo zhoubkan* (Life Weekly), China's most popular periodical, voiced trenchant criticism of Nanjing's stand toward the Japanese. The strategy urged upon Nanjing by the critics was the recapture of the Northeast, and, specifically, aid for the volunteer forces and resistance leader Ma Zhan-shan. This advice was the fruit of propaganda by nationalist activists who had shaped reports of the resistance's activity, and in at least one important case—that of *Shenghuo zhoubkan*—was due specifically to NNSS involvement. Linguistic, intellectual, and social developments (the growth of journalism and education, the importation of

ideologically weighted Japanese language, attacks from outside) had contributed to an atmosphere that was responsive to nationalist rhetoric.

Shenghuo zhoubkan was edited by Zou Taofen, “probably the most successful popular journalist in the history of Republican China.” His publications were given prominence because of their attacks on Nanjing’s policy of nonresistance, and in 1932 *Shenghuo zhoubkan* may have reached 1.5 million readers. In the aftermath of the Manchurian Incident, Zou berated Zhang Xueliang for failing to resist, and expressed doubt that China would get justice from the imperialist-dominated League of Nations. As well as reporting on conditions in occupied Manchuria and portraying them as “grim,” the journal made much of the actions of Ma Zhanshan, comparing his heroic stand with Zhang Xueliang’s cowardice. The journal also solicited contributions from readers for Ma, and between November 1931 and February 1932, ¥130,000 was collected.⁶⁷ The Ma Zhanshan who was made the subject of Zou’s fulsome editorials and who could provoke readers into such generosity was not the flawed local militarist of reality, but the almost superhuman freedom fighter depicted in publicity ghostwritten by advisers such as Han Shuye and Che Xiangchen. In reaping both abundant publicity and financial support, the nationalist activists’ support for Ma paid off handsomely.

As well as using images of the resistance shaped by the NNSS and other activists, in 1932 Zou Taofen hired Du Zhongyuan, a “Japanese-trained industrialist refugee from Mukden,” as one of the paper’s chief writers (having already used him as a freelancer since 1930).⁶⁸ Of course, Du was not just any northeasterner: he was joint head of propaganda of the NNSS.⁶⁹ (Yan Baohang was in charge of coordinating propaganda within the Northeast, whereas Du concentrated on spreading the NNSS’s message in the rest of China.) Du took to his task with relish. As *Shenghuo zhoubkan*’s circulation rocketed throughout 1932, the NNSS had a prominent activist in a prime position to spread its message nationally. This is not to say that Du’s input was subverting the content of a magazine that would otherwise have been uncontroversial. The newspaper-reading Chinese public had a choice as to whether they wished to buy pro- or antiresistance journalism, and as Coble notes, they seem overwhelmingly to have chosen proresistance material. But without the raw material about resistance (such as the Ma Zhanshan telegrams) shaped by the northeastern activists, it seems less likely that the momentum of the anti-Japanese movement during 1931 to 1933 could have been maintained so readily via the press. And there were opportunities there to be taken; for example, the need to actively link the Shanghai Incident with the Manchurian occupation, which strengthened the mood created by these newspapers still further. This also goes some

way to explain why the criticisms of the resistance seen in an alternative northeastern periodical, *Dongbei yuekan* (Northeastern Monthly), and elsewhere failed to capture the popular imagination. In the first place, they were not permitted in a wide-circulation magazine like *Shenghuo zhoubkan*, which held a line that was proresistance at all costs and which had an NNSS member on its editorial staff. Second, once *Shenghuo zhoubkan* and magazines like it had successfully created a proresistance mood among the newspaper-reading public (and Coble suggests that they did), it would have been that much harder to chip away at the image of the resistance as the untarnished defender of China's integrity, as it would have involved not merely putting forward a neutral position but actively attacking and subverting an established and highly popular image.

Shenghuo zhoubkan was perhaps the most clear-cut and influential example of NNSS influence on the press, but it was not the only one. The Ma Zhanshan (and other resistance) telegrams were sent out to news agencies all over China and abroad. The telegram of 5 October 1932 signed by Su Bingwen and the other resistance leaders was addressed to "all newspaper offices," as were Ma Zhanshan's telegrams of 7 November 1931 and 12 April 1932, the former announcing that he had launched resistance and the latter that he had redefected from the Japanese.⁷⁰ The society's activities also gave rise to press coverage. The expedition south to petition Nanjing in October 1931 had wide coverage, including a special supplement in the Beiping *Shibao*.⁷¹ On the 18th of every month, the NNSS organized a "meeting to remember the lost provinces," which would be covered by the *Jingbao* and other Beiping papers. Publicity and fund-raising could be combined. After NNSS pressure, the *Tianjin gongbao* pledged to assist in the campaign to help Ma Zhanshan, and announced on 11 February 1932 that its readers had already pledged over 30,000 yuan by November 1931.⁷² The foreign press was not ignored either. Wang Huayi notes an occasion when he accompanied some activists who had just returned from Ma Zhanshan's camp and were about to brief foreign reporters.⁷³ Propaganda had been one of the first tasks that the NNSS's founding committee had highlighted, along with finances and military training, and Du Zhongyuan and his associates showed that they were skilled at the task they had set themselves.

STUDENT PROTEST

As has been seen above, the NNSS themselves used some of the classic techniques of student protest, such as demonstrations, for the transmission of northeastern propaganda. However, they also had a

role to play in the actual student protests, which followed the crisis in September 1931.

First, Ma Zhanshan contributed to the building of the resistancialist construct via the student movement. Jeffrey Wasserstrom notes that youth brigades in Shanghai formed of “their own accord” to go to the Northeast and help Ma Zhanshan, as well as raising funds for him.⁷⁴ They did indeed go of their own accord in the sense that northeastern activists did not necessarily advise them straight out to go, but once again, it is clear that the Ma Zhanshan they wished to go and help was the constructed national hero. It should also be noted that it was Ma Zhanshan specifically that they wished to help, not Tang Juwu or Su Bingwen or Li Du (who actually had rather better records of resistance up to that point). In fact, Ma Zhanshan himself, as noted in chapter 6, strongly dissuaded students from coming to join the resistance, telling them they would be better off helping the country by studying.⁷⁵

Another element in the students’ repertoire cited by Wasserstrom is the technique of petitioning Nanjing. On 28 October 1931, somewhat after Shanghai students had begun using the technique, Yan Baohang set up a “petition corps” (*qingyuandui*) that had over 600 members. During early November, the group had angry and unproductive meetings with various KMT notables, including Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin, and Wu Tiecheng, and on 11 November they were given a short audience with Chiang Kaishek (the contents of their petitions will be discussed in chap. 6 in the section on NNSS propaganda). The NNSS members had arrived together with a group of Tianjin students, whose presence angered Chiang. Chiang is said to have stated, “The Northeast has fallen, so northeasterners can come and petition, but Tianjin has not fallen, so what is it that Tianjin students are coming to petition for?”⁷⁶ In the end, he offered some more conciliatory words but gave no pledge that he would send troops to the Northeast. Nonetheless, the petition drive succeeded in obtaining good newspaper publicity for the NNSS and the cause of resistance.⁷⁷

Wasserstrom sums up the Shanghai student movement of 1931 by saying that it “never became a truly national one led by an umbrella group capable of coordinating concurrent protest activities in different cities.”⁷⁸ This is absolutely accurate when considered from the point of view of the Shanghai students, which is, of course, the point of his study. But the movement’s influence becomes much more significant when considered as part of a *northeastern* strategy of “nationalizing” the Manchurian issue. To be sure, this particular movement did not expand

much outside Shanghai and fell apart by December 1931. But the NNSS had seen a significant stratum of society (southern students) far removed from either Beiping or the Northeast respond at least in part to *their* propaganda, and to that extent the NNSS's first attempts to stimulate a national discourse of resistance had borne fruit. Later, when the Shanghai Incident of February 1932 galvanized a far wider section of the population into accepting the concept of anti-Japanese resistance, the NNSS had a base of awareness on which to draw. Even when Sino-Japanese relations improved briefly in the mid-1930s, the new language and images were in people's minds, ready to be revived when politics once again took a more ominous turn after 1935 and descended into war in 1937.

PUBLICITY AND PETITIONS

The NNSS was eager to raise cash and at pains to ensure that its message reached as many influential circles as possible. Du Zhongyuan was once again in the forefront of these efforts, and shortly after the society's establishment he went to Shanghai to begin drumming up support and contributions from the industrial and commercial communities, as well as overseas Chinese. On a speaking tour, Du gave over sixty talks between December 1931 and February 1932, in cities including Chongqing, Hankou, Changsha, Jiujiang, and Anqing. With audiences often numbering over 1,000 people, he would average around 5,000 yuan in contributions per talk. Du's performances sometimes stimulated newsworthy responses, as in Emeishan, for example, where a priest handed over fifty yuan publicly to him, asking him to send it to Ma Zhanshan. Although Du Zhongyuan was the most active fund-raiser, Yan Baohang, Gao Chongmin, Wang Huayi, and others also joined in. They even persuaded Song Qingling to fund-raise for them among the overseas Chinese, as her husband Sun Yatsen had once done.⁷⁹ These activities did create real depths of feeling. When Ma Zhanshan defected to the Japanese, he received a daily stream of angry letters from Chinese who had donated to his cause, not necessarily angry about the money as such, but outraged that the symbolic figure who could bring them nearer to a shared sense of truly national community in a time of crisis could then spurn the nationalism that he had done so much to promote.⁸⁰

Various other publicity tactics made the proresistance agenda accessible to the illiterate. In Beiping, the NNSS attracted publicity and funds by setting up a "patriotic lottery." Launched by Wang Zhuoran, it

started up in May 1932; tickets cost 1 yuan each, with the draw taking place on the 10th of each month. In total the scheme made 170,000 yuan, which suggests it was popular, and it was able to spread the movement's appeal beyond the literate classes who could be reached via the press. However, He Yingqin, at that time acting chairman of the Beiping branch of the Military Affairs Commission, eventually shut the scheme down on 30 June 1933, an indication that Nanjing was worried about the NNSS's growing success.⁸¹ The NNSS also aimed to obtain a wider audience for its message by cooperating with filmmakers. Wang Huayi reports that on 14 January 1933, "the Baidai film company came to shoot a film of the student corps, and they also shot a film about the military commanders' general strategy."⁸² Wang was clear about the purpose of such films, as expressed in his comment on another film about the resistance that he later saw: "This evening, went to see the movie 'The History of the Resistance Army's Life and Death Battle.' It portrays the situation of Feng Zhanhai's division . . . A lot of it was not accurate, but as propaganda, it was fine."⁸³ Consumer advertising could also reach beyond the literate population. Ma Zhanshan made appearances on cigarette boxes and the packaging on bars of soap, which were given his imprimatur to encourage sales.⁸⁴

We can make some sort of assessment of the effectiveness of the propagandists' efforts by looking at the large number of petitions sent to Nanjing by interest groups around the country in protest at the nonresistance policy. Chapter 6 will argue that the language of resistance contained a series of standardized phrases and constructs, and it is worth noting that these phrases turn up repeatedly in the messages sent to the capital. It is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of the petitions came from educated or commercial elite groups, as these people tended to be in positions of power, and it was their opinions that did most to shape public discourse in the 1930s.

Students, it appears, made up the large majority of those who pressured the government from the very outbreak of the Manchurian Incident. In September and October 1931, students from Beiping, Tianjin, and Jiangsu all sent telegrams demanding that the government deal strongly with the Japanese.⁸⁵ By 1932–33, the students' language had become even more strident, with Hangzhou, Guangzhou, and Shanghai students demanding general mobilization and a declaration of war against Japan.⁸⁶ From 1932 on, however, there is a greater preponderance of petitions from other groups. Chambers of commerce were one prime source for petitions; between May 1932 and March 1933, for in-

stance, there were telegrams in favor of resistance to the Japanese from the chairmen and committees of chambers in Jiangsu, Kunming, Ningbo, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Guangzhou (although as noted above, Shanghai had acted early and started to organize a boycott in autumn 1931).⁸⁷ Those from Ningbo, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Kunming all mentioned the Northeast specifically, and Kunming also invoked Ma Zhanshan by name. The Shanghai ironworkers' and banking trade unions expressed concern too about the Northeast.⁸⁸ More socially and geographically disparate groups also sent petitions: the Shanxi "Double-Ten" Memorial Association, the Hunan and Sichuan's People's Anti-Japanese Resistance Armies, and a representative of Chinese workers who had served in Europe during World War I.⁸⁹

KMT FACTIONALISM

Fearful that the nonresistance policy might be threatened and distrustful of the northeasterners' association with Zhang Xueliang, the Nanjing regime needed to discredit the narrative of resistance constructed by the NNSS. By doing this, they could then discredit its aims as well. However, the NNSS's influence could also be co-opted positively by Chiang's opponents, although those opponents did not immediately seize the opportunity. On 8 November 1931, the NNSS's political corps, led by Wang Huayi, attempted to see Hu Hanmin and Wang Jingwei in Shanghai. They were refused entry, and were angered further when they discovered that Hu had sent Zhang Xueliang a telegram reading, "The strength of a country does not lie in its borders."⁹⁰ In March 1932, Hu Hanmin and Wu Tiecheng sent representatives to the NNSS to demand that the organization "cooperate" with Nanjing's policy.⁹¹

However, the winter of 1931–32 saw a realignment in Chinese politics, in which the Guangdong faction of the KMT challenged the authority of Chiang Kaishek. Although Manchuria was not the central issue in the power struggle, opponents of Chiang were able to seize it as a means to undermine the Nanjing government: Wang Huayi noted that the political crisis in intramural China "has had an influence on the northeastern question."⁹² 1932 saw a succession of resignations and falls from power. Chiang himself briefly left office between December 1931 and January 1932, a time when leadership was desperately needed in response to the situation in the Northeast, as the Northeastern Army's last stand in Jinzhou was deteriorating day by day. Although the interim government led by Sun Ke collapsed because of the lack of military support for it, the

return of Chiang to power did not stem the sense of crisis. Chiang's brother-in-law T. V. Soong (Song Ziwen), who was minister of finance, resigned on 4 June 1932 over Chiang's policy of "first pacification [of the CCP], then resistance [to the Japanese]." Wang Jingwei, now the prime minister, became worried that he would become the target of growing public anger at China's supine response to the Japanese and tried to preempt this by denouncing Zhang Xueliang for his loss of the Northeast and demanding that Zhang resign. Chiang stepped in to prevent this, and eventually it was Wang himself who had to resign and spend a while in Europe recovering face. Meanwhile, T. V. Soong returned to office, although he, along with other notables such as Foreign Minister Luo Wengan, remained unhappy about the nonresistance policy and the Tanggu Truce of 31 May 1933, which effectively ceded control of Manchuria to China. Meanwhile, the Guangdong faction and its allies, such as Hu Hanmin, continued to mark their exclusion from power by sniping at Nanjing.⁹³

For these dissenters from the nonresistance line, the Manchurian crisis became a tool with which to undermine Nanjing's authority. Once the KMT dissidents decided that the northeastern situation should become a point of leverage, the NNSS and the Support Society began to find doors open to them that had been firmly closed just a few months earlier. Hu Hanmin, having denied the importance of territorial issues in autumn 1931, had reversed his position completely a year later. Hu himself had fled to Hong Kong by then, but on 23 October 1932 he sent his representative Yao Juewu to visit Wang Huayi and other NNSS members. The message ran: "Hu Hanmin's opinion and the opinion of the comrades of this society are all the same as regards national salvation."⁹⁴ T. V. Soong's involvement was more active. Soong was loyal to Chiang, having been instrumental in scuppering Sun Ke's interim government by refusing to serve in it and thereby lend it his financial prestige. However, he was also in favor of resistance to the Japanese and had previously given aid to the Nineteenth Route Army during the Shanghai Incident of February 1932. On 9 September, Soong had his representative Hu Junzhuang receive NNSS members at his home and offer them assistance on Soong's behalf. Soong graduated the following spring to making personal appearances with the northeastern activists. On 16 February 1933, he came to a meeting to set up an organization to defend Rehe, which the Kwantung Army was about to attack. Two days later, he gave a talk at his private residence to the northeastern student propaganda corps, whom he advised: "Don't speak from a factional

point of view. Speak rather about opposing Japan . . . from a national point of view. I myself am a KMT man, but I'm not [now] talking in terms of the party."⁹⁵ On 29 November, Wang Jingwei is reported to have made contact with the NNSS "to talk about national salvation," although no more details are given about the nature of the conversation.⁹⁶ Luo Wengan was also regularly contacted by the Support Society, who passed on to him a series of reports on resistance activities.⁹⁷

These were prominent figures indeed to associate themselves with a small, one-issue pressure group operating in violation of official government policy, although of course, for these figures it was part of a wider network of maneuvering. That the NNSS could attract such support was an indication of their success in presenting the northeastern resistance forces as a source of moral and therefore political authority, quite aside from the NNSS's factional connections with Zhang Xueliang. Both sides gained from the association.

LOBBYING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Members of the NNSS were keen to lobby the Lytton Commission, both in person and through propaganda. Before the League team had arrived in China, Wang Huayi, Gao Chongmin, and others decided to send workers into the Northeast to organize a general mobilization of the resistance when the commission reached Manchuria; they were ordered to organize "a concerted attack before the Lytton Commission leaves the Northeast."⁹⁸ When the commission arrived in Beiping, they took tea with Zhang Xueliang, Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo), and Zhou Dawen, the mayor. NNSS organizers accompanied Zhang, properly briefed; Wang Huayi noted that he had taken care to look through all his notes on foreign affairs "so as to respond to the investigative team."⁹⁹

Having visited the Northeast, Lytton was of the opinion that the Chinese who supported Manchukuo were generally opportunists, with a few genuine but deluded souls thrown in. George Moss, a China expert attached to the commission, estimated that "80% of the total of 30 millions" claimed to be pro-Chinese.¹⁰⁰ The question arises as to how Moss could make this judgment, as he had been in Manchuria only a few weeks, and thanks in large part to the orchestration of the trip by the Manchukuo government, the delegation had met relatively few Manchurian Chinese. We know that one of the main ways the commission received information about dissidence in Manchukuo was through

letters smuggled through to their hotels and to foreign consulates. Moss said, "We had collected some *60 statements in Chinese* favouring the Manchukuo, and over 1700 letters in Chinese denouncing it."¹⁰¹ The letters were clearly from people genuinely outraged by the Japanese actions in the region, although one cannot speculate too far on the number or nature of people who wrote them. However, one should note that one of the NNSS members sent out to Shenyang during the League's visit was Zhang Songjun, who was supposed to "encourage spirited local notables to express their opinions for the League investigation team."¹⁰² These notables undoubtedly said what they believed, but it is interesting to note that the NNSS thought it was prudent to prompt them into action: and whatever level of responsibility the NNSS had in stimulating them, it is clear that the letters *were* effective in influencing the commission members.

Conclusion

The Tanggu Truce of 31 May 1933 provided an uneasy resolution of the first phase of the Japanese occupation. Its provisions meant that Nanjing effectively gave Manchukuo *de facto* recognition, and it changed the political climate as far as resistance went. Among the conditions Chiang agreed to was that anti-Japanese agitation, particularly in North China, would be banned. In July 1933, the NNSS and Support Society both decided, under pressure, to dissolve themselves, although the key figures involved with both groups began underground resistance work that would continue until the establishment of a United Front policy in 1936.¹⁰³ At this point, it is worth assessing how successful the NNSS and Support Society were.

First, how successful were their activities with regard to the volunteers? In monetary terms, they had succeeded in raising substantial (although still primarily symbolic) sums to support the resistance armies. They had also, through the activities of Che Xiangchen and others, taken steps to offer military training and increase nationalist awareness among volunteer groups whose conception of their place in a wider context was often hazy. However, in the last resort, they were not able to offer sufficient support to enable the scattered resistance forces to unite and defeat the Japanese (never in any case a realistic option), nor to prevent them carrying out those activities that alienated them from

the population of the Northeast. But in fact effective armed resistance would never have been realistic unless they had received support from the regular armies south of the Great Wall. It is unclear how widespread the success of their political activism among the resistance troops was, although the case study of Ma Zhanshan in the next chapter suggests that such activism could be a successful technique. All in all, the NNSS's concrete achievements on behalf of the resistance can only be counted moderately effective.

How great, then, was the exiles' influence outside the Northeast? Again, the sums of money raised by them show the awakening of real popular interest in the recovery of the Northeast as a national issue, assisted by a knack for good publicity shown by Du Zhongyuan and others. The increase in petitions and protests to Nanjing, and the way they are phrased, gives some indication of the increasing significance of the Northeast as an issue among people in very different social and geographical groups, and of the way in which the NNSS's resistancialism specifically had been popularized; the NNSS could also build on the efforts of others, such as the boycotts and petitions of 1931–32, to spread their message. To this extent, the exiles' construction of a narrative of the Manchurian crisis was a great success. This was true even outside China, where League and newspaper sources came round to reporting the crisis within the constraints of the template set by the NNSS. In addition, they played factional political battles with some skill.

However, one cannot assume that even by 1933 the expansion of that sense of national crisis was all-encompassing. Students, it has been noted, were often the most radical of all groups when it came to resistance, and their anger was stimulated by each new Japanese outrage. Yet between 1934 and 1937, when the immediate impact of the Japanese aggression had worn off, there was a new peak of Chinese students taking Boxer Indemnity Scholarships to go to Japan. And although Japanese Dōjinkai hospitals were boycotted by the Chinese public during crises (for instance, when victims of the Yangtze flooding refused aid in 1931), in other years they noted no downturn in the number of patients, many of whom preferred the more modest Japanese facilities to the American-backed Peking Union Medical College, which they branded a "rich man's hospital."¹⁰⁴ These facts are not intended to suggest that nationalism somehow fell into abeyance between 1933 and 1937, but to point out that it remained necessary for activists to catalyze that nationalism and keep awareness of it alive and growing—what Cull describes as "garden-ing." This chapter has aimed to show ways in which the northeasterners,

using their own methods, and with their own agenda, were significant in that process of growth. Rather than portray the emergence of Chinese nationalism in the twentieth century using the cliché of a tidal wave, it is perhaps more accurate to suggest that it was a tide slowly advancing, sometimes retreating, but eventually reaching the top of the beach. Japan had for several decades been a target for Chinese nationalism. However, the Manchurian crisis provided a clear-cut opportunity for a starkly dichotomized Other to be popularized (via press, public meetings, etc.), leading to a clearer conception of the Chinese nation as an entity because of the new clarity of what it was defined against (the Japanese occupation and other linked Japanese atrocities). The north-eastern exiles were not the only vectors of nationalism during the period—far from it—but they did play an active and important role that hitherto has not been widely acknowledged, not least in helping to propagate a positive, heroic trope to make nationalism more appealing.

CHAPTER 6

Know Your Enemy

*The Creation of a Discourse of Nationalist
Resistance, 1931–1933*

The political activists of the NNSS were heavily influenced by the events that fueled nationalism all over China in the early twentieth century, including the May Fourth and May Thirtieth Movements. In this chapter, we will see that from 1931 to 1933 the NNSS drew on an existing nationalist discourse understood by the groups they were trying to reach, but adapted that discourse to fit the Manchurian case, permitting them to portray their own cause as being part of a wider national struggle. First, it shows that the concepts and terms used by the NNSS writers to define their positions and argue their case were heavily influenced by the language of late Qing and early Republican nationalist discourse, with its combination of imported and native ideas. Second, it suggests that in dealing with the issue of the occupation, the NNSS tied their propaganda strategy firmly to the resistance armies and specifically to the image they created of those armies. The connection to preexisting discourses tied them into the wider cultural community in which they operated, whereas their use of ideas that had emerged only recently enabled them to be innovative and widen their frame of reference.

Tradition and Innovation: Creation of Nationalist and Resistance Discourses

CUI WEIZHOU AND *JIUGUO XUNKAN*

The NNSS made its position known chiefly through its journal, *Jiuguo xunkan* (National Salvation Journal), which appeared fortnightly between early 1932 and mid-1933. The editor of *Jiuguo xunkan* was Li Quanlin, but Cui Weizhou wrote the first editorial after it had been discussed and passed by the NNSS committee, as well as many subsequent similar pieces: thus Cui's work forms a significant part of the material discussed here.¹ Cui eventually became disillusioned with the NNSS, and in April 1933 he not only left the group publicly but also accepted Japanese money.² But we should not let that knowledge inform our reading of the whole period that Cui wrote for the journal. We know, for instance, that he was trusted enough in May 1932 to write, along with Yan Baohang, Qian Gonglai, and Wang Huayi, a joint letter on behalf of the NNSS to the Beiping Political Affairs Council chairman Huang Fu.³ We should also bear in mind that identifying any particular influences on the NNSS's thinking does not imply consistency of thought throughout. The NNSS members did not use their journal to hold discussions about the merits of "national salvation" over "enlightenment" (*jiuguo, qimeng*), as did some May Fourth intellectuals, nor to act as a showcase for the conscience of Hu Shi or Lu Xun.⁴ They and their magazine were active in service of a particular agenda: the recovery of the Northeast. Whatever would help that cause—exhortation to adopt Mencian values, sponsoring bandits, taking tea with the Lytton Commission—was within bounds.

Nonetheless, there are clear precedents in late Qing nationalist thinking for the NNSS's ideas. The debt they owed to this thought, and to late Qing and early Republican journalism, explains in part why they chose to use a language based on nationalism and why it struck a chord with their audience. Late Qing nationalist discourse was steeped in imported Japanese terms from the highly ideologically driven Meiji language reforms, and those terms were themselves imported from a Europe that had decades or more of experience of nationalism. The years 1900 to 1907 marked the peak period in China for translation of Japanese texts on law and politics, including works on nationalism.⁵ Liang Qichao's *Xinmin congbao* (New Citizen Journal), with a circulation of 9–10,000 by 1902, did a great deal to spread the new language. Huang Zunxian wrote to Liang to say, "More than two score newspapers in

China . . . have adopted all the terminology and language you have newly translated and introduced.”⁶ Liang helped to define popular journalism in China of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, and the language he and similarly minded late Qing journalists used was heavily laden with nationalistic terms, providing momentum and a means of expression for the momentous events of the second and third decades of the twentieth century that would influence and inspire the young activists who later made up the NNSS.⁷

Thus in expressing their ideas, NNSS writers were fitting into a groove that earlier political writers had shaped for them and using terms that in turn had preexisting ideological weight at the time of their importation. The NNSS’s language showed a paradox here similar to that noted by Lydia Liu in her discussion of the National Essence (*Guocui*) movement. The latter group, typified by Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong, felt the need to articulate a new anti-Manchu language that stressed their own Han identity. However, to do so they were forced to resort to wholesale use of imported Japanese terms, either Japanese neologisms or classical Chinese compounds that were given a new meaning in Japanese and reimported into Chinese: *guocui* (national essence) and *guoxue* (national learning) are transliterations of this type.⁸

Developments in the early Republican period also shaped the nationalist outlook of the NNSS. The success of the 1911 revolution in overthrowing the Qing removed the Manchus as primary targets for opposition; other targets replaced them. One new factor that was of particular relevance to the Manchurians was the increase in resentment against Japan as a new imperialist power. Although the 1895 and 1904–05 wars had indicated the nature of the threat to China from its neighbor to the east, the transfer of German concessions to Japan at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 led to “a different order” of student-organized mass protests that underlay a new urban nationalism to which the NNSS would later contribute; student protest contributed heavily to setting forth an established tradition of nationalist rhetoric in the Republic.⁹ The New Culture movement of the May Fourth period also ushered in a period of profound reconsideration among elite circles on the nature of being Chinese, and for many, nationalism increasingly filled the gap left by the rejection of traditional culture.¹⁰ Warlordism also increased social chaos and helped stimulate a climate that would open the way to development of nationalism.¹¹ Events such as the May Thirtieth Movement increased the importance of imperialism as a spur to nationalist awareness all over China: the shootings in Shanghai on 30 May 1925 led to students walking out of the SMR Medical College in Shenyang, thousands

of miles away.¹² Writings of the time, whether the political tracts of Chen Duxiu or the novels of Mao Dun, all show the influence of these events.

Clearly visible in the writings of the NNSS is the influence of the thought of the China Youth Party (CYP), of which Cui Weizhou was a member. Heavily influenced by the radical French nationalist right, the CYP's thinkers, such as Zeng Qi and Li Huang, believed that "modern nationalism could only emerge in conflict with foreign powers" and that nationalism was "a specific people, occupying a certain piece of land, protecting certain ownership rights."¹³ With its frequent references to the loss of the northeastern homeland after foreign invasion, as well as to European dictators such as Mussolini, the NNSS's writings heavily echo the CYP's program.

The effects of this history of the development of nationalist rhetoric over the six or seven decades from the late Qing to the 1930s can be seen in the writings of the NNSS. In addition, as Youli Sun has pointed out, political activism against imperialism in the 1920s was divided between several targets (Britain, Japan, France, and the United States among them), whereas the events of the 1930s made Japan the sole target of attack, allowing China to turn from "revolutionary diplomacy" to attempts to create international alliances.¹⁴ This section will examine the dynamics of that change and how these influences contributed to the shaping of a discourse and, in turn, were adapted in light of the circumstances of the occupation.

These are Cui Weizhou's opening lines in the first edition of *Jingguo xunkan*:

The Chinese nation [*minzu*] founded a state more than 4,000 years ago. It has a great culture, a lengthy history, and a special spirit. In the past we fought with other races [*waizu*] and were never weak. After we had taken victory, we benefited them with our culture [*wenhua*], and taught them with our customs [*liyi*], expecting that we would both have peace and prosperity and that we could build the world together, so that we could advance toward the Great Unity [Datong].¹⁵

He writes in another editorial:

Suddenly on 18 September last year, [the Japanese] sent troops to launch a fierce raid on Shenyang and occupy Jilin and Heilongjiang . . . The attacks from world [*shijie*] opinion, the censure by the League of Nations, the opposition of Britain and the USA, the anger of the Chinese citizenry [*guomin*]¹⁶—all were ignored by the Japanese militarists [*junfa*].¹⁶

In these two short passages, the words for "culture," "nation," "world," "citizenry," and "militarist" are all Japanese importations or reimporta-

tions. In other words, fundamental concepts to explain the NNSS's interpretation of China's situation had to use these adapted terms.¹⁷ Since the words were imported, it is unsurprising that the ideas that had prompted those words to become necessary (whether for Yan Fu or the Meiji writers) were imported too. Dealing with the term *guocui* (national essence), Lydia Liu points out that "*guocui* . . . like the related terms *minzu* . . . and *guoxue* . . . was first imported from Japan as part of a cultural discourse, and it provided the Chinese with a theoretical language to talk about race, civilization, and national identity, and to deal with the contradiction of being Chinese in a modern world."¹⁸

Datong (the Great Commonwealth) was Kang Youwei's "major utopian synthesis," written after the collapse of the 1898 reforms.¹⁹ The text, which saw the present as a transition between the "age of disorder" and an "age of rising peace," was highly influential on Tan Sitong and Liang Qichao.²⁰ Datong was an early concept that allowed Chinese reformers to shape the growing need for *jinguo* (national salvation) in humanist terms, and must have been an influential element in the "internationalist nationalism" that informed the NNSS, which took full account of the world system of nation-states even while being cynical about it. Kang and Liang had drawn heavily on Mencian traditions: Prasenjit Duara has made the case that for Kang Youwei, the New Text School of Confucian thought enabled him to "argue for modern institutions, and ultimately even for a modern nation-state, while remaining within a universalist Confucian perspective."²¹ Cui does not attempt to define further his own understanding of the term Datong in the piece above, but he also expressed the anti-Japanese struggle in Confucian-Mencian terms: "Saving the country by resisting the Japanese can be called loyalty; resisting the Japanese by treating your relatives well can be called filiality; resisting to the end and not surrendering can be called purity, and sacrificing oneself to save one's compatriots can be called righteousness."²²

Cui sets his terms out right at the start; the Chinese *nation* has existed for centuries, and therefore he is justified in characterizing the issue of the Japanese occupation as one of national significance: "In the history of the Chinese nation [*minzu*], this is the most urgent situation, a disgrace and shame connected with life and death and survival."²³

Over a year later, he wrote:

Northeastern compatriots must thoroughly arouse themselves from the disorganization, disunity, and lack of effort of the past . . . If we cannot unite against the Japanese, then we will sink into being a lost country of slaves . . . It could really be said that we would be the most

pitiable people in the world, and also the most detestable people in the world; pitiable because they will pity our poverty, hateful because they will detect our lack of will! . . . The territory of the Northeast is fertile, and people's lives were relatively easy. Therefore they did not realize they were immersed in a wasted life of [mere] material progress. But as they had not awakened, when a disaster landed upon them, then the soldiers just abandoned their armor and fled. They had no ability to resist, and now the country is broken and our families are lost; they have flowed everywhere. Pitiless, ruthless, these soldiers are definitely the most effective troops for the recovery of the lost lands of the Northeast.²⁴

This extract shows several themes derived from late Qing nationalist discourse. First, the idea that the occupation and the conflict with the Japanese was a matter of national *survival* was not a new one, but was linked to the pseudo-scientific version of evolutionism that dominated the writings of the late Qing reformers. Yan Fu's translations of Herbert Spencer's work on Social Darwinism had had a great influence on Liang Qichao, who further drew on the work of Japanese Social Darwinist Katō Hiroyuki.²⁵ The idea that evolutionism could be applied to nations as much as species gave rise to the conception that the conflict between two peoples could easily be expressed in terms of the survival of the fittest.

Much of the thrust of the European Social Darwinists was deterministic: "unfit" races, nations, and classes could not change their status, and it went against nature for them to try to do so. Yan Fu adapted this, making the fate of a nation much more voluntaristic; thus national survival became a matter of will, as suggested in the second quotation. (The idea of will as the driving force in society had currency around this period in Europe in the work of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in particular.) Yan believed "quite explicitly that 70 per cent of China's difficulties derive from inner ills."²⁶ He developed a concept of "the people," linked to the idea of the nation, to provide a focus for this anxiety. This theme, which finds reasons internal to the conquered people themselves to explain their fate, emerges in Cui's condemnation of materialism among the pre-1931 northeasterners. This thought also echoes the thought of the late Qing National Essence (Guocui) thinker Xu Shouwei, who had proposed a "difference in terms of Chinese spirituality and Western materialism" and defined national essence as a fuel for the former.²⁷ (The dichotomy between a spiritual East and a material West, it should also be noted, is an idea heavily grounded in nineteenth-century European ideas of the Orient and then transmitted to India and Japan.)

The failures and successes of other peoples were scrutinized carefully by the late Qing reformers, including Kang and Liang, who had pointed out the “object lessons to be drawn from the history of fallen empires like Persia or Turkey, and of ‘lost’ peoples like the Poles, the Irish or the American Indians—all social organisms seen as having failed in the evolutionary struggle.”²⁸ Cui wrote in praise of one nation he saw as having won in that struggle:

Before the European War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire flourished and the *Dreikaiserbund* controlled everything in Europe. At that time, the Czech nation proposed revolution, to show their strength and throw off their fetters, and everyone just laughed at their craziness, pitying their weakness and saying that they might sacrifice themselves but they would never be successful. But the great heroes Masarik [*sic*: i.e., Masaryk; the Chinese text has the names inserted in Roman letters] and Benes set their wills [*li zhi*] for revolution and . . . sacrificed their strength, sacrificed their lives, sacrificed everything, giving all they had as a contribution to the nation. And their people struggled without concern for themselves and gave their strength to help them. Finally, after the Paris Conference of 1919, the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell apart, and they set up a state for the whole Czech people, who held up their heads in Europe and Asia, inexpressibly happy. They had had the will to complete [the task], and their sincerity was sufficient that they could consider themselves to be valiant! The strength of our Chinese race is surely greater than that of the Czechs, our culture is surely older than the Czechs’, our territory is surely larger than the Czechs’, our people are surely more numerous than the Czechs. If this is so, then to say that we cannot resist the Japanese dwarfs, nor revive and self-strengthen [*fixing ziqiang*] . . . is the argument of an imbecile.²⁹

Will is again cited as the key to the Czechs’ success, and Cui ties in his foreign example to the experience of the Qing when he recalls self-strengthening. The idea of revival (*fixing*) above is taken further, reflecting the fascination of Cui, and the CYP more widely, with European fascism:

Compatriots! Look! The stirring nature of the recent tenth anniversary of Mussolini[’s rise to power] . . . See Italy’s authority in the world today . . . Compatriots! Hitler would not be oppressed[,] . . . an extraordinary man who has revived Germany! . . . Compatriots! China will be called strong on the day of the recovery of the Northeast.³⁰

Cui made comparisons with other foreign cases:

France was being greatly oppressed by Germany, but after the European War they became masters in Europe . . . The British could not

tolerate the Spanish running riot, and rejuvenated and strengthened their navy . . . After the European War, it was Turkey's having been oppressed that was the reason for their rejuvenation . . . Why did the Chinese revolution arise in the southwest? Because the southwest had been intimidated by the British and French. Now [that] our Northeast has been occupied and has suffered a uniquely deep disgrace, [this is] our day to be angry and plan to strengthen [ourselves], and the day of our nation's bringing its glory to light.³¹

The idea of "strength" recurs throughout these editorials; in the latter, it is oppression, in the form of foreign invasion, itself credited with acting as a potential stimulus to China in its Social Darwinian struggle. Why, though, did Cui and the NNSS feel that there was such a strong *need* to stimulate nationalist awareness when dealing with the occupation? The answer, they felt, lay in the historical regional and factional splits that prevented China from operating as a nation:

The Opium War was Lin Zexu's war, not China's war. The Sino-French War in Annam was Feng Zicai's war, not China's war. The war over the Anglo-French joint expedition was the northern generals' war, not China's war. The Sino-Japanese War was Li Hongzhang's war, not China's war. The bombing of the southeast [i.e., the 1932 Shanghai Incident] was the Nineteenth Route Army's War, not China's war.³²

The sentiments above had already been expressed in the NNSS petitions to the KMT in November 1931, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter. Referring to the conflict between the Nanjing and Guangdong factions that was distracting attention from the Northeast, the petitioners stated:

One faction's advantage is placed above everything else. Even if the country is destroyed, the faction's advantage must still be maintained, and although the country is destroyed the faction could still exist independently.³³

The need to make the nation a concrete and popularly appreciated site of attachment was certainly not newly created by the NNSS: Joan Judge has analyzed the debate among reformist Qing journalists on the development of a national assembly as a locus for this attachment.³⁴ However, the NNSS members had lived through Yuan Shikai's dissolution of the assemblies and the sidelining of the northeastern assemblies by Zhang Zuolin. They had less reason to be convinced that a solution would come from the structures of domestic politics, and turned instead

to the threat from outside as a catalyst to promote nationalism as a solution to the crisis China faced.

INTERNATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

Cui Weizhou stated in one editorial in *Jinguo xunkan* that Manchuria had become a world market, and as such its status was crucial to world peace.³⁵ It would seem that this was a gesture toward the new culture of internationalism, which Akira Iriye characterizes China as having adopted in the 1920s and 1930s, as opposed to the involutioned nationalism of Japan.³⁶ Yet in Cui's case, the appearance of internationalism in fact was combined with a concept that echoed the late Qing nationalism that influenced him: "China ought to determine a strategy against the Japanese foreign policy and clearly announce it to the world; on the one hand, prepare its strength, on the other, appeal to international sympathy, with peace as a principle and self-defense as a goal."³⁷

So far, so internationalist, although it had shades of the warning issued by the Qing official Zhao Shuji in 1861 that "negotiated agreements with barbarians were unreliable and that the only safeguard for the future lay in 'searching for the method of self-strengthening.'"³⁸ However, Cui then went on to advocate "using barbarians to control barbarians" (*yi yi zhi yi*). While his ideas were not incompatible with internationalism, they suggested a strong disillusionment with Wilsonianism and the League of Nations:

This supposed "using barbarians to control barbarians" is not meant to incite international ill-feeling. Rather, it's an idea that prepares one for diplomacy. In protecting itself against another country's attack, a country ought on the one hand to prepare its military strength, and on the other hand, it ought to manipulate the other country's public opinion and strength so as to censure [that other country]. This is a plan for inevitably bringing about victory. This sort of policy is customary with the British, and the foundation of the British state. Napoleon was a military hero in Europe, so the British used unity with the European continental states to control him. When imperial Russia moved south, Britain united with France and Turkey to block her. Before the war, Germany was called strong, but Britain used France, Italy, the U.S. and other countries to defeat her . . . all these are marvelous examples of "using barbarians to control barbarians."

In carrying out this sort of policy, there are two parts. First, one should make self-defense one's policy and not plot any invasions,

which could provoke a great world war . . . Second, one should prepare one's strength and not just purposelessly "use barbarians to control barbarians," ending up in a situation where one turns away the tiger at the front door but lets the wolf in the back door. For instance, after the Sino-Japanese War, Li Hongzhang allied with Russia to control Japan, and as a result the Russians and Japanese clashed, staging the great 1904 war. China was without resources and had no strength to stop them, so our territory supplied a battlefield for other countries, leading on to the disgrace of the occupation of the Northeast today.³⁹

Nanjing's diplomacy was doomed to be ineffective, he declared, because it was not backed up with force: "if you can resist, then diplomatic maneuvers are effective; if you cannot, they are ineffective."⁴⁰ The NNSS's willingness to have recourse to the international system was tempered by memories of the failure of Qing efforts to bring about a "rich country and strong army," as well as painful memories of the raw deal China had had at the hands of the powers, leading them to be wary of any system of international arbitration run by those same powers.

The NNSS seems not to have been sentimental about the prospect of the League of Nations backing China up, but they decided to lobby them anyway, an aspect of their intent to "use barbarians to control barbarians." When the League's Lytton Commission report failed to satisfy, *Jinguo xunkan* was scathing. An editorialist calling himself Yan Cheng ("Plain Speaking") declared that the whole League was an imperialist plot and their proposed international joint mandate was part of that plot. He poured scorn on Lytton's concern for Japanese "special rights" in the Northeast, asking why, if Japanese investment was sufficient to secure rights on Chinese territory, then the United States did not have special rights in Western Europe. He then stated,

So-called international cooperation—isn't it international joint control [*gongguan*]? Already in practice China's Northeast is not ours. In the southwest, British soldiers have invaded our Tibet. French soldiers have stormed into Yunnan and Guizhou, and American warships are stationed in the Pacific.⁴¹

Yan Cheng summed up in disgust, again in language reminiscent of the Social Darwinist dichotomy between strong and weak nations: "The League of Nations is an organization that is a body of all the imperialists, a tool to oppress colonies and to divide up weak and small nations and semicolonies."⁴²

PRESENCE AND ABSENCE: RACE AND GENDER

In stressing that the Manchurian crisis should be dealt with as a primarily Chinese-Japanese conflict, it was necessary for the NNSS to stress Japanese racial contempt for the Chinese and to lessen the importance of the Chinese-Chinese civil war that had made such a strong impression on the Chinese for the past decade and more. In doing so, the propagandists had to simplify what was in reality a deep cultural ambiguity on the part of many Japanese toward China. Unlike the Koreans, whom they treated as children to the Japanese adults, the Japanese “mingl[ed] contempt for China’s present with respect for its past.”⁴³ The ambiguity is expressed in a quotation from Ishiwara Kanji after he had visited Hankou in 1921, having given “three banzais” for the Revolution of a decade earlier: “I came to harbor grave doubts as to the political capacities of the Chinese race . . . Though they were a people of high cultural attainments, it was impossible for them to construct a modern state.”⁴⁴ This ambiguity is also expressed in the way that the Kwantung Army tried to invoke Chinese tradition to legitimize the ideology it imposed on Manchukuo, with the Mencian flavor of the Kingly Way. Japanese racism toward China (and other nations) was real and widely felt. However, it had more gradations than the portrayal by the propagandists allowed.

At this point, one interesting omission from the NNSS’s discourse should be noted: it deals seldom, if at all, in gender-defined tropes. These are hardly lacking in the Chinese tradition; in the late Qing, prostitutes were used as a metaphor for China’s political weakness, and during the Sino-Japanese War just a few years later, female images such as the warrior Hua Mulan would be used to promote resistance.⁴⁵ It is an intriguing question why race, but not gender, should have seized the imagination of the northeastern propagandists; the answer may lie in the particular urgency that the Japanese presence in the Northeast had given to the racial discourse, pushing gender into irrelevance for the NNSS’s propaganda purposes, but it is impossible to be categorical as to the reason.

One article in *Jiuguo xunkan* gives a flavor of the way in which race could be highlighted as a point of conflict. The fact that the propaganda is exceptionally crudely drawn only emphasizes the point. It is a short sketch of life in occupied Manchuria, clearly fictionalized:

Around 10 o’clock one morning, in the militarily occupied city of Shenyang. On the street[,] . . . a unit of Japanese soldiers . . . Sometimes they glance about, raising their eyebrows in rage, then lowering

their heads after a moment, smiles playing on their lips, as if to say, “Hmph! You Chinamen (Zhinaren; in Japanese, Shina-jin, a derogatory term for the Chinese) really are detestable . . . I could shoot you down and make ghosts out of you like that . . . Ha! We Yamato people really are something; we have at last conquered “Shina”! Ha ha!! Ha ha!!⁴⁶

Having set the scene, the narrator recounts how the Japanese soldiers stop a couple of young Chinese men on the street and steal their money on the pretext of “searching” them. The enraged Chinese discuss what they should do, and one suggests running away:

- A: [In Beiping], they are all Chinese. They speak Chinese wherever you go.
 B: All Chinese! I can’t believe that!? Look at that civil war that went on for years. That wasn’t Chinese [people], was it?
 A: The bosses of those killers behind the scenes were warlords [*junfa*], and not ordinary Chinese.⁴⁷

The fact that the author felt the need to insert the lines above suggests that there was a genuine popular feeling against militarism, and that one did not have to be a Japanese fellow-traveler to agree with the antiwarlord editorials in *Shengjing shibao* (see chap. 2). The NNSS had to overcome the legacy of years of civil war.

The youths then go on to discuss the way in which factionalism caused civil war, and the possibility that the “Communist bandits” (*gongfei*) may take advantage of the opportunity of national disunity to seize power. The piece ends up asking, “Are these the youths of a destroyed country? Are these the youths of a destroyed province? Their country has not yet been destroyed. Their province has not yet been destroyed.”⁴⁸ But once again, the clear implication of this conclusion is that “national survival” is at issue, in a piece that makes evident just who the opponent in the struggle is.

What did the NNSS suggest that people should do? In his final editorial, Cui put forward five slogans:

1. Northeasterners unite to save the Northeast!
2. Chinese unite to save China!
3. Let the nation survive!
4. Fight for national independence!
5. Work for world peace!⁴⁹

With three mentions of the nation, and one each of the Northeast and the world, Cui left readers in no doubt as to where he felt their priorities lay.

LINKING THE NORTHEAST INTO A SCHEME OF JAPANESE EXPANSIONISM

The outbreak of the Shanghai Incident in February 1932 proved to be an opportunity for propaganda of which the activists took full advantage: it “created an even greater emotional impact in China and overseas than had the earlier, more remote Manchurian Incident.”⁵⁰ The events in Shanghai showed that there was a potential for nationalist sentiment that they could tap; their task was to exploit it. The fighting in Shanghai was not carried out by the Kwantung Army; the navy had launched its campaign partly out of jealousy, believing that the army had had a chance to run amok in Manchuria while the navy had had to remain restrained.⁵¹ But these distinctions, even had they been known at the time, were of little relevance to the Chinese. And the opportunity to link Manchuria and Shanghai in people’s minds was an excellent opportunity for the propagandists.

The NNSS sent Yan Baohang on a fund-raising trip to Shanghai on 27 January 1932, having let it be known via the *Da gongbao* that they were sending 10,000 yuan to the Nineteenth Route Army.⁵² He returned on 11 February, having had little success: “Because the Shanghai Incident has just happened,” noted Wang Huayi in his diary, “progress was difficult.”⁵³ Wang suggests that while the Shanghai Incident was actually going on, there was little enthusiasm to hear the NNSS propagandists who had come to the city; people were simply too preoccupied with the war on their own doorstep. The Shanghai Incident itself had a much greater immediate impact on people living in and near Shanghai than any written propaganda could; but propaganda could feed off the sense of grievance left once the Incident was over, and could be spread to other urban areas with newspaper readers.

Cui Weizhou, in an editorial in *Jiuguo xunkan* on 31 March 1932, stated,

Last year, suddenly on 18 September 1931, [the Japanese] sent troops to launch a fierce raid on Shenyang and occupy Jilin and Heilongjiang. By April, they had swallowed up the entire area of the Three Eastern Provinces. In January 1932 they attacked Shanghai, and their soldiers even now have not withdrawn. The attacks by world opinion, the censure of the League of Nations, the opposition of Britain and the USA, the anger of the Chinese people—all were ignored by the Japanese militarists.⁵⁴

The point Cui was making, that the Manchurian crisis was a world crisis, was not new. But by linking the Shanghai Incident, which had

been much more visible nationally and globally, the point was made far more explicit. In fact, the comparison was misleading when examined closely; the Japanese navy had attacked Shanghai partly out of resentment at the Kwantung Army, not in tandem with them, and the horror of Shanghai was exacerbated by intensive bombing by both Japanese and Chinese, which had not happened to the same extent in the Northeast, although there had been bombing in Shenyang and Jinzhou during the occupation. Nonetheless, the propaganda point was there to be made; and Cui had explicitly stated that he did not feel that it would be made automatically, when he claimed that all previous conflicts in China, including the Shanghai Incident, had been regarded only as regional and not national affairs.⁵⁵ Jeffrey Wasserstrom mentions that one common anti-Japanese slogan during the Incident was “Shanghai for the Shanghainese.”⁵⁶ This suggests localism rather than nationalism as a motivating factor for those who used this slogan, and indicates the attitude that the NNSS felt they had to overcome.

The NNSS also made comparisons with an aspect of Japanese imperialism, the annexation of Korea. This point of comparison was found less frequently and was less immediately accessible than the Shanghai comparison, as it related to a territory even more remote than Manchuria, one that was not only foreign but had once been a state under Chinese suzerainty. In their initial announcement, the NNSS stated, “The [Japanese] desired to complete their great attack and develop their plan; to invade our Northeast was really their sole task after swallowing up Korea.”⁵⁷

He Meiqiu, writing in the *Dongbei yuekan*, also chose to make a comparison between gradual Japanese encroachment and the use of collaborators in Korea and then Manchuria.⁵⁸ However, this more abstract association with the plight of Korea as another sovereign territory seized by Japan was undermined somewhat by other articles claiming that Koreans in Manchuria were being given special privileges when it came to land purchases. Some people felt that the Japanese were deliberately and cleverly using a “divide and rule” policy.⁵⁹ But others merely condemned the Korean interlopers and called the Chinese who were helping them *hanjian*; for example, Guan Rongsen, magistrate of Yongji county, Jilin, who pleased the Japanese and “brought about a complete resolution of the land rental problem that served the convenience of the Korean farmers alone.”⁶⁰ The latter problem, of course, was linked to the even more sensitive question of *Chinese* collaboration with the Japanese.

PUBLICIZING THE THEMES

One of the first public appearances of the themes outlined above in NNSS writings was in the petitions they presented to the KMT in November 1931, sent during the negotiations between Chiang Kaishek and Hu Hanmin's Guangdong faction. One public announcement was made on 5 November. It was not gentle:

Following the recent expedition of the Japanese dwarfs, national destruction is very near! Only if we unite can we strive for our survival. Only if we combine our strength can we oppose the foreigners. During the European War, the British organized a coalition cabinet to deal jointly with the crisis. In France, all the parties put aside their prejudices and approached the national crisis together . . . In the face of national disaster, do not allow another civil war to happen; that would be bringing extinction upon ourselves . . . So the national party leaders and the political authorities, encountering this shocking circumstance, should sacrifice their political views and exercise sincerity in cooperation. As for the Shanghai peace agreement that the people of the whole country have been looking forward to, on the one hand, they say they are exchanging opinions, on the other, they say they are preparing for a conference. They are letting time slip idly away . . . [and] are not dealing with the national crisis. They are diverted by their desire for advantage, and ignore the disaster in the Northeast . . . But if the leaders unite, . . . then with speedy national unity, and national mobilization, we can hope for more! This northeastern territory of ours may fall beyond recovery, but our Chinese race will return there together ultimately! . . . It is very bad that the gentlemen at the peace conference, at this moment of national survival, have been making a clamor for more than a month now, and show no interest in having a method to oppose the foreigners and put in place preparations but rely on the League of Nations resolution [instead]. Can we rely on the League resolution? The League put a deadline on Japan to withdraw its troops before 14 October, but then the Jinzhou firebombing took place . . . All this is proof enough that if we do not ourselves work hard to unite, then we will hope in vain for others to help, and we will be taking the road of our own destruction. An American newspaper said that it was pathetic that China's rulers were unable to sacrifice their prejudices, but were [just] sitting back to wait for outside help. I don't know if the national party leaders heard about this, and whether their faces sweated at it or not? How can the masses of our Northeast rely on you leaders? Why do you ignore the masses' distress like this? How can you idly watch these atrocities of the enemy's and stop up your ears and not listen? . . . Set up a strong government, bring about a united country, and make your minds up to declare war on Japan. Then the people of the

Northeast will inevitably swear to die going into the disaster [area], desiring to constitute the front line and to recover our territory.⁶¹

In their direct petition to Chiang Kaishek, signed by Wang Huayi and Lu Guangji, among others, the corps was more polite but covered the same themes:

The country is unhappy, the cruel Japanese [*hao-Ri*] have been reckless and oppressive, Liaoning and Jilin have been suddenly occupied, the masses have been savagely slaughtered[,] . . . the whole country is aware of this situation. You in the national party leadership gave special attention to the national crisis and immediately convened a conference in Shanghai, so we expected that your whole effort would be directed at the foreigners . . . But for a long time, no accord has been resolved, [the Northeast's] pain grows daily deeper; and therefore we have come to Shanghai to petition, hoping sincerely to encourage the peace conference to complete unification . . . [but] it was clear that the national government's view was split. Therefore we detoured to Nanjing to request . . . that the following should immediately be put into practice, and then we will be very grateful! . . .

3. Complete unification immediately;
4. Swiftly recover the lost territories of the Northeast;
5. Immediately block with force any advances by the cruel Japanese;
6. Prepare to declare war on Japan;
7. Post a reward for the capture of the traitors who have fawned on the Japanese: Yuan Jinkai, Xi Xia, Zhang Jinghui, and the rest;
8. The officials who have taken office in the lost provinces must, whatever happens, be punished.

For the attention of National Government Chairman Chiang.⁶²

As can be seen, many of the themes from the *Jiuguo xunkan* editorials, including the need for unification, a low opinion of the League of Nations, differentiating oneself from foreigners even while learning from them, and a social Darwinian expression of national survival, are found in the texts of these early petitions. However, these issues are not presented here in the same detail as in the pages of *Jiuguo xunkan*. This is because in its propaganda material for outside consumption, the NNSS created a standardized and formulaic language of resistance. This became the language of the discourse within which the vast majority of media, politicians, and diplomats presented the crisis, and remains so today. The next sections will discuss how that language came to be created.

Shaping the Image of the Resistance

The NNSS's use of traditional ideas was combined with a specific adaptation to the circumstances of 1931. They had identified the enemy; now they needed heroes. The volunteer armies became the main propaganda theme for the NNSS. In his first editorial, Cui Weizhou stated that "the rising up of the resistance armies is the people's self-defense. Ma Zhanshan's lone battle was a signal of righteousness. Li Du and Ding Chao's resistance battles are a manifestation of the spirit of resistance."⁶³ The military theme was taken further into the realm of metaphor: "today the 30 million compatriots in the Northeast are prisoners-of-war under the violent oppression of the Japanese army."⁶⁴

The Twenty-third Division of the "resistance army" was described thus: "This army's soldiers are all patriotic people. They hate the Japanese army's invasion, and have formed together freely . . . The weapons that they use are freely endowed by the local people." Their action was described as having failed not because of any lack of local support, but because of lack of ammunition: a commander said, "Because of this problem with bullets, I intend to request assistance from the authorities." The shortage of supplies available to the resistance was a constant theme of the NNSS's propaganda, aimed at encouraging donations and outside support. There were also occasional hints of differences between the resistance armies and the locals, as in Liaodong, where the local resistance was reported to have clashed with the Japanese on 20 March 1932. In the end, however, the "local people requested the resistance to cease fighting," and to prevent the people from "suffering distress" the fighters complied.⁶⁵ In general, though, the voluminous accounts of resistance activity that appeared in *Jinguo xunkan* and the more widely distributed press did not have much space for ambivalence. As the months passed, the appeals for assistance became more and more open. Wang Delin, the leader of the People's National Salvation Army, had the following statement attributed to him:

In each battle, we have many successes, . . . but in the end, because we are a lone army struggling, we have no support behind us and we cannot hold any town we reach for long. We have to bear our pain and withdraw. Recently, because the weather has been getting colder, . . . we have specially sent representatives to request help from all circles, but we have had no results yet."⁶⁶

In late 1932, Li Quanlin contrasted the “flourishing” summer, which had seen campaigns by Feng Zhanhai, Gong Changhai, and Ma Zhan-shan and a “return to correct behavior” (the abandonment of a compromise agreement with the Japanese; see chap. 5) by Su Bingwen, with the winter of 1932–33, during which the armies had to lie low because of lack of ammunition and a strong Japanese presence. However, he “dare[d] to declare boldly: this year, the activities of the resistance armies will certainly be extended and expanded.” This was because “the Northeast under Japanese oppression is simply hell on earth! The people’s suffering is hotter than fire.” Li follows this statement with a couple of anecdotes about Japanese repression of dissent, and he declares that the economic hardship faced by northeasterners will lead them to resist. Finally, he states that “from the patriotic enthusiasm of the people of the Northeast, we can confirm the expansion of [their] anti-Japanese spirit.”⁶⁷

The northeastern crisis in the worldview of *Jiuguo xunkan* and its contributors, then, consisted of several key strands. It portrayed the conflict in clear-cut national terms, Chinese versus Japanese. It took as given that the activities of the resistance were supported by the local population and were hampered only by lack of outside support. It also assumed that the Northeast was living under an arbitrary reign of terror exercised by Japanese “militarists.” This view had no ambiguities, no shades of gray.

The simplicity of this worldview was what gave it its strength. (Indeed, the frequency with which elements of it appear in discussions of the history of the 1930s even today suggest that it has been effective long after its creators might have imagined it would be remembered.) It is for this reason that complications in the picture of the resistance as portrayed above were problematic for the NNSS. However, these complications did exist and had to be dealt with.

The crux of the problem was this. To ensure support for their cause and to embarrass Nanjing and the League of Nations into sending troops to the Northeast, it was necessary for the propagandists to portray the resistance armies in a particular way: inspired by nationalist outrage, fighting not just for Manchuria but all China, and gathering the support of the ordinary people of the Northeast. There are similarities with a phenomenon noted by Benedict Anderson, who discusses the way in which the French Revolution became a model for the European uprisings of the mid-nineteenth century, not in terms of the actual events of 1789 but as a model to aspire to, shaped by printed propaganda. The creation of this model, however, demanded the creation

of a standardized version of the events, with any unsavory deviation either to be ignored or to be dismissed as an “inconsequential anomaly.”⁶⁸ The NNSS was keen to establish a similarly standardized model of the Manchurian resistance with as few deviations as possible. However, the reality on the ground proved awkward to assimilate into the model; the resistance was dominated by bandits, who were prone to change sides and who often raided the local population for supplies while claiming for themselves the name of the anti-Japanese resistance. Therefore it was necessary for the NNSS, via their political workers in the Northeast and their propagandists south of the Great Wall, to shape the resistance’s image into a more favorable form.

The Heilongjiang resistance leader Ma Zhanshan in particular became almost metonymic in his significance; to speak of him *was* to speak of the resistance, despite the fact that Su Bingwen, Ding Chao, Tang Juwu, and dozens of other resistance leaders were at least as active in the region. Press reports, fund-raising drives, and public speeches all used Ma’s name as a pivotal point. This translation of Ma into an icon necessitated the sanitization of the “official” narrative of his resistance. Therefore, the reality of his campaign, which encompassed negotiations with the Kwantung Army and frequent reversals of policy toward the Japanese, was not mentioned.⁶⁹ As long as these aspects did not permeate public perceptions south of the Great Wall, the propagandists could make use of Ma as a powerful symbol of resistance; a far greater problem was posed by his very public defection to the Japanese in February 1932 (the Japanese also recognized and were keen to use his symbolic power).

In discussing the Boxer movement, Joseph Esherick has noted the way in which it is generally presented by later sources, those favorable and not, as homogeneous, whereas in fact it was highly varied in character depending on the geographical origins of any particular section of the movement.⁷⁰ The propagandists aimed to use a similar technique on the resistance: bandits, former warlord soldiers, the occasional idealistic troupe of students were all submerged into the idea of *yiyongjun*, the “righteous armies,” the name itself strongly implying volunteers rather than press-ganged recruits. Their efforts to create a monolithic image were aided by the fact that Manchuria was geographically and politically inaccessible enough to prevent too many dissenting versions from being released (Japanese ones excepted, naturally, but these were fundamentally suspect anyway).

The NNSS’s agenda was to regain their homeland, but they had

insufficient military resources to bring it about themselves, particularly as Zhang Xueliang refused to defy Chiang Kaishek and mobilize the Northeastern Army. They therefore had to use what “soft” power resources they had.⁷¹ The overarching aim was to embody the task of recapturing the Northeast as a necessity, a task of national salvation, and by making that a reality they hoped to apply sufficient pressure to the rest of China to assign the “hard” power resources to bring that about. It is a mark of their success that by mid-1932, comments such as indictments of the resistance from the rival Northeastern Association’s leader, Qi Shiying, or Hu Shi’s statements in favor of nonresistance in *Duli pinglun*, were seen as counternarratives to a dominant narrative, rather than alternative narratives of equal validity. It also helped the NNSS that they were acting at a time when Chiang Kaishek and the Nanjing government were under severe strain.

It should be stressed that there was no group of cunning if well-hidden northeasterners manipulating the rest of an inert China. Rather, it is important to note that the northeasterners themselves were active players in their own drama and not merely the ciphers of other political groups south of the Great Wall, as their absence from most histories of the period implies. They created their own opportunities and took advantage when they became aware of groups or movements favorable to them. Their ideas had been shaped by the rise of Chinese nationalism, as their language shows, but they were able to make use of preexisting themes to develop that nationalism further.

Resistancialism was of necessity mostly a postwar phenomenon in France (although it was cultivated in Britain and the United States even during the war). However, the occupation of only a part of China from 1931 to 1933 enabled propagandists to create a form of resistancialism *contemporaneous* with the events being mythologized. As events were unfolding while the construct was being developed, further (suitably processed) reports of events from the Northeast added fuel to the fire and kept it burning.

A RITUALISTIC LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE

It is written language that is paramount when we consider the nature of the material on which so much of the NNSS’s propaganda was based. There are instructive parallels to be drawn from Paul Fussell’s pioneering work on the Great War and the creation of modern memory, which deals in detail with the question of language. Although Fussell concentrates on the development of memory of the war after it

was over and is more concerned with literature than press reports or government documents, he makes some more general suggestions on the use of language that help establish a framework for the understanding of the often militarized rhetoric of resistance that was created during 1931 to 1933. A key linguistic tool in the conversion of the ambiguous, brutal, and unennobling realities of war is the “raising” of language, turning it into a standardized form that can be both banal and misleading but at the same time giving it a ritualistic quality that allows it to be shared by those not personally involved.⁷²

There are some striking features in the texts produced by the northeastern activists; in particular, a standardization of language about resistance that, to use Fussell’s term, “raises” it to give it a ritualistic flavor. In the category of texts I include telegrams to Nanjing and the media, journal articles, declarations of policy—in short, pieces of writing whose aim is to further the agenda of the exiles by imparting views and information to those in a position of power or influence. I will also suggest that even in cases of texts where the writer is not necessarily attached to, or is possibly even opposed to, the tactics or personalities of the NNSS, the standardization of language concerning the resistance and the conflict in the Northeast had become sufficiently pervasive to influence their texts, even though the purpose of those texts might be to subvert the NNSS’s narrative.

On 27 September 1931, the NNSS announced its foundation with the following declaration:

Northeastern fathers, brothers, aunts, sisters: alas! The 30 million people of the Northeast, and several tens of thousands of *li* of national territory, today are trampled under the iron hooves of the Japanese! In the last ten days, they have destroyed the garrisons, slaughtered our people, burned our houses, robbed our property . . . Our rivers and mountains are all buried below the mortar fire of the Japs [*womu*]. This autumn of what we will call crisis and survival really is a critical moment! Is it not the case that the Japanese call themselves a civilized country, and have they not a duty to protect the peace in East Asia? Did they not call upon us, proposing closeness on the basis of coexistence and coprosperity? . . . The extremely murderous tragedy of this incident is not only unprecedented in China but is lacking in precedent throughout the whole world . . . This sort of inhuman, unjust, peace-destroying action is really something unspeakable among human beings, and is intolerable internationally . . . We are fighting to maintain justice, we are fighting to preserve peace. For the survival of the nation, for the tranquillity of the country, we have no choice but to go out to the final battle! . . . We hope our compatriots will rise

and help us! Our society [the NNSS] is willing to follow the people of the whole country and drive forward in a united effort . . . All our compatriots, the moment is pressing; rise up!⁷³

The NNSS promulgated the text of the “Volunteer Oath” in early 1932. It was supposed to be sworn by all those participating in the resistance, although it may well have been intended more for the audience outside the Northeast. In part, it ran:

I will do my utmost for the task of the people of the nation and join the Northeastern People’s Self-Defense Army and fight to the death with the Japanese. I will obey orders, maintain military discipline, protect the people, recover the national territory, and while there is still breath in my body, struggle to the end. If I break this oath, I shall be severely punished. I swear this.⁷⁴

These two texts, as well as the NNSS announcements discussed previously, contain recurrent phrases and themes dealing with resistance and the occupation. Some examples of the most common are given here. It is standard to see references to the “cruel Japanese” (*bao-Ri*) and their “wild ambition” (*yexin*).⁷⁵ Life in occupied Manchuria is described as “hell on earth” (*diyu*), and a frequent metaphor is that northeasterners are caught in the heat of the fire or the depth of the water, or are trapped between life and death.⁷⁶ By fighting the Japanese, the members of the resistance are stated to be saving the national territory (*guotu*); in a bid for national salvation (*jiuguo*); the *national* element is paramount.⁷⁷ The national element of the struggle is also reinforced by reminders that the northeasterners are Chinese “compatriots” (*tongbao*, lit. “same womb”), often reinforced by the preface “30 million” (*san qian wan*).⁷⁸ These compatriots are being maintained by their patriotic spirit (*aiguo zhuyi*, *aiguo jingshen*).⁷⁹ As a set of texts in which these phrases recur, the telegrams sent out in Ma Zhanshan’s name also stand out. Within them are to be found sentences such as, “I have taken on this most important service for the nation,” “We have a duty to protect our territory, patriots together,” and “I respectfully and sincerely pledge [resistance] to my 400 million compatriots.”⁸⁰

These phrases are notable not only for their recurrence but also for the way in which they tend to stand in place of content, rather than enhance it; the reports create a general atmosphere of atrocity, rather than listing specifics. Of course, it is necessary to realize that obtaining facts and figures from an occupied territory is hardly an easy task, but the avoidance of detail seems to be deliberate, since specifics were available

and occasionally provided, as in December 1932 when Wang Zhuoran sent out telegrams dealing with the Pingdingshan massacre.⁸¹ This was a relatively rare occurrence, however, and the names of these massacres did not achieve the symbolic importance in public discourse that the resistance had.

Rather than convey information, the reading and accepting of these texts acted as a point of entry to a particular discourse, in this case a nationalist one. This was, of course, not new to the NNSS; the CCP, KMT, and religious movements had all used similar techniques. Why should this ritualistic rhetoric have found its mark? Earlier it was suggested that nationalism was spurred by crisis; an increased threat from outside led people to seek refuge in a more tightly bounded sense of their own community. To share in a discourse was a further means of creating that community, particularly when official structures such as the central government appeared incapable of dealing with the outside threat.

Above, we have noted that nationalist debates of the late Qing had had an effect on the ways that the NNSS writers thought about the concepts that concerned them. Yet this should not obscure the fact that journalism had also developed between the turn of the century and the 1930s. In his study of war reportage as a new use of language in Chinese journalism, Chang-tai Hung characterizes the new-style reporters as having “challenged traditional journalistic practices, redefined the role of a reporter,” and “created a new language.” One of their tools was the creation of standardized language, with a particular emphasis on “generals and commanders . . . portrayed as calm, determined and professional”; he cites one commander reported by Cao Juren of the Central News Agency as advocating “a struggle to save our nation” and “total resistance.” Hung’s work deals with the 1937–45 war and demonstrates that the outbreak of hostilities at the Marco Polo Bridge was an important catalyst for this change in reportage. One of the journalists he cites as typical of the new style is Zou Taofen of *Shenghuo zhouban*: as was discussed in chapter 5, Du Zhongyuan, the NNSS’s joint chief of propaganda, was Zou’s chief editorialist. This means that there is more than a tentative connection between the northeastern propagandists and the journalism of resistance, and suggests that development of the techniques of realistic yet simultaneously standardized and heroic language may have begun well before 1937, with the descriptions and words placed in the mouths of Ma Zhanshan, Wang Delin, and others.⁸²

On a more immediate level, the vagueness of the language of

resistance is at least in part attributable to the disparity between the “hell on earth” of the propaganda and the more mundane reality of the occupation for many. It is an interesting exercise in the examination of historical memory to compare accounts of Manchuria even today with those of the Rape of Nanjing in 1937. One Chinese assessment of “Japan’s fascist control and oppression of the Northeast” deals with the question of atrocities in Manchuria by highlighting two specific incidents, the Pingdingshan and Tulongshan massacres of 1932 and 1934 respectively (see chap. 3).⁸³ The acts are quite justifiably detailed as examples of what the occupying forces were capable of, but are given no contextualization at all and leave the reader unclear as to what total proportion of all those killed by the Japanese the 3,400 victims of these massacres made up. The impression given, in other words, is that the Japanese exercised random violence in Manchuria, whereas the evidence suggests that violence was part of a whole repertoire of techniques of coercion, and that co-optation remained their preferred option when available (as their eventual co-optation of the leader of the Tulongshan uprising, Xie Wendong, after four years of resistance, suggests). In contrast, a wealth of figures, maps, and survivors’ stories are an integral part of the historical understanding of the Nanjing massacre; indeed, one of the key arguments (as much political as historical), between the Chinese and the Japanese, is precisely over the question of how many people were killed in Nanjing.⁸⁴ It should be emphasized that all this does not mean that the atmosphere in Manchuria was not repressive or that atrocities did not often occur. It means, rather, that specific cases were subsumed by the propagandists into a wider discourse of atrocity that served their needs better.

The Japanese sale of narcotic drugs in Manchukuo was another trope in the propaganda of resistance. The following extract from a 1933 article by Yan Baohang on the second anniversary of the crisis is typical: “The [Japanese] are advocating smoking [opium] to poison our youth; they are implementing slave education to destroy our national consciousness.”⁸⁵ The conjunction here is suggestive: opium, which caused literal drowsiness and lethargy, is mentioned alongside Japanese-run education, which was held to cause a metaphorical lethargy and forgetfulness by removing the influence of Chinese nationalism. In this way, the Japanese sponsorship of narcotics was given a symbolic value beyond the literal reality, detailed in chapter 4, of the Manchukuo Opium Monopoly, which was probably more a cynical and amoral moneymaking exercise than a carefully thought-out tool to destroy Chinese morale in the

region. It was money, after all, that had motivated the British to develop the opium trade in China in the first place.

The vagueness of the language of resistance was not lost on one contemporary critic, at least. Gui Ke, a pseudonymous writer from the Northeastern Association, wrote rather scornfully of the telegraphed accounts of the resistance's activities in Jinzhou in late 1931 to early 1932, the language of which expressed strong determination to fight to the end: "[Their statements] have nothing in them concerning the gains and losses of the resistance itself."⁸⁶ One might also note a telegram sent on 5 October 1932 in the name of Su Bingwen, Xie Ke, Wang Delin, and Li Haiqing to Nanjing, the national press, and the League of Nations:

The 30 million people of the Northeast have been encountering military depredations under the iron hooves of the cruel dwarves; they seek death and cannot obtain it; they scabble for life, but cannot [get it]. They are placed in the midst of the water's depth, of the fire's heat . . . [The Japanese] arrested our officials, occupied our Shenyang, killed our students, plundered our resources, made use of villains among us to set up a puppet government . . . In Heilongjiang, all the important offices are headed by Japanese . . . When the League investigation team arrived in Manchuria and investigated the awful true situation[,] . . . this was sufficient to prove solidly that the [Manchukuo] declaration to the world of the people's self-determination with coexistence and common growth can be seen as a fraud. . . .

We pledge . . . to exterminate the traitors of the puppet government, and to root out the cunning of the cruel dwarf demons, recover the territory that is solidly China's, and . . . use all our power to wash away this disgrace.⁸⁷

The message contains a string of formulaic phrases, but no information about the four signatories' recent actions at all. Even when the telegram gives information rather than rhetoric, it is kept general, vague, and is a repetition of established facts rather than a revelation of news. The telegram tells the recipients nothing they did not know before, but reinforces the constructed resistancialist narrative by stimulating the emotional pressure point that had by now developed: brave nationalist heroes fighting a despicable foreign enemy.

The telegram discussed above may be a particularly extreme example of formula over content. More often the anomaly in the texts is that standardized expressions of the resistance's determination to fight to the last drop of blood for the national territory are coupled with an account of an actual retreat, which sits rather oddly with the rhetoric. Ma Zhan-shan's telegrams are a particularly notable example of this. However, this

was irrelevant at a time when the texts were serving a political and emotional purpose, not a fact-conveying one. In this, the language used was no different from political rhetoric elsewhere, whether in China or outside, but it should be recognized that these texts are *primarily* valuable as rhetoric rather than reportage.

Spoilers

THE PERMEATION OF RESISTANCIALIST LANGUAGE

The NNSS had to beware of alternative sources of information that might spoil the discourse of resistance they had built up. These were not necessarily intentional disruptions to their agenda, although one should note that even where the writer was actually opposed to some aspect of the NNSS's activities, the tendency to express the complaint within the framework of resistancialism remained strong. Consider the difference between two telegrams from Nong'an county, Jilin, sent in November 1931 and April 1932. Local elite member Sun Haiyan wrote a report on the situation in Nong'an, which claimed that the Japanese were encouraging local Manchus and Mongols to become bandits and raid the Han; the ensuing conflict would give the Japanese an excuse to come and restore public order. However, the local population, said Sun, was not aware of these details:

Unfortunately, our people do not see that they have recently been increasingly deceived, and so they say that their urgent priorities are local unrest and disasters that have not yet struck, and that a foreign calamity [the occupation] and a disaster that has already happened is not so urgent. If they are planning to concentrate on reducing [local] disasters, then I am very much afraid that when the time comes to make the nature of the puppet government clear to them, the people will have already become completely accustomed in their minds to their changed circumstances, and putting them straight will be quite difficult.⁸⁸

Sun's suggestion was that Nanjing should send in agents to educate the people about the real nature of the occupation and then lead them in battle against the Japanese. Messages of this nature did little to support the NNSS's claim that the Northeast was a hotbed of anti-Japanese sentiment, waiting to be liberated by their compatriots. However, the period

from late 1931 to early 1932 was when nationalist political activists were sent undercover into the Northeast, at the same time that their message was being spread in intramural China. Six months later, a follow-up report on Nong'an from Sun Jingyu, Sun Haiyan's relative, reiterated that Nanjing should send agents to the Northeast, but did so in terms that coordinated with the resistancialist line. Now it was stated that the people "have united, all internally thinking of vengeance against bandits and traitors [*hanjian*], and externally opposing the weapons of the dwarf bandits and the rebels [i.e., the Manchukuo army]."⁸⁹ He summarizes:

Those who have guns will help with guns. Those who have horses will help with horses. Those who have neither guns nor horses are all willing to a man to train positively with their [full] bodily strength and to mount a strong defense of the front line, and to eliminate within our borders any bandits or traitors, so as to maintain peace in the villages, and to use all efforts to prevent the cruel Japanese and the rebel forces from invading.⁹⁰

This was much more the sort of telegram that would support the NNSS's line: ordinary people united in resistance to the Japanese, just waiting for central government intervention. It could be, of course, that the situation had changed radically in Nong'an county over those months. But it is not just the content of the second message that is so different; the style is also completely altered, and once again the wording gives the reader little specific detail about any actions that the villagers have undertaken or intend to carry out.

The influence of formulaic language grew over time, so that it could permeate even a telegram hostile to a core element of the NNSS's strategy. Take a confidential telegram sent on 10 February 1933 to Nanjing by Li Baolin, an area commander in Li Du's Jilin People's Self-Defense Army, which was engaged in infighting with Wang Delin's National Salvation Army at the time.⁹¹ It begins:

The cruel Japanese [*hao-Ri*] have falsely occupied our territory, their weaponry has scorched our people[,] . . . they have slaughtered our masses and raped our wives and daughters . . . However, these beast-like [creatures] cannot overcome . . . my will to cherish the protection of the country and the safeguarding of the people.⁹²

However, this standard introduction is not expanded on in any way in the rest of the telegram, which hardly touches on the subject of the Japanese. It is as if it was by now *de rigueur* for a communication from the resistance to begin with a ritualized account of the authorized history of

the occupation in a nutshell before getting to the (possibly quite separate) business in hand. In this case, that business makes the formulaic introduction more ironic:

The Red Spear Society takes the name of the Boxers, but in fact they are bandits, more than twenty divisions, with 1,000 men per division, of whom 3–500 are uneducated and unsophisticated, and who burn, kill, and rape the people . . . People . . . have all been oppressed by means of burning, killing, rape, and robbery by Japs and soldier-bandits and Red Spears, so they do not dare to venture out. The uneducated and unsophisticated National Salvation Army, which burns and rapes and kills and robs, has already lost the trust of the masses. That the National Salvation Army rape and rob a great deal indicates that they still have no conception of rewards or punishments . . . The government bears complete responsibility toward its sons and younger brothers to . . . educate and develop them.⁹³

These complaints about fellow-resistance fighters tear a hole right through the resistancialist imagery invoked at the beginning. Indeed, there seems to be some sort of moral equivalence being made between the renegade volunteers and the Japanese; there is no suggestion of a qualitative difference, in the eyes of the victims, between Japanese rapes and those committed by the volunteers (“burning, killing, rape, and robbery by Japs and soldier-bandits and Red Spears”). Naturally, articles and telegrams of this sort were taboo from the NNSS’s point of view. Their construct could survive only by maintaining the tenets that resistance fighters were always, in all places, beloved defenders of the people, and that it was the Chinese-Japanese national conflict that was uppermost in the minds of the resistance (and by extension, their supporters) and not, as is suggested by the tone of this telegram, local infighting.

THE *DONGBEI YUEKAN* AND ITS COUNTERNARRATIVE

The NNSS’s success in presenting a heroic image of the resistance fighters caused difficulties for the opponents of the NNSS and their strategy of support for the volunteers, such as the rival Northeastern Association under Qi Shiyong, who was associated with the CC clique. Opponents such as Qi could not abandon the whole resistancialist image without appearing to claim that there was really no popular will for reunification with China—in which case why was it so urgent to recover the lost territories?—but on the other hand, they wanted to jet-

tison a key element of the image, the volunteer armies. They were doubly handicapped in that their oppositional strategy relied almost totally on negative (although true) propaganda that the resistance was dominated by bandits. Their only positive alternative was to urge Nanjing to send troops to the Northeast, which was, of course, no different from the ultimate aim of the NNSS.

Wang Ju and Shao Yuchun characterize the *Jinguo xunkan*, edited by Li Quanlin, as being the voice of the nationalistic, “progressive” resistance, as opposed to organs such as the *Dongbei yuekan* (Northeastern Monthly), journal of the Northeastern Association.⁹⁴ However, this interpretation ignores the NNSS’s association with Zhang Xueliang and its consequent implied bias against Chiang Kaishek. Then, there *was* a variance of views in *Dongbei yuekan*. The latter drew the NNSS’s wrath because it offered a debate between the merits of resistance and nonresistance, it criticized Zhang Xueliang, and it dared to discuss the seamier side of the resistance’s activities. It should also be noted that all the way through the NNSS’s existence, the “progressive” *Jinguo xunkan* never advocated disloyalty to the KMT; even in May 1933, when the NNSS was on the verge of being shut down, an editorial declared “Long live the KMT!”⁹⁵ It was specifically the policy of nonresistance that they attacked, although its endorsement by Nanjing made this a dangerous game.

Wang and Shao characterize Qi and the *Dongbei yuekan* as simply being wreckers of the NNSS’s efforts, hired by Chiang Kaishek, and state that in spring 1932 the Northeastern Association advocated the breakup of the volunteer armies.⁹⁶ What they do not point out is that *Dongbei yuekan* advocated this policy not so as to leave the Northeast to its fate, but to prevent the local population from being further alienated by bandit raids and from thus clearing the way for Nanjing to send in troops to retake the region. Their argument was as follows:

Some of the resistance armies and militias were scattered, and a number of them were angered and became bandits, so that locality was not peaceful . . . Now in Liaoxi, thieves and bandits are [as numerous as] hairs, and almost all of the able-bodied men there are bandits! . . . All the counties of Liaoning are lawless in this way, especially the city of Niuzhuang, Taian county, Liaozhong, Xinmin, Liaoyang, Haicheng . . . Friends! Daily we await the sending of troops beyond the pass, whereas you are awaiting the volunteers beyond the pass to fight the Japanese.⁹⁷

If the journal had followed the nonresistance line blindly, then it would be easier to dismiss its complaints about the resistance as the

products of malice. However, examination of the *Dongbei yuekan*'s editorial line over the 1932–33 period reveals that it was frequently as ready to advocate armed recapture of the Northeast as was the NNSS. If Chiang Kaishek was paying Qi Shiyong to edit a journal that would strictly follow his nonresistance line, he must have been disappointed by a statement such as “[The people] are very much afraid to hear the news that the government has no strength to recover the lost lands.”⁹⁸ Nor can Chiang have been pleased to have been told that his best hope of eliminating the CCP (an aim supported by the *Dongbei yuekan*) was to deal with the Japanese menace first, and that his current policy was “basically wrong.”⁹⁹ Wang and Shao condemn the Northeastern Association as a tool of the CC clique and therefore tarred with Chiang's brush, but as the example of the Nanjing journal *Shidai gonglun* shows, adherence to the CC clique did not necessarily mean slavish adherence to the nonresistance line; the latter journal was noted for its attacks on nonresistance.¹⁰⁰

Therefore, the journal's concern about the behavior of the resistance invites attention. Its writers repeatedly characterize the volunteer forces as “former bandits, now vagrants, collected by intellectuals into battalions,” claiming that “their courage is small, but their talent at extorting money is great.”¹⁰¹ One article that must have particularly infuriated the NNSS was by Gui Ke (“Returned Traveler”), possibly a pseudonym for Qi Shiyong himself.¹⁰² In it, Gui Ke discussed the resistance offered by the first volunteer force organized by NNSS members Huang Xian-sheng and Xiong Fei. He first mentioned that the NNSS published a declaration of resistance in the Jinzhou area in January 1932, stating that “the resistance armies of the time were organized by personnel sent by the NNSS to each county. Although they rose up for a while, in the end their organization was unable to unite them, and their weapons and ammunition were insufficient.”¹⁰³ Gui Ke said that he went to Jinzhou to observe for himself, and he confirmed that the NNSS's account *was* in fact accurate. However, he then promptly undermined his previous statement by adding more details:

[The NNSS] united bandits and vagrants who would not normally assent to commands. Naturally, because they had received guarantees [of rewards], the people who had been brought together were happy to join up in great numbers. But when it came to making use of their people, [the NNSS] felt that these scum were too dangerous. So they were never able to supply them fully with arms and ammunition, and this led to their defeat, with many deaths. Finally, they didn't let them retreat “within the pass” along with the regular army [Zhang Xueliang's Northeastern Army, which abandoned Jinzhou in January 1932] . . . In all the areas that the resistance armies passed through in

Liaoxi, there was a clean sweep, and not a chicken or pig was left in the savage robbery and cruelty.¹⁰⁴

The rift between the ordinary people and the resistance, he concluded, “will be a fatal wound to the future of the volunteers.”¹⁰⁵ In this one piece, Gui Ke not only accused the resistance of acting like bandits and alienating the people they were supposed to be protecting but also sowed distrust between the NNSS and the volunteers by suggesting that the former’s support for the latter was insincere.

But *Dongbei yuekan* also ran stories that were more sympathetic to the resistance.¹⁰⁶ And it was capable of differentiating between the various sorts of collaborators with the Japanese and not condemning their behavior outright: “the officials of the puppet government are in a temporary unhappy situation and have been intimidated and deceived . . . When the opportunity comes, they still have the possibility of turning back to righteousness.”¹⁰⁷ This was in contrast to the NNSS’s earlier demand that the collaborators should be arrested and punished. In short, the worldview of the *Dongbei yuekan* was more complex than that of the *Jinguo xunkan*.

Conclusion

The NNSS was attempting to make the Manchurian crisis a national issue, and one should not ignore the significance of geography as a factor in the difficulties of “nationalization.” There has been much recent consideration of whether social groups on the “margin” are harder to include in the idea of nation as community.¹⁰⁸ But the usefulness of the idea of thinking of periphery in metaphorical terms should not blind us to its literal significance: that in China—nation or social reality—the imagining of community is that much harder when the periphery is at a great distance, as in the case of Manchuria. This was a two-way process: not only would events in Shenyang be remote for people in Shanghai, but the concept of loyalty to a nation with its capital at Nanjing was that much more vague to those living in the Northeast; the urban, Fengtian-based nature of many nationalist activities described in chapter 2 suggests this. Making the Chinese imagine their community was not an *ab initio* effort, but neither did it happen absolutely spontaneously. The northeasterners contributed to that imagining by making the Manchurian crisis another catalyst to the formation of a perceived national community. Yet conversely, once the process had

begun, it was *easier* to use tropes from a region where the reality on the ground remained obscure because it was too far away for many people to see it firsthand.

In one sense, the activists failed in their immediate aim: Manchuria stayed under Japanese control until 1945. But the ghost of their contribution to a new nationalist construct that pitted the Chinese nation against the forces of Japanese imperialism can be seen in the still common characterization of Japanese expansion and Chinese reaction as monolithic processes, taking on trust the resistancialist construct that the propagandists worked hard to build. Modern memory of the Manchurian crisis is informed by resistancialism; the construction of that memory was not retroactive but contemporaneous with the events concerned, although at a distance from them. The willingness of official history to co-opt the resistance shows the influence the resistancialist myth has had, and its power as part of an essentially modern nationalist project.

CHAPTER 7

Frontline Choices

*The Resistance Fighters, Nationalism,
and Locality, 1931–1932*

This chapter looks at the actions of anti-Japanese activists on the ground in Manchuria—the resistance fighters. It is not intended to be a comprehensive account of their activities, which have been dealt with in detail in a series of excellent studies.¹ Instead, I aim to place resistance activity in the context of northeastern society at the time of the Manchurian Incident and to analyze it as part of the variety of responses that different groups within that society made to the occupation, rather than regard it as an isolated phenomenon. I will demonstrate the connections between the resistance fighters and the groups discussed in the previous chapters, the co-opted elites and the nationalist exiles, and to give an overview of the motivations, composition, and behavior of the resistance bands.

The chapter then offers a detailed case study of the resistance leader Ma Zhanshan in Heilongjiang, which will allow us to extract more general points about the relations between the various Manchurian Chinese groups and the way in which they responded to the Japanese. The elite, modern concepts of nationalism were not alien to the resistance, resonating as they did with a more long-standing Chinese cultural identity, but the resistance fighters sometimes had difficulty in grasping the stark choices that the growing hegemony of nationalist thought had forced upon them politically; thus at first, Ma Zhanshan felt able to keep in contact with both the Chinese and the Japanese sides in the conflict, and it was only relatively late in events that he made a definite choice to behave according to the rules that the elite-defined, nationalist discourse

demanded. The issues faced and dealt with by Ma Zhanshan were also faced by other resistance leaders; their reactions varied, but the context remained the same.

The resistance fighters fought long and hard, often against hopeless odds, and frequently had to make uncomfortable decisions. My analysis of their actions in this chapter aims to deromanticize their behavior, but it does not aim to diminish the significance of their very real courage and audacity.

Resistance, Nationalism, and Banditry

This chapter focuses on resistance *armies* and nationalism. Is it possible to make a comparison with the attitudes of soldiers in another conflict seen as a clash of nations, for example, World War I? Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, in his study of attitudes among the *poilus* in the French army of 1914, differentiates between “national sentiment” and “nationalism” and examines the influence of the former on the development of the latter.² In the absence of a letter-and-diary archive like that available to scholars of the French and British soldiery, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the “national sentiment” or otherwise of ordinary resistance fighters. This does not mean that we can dismiss its existence; reports like those in chapter 4 suggest that efforts were made by the NNSS and other groups to transmit propaganda to the resistance troops. However, we can make more of an attempt to analyze the motivations of the resistance leaders. Even when, like Ma Zhanshan, they were themselves illiterate, there is enough material written by those who came in contact with them to make some sort of assessment of the way in which their thoughts and actions developed during the crisis. In this section I will consider the factors that influenced the northeastern resistance specifically, and banditry in particular. Connections with heterodox behavior patterns were a complication in the path to accepting nationalism.

In June 1932, one anti-Japanese report giving details of Chinese resistance in the Harbin area declared, “Shortly, the [Japanese] will be talking about reports detailing problems with rebellious bandits and will use this as grounds to deceive people abroad.”³ People should beware, the author warned, of the Japanese dismissing the resistance as mere bandits. However, this statement needs to be supplemented by an awk-

ward coda: many of the resistance *were* bandits. The word “resistance” has taken on a great deal of romantic imagery in the last fifty years, both in China and elsewhere. The key to an analysis of the role of the resistance in the Northeast after 1931 is understanding the significance of banditry to the region’s history, as outlined in chapter 2.

Yan Baohang wrote a report on the resistance in 1932, declaring that after the Manchurian Incident

robbers abounded, . . . the area was extremely chaotic . . . But some . . . left their bandit lives and formed up to join the volunteers, taking part in the anti-Japanese resistance work . . . However, there are some who kill and rob to further their own desires and have no national outlook at all, but steal the name of the resistance and confuse what people see and hear, and cheat the people.⁴

This quotation expresses the dichotomy—which still informs much interpretation of the Manchurian resistance—between those who joined the “anti-Japanese resistance” and those who “steal the name of the resistance” to indulge in raids. For Yan Baohang, desperate to propagandize and raise funds in 1932 for the hard-pressed resistance movement, it was essential to draw this distinction. But as we will see below, it was quite possible, indeed common, for the volunteers simultaneously to fight the Japanese and to use bandit raids and extortion as a method of gaining supplies.

It is often not possible to make a dichotomy between those resistance fighters or volunteers who selflessly fought the Japanese and those who indulged in banditry under the name of the resistance. The tradition of banditry and the high number of bandits in the resistance armies were central, not marginal, elements to understanding the formation of the resistance. Furthermore, the persistence of bandit behavior among the resistance armies served to alienate many peasants and others who might have formed the basis of a mass movement under other circumstances. This was the reason that the CCP from 1931 to 1933 forbade its local workers from cooperating with the volunteers.

Where did resistance forces contain significant numbers of bandits? Accurate assessments are fraught with difficulties. One study suggests that 140,000 of a total 300,000 resistance members were from a bandit background.⁵ According to one contemporary source, there were 298,200 resistance fighters in Manchuria in June 1932, the period regarded by the NNSS’s journal as the high summer of the volunteers.⁶ Of these, the 122,400 in Liaoning were mostly made up of “former bandits,” except for around 15,100 in Liaodong, where bandits were in a

minority compared with local police force members. In Heilongjiang, 50,000 of the 69,500 troops were associated with Ma Zhanshan, whose bandit background and behavior is discussed in the case study below. Only in Jilin were the 107,000 troops led by former military leaders, and again, the material below suggests that Jilin commanders such as Ding Chao could also behave in banditlike ways.⁷ Techniques used by the resistance were similar to those employed by the CCP in Jiangxi, where “they appealed more directly to bandit chiefs and secret-society heads than to their followers, and generally deviated little from methods long used by hill-country elites in search of armed followings.”⁸ The CCP structure was also marked by “political intrigue, personality conflict, and collective paranoia.”⁹ The difference is that the CCP had the ultimate aim of revolution. The resistance armies did not.

BANDITRY AFTER THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT

For those sectors of society that were in some way alienated from settled society so that they joined local military or bandit groups, or switched between the two, patronage had traditionally been an immediate concern and an important focus of loyalty. The search for patronage did not preclude national consciousness, but might take precedence over it. This did not change with the occupation of 1931. Some bandits decided to try their luck with Chinese patrons. Support for Zhang Xueliang or the Manchurian exiled resistance based in Beiping involved assuming the name of a volunteer army. This adoption by many militarists and bandits of the “resistance” name need not have been a purely cynical move made as a result of a judgment that the Chinese were more likely eventually to be victorious. It is not possible to determine how much of any individual message of resistance sent to Beiping or Nanjing was composed by activists from the NNSS or elsewhere, and how much was a product of the thought of the resistance leader himself in whose name it was sent. However, it argues for very high levels of manipulation to suggest that the NNSS was conjuring up messages that had no connection whatsoever with those in whose names they were published (see chap. 5). Nonetheless, other militarists and bandits decided to carry on a patronage relationship that was already decades old and stay with the Japanese. The point is that it is not safe to assume that because they were Chinese, bandits would automatically oppose Japan after the Manchurian Incident. Phil Billingsley

writes, "While the charges of unpatriotic behavior constantly leveled [at those who cooperated with Japan] were no doubt true, they fell on deaf ears, for they reflected the point of view of a community whose values were alien to everything those chiefs lived by."¹⁰

When one understands how far bandits were integrated into north-eastern local power structures, it becomes easier to interpret the role of the resistance forces as reported in contemporary sources. The alienation of members of orthodox society from bandits is one significant reason there was no mass uprising against the occupiers. Some commentators have apportioned blame onto the nonresistance policy of Nanjing and Zhang Xueliang and the subsequent lack of support or leadership that caused the resistance to fall apart.¹¹ However, it is necessary to note that there were internal factors peculiar to the Manchurian resistance that handicapped it in taking on the role of vehicle for popular nationalism.

In addition to the bandits who mounted some form of resistance, there were also bandits who took advantage of the chaos to mount raids. And, notes Cai Shaoqing, there were "many *mazei* [horse thieves, a specific term used for Manchurian bandits of all types] [who] finally directly entered the Japanese embrace, and there were some anti-Japanese *mazei* . . . who gradually . . . became collaborationist troops."¹² Liu Shaoqi declared, "Some bandit groups are sincerely interested in resisting Japan, but most raise the banner of resistance only to camouflage their true intentions of plunder."¹³ This viewpoint is echoed in one report from occupied Manchuria, which suggested,

Last year, a certain resistance army and a certain battalion leader [working] on behalf of his movement were "squatting" around the Liaoning-Rehe border. He called together all his bandits and collected over 3,000 of them. Then a certain retired battalion commander requested authorization for a county magistrate to come and do the army estimates on the spot. This was a mechanism for receiving "protection costs." Once the rations were sufficient, his strength blazed up mightily, and as a result he called himself "the commander of such-and-such a unit of the Northeastern Resistance Army."¹⁴

If 140,000 of the 300,000 volunteers really were bandits, this explains why much of their behavior went against the dictates of orthodox society, and why many members of that orthodox society in the occupied Northeast refused to join them. Bandits were the largest single element in the volunteer armies. Some studies suggest that many of these were "former bandits," but it is unclear what the term "former bandit"

means. Bandits who joined the volunteers were hardly in a position to give up raiding as a way of life while fighting the Japanese. It is unsurprising that the most prominent outlaw group under Chinese rule became the most prominent outlaw group under Japanese rule.

THE ROLE OF THE CCP IN THE MANCHURIAN RESISTANCE

Much Chinese scholarship treats the Manchurian occupation as the first stage in the development of the region's mass nationalism expressed through an anti-Japanese struggle. In mainland Chinese interpretations, the CCP is credited with a major role in creating this mass nationalism.¹⁵ It is therefore important to stress that the role of the CCP in Manchuria at this stage was negligible. One author says, "Under the influence of the CCP's announcement [in 1931, that they had declared war on Japan], all sorts of bandits and *mazei* in the Northeast divided up, and a certain number of them became patriotic official soldiers of the Northeastern Army and a key section of the anti-Japanese armed troops."¹⁶ This interpretation, however, allows the CCP far too much prominence in decision-making in the Northeast, and studies such as those by Chong-sik Lee and Anthony Coogan show that the attribution of any major role to the Communists before 1933 is a gross exaggeration.¹⁷ The CCP Central Committee, who had declared war on Japan, was thousands of kilometers away in Jiangxi and was of little relevance to the *mazei*. The Manchurian Provincial Committee of the Party did not enjoy a high reputation: "indiscriminate killings and destruction" by undisciplined Communist guerrillas, such as the massacre in 1930 at the village of Wengshenglazi in eastern Manchuria, had alienated them from most civilians.¹⁸ At the time of the invasion, the party in the Northeast had only 1,190 members, of whom 800 were Korean peasants.¹⁹ Furthermore, far from encouraging the local CCP to take a leadership role in the resistance, Zhou Enlai actually condemned the bandit-dominated volunteer forces as "counterrevolutionaries" and refused the local party permission to cooperate with them, with the Communist press even accusing the volunteers of attempting to facilitate a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union.²⁰ (The latter charge is the opposite of the one contained in the intelligence report sent to Zhang Jinghui by Wang Ruihua on 17 October 1931, which claimed that the Soviets were hoping to hire bandits to cause trouble, so as to give the Soviets a cover to propagandize for Communism amid the chaos.)²¹ The result of this policy by the

CCP, which lasted until 1933, was the sidelining of the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the CCP, which was then rather unjustly lambasted by the Central Committee for its lack of effectiveness.²²

Anthony Coogan has shown that the CCP's main success in the Northeast before 1933 was in areas where they abandoned the Central Committee's official line of noncooperation with volunteer groups. He notes in particular that the candidate CCP member Li Yanlu was responsible for the Communists' biggest breakthrough in the early phase of the occupation, their association with Wang Delin's National Salvation Army (NSA). However, this association was primarily due to Li's personal friendship with Wang, and the latter "seemed personally unconcerned about political affiliation."²³ Despite the entry of CCP adherents, the NSA did not try to carry out any of the social reforms that the Central Committee had urged upon the Manchurian Provincial Committee. Indeed, one report from a rival resistance leader spoke of "the uneducated and unsophisticated National Salvation Army, which burns and rapes and kills and steals [and] has already lost the trust of the masses."²⁴ Surveying the level of CCP activism in occupied Manchuria by summer 1932, Coogan concludes, "Apart from the work in the NSA, there is no evidence that CCP members, who supported Ma Zhanshan and the other leaders of the volunteer armies, were successful." The Wang Ming letter of 26 January 1933 allowed the regional CCP forces slightly more room to maneuver, but it still condemned all volunteer leaders, as well as local militias and the Red Spears, as being in the pay of the KMT or the Japanese, except Wang Delin (who was approved grudgingly). Yet even the alliance with the NSA was under threat by December 1933 because Wang Delin's deputy Kong Xianrong was being supported by the Guangdong faction of the KMT. Kong was prepared to conciliate the Communists, but they refused to deal with him and remained ineffective even in late 1933. Only a change in the Comintern's policy in 1934 enabled the local CCP to attempt a united front that gave the anti-Japanese movement priority over social reform. By 1936, most of the other volunteer forces had withdrawn or been co-opted, and the CCP guerrilla force, the Northeastern United Anti-Japanese Army, was in fact the largest one in the region. Yet at its peak (1935–38), the United Anti-Japanese Army was only 30,000 strong, and Japanese opposition meant that it had mostly retreated behind the Soviet border by 1942. Even during the CCP's most active period, Coogan notes, "the local peasants were not involved as much as the CCP would have liked, and the united front remained a military rather than a social and political

union.”²⁵ In summary, the actions of the resistance in the immediate aftermath of the Manchurian Incident cannot be understood through an analysis based on the idea that they were under CCP leadership.

NATURE OF THE RESISTANCE: METHODS AND MEMBERS

In September 1932, Yan Baohang wrote a “General Report on the Situation of the Northeastern Volunteer Forces.”²⁶ In this NNSS internal document, in which he was able to be more frank than in announcements for public consumption, he analyzed the successes of the resistance forces and the problems that they faced at that time.

Yan tabulates the recruitment to the various units of the volunteer army in Liaoning and southern Jilin. In fact, although Yan lists them as if they were disciplined units in a united army, they were different volunteer groups who operated under often only the loosest cooperation. Elizabeth Perry has noted the phenomenon of armies dominated by bandit gangs in the Huaibei region. Although they might take on a “quasi-military organizational structure,” in reality, “the alliances remained . . . cellular and segmented, with primary loyalties continuing to operate at the level of the gang, rather than with the army.”²⁷ A similar phenomenon appears to have operated in Manchuria with the resistance “armies.” Thus the National Salvation Army under Tang Juwu became embroiled in fighting with Li Du’s rival Jilin Self-Defense Army; and in the case of Ma Zhanshan’s army of 15,000 men in Heilongjiang, he was, by his own estimate, in full control of only a third.²⁸ Yan lists the various units of the resistance armies by area of operation, and records the number of members in 1931 and then in 1932. Out of 54 groups, 34 show similar membership levels from one year to the next: Zu Huishi in Tongjiangkou kept his 2,000 followers, Li Juchuan’s group in Liaoyang rose from 2,300 to 2,500, and Song Gongquan’s band in Changtu-Tonghua stayed steady at 5,000.²⁹ A further 12 units show memberships that were significantly reduced: Zhang Wuwu in Chaoyang saw his 12,000 men reduced to 2,500, and Fang Xiangxue’s 3,000 followers in Taian were completely gone by 1932.³⁰ The disappearance of a group did not necessarily mean its members had been wiped out or had defected to the Japanese. For instance, although Chen Jixin’s 2,200 men in the Kaiyuan-Tieling area in 1931 were gone by the following year, other groups operating in the area under Zhao Yazhou and Cui Dianhua saw their memberships rise by 800 in total; transfers between groups proba-

bly accounted for some of the fluctuations in numbers.³¹ A group like Jin Ziming's in Heishan was exceptional, with a rise over the year from 1,500 to 12,000.³² For the most part, the figures suggest that there was no great variation in the number of volunteers in the initial year of the occupation; those who had made the decision to resist did not leave again, but neither did they manage to attract a much greater number of followers later.

The scale of figures above is echoed in an examination of Japanese reports of resistance activities. Between March 1932 and November 1933, the Kwantung Army listed its major encounters with the resistance forces. The opponents (with numbers of Chinese forces in parentheses) included: Li Du and Ding Chao (20,000 troops), Tang Juwu and Wang Fengge (20,000; two engagements), Ma Zhanshan and Li Haiqing (16,000), Feng Zhanhai (15,000; three engagements), and Su Bingwen and Zheng Dianjiu (20,000). In addition, there were campaigns against other, smaller uprisings of 2–5,000 resistance fighters, but no individual group or combination of northeastern resisters in one particular campaign is recorded as being more than 20,000 strong.³³

In addition to examining numbers, Yan Baohang also analyzed the different types of recruit to the volunteer forces. These are expressed in percentage terms, but the figures should not be taken too literally, as mobile resistance base camps in an occupied zone were hardly the ideal setting for a detailed social survey. In terms of social strata, he declared that the proportions were as follows: bandits, 25 percent; bankrupt peasants, 50 percent; former soldiers, 20 percent; and “patriotic intellectuals . . . incensed by righteous anger,” 5 percent.³⁴ Two other contemporary sources offer similar figures. She Yize offers the same figures as Yan, except that the proportions of soldiers and bandits are reversed. Lei Ding offers categories that presumably overlap, although it is not indicated where: bankrupt farmers, 50 to 60 percent; former military, 50 percent; former bandits, 30 to 40 percent; intellectuals, 4 to 5 percent; and workers, 6 percent.³⁵ All this information should be treated with caution. Cai Shaoqing, for instance, puts the number of bandits much higher, at 47 percent of the total forces.³⁶ But as well as reflecting the difficulty of accurate counting, this difference may denote a problem with categorization. As has been noted above, it was often very difficult throughout the history of the Northeast to differentiate between soldiers and bandits, since it was possible to move from one role to another. So if one adds together Yan's “bandit” and “former soldier” categories, one reaches a proportion of 45 percent, which is much closer to Cai's 47 percent

“bandit” level. What is significant is the suggestion that the average resistance force contained as nearly half its membership people who were used, one way or another, to living off the peasants, whether it was through the extraction of “military expenses” or simple raiding and looting. The other half of the band would be peasants who might have been forced into fighting only by pressure or circumstance; furthermore, being destitute, they had little to lose by joining the volunteers. By Yan’s own admission, only a small number had had the type of formal education that would make them more likely to understand nationalism in the ideological terms that he did himself. In fact, it was quite traditional that a bandit group would employ a scribe as an assistant to the usually illiterate chiefs.³⁷ But they were in a minority; most members of bandit groups were uneducated.

In chapter 5, it was noted that some Shanghai students formed groups to go and fight with Ma Zhanshan. In practice, it appears that when students, mostly local, made it to his base at Hailun, Ma discouraged them. (It is noteworthy that the following report, although published in the Japanese-owned *Shengjing shibao*, does not seem prejudiced against Ma, who is here given his title of “chairman,” even though it had been awarded by Nanjing). The newspaper stated:

Ever since a battle broke out between the Chinese and Japanese in Heilongjiang, many students have come here through patriotic enthusiasm, coming to Heilongjiang to join the army. But chairman Ma exhorted them to return to school and study, and said that national salvation lay in studying hard . . . However, six middle-school students from Harbin, twelve students from technical colleges in Beiping and Tianjin, one middle-school student from Andong, and forty-five students from the Nos. 1, 2, and 3 middle schools in Benxi all came to Hailun. At first, Ma would not receive them, but the students entreated him, swearing that otherwise they would die right there and would not return home. Ma had no choice, so he telegraphed their schools, and after he had obtained letters of identification from their school principals or fathers or brothers, he placed them within the defense corps. He then telegraphed [a message for] all high school students in the Northeast that after this, if any students [came to] join the army, he would prevent them doing so. If they absolutely had to come, they should bring a letter of identification from the principal of their school and a recent photograph, or else they definitely would not be received.³⁸

Considering the background of most of the members of the resistance armies, it would be surprising if these groups’ relabeling under a

nationalist banner had led them suddenly to change their old way of life completely. And so it proved. Yan expressed deep concern over the tactics of many resistance fighters. "The volunteer forces have no means to raise money, so for supplies they have no choice but to take them from the people," declares the report. Therefore "the volunteers go through each village and town, and they need food and shelter. If the people are ungenerous in their response, then [the volunteers] cannot help but feel injured. Because this causes resentment, sometimes it causes a conflict. Or if the [villagers] have fallen in with the Japanese, and have harmed the volunteers, then this sort of appearance causes great concern."³⁹

Thus the apologia for raids on uncooperative villages. However, "if the volunteers can be completely supplied, then they will not cause disruption at all to the local people. Not only do the people in trouble have their distress lessened, but the people and the [volunteer] army collaborate, which inevitably makes more concrete the task of anti-Japanese national salvation."⁴⁰

It does not take much imagination to interpret these statements and visualize the arrival of hundreds of irregulars led by bandits, at a village, demanding that food and money be handed over and threatening reprisals for noncompliance. One article in an anti-Japanese Beiping journal complained, "Volunteer forces in other places are much more pure and upright by comparison, holding fast to the principles of national struggle . . . If they all imitated our country's phony [resistance fighters], I'm afraid they would all be defeated and scattered by the 'wooden-clogs' [Japanese]."⁴¹ Yan was not so harsh in his judgment, but he did admit, "There is a shortage of grain in the Northeast because the Japanese have bought it up or bandits have snatched it, so that the people don't have enough for themselves and don't have the strength to supply the volunteers."⁴² He concludes, "The members of the resistance are very varied, they have not yet had proper training, and they don't have food, supplies, or clothes. So they've been oppressive toward the people and have slipped from the [appropriate] standard in their actions, and recently they have caused chaos. This is really inexcusable."⁴³

It was not just inexcusable because it had harmed the people, but also because it had harmed the image of the resistance that the NNSS was attempting to portray. The resistance's techniques, alienating the people they were supposedly protecting, was one reason that it did not foster a mass uprising and it remained the preserve of a minority. In the absence of more than the limited clandestine aid (which had to escape the

attention of not only the Japanese but also Chiang Kaishek) that the NNSS and similar organizations could supply, there was little alternative for them. This reality was a powerful motivation for the NNSS to transfer their attention from trying to make the volunteers powerful enough to defeat the Japanese within Manchuria to concentrating on propagandizing their cause in China south of the Wall, portraying the members of the resistance as heroes who deserved financial and military support from the rest of China.

Several sources suggest that bandit behavior was common throughout many resistance armies. As well as Yan Baohang's comments, there are Li Baolin's descriptions of the behavior of Wang Delin's NSA, and the following description of the arrival of Zhang Haitian ("Lao Beifeng"), an NNSS-supported resistance leader (see chap. 4): "Bandit leader Lao Beifeng is over sixty, and one evening last month, in a certain town in Taian county, he snatched five women and took them to a cave. In the old days, this was called 'two birds in one cage,' but this old man 'moistened' [raped] *five* young women. Although Lao Beifeng has a political role, he is *still* like this, so you can visualize what *other* local villains and bullies are like, once they have power."⁴⁴

The highest estimate of numbers in the resistance is around 300,000.⁴⁵ This is approximately 1 percent of the 30 million population of the Northeast at the time. While this is not a negligible number, it is necessary to be aware of the factors that constrained more from joining them. Even when they were not being actively alienated by raids by the volunteers, many locals were reluctant to be associated with them. They feared, quite correctly (as Pingdingshan showed), that reprisals might be taken against them by the Japanese, particularly as the resistance could disappear into the countryside when necessary in a way that was not possible for those who lived in villages or towns. Or just as bad, the bandits and Japanese sometimes took to long-distance battles with mortars and shells, with uninvolved villagers often finding themselves stuck in the middle. One should note again that the volunteers tended to be those members of society who had little property or social position and therefore little to lose from attacks on villages or towns.

Sun Guangying, an inspector for the Manchurian Provincial Committee of the CCP, reported on eastern Manchuria and Ning'an in December 1932. He noted that "some volunteer forces were surrendering and being organized as militia [*mintuan*] or peace preservation corps [*baodandui*] by the Japanese," and characterized most of the volunteers as

“bankrupt peasants and unemployed workers and the urban poor.”⁴⁶ In other words, they were people already at some level alienated from the mainstream of local society; in comparison with the more immobile landholding peasants, they had little to lose. Being relatively mobile, their actions were less likely to bring harm to them than to those members of society who had property to defend. And although without the benefit of contemporary sources originating from the lower-level resistance army members it is difficult to be exact, it seems likely that nationalism—at any rate, the variety espoused by the elites in the NNSS—may not have been the overwhelming reason for joining the volunteers. Elizabeth Perry’s analysis of Huaibei suggests that the orthodox/heterodox dichotomy is an elite one: “Most villagers joined bandit gangs or defense forces for the eminently practical aim of seizing or securing a livelihood. Although both strategies had wider political potential, there was nothing inherently rebellious about either.”⁴⁷ However, the experience of the Boxers, Triads, and secret societies that had supplied Sun Yatsen and the Taiping rebels suggests that it was possible to mobilize heterodox sectors of society on behalf of China as a community, although these groups’ conceptions of the nation were very different from those of the elites who aimed to mobilize them.⁴⁸ It should also be noted that the educated elites who turned to nationalism felt that bringing the masses to awareness of the elite modern conception of the nation was one of their key tasks.⁴⁹

The NNSS’s idea of nationalism had not penetrated among the resistance fighters, and the group felt it necessary to send political education teams into the Northeast. The ideas espoused by Shenyang-based, foreign-educated intellectuals such as the leaders of the NNSS were not necessarily incompatible with the affiliations or loyalties of the resistance fighters, but the latter’s links to local networks that provided their immediate subsistence meant that they had an alternative focus for their loyalties, a community that they did not have to go to the trouble of imagining. I also suggest that, in the case of Ma Zhan-shan, for one, after the occupation, political activism by infiltrators from groups such as the NNSS influenced resistance fighters to the point where they espoused the elite concept of nationalism. Because the documents published officially in the names of resistance fighters are all steeped in nationalist language, it is only when the disparities between the rhetoric and actions on the ground become apparent that we begin to develop a picture of the move to nationalism among the resistance as a dynamic process and not a preexisting situation.

A comparison can be made with another resistance, which took place during the German occupation of France from 1942 to 1944. The initial period of German control (1940–42) is not so easily comparable, as the Vichy portion of France was not occupied by foreign troops and resistance activity could be carried on relatively openly. The absence of Germans in the region also meant that most agitation was in fact anti-Vichy rather than anti-German.⁵⁰ After November 1942, however, Vichy lost even the theoretical freedom that it had enjoyed and was joined with occupied France. During that period, the *Mouvements Unis de la Résistance* coordinated the bulk of organized resistance activity. “An evaluation of the numbers in any clandestine organization is a tricky business,” notes one scholar.⁵¹ However, he assesses the numbers of the resistance as being 75,000 to 100,000. With a French population at the time of 41.9 million, this suggests that there was a participation level of only around one-quarter of 1 percent—lower than in Northeast China, although the repressive apparatus available to the Germans was more totalistic than that which the Japanese had during the initial phase of their occupation.⁵² Initially, the French resistance faced a problem similar to the one experienced by the Chinese volunteers: that is, the unwillingness of the population at large to incur the wrath of the occupiers by cooperating with the resistance. According to John F. Sweets, “Many Frenchmen believed [*sic*] that the Germans would not have shot hostages and taken other repressive measures without the provocation of resistance agitators.”⁵³ However, the social background of France in the 1940s was very different from that of Manchuria in the 1930s. The French resistance was not dominated by bandits (banditry was not a significant feature of French society by this time, although some *maquisards* did steal supplies) and did not tend to supply itself by raiding, as its members usually operated from within existing communities. Thus although its actual membership remained small, it was in a good position to win public sympathy when the tide turned against the Germans and the political mood changed from Pétainist to Gaullist, although even this was most notable only when it became clear that the Allies were likely to win the war. As Georges Rougeron puts it, “Let no-one kid himself: the Resistance, in the sense of total engagement, was the work of a small number in proportion to the whole. But the increasing, tacit adhesion of the masses seemingly ‘carried’ the Resistance.”⁵⁴ In contrast, the war in East Asia ended much more swiftly than in Europe, with the atomic bombings of August 1945 concluding the war in a matter of days. Some of the Manchurian resistance’s failure to achieve the “adhesion of the masses”

was therefore simply due to a lack of time; yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that at least part of the failure stemmed from its problematic relationship with the ordinary people of the region.

Case Study: The Resistance of Ma Zhanshan

I have suggested that in the initial phase of the Japanese occupation, the majority of the members of resistance groups were not motivated by nationalism in the sense understood by the intellectuals in exile in Beijing. In this context, the case of one particular resistance leader, Ma Zhanshan of Heilongjiang, is pertinent. The primary reason for considering Ma's campaign is that his activities were the first to have a significant impact on Chinese and world public opinion. Ma Zhanshan became a name to reckon with in a way that Tang Juwu or Su Bingwen did not. Ma's rise to prominence is examined in the context of the propaganda created about him by the NNSS and other nationalist advisers, and contrasted with the initial pragmatism of his approach to resistance, where he used his contacts within the preexisting local elite network to keep up contacts both with Zhang Xueliang and the Kwantung Army. I argue below that Ma initially carried out his resistance activities as a combination of that search for patronage that had been characteristic of local militarists in the Northeast while simultaneously drawing on his Chinese identity, which he understood in a traditional premodern sense. However, this was not clear to the outside world, to which his actions were publicized as the deeds of a committed, ideological nationalist. His defection to the Japanese in the winter of 1931–32 was a result of disillusionment with the lack of concrete support from Nanjing, but his patrons in the NNSS had been so successful in turning him into a symbol of nationalist resistance that his defection to Japan caused outrage in China. The public's reaction to his behavior made it clear that it would no longer be acceptable for Ma to refuse to make loyalty to a greater China his top priority. Instead, he substituted an unambiguous acceptance of the nationalist cause *over* his previous simultaneous loyalty to connections made within the local elite network in his province. Although there are limitations in concentrating on this particular case, the details of Ma Zhanshan's actions between autumn 1931 and spring 1932 demonstrate many of the factors affecting the activities and decisions of resistance fighters in general. It has been asked whether Ma's conversion

to nationalism was “genuine.”⁵⁵ However, to ask this is to miss an important point: Ma’s *actions* allow us to term him a nationalist at this point, regardless of the thoughts that he may have had, which are now impossible to reconstruct.

FROM RESISTANCE TO WITHDRAWAL: THE FIRST PHASE OF MA’S CAMPAIGN

Ma Zhanshan (1885–1950) was born in Huaide county, Fengtian. His early career showed characteristics of the overlap between the military and banditry that was typical of the region. While young, Ma joined a bandit group in Heihushan before the band was incorporated into the troops of the Huaide county yamen.⁵⁶ During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, he was one of many local soldiers to have served under the Japanese; as with Yu Chonghan’s intelligence activities, service in a foreign army was no barrier to later promotion within the local political elite (see chap. 3).⁵⁷ Ma went on to serve in Zhang Zuolin’s military in various capacities, and in 1927 he was transferred to Heilongjiang, where he was garrison commander at Heihe, on the Soviet border, at the time of the Manchurian Incident. When the Japanese occupied southern Manchuria, they persuaded Zhang Haipeng, a local militarist in Liaoning, to send his troops north to capture Heilongjiang. From late October to early November 1931, Ma Zhanshan’s troops defended a railway bridge over the Nonni River near Daxing, thereby preventing Zhang from moving north. However, Japanese military support for Zhang eventually forced Ma to withdraw to Qiqihaer and then to his local power base at Hailun.⁵⁸ It is the presentation and interpretation of this campaign on all sides that I will examine.

On 7 November 1931, Ma had a telegram sent in his name (he himself was illiterate) to the KMT executive in Nanjing, informing them that he had “determinedly led troops against Japan in self-defense.”⁵⁹ His troops had blown up the Japanese-run railway bridge over the Nonni River, leading to a clash with Japanese troops and troops under Zhang Haipeng. In this and a subsequent telegram on 10 November, Ma gave an explanation for his resistance and subsequent defeat. On the one hand, Ma was aware of the League of Nations’ demand that both sides declare a cease-fire, and he stated, “I have . . . telegraphed to the League of Nations about the recent situation, requesting them to set up some means of stopping all this. I am quietly awaiting the resolution of international justice.”⁶⁰ But at the same time, he swore that “I have taken on

this most important service for the nation, the burden of the people's trust . . . I swear to . . . maintain our strength throughout, and not to yield or submit at all."⁶¹

These telegrams were drafted, according to Major Hayashi Yoshhide, the Kwantung Army's chief intelligence officer in Heilongjiang, by anti-Japanese associates of Ma's such as Han Shuye. Han, a nationalist who was a trusted adviser to Ma, had been educated at Kyoto University and knew the Japanese well.⁶² The NNSS member Che Xiangchen was also sent to Heilongjiang to advise Ma.⁶³ The assistance of literate aides in composing the telegrams was clearly vital for the illiterate Ma, but this did not preclude him having made his own anti-Japanese contributions to them. These messages were helpful to the NNSS in creating the image of a resistance hero in their propaganda, and helpful to Ma in that they encouraged a flow of donations to him and created the possibility of intervention from outside that would lead to his being rewarded.

But the telegrams tell only part of the story. Throughout the period that telegrams were being sent to the outside world detailing only the anti-Japanese activities of his troops, Ma was also using contacts in the local elite network in Heilongjiang to negotiate with the occupiers. In the initial period of the Nonni River conflict, his main representative was Zhao Zhongren. Zhao was a powerful provincial official with a long history of association with the Japanese, dating back to his involvement with the Anfu clique associated with Duan Qirui's government, which held office in Beijing after 1917. On 3–4 November, Zhao and Hayashi managed to work out a compromise at the Japanese consulate in Qiqihaer that would end hostilities, with Zhao assuring the Kwantung Army that Ma had no desire to cause an incident.⁶⁴ An agreement was reached between Ma and Zhang Haipeng. On 4 November, Ma sent his subordinates to accompany Hayashi to the bridge, "so that the Japanese might begin work, and so that I could order my army to start to retreat."⁶⁵ A message from George Hanson, the U.S. consul in Harbin, stated that "Ma gave assurance that Japanese repairing operations would not be interfered with," even though he had allegedly previously stated that he would "paint all Manchuria red with the blood of Japanese troops."⁶⁶ But when the party went to Daxing, they were strafed by Japanese military aircraft, and they had to return to the provincial capital.⁶⁷ Ma's telegram to Nanjing portrayed this incident as an example of Japanese treachery.

That was not how the Japanese saw it: quite the opposite. Hayashi's report says that having received assurances from Zhao that Ma would

have the hostilities stopped, he went to Daxing, scene of the fighting, only to find that the village was still a war zone. They tracked down Ma's subordinate on the ground, Xu Baozhen, who said that he had received no orders to cease fighting. It was at this point that the Japanese aircraft attacked the area; seeing no cease-fire, the Kwantung Army continued its assault on Daxing. Later on, having managed to return to Qiqihaer, Hayashi found that the orders to stop fighting had in fact reached Xu Baozhen, but his officers had said that to withdraw with no protection behind them was "like committing suicide," and they had decided to ignore the order. Ma continued to send messages demanding a cease-fire, saying that at a suitable opportunity he would reveal his true intentions. These messages were also ignored.⁶⁸ It was incidents like this that would lead Ma later to assert that he could rely completely on only a third of the 15,000 troops nominally under his command.⁶⁹ Ma felt able to negotiate simultaneously with the Chinese and the Japanese sides; at the same time, it meant that the commanders under Ma also felt that they could obey his orders selectively. At this point, however, Hayashi and the Kwantung Army were convinced of nothing more than the bad faith of the Heilongjiang resistance army and Ma's weakness as a commander.

Ma was aware that, by now, this battle in an obscure frozen wasteland had caught the attention of the world. Cables were being sent by consuls to their governments, and Ma's telegrams were being read out at the League of Nations. Ma's ghostwriters rose to the occasion on 10 November with a telegram tailored for an international audience:

I am helpless. I have exhausted all attempts to preserve peace. I have strictly instructed my commanders to act only on the defensive, and that they must not attack. But Major Hayashi has seen this behavior by the Japanese military, and not only has not stopped it but, on the contrary, wants our army to withdraw from Heilongjiang province, so that they can carve up the whole lot . . . Since the 4th, the Japanese army has started to attack our army . . . They are coordinating land and air attacks, carrying out utterly horrible bombings!⁷⁰

Ma's image as a hero was given a great boost by such reports, even while he was sending representatives to negotiate with the Japanese; and the NNSS and other anti-Japanese groups used newspaper reports and public meetings centered on Ma's campaign to generate financial and popular support for their cause.⁷¹

The characteristics of Ma's ambivalent fighting style mentioned

above appear again in the urban campaigns that he undertook at Qiqihaer and then Qiqihaer and Harbin (November 1931 and January 1932). These campaigns expose the split between the interests of the resistance and of the civilians whom they were supposed to be defending. In addition, it becomes clear that the volunteer forces themselves were increasingly factionalized. Ma's campaign of resistance was not popular with the townspeople themselves, as chapter 3 has shown, although it bolstered his case for receiving patronage from his Chinese compatriots and gave the NNSS more ammunition for propaganda.

On 17 November Ma sent an urgent telegram to Zhang Xueliang in Beijing reporting that the Japanese had been attacking the Heilongjiang troops at Qiqihaer with both infantry and air raids. On 15 November, Shiroya, the representative of General Honjō Shigeru (a Kwantung Army commander from August 1931 to July 1932) had come with a list of demands: Ma's troops must withdraw north of Qiqihaer, Heilongjiang must declare independence, and Ma himself must resign.⁷² The latter is particularly significant. When the Japanese withdrew that final condition of resignation, Ma proved much more willing to negotiate with them.

Ma said that he had turned these demands down and had continued to fight valiantly, but by 2 P.M. on 16 November the Japanese were attacking with tanks and heavy artillery, and the Heilongjiang army was unable to withstand the assault.⁷³ There was another reason why he had given up his defense: "The Japanese had four cavalry units who ran amok everywhere, and they used two aeroplanes to bomb Qiqihaer into submission through terror. The merchants were utterly terrified, making pleas that the areas where they were should be avoided, so as to prevent misery among the people."⁷⁴ The civilian community had priorities different from Ma's. As the Nonni River battle had shown, Ma and partisan fighters like him could withdraw when they were about to be overwhelmed (a long-standing Chinese military tradition that did not mean a loss of face). They could use the time-honored methods of the local militarists and bandits to obtain provisions from villagers and townsfolk. These were not options open to most civilians. In the case of the inhabitants of Qiqihaer, they would have to go on living in the city long after Ma had gone, and it was clear by now that there was no immediate prospect of the Japanese letting their newly acquired territory go. The citizens were understandably not keen for resisters like Ma to add to their troubles by bringing bombs down on their heads. Hayashi played successfully on this fear by advising Tamon, the Kwantung Army commander who took Qiqihaer from Ma, that he should ensure that his

troops were impeccably behaved and that a Chinese civilian administration was set up to run the city after its capture (see also chap. 4).⁷⁵ This mirrored the techniques used by the Japanese in Liaoning in the early stages of the occupation, where local elite members were quickly co-opted to avoid giving the impression of an alien regime being imposed upon the region.⁷⁶

THE PURPOSE OF RESISTANCE

Whatever the complexities of the situation on the front-line, Ma could argue with some justification that he had more right to be classed as a resistance hero than most. However, it is important to note the reason for the disparities between the rhetoric used in his telegrams and the reality of his campaign. Ma's actions were influenced by his patrons in the NNSS and in similar organizations, who portrayed him in their propaganda as a model resistance fighter, an image valuable for their anti-Japanese activism (see chaps. 5 and 6). Their main input was to influence communications from his camp. In its account of the Nonni River battle at Daxing, the telegram sent out in the name of Ma Zhanshan spends hundreds of words describing the fearful odds against him and the depth of Japanese iniquity. He says that his commanders are "unafraid to die." However, this is followed with the statement "But because Daxing's topography makes it difficult to defend, I could not bear that my commanders should stake everything on one throw. Therefore, on the 6th, I ordered everyone to assist one another in withdrawing to Sanjianfang station, 50 miles distant from the bridge, so as to ensure a strong defense." Ma went on to give another reason for his reluctance to continue fighting at the river: "Now there is snow on the ground, and it's freezing."⁷⁷

The rhetoric attributed to Ma is that of a warrior prepared to face death to save his country's territorial integrity. But his campaign at the Nonni River belies this: destruction of a bridge before the Japanese arrived, initial refusal to let the Japanese pass, the decision reversed when they brought in more troops, then a withdrawal, an agreement to negotiate (broken off by the Japanese rather than by Ma), followed by another withdrawal. His later actions showed a similar pattern: initial defiance gave way to evacuation so as to avoid a confrontation with the Japanese that might well have proved fatal. He also persisted in his reluctance to cut himself off completely from either side. Thus in the siege of Qiqihaer, while Ma was breathing defiance against the Japanese, Zhao

Zhongren was simultaneously attempting to explain away what he called a “misunderstanding” between the Japanese and Heilongjiang troops.⁷⁸ On occasion, two elements of his behavior could be mutually contradictory. Thus on 11 November, a telegram was sent to Nanjing and Geneva “stating clearly that there are no Russians in our army,” while simultaneously, according to Kwantung Army intelligence, Ma was telling the inhabitants of Qiqihaer that he could not be defeated because 50–60,000 Russian soldiers were poised to intervene on his behalf.⁷⁹

Ma’s pragmatism was the result of his need to maintain his credentials with the nationalists while dealing with the very difficult situation he faced on the ground. His troops, at least, could be grateful for his caution. Ma was not literally “unafraid to die”; but then one would be wary of a commander who was. Ma concluded his account by declaring that “the others and I have a duty to protect the territory as patriots together.”⁸⁰ This rhetoric is significant, not because it should be taken literally but because it was an attempt by his nationalist advisers to portray Ma as a symbol of national resistance. As long as Nanjing and Zhang Xueliang’s Northeastern Army failed to support him, he had little choice but to act as he did, talking boldly but acting with caution.

It is clear what value the NNSS gained from Ma’s activities. But it should also be asked what it was that motivated Ma to fight. Although military rhetoric and reality often differ, it seems unlikely that Ma *ever* believed that he could win against the Japanese. Ma and his troops had had long experience of Heilongjiang, and the difficulties of the local terrain and weather would have been known to him. Ma had also had two months to assess Japanese troop numbers and superiority of arms, as well as to realize that there was no mass resistance movement to back him up. In addition, the Zhang Xueliang regime had not enjoyed deep-rooted support, and the Japanese had considerable success in co-opting local elites who then ensured that public order was maintained. For a commander with Ma’s experience, it would not have taken long to realize that even if he won a temporary victory (which he did not), it would have been eclipsed by the superior Japanese firepower his advisers had had no difficulty in describing in their telegrams to Nanjing.

Ma’s actions were instead aimed at attracting outside support, and the NNSS’s propaganda was significant in those efforts. The idea that the fighting was symbolic rather than genuinely intended to overcome the Japanese was supported by George Hanson, who noted on 7 November, “I have reason to believe that the Chinese military leaders in North Manchuria had come to the conclusion that by not fighting the

Japanese they lose their influence, so they decided to resist the Japanese in order to bring about interference of the outside powers or possibly Soviet Russia.”⁸¹ Having been given the patronage of the KMT when they appointed him governor of Heilongjiang, Ma depended on their continued support. But that support came nowhere near to being sufficient. Ma had to make it clear that the choice was between supporting him or letting the Japanese have a clear run. By maintaining a continued resistance of a sort, even when he was aware that he could not win, Ma and the nationalists aimed to embarrass Chiang into acting to save him. Similarly, his references to the League of Nations were an attempt to gain international help. Ma could not know at the time that neither entity was going to come to his rescue, although his later defection to the Japanese may well have been influenced by that growing realization.

Nonetheless, the effect of the rhetoric in the telegrams sent to Nanjing, combined with the appearance of resistance, was sufficient, when filtered by the NNSS, to make Ma Zhanshan a popular hero among the people outside the Northeast—at a distance from his activities. Descriptions of his activities were used in the public meetings and journals organized to publicize the Manchurian exiles’ cause, and his name was used to summon up enthusiasm for demonstrations and fund-raising.⁸² The insistence of the NNSS in referring to the volunteer groups as “armies” helped to foster an image of an organized body united against the Japanese.

A note should be made here about the significance of the USSR in Ma’s calculations. As described in chapter 3, the Soviet Union had made it clear early in autumn 1931 that it would not interfere militarily in Manchuria, and it even tolerated the Japanese move into northern Manchuria, traditionally an area of Soviet influence. However, Ma’s camp did make efforts to gain Soviet aid, as evidenced by his claim at Qiqihaer in November 1931 that Russian soldiers would intervene decisively on his behalf. Although Japanese military intelligence was initially worried by this announcement, they soon discovered that Ma’s request for aircraft from the Red Army detachment stationed at Dauriya had been turned down.⁸³ Nonetheless, the Japanese accused the Soviets of providing training and aid to Ma and warned them not to advance on the CER. TASS, the Soviet news agency, denied the story, although they did not refute the allegation that Ma had met a Soviet officer at Blagoveshchensk on 12–13 October 1931.⁸⁴ In practical terms, Ma’s attempts to enlist Soviet aid were a failure. These attempts were also potentially hazardous to his other bids for support. The prospect of Soviet intervention would not have endeared Ma to the League of Nations or

to Chiang Kaishek, hence his telegram “stating categorically that there are no Russians in our army.”⁸⁵ In addition, during his defense of Qiqihaer, Ma kept the local KMT on his side, leading them to send out what Hayashi termed “absurd” announcements that Zhang Xueliang and Chiang Kaishek were about to dispatch thousands of troops to the region.⁸⁶ Therefore, while trying to elicit support from all possible sources, Ma’s camp was forced to maintain differing, and sometimes contradictory, versions of events depending upon who was being addressed.

In the face of Chiang Kaishek’s continued nonresistance policy toward the Japanese, which made support for the volunteers in the Northeast very difficult, Ma’s reputation as a Chinese hero was valuable, as he provided a badly needed symbol on whom the northeastern anti-Japanese nationalists could base their propaganda. Ironically, however, the one person who had not yet fully embraced the nationalism that was generated by this propaganda was Ma himself, and he was not yet prepared to let his attachment to the nation override his other considerations and loyalties.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE

After his unsuccessful defense of Qiqihaer, Ma retreated to Hailun, far enough from the Japanese presence to feel safe. At this point, his influence in the area was still such that local peasants paid taxes to and recognized the authority of his government rather than the Japanese-controlled one in Qiqihaer.⁸⁷ Little was heard from Ma over the next three months until the astounding announcement on 14 February 1932 by Colonel Itagaki Seishirō of the Kwantung Army that Ma had defected to the Japanese and was set to play a part in the new Manchukuo government. China and the world asked what had happened to turn the nationally celebrated resistance hero into a creature of the puppet government he had affected to detest. There are various factors we must take into account in assessing Ma’s defection, among them the lack of active support from his Chinese compatriots, as well as the change in Japanese attitudes toward him.

Throughout this whole period, the influence of local Chinese elite members who knew Ma and were encouraged by the Japanese to persuade him to surrender was crucial to securing his defection. Even on the public order maintenance committee in Qiqihaer there had been a significant pro-Ma Zhanshan faction (in the sense that they supported him as a suitable regional leader capable of unifying the province under the new regime, rather than supporting him because they were in favor of Ma’s

resistance to Japan), and there was considerable pressure on him from old friends and colleagues to join the new government, as preexisting local elite networks continued to operate after the Manchurian Incident.⁸⁸ As well as old alliances, long-standing local rivalries also continued to reveal themselves. Before Ma's defection, Ding Chao, a local militarist who switched several times between opposing and supporting the Japanese, gave the Kwantung Army advice on how to disarm Ma's troops.⁸⁹ In early 1932, when Ma was acting as governor of Heilongjiang under the Japanese, one of his actions was to send troops against resistance fighter Li Haiqing, and another was to root out the Wan family (Wan Fulin had been governor and his son Wan Guobin acting governor of Heilongjiang under Zhang Xueliang and during the first month after the Manchurian Incident) from positions of influence. The Japanese occupation could be used in this way by local elite members as a means of carrying on agendas shaped by preexisting networks and rivalries.

Ma operated from his base area of Hailun from November 1931 to January 1932. Liu Shizhou's report (see chap. 4) declared, "Hailun became the center of resistance to Japan in the Three Eastern Provinces and a place that the whole world looked to . . . Hailun city was revolutionized, the atmosphere of resistance permeated, so why afterward did it melt away? Why did Ma Zhanshan, having returned to the provincial capital, surrender?"⁹⁰ There are several possible answers to this question.

As late as mid-November, when the battle for Qiqihaer was still under way, the Japanese were making Ma's resignation a condition for a cease-fire. While Zhao Zhongren continued to insist to the Japanese and the U.S. consuls that the whole thing was a misunderstanding, Ma continued to hold out, seeing that he had nothing to lose by doing so and taking advantage of opportunities to flee when the Japanese looked as if they were coming too close.⁹¹ But after his retreat to Hailun on 20 November, circumstances changed. The weather became worse, and the Japanese advance stopped temporarily. The Kwantung Army was then persuaded to try a new tactic on Ma. Komai Tokuzō, who had been appointed by the Kwantung Army as head of its new Board of Control, saw, along with Hayashi Yoshihide and others, that it would be a great propaganda coup if the by now world-famous resistance hero could be brought over to work for them.

An article written months later, in the wake of Komai's resignation in August 1932 (he had by then become president of the National Affairs Yuan in the Manchukuo government), suggested that there was no unanimity in the Kwantung Army command about the best way to handle Ma

and his troops; some favored negotiations, others force. However, Komai was eventually given permission to use negotiations to try and bring them over to the Japanese side.⁹² The negotiations took place in several phases. The use of Chinese civilians co-opted by the Japanese as go-betweens was crucial. Even during the Nonni River conflict, Zhao Zhongren had been only one of several members of the local elite in Qiqihaer who had advised Ma to stop fighting; others included Gao Xiang, the local manager of the *Shengjing shibao*, and the local militarist Liu Jiwu.⁹³ After Ma's retreat to Hailun, Hayashi made use of a local factory owner, Han Yunjie, who had, like Yu Chonghan in the 1920s, become an agent of Japanese intelligence, to persuade Ma to negotiate with the Kwantung Army.⁹⁴ The use of well-known local elite members was designed to bring a familiar element to the negotiations and to make Ma more willing to listen.

On 7 December 1931, Colonel Itagaki Seishirō, staff officer to General Honjō, called on Ma at Hailun. Both sides had interpreters and aides present. Itagaki announced that the Japanese desired two things: that peace should be maintained in East Asia, and that there should be "complete cooperation . . . between the Chinese and Japanese authorities in the Northeast." According to the report passed on to U.S. consul George Hanson, Itagaki went on to say that Kwantung Army officers had been impressed by Ma's "brilliant display of bravery" and would give him military command over Heilongjiang as long as he came to an "understanding" with them. Ma stuck to his official position: the moves made by his Heilongjiang troops were "taken only in self-defense," and he was "subject only to the orders of the Nanking Government." Although Ma did not agree to their demands, the Japanese felt that they had detected a note of flexibility in his position. Itagaki suggested that Ma might be appointed military commander of the province under the provincial governor in Qiqihaer, Zhang Jinghui. Ma replied that "as Hailun is not very far from Harbin, he could consult with General Chang Ching-hui over the telephone or pay a call on the latter in person, and that a second trip to Hailun by the Japanese representative would not be necessary."⁹⁵

At this point, noted Hanson, there was "no doubt" that Ma objected to the visit and did not want it repeated. However, Itagaki was well pleased with the meeting, feeling that Ma could not commit himself to the Kwantung Army openly while anti-Japanese elements in his entourage, such as chief of staff Xie Ke and battalion commander Tang Fengjia, were still present, but that he would come over to them sooner rather than later.⁹⁶ Han Yunjie, who acted as interpreter for Itagaki, felt that the offer of military

power in Heilongjiang had Ma's tacit approval.⁹⁷ Furthermore, after this initial meeting, Japanese Consul-General Ohashi told Hanson that the military thought that the results of the interview were "fairly satisfactory." When Ma did defect a few weeks later, the first indications that something was amiss were not visits by the Japanese but calls paid by Ma on Zhang Jinghui. The Japanese had succeeded in their technique of working via co-opted local elite members who made use of their preexisting networks.

COOPERATION WITH THE KWANTUNG ARMY

Ma was still holding out for help from Nanjing. But as winter deepened and there was no sign of assistance, Zhao Zhongren informed Hanson that Ma was growing worried. The retreat of Zhang Xueliang's troops from Jinzhou gave him yet further cause for concern. By 23 December, Zhao Zhongren was telling Hanson that Ma was "still acting under instructions of Nanking," but the consul began to suspect that he might be ready to switch allegiance.⁹⁸

Liu Shizhou attempted in retrospect to assess the reasons for Ma's surrender. The first reason relates to the negotiations mentioned above. Although Ma did not immediately meet the Japanese directly again, local pro-Japanese elite members appear to have been frequent visitors to his headquarters, making statements such as "China below the Wall can certainly no longer look after the Three Eastern Provinces. Japanese military strength is powerful and vigorous . . . We're all old friends. How can we watch you sustain damage like this?"⁹⁹ These arguments were being made by long-standing elite members who had for decades been part of the society within which Ma had also operated, in both the orthodox and heterodox spheres. It was also clear to northeasterners by December 1931 that no intervention was forthcoming from the outside world, and that the Japanese were there to stay, at least for the time being. While repeatedly uttering anti-Japanese sentiments, Nanjing had in fact decided by November that they were not going to use force to try and recover the Northeast and would instead pursue a policy of conciliation with the Japanese.¹⁰⁰ Zhang Xueliang was following Chiang Kaishek's line when he withdrew troops from Jinzhou, thus abandoning the resistance to their fate. The report of the League Commission might bring about some change in the situation, but in the meantime Ma's resistance force would have little effect other than to infuriate the Japanese and bring down their wrath on the inhabitants of the cities and country-

side. It was at this point that Ma must have begun to consider what other options lay open to him.

Morale is a second reason for his switch. There was dissent in Ma's ranks, and some subordinates, claimed Liu, would undermine Ma's encouraging words to his supporters by pointing out that the volunteers had no means of buying weapons and were running out of supplies.¹⁰¹ That said, feelings were also running very high among those who wanted to continue resistance; it should be remembered that nationalist propagandists were present to spread the proresistance message within Ma's camp. Chief of Staff Xie Ke, who was himself opposed to the policy of cooperation with the Japanese, had to prevent an assassination attempt on Han Yunjie by three subordinates. Xie Ke and the would-be assassins later left Ma's camp after his defection to the Japanese.¹⁰² The two factions in Ma's entourage were beginning to split irretrievably.

The Japanese were as aware of Ma's vulnerability as he was and were simultaneously conscious of his symbolic value to them. They took advantage of these facts to make him an offer that Komai thought would appeal to him. In addition to offering him prestige and the potential for exercising authority in a high position in the new regional government, they believed that Ma would be interested in making money (he had, after all, been receiving considerable sums via the NNSS), and Chinese officials in the service of the Japanese had not, it seems, been slow to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. For example, it was alleged that Xie Jieshi, the foreign affairs minister of Manchukuo, had managed to make over 1 million yuan in the first three months of office, under Komai's tolerant gaze.¹⁰³

Yet during the winter of 1931–32, although Ma considered supporting the Japanese, he remained uncommitted for a considerable period, and his ambiguity over his allegiance led to his switching sides three times. The outline of the diplomatic minuet between Ma and the Japanese ran as follows. After the 7 December meeting with Itagaki, Ma indicated that he would prefer to be both military commander and governor of the province, and Zhang Jinghui, the governor-designate, agreed to step down.¹⁰⁴ It appeared that Ma had managed to convince most of his supporters that he should take up office in Qiqihaer, although there were many dissenters, and he was due to arrive in the city on 23 January 1932. However, on that day, there was no sign of Ma. It emerged that on 24 January, representatives of Li Du and Ding Chao's Jilin Anti-Japanese Resistance Army had attended a conference of Ma's officers and persuaded them to launch an attempt to recapture

Qiqihaer and hold Harbin for the resistance.¹⁰⁵ Hayashi thought that “Ma did not have any intention of collaborating with [them] at first, but he was uneducated, had no fixed opinions, and, having heard a great deal of talk, was inclined toward them.”¹⁰⁶

The attacks were launched the following week on 4 February 1932. Han Yunjie, aware that this change of plan would be very detrimental for the future of local elite members who wished to gain influence under the new regime, stated that he traveled out to the front line and informed the commander, Wu Songling, that the campaign was doomed because the Japanese had far more troops stationed in the area than the resistance had realized. Han was sent to see Ma at Hailun, and after an explanation of the situation it was agreed to call the two assaults off. When asked why he had gone back on his agreement with the Japanese, Ma said, “At the time of the military conference, I was given no choice, because Li and Ding had the upper hand.”¹⁰⁷ Han then helped Ma to extricate himself by delivering a letter to Doihara, the senior Kwantung Army officer in Heilongjiang, explaining that the attack had been planned by Ma’s subordinates, but that he himself remained willing to cooperate.

Ma later explained his own actions during this period in this way:

The Japanese spies knew our maneuvers to support Harbin . . . so they used strong forces in a pincer attack on us to destroy our army’s strength. Our situation was that we then had a strong enemy advancing and pressing down on us and, on the other hand, no defensible passes. We had no weaponry, useless ammunition, and isolated counties were being cut off [from our control] . . . Since my youth, I’ve been a military man; I have stood for a long time in the line of battle, and I have given no consideration to the words *life* or *death*.¹⁰⁸

Once again, this last statement couched in heroic language is the cue for an explanation of a reversal. The telegram went on:

Whether death is as weighty as Mount Tai or as light as a goose feather, though, if I urged on my army’s loyalty so as to pit them against strong, brutal, effective, and merciless artillery, it would result in a sacrifice for a merely temporary gain, and they would despair more and more of any chance of recovery. Considering this carefully, I desired to resolve the crisis before us, so that if only some opportunity came up, then we could delay the enemy’s advance and preserve our army’s current strength. We would wait for that opportunity to arrive, then plan our counterattack, spying on the actual Japanese plan for their invasion of our territory.¹⁰⁹

Even during the period of this short and abortive campaign, there was an understandable unhappiness among the civilians at the damage

in lives and property brought upon them by the resistance's actions and the Japanese retaliation. There was also dissatisfaction with the behavior of the Chinese troops themselves. On 4 February, Ding Chao, the supposed defender of Harbin, mysteriously disappeared together with all his staff during the final skirmishes, when he was meant to be supporting the Jilin troops of Feng Zhanhai.¹¹⁰ The image of the resistance projected to the outside world was heroic, and at least some of them, such as Feng Zhanhai and Li Du, put up a strong, if not necessarily popular, resistance to the end. But to many of the people whom they were supposed to be liberating, the resistance fighters were at best misguided in their quixotic attempts to hold back a force they knew to be more powerful than they were, bringing down trouble on the heads of the civilians who had to stay and face the wrath of the Japanese when the volunteers had fled to the hills, and at worst were parasitic nuisances who lived off the civilian population and changed sides when it was convenient. After Ma's troops had evacuated Qiqihaer in November 1931, for instance, there were many instances reported of members of Ma's army entering the city to raid for provisions and having to be repelled by the local police under chief Liu Shengyun.¹¹¹

By 22 January, Charles C. Brown, the language officer at the U.S. legation in Shenyang, was impressed by "the degree of understanding which has apparently been reached by the Japanese and Chinese military in that area."¹¹² Three days later, Hanson in Harbin confirmed this impression when he reported that Ma and Zhang Haipeng were together guarding the railway and that Ding Chao had now pledged allegiance to Xi Xia, the governor of occupied Jilin. "It can be concluded," he said, "that Heilungkiang and Kirin Provinces are now under the control of the Japanese Army, acting through Chinese officials selected or tolerated by it."¹¹³ On 6 February, "the Japanese troops commenced to enter Harbin at 1 P.M., without meeting any resistance." Instead of showing any signs of last-ditch opposition, the "attitude of the Chinese populace might be described as sullen."¹¹⁴

The Japanese had had some success, then, with their tactics of persuasion combined with force as far as Ma was concerned, although the process had come close to derailment. They now moved to capitalize on those tactics. On 16 February, Honjō convened a Northeast Political Affairs Committee Conference at Shenyang, which was attended by the senior Chinese members of the new regime, including Zhang Jinghui, Ma Zhanshan, Zang Shiyi, Xi Xia, and others. The purpose of the conference was to appoint the delegates to positions in the

soon-to-be-announced “Manchukuo.” The Japanese were making the most of Ma’s presence among the Chinese notables who were cooperating with them, with newspaper reports referring to them as “The Big Four” (*Si jutou*).¹¹⁵ As Ma’s new patrons, the Japanese were keen to exploit the symbolism of his presence for all it was worth.

REDEFLECTION: THE PATH TO NATIONALISM

On 10 April 1932 Ma fled Qiqihaer, reappearing at Heihe, from where he sent a long telegram announcing that he had abandoned the Japanese and had once again joined the anti-Japanese resistance.¹¹⁶ What was behind his change of heart? His telegrams tell us very little about his own activities under the Japanese. However, we know that when Ma took up his new position as governor of Heilongjiang and minister of war in the Manchukuo government, some of his associates were unhappy at his change in sides: his chief of staff, Xie Ke, for one, left his entourage. In addition, Ma was subjected to further pressure, as some elements in the Kwantung Army hostile to him demanded to know what use he had made of public funds in his years in the former Heilongjiang government, suspecting that he was “afraid to reveal the seamy truth.”¹¹⁷ Although Hayashi tried to reassure him that no investigation would make any difference to his position, Ma became very anxious.¹¹⁸ It also became clearer that Ma would be given little real power by the Japanese.¹¹⁹ One other important factor became apparent only after Ma’s defection to the Japanese. His benefactors from all over China, outraged by his change in allegiance, were demanding that the “special service bonuses” they had paid him be returned; the drying up of this source of income was impoverishing Ma, and to make things worse he was “instead sent a daily stream of letters accusing him of treason.”¹²⁰

While Ma had been trying to work out which patron could offer him more, the rising tide of anti-Japanese feeling south of the Wall, fueled by his image as an unambiguous nationalist hero, had become a powerful force. Ma’s placing his attachment to the nation on the *same* level as his local and personal commitments simply did not fit into the explanation of his campaign that had been shaped by the nationalists. Their telegrams had told the people of China and the world that he was determined to defend the *nation’s* territory. Furthermore, those telegrams had helped solidify the community that made up that nation. Ma had accepted aid given on those unambiguous terms, and in the eyes of his supporters his decision to defect to Japan could only be interpreted as

treason. From this point, he had to choose sides, and he made his decision to abandon the Japanese.

However, there was nothing inevitable about Ma's move to nationalist commitment. Various other resistance leaders, including Ding Chao and Xu Baozhen, ended up staying with the Japanese, and this option was clearly available to Ma, had he chosen to take it. What was new about his situation, in the political climate created by the propaganda of which he had been a key symbol, was that he could no longer continue to negotiate with both sides. It had been brought home to him that he was now an integral part of a movement to solidify a sense of Chinese nationalism. The tools of a modern, literate state (newspapers, mass communications) were being used to promote his activities as part of a campaign to foster a conception of cultural and political homogeneity that had as its central element the idea that the occupation of the Northeast was the concern of *all* Chinese. The news that Ma Zhanshan, a key figure within that conception, was prepared to negotiate with and surrender to the Japanese could have stopped this idea in its tracks. It indicates how widespread that concept had become in a relatively short time that Ma's defection to the Japanese sparked widespread anger rather than a relapse into indifference about the fate of the Northeast (although it should also be noted that nationalistic fervor was much muted later on, from 1933 to 1935, demonstrating to the activists that they had to keep working on the base of popular sentiment they had established). Ma's illiteracy means that we have to interpret the motivation behind his decisions through the writings of others, which means that it is impossible to tell how heavily a new realization of nationalism weighed as a factor in his own mind in his decision to return to the Chinese side. Yet even Japanese intelligence, hardly sympathetic to Ma, does suggest that it *was* important in his decision, aided, as before, by the influence of nationalist intellectuals in his entourage. It should also be noted that the Japanese felt that Ma's conversion to the nationalist cause happened during his period working for Manchukuo; in other words, his surrender was not just a bluff designed to gain time. While the Japanese might have preferred to believe this anyway, to avoid the conviction that they had been duped from the start, this interpretation is supported by actions such as the resignation of Ma's anti-Japanese chief of staff, Xie Ke, who moved to the camp of Su Bingwen, another volunteer leader.¹²¹ If Xie Ke had believed all along that Ma would soon return to the anti-Japanese struggle, he would have been unlikely to leave him.¹²²

The news of Ma's surrender had caused great anger among the urban

public who had been the target of nationalist propaganda in China south of the Wall. Aside from the letters that the Japanese noted that Ma received, Ma's son Ma Gui, who was in Shanghai at the time of the defection, was said to have written to his father, "If your recent surrender to the Japanese is for real, you are not my father, and I am not your son."¹²³ On the streets, the cigarette cartons that had used Ma's picture as a selling point quickly switched to portraying Cai Tingkai and Jiang Guangnai (the commanders of the Nineteenth Army who had defended Shanghai) instead.¹²⁴ However, the northeastern exiles seem to have taken a more cautious line. Yang Chengqi, secretary to the deputy commander of the Heilongjiang division of the Northeastern Army, who had contacts with both Zhang Xueliang and Wan Fulin, had visited Ma on two occasions before his defection. In March 1932, he was sent back to the Northeast to talk to Ma again and find out the reasons for his surrender. In a memoir, Yang stated that Ma expressed sorrow for his defection to Japan, and Yang credits his own intervention for giving Ma an impetus to redefect.¹²⁵ The truth of that assertion cannot be known; however, the fact of Yang's visit gives some indication that the northeastern exiles were more concerned about salvaging the nationalist icon they had helped to create than condemning his behavior immediately. In retrospect, Yang decided to deal with the question of Ma's motives by stating, "Only Ma Zhan-shan himself can know whether his surrender was real or false."¹²⁶

Hayashi, making a report in the aftermath of Ma's abandonment of his positions in the Manchukuo government, felt that a combination of factors had led to Ma's redefection: the stream of letters accusing him of treason was the most important, but also significant were the drying up of the donations he had received and his feeling that he had not been granted sufficient power by the Manchukuo authorities. Local rivalries also came to the fore again. Zhao Zhongren began to threaten that financial investigations being carried out in spring 1932 by the new central bank in Xinjing would expose Ma's dubious financial dealings, and assurances by Hayashi and his associates did nothing to calm Ma's fears.¹²⁷ With this combination of concerns weighing upon Ma, Hayashi suggested, Han Shuye, the Kyoto University-educated nationalist who remained with Ma even after his defection, was instrumental in influencing Ma to change sides again. Han made a trip to Beiping, and on his return to Heilongjiang stressed to Ma just how low his reputation had fallen. Hayashi alleges that Han told Ma to flee to Heihe and declare his allegiance to the anti-Japanese cause, and to claim that his period under the Japanese had merely been a spying expedition.¹²⁸ It seems likely that a combination of a newly developed na-

tionalist realization (nurtured positively by ideologues such as Han Shuye and negatively by the letters of abuse), together with a calculation of his own self-interest, led Ma to redefect.

AN OUTSIDE ASSESSMENT

For obvious reasons of politics and geography, the number of outsiders, whether Chinese or foreign, who were able to meet resistance fighters on the ground was very limited. But there were some. We have mentioned Liu Shizhou, who spent time with Ma Zhanshan before his defection to the Japanese. Another reporter who tracked Ma down was the American A. T. (Archibald) Steele, who interviewed him for the *New York Times* in late spring 1932. Steele's account (written in the late 1930s) is interesting not only for the information it contains but also for the insight it gives us into the way the crisis was perceived.

Steele was a freelance reporter who decided, together with August Lindt, a Swiss journalist from the *Journal de Genève*, to find Ma Zhanshan's headquarters and interview him to find out whether he was a resistance hero, as claimed by the Chinese, or an unscrupulous bandit, as in the Japanese version. Neither man spoke Chinese, so in Harbin they found "a school-teacherish fellow named Han" who offered to take them to Ma "as a patriotic duty."¹²⁹ Unfortunately, no further details are given about Han; Steele states that his English was barely serviceable, so communications between him and the journalists were quite basic.

Nonetheless, the experiences reported by Steele confirm some of the impressions we gather from other sources about the structure of power in occupied Manchuria. At one point, the journalists' party was being escorted by one "General Wang," who attempted to gain shelter for them at a small town by explaining that he was a follower of Ma Zhanshan. The magistrate "smiling grimly, responded that he too took orders from General Ma but that it was with the deepest regret that he had to decline General Wang's request," explaining that billeting Chinese troops in the town was a sure way to attract Japanese bombardment. General Wang accused the magistrate of being in league with the Japanese, leading to a counteraccusation by the magistrate that Wang's soldiers might be bandits. In the end, the travelers ended up sleeping elsewhere.¹³⁰ In the fluid political situation in Heilongjiang in spring 1932, the magistrate wished to avoid trouble.

Steele and Lindt had to wade through a lot of mud on their journey,

but they did finally meet Ma Zhanshan. Their assessment of him was that he was “one of those interesting phenomena—an old-school warlord who had been caught up in the nationalistic sweep of the new China and is striving to readjust himself to it.”¹³¹ Steele’s observation on why Ma should have been so caught up is perceptive:

We understood better the strange contradictions in the makeup of this man when we had met and talked with the staff surrounding him. They are young and nationalistic . . . Unlike their chief they have little of the old-fashioned military mentality. They disapprove of his opium smoking and don’t entirely agree with his methods, yet they worship him as a symbol of leadership and courage. They talk much of their devotion to the cause of a strong and united China . . . Their thinking is often fuzzy, but it is always passionately nationalistic. General Ma . . . is of the old and conservative order. Yet there is no doubt he is deeply infected with the patriotic enthusiasm of the new Chinese generation which surrounds him.¹³²

Steele’s impression of Ma was heavily shaped by his perception of Ma’s aides. This was particularly so because the interpreter for the conversation between the resistance leader and the journalists was a young man named Hu, who was “characteristic of the men around Ma. He is a graduate of a Y.M.C.A. school and is full of Kuomintang ideology.”¹³³ We have met such young men before, with names such as Che Xiangchen and Yan Baohang: the NNSS was run by them. And so it is no surprise that even when they met Ma face to face, as opposed to reading about him in news stories and telegrams, these journalists came away with the official resistancialist version of events in the Northeast. They were perceptive enough to notice the influence of Ma’s advisers, but did not recognize those advisers as a factor in the actual creation of the version of events they then reported back. However, they did note that it was Ma who appeared to be affected by the views of the young nationalists, and not the other way round.

Conclusion

In the initial phase of the Japanese occupation of the Northeast, the majority of the members of resistance groups were not motivated by nationalism in the sense understood by the intellectuals in exile in Beiping. Nonetheless, they shared a consciousness of Chinese

identity that could be worked upon by outside propagandists. After 18 September 1931, the resistance was offered patronage by nationalist groups of exiled northeastern intellectuals opposed to Chiang Kaishek's nonresistance policy, in particular the NNSS. The resistance armies benefited from the attention of these groups, although the behavior of their troops (raiding, infighting), showed that they still used many of the methods of the bandits who comprised so much of their membership. Ma Zhanshan also profited financially from the attention of these groups but still refused to cut himself off from the Japanese. When he became disappointed by the limited commitment of the nationalists to him, Ma turned his attention instead to the region's alternative patrons, the Japanese. However, the nationalists had used their client to advantage. Their selective reporting of the actions of Ma (and other resistance fighters) had led to a rise in popular anti-Japanese feeling in China south of the Wall, and this meant that there was widespread outrage at the news of Ma's defection, manifested in abusive letters and the withdrawal of funds. Ma was made aware that, perhaps without fully realizing it himself at the time, he had helped the exiled nationalists create a climate outside the Northeast where ambiguous loyalties were no longer permissible.

These factors that affected Ma's decisions were also important to other resistance leaders. Take Su Bingwen, who was a graduate of the Baoding Military Academy and had served as far afield as Fujian: with his higher level of education and exposure to ideas outside the Northeast, we might assume that he was more likely than Ma Zhanshan to show commitment to the elite concept of nationalism. Yet even Su Bingwen compromised with the Japanese to some extent. Between March and August 1932 when the Japanese threatened to cut off supplies to his base at Hailar, Su agreed to allow a Manchukuo border police detachment consisting of Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans to patrol his area. This action in turn angered some of his followers, and they split off from his command.¹³⁴ Although Su later returned to the resistance, his nationalist commitment was also more complex than the propaganda might suggest.

With Ma, as with other resistance fighters, activists such as Han Shuye and Che Xiangchen had a role in introducing the modern nationalist project to the resistance, where it had previously either not existed or been only vaguely understood. However, since they were unable to supply regular military assistance, the activists could not offer the resistance any alternative to the traditional bandit-style means of supplying themselves, meaning that the volunteers remained alienated from the

population at large and that there was little possibility of spreading nationalist ideas beyond the resistance armies. The practical significance of introducing a nationalist viewpoint to resistance leaders, as an element of the anti-Japanese activists' strategy as a whole, was that it emphasized that their decisions had implications well beyond the boundaries of the Northeast. Some resistance leaders, like Ma Zhanshan, chose the nationalist side in that realization and were valuable tools in the propaganda battle against the Japanese. But they had arrived at their allegiance to nationalism via a complex route.

CHAPTER 8

Epilogue

Manchuria in Memory and Myth

How did Chinese ideas of nationalism, resistance, and collaboration change between 1931 and 1933? In some ways, they appeared to change very little. Groups such as the Northeast National Salvation Society, demonstrations by students and merchants, and journals and magazines that advocated resistance against the Japanese occupation of the Northeast appeared and then faded from view, victims of a combination of the official Chinese policy of appeasement toward Japan and a generally sunnier, if short-lived, climate in Sino-Japanese relations.

Under the surface of politics, however, deeper shifts were taking place. In mid-1931, nationalism was a rising and clearly visible force in Chinese politics. However, it was inchoate and sporadic, flaring up in response to some incident but then quickly dying down. Over the previous decades, efforts by intellectuals and activists alike to promote a clear idea of what the Chinese nation stood *for* had failed to take hold: the success of the idea in pushing the modern project forward lay mostly in the negative technique of defining itself *against* various factors: missionaries, foreign firms, imperialism in general.

By mid-1933, there was yet another powerful enemy against whom the Chinese could define themselves, the Japanese occupiers of the northeastern provinces. But this new enemy had brought with it the opportunity for a *positive* trope around which nationalism could define itself: resistance to Japan's invasion. A constructed image of heroism, tied inextricably to nationalism and set against a menacing invader, proved the catalyst for a sustained, solid discourse to emerge that did not

recognize any ground between nationalist commitment and treachery. This discourse failed to convince many of those actually under occupation, who saw shades of gray in the reality of the occupation that the constructed image did not allow, as well as the fallibility and capriciousness of the real-life resistance fighters. Distance from the events portrayed was essential for the effectiveness of the propaganda image shaped by the Manchurian nationalist activists of the Northeast National Salvation Society.

Resistance became a theme that spread more widely after 1933, culminating in the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), which the Chinese termed the War of Resistance to Japan. The efforts of the NNSS and of the other sectors of Chinese society galvanized by the new narrative of resistance did not bring about an instant shift in the public attitude in the early 1930s, and nationalism's effectiveness still ebbed and flowed. Du Zhongyuan's journalism and Ma Zhanshan's public advocacy of resistance became a prominent element in the continuing struggle to propagandize effectively against Japan, and the two were often vocal in their outrage at the seeming willingness of the Chinese politicians and public to ignore the Japanese menace in the mid-1930s, just because there happened to be a lull in the hostilities.¹ Furthermore, for many Chinese who were not in reach of cities and the apparatus of nationalist propaganda that operated from them, the 1930s were associated with economic problems that drove the Japanese invasion into second or a lower place in their minds: economic depression and famine, rather than Japan, often leap out as the big stories in the newspapers from 1933 to 1937.² It was only when war was a reality that many ordinary Chinese could be torn away from their top priority of finding work or food.

Chinese nationalism also struggled to take root in occupied Manchuria, even during the fourteen long years of occupation. The resistance forces were never as strong again after their high summer of 1932, after which many volunteers left for intramural China or the USSR. Although the Communist Party's fastidiousness about associating with bandits was finally broken down in 1933, and they played a key role in the development of an anti-Japanese united force in the Northeast, their efforts, rather like those of the NNSS, were more effective in providing lessons for their campaigns in the rest of China than in the Northeast itself. The nature of Japanese rule changed through the period of occupation. The establishment in Japan of a policy of mass migration to the Northeast for poor farmers led to land seizures from Chinese farmers and to a rise in conflict; and after the outbreak of war in

1937, Manchukuo's role as part of the Japanese "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere" meant that many Chinese were conscripted into labor in the factories and mines, often under horrific conditions. Nonetheless, Communist cadres arriving in the Northeast after the war's conclusion noted the lack of political consciousness among the locals, despite the experience of occupation.³

With these caveats, however, it remains clear that the perception that the Chinese people should and could oppose Japan did grow in the public mind in the period from 1933 to 1937. From the Xi'an Incident of late 1936 and the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, resistance entered official rhetoric, and at last Chiang Kaishek drew on it, having attempted to ban it for the previous six years. Yet by that time Chiang was echoing a theme that had already become widespread in Chinese thinking, in particular among the urban elite. The journalism of Zou Taofen and Du Zhongyuan had kept the flame burning, even resulting in the latter's imprisonment for breaking censorship laws in 1935. Artists also took up the idea. The nationalist anti-Japanese street drama "Lay Down Your Whip," whose protagonists were refugees from the occupied Northeast, reached the height of its popularity only after 1937, even though it dramatized the aftermath of the events of 1931.⁴ In literary fiction, the writing of Xiao Jun romanticized the resistance. His novel *Village in August* deals with a series of stylized characters who represent the faces of the crisis in Manchuria: dispossessed former bandits who fight the Japanese, a collaborating village landlord, and a Japanese soldier intent on rape.⁵ The war, of course, was the single greatest catalyst for the spread of the idea of resistance, although even then resistance was neither universal nor uncomplicated.⁶

There remained, however, a cruel irony in the careers of the Manchurian exiles who had done so much to link resistance and nationalism in the popular perception. It was not until the end of World War II in August 1945 that the Japanese were finally forced to leave the Northeast. However, the Nationalist government had no intention of restoring the northeastern elites of the prewar and wartime periods to their former positions of power. Those who had stayed on under the occupation could be dismissed as collaborators, but even those who had resisted were also under suspicion because they had provided a focus for opposition to Chiang Kaishek in the 1930s. The Communists, in contrast, used northeastern cadres in Manchuria during the 1946–49 civil war, but they found themselves having to train them from scratch on the spot before sending them to work with the peasants, and there was often hostility and mistrust between the local and outside cadres. After the

People's Republic had been established, most of the local cadres disappeared from public life, their usefulness expended.⁷

Yet although the progenitors of the idea of the Manchurian resistance had disappeared from view, their legacy was not destroyed but only hidden beneath the surface of history. Mao's China was marked by a fierce nationalism, but it was generally expressed in the rhetoric of class warfare; for instance, in the War Crimes Memorial set up in the 1950s in Fushun, near Shenyang, the condemnation of the Japanese occupation is intertwined with an attack on the Nationalist troops who fought in the Northeast during the 1946–49 civil war, making a moral equivalence between the former and the latter.⁸ In the 1980s and 1990s, this changed. The discrediting of the command economy and the need to abandon the excesses of the early period of the existence of the People's Republic of China, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, left the officials in charge of history little choice but to seek unifying themes from the pre-1949 period. The construct of Manchurian resistance was one of those brought back into play. The sixtieth anniversary of the crisis in 1991 marked the occasion for a huge number of publications assessing the significance of the crisis, all following the resistancialist line established in 1931; perhaps the most revealing in its title is Kong Lingbo's essay "Lessons of the Experience of the Resistance Battle at the [Nonni River] Bridge," which stresses the contemporary importance of learning from the nationalist example set by Ma Zhanshan in November 1931.⁹ Politics and history are closely connected in all societies, but in few places is the link between them spelled out as openly as in China. The celebration of the resistance, and the partial rehabilitation in the 1980s and 1990s of even so controversial a figure as Chiang Kaishek, suggests that the Chinese have rediscovered their de Gaulles, a few decades late. The question arises as to how far they will investigate their heroes' shortcomings, or indeed whether they will go on to look at their Pétains. Although the issue of collaboration as well as the complications in the myth of resistance in Manchuria have begun to surface in China at the end of the twentieth century, the topic seems likely to remain sensitive for a long time to come. Somewhere beyond the reach of impertinent historians, one can imagine the ghosts of Yan Baohang, Du Zhongyuan, and Ma Zhanshan sharing a quiet smile together at the longevity of their Manchurian myth.

Abbreviations

- AJCA *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*.
- DBWH *Dongbei wenhua* (Northeastern Culture). Periodical, Dairen, 1930.
- DBYK *Dongbei yuekan* (Northeastern Monthly). Periodical, Beiping, 1932–33.
- DFGL *Dongfang gonglun* (Eastern Discussion). Periodical, Beiping, 1932.
- FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Washington, D.C., 1929, 1931–32.
- GSS *Gendaishi shiryō* (Materials on Modern History). Tokyo, 1962–1980.
- JAS *Journal of Asian Studies*.
- JDSJ “Jiu-yi-ba” shibian dang’an shiliao jingbian (Key Historical Materials from the September Eighteenth Incident Archives). Ed. Wang Chonglü and Liu Sheng. Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991.
- JGH Appendices to Wang Ju and Shao Yuchun, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*.
- JGXX *Jiuguo xunkan* (National Salvation Journal). Periodical, Beiping, 1932–33.
- JSS *Jiu-yi-ba shibian shiliao* (Historical Materials on the September Eighteenth Incident). Ed. Li Yunhan. Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1977.
- LS Liaoning Provincial Archives, Shenyang, followed by file or volume number. Unless indicated otherwise, items are from the *Shidi* (History and Geography) collection.
- MAS *Modern Asian Studies*.
- MTMD “Jiu-yi-ba” shibian qianhou de Riben yu Zhongguo dongbei: Mantie mi-dang xuanbian (Japan and the Chinese Northeast around the Time

- of the September Eighteenth Incident: Selections from the Confidential SMR Archives). Ed. Wang Bingzhong and Sun Jingyue. Shenyang Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991.
- MYB* *Manchuria Yearbook; Manchoukuo Yearbook*. Tokyo, 1931–34.
- MZS* *Ma Zhanshan jiangjun* (General Ma Zhanshan). Ed. Liu Banghou et al. Harbin: Heilongjiangsheng Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao, 1986.
- NCH* *North China Herald*. Newspaper, Shanghai, 1934–35.
- NJ* Second Archives of China, Nanjing, followed by file number and date of document within file.
- PRC* People's Republic of China.
- SJSB* *Shengjing shibao* (Shengjing Times). Newspaper, Shenyang, 1930–32.
- T* Academia Historia (Guoshiguan) Archives, Taipei, Taiwan, followed by file number and reference to document.
- WHYR* *Wang Huayi riji* (Wang Huayi's Diary). Appendix to *JGH*.
- YBH* *Yan Baohang jinian wenji* (Collected Essays in Memory of Yan Baohang). Ed. Yan Fujun et al. Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1995.

Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction: Crisis or Catalyst?

1. A. T. Steele, *Shanghai and Manchuria 1932: Recollections of a War Correspondent*, Occasional Paper No. 10 (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1977), tells the story of Steele's journey.

2. For a fascinating insight into the contemporary historiography of Manchukuo in the People's Republic of China (PRC), see Søren Clausen and Stig Thøgersen, *The Making of a Chinese City: History and Historiography in Harbin* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 109–48. There are many Chinese studies of Manchukuo, including Jie Xueshi, *Wei Manzhonguo shi xinbian* (History of the puppet Manchukuo, new edition) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1995); Jiang Niandong et al., *Wei Manzhonguo shi* (History of the puppet Manchukuo) (Changchun: Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1980); Ma Yueshan, “*Jiu-yi-ba*” *shilü* (True record of September Eighteenth) (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991); Wang Chengli et al., eds., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian shisimian shi gangyao* (A summary of the history of the fourteen years of the occupation of the Northeast of China), from the PRC; Liang Jingdui, *Jiu-yi-ba shibian shishu* (History of the September Eighteenth Incident) (Taipei: Shijie shuchu, 1975), from Taiwan.

3. Gavan McCormack, “Manchukuo: Constructing the Past,” *East Asian History* 2 (December 1991): 123. McCormack's article is a sophisticated analysis of the problems of the historiography of Manchukuo in postwar Japan. The most comprehensive Japanese history of Manchukuo is Okabe Makio, *Manshūkoku* (Manchukuo) (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1978); see also the work of Nishimura Shigeō and Kazama Hideto listed in the bibliography.

4. One scholar has asserted that in France a key trigger for the reexamination of France's experience during the World War II was the publication of a book by a foreign (American) writer, Robert Paxton's *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972). See also Henry Rousso,

The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 252–56.

5. There are many studies that give a thorough account of the events of the Manchurian Incident and the political circumstances in Nanjing and Tokyo that led up to and followed it. For a penetrating analysis, see Parks M. Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931–1937* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991), 11–31. The events are discussed from the point of view of the Kwantung Army in Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931–1932* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964); and Mark Peattie, *Isihwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For a detailed discussion of the influence of Manchukuo on Japanese political culture, see Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

6. For a discussion of Chinese foreign policy during this period, see Youli Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1931–1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); for Japanese foreign policy, see Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China, and the League of Nations, 1931–3* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993); for the deliberations of the European Powers and the United States over the Manchurian crisis, see Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League, and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–33* (London: Macmillan, 1972).

7. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914–1990* (London: Longman, 1993), 247–51.

8. David Dutton, *Simon: A Political Biography of Sir John Simon* (London: Aurum Press, 1992), 125.

9. *Ibid.*, 129.

10. Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle*, is a meticulous account of the Lytton Commission's experiences in Manchuria, based on Japanese and British sources. See *Japan's Struggle*, 125, 164, 175–77.

11. Dutton, *Simon*, 138.

12. For details on the resistance movement, see Chong-sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983); Anthony Coogan, "Northeast China and the Origins of the Anti-Japanese United Front," *Modern China* 20, no. 3 (July 1994); Pan Xiting et al., *Dongbei kang-Ri yiyongjun shi* (The history of the northeastern anti-Japanese volunteer armies) (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1985); Tan Yi, "*Jiu-yi-ba*" *kangzhan shi* (The history of the September Eighteenth resistance battles) (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991).

13. James L. Watson, "Rites or Beliefs? The Construction of a Unified Culture in Late Imperial China," in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 80.

14. Robert Tombs, introduction to *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War, 1889–1914*, ed. Robert Tombs (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991), 3.

15. Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 19.

16. Prasenjit Duara, "De-constructing the Chinese nation," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 31.
17. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6, 9.
18. John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1996). Fitzgerald's perceptive argument is expanded in John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
19. Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 291.
20. Arthur Waldron, *From War to Nationalism: China's Turning Point, 1924–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 270.
21. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; reprint, London: Verso, 1991), 62–5; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 139–42.
22. Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 7.
23. Waldron, *From War to Nationalism*, 279.
24. *Ibid.*, 271.
25. Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 58.
26. Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Collins, 1987), 62.
27. *Ibid.*, 69.
28. Michael Ng-Quinn, "National Identity in Premodern China: Formation and Role Enactment," in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 35.
29. Tsung-i Dow, "The Confucian Concept of a Nation and Its Historical Practice," *Asian Profile* 10, no. 4 (August 1982): 350.
30. Rolf Trauzettel, "Sung Patriotism as a First Step toward Chinese Nationalism," in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John W. Haeger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 200–12.
31. *Ibid.*, 202.
32. Daniel Bell, "The 'Hegelian Secret': Civil Society and American Exceptionalism," in *Is America Different?: A New Look at American Exceptionalism*, ed. Byron E. Shafer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 51.
33. Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 207.
34. Mark Elvin, "The Inner World of 1830," in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, ed. Tu Wei-ming (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 35, 44.
35. Myron L. Cohen, "Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity," in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, ed. Tu Wei-ming (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 88, 89–90, 99–100. See also Watson, "Rites or Beliefs?"

36. Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, God of War," *JAS* 47, no. 4 (November 1988), 785–86.
37. Robert Lee, *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch'ing History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 80–81.
38. Cohen, "Being Chinese," 103.
39. Lucian W. Pye, "How China's Nationalism Was Shanghaied," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 87.
40. *Ibid.*, 6, 9.
41. Prasenjit Duara, "Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900–1945," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 4 (October 1997): 1035. See also Prasenjit Duara, "The Regime of Authenticity: Timelessness, Gender, and National History in Modern China," *History and Theory* 37, no. 3 (1998): 287–308.
42. Tang, *Global Space*, 47; Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 41.
43. For a discussion of the significance of gender difference in understanding of nationalism, with particular reference to the Manchurian crisis, see Lydia Liu, "The Female Body and Nationalist Discourse: The Field of Life and Death Revisited," in *Scattered Hegemonies*, ed. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 37–55.
44. Hans van de Ven, introduction to *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, ed. Tony Saich and Hans van de Ven (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), xiii.
45. Ian Nish, "Some Thoughts on Japanese Expansion," in Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: German Historical Institute, 1986), 83–7; Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 133–34.
46. E. Patricia Tsurumi, "Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Michael E. Robinson, "Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
47. Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 211–20.
48. *Ibid.*, 278. Ronald Robinson points out that colonies such as the Belgian Congo and Southern Rhodesia, where collaboration was very low and coercion very high, were exceptional. See his "The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, with or without Empire," in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: German Historical Institute, 1986), 278.
49. Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911–1928: China, Japan, and the Manchurian Idea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 230; Henry W. Kinney, *Modern Manchuria and the South Manchuria Railway Company* (Dairen: Japan Advertiser Press, 1928), 12.
50. Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

51. Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome*, 10.
52. Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 9.
53. Poshek Fu, *Resistance, Passivity, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 138. See also Paul Jankowski, *Communism and Collaboration: Simon Sabiani and Politics in Marseille, 1919–1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), chaps. 6–9. The definitive work on the elite politics of Chinese wartime collaboration with Japan is John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972).
54. Ronald Robinson, “Excentric Idea”; and “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration,” in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972).
55. See, for example, C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 3–4; Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community, Culture, and Colonialism, 1900–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
56. *DBYK* 1, no. 5 (30 September 1932): 12, differentiates between collaboration for personal gain and for economic survival, in a way similar to Fu and Jankowski’s division of “hard” and “soft” collaboration.
57. Fu, *Passivity*, 82.
58. Frederick W. Mote, “Chinese Society under Mongol Rule,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 625. The “Mandate of Heaven,” in Chinese tradition, was the source of legitimacy for the imperial dynasty. A bad ruler was considered to have forfeited the mandate and might legitimately be overthrown.
59. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (London: Hutchinson, 1990), 60.
60. Chong-sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle*, 56.

Chapter 2. Reform and Reaction: Northeast China under Zhang Xueliang, 1928–1931

1. Robert Lee, *Manchurian Frontier*, 102.
2. *Ibid.*, 147–49, 171–73.
3. Roger R. Thompson, *China’s Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform, 1898–1911* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1995), 138–40.
4. The authoritative account of Zhang Zuolin’s career is Gavan McCormack, *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China*.
5. Ernest P. Young, “Politics in the Aftermath of Revolution: The Era of Yuan Shih-kai, 1912–16,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912–1949*, pt. 1, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

6. F. C. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1949), 2–3.
7. *Ibid.*, 4.
8. *Ibid.*, 5–6, 60.
9. *Ibid.*, 9–11. For more details on industry in the Northeast, see the section below on Zhang Xueliang's reforms.
10. Arthur Waldron, *From War to Nationalism*, 61–63.
11. *Fifth Report on Progress in Manchuria to 1936* (Dairen: South Manchuria Railway Company, 1936), 151–52.
12. *Ibid.*, 2–3.
13. *Ibid.*, 103–5.
14. Zhang Xueliang biographical details from Zhou Pingsheng, “Zhang Xueliang,” in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 1–16; and Howard Boorman, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 61–64.
15. Shu Qiao, “Zhang Zuoxiang,” in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 33–39.
16. Ai Yafei, “Wan Fulin,” in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 46–51.
17. Wu Yuwen, Wang Weiyuan, Yang Yuyi, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue* (A brief biography of General Zhang Xueliang) (Shenyang: Liaoning Daxue Chubanshe, 1988), 232–35.
18. *Ibid.*, 237–41.
19. Akira Iriye, “Chang Hsüeh-liang and the Japanese,” *JAS* 20, no. 1 (November 1960): 35–36.
20. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 237–43.
21. *Ibid.*, 244.
22. *Ibid.*, 236–37. Wu claims that, in a nice piece of irony, Gao told Yang and Chang they had to be removed as a threat to national unification before he had them gunned down.
23. *FRUS* 1929, vol. 2 (14 January 1929), 124.
24. *Ibid.* (22 January 1929), 133.
25. LS 441: *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan* (Great Manchukuo: First volume), 796.
26. McCormack, *Chang*, 184.
27. Chong-sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 54.
28. *Ibid.*, 52.
29. McCormack, *Chang*, 169–71.
30. C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 54.
31. *Ibid.*
32. McCormack, *Chang*, 88.
33. Wang Lianjie, *Yan Baohang nianpu* (The chronicle of Yan Baohang), *YBH*, 429–30.
34. Albert Feuerwerker, “The Foreign Presence in China,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912–1949*, pt. 1, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 167, 169, 171.

35. Ibid., 172. Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges 1850–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 220.
36. Wu Yuwen and Su Yan, “Wang Zhuoran de kang-Ri jiuguo huodong” (The anti-Japanese national salvation activities of Wang Zhuoran), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 288.
37. Wang Lianjie, *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 430.
38. Ibid., 431.
39. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges*, 222.
40. Wang Lianjie, *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 432.
41. Ibid.; Edinburgh University Archives, 1925 *Yearbook*; Wang Lianjie, “Yan Baohang zhuan” (Biography of Zhang Xueliang), in Wang Lianjie, ed., *Dongbei jiuwang qi jie* (Seven northeastern national salvation heroes) (Shenyang: Baishan Chubanshe, 1992), 137.
42. Wu and Su, “Wang Zhuoran,” 289; Wang Lianjie, *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 433.
43. Wang Lianjie, *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 434.
44. Ibid.
45. Zhao Jie, “Lu Guangji,” in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 300.
46. Ibid., 297–99.
47. Li Rong, “Chen Xianzhou,” in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 288–91.
48. Ma Yuliang et al., eds., *Dongbei renwu da cidian* (Dictionary of northeastern personalities) (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 743.
49. “Du Zhongyuan zhuan” (Biography of Du Zhongyuan), in *Dongbei jiuwang qi jie* (Seven northeastern national salvation heroes), ed. Wang Lianjie (Shenyang: Baishan Chubanshe, 1992), 1–12.
50. See the section “Education Reforms” below: while the numbers in schools improved under Zhang Xueliang, they were still very low as an absolute percentage of the total number of school-aged children.
51. “Che Xiangchen zhuan” (Biography of Che Xiangchen), in *Dongbei jiuwang qi jie* (Seven northeastern national salvation heroes), ed. Wang Lianjie (Shenyang: Baishan Chubanshe, 1992), 180–84.
52. Wu and Su, “Wang Zhuoran,” 288–90.
53. McCormack, *Chang*, 91.
54. Ibid., 189.
55. Ronald Suleski, “The Rise and Fall of the Fengtien Dollar,” *MAS* 13, no. 4 (May 1979): 659–60.
56. Ibid., 660.
57. McCormack, *Chang*, 80.
58. Ibid., 196. McCormack takes his figures on taxation from contemporary SMR reports.
59. Waldron, *From War to Nationalism*, 276.
60. Suleski, “Rise,” 659.

61. *Guowen zhoubao* 5, no. 24 (21 June 1928), cited in Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 287.
62. *MTB* 1932–33, 80–81.
63. *Ibid.*, 83.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan*, 797.
66. *Ibid.*, 798.
67. McCormack, *Chang*, 21.
68. *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan*, 797.
69. McCormack, *Chang*, 36, 84, 118, 288.
70. *Ibid.*, 227.
71. Zhang Xueliang, “Dongbei gesheng zuijin de qingkuang” (The recent situation in the provinces of the Northeast), *JSS*, 119.
72. *Ibid.*, 120.
73. McCormack, *Chang*, 33–34.
74. R. G. Tiedemann, “The Persistence of Banditry: Incidents in Border Districts of the North China Plain,” *Modern China* 8, no. 4 (October 1982): 396.
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76. *Ibid.*, 111.
77. *Ibid.*, 170–71.
78. Tiedemann, “Persistence,” 402.
79. Phil Billingsley, “Bandits, Bosses, and Bare Sticks: Beneath the Surface of Local Control in Early Republican China,” *Modern China* 7, no. 3 (July 1981): 247.
80. Diana Lary, *Warlord Soldiers: Common Chinese Soldiers, 1911–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1.
81. Tiedemann, “Persistence,” 417. See also Lary, *Warlord Soldiers*, chap. 5.
82. Tiedemann, “Persistence,” 419.
83. Zhang Xueliang, “Dongbei gesheng zuijin de qingkuang,” 121.
84. Cai Shaoqing, ed., *Minguo shiqi de tufei* (Bandits during the Republican period) (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue Chubanshe, 1993), 90.
85. Phil Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 216, 219–20, 222.
86. Ramon Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria: The South Manchuria Railway Company, 1906–1933,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 106.
87. *Ibid.*
88. See Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
89. Y. Tak Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria, 1931–1934,” in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, ed. Peter Duus, Mark Peattie, and Ramon Myers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 104.
90. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 109.
91. *Ibid.*, 115–16.
92. *North-China Herald*, 4 March 1922, in *ibid.*, 116. Mukden was the old Manchu name for Shenyang and was still widely used before 1949.

93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., 127–28.
95. Sophia Lee, “The Boxer Indemnity,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 296.
96. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 128.
97. McCormack, *Chang*, 239.
98. Henry W. Kinney, *Modern Manchuria and the South Manchuria Railway Company* (Dairen: Japan Advertiser Press, 1928), 12.
99. C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 56.
100. Both Ramon Myers, *The Japanese Economic Development of Manchuria, 1932–1945* (New York: Garland Press, 1982), and C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, note that detailed figures on the makeup of the Manchurian labor force are not readily available. However, Lee cites GSS 31–33 (*Mantetsu*), 595–737, as providing some “fragmentary” figures; e.g., in 1925 Dairen docks employed 12,783 Chinese and the Anshan Iron Works, in which Yu Chonghan held shares, employed 6,188.
101. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 124.
102. Mikiso Hane, *Peasants, Rebels, and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), 187–88.
103. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 126.
104. Kinney, *Modern Manchuria*, 42.
105. Ramon H. Myers and Thomas R. Ulie, “Foreign Influence and Agricultural Development in Northeast China: A Case Study of the Liaotung Peninsula, 1906–42,” *JAS* 31, no. 2 (February 1972): 329–50.
106. McCormack, *Chang*, 284.
107. *SJSB*, 3 September 1930.
108. *SJSB*, 16 October 1930.
109. *SJSB*, 28 June 1931.
110. *SJSB*, 26 April 1932.
111. *DBWH*, 15 September 1930. Although the circulation of the journal is unclear, its contents and advertising suggests that it was aimed at elite urban readers with money to spare.
112. Louise Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 245.
113. Alvin D. Coox, “The Kwantung Army Dimension,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 422.
114. Mark Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji*, 89–91; Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria,” 104.
115. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji*, 89–91.
116. Ibid., 98; Sadako N. Ogata *Defiance in Manchuria*, 44.
117. Tao Shing Chang, *International Controversies over the Chinese Eastern Railway* (Taipei: n.p., 1971), 77–78.
118. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 249.
119. McCormack, *Chang*, 220–22.
120. C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria*, 95–97.
121. T. S. Chang, *International Controversies*, 144–46.

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123. *FRUS* 1929, vol. 2 (9 January 1929), 188.
124. Ibid. (27 March 1929), 190.
125. Ibid. (25 August 1929), 301.
126. Ibid. (9 September 1929), 316; (20 November 1929), 344; (21 November 1929), 344–45.
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128. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 252–59; Chang, *Controversies*, 158.
129. Jonathan Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930–33: The Impact of the Depression* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 20, 80–81.
130. Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle*, 5.
131. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 221–22.
132. Ibid., 222–25.
133. Iriye, “Chang Hsüeh-liang,” 37–41.
134. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 227.
135. Ibid., 226–28.
136. *FRUS* 1929, vol. 2 (2 July 1929), 137; (31 December 1928), 186.
137. Iriye, “Chang Hsüeh-liang,” 43.
138. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 268–69.
139. Ibid., 276, 285–86.
140. “Zhang Xueliang jian pianyi jieguo zhi tuice” (The result of Zhang Xueliang seeking his own advantage), *DBWH* (1 November 1930): 7.
141. “Ci ci neizhan yaoren zhi xinli jiepo” (Analysis of the psychology of the key figures in this civil war), *DBWH* (1 September 1930), 5.
142. “Zhang Xueliang jian pianyi,” 7.
143. Ibid.
144. *FRUS* 1930, vol. 2 (12 October 1930), 39.
145. Ibid., 42.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid., 43.
148. Ibid. (18 December 1930), 60.
149. *Guowen zhoubao* (21 June 1928), cited in Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 287.
150. Zhang Xueliang, “Dongbei gesheng zuijin de qingkuang,” 117–24.
151. LS *Zhengzhi* 434: Sonoda Kazuki, *Tōhoku shisei seikyū no senjō* (*Shengjing shibaoshe*) (The current political situation in the northeastern provinces: *Shengjing shibao* company), 14, 15–16, 24–25.
152. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 293.
153. Ibid., 296.
154. LS 442: *Dai Manshūkoku gekan* (Great Manchukuo: Second volume), 475.
155. *MTB* 1931, 231.
156. Ibid., 256. The banks were the Three Eastern Provinces Bank, the Bank of China, the Bank of Communications, and the Gongji Pingshi Qianhao. The latter merged with the Provincial Bank in 1929.
157. Ibid., 257.
158. Ibid.
159. Nishimura Shigeō, “Chō Gakurō seikenka no heisei kaikaku” (Currency

reform under the political authority of Zhang Xueliang), *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 50, no. 4 (March 1992): 36–37.

160. *MTB* 1931, 55.

161. *Ibid.*, 258. The banks were the Provincial Bank of the Three Eastern Provinces, the Territorial Bank, the Bank of China, the Bank of Communications, and the Heilongjiang Provincial Bank.

162. *Ibid.*

163. *Ibid.*, 259–60.

164. *Ibid.*, 260–61.

165. *Chō Gakurō jidai no seiseifu soshiki* (Political organization during the Zhang Xueliang period), in *Dai Manshūkoku gekan* (Great Manchukuo: Second volume), 233.

166. *Ibid.*, 235–38.

167. Philip A. Kuhn, “The Development of Local Government,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 13, *Republican China, 1912–1949*, pt. 2, ed. John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 344–45, 347–48.

168. Philip A. Kuhn, “Local Self-Government under the Republic,” in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 286.

169. R. Lee, *Manchurian Frontier*, 111.

170. Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 111–12; Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 66–70.

171. *JDSJ*, 349–59.

172. *MTB* 1932–33, 80.

173. *MTB* 1931, 47–48. A brigade consisted of three regiments, a regiment of three battalions, and a battalion of four companies.

174. Zhang, “Dongbei gesheng zuijin de qingkuang,” 120.

175. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 288.

176. *Ibid.*, 290.

177. Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 23.

178. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 289.

179. *Ibid.*, 289–92.

180. *Ibid.*, 296.

181. *Ibid.*, 298.

182. Kungtu C. Sun, assisted by Ralph W. Huenemann, *The Economic Development of Manchuria in the First Half of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 26–28.

183. Myers, *Japanese Economic Development*, 76.

184. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 304.

185. Sun, *Economic Development*, 61–74.

186. Myers, “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria,” 127.

187. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 298–300.

188. Cited in Ikuhiko Hata, “Continental Expansion, 1905–1941,” tr. Alvin D. Coox, in *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 6, *The Twentieth Century*, ed., Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 291–92.

189. Akira Iriye, “Japanese Aggression and China’s International Position, 1931–1949,” in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 13, *Republican China, 1912–1949*, pt. 2, ed. John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 497.
190. Ibid.
191. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 306, 308–11.
192. Nijijima Atsuyoshi, *Manshū kyōiku shi oboegaki* (Memorandum on the history of education in Manchuria), cited in McCormack, *Chang*, 97.
193. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 312.
194. Wu and Yan, *Wang Zhuoran*, 290.
195. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 313.
196. *Dai Manshūkoku gekan*, 474.
197. Zhang, “Dongbei gesheng zuijin de qingkuang,” 117–24.
198. *Dai Manshūkoku gekan*, 474.
199. *Dai Manshūkoku gekan*, 474, gives a figure of 10,404. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 313, says 9,393.
200. *Dai Manshūkoku gekan*, 475.
201. Ibid., 476.
202. Ibid. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 4.
203. *Dai Manshūkoku gekan*, 476–79.
204. Ibid., 481.
205. Ibid., 482.
206. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 43.
207. For more detail on the cultural history of early Republican citizenship, see Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Chapter 3. Staying On: Co-optation of the Northeastern Provincial Elites, 1931–1932

1. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 4.
2. Coox, “The Kwantung Army Dimension,” 422–23.
3. Wu, Wang, and Yang, *Zhang Xueliang jiangjun zhuanlue*, 326.
4. Ibid., 326–27.
5. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 11–12, 17–18.
6. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (30 December 1931), 710.
7. Ibid.
8. Ogata, *Defiance*, 125.
9. The following summary is based on Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria,” 97–135. See also Peattie, *Ishihara Kanji*.
10. Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria,” 103.
11. Ibid., 104.
12. Akira Iriye, introduction to “The Extension of Hostilities, 1931–1932,” by Shimada Toshihiko, in *Japan Erupts*, ed. James W. Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 238.
13. LS: 441: *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan*, 802–9. For more on Komai Tokuzō, see

also Ito Takeo, *Life along the South Manchurian Railway*, tr. and with an introduction by Joshua A. Fogel (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1988), 143.

14. LS: 441: *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan*, 806.
15. Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria,” 106.
16. *Ibid.*, 105.
17. “Outline for Economic Construction in Manchukuo” (Kwantung Army, 1 March 1932), cited in Nakagane Katsuji, “The Economic Development of Manchukuo,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 141.
18. Myers, *Japanese Economic Development*, 34.
19. Ito Takeo, *Life along the South Manchurian Railway*, 122–23, 141–47. See Ito’s autobiography for an account of liberal SMR employees’ friction with Kwantung Army officials.
20. Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 275–84.
21. T-172–1:1068, Lewis report to Nanjing.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *SJSB*, 20 September 1931.
24. *SJSB*, 29 September 1931.
25. Wang et al., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 80.
26. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 92. For details of the Zhang-Yang clash, see chap. 2.
27. *SJSB*, 24 September 1931.
28. *SJSB*, 25 September 1931.
29. Cui Liaoyuan, “Changchun de lunxian ji qi chengwei Riben zhimin tongzhi zhongxin” (The occupation of Changchun and its establishment as the control center for Japan’s colony), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 25.
30. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Rijun gongzhan Changchun ji qi zhongzhong baoxingshi zhi Zhang Jinghui” (Wang Ruihua reports to Zhang Jinghui on the attack on Changchun and various violent events), *JDSJ*, 24 September 1931, 378.
31. *SJSB*, 25 September 1931.
32. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Rijun gongzhan Changchun,” 378.
33. Wang et al., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 82.
34. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 95.
35. *Ibid.*, 98.
36. Ma Yuliang et al., eds. *Dongbei renwu da cidian*, 663.
37. R. Lee, *Manchurian Frontier*, 181.
38. Wang Hongbin et al., *Puyi he wei Manzhongguo* (Puyi and the puppet Manchukuo) (Henan: Henan Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), 59, 71; John Stephan, *The Russian Fascists: Tragedy and Farce in Exile, 1925–1945* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), 63.
39. Coox, “Kwantung Army Dimension,” 412.
40. McCormack, *Chang*, 200.
41. Ogata, *Defiance*, 120.
42. “Zhang Jinghui wei zuzhi Dongtequ zhi’an weichihui shi gei Zhang

Xueliang diangao” (Zhang Jinghui cables Zhang Xueliang that he has organized a public order maintenance committee), *JDSJ*, n.d. September 1931, 483; Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 90.

43. *Dai Manshūkoku jōkan*, 807.

44. Ogata, *Defiance*, 118.

45. Kuhn, “Development of Local Government,” 331.

46. *Ibid.*

47. R. Lee, *Manchurian Frontier*, 105, 131; Cai Shaoqing, *Minguo shiqi de tufei*, 88–89.

48. Kuhn, “Development of Local Government,” 331.

49. Ogata, *Defiance*, 43–44.

50. *Ibid.*, 46.

51. Shimada Toshihiko, “The Extension of Hostilities, 1931–1932,” in *Japan Erupts*, ed. James W. Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 329; Ogata, *Defiance*, 123.

52. Ogata, *Defiance*, 123.

53. *SJSB*, 26 September 1931.

54. Wang et al., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 81.

55. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 91–93.

56. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken” (Yu Chonghan’s emergence from retirement and his political views), *GSS* 7, 564.

57. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 93; Ogata, *Defiance*, 90.

58. *SJSB*, 26 September 1931.

59. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken,” 564.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*, 565–70.

62. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 95.

63. *SJSB*, 14 October 1931.

64. *JDSJ*: series of telegrams dated September to December 1931.

65. *SJSB*, 21 September 1931.

66. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 32.

67. See chap. 7 for more details on the resistance.

68. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (5 December 1931), 621.

69. *Ibid.* (7 December 1931), 629.

70. *Ibid.* (8 December 1931), 636. Chap. 5 gives more details on how T. V. Soong used his contacts with the NNSS to express discontent at the nonresistance policy.

71. *Ibid.* (10 December 1931), 669.

72. *Ibid.* (11 December 1931), 677.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Ibid.* (21 December 1931), 698.

75. *Ibid.* (22 December 1931), 699.

76. *Ibid.* (1 January 1932), 713.

77. *FRUS* 1932, vol. 4 (3 January 1932), 3.

78. Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, 72–73.

79. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhongguo shi*, 98–99.

80. “Dongtequ xingzheng zhangguan gongshu wei baogao haowu hou Ha-

Chang tongche ji chuan Ri-jun kaifu Jilin shi fu Zhang Xueliang diangao”(The Special Zone commander’s office reports to Zhang Xueliang on the Harbin-Changchun railway service and the Japanese army’s advance into Jilin), *JDSJ*, 21 September 1931, 373.

81. “Zhang Jinghui wei baogao Jiyuan shixian ge jiguan zai Rijun lanshi xia bangong he difang zhi’an reng you jingcha weichi deng zhi Zhang Xueliang diangao” (Zhang Jinghui cables Zhang Xueliang that Jiyuan has been occupied, all the agencies are operating under Japanese supervision, and local public order is still being maintained by the police), *JDSJ*, 25 September 1931, 383.

82. *Ibid.*

83. “Dongtequ zhangguan gongshu wei Ha-bu wei guoji shichang shang-min deng ge anshengye shi de xunling gao” (The Special Zone commander’s office’s order that because Harbin is an international market city, the merchants should trade calmly), *JDSJ*, 20 September 1931, 473.

84. *Ibid.*

85. “Zhang Xueliang wei Rijun ru xiang Ha-bu tuijin ying bimian chongtu shi zhi Dongtequ zhangguan gongshu deng dian” (Zhang Xueliang cables the commander of the Special Zone that if the Japanese army comes to Harbin, he should avoid a conflict), *JDSJ*, 22 September 1931, 475.

86. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Riben jing Eren shougei Zhongguo gongren qiangdan yi zhizao zai-Ha chubing zhi jiekou shi zhi Zhang Jinghui dai dian” (Wang Ruihua reports to Zhang Jinghui that Japan is supplying Chinese workers with guns and creating a pretext to mobilize troops in Harbin), *JDSJ*, 22 September 1931, 476.

87. “Zhang Xueliang wei ju Ri-shiguan chengpai bai ming jingcha fu-Ha ‘baoqiao’ bing bu pai bing deng zhi Dongtequ zhangguan gongshu deng dian” (Zhang Xueliang cables the Special Zone commander’s office that the Japanese ambassador says he will send a hundred policemen to Harbin “to protect expatriates” and that the commander should not send out troops), *JDSJ*, 25 September 1931, 479.

88. “Zhang Xueliang wei Rijun yi zhongzhi gong-Ha ji qishi yu Efang lian-luo shi zhi Dongtequ zhangguan gongshu deng dian” (Zhang Xueliang cables the Special Zone commander’s office that the Japanese army has already ceased its attack on Harbin and is actually in contact with the Russians), *JDSJ*, 23 September 1931, 476.

89. “Wang Ruihua wei chaosong weichi zhi’an bugao shi gei Zhang Jinghui cheng” (Wang Ruihua copies the announcement on the maintenance of public order to Zhang Jinghui), *JDSJ*, 28 September 1931, 480.

90. *Ibid.*, 481.

91. Ogata, *Defiance*, 78.

92. “Zhang Jinghui wei zuzhi Dongtequ,” *JDSJ*, 483; Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhouguo shi*, 99.

93. Zhang Yuzhi, “‘Jiu-yi-ba’ shibian shiqi de Zhang Jinghui” (Zhang Jinghui at the time of the September Eighteenth Incident), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 338.

94. Ogata, *Defiance*, 90.

95. “Dongtequ jingcha guanlichu guanyu ‘jiu-yi-ba’ shibian hou zhi’an wei pohuai de shuoming” (The Special Zone police administration’s office’s explanation of the breakdown in public order following the September Eighteenth Incident), *JDSJ*, 22 October 1931, 487.

96. *SJSB*, 13 October 1931; “Dongtequ jingcha guanlichu,” 487. The *dayang* (large foreign) was the local paper currency.

97. “Dongtequ jingcha guanlichu,” 488; “Wang Ruihua wei Rifang xunmi Jichang renwu chongdang jiaoshe zhongren shi zhi Zhang Jinghui dian” (Wang Ruihua cables Zhang Jinghui that the Japanese are looking for notables from Jilin and Changchun to act as negotiators), *JDSJ*, 4 November 1931, 489.

98. Zhang Yuzhi, “‘Jiu-yi-ba’ shibian shiqi de Zhang Jinghui,” 337.

99. McCormack, *Changf*, 253.

100. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Sulian zai Dawuli jijie bingli shi zhi Zhang Jinghui deng dai dian” (Wang Ruihua reports to Zhang Jinghui that the USSR is gathering military forces at Dauriya), *JDSJ*, 24 September 1931, 578.

101. Zhong Yu wei baogao xu lingshi Xiang Sulian jieshao Riben chubing Dongbei zhenxiang shi zhi Zhang Jinghui dai dian” (Zhong Yu reports to Zhang Jinghui on allowing the consuls to explain the truth about the Japanese attack on the Northeast to the Soviets), 29 September 1931, 581.

102. Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, 74.

103. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Zhongdonglu lishihui shi yu Sulian zhongyao ren yuan tanhua neirong shi zhi Zhang Jinghui dai dian” (Wang Ruihua cables Zhang Jinghui the contents of the talks between the CER directorate and key Soviet officials), *JDSJ*, 23 September 1931, 576.

104. “Wang Ruihua wei baogao Sulian zhengfu xunling zhu Dongsheng ge lingshi dui Zhongguo dangju wu xu biao shi haogan shi zhi Zhang Jinghui daidian” (Wang Ruihua reports to Zhang Jinghui that the Soviet government has ordered all its consuls in the Northeast to show goodwill toward the Chinese authorities), *JDSJ*, 5 December 1931, 601.

105. Anthony Coogan, “Northeast China and the Origins of the Anti-Japanese United Front,” *Modern China* 20, no. 3 (July 1994): 284.

106. NJ 2–854 (4:36 P.M., 21 April 1932), (5:45 P.M., 21 April 1932), (6 P.M., 21 April 1932), (12:30 P.M., 22 April 1932), (7:45 A.M., 24 April 1932).

107. NJ 2–854 (6 May 1932), (12 May 1932).

108. NJ 2–860 (1 April 1933), (22 May 1933).

109. Ogata, *Defiance*, 125.

110. Alter, *Nationalism*, 19.

111. Matsusaka, “Managing Occupied Manchuria,” 105.

112. *Ibid.*

113. For more on Japanese motivations for the formation of the Concordia Society, see L. Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 287–90.

114. *Ibid.*, 284–85.

115. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken,” 565–67.

116. “Mantie yu Yu Chonghan guanxi zhi jian” (The relations between the SMR and Yu Chonghan), *MTMD*, 6–11.

117. Sun and Huenemann, *Economic Development of Manchuria*, 70.
118. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken,” 570.
119. “Guanyu Yu Chonghan shi zhuyuan jian” (Yu Chonghan’s stay in the hospital), *MTMD*, 19.
120. “Shenqing shenyi dui Yu Chonghan dianyi ji qita zhifufei yongjian” (A request for special consideration for the funeral gift and other expenses of Yu Chonghan), *MTMD*, 19.
121. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
122. Dui qian Si-Tao tieluju duban Ma Longtan shi zhichu yuanzhujin zhi jian” (The payment of financial aid to the former Sipingkai-Taonan railway supervisor Ma Longtan), *MTMD*, 27.
123. *SJSB*, 21 October 1931.
124. Ma Yuliang et al., eds., *Dongbei renwu da cidian*, 912.
125. Wang Hongbin, *Puyi he wei Manzhouguo*, 68.
126. “Hayashi Kyujiro zonglingshi wei zhifu Xie Jieshi jintie shi zhi Matsuoka Mantie fushezhang han” (Consul-General Hayashi Kyujirō to SMR Deputy President Matsuoka on payment of an allowance to Xie Jieshi), *MTMD*, 33.
127. Further information about Zheng Xiaoxu may be found in Zhao Lingshi, “Zheng Xiaoxu de ‘Wangdao sixiang’ fenxi” (An analysis of the “Kingly Way” thought of Zheng Xiaoxu), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al., vol. 1 (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 271–75.
128. Zhao Lingshi, “Zheng Xiaoxu,” 327.
129. *Ibid.*
130. For more details on the meaning of *gongguan*, see Youli Sun, *China and the Origins*, 5.
131. From *Zheng zongli dachen Wangdao jiangyanji* (Prime Minister Zheng’s collected speeches on Wangdao), cited in Zhao Lingshi, “Zheng Xiaoxu,” 329.
132. Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and Sinology: The Case of Naitō Konan [1866–1934]* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1984), 255. Fogel’s study provides an invaluable account of Japanese intellectual responses to political developments in China during the late Qing and early Republic.
133. Jin-ichi Yano, “Wangtao—the Kingly Way,” *MYB* 1934, 106–7.
134. *Fourth Report on Progress in Manchuria to 1934* (Dairen: South Manchuria Railway Company, 1934), 227–28.
135. *Manzhou guoyu keben* (Manchukuo Chinese language textbook), vol. 8, lesson 1, cited in Wang et al., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 234.
136. *Guoshi jiaoke shu* (National history textbook), cited in Wang et al., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 234.
137. LS: 343: 4–3; *Manshūkoku chihō jijō* (*Hōten*) (Manchukuo local information: Fengtian), 82, 345.
138. Prasenjit Duara, “Empire in the Age of Nationalism,” in *The Japanese Empire in East Asia and Its Postwar Legacy*, ed. Harald Fuess (Tokyo: Deutsche Institut für Japanstudien, 1998), 23.

Chapter 4. Shrapnel and Social Spending: Local Elite Collaboration in Manchukuo, 1931–1933

1. Coox, *Kwantung Army Dimension*, 422–23.
2. Ogata, *Defiance*, 44.
3. *MTB* 1934, 118.
4. “Liaoyang xian zhengfu wei baogao shibian hou weichi zhi’an qingxing zhi weichihui han” (Liaoyang county administration reports on the committee for the maintenance of public order), *JDSJ*, 5 October 1931, 268.
5. *Ibid.*
6. “Haicheng xian zhengfu wei baogao shibian jingguo ji ‘jiaofei’ qingxing zhi weichihui han” (Haicheng county administration public order committee reports on the Incident and the bandit-extermination situation), *JDSJ*, 10 October 1931, 275.
7. *Ibid.*
8. “Shu Tieling xianzhang Yu Rongqing wei baogao weichi xian zhi’an qingxing zhi Yuan Jinkai han” (Tieling county magistrate Yu Rongqing reports to Yuan Jinkai on the maintenance of public order in the county), *JDSJ*, 2 November 1931, 289–90.
9. LS: 343: 4–3: *Manshūkoku chihō jijō (Hōten)* (Manchukuo local information: Fengtian), 323–26.
10. “Liaozhong xian zhengfu wei baogao shibian hou weichi zhi’an qingxing zhi weichihui daidian” (Liaozhong county administration public order committee reports on the maintenance of public order after the Incident), *JDSJ*, 9 October 1931, 271.
11. *Ibid.*
12. “Shenyang xian zhengfu wei bao weichi sixiang zhi’an qingxing gei weichihui cheng” (Shenyang county administration reports to the committee on the maintenance of the local public order situation), *JDSJ*, 10 October 1931, 273.
13. “Liaoyang xian zhang Xu Weixin wei baogao shibian hou weichi difang qingxing gei Zang Shiyi cheng” (Liaoyang county magistrate Xu Weixin reports to Zang Shiyi on the maintenance of public order after the Incident), *JDSJ*, 19 January 1932, 349–53.
14. Billingsley, “Bandits, Bosses, and Bare Sticks,” 250–54.
15. *Ibid.*, 254.
16. “Changtu xian zizhi zhixing weiyuanhui weiyuanzhang Zu Fuguang wei baogao shibian hou weichi difang qingxing gei Zhang Shiyi cheng” (Changtu county self-government committee chief Zu Fuguang reports to Zang Shiyi on the maintenance of the local situation), *JDSJ*, 3 February 1932, 355–59.
17. “Suizhong xianzhang wei baogao shibian hou ‘Weichi zhi’an’ ji Ri-jun rucheng soujiao qiangxie deng qingxing fu Zang Shiyi dai dian” (The Suizhong county magistrate reports to Zang Shiyi on the maintenance of public order after the Incident and the Japanese army’s entry into the county town to search out and confiscate weapons), *JDSJ*, 20 January 1932, 353–55.
18. *SJSB*, 7 January 1932, 22 January 1932, 12 February 1932, 14 February 1932, 16 February 1932, 19 February 1932, 3 March 1932.
19. *SJSB*, 24 March 1932.

20. Ibid.
21. *SJSB*, 1 October 1931.
22. Ogata, *Defiance*, 125.
23. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken,” 563.
24. Ibid.
25. “Liaoyang,” 349; “Changtu,” 355.
26. Wang Chengli et al., eds., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 84.
27. Jiang et al., *Wei Manzhouguo shi*, 104, 106.
28. Ogata, *Defiance*, 44.
29. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 54.
30. *Manshūkoku chihō jijō*, 2–82.
31. Ibid., 2.
32. Ibid.
33. McCormack, *Chang*, 195–96.
34. *Manshūkoku chihō jijō (Hōten)*, 3.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 3–4.
37. Ibid., 21.
38. T-172–1:1068, Hunter telegram. I have inserted punctuation into Hunter’s report, but the text remains identical.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Wang Chengli et al., eds., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 165; L. Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 309.
43. Wang Chengli et al., eds., *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 170; Suleski, “Northeast China,” 369–71.
44. Suleski, “Northeast China,” 371.
45. For a full description of Unit 731, see Sheldon Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare 1932–1945 and the American Cover-up* (London: Routledge, 1994).
46. “Liaoyuan xianzhang Xu Weixin,” *JDSJ*, 349; “Shenyang,” 273.
47. Paul C. Hickey, “Fee-Taking, Salary Reform, and the Structure of State Power in Late Qing China, 1909–1911,” *Modern China* 17, no. 3 (July 1991): 411–12.
48. “Yu Chonghan no shutsuro to sono seiken,” 567–68.
49. L. Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 195–97.
50. A detailed analysis of the economic value of Manchukuo to Japan is found in Nakagane, “Economic Development.”
51. *MTB* 1934, 166–68.
52. Ibid., 175, 180, 184–86.
53. “Liaozhong,” 271.
54. “Guandongjun siling guan Honjo ji wei Dongsansheng guanyinhao, bianye yinhang kaiye hi zhi Yuan Jinkai han” (Kwantung Army commander Honjō to Yuan Jinkai on the establishment of the official Three Eastern Provinces Bank and the Border Bank), *JDSJ*, 11 October 1931, 276–77.
55. “Hailong xian shishen Wang Yintang deng wei jiu difang shangmin shenghuo qing yu Ri-jun jiaoshe yunxu tongche shi gei weichihui cheng” (Hai-

long county local elite member Wang Yintang requests the public order committee to hold negotiations with the Japanese army to permit transport links so as to save the merchants' livelihoods), *JDSJ*, n.d. October 1931, 287.

56. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 132–34.

57. Myers, *Japanese Economic Development*, 35–36.

58. *Ibid.*, 95–96.

59. Nakagane, “Economic Development,” 146.

60. Ramon H. Myers, “Socioeconomic Change in Villages of Manchuria during the Ch'ing and Republican Periods: Some Preliminary Findings,” *MAS* 10, no. 4 (1976): 600–610, 617.

61. Jones, *Manchuria since 1931*, 172.

62. Myers, *Japanese Economic Development*, 75–76.

63. *Ibid.*, 76.

64. *MYB* 1932, 416–19.

65. *Ibid.*, 420.

66. *Ibid.*, 421.

67. *MYB* 1934, 183–84.

68. “Changtu,” 355–59.

69. *Manshūkoku chihō jijō (Hōten)*, 81.

70. *Ibid.*, 845.

71. *Ibid.*, 756, 759, 790.

72. L. Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 371–72.

73. “Manchoukuo and Her Future Destiny,” *North China Herald*, 23 January 1935, 152. (The *North China Herald* was the weekly digest of the *North China Daily News*.)

74. For more details, see Duus, *Japanese Informal Empire*.

75. LS: 343: 4–3: *Manshūkoku chihō jijō (Kirin)*, 3, 11, 63.

76. *Ibid.*, 12.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*, 18.

79. *Ibid.*, 44, 50, 53.

80. Hayashi Yoshihide, “Kenkoku toshi ni okeru Kokuryūchōsei no kaikō” (Recollections of the foundation of Manchukuo in Heilongjiang), *GSS* 7, 644.

81. Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy, 1930–33*, 80–81.

82. Hayashi, “Kenkoku,” 659.

83. *Ibid.*, 661–62.

84. *Ibid.*, 666.

85. *Ibid.*, 679.

86. *Ibid.*, 662.

87. *Manshūkoku chihō jijō (Hōten)*, 132–34.

88. *Ibid.*, 143–44.

Chapter 5. Selling Salvation: The Campaigns of the Northeast National Salvation Society, 1931–1933

1. Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 130.

2. See Rudolph G. Wagner, "The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere," *China Quarterly* 142 (June 1995): 423–43.
3. I use Anthony Coogan's translation of the NNSS's title. See Coogan, "The Volunteer Armies of Northeast China," in *History Today* (July 1993): 38.
4. For media, see Coble, *Facing Japan*. For petitions, see Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
5. Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The Propaganda Campaign against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 199.
6. See chap. 2.
7. Nishimura Shigeō, *Chūgoku kindai tōhoku chiyū shi kenkyū* (Historical research on China's Northeast region in the modern period) (Kyoto: Horitsu bunkasha, 1984), 217; Wang Ju and Shao Yuchun, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui* (The Northeastern National Salvation Society) (Shenyang: Liaoning Daxue Chubanshe, 1991), 9.
8. *WHYR*, 19 September 1931.
9. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 10.
10. *Ibid.*, 11.
11. Wang Lianjie, ed., *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 437.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *WHYR*, 5 November 1931, 9 May 1932.
14. Zhou Pingsheng, "Huang Xiansheng," in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 131.
15. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 130.
16. Zhou, "Huang Xiansheng," 131.
17. Wang Xiliang, *Zhang Haitian*, in *Dongbei kang-Ri yiyongjun renwuzhi* (Guide to the personalities in the northeastern anti-Japanese volunteer armies), ed. Tan Yi (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), 52. It is not clear how much Zhang was offered to cooperate on this occasion. But the records of donations made by the NNSS's sister organization, the Support Society, state that in total they gave Zhang's division 17,878 yuan.
18. Li Rong, "Tang Juwu," in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 137.
19. *Ibid.*, 256.
20. *Ibid.*, 257–60. This source claims that Tang's force started with 100,000 followers and rose to 200,000 in total. However, *MYB* 1934 (cited in Chong-sik Lee, "The Chinese Communist Party and the Anti-Japanese Movement in Manchuria: The Initial Stage," in Alvin D. Coox and Hilary Conroy, eds., *China and Japan: Search for Balance since World War I* [Santa Barbara: Clio, 1978], 150–51) suggests that in two individual clashes, only 20,000 of Tang's troops, in alliance with the Big Swords of Wang Fengge, took part.
21. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 64–66, 70–73.
22. "Liao-Ji-Hei minzhong houyuanhui yuanzhu ge kang-Ri budui kuanxiang yi lanbiao" (Overview of sums given to support anti-Japanese troops by the Liaoning-Jilin-Heilongjiang Support Society), *JGH*, 136–42.
23. *WHYR*, 28 October 1932.

24. *WHYR*, 3–7 October 1931.
25. *WHYR*, 21 October 1931.
26. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 44–45.
27. *Ibid.*, 75–76.
28. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 677–78.
29. For further information on Ma Zhanshan's camp and outsiders' perceptions of it, see chap. 7.
30. Liu Shizhou, "Hailun jianwenlu" (Experiences in Hailun), *DBYK* 1, no. 2 (30 June 1932): 7.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Gu Zhenhuan, "Che Xiangchen dao Heihe" (Che Xiangchen comes to Heihe), *MZS*, 185.
33. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 49.
34. *Ibid.*, 50. However, chap. 7 shows that it was not just anti-Japanese activists who were permitted to make contact with Ma's soldiers; local elite member Han Yunjie, who had been co-opted by the Japanese, was a frequent visitor to Hailun in 1931–32.
35. *Ibid.*
36. "Li Du zhi Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui" (Li Du to the NNSS), *JGH*, 131.
37. *WHYR*, 8 November 1932.
38. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 48.
39. See also the section below on *Dongbei yuekan*.
40. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 73.
41. *Ibid.*, 69.
42. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 224; Coble, *Facing Japan*, 74; Donald Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs: The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy," 1931–2* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 334.
43. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 75.
44. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 86; Ma Yuliang et al., eds., *Dongbei renwu da cidian*, 713.
45. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 86.
46. *WHYR*, 11 February 1932.
47. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 124.
48. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 87–89.
49. *Ibid.*, 89–90.
50. *Ibid.*, 93–94; Ma Yuliang et al., eds., *Dongbei renwu da cidian*, 713.
51. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 94.
52. Yuan, *Zhang Xueliang yu dongbei Kang-Ri yiyongjun*, 85.
53. *WHYR*, 20 January 1933.
54. *WHYR*, 21 January 1933.
55. *WHYR*, 24 October 1932.
56. Yan Baohang, "Huiyi 'Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui'" (Remembering the NNSS), *YBH*, 396.
57. Marilyn A. Levine, "Zeng Qi and the Frozen Revolution," in *Roads Not Taken: The Struggle of Opposition Parties in Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Roger B. Jeans (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 231–35.

58. *JGXX* 4, 2.
59. Yan, “Huiyi,” 396.
60. *WHYR*, 2 October 1932.
61. *WHYR*, 12 October 1932.
62. *WHYR*, 28 October 1932.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 675.
66. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 76. Coble also warns that only 5 to 10 percent of the Chinese public read newspapers in the 1930s, and there are limitations on judging how far their opinions matched the press’s views.
67. *Ibid.*, 81–82.
68. *Ibid.*, 83.
69. *WHYR*, 21 October 1931.
70. NJ 2–856 (5 October 1932); Ma Zhanshan, “Juexin shuaibu kang-Ri zi-wei tongdian” (Determinedly leading troops in self-defense to resist Japan), *JSS*, 303; and “Xuanbu Ri-wei neimu juexin jixu kang-Ri tongdian” (The inside story of the Japanese puppet government and our determination to continue resistance to Japan), *JSS*, 313.
71. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 24.
72. *Ibid.*, 60.
73. *WHYR*, 3 October 1932.
74. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 181–83.
75. *SJSB*, 11 December 1931.
76. *WHYR*, 11 November 1931.
77. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 24.
78. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 194.
79. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 27, 59.
80. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 676.
81. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 63, 114; Wang Lianjie, ed., *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 438.
82. *WHYR*, 14 January 1933.
83. *WHYR*, 8 February 1933.
84. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 71.
85. NJ 2–2494 (September 1931), (19 October 1931), (20 September 1931).
86. NJ 2–2495 (15 January 1932), (6 February 1932), (1 April 1933).
87. NJ 2–2500 (15 May 1932), (8 June 1932), (23 July 1932), (6 February 1933), (30 March 1933), (n.d.).
88. NJ 2–2500 (15 September 1932).
89. NJ 2–2487 (4 November 1932), NJ 2–2482 (19 January 1932), NJ 2–2479(2) (5 May 1933), NJ 2–2476 (31 October 1932).
90. *WHYR*, 8 November 1931.
91. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei kang-Ri minzhong jiuguohui*, 108.
92. *WHYR*, 24 December 1931.
93. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 57–67, 137; Anthony Coogan, “Northeast China and the Origins,” 301.
94. *WHYR*, 23 October 1932.

95. *WHYR*, 9 September 1932, 16 February 1933, 18 February 1933.
96. *WHYR*, 29 November 1932.
97. For example, in November 1932 alone: NJ 2–855 (7 November 1932), (15 November 1932), (16 November 1932), (26 November 1932), (30 November 1932).
98. *WHYR*, 22 March 1932, 18 April 1932.
99. *WHYR*, 10 April 1932.
100. Nish, *Japan's Struggle*, 151.
101. *Ibid.*, 144. (Italics in original.)
102. *WHYR*, 25 March 1932.
103. *WHYR*, 16 July 1933.
104. S. Lee, “The Boxer Indemnity,” 296–99, 301.

Chapter 6. Know Your Enemy: The Creation of a Discourse of Nationalist Resistance, 1931–1933

1. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 30.
2. *WHYR*, 22 April 1933.
3. Wang Lianjie, ed., *Yan Baohang nianpu*, 437.
4. Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 165–70.
5. Philip C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 37.
6. Tang, *Global Space*, 47.
7. Judge, *Print and Politics*, 161–70.
8. Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 240. The phenomenon was not exclusively Chinese; Pierre Sorlin notes that French nationalists seeking to articulate their doctrine at around the same time (pre-World War I) had to resort to an esoteric vocabulary to express what they claimed were primordial truths. See Sorlin, “Words and Images of Nationhood,” in *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War, 1889–1914*, ed. Robert Tombs (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991).
9. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 51–52.
10. It should be noted that the New Culture rejection of tradition was not as widespread as sometimes implied by general histories of the period. Perry Link has pointed out that the most widely read literature of the period was not the modern *baihua* fiction of the New Culture writers, but the Mandarin Duck stories based on traditional popular literary forms (E. Perry Link, *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Cities* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981]). Susan Daruvala has also analyzed the work of Zhou Zuoren to show that he advocated a route to modernity that did not share the repudiation of tradition that characterized the May Fourth writers (Daruvala, “Nation and Locality in the Writing of Zhou Zuoren” [paper delivered at the Joint East Asian Studies Conference, University of Leeds, 6–8 April 1994]).

11. Waldron, *From War to Nationalism*, 5.
12. C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle*, 47.
13. Marilyn A. Levine, "Zeng Qi and the Frozen Revolution," in *Roads Not Taken: The Struggle of Opposition Parties in Twentieth-Century China*, ed. Roger B. Jeans (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 226, 231.
14. Y. Sun, *China and the Origins*, 5–6.
15. *JGXX* 1 (29 February 1932): 1.
16. *JGXX* 4 (31 March 1932): 1.
17. L. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 312, 292, 342, 308; Waldron, *From War to Nationalism*, 246–47.
18. L. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 240.
19. Charlotte Furth, "Intellectual Change: From the Reform Movement to the May Fourth Movement, 1895–1920," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912–1949*, pt. 1, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 327.
20. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, 19.
21. Duara, "Transnationalism," 1035.
22. *JGXX* 43 (30 April 1933): 1.
23. *JGXX*, 1.
24. *JGXX*, 1–2.
25. Schwartz, *In Search*; Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao*, 56.
26. Schwartz, *In Search*, 89.
27. L. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 244.
28. Furth, "Intellectual Change," 346.
29. *JGXX* 1, 2.
30. *JGXX* 43, 2.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *JGXX* 4, 3.
33. "Dongbei minzhong jiuguo qingyuantuan xuanyan" (Announcement of the Northeast National Salvation Petition Corps), *JGH*, 123.
34. Judge, *Print and Politics*, 162.
35. *JGXX* 1, 3.
36. Akira Iriye, *China and Japan in the Global Setting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 81, 88.
37. *JGXX* 4, 2.
38. Ting-yee Kuo and Kwang-ching Liu, "Self-Strengthening: The Pursuit of Western Technology," in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, pt. 1, ed. John K. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 493.
39. *JGXX* 4, 2–3.
40. *Ibid.*, 3.
41. *JGXX* 23 (10 October 1932), 4.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Duus, *Abacus and the Sword*, 421; Peter Duus, "Japan's Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937: An Overview," in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), xiii.

44. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji*, 35.
45. Gail Hershat, *Dangerous Pleasures: Prostitution and Modernity in Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 246–48; Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, 64–77.
46. *JGXX* 4, 11.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. *JGXX* 43, 2.
50. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 44.
51. Ibid., 43.
52. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 60.
53. *WHYR*, 27 January 1932, 11 February 1932.
54. *JGXX* 4, 1.
55. Ibid., 3.
56. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests*, 222.
57. “Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui chengli xuanyan” (Announcement on the establishment of the NNSS), *JGH*, 119.
58. He Meiqiu, “Ribei mie Gaoliguo tong wang Dongsansheng shiyong de shouduan bijiao” (A comparison of the methods used by Japan to extinguish Korea and destroy the Three Eastern Provinces); and Zhao Minggao, “Manzhou weiguo wucunzai zhi zige yi liyou” (The qualifications and reasons for the nonexistence of the puppet Manchukuo state), both in *DBYK* 1, no. 5 (30 September 1932).
59. He, “Ribei mie Gaoliguo,” 4.
60. *DBYK* 1, no. 3 (30 July 1932): 96.
61. “Dongbei minzhong jiuguo qingyuantuan xuanyuan,” 123–24.
62. “Dongbei minzhong jiuguo qingyuandui daibiao dao Jiang Jieshi qingyuanshu” (Text of petition of the NNSS Petition Corps to Chairman Chiang Kaishek [8 November 1931]), *JGH*, 127.
63. *JGXX* 1, 1.
64. Ibid., 3.
65. *JGXX* 4, 9–10.
66. *JGXX* 24 (20 October 1932): 14.
67. *JGXX* 36 (20 February 1933): 2.
68. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 78.
69. See chap. 7 for more details.
70. Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 318.
71. I use Joseph Nye’s distinction between “soft” (cultural) and “hard” (military and economic) power. See Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 174–91.
72. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 175.
73. “Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui chengli xuanyan,” 119–20.
74. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 67.
75. See, e.g., *JGXX* 4, 3; *DBYK* 1, no. 3 (30 July 1932), p. 95; 1, no. 4 (30 August 1932), p. 65; 1, no. 5 (30 September 1932), p. 4; *NJ* 2–844 (10 February 1933); *NJ* 2–2500 (23 July 1932), (6 February 1933); *NJ* 2–2479(2) (5 May 1933).

76. See, e.g., *JGXX* 36 (20 February 1933), 2; 43, no. 1; *DBYK* 1, no. 1, p. 91; 1, no. 2 (30 June 1932), p. 9; NJ 2–856 (15 October 1932).
77. See, e.g., *JGXX* 1, 6; 4, 1; 23, 5; 35, 1; 36, 3; 45, 10; *DBYK* 1, no. 1, p. 98; 1, no. 5, p. 4, 11; NJ 2–844 (10 February 1933); NJ 2–856 (5 October 1932); NJ 2–2500 (23 July 1932), (15 September 1932), (6 February 1933); NJ 2–853 (21 November 1931), (29 April 1932); NJ 2–2495 (6 February 1932), (1 April 1933).
78. See, e.g., *JGXX* 1, 8; 43, 1; *DBYK* 1, no. 2, p. 15; 1, no. 3, p. 95; NJ 2–856 (15 October 1932); NJ 2–853 (29 April 1932).
79. See, e.g., *JGXX* 4, 9; 36, 2; *DBYK* 1, no. 2, p. 15; NJ 2–863 (25 February 1932); NJ 2–853 (29 April 1932).
80. Ma Zhanshan, “Juexin shuaibu kang-Ri ziwei tongdian,” *JSS*, 303–11. See also chap. 7 for translations.
81. T-172–1:1068 (10 December 1932).
82. Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, 151, 155, 175, 177.
83. Wang Chengli et al., eds. *Zhongguo dongbei lunxian*, 168–70.
84. For a discussion of this question, along with a stark narrative description of Japanese army atrocities in Nanjing in 1937–38, see Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Hidden Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).
85. Yan Baohang, “‘Jiu-yi-ba’ er zhounian jinian ganyan” (Feelings and words on the second anniversary of the September Eighteenth Incident), *YBH*, 255.
86. *DBYK* 1, no. 2, p. 3.
87. NJ 2–856 (5 October 1932).
88. NJ 2–853 (21 November 1931).
89. *Ibid.* (29 April 1932).
90. *Ibid.*
91. Coogan, “Volunteer Armies,” 39.
92. NJ 2–844 (10 February 1933).
93. *Ibid.*
94. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 109.
95. *JGXX* 45 (20 May 1933): 10.
96. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 108–9.
97. *DBYK* 1, no. 1, pp. 92–93.
98. *Ibid.*, 5.
99. *DBYK* 1, no. 3, p. 78.
100. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 109; Coble, *Facing Japan*, 77.
101. *DBYK* 1, no. 1, p. 98; *DBYK* 1, no. 2, p. 10.
102. *DBYK* 1, no. 2, pp. 1–4.
103. *Ibid.*, 1.
104. *Ibid.*, 2.
105. *Ibid.*
106. For example, *DBYK* 1, no. 4, pp. 55–65.
107. *DBYK* 1, no. 5, p. 12.
108. See, for example, Bhabha, “DissemiNation,” 291.

Chapter 7. Frontline Choices: The Resistance Fighters, Nationalism, and Locality, 1931–1932

1. See C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle*; Coogan, “Northeast China and the Origins”; Pan Xiting et al., *Dongbei kang-Ri yiyongjun shi*.
2. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, “The National Sentiment of Soldiers during the Great War,” in *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War, 1889–1914*, ed. Robert Tombs (London: HarperCollins Academic, 1991), 89.
3. Li Dechang, “Haerbin ge gongtuan shi Guolian diaocha tuanshu” (Report of the Harbin public bodies to the League of Nations investigation team), in *DFGL* (10 August 1932): 12.
4. Yan Baohang, “Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang” (The general situation of the resistance in the Northeast), *YBH*, 229.
5. Cai, *Minguo shiqi de tufei*, 108.
6. Guangdong Fuyuan Dongbei yiyongtuan (The Guangdong Northeastern Aid Volunteer Corps), *Dongbei jingqing baogao* (Report on the recent conditions in the Northeast), cited in C. Lee, “Chinese Communist Party,” 147.
7. Ibid.
8. Stephen C. Averill, “Party, Society, and Local Elite in the Jiangxi Communist Movement,” *JAS* 46, no. 2 (May 1987): 298.
9. Stephen C. Averill, “The Origins of the Futian Incident,” in *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution*, ed. Tony Saich and Hans van de Ven (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 110.
10. Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 283.
11. Yuan Hong, “Zhang Xueliang yu dongbei kang-Ri yiyongjun” (Zhang Xueliang and the northeastern anti-Japanese resistance armies), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 80.
12. Cai, *Minguo shiqi de tufei*, 108.
13. Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 261.
14. Yin Shi, “Renjian diyu” (Hell on earth), *DBYK* 1, no. 1, p. 13.
15. Wang Bingzhong et al., eds., *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident) (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), is one example of this interpretation.
16. Cai, *Minguo shiqi de tufei*, 106.
17. Coogan, “Northeast China and the Origins,” 290; C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle*, 226.
18. C. Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle*, 121.
19. Coogan, “Northeast China and the Origins,” 284.
20. Ibid., 286.
21. “Wang Ruihua wei ju shenbao Su wei baozhang zai Man-Meng quanli zhuanyong yanmi waijiao shouduan duice Rifang shi zhi Zhang Xueliang daidian” (Wang Ruihua’s telegram to Zhang Jinghui concerning the Soviet Union protecting its rights in Manchuria-Mongolia by using strict diplomatic tactics against the Japanese), *JDSJ*, 17 October 1931, 587.

22. Coogan, "Northeast China and the Origins," 287.
23. Anthony Coogan, "Northeast China and the Development of the Anti-Japanese United Front (1931–1936)" (Ph.D. diss., Polytechnic of Central London, 1991), 59.
24. NJ 2–844 (10 February 1933).
25. Coogan, "Northeast China and the Development," 61, 105, 134–38, 177, 209, 247–50.
26. Yan, "Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang," 213–30.
27. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 70.
28. Coogan, "Volunteer Armies," 39; Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 666.
29. Yan, "Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang," 214–17.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 215.
33. MYB 1934, 142–47, cited in C. Lee, "Chinese Communist Party," 150–51.
34. Yan, "Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang," 222.
35. She Yize, *Dongbei shikuang yu dikang* (The loss of the Northeast and resistance), 245; and Lei Ding, *Dongbei yiyongjun shihua* (Historical account of the Northeastern Volunteers' Army), 22, both cited in C. Lee, "Chinese Communist Party," 147.
36. Cai, *Minguo shiqi de tufei*, 108.
37. Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 107.
38. SJSB, 11 December 1931.
39. Yan, "Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang," 226.
40. Ibid.
41. Yin Shi, "Renjian diyu," 13.
42. Yan, "Dongbei yiyongjun gaikuang," 226.
43. Ibid., 227.
44. DBYK 1, no. 1, p. 93.
45. Coogan, "Northeast China and the Origins," 285.
46. Coogan, "Northeast China and the Development," 94–95.
47. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 254.
48. Duara, *Rescuing History*, chap. 4.
49. Ibid., 144–45.
50. John F. Sweets, *The Politics of Resistance in France, 1940–1944* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 19.
51. Ibid., 39.
52. Colin Dyer, *Population and Society in Twentieth Century France* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 101.
53. Sweets, *Politics*, 17.
54. Ibid., 18.
55. Yang Chengqi, "Tong Zhang Xueliang de mimi lianxi" (Secret contacts with Zhang Xueliang), MZS, 106–9.
56. Wen Yonglu, "Ma Zhanshan," in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 190–91.
57. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 645.

58. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary*, 2:459–60; Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*, 134.
59. Ma Zhanshan, “Juexin shuaibu kang-Ri ziwei tongdian,” *JSS*, 303.
60. *Ibid.*, 303–4.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 677–78; Ito, *Life*, 33.
63. Wang Ju, “Zhang Xueliang yu Dongbei minzhong jiuguohui” (Zhang Xueliang and the Northeastern National Salvation Society), in *Jinian “jiu-yi-ba” shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 92.
64. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 650.
65. Ma Zhanshan, “Baogao Rijun ruqin Heilongjiangsheng qingkuang dian” (Reporting the Japanese invasion of Heilongjiang [10 November 1931]), *JSS*, 304.
66. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (6 November 1931), 383.
67. Ma Zhanshan, “Baogao,” 305.
68. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 650.
69. *Ibid.*, 666.
70. Ma Zhanshan, “Baogao,” 305.
71. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 28. See also chap. 4.
72. Ma Zhanshan, “Zhi Zhang Xueliang baogao zhankuang dian” (Reporting the battle situation to Zhang Xueliang [17 November 1931]), *JSS*, 307.
73. Ma Zhanshan, “Wei Rijun menggong Heisheng suobu bei yatui chu shengcheng gao quanguo dian” (Being forced to retreat from the provincial capital of Heilongjiang because of fierce Japanese military attacks [18 November 1931]), *JSS*, 308.
74. *Ibid.*, 309.
75. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 659; *SJSB*, 21 November 1931.
76. Wang, *Gangyao*, 80–85.
77. Ma Zhanshan, “Baogao,” 305.
78. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (10 November 1931), 416.
79. Ma Zhanshan, “Shengming junzhong juewu Eren dian” (Stating clearly that there are no Russians in the army [11 November 1931]), *JSS*, 306; Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 647.
80. Ma Zhanshan, “Baogao,” 305.
81. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (7 November 1931), 416.
82. Wang and Shao, *Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguohui*, 28. See also chap. 5.
83. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 647.
84. Haslam, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, 78–79.
85. Ma Zhanshan, “Shengming junzhong juewu Eren dian.”
86. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 651.
87. *Ibid.*, 662.
88. *Ibid.*, 667.
89. *Ibid.*, 653.
90. Liu Shizhou, “Hailun jianwenlu,” *DBYK* 1, no. 1, p. 5.
91. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (10 November 1931), 416.

92. Nan Guang, “Komai cizhi neimu yu duifu yijun zhengce” (The inside story of Komai’s resignation and the policy toward the resistance), *DFGL* (20 August 1932): 20.
93. Xing Jiexing, “Wo canjiale jiangqiao kangzhan” (I took part in the resistance battle at the bridge), *MZS*, 57.
94. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 664 ff.
95. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (11 December 1931), 675.
96. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 666.
97. Han Yunjie, “Quanxiang Ma Zhanshan de neimu” (The inside story of how I persuaded Ma Zhanshan to surrender [translation of the Japanese-language source]), *MZS*, 120.
98. *FRUS* 1931, vol. 3 (26 December 1931), 706.
99. Liu Shizhou, “Hailun jianwenlu,” 7.
100. Dai Jitao, “Tezhong waijiao weiyuanhui dui Ri-zhengce baogaoshu” (Report of the Special Foreign Affairs Committee on policy toward Japan), *JSS*, 325.
101. Liu Shizhou, “Hailun jianwenlu,” 7.
102. Xie Ke, “Xiang-Ri jingguo” (Experiences surrendering to the Japanese), *MZS*, 83.
103. Nan Guang, “Komai cizhi,” 20.
104. Han, “Quanxiang,” 120.
105. *Ibid.*, 121.
106. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 668.
107. Han, “Quanxiang,” 121–22; Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 669–70.
108. Ma Zhanshan, “Xuanbu Ri-wei neimu juexin jixu kang-Ri tongdian” (The inside story of the Japanese puppet government and our determination to continue resistance to Japan), *JSS*, 10 April 1932, 314.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Harbin Observer*, 5 February 1932; *SJSB*, 5 February 1932.
111. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 661.
112. *FRUS* 1932, vol. 3 (22 January 1932), 45.
113. *Ibid.* (25 January 1932), 59.
114. *Ibid.* (7 February 1932), 248.
115. *SJSB*, 17 February 1932.
116. Nan Guang, “Komai cizhi,” 20.
117. “Ma Senzan mondai” (The Ma Zhanshan problem: Kwantung Army intelligence report [April 1932]), *GSS* 7, 484.
118. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 675.
119. “Ma Senzan mondai,” 484.
120. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 675.
121. Gu Zhenhuan, “Cong ‘hetan’ dao ‘fanmao’” (From “discussion” to “surrender”), *MZS*, 89.
122. It is also worth considering that Xie Ke’s memoirs as recorded in *Ma Zhanshan jiangjun* (*MZS*) go against the popular myth by continuing to maintain that Ma was weak and uncommitted to the nationalist cause. This contrarian view suggests that Xie had not, perhaps unlike certain contemporaries recording their memoirs in retrospect, “remembered” the past as the officials in charge of history might have liked him to do.

123. Gu, "Cong 'hetan,'" 91.
124. Coble, *Facing Japan*, 71.
125. Yang, "Tong Zhang Xueliang de mimi lianxi," 106–9.
126. *Ibid.*, 108.
127. Hayashi, *Kenkoku*, 675.
128. *Ibid.*, 677.
129. Steele, *Shanghai and Manchuria*, 19.
130. *Ibid.*, 30–31.
131. *Ibid.*, 32.
132. *Ibid.*, 33.
133. *Ibid.*, 34.
134. Lian Jie, "Su Bingwen," in *Zhang Xueliang he tade jiangjunmen* (Zhang Xueliang and his generals), ed. Song Li (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1993), 239.

Chapter 8. Epilogue: Manchuria in Memory and Myth

1. Du Zhongyuan, *Yuzhong zagan* (Various thoughts while in prison) (Canton: n.p., 1938); "Chinese Hero Wishes to Get at Japanese: 'Resist or Be Ruined' Is the Cry of Ma Chan-shan," *NCH*, 19 June 1935.
2. A small sample of such stories from mid-1935 is given here, but most newspapers from the period will illustrate this point: "Depression Times in Hankow," *NCH*, 6 March 1935, p. 369; "Famine Relief Measures in Hunan," *NCH*, 13 March 1935, p. 409; "Chinese Banks and Stores in Difficulties," *NCH*, 12 June 1935, p. 428; "Starving Peasants as Rock Carriers," *NCH*, 19 June 1935, p. 471.
3. Steven Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945–1948* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 9–10.
4. On Xiao Jun, see Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 225–29. On "Lay Down Your Whip," see Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, 8, 55–64.
5. Tien Chun [Xiao Jun], *Village in August* (London: Collins, 1942).
6. Hung, *War and Popular Culture*, and Fu, *Resistance, Passivity, and Collaboration*, give fascinating insights into the nature of resistance in wartime China.
7. For details of the civil war in Manchuria, see Steven Levine, *Anvil of Victory*. On northeastern disillusionment with Nationalist politics in 1945–49, see Rana Mitter, "Complicity, Repression, and the Region: Yan Baohang and the Creation of Centripetal Nationalism, 1931–1949," *Modern China* 25, no. 1 (January 1999): 44–68.
8. Fushun War Crimes Memorial, author's visit, September 1997.
9. Kong Lingbo, "Jiangqiao kangzhan de jingyan jiaoxun" (Lessons from the experience of the battle at the bridge), in *Jinian "jiu-yi-ba" shibian 60 zhounian* (Remembering the sixtieth anniversary of the Eighteenth September Incident), ed. Wang Bingzhong et al. (Shenyang: Liaoning Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 131–40.

Glossary

<i>aiguozhuyi</i>	爱国主义
<i>bao-Ri</i>	暴日
Changtu	昌图
Che Xiangchen	车向忱
Chen Xianzhou	陈先周
Cui Weizhou	崔维周
Daxing	大兴
<i>dayangyin</i>	大洋银
Ding Chao	丁超
<i>Dongbei minzhong kang-Ri jiuguoahui</i>	东北民众抗日救国会
<i>Dongbei yuekan</i>	东北月刊
<i>Dongbei zhengwu weiyuanhui</i>	东北政务委员会
Du Zhongyuan	杜重远
Feng Zhanhai	冯占海
Gao Chongmin	高崇民
<i>guocui</i>	国粹
<i>guotu</i>	国土
<i>guoxue</i>	国学
Haicheng	海城
Hailong	海龙

Han Yunjie	汉云介
Hayashi Yoshihide	林義秀
Heihe	黑河
Honjō Shigeru	本庄繁
Houyuanhui	后援会
Huang Xiansheng	黄显声
Huang Yuzhou	黄宇宙
Ishiwara Kanji	石原莞尔
Itagaki Seishirō	板垣征四郎
<i>Jiuguo xunkan</i>	救国旬刊
Keshan	克山
Komai Tokuzō	駒井得三
Lao Beifeng	老北风
Li Du	李杜
Li Quanlin	李全林
Liaoyang	辽阳
Liaozhong	辽中
Liu Shengyun	刘升允
Liu Shizhou	刘什洲
Lu Guangji	庐广绩
Ma Longtan	马龙谭
Ma Zhanshan	马占山
Manchukuo (<i>Manzhonguo</i>)	满洲国
<i>Manshū seinen renmei</i>	满洲青年联盟
Ning'an	甯安
Ōhashi	大桥
<i>Shenghuo zhoukan</i>	生活周刊
<i>Shengjing shibao</i>	盛京时报
Su Bingwen	苏炳文
Suizhong	绥中
Taian	台安
Tamon	多门
Tang Juwu	唐聚五
Taonan	洮南
Tieling	铁岭

Tōchibu	统 治 部
Tokumubu	特 務 部
<i>tongbao</i>	同 胞
Wan Fulin	万 福 鳞
Wang Delin	王 德 林
Wang Huayi	王 华 一
Wang Ruihua	王 瑞 华
Wang Yongjiang	王 永 江
Wang Zhuoran	王 卓 然
<i>Wangdao</i>	王 道
Xi Xia	熙 洽
Xie Jieshi	谢 介 石
Xie Ke	谢 珂
Xu Baozhen	徐 宝 珍
Yan Baohang	阎 宝 航
Yang Yuting	杨 宇 霆
<i>yexin</i>	野 心
<i>yi Yongjun</i>	义 勇 军
Yu Chonghan	于 冲 汉
Yu Zhishan	于 芷 山
Yuan Jinkai	袁 金 铠
Zang Shiyi	臧 式 毅
Zhang Haipeng	张 海 鹏
Zhang Haitian	张 海 天
Zhang Jinghui	张 景 惠
Zhang Xueliang	张 学 良
Zhang Zuolin	张 作 霖
Zhang Zuoxiang	张 作 相
Zhao Xinbo	赵 欣 伯
Zhao Zhongren	赵 仲 仁
Zheng Xiaoxu	郑 孝 胥
Zhu Qinglan	朱 庆 澜

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