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# The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations At Home and Abroad in the Republican Era

William C. Kirby

Nothing mattered more. Chinese history during the era of the first Republic was defined and shaped – and must ultimately be interpreted – according to the nature of its foreign relations. While few would dispute the contributions of what Paul Cohen has called a “more interior approach”<sup>1</sup> to modern Chinese historical studies in the past two decades, there is no point searching for some uniquely “China-centred” historical narrative for this period. Everything important had an international dimension. The period is bordered by the inauguration of two “new Chinas,” the Republic of 1912 and the People’s Republic of 1949, both of which were patterned on international designs. The difference between those governments shows the progression of international influences. Few Chinese were affected in a direct way by the parliamentary experiment of the early Republic. No Chinese would be unaffected by the lethal blend of Leninism and Stalinism that Mao Zedong called Chinese Communism.

Foreign relations in this era became, quite simply, all penetrating, all permeating, all prevailing – *durchdringend*, as the Germans say – ultimately forcing their way into every part of Chinese society. In the realm of high diplomacy, Chinese statecraft delineated and protected the borders of the new nation-state to which all Chinese (and not a few non-Chinese) were now said to belong. “China” – truly a geographic and not a political expression before 1912 – moved from being a ward, if not semi-colony, of the “great powers” to being a great power itself, recovering the sovereignty and autonomy that had been so severely limited in the latter decades of the Qing dynasty.

The transition from pupil to power was even more marked in the military sphere. It is only necessary to compare the duration and outcomes of the first and second Sino-Japanese wars, or contrast the Qing’s humiliation by a relative handful of Western soldiers in the Boxer War of 1900 with China’s performance at the end of the Republican era. Five years after the Nationalists had outlasted Japan in the war of 1937–45, the People’s Republic – whose armies were born of the Republican era – would fight to draw hundreds of thousands of the best armed troops of the world’s most powerful nation. Military strength was made possible in part by industrialization, which was founded in turn on an unprecedented opening to international economic influences. This era witnessed the “golden age” of the Chinese bourgeoisie as well as the birth of modern

1. Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 153.

state capitalism, neither of which could have existed without foreign partners and investment.

Most striking of all in this period was the self-conscious attempt to overhaul Chinese culture, particularly political culture, according to international categories. Every government would seek legitimacy in the context of one or another internationally authenticated “ism,” from constitutionalism to Communism. Most puzzling about the era is the manner in which the Western presence could disappear from China so quickly and completely, if ultimately temporarily, within years of the end of the Republican period.

### *Diplomacy: From Great Muddle to Great Power*

Diplomatic history has not been at the heart of Republican China studies. The examination of foreign policy and of formal, state-to-state relations has never held for scholars of any period of modern Chinese history the cardinal position it enjoyed in European historical writing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. If Ranke’s use of Venetian ambassadorial letters defined a history of *Fürsten und Völker* with more princes than peoples,<sup>2</sup> the book that defined the field of modern China’s foreign relations put trade before diplomacy, and treated inter-state relations as but one part of a confused set of economic, cultural and political contests.<sup>3</sup> If in the larger field of international relations the “realist” school of foreign relations long dominated scholarship, treating states as unitary, rational actors pursuing permanent interests, with their actions determined more by external than by internal stimuli (the “primacy of foreign policy”),<sup>4</sup> the most influential work in the history of China’s foreign relations has always incorporated the private with the public, the official with the non-official, on a stage where “non-state actors” can steal the show.<sup>5</sup>

Only recently has this broadly conceived and methodologically inclusive approach been graced with a name: “international history.” Here foreign policy is but one part of foreign relations, and may in any event be a cultural construct. Hence the importance to this school of “images,” “perceptions,” “belief system” and “cognitive maps.”<sup>6</sup> As important as

2. Leopold von Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert, vornehmlich aus ungedruckten Gesandtschafts-Berichten* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1854).

3. John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast. The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842–1854* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

4. For a concise overview of realist and “neo-realist” models see Ore R. Holsti, “International relations models,” in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 57–88.

5. A splendid example is Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

6. This has been a particularly big theme in Chinese–American relations. Most recently see R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee (eds.), *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); and Jonathan Goldstein, Jerry Israel and Hilary Conroy (eds.), *America Views China: American Images of China Then and Now* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1991).

the interests and actions of other nation-states is the “set of lenses” through which information about them is viewed.<sup>7</sup> Among theoreticians of international relations, the work of Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle comes closest to the work of international historians in incorporating a long list of factors, among them cognitive issues, interest group politics and processes of demographic and cultural change, while not ignoring the traditional concerns of power politics and geopolitics.<sup>8</sup> Yet as practised by such master historians as Akira Iriye and Michael Hunt, international history still lacks anything like a theory.<sup>9</sup>

But while the study of China’s foreign relations has generally been theory-poor,<sup>10</sup> it has not lacked poor theories. The Marxist-Stalinist-Maoist tradition stressed the economic and class dimensions of foreign relations, subject to frequent reinterpretation according to the dictates of contemporary politics. In the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Lenin’s linkage of imperialism with finance capital during capitalism’s “highest stage” remained a standard interpretation well into the PRC’s own capitalist phase, even though it explained nothing about the imperialist West’s activities in China.<sup>11</sup> More recently the narrative of modern Chinese history has been shorn of complexity and contingency in order to fit it into a “world systems” approach.<sup>12</sup> And – with the notable exception of the work of Prasenjit Duara<sup>13</sup> – postmodernist approaches to

7. See Ore Holsti, “The belief system and national images,” in James N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy* (New York: The Free Press, 1969). More recently see Richard Little (ed.), *Belief Systems and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). For an excellent review of the literature see David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972–1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 17–20.

8. See Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Introduction à l’histoire des relations internationales*, 4th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991).

9. Akira Iriye, “Culture and international history,” in Hogan and Patterson, *Explaining*, pp. 214–15; and Michael H. Hunt, “Normalizing the field,” in Michael H. Hunt and Niu Jun (eds.), *Toward a History of Chinese Communist Foreign Relations, 1920s–1960s* (Washington, DC: Asia Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center, 1994), pp. 163–191. Hunt (p. 167) urges the “theoretically enthralled” to “enter the fray, usually monopolized by historians, over what the evidence may actually mean.” As Emily S. Rosenberg writes, “International history is not a methodological prescription but, to switch the metaphor, a vast empty plain with undetermined borders and topography that must be sketched by the historian-guide.” Emily S. Rosenberg, “Walking the borders,” in Hogan and Patterson, *Explaining*, pp. 24–25.

10. On the limitations of theory in a specific context see Michael H. Hunt, “Beijing and the Korean Crisis,” *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 107 (Fall 1992).

11. The classic, simple account is that of Hu Sheng, *Imperialism and Chinese Politics* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1955). More recently see Xiang Rong, “Lun menhu kaifang zhengce” (“On the open door policy”), *Shijie lishi* (*World History*), No. 5 (1980); *Lun dangdai diguozhuyi* (*On Contemporary Imperialism*) (Shanghai: Renmin, 1984). On the continued uses of “imperialism” as an analytical category in policy see Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist*, pp. 53ff. For a superb discussion of the historical literature see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Semi-colonialism and informal empire in twentieth-century China: towards a framework of analysis,” in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 290–314.

12. Frances K. Moulder, *China, Japan, and the Modern World Economy: Toward a Reinterpretation of East Asian Development, ca. 1600 to ca. 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

13. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

the study of the historiography of China's foreign relations seem unable to escape ancient political debates.<sup>14</sup>

In all this excitement comparatively few have given serious scholarly attention to China's diplomatic history. John Garver, Andrew Forbes, Donald Jordan, Odd Arne Westad, Youli Sun, Nicholas Clifford and others whose work is cited below have made vital contributions, but few among these would consider themselves diplomatic historians. It may be that international history has chased diplomatic history, that is, the study of the practice of diplomacy, almost entirely from that small patch of the China field that has continued to study foreign relations. As a result there is no standard text in the West on the diplomatic history of 20th-century China. (Even for the 19th century, the work of H. B. Morse has not been surpassed in English.)<sup>15</sup> For detailed, general narratives of diplomatic affairs in the Western literature one must retreat to contemporary accounts, such as those of Robert T. Pollard, Claude A. Buss and Werner Levi.<sup>16</sup> While Chinese authors have more readily written general diplomatic histories, and indeed published several outstanding volumes during the Republican era, scholarship has been limited until recently by the political restrictions of several Chinese governments.<sup>17</sup> Only in the 1990s and only in the PRC, where archival restrictions on Foreign Ministry archives have been fewer than in Taiwan, have there appeared comprehensive, largely unpoliticized, archive-based surveys of the diplomatic history of the Chinese Republic.<sup>18</sup>

The paucity of energy in the study of diplomatic history, compared to other fields, is all the more regrettable because the story of Chinese diplomacy in the Republican era is one of stunning accomplishments from a position of unenviable weakness. The Republican government of

14. See Tani E. Barlow's attempt to strike out the baleful influence of the "Cold War founders" of American China studies, who allegedly displaced colonialism from the history of China's foreign relations. Tani E. Barlow, "Colonialism's career in postwar China studies," *positions* 1, No. 1 (1993), p. 225. See also James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989).

15. H. B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (London: Longmans Green, [1910] 1918).

16. Robert T. Pollard, *China's Foreign Relations, 1917-1931* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Claude A. Buss, *War and Diplomacy in Eastern Asia* (New York: Macmillan, 1941); Werner Levi, *Modern China's Foreign Policy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953).

17. Among the most distinguished works are older ones that deal primarily with the early (pre-Nationalist government) period of the Republic: Zhang Zhongfu, *Zhonghua minguo waijiaoshi* (*Diplomatic History of the Republic of China*) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1936; Chongqing, 1943); Hong Junpei, *Guomin zhengfu waijiaoshi* (*Diplomatic History of the Nationalist Government*) (1930; reprint Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1968). Two works that represent well the ideological divide of the Taiwan Strait are Ding Minnan, *Diguo zhuyi qin Hua shi* (*History of Imperialism's Aggression against China*) (Beijing, 1958, 1985); and Fu Qixie, *Zhongguo waijiaoshi* (*Diplomatic History of China*), Vol. 2 (Taipei: Sanmin, 1957).

18. Wu Dongzhi (ed.), *Zhongguo waijiaoshi: Zhonghua minguo shiqi, 1911-1949* (*History of China's Foreign Relations: The Period of the Republic of China, 1911-1949*) (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin, 1990); and especially Shi Yuanhua, *Zhonghua minguo waijiaoshi* (*Diplomatic History of the Republic of China*) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1994).

1912 inherited not what one might call “historical China” but the *Da Qing Guo*, the vast Qing empire, the multinational and multicultural expanse that included Manchuria, Mongolia, Eastern Turkestan and Tibet, among other areas. No Chinese empire had ever been so big for so long as the Qing realm of the Manchus. The first decade of the 20th century was full of portends of its dissolution. But the amazing fact of the Republican era is that this space was not only redefined, as “Chinese” and as the sacred soil of China, but also *defended* diplomatically to such a degree that the borders of the PRC today are essentially those of the Qing, minus only Outer Mongolia. The Qing fell but the empire remained. More accurately, the empire became the basis of the Chinese national state. This was perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Republican diplomacy.

*Defending the boundaries.* The task of defending the Republic’s far-flung and militarily indefensible borders fell mainly to a diplomacy that was hard-pressed, often creative and always obstinate. For example President Yuan Shikai announced in 1912 that he was “restoring” the titles of the Dalai Lama of Tibet – who had fled to India in 1910 – even as the Dalai Lama was declaring himself in full control of Tibetan territory. Two years later China refused to sign a convention with British and Tibetan authorities that would underscore China’s “suzerainty,” but not full sovereignty, over Tibet. In the 1920s and 1930s China played up the authority of the Panchen Lama, who had fled to China proper, in contrast to the stubbornly autonomous Dalai Lama. But when in 1940 a new Dalai Lama was named, the Nationalist regime once again acknowledged his claim to spiritual, if not temporal, authority, on the premise that the title was its to bless. When in 1942 Tibet opened its own Foreign Ministry, China, unlike Britain, refused to deal with it.<sup>19</sup> As British influence – the main external support of Tibetan autonomy – disappeared in the post-war years, Tibet’s formal reassociation with the Chinese state was but a matter of time. In short, a series of Republican governments refused to resolve the Tibetan question until it could be settled in China’s favour, as it was in 1950.

A determined policy of non-recognition and an even greater degree of diplomatic patience was required to maintain the several regions of Xinjiang within China’s potential pull if not its orbit. Here the cause was helped by the political dominance of the essentially self-appointed Han Chinese governors Yang Zengxin and Sheng Shicai, whose self-interest in suppressing ethnic separatism and, to the degree possible, setting limits to Soviet influence, served the long-term purpose of retaining the concept of Chinese suzerainty in a realm in which the Chinese state had almost no real power. Even when, in the late 1930s, Xinjiang became “a virtual territorial extension of the Soviet Union”<sup>20</sup> at a time when China was

19. A brief survey may be found in Marc Mancall, *China at the Center: 300 Years of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1984), pp. 251–54.

20. Andrew D. W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 157.

dependent upon Soviet military aid in the war against Japan, the Nationalist regime refused to abandon its claim. Instead, it bided its time until Soviet power was diverted and it could perform a “delicate surgical procedure”<sup>21</sup> to install Nationalist Chinese leadership of the province in what John Garver has called a “brilliant” and well timed diplomacy that possibly “saved Xinjiang for the Chinese nation.”<sup>22</sup> It then dealt with the contemporaneous rebellion known as the “Eastern Turkestan Republic,” which sought less separation from China than local autonomy, and ultimately would be granted neither.<sup>23</sup> Xinjiang, too, was saved for the Chinese Communists, who inherited it intact on 12 October 1949.

The non-recognition of unpleasant realities in China’s border areas was carried to an art form in the case of Manchuria. But here diplomacy was accompanied by a willingness to fight. Surely it speaks volumes about the obsessive and unitary conception of Chinese nationalism that the Chinese Republic would mobilize for war in defence of the *Manchu* homeland. (Although Chinese had begun to settle in southern Manchuria in the 18th century, Han migration was legalized only in 1907.) When the Republic was established, northern Manchuria was *de facto* a Russian colony and southern Manchuria a sphere of Japanese influence. The Republic negotiated and fought over this territory almost continuously throughout its existence, including outright hostilities with the Soviet Union in 1929 and full-scale war with Japan from 1937 to 1945. The greatest success came in Chinese diplomacy toward “Manzhouguo,” the Japanese-administered state that aimed to give political legitimacy to the conquest of the region by Japanese forces in 1931. By itself China could not alter the fact of Japanese control. But through a globally orchestrated diplomacy that made the “non-recognition doctrine” part of a standard political lexicon, it could and did deny Manzhouguo any semblance of legality: in its early years, apart from Japan only El Salvador saw fit to recognize the new Manchu paradise. And China’s uncompromising posture would make it a suitable ally for other, later, enemies of Japan, including the two powers that would ultimately return Manchuria to Chinese rule, the United States and the Soviet Union.

If the case of Outer Mongolia turned out differently, this was perhaps because there China confronted a combination of circumstances present nowhere else: coherent, internal resistance to Chinese rule, which had grown significantly after the Qing opened Mongolia to Han settlement in 1902; and a determined effort by a powerful neighbour to support a separatist movement. After both Chinese warlordism and the Russian civil war spilled into Mongolia in 1918–19, Mongolian partisans found allies in the new Soviet state and declared a republic in 1924. This was the one case in which Chinese non-recognition would have no effect. On maps printed in Taipei, Outer Mongolia still forms the northern border of

21. Mancall, *China at the Center*, p. 250.

22. John W. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations, 1935–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 178.

23. See Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944–1949* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990).

the Republic of China. But the Nationalist regime itself legitimized Mongolian independence in the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1945, although this was done only *in extremis*. To Chiang Kai-shek, who went against the majority opinion of the Kuomintang leadership, this was the “maximum sacrifice,” bearable only – and perhaps not forever – if alliance with the Soviet Union could avert the “national calamity” of Communist rebellion.<sup>24</sup> It didn’t, but Mongolians ratified their independence in the Stalinesque plebiscite of October 1945 (the vote was some 487,000 to *nothing*), an outcome that Mao Zedong’s People’s Republic would be forced to live with in the following decades.

By 1945 all border regions of the Qing empire, save for Outer Mongolia, had been recovered. In all border areas except Mongolia, the level of external influence was much less than in 1911, and the residual rights of the Soviet Union in Xinjiang and Manchuria would disappear within a decade. Indeed, the Republic went beyond the borders of 1911 in regaining Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan, which the Qing had lost to Japan in 1895.<sup>25</sup> The tenacity, obduracy and overall *success* of Chinese diplomacy regarding the most distant regions of the Manchu realm may help to explain the PRC’s unyielding determination to “recover” once again for China the territory of Taiwan, even though it has never governed it for a single moment.

*Internal frontiers.* An even more consistent purpose of Chinese diplomacy during the Republic was the recovery of sovereignty *within* China proper. When Mao Zedong declared that the Chinese people had finally “stood up” in 1949, he overlooked the fact that the People’s Republic, unlike the Republic, inherited a state unburdened by foreign “concessions” and settlements outside government control, not to mention the institution of extraterritoriality, which had immunized foreigners against Chinese law. This did not happen by itself. It was the result of a stubborn resolve to do away with the residue of the “politics of imperialism.” While once at the centre of Western writings on China’s foreign relations,<sup>26</sup> with the signal exception of Akira Iriye’s *After Imperialism*,

24. See the marvellous account of the Moscow negotiations of 1945 in Xiaoyuan Liu, *A Partnership for Disorder: China, the United States, and their Policies for Postwar Disposition of the Japanese Empire, 1941–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The citations are from a manuscript version, pp. 304, 306. See also Odd Arne Westad, *Cold War and Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry and the Origins of the Chinese Civil War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 40–41.

25. Taiwan’s loss, interestingly enough, had been taken for granted. Until Japan’s defeat in the war of 1937–45 seemed likely, no Republican government had challenged the legality of the Treaty of Shimonoseki by which the Qing had ceded the island to Japan; and for no major political movement, including the Communists, had it been *terra irredenta*.

26. Zhang Zhongfu, *Diplomatic History of the Republic of China*; Hong Junpei, *Diplomatic History of the Nationalist Government*; Robert T. Pollard, *China’s Foreign Relations, 1917–1931* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Syllabus on *Extraterritoriality in China* (Nanjing: Citizen’s League, 1929); G. W. Keaton, *The Development of Extraterritoriality in China* (2 vols.) (London: Longmans, 1928); Liu Shih-Shun, *Extraterritoriality: Its Rise and Its Decline* (New York: Columbia, 1925); G. Soulié Morant, *Extraterritorialité et intérêts étrangers en Chine* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1925); Li Tz-hyung (ed.), *Abolition of Extraterritoriality in China* (Nanjing: International Relations Committee, 1929); Thomas F.



published nearly 30 years ago, this diplomacy has received scant attention in the West, although it has been recounted in loving detail by Chinese historians.<sup>27</sup>

The Nationalist regime in particular had what one foreign diplomat called an “extraterritoriality complex.”<sup>28</sup> Its rise followed the failure (from China’s viewpoint) of the Washington Conference of 1921–22 and was accompanied, in the Northern March of 1926, by a wave of popular anti-foreignism unmatched since the Boxer years. Unlike Boxer xenophobia, this was orchestrated anti-foreignism, linked to a “revolutionary diplomacy” that included the economic boycott as a weapon.<sup>29</sup> If there was a single turning point in the century-long struggle to undo Western privilege, it was the January 1927 overrunning of the British concession at Hankou, which was returned to Chinese governance without a shot being fired. This came after 18 months of anti-British agitation and boycotts in Kuomintang-held China, and after Britain had already made, in the Christmas Memorandum of the previous month, the extraordinary (and for some foreign powers, traitorous) offer of the “sympathetic adjustment of treaty rights” – including unconditional tariff autonomy – to meet the “legitimate aspirations of the Chinese people.”<sup>30</sup> But when the concession was taken the prospect of a military response on the part of the powers, as in 1900, seemed very real.

*footnote continued*

Millard, *The End of Extraterritoriality in China* (Shanghai: A.B.C. Press, 1931); Wu K'ai-sheng, *La politique étrangère du gouvernement national de Chine et la révision des traités inégaux* (Paris: M. Giard, 1931). Contemporary documentation of diplomatic activity included: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, *Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China, 1919–1929* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1929); China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Treaties of 1928 and Related Papers* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1929); Permanent Court of International Justice, *Affaire relative à la dénonciation du traité sino-belge du 2 novembre 1865* (Leyde: Société d'éditions A. W. Sijthoff, 1929); Adolphe Dubois, “Les accords franco-chinois,” thèse, Univ. de Paris, 1928; *Sino-Foreign Treaties of 1928: Texts of the Documents Which Lay the New Foundations for Sino-Foreign Relations* (Beijing: Peking Leader Press, 1929); Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Exchange of Notes between His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom and the Chinese Government Regarding the Rendition of the British Concession of Chinkiang, Nanking October 31, 1929* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1930).

27. This is true also for the latest histories from the PRC: see Shi Yuanhua, *Zhonghua minguo waijiaoshi*, chs. 4 and 6. This diplomatic history has, of course, long been written from the perspective of foreign powers (e.g. Dorothy Borg, *American Policy and the Chinese Revolution, 1925–1928* (New York: Macmillan, 1947)). Although recent work on British policy and on the international community in China has employed Chinese materials in an imaginative way, the focus has not been on Chinese diplomacy. See Edmund S. K. Fung's excellent work, *The Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat: Britain's South China Policy, 1924–1931* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Nicholas Clifford's marvellous *Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920's* (Hanover, N.H.: Middlebury College Press, 1991).

28. British Minister to China Miles Lampson, quoted in Iriye, *After Imperialism*, p. 286.

29. For an enlightening discussion of boycotts as a diplomatic weapon in a later context see Donald A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs: The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy," 1931–32* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

30. United States State Department, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1926), Vol. I, pp. 923–27. On the American Minister's sense of betrayal see *ibid.* pp. 930–34.

Instead the British negotiated the rendition of the Hankou concession in less than two months. Chinese diplomats then pursued four years of talks that “succeeded in adding a diplomatic to their nationalist revolution”<sup>31</sup> and which almost certainly would have culminated in the general end of extraterritoriality in 1931, were it not for the intervening Manchurian crisis. By the early 1930s, negotiations had restored Chinese control over maritime customs, tariffs, postal communications, salt monopoly revenues and almost two-thirds of the foreign concessions in China. In all these Chinese negotiators employed a diplomacy of what Arthur Waldron has called (in a different context) an “inexorable legalistic gradualism,” which was perhaps more effective than the unilateral denunciation of old treaties.<sup>32</sup> For such painstaking and expert work the Foreign Ministry recruited, as Julia Strauss has shown, “the most cosmopolitan and well educated group of young men in all of China.”<sup>33</sup> Even before the formal return of all concessions in 1943, the regime had regained judiciary control over Chinese residents in foreign concessions, and (as I have discussed elsewhere) strove to tame the wildest part of China’s inner frontiers: the international society of the treaty ports.<sup>34</sup> The end of the old treaty system set the stage for the post-war negotiation of new legal, commercial and cultural treaties with the West that fulfilled the most basic element of China’s diplomatic agenda since the first Opium War. Only Hong Kong and Macau remained under colonial authority and not, it seemed, for long.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere, with extraterritoriality gone, Chinese laws began to govern and increasingly restrict the activities of foreigners in China. They still do.

*International environment.* The preservation of the nation’s borders – even when China was in no position to fight for them – and the recovery of internal authority depended in no small measure on the international setting. Frontier policy was aided by the common determination of Chinese *and* foreign governments to view the Chinese Republic as a nation-state. As in the 19th century, when the imperialist powers gave rhetorical support to the empire’s territorial integrity (in part to avoid

31. Levi, *Modern China’s Foreign Policy*, p. 192.

32. Waldron refers to Beiyang-era negotiations in his review of Yongjin Zhang, *China in the International System*, in *The China Quarterly*, No. 131 (September 1992), p. 797.

33. Julia C. Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities: Personnel Policies and State Building in China, 1927–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). (Citation is from manuscript, p. 246.)

34. William C. Kirby, “Traditions of centrality, authority, and management in modern China’s foreign relations,” in David Shambaugh and Thomas W. Robinson (eds.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 13–29.

35. On wartime negotiations over Hong Kong see Liu Xinli, “Chongqing guomin zhengfu yu Yingguo zhengfu guanyu Xianggang wenti de jiaobu” (“Diplomatic initiatives of the Chongqing National Government and the British Government regarding Hong Kong”), *Jindaishi yanjiu (Modern Historical Research No. 4 (1994))*, pp. 191–200. Chan Lau Kit-ching, *China, Britain and Hong Kong, 1895–1945* (Hong Kong, Chinese University Press, 1990), p. 327, shows how the Pacific War delayed the issue of Hong Kong and that during the war even Churchill had come to believe that Hong Kong would go the way of Wei-hai-wei. See also Kevin P. Lane, *Sovereignty and the Status Quo: The Historical Roots of China’s Hong Kong Policy* (Boulder: Westview, 1990).

fighting over it themselves), foreign powers remained convinced that the new Chinese Republic would be even more trouble divided than united. Tibet had announced its independence in 1913. At various times, in various ways, so did a lot of Chinese provinces. None would have their independence sanctioned by the Republic, and none, save the north-eastern provinces reorganized as Manzhouguo, would receive formal recognition by a single foreign power. For better or (as in the case of the Qing's international debts) for worse, the Republic's status as the successor to the Qing was unchallenged internationally.

As the Chinese nation-state established itself, its assertion of internal control benefited from a broader international trend: the beginning of the end of European pre-eminence in global power politics. Take again the example of 1927: the British surrender of Hankou reveals as much about the decline of Western power in China as it does about the Nationalist revolutionaries. Britain's "one real weapon," thought John Pratt of the Foreign Office's Far Eastern Department, was "the vague threat of force." The actual dispatch of troops was certainly considered, but deemed worthless, for against economic boycotts, the Nationalists' most potent weapon, "troops [were] no protection."<sup>36</sup> A bluff was tried at Shanghai, where a small force was gathered to defend the International Settlement, but the British Chiefs of Staff knew that no conceivable British force could defend it against a determined attack by the Nationalist military.<sup>37</sup> In any event any significant British military action was politically impossible at a time when British public opinion had become anti-interventionist and anti-imperialist. "Far away from England, and with the constant provocations of the Chinese ever before your eyes and ears," wrote Foreign Minister Austin Chamberlain to his Minister in China, Miles Lampson, "you can have no conception of how profoundly pacific our people now are."<sup>38</sup>

The West not only began its retreat from China, but broke apart as a distinct entity after the First World War. The unity of the Western powers in dealings with the Qing had come to include Japan after the turn of the century, and had severely restricted the empire's diplomatic freedom. This was one reason why the Qing state could take no part, even when it wanted to, in the international alliance system of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The European catastrophe of 1914–18 changed that, and made China a player in a reorganizing, multi-polar, international system.

One could read widely on the history of the First World War and never know that China took part in it. But however painful the experience of what Guoqi Xu calls Republican China's "age of innocence," China's entry into the war was a major turning point in its foreign rela-

36. Great Britain, Foreign Office, F979/156/10, minute by Pratt, 31 January 1927, cited in Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire*, p. 189.

37. Great Britain, Foreign Office, FO 405/252/16, Chamberlain to Tilley, 13 January 1927; *Survey of International Affairs* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs), 1927, p. 377.

38. Great Britain, Foreign Office, FO 800/260/421, Chamberlain to Lampson, 4 April 1927. Quoted also in Fung, *Diplomacy*, pp. 131–32.

tions.<sup>39</sup> As Zhang Yongjin has shown, the Republic self-consciously entered “international society” for the first time in its diplomacy of 1918–20, agreeing to abide by the rules and norms that in theory governed international behaviour.<sup>40</sup> China became an active participant in the “universal partnership” (to use Robert Keohane’s term)<sup>41</sup> of the League of Nations. But the League’s inability to enforce its principles, as China would discover to its anguish in the Manchurian Crisis of 1931, only strengthened the Republic’s desire to pursue its interests through an independent diplomacy.<sup>42</sup> It was, then, less the ideal than the practice of foreign relations in the inter-war period that permitted China for the first time to deal with foreign powers individually, not as a unit. This bilateralism was a leading factor in the success enjoyed in treaty revision in 1928–31, and it would lead to modern China’s first international alignments or alliances of any significance.

*Allies and enemies.* These alignments became matters of national life or death as tensions with Japan increased through the Republican era, culminating in the War of Resistance from 1937 to 1945. China’s survival and ultimate victory depended on a search for foreign patrons and allies in a fast-changing international environment. The Nationalist government after 1927 moved rapidly from an era when China was an object of great power co-operation at China’s expense, to one in which it formed important economic or strategic associations with three of the world’s most powerful nations – Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States – in order to defend itself against the fourth. In 1927 China remained a “muddle,” in the assessment of the British Foreign Office.<sup>43</sup> By 1945 it had become an important factor in the global balance of power and in the victory of the Allied coalition that it had joined, this time – unlike its role in the First World War – as a partner more than a supplicant. Indeed China was formally now a “great power,” a status attained by performance in war and diplomacy,<sup>44</sup> and confirmed by a permanent seat on the Security Council of the new United Nations.

With Germany, the Nanjing government entered into modern China’s first co-operative relationship based upon both the principle and practice

39. See Guoqi Xu, “Age of innocence: the First World War and China’s quest for national identity,” Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, in progress.

40. Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System, 1918–20* (London: Macmillan, 1991). Zhang’s conception of international society as the expansion of “the international society of European states” is drawn from Hedley Bull and A. Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon 1984).

41. Robert Keohane, “Partnerships and alignments: neorealist and institutionalist analyses,” p. 6. Paper presented to the conference on Patterns of Cooperation in the Foreign Relations of Modern China, Wintergreen, August 1987.

42. On Chinese reactions to the failure of League internationalism see Ian Nish, *Japan’s Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China and the League of Nations, 1931–33* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993).

43. W. R. Louis, *British Strategy*, p. 135.

44. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations*, pp. 192–96, shows that this status was not simply a gift to China, based on future expectations of it by the Americans, British and Soviets, but a hard-won diplomatic achievement.

of equality and mutual benefit. That relationship – in many ways the most successful of the Republican period – was grounded in economic, military and ideological ties, and arguably gave China the military-industrial capacity to survive the first years of the Sino-Japanese war.<sup>45</sup> It was *Realpolitik* and little more – the common fear of Japan – that led to the alignments with the Soviet Union (1938–40), studied so well by John Garver and He Jun,<sup>46</sup> and the United States (1941–45), studied by so many, though until recently almost entirely from the American perspective.<sup>47</sup> These partnerships assured China's survival, trained Chinese armies and brought the Republic into the very centre of global power politics. None of these relationships proved permanent, but each was crucial in its time. How each was pursued, managed, institutionalized and ultimately concluded is one of the more interesting stories of modern China's diplomacy.<sup>48</sup> Together they demonstrate the versatility of Chinese diplomacy in pursuing broadly consistent goals through an extraordinarily diverse set of relationships within a short span of years.

Of course the most influential, complicated, dangerous and ultimately disastrous of China's foreign relationships was that with Japan. War is the ultimate category of foreign relations, and the eight-year struggle with Japan inflicted staggering losses on the Chinese people, the Chinese economy and the Chinese government, which never really recovered

45. William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984); Françoise Kreissler, *L'Action culturelle allemande en Chine. De la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1989); Kuo Heng-yü (ed.), *Von der Kolonialpolitik zur Kooperation. Studien zur Geschichte der deutsch-chinesischen Beziehungen* (München: Minerva, 1986).

46. See Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations*; He Jun, "Lun 1929–1939 nian de Zhong Su guanxi" ("Sino-Soviet relations, 1929–39"), dissertation, Nanjing University, 1986.

47. A small sample of work includes: Dorothy Borg, *The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933–1938* (Cambridge, MA, 1964); Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China* (New York, 1980); Ta-jen Liu, *History of Sino-American Relations, 1840–1974* (Taipei, 1978); Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938–1945* (New York, 1979); Wilma Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China, 1912–1949* (Washington, DC, 1976). Contemporary Chinese perspectives include Zhang Zhongfu, *Sinian laide Meiguo yuandong waijiao (U.S. Far Eastern Policy in the Past Four Years)* (Chongqing, 1941), and *Meiguo zhanqiangde yuandong waijiao (U.S. Far Eastern Policy Before the War)* (Chongqing, 1944). More recently see Li Changjiu (ed.), *Zhong Mei guanxi erbainian (200 Years of Sino-American Relations)* (Beijing, 1984). All the above work had to be based on little or no Chinese archival evidence. Exceptions were works that sought to make a point in an international scholarly/political dispute, as in the never-ending Stilwell controversy (see for example Ching-chun Liang, *General Stilwell in China, 1942–1944: The Full Story* (New York: St John's University Press, 1972). However, since the early 1980s there has been an explosion of publication on Sino-American relations in the PRC, much of which takes account of newly available Chinese materials. For a bibliography, see Yang Yunheng and Hu Yukun (eds.), *Zhongguo Meiguo xue lunwen zhongmu (Guide to Chinese Essays on American Studies)* (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1991). For a survey of such scholarship see Chen Jian, "Sino-American relations studies in China," in Warren I. Cohen (ed.), *Pacific Passage: The Study of American–East Asian Relations on the Eve of the 21st Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 3–35. The field of Chinese–American relations in the 20th century in the same volume by William C. Kirby, Charles W. Hayford and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker.

48. See William Kirby, "Nationalist China's search for a partner: relations with Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States, 1928–1945," in Harry Harding (ed.), *Patterns of Cooperation in Modern China's Foreign Relations*, forthcoming.

from it.<sup>49</sup> With Japan too, China had pursued broadly consistent goals and policies. But the same measures that had proven so successful with respect to Western imperialism – obduracy, legalism and economic boycotts – proved unsuccessful at best and counter productive at worst in Sino-Japanese relations, which moved from diplomatic dispute to open military conflict and finally into the realm of barbarism.

The “Asian Holocaust”<sup>50</sup> of the Second Sino-Japanese War is still understudied, particularly in Western scholarship, but pre-war Sino-Japanese relations have been the subject of much recent work. Although there is still no comprehensive diplomatic history of Sino-Japanese relations,<sup>51</sup> here the multi-dimensional approach of “international history” has made important contributions. The domestic aspects of China’s Japan policy in the 1930s and the evolving role of “public opinion” in policy debate and formulation are at the heart of Parks Coble’s fine study.<sup>52</sup> Donald Jordan emphasizes the unpredictable results of a new version of Nationalist “revolutionary diplomacy,” particularly anti-Japanese boycotts, in the early 1930s, which he suggests not only failed to deter Japanese aggression but in fact helped to bring it about in the first place.<sup>53</sup> Youli Sun’s stimulating, revisionist account of China’s “appeasement” diplomacy during the 1930s stresses the cultural construction of Chinese foreign policy, which, he argues, was defined and implemented according to conceptions of “imperialism” that assumed an inevitable conflict between Japan and the Western powers. This *idée fixe* emerges in Chiang Kai-shek’s great gamble for war in July 1937 and his determination over the next four years to make world politics fit his preconception.<sup>54</sup> To this Akira Iriye has added the challenge that Sino-Japanese relations in this period are looked at primarily in cultural terms, first as partners in cultural internationalism, then as enemies whose struggle became all the more deadly once it was defined as a battle of cultures.<sup>55</sup>

Japan’s defeat ended the wartime alliance structure and China’s

49. Chi Jingde, *Zhongguo dui Ri kangzhan sunshi diaocha shishu (Historical Account of China's Losses During the War with Japan)* (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 1987); Han Chi-tong, *Zhongguo dui Ri zhanshi sunshi wenguji (Estimated Chinese Losses During Hostilities with Japan)* (Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1946); William C. Kirby, “The Chinese war economy,” in James Hsiung and Steven I. Levine (eds.), *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan, 1937–1945* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1992, pp. 185–213).

50. Hsiung and Levine, *China's Bitter Victory*, p. v.

51. Compilations of documentation from either side of the Taiwan Strait include: *Zhongguo wajiaoshi ziliao xuanbian (Selections of Materials on China's Diplomatic History)*, Vol. 3, 1937–1945 (Beijing: Wajiao xueyuan, 1958); *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: dui Ri kangzhan shiqi, ti san bian, zhanshi wajiao (Preliminary Compilation of Important Historical Materials for the Republic of China, the Period of the War of Resistance Against Japan, Vol. 3, Wartime Diplomacy)* (Taipei: Kuomintang dangshi weiyuanhui, 1981).

52. Parks M. Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931–1937* (Cambridge, MA.: Council on East Asian Studies, 1991).

53. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs*.

54. Youli Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1993).

55. Akira Iriye, *China and Japan in the Global Setting* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.) See also, on the more positive side of cultural relations, Joshua A. Fogel, *The Cultural Dimension of Sino-Japanese Relations: Essays on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

position in it. If China was recognized as a great power, it now had to navigate in a bipolar world dominated by two “superpowers,” the United States and the Soviet Union, and complicated by a Chinese Communist insurgency that neither power could control. Nationalist China would win the war – not only the war with Japan but the struggle for China’s sovereignty and self-assertion in the world – only to lose the country. This outcome, unexpected then and still astounding in retrospect, is one reason why the post-war era has long been the most contested field of Republican China’s diplomatic history. Steven I. Levine’s pathbreaking study, *Anvil of Victory*, demonstrated the interlocking nature of international and domestic settings in explaining, better than anyone else, how the Communists won in Manchuria and set the stage for their conquest of China.<sup>56</sup> Most recently Odd Arne Westad has explored the origins of the Civil War in the context of the Cold War politics and in the light of new Soviet and Chinese materials.<sup>57</sup> He stresses the nearly universal ineptitude (at best, limited vision and gross miscalculation) that marked leading policy-makers in all four corners (that is, in Chongqing, Yan’an, Moscow and Washington) but shows clearly how the *civil* war was fundamentally shaped and its outcome partly determined by *Cold* war diplomacy, in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was now a player.<sup>58</sup> Michael Hunt goes further to suggest the emergence of a distinctively Chinese Communist approach to foreign relations, autonomous from those of other post-imperial Chinese regimes and eventually even from its Comintern and Soviet mentors. In the foreign policy of the Communist “state in embryo” one finds themes that would endure past 1949, not the least of which (and this is my reading more than Hunt’s) was the dominance of an opinionated leader with dangerous limitations in foreign affairs.<sup>59</sup> But Mao Zedong would inherit a state and a history of diplomatic achievement that would allow the People’s Republic to play a major role in world affairs from the start.

### *The Internalization of Foreign Relations*

The definition and defence of the Chinese *zuguo* took place in an environment of inescapable internationalization at home. The physical dimensions of this were most obvious in the cities, particularly the treaty ports, with their paved streets, electric lights, public parks and big cinemas showing mostly Hollywood films, not to mention the thousands of foreigners who lived there. But internationalization would be evident across the land, wherever railway lines were laid with foreign financing;<sup>60</sup>

56. Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945–1948* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

57. Westad, *Cold War and Revolution*.

58. In this regard see also Brian Murray, “Stalin, the Cold War, and the division of China: a multi-archival mystery,” Woodrow Wilson Center Cold War International History Project No. 12, June 1995.

59. Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

60. Ralph Heunemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

or in the skies, where Pan American and Lufthansa introduced civil aviation to China in partnership with the Chinese government,<sup>61</sup> or wherever soldiers marched, in Western-style uniforms, carrying imported guns and ammunition, ordered about by generals weighted down by the medals and epaulets of current fashion, and trained by successive missions of foreign military advisers. And even remote areas could be changed overnight by the force of the international economy.

An example is Dayu *xian*, in south-western Jiangxi province, which in the 20th century enjoyed its second or third, and certainly its most dramatic, incorporation into global markets. This former prefectural seat had for centuries been a major trading depot, being the first city to the north of the Meiling pass from Guangdong, on one of the most frequented trading routes linking Guangzhou to east-central China. As the Frenchman du Halde described the city in 1736, it was “as large as Orléans [ca. 100,000], populous and handsome, has a great trade, and is a place of much resort.”<sup>62</sup> Dayu prospered during the heyday of the Guangzhou system of Sino-Western trade, trafficking in tea, silk and opium. But by the time Shi Dakai’s expedition passed through the city during the Taiping Rebellion in 1858, Dayu’s decline had begun. With the expansion of the treaty-port system and the growth of Shanghai, the route over the Meiling became limited to regional traffic. Dayu became a backwater, worthy of only the lowest form of substation to collect the *lijin* transit tax. Its cultivable land was capable of feeding only half its population, and increased production of local tea, bamboo paper and the once-famous *Dayu banya*, or Dayu pressed duck, did not prevent its downward slide.<sup>63</sup>

Then tungsten was found at Dayu. The presence of the ore was discovered in the late 19th century by a foreign missionary who owned property at nearby Xihua Mountain, which, it turned out, held the largest concentration of wolframite, the ore from which tungsten is mined, in the world. He was soon bought out by local gentry who made the mountain “public property,” but such civic-mindedness lasted only until 1916 – the height of the First World War and of a frenzied demand for tungsten, essential for the making of modern armaments and special steels. A frenetic land rush ensued, with the mountain subdivided into hundreds of small holdings and with 20,000 miners extracting the world’s most

61. Bodo Wiethoff, *Luftverkehr in China, 1928–1949* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975).

62. Père du Halde, *The General History of China* (trans. R. Brookes) (London, 1936), p. 161. See also Stanley Wright, *Kiangsi Native Trade and its Taxation* (Shanghai, 1920), pp. 12, 116; Tan Xichuan, Wang Baojun (comps.), *Dayu xian xu zhi* (1851).

63. Jen Yu-sen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 307; John K. Fairbank, “The creation of the treaty system,” in J. K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 11, Part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 245; Wright, *Kiangsi Native Trade*, p. 12, and Appendix A; Liu Daqian, “Dayu shehui jingji zhi xiankuang tan” (“On the current situation of Dayu’s society and economy”), in Jiangxi sheng zhengfu (ed.), *Jingji xunkan (Economic Periodical)*, Vol. 2, No. 14 (11 May 1934), pp. 15–17; *Jiangxi zhi techan (Local Products of Jiangxi)* (Nanchang, 1935), p. 106.



valuable strategic ore.<sup>64</sup> Dayu became a boom town. It developed a thriving market for delicate silks, imported Western woollens and even Western cosmetics. Tea and wine houses thrived. While the provincial governments of Jiangxi and Guangdong fought with each other and with Nanjing on how to modernize and monopolize China's most precious export commodity, Dayu enjoyed two decades as the centre of the world's tungsten trade.<sup>65</sup>

Incorporation into world markets was wildly uneven between industries and regions. One famous example was the silk industry, where inferior Chinese quality and marketing had endangered one of the nation's most important export industries. In 1932 the national and provincial governments worked with the Silk Reform Association (*Canci gailiang hui*) of private industrialists to set national quality standards for silk manufacture that were designed above all to meet international standards.<sup>66</sup> At the suggestion of experts from the League of Nations, the government began to regulate both the industry and individual producers. Chinese farmers were forced to have their homes or other buildings used in silk production sprayed with disinfectant, and required to buy eggs only from the government. These reforms – largely successful – were not the first steps toward the nationalization of the industry but toward its internationalization.<sup>67</sup> The Chinese state had internalized international standards, and made them its own.

*Political prototypes.* The same can be said, in a general sense, of political standards.<sup>68</sup> No government of the Republican era, except possibly that planned by Zhang Xun in 1916, believed that China's 20th-century crises could be solved by a return to the Qing state. There were certainly no clear precedents in Chinese political history for the task of integrating a new set of social groups – among them a bourgeoisie, a proletariat, an intelligentsia and a permanent, professional military – into the altogether new structure of a nation-state. This was an era, and indeed has been a century, of continual experimentation with political forms, not

64. Zhou Daolong, (ed.), *Gannan wukuang zhi (Tungsten Mines of Southern Jiangxi)* (Nanchang, 1936), pp. 121–22; *Jiangxi jingji wenti (Jiangxi Economic Issues)* (Nanchang: Jiangxi sheng zhengfu, 1934), pp. 255ff; L. Fabel, "Le Tungstène: minerai le plus important de la Chine," *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore*, Vol. 4 (1943), p. 128.

65. "Shishi wusha tongzhi zhi buzhu" ("Steps toward the control of tungsten ore"), *Economic Periodical*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (15 February 1935), p. 5; Liu Daqian, "Dayu," pp. 16–17.

66. Terry M. Weidner, "Local political work under the Nationalists: the 1930's silk reform campaign," *Illinois Papers in Asian Studies*, No. 2 (1983), p. 67; See also Lillian Li, *China's Silk Trade: Traditional Industry in the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 200.

67. Second Historical Archives, Nanjing 44 (1719), "Quanguo jingji weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao" ("Report of the work of the National Economic Council"), 1937, pp. 33–40; *ibid.*, Chin Fen, "The National Economic Council" (March 1935), pp. 67–70; Lau-King Quan, *China's Relations with the League of Nations, 1919–1936* (Hong Kong: Asiatic Litho Press, 1939); Tao Siu, "L'Oeuvre du Conseil National Economique Chinois," dissertation, L'Université de Nancy, 1936.

68. On the linkage between "national identity" and the national question as addressed by Marxism see the stimulating work by Germaine Hoston, *The State, Identity, and the National Question in China and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

one of which was indigenous in origin: the parliamentary republic of 1912–13, the military dictatorship of 1913–16, the attempt at constitutional monarchy in 1916 and, most enduringly, the Leninist party-state.

The party-state became the central arena of Chinese politics from 1924 to the present. While the large majority of scholarly literature has dealt with the Communist variant – what Su Shaozhi has called “party-crazy with Chinese characteristics”<sup>69</sup> – the intellectual lineage of the party-state may be traced from Lenin to Stalin to alternative sets of Chinese leaders in both the Nationalist and Communist camps. It was under Russian tutelage that Sun Yat-sen coined the concept *yi dang zhi guo* (government by the party). It was surely no accident that, when the Nationalists drew up their blueprints for the new capital at Nanjing – now to be an international city patterned on Paris and Washington – the structure housing the national government was literally in the shadows of a massive Kuomintang headquarters (*Zhongyang dangbu*), an architectural marvel combining the most distinct features of Beijing’s Temple of Heaven and the U.S. Capitol building.<sup>70</sup> By the 1930s the attempt to “partify” (*danghua*) political and even cultural life was second nature to the Nationalist regime. Until very recently, and then largely on Taiwan, the dominance of *zhengdang* (ruling party) political culture has overwhelmed consideration of alternatives to the party-state both in political practice and in scholarship.<sup>71</sup>

Of course the working and practice of Chinese politics sometimes remoulded political models nearly beyond recognition. If all governments planned, or claimed they were working toward, a “constitution,” this did not always mean a willingness to adhere to constitutional rule.<sup>72</sup> A cynical New York friend told the American political scientist Frank Goodnow, who was counselling Yuan Shikai as Yuan was setting up his dictatorship, that even the most reactionary government could not do without a constitutional adviser, “any more than the large corporations here who intend to disregard the law start out without the best lawyer of the land in their cabinet.”<sup>73</sup> China’s self-styled fascists of the 1930s had their advisers and models too, and certainly placed their stamp on the historical image of the Nanjing regime. But what passed for Chinese “fascism” would bear little resemblance to the European phenomenon. At most there was an attempt to import the superstructure of an existing fascist state – the rhetoric, marching, music and propaganda – never the essence

69. Paper delivered to the Conference on the Formation of the Communist Party State, Colorado Springs, 1993.

70. Guodu sheji jishu zhuan yuan banshichu (Office of Technical Experts for Planning the National Capital) (comp.), *Shoudu jihua (Plan for the Capital)* (Nanjing, 1929).

71. For the first extensive scholarly treatment of minor parties in 20th-century China see Roger Jeans (ed.), *Roads Not Taken* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

72. See Andrew J. Nathan, *Peking Politics, 1918–1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). On constitutional politics in the Beiyang and Nationalist periods, respectively, see the forthcoming Harvard dissertations of Allen Fung and Paulo Frank.

73. Letter, Charles E. Bigelow to Frank Goodnow, New York, 8 February 1914, cited in Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shikai* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), p. 174.

of a fascist social *movement*, which was at the core of the political strength of contemporary German National Socialism and Italian Fascism, and for which the Kuomintang leadership had no taste. In the vast literature on the nature of fascism, there is no definition that can accommodate its various, often disputatious, admirers in China. Indeed fascism never even found an adequate Chinese translation, but remained in abstract transliteration: *faxisi zhuyi*.<sup>74</sup>

Such, however, was not the case with Chinese Communism, whose determination to “share production” (*gongchan zhuyi*) would translate into an unprecedented redistribution of wealth and status in the territories under its control. It is easy to see features that distinguished Chinese Communism, particularly in its Maoist form, from Communism as practised in Stalin’s Soviet Union or as understood by Western Communist leaders from Ernst Thälmann to Gus Hall. Much of the literature on Chinese Communism, from the seminal work of Benjamin Schwartz to Mark Selden’s powerful study of the “Yan’an Way,” to the newest accounts of the CCP’s origins,<sup>75</sup> has taken such pains to emphasize the Party’s indigenous dimensions that it is easy to forget how strongly this movement was connected to international forces in its youth and how deeply it came to internalize the discipline of international Communism.<sup>76</sup> Certainly the political history of the Party makes no sense without constant reference to the Comintern, the leaders of the USSR and that country’s massive intervention in Chinese political life in the Republican era.<sup>77</sup> In foreign policy, recent work demonstrates anew that even when united front policies led CCP leaders to flirt with Washington in 1944–46, they knew they were married to Moscow.<sup>78</sup> Both

74. William C. Kirby, “Images and realities of Chinese ‘fascism,’” in S. Larsen (ed.), *Fascism Outside Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming), and *Germany and Republican China*, pp. 152–185, 264–65. One critic put it: fascism in China was “a stalk without roots, a river without a source.” See Xu Daquan, “Suowei Zhongguo faxisiti de pipan” (“Critique of so-called Chinese fascism”), *Sanmin zhuyi yuekan* (*Three People’s Principles Monthly*), Vol. 4, No. 5 (15 November 1934).

75. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951); Mark Selden, *The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism*.

76. This was not an overnight process, as Hans J. van de Ven has shown in his *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920–1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). On the international if not particularly cosmopolitan experiences of Chinese Communists in Europe see Marilyn A. Levine, *The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe During the Twenties* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

77. See C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-Ying How, *Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China, 1920–1927* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); *Die Komintern und die national-revolutionäre Bewegung in China. Dokumente, Band 1, 1920-1925* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996).

78. Niu Jun, *Cong Yan’an zouxiang shijie* (*From Yanan to the World*) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1992). Most persuasively see Michael M. Sheng, *Ideology and Foreign Policy: Mao, Stalin, and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); and John Garver, “Little chance,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 87–94. On the fundamental conflicts between the CCP and the United States see also Zi Zhongyun, *Meiguo dui Hua zhengce de yuanqi he fazhan* (*Origins and Development of U.S. Policy Towards China*) (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1987).

out and in power, in the arts as in industry, in internal as in foreign policy, the CCP followed the Soviet road much more than it diverged from it. One must always recall the elementary fact: without the Soviet Union there would be no Chinese Communist Party. There would be no People's Republic of China.

*The military persuasion.* Finally, it may be noted that the political success of the Chinese party-state is related to an even more enduring foreign influence that became a permanent part of modern Chinese politics, that of modern militarism. Both the Nationalists and the Communists fought their way to power in the first half of the 20th century, when China was the world's largest market for Western arms and munitions. It had more men under arms for longer periods than any other part of the world. More to the point, Western militarism (in its Soviet, German and American national forms) was undoubtedly the single most successful cultural export from the West to China.

Foreigners were not needed to teach Chinese to make war or be violent. China's capacity for warfare was already "awesome."<sup>79</sup> What changed, beginning with the new, national army under Yuan Shikai in the late Qing, was the institutionalization of a standing, professional military that measured success in relation to concrete models of military organization abroad. The politicized forces trained by Soviet advisers in Guangdong in 1924–26, the Central Army of Chiang Kai-shek under Prussian-German tutelage from 1927 to 1938, and the several armies advised by first Russians and then Americans during the War of Resistance were all variations on this theme.

To this one may add the militarization of political authority, beginning under and immediately after Yuan Shikai, made manifest as a regional phenomenon in the so-called "warlord" era, and institutionalized at the political center in the dominance of the Military Affairs Commissions of both the Kuomintang and Communist party-states. Beyond that one may turn to the attempted militarization (*junshihua*) of citizenry in Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement and ultimately to the mobilization of the entire country in unending "campaigns" and the reconstitution of social units as "brigades" on the forced march to Communism in Mao's People's Republic. And to maintain order on the streets of the major cities, first under the Nationalists and then under the Communists, China would be the beneficiary, if that is the correct term, of the latest in police training from both West and East.<sup>80</sup>

David Shambaugh's recent effort to revise the history of Chinese politics by "bringing the soldier back in" demonstrates how internal and external security issues were nearly always at the top of the CCP political agenda; how soldier-politicians played central roles in CCP and PRC

79. Hans van de Ven, "War in the making of modern China", paper presented to the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University, September 1995, p. 1.

80. On the use of Western and Japanese models in Republican-era policing see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Policing Shanghai, 1927–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 58.

governance in an “interlocking directorate”; how military values crowded out others and became the source of political campaigns; and how economic priorities were made on the basis of defence strategy.<sup>81</sup> All this was at least equally true of the Nationalist regime, which bequeathed to the Communists what I would call the Chinese “national security state” with a large state industrial sector geared above all to national defence and the creation of military-economic strength.<sup>82</sup>

### *Cultural and Economic Internationalism*

However important the role of foreign policy for the Republican state and foreign prototypes for Republican politics, particularly distinguishing features of the Republican era were the scope and depth of cultural and economic connections with foreigners. It was in those realms that China would be most deeply integrated into global patterns. First, and not least, was the greater possibility of having living foreign relations, that is, relatives who lived, worked or studied abroad, who communicated, remitted funds and occasionally returned home from South-East Asia, North America, Western and Central Europe, the Soviet Union and Japan.

*Missionaries.* Beyond the experiences of Chinese sojourning abroad were those of Westerners in China. At no other time in its modern history was China so open and accessible, even to the greatest scoundrels. Where else could the picaresque J. T. Trebitsch-Lincoln, in his own words “the greatest adventurer of the twentieth century,” make his fortune? This Hungarian Jew, who became an Anglican priest and a member of the British parliament, was already wanted for espionage and sedition in three countries when he emerged in China in 1921 with plans “to develop the country into a first class military and naval power.” He became chief military adviser to three major militarists of the “warlord” era, including Wu Peifu, and pursued mammoth armaments and industrial negotiations on their behalf. Only with the Nationalist reunification of China did he return to the contemplative life, now as a Buddhist monk, residing in a monastery near Nanjing. But his itinerant urge would send him abroad again as a “Buddhist missionary” to Europe, where he would be arrested for swindling.<sup>83</sup>

Missionaries of a more familiar sort have been the subject of study and controversy ever since Mark Twain’s warning that “every convert runs a

81. David Shambaugh, paper delivered to the Conference on the Construction of the Party-State and State Socialism in China, 1936–1965, Colorado Springs, May 1993.

82. William C. Kirby, “Technocratic organization and technological development in China: the nationalist experience and legacy,” in Merle Goldman and Denis Simon (eds.), *Science and Technology in Post-Mao China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 23–43.

83. J. T. Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Der größte Abenteurer des XX. Jahrhunderts!? Die Wahrheit über mein Leben* (Leipzig, 1931), pp. 226–258; Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, pp. 26–28; Bernard Wasserstein, *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

risk of catching our civilization” inaugurated a sceptical literature that competed with missionary-friendly accounts of “God’s work in China.”<sup>84</sup> Only recently, however, has scholarship begun to address the relationship between mission work and international political interests in this period.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the subject of religion, which curiously has seldom been at the heart of missionary studies, is being taken seriously. The work of Daniel Bays in particular is demonstrating how Christianity, too, could be “internalized” in 20th-century China and could find a place among “indigenous” Chinese religions.<sup>86</sup>

Missionary work of a more secular kind is highlighted by recent works, including novels, revolving around the history of the YMCA in China.<sup>87</sup> Even doctors, according to Wolfgang Eckart, may be viewed as “cultural missionaries.”<sup>88</sup> Technical missionaries, if one may use that term, are the subject of Randall Stross’s critical account of the work of American agriculturalists in China, while Chen Yixin has shown how international models for agricultural collectives were domesticated in the Republican era.<sup>89</sup>

Military advisers and mercenaries (can one consider the euphemism “military missionaries”?) have been cultural go-betweens of another kind. In the case of Sino-American relations, attention has been focused almost exclusively on the high politics of the Stilwell and Wedemeyer missions of the 1940s, usually with a strongly partisan perspective.<sup>90</sup> Ultimately more interesting are the institutional history of these missions,<sup>91</sup> particularly in contrast to those of the Soviet mission to the early Nationalist movement<sup>92</sup> or with the German military advisership to the Nationalist

84. See Charles W. Hayford, “Sino-American cultural relations, 1900–1945, cultural criticism, and post-semi-colonial historiography,” paper presented for a Workshop on the Historiography of American-East Asian Relations, Wilson Center, Washington DC, 1994.

85. On relationships between missionary “mentalities” and activities on the one hand, and official attitudes on the other, see Patricia Neils (ed.), *United States Attitudes and Policies Toward China: The Impact of American Missionaries* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990); James Reid, *The Missionary Mind and American East Asian Policy, 1911–1915* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1983); and Jessie G. Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1920–28* (Indiana: Cross Roads Books, 1988). See also Jean-Paul Wiest, *Maryknoll in China: A History, 1918–1955* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1988).

86. This is the working assumption of the Luce Foundation project on the History of Christianity in China Project, headed by Daniel Bays at the University of Kansas.

87. See John Epsey, *Minor Heresies, Major Departures: A China Mission Boyhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); John Hersey, *The Call* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

88. Wolfgang Uwe Eckart, *Deutsche Ärzte in China 1897–1914: Medizin als Kulturmission im Zweiten Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Stuttgart: G. Fischer, 1989).

89. R. E. Stross, *The Stubborn Earth: American Agriculturalists on Chinese Soil, 1898–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

90. Of which the best examples are Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); and Ching-chun Liang, *General Stilwell in China, 1942–1944: The Full Story* (New York: St John’s University Press, 1972).

91. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Mission to China* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), *Time Runs Out in CBI* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1959), and *Stilwell’s Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956).

92. Wilbur and How, *Missionaries of Revolution*.

government during 1928–38. The latter has been lately the subject of detailed research not only on its leadership but also on its organization, institutional culture and influence on a range of military, economic, ideological and political matters. This also provides material from which to gauge the personal, almost teacher–student relationship between adviser and master, as with Chiang Kai-shek’s interaction with his first and most trusted German adviser, Max Bauer. The curriculum imparted to a generation of Chinese officers, which was *au courant* enough to include a required course on “The Influence of Race on Politics,” is known too.<sup>93</sup>

*Education.* The broadest influence of international education would be felt outside the official sphere, sometimes by political design, in the case of cultural activities broadly sponsored by a foreign power,<sup>94</sup> but more commonly by the coming together of young Chinese in international institutions in China, in an era of vibrant, initially uncoordinated, educational exchange, when China housed a cosmopolitan and diverse collection of institutions of higher learning. This has become one of the most fertile fields in the study of China’s foreign relations, as scholars trace the beginning of modern academic disciplines and the training of Chinese students, in China, on a high international standard.<sup>95</sup>

93. See for example, Bernd Martin (ed.), *Die deutsche Beraterschaft in China, 1927–1938* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1981); Hsi-Huey Liang, *The Sino-German Connection: Alexander von Falkenhausen between China and Germany, 1900–1941* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978). On Bauer see Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, ch. 3; on racism see *ibid.* pp. 167–69, and more completely, in terms of China’s relationship to international racial discourse, the bold study of Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

94. Françoise Kreissler, *L’Action culturelle*; Rotraut Bieg-Brentzel, *Die Tongji-Universität. Zur Geschichte deutscher Kulturarbeit in Shanghai* (Frankfurt: Haag und Herchen, 1984).

95. On the diversity of the higher educational enterprise in China see above all, Yeh Wen-hsin, *The Alienated Academy: Culture and Politics in Republican China* (Cambridge MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1990). For a broad set of essays on cultural and education interactions see Priscilla Roberts (ed.), *Sino-American Relations Since 1900* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Centre of Asian Studies, 1991). Further see Mary Bullock, *An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Union Medical College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), and “The legacy of the Rockefeller Foundation in China,” paper presented to the American Historical Association annual meeting, 1990; Peter Buck, *American Science and Modern China, 1876–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); William J. Haas, *China Voyager: Gist Gee’s Life in Science* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); James Reardon-Anderson, *The Study of Change: Chemistry in China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Laurence A. Schneider, “The Rockefeller Foundation, the China Foundation, and the development of modern science in China,” *Social Science in Medicine*, No. 16 (1982); Yang Tsui-hua, “Geological sciences in Republican China, 1912–1937,” Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1985; Bettina Gransow, *Geschichte der chinesischen Soziologie* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1992); Chiang Yung-chen, “Social engineering and the social sciences in China, 1898–1949,” Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1986; and Joyce K. Kallgren and Denis Fred Simon (eds.), *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1987).

Paradoxically, when higher education was gradually brought back under the control of the Chinese state in the 1930s, this too was on the basis of – or was at least legitimized by – international advice in the form of a commission from the League of Nations' programme on International Intellectual Co-operation. This "Becker Commission," named for its leader, the former Prussian minister of education C. H. Becker, decried the disorganization of Chinese education (which for some reason it blamed on the Americans). It aimed to strengthen the state's hand in setting educational agendas; to rationalize geographically and fiscally the system of national (*guoli*) universities; and to establish a nation-wide system of entrance examinations that would permit authorities to channel admissions to specific disciplines. The result was to reorganize, centralize and ultimately to nationalize Chinese higher education<sup>96</sup> on the basis of an "authoritarian view of knowledge"<sup>97</sup> shared and, in time, implemented vigorously by the Nationalist regime. In terms of disciplines, the reforms that took place in the early 1930s marked a fundamental, and so far permanent, shift of priorities in Chinese higher education away from the humanities and social sciences, in which enrolment began to be limited, in favour of science, mathematics and engineering.

The greatest international schools of all were simply the treaty ports, the multi-cultural arenas of learning, meeting and nationalist conflict. These were the hubs of modern economic growth and the central meeting places between Chinese and foreigners (not to mention between Chinese of different regions) in the first part of the 20th century. They were the most conspicuous breeding grounds of new social classes with international connections. Their heyday co- incided with Chinese capitalism's first "golden age"; of China's first – and last – independent workers' movement; and of an internationally-oriented intelligentsia poorly connected to the state. Here are the best examples of the world of Republican China's "private" foreign relations.<sup>98</sup>

In the field of Republican Chinese history Shanghai, at once an international and a Chinese city, has been a natural focus of new work. In the study of that metropolis alone Emily Honig and Elizabeth Perry have reopened the field of labour history, which had lay dormant in the West since the work of Jean Chesneaux; Frederic Wakeman has brought to light the dark, underworld struggles of the police and their adversaries;

96. C. H. Becker *et al.*, *The Reorganization of Education in China* (Paris: League of Nations' Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, 1932); Zhu Jiahua, *Jiuge yue lai jiaoyubu zhengli quanguo jiaoyu zhi shuoming* (*Explanation of the Ministry of Education's Reform of National Education in the Past Nine Months*) (Nanjing, 1932).

97. Ruth E. S. Hayhoe, "China's higher curricular reform in historical perspective," *The China Quarterly*, No. 110 (June 1987), p. 203. See also Ernst Neugebauer, *Anfänge pädagogische Entwicklungshilfe unter dem Völkerbund in China, 1931 bis 1935* (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1971).

98. See David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in 1920's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Christian Henriot, *Shanghai, 1927–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).



Emily Honig has investigated migrant culture, Jeffrey Wasserstrom student culture, Wen-hsin Yeh banking culture – all assisted by archival sources that were not open to research just a few years ago.<sup>99</sup>

Yet the international social history of these cities remains to be written. The “sojourners” studied by Wakeman, Yeh and others consist of the Chinese bankers, industrialists, workers, students, journalists, gangsters and prostitutes who gradually came to think of themselves as “Shanghai people.” It is not the Shanghai of international sojourners – businessmen, adventurers and refugees from around the globe – who are the protagonists in Nicholas Clifford’s recent study. Nor is it the Shanghai of young John Hay Thornburn, the British permanent resident who murdered, and was murdered, in defence of the place that once was known as the Ulster of the East.<sup>100</sup> These cities were sites not just to visit – the scope of international tourism being what it was in the days before transcontinental air travel – but places to live, work, and to be a home abroad for foreign nationals who made China their primary domicile. Above all it is the history of the interaction between Chinese and foreign sojourners in China that is the missing story of modern Sino-foreign relations. The opening of Chinese and international archives now permit this history now to be written, and, simply put, to “bring the West back in” by treating the foreign presence in China as an integral part of modern Chinese history.<sup>101</sup>

*Business.* Certainly a history that includes the foreigner-in-China is fundamental to any new work on the history of Chinese business enterprise, on patterns of Sino-foreign economic co-operation and competition, and on the long-term development of modern Chinese capitalism in an international context.<sup>102</sup> There is no point, as Marie-Claire Bergère argues persuasively, in distinguishing between a “national” versus a “compradore” bourgeoisie: all important businesses had vital international connections, even as almost all had nationalistic ownership.<sup>103</sup>

99. Emily Honig, *Sisters and Strangers: Workers in the Shanghai Cotton Mills, 1919–1929* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Jean Chesneaux, *The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919–1927* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968); Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Shanghai Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Emily Honig, “Migrant culture in Shanghai: in search of a Subei identity,” and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, “The evolution of Shanghai student protest repertoire,” both in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Wen-hsin Yeh (eds.), *Shanghai Sojourners* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies of the University of California, Berkeley, 1992); Wen-hsin Yeh, “Corporate space, communal time: everyday life in Shanghai’s Bank of China,” *American Historical Review*, No. 9 (February 1995), pp. 97–123. On the Chinese municipal government of Shanghai see Henriot, *Shanghai*.

100. Wakeman and Yeh, *Shanghai Sojourners*; Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire*; Robert A. Bickers, “Death of a young Shanghailander: the Thornburn Case and the defence of the British Treaty Ports in China in 1931,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1995).

101. See in particular the forthcoming work of Robert A. Bickers, *Colonial Attitudes and Informal Empire: The British in the Chinese Treaty Ports, 1843–1943* (Manchester: Manchester University Press.)

102. See Rajeswary Ampalavanar Brown (ed.), *Chinese Business Enterprise in Asia* (London: Routledge, 1995). On patterns of both emulation and competition with Western enterprise see Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); and Bergère, *Golden Age*.

103. Bergère, *Golden Age*.

Nor is there any point in limiting discussion of economic internationalization just to the treaty ports. The dynamics of Republican-era economic growth, if one applies the findings of Thomas J. Rawski, began with but extended well beyond the treaty port and urban sectors. Rawski traces a pattern of sustained economic expansion of the national economy during the period 1912–37 that was “rooted in the expansion of foreign trade.”<sup>104</sup>

The same could be said for the dramatic expansion of the state sector of the economy in the second half of the Republican period. Chinese state capitalism developed, and could only have developed, in partnership with foreign firms and governments and with foreign technical assistance. This was as true of the joint ventures that funded civil aviation as it was of foreign participation in the expansion of the national rail network, as of the establishment of China’s first automotive manufacturing company, and, most strikingly, of the creation of the state heavy industrial sector that would be the economic heart of the late Nationalist and early Communist regimes. The engineers and planners in charge of Chinese state capitalism were mostly trained abroad, or were sent abroad to work with partner firms or governments. They would prove ingenious in adapting to difficult, indigenous circumstances, as when the National government relocated to Sichuan during the war. But their plans and their training were based on state-of-the-art technology and permanent connections to the most advanced industrial economies. When more than two-thirds of China’s total industrial capital was in the hands of the state by the end of the Republican era, this was the result not just of nationalization, but of internationalization.<sup>105</sup> It was the result, indeed, of what Sun Yat-sen had once called, in his industrial blueprint for the Chinese Republic, “the international development of China.”<sup>106</sup>

### *Epilogue*

If the Republican era was indeed such a high tide of internationalism, how can one account for what followed it? In the first years of the People’s Republic, China cut off formal relations with all but one Western power and then was diplomatically derecognized by the rest. It was excluded from the central forum of global diplomacy, the United Nations. At home almost all Westerners were thrown out of China, their missions, businesses and homes confiscated, their Chinese partners and friends placed under a political cloud. By 1952 even the receipt of mail from a Western country could be viewed as a seditious act. The Chinese

104. Thomas J. Rawski, *Economic Growth in Prewar China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 344.

105. See Kirby, “Technocratic Organization,” and “Continuity and change in Modern China: economic planning on the Mainland and on Taiwan, 1943–58,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* (July 1990).

106. Sun Yat-sen, *The International Development of China* (New York and London, 1922). See Michael R. Godley, “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: Sun Yat-sen and the international development of China,” *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No. 18 (July 1987), pp. 109–125.

people “stood up,” in Mao’s words, only to give the boot to the most intense set of foreign relations in China’s modern history.

One explanation is that the PRC was reacting, if not overreacting, to a period of unprecedented interpenetration on the part of Chinese and foreigners. But it also followed a regime that had successfully defended China’s status internationally while regaining its full sovereignty internally. Could it not have simply built on those accomplishments? One thing should be clear from the above account: the Republican state had given China what it had not had under the late Qing: the capacity to take the lead in its external relations, and to regulate, or redirect, foreign relations within China to the service of the state. The PRC had this capacity from the start and would use it to the extreme.

A more compelling general explanation is that the early PRC did not diminish China’s foreign relations so much as point them all in one direction: East.<sup>107</sup> China was never so deeply incorporated into an international system as it was in the hottest years of the Cold War. Certainly it had never entered into a foreign relationship of the intensity and scope of the Sino-Soviet alliance in all its dimensions. This was an alliance of (initially) shared ideology, and built on decades of Soviet mentoring of the CCP. Beyond that it was the most fully articulated military alliance in China’s history. It was a cultural and educational alliance, confirmed by the thousands of Chinese who studied in the USSR and the thousands of Russians who taught in China. And it was an economic alliance of greater depth and complexity than any of modern China’s foreign economic relationships. Through long-term plans and annual negotiation, China’s economy would become linked to those of its Eastern European and Soviet brothers. At times China would even be a donor nation to its allies, as in its sending of emergency food aid to the tottering East German regime in 1953. On the whole China was the beneficiary of the largest planned transfer of technology in world history, which gave the People’s Republic a new core of state industries. For the People’s Republic, as for the Nationalist regime before it, industrialization meant internationalization.

Only the total mismanagement of both China’s foreign relationships and its domestic politics – and these were interconnected phenomena under Mao Zedong’s leadership after the end of the First Five-Year Plan – could have left China in the diplomatic quarantine and economic isolation of the 1960s, when it faced, as it had not since the Boxer War, a world of enemies. But this has proven to be the great exception to the rule of onrushing internationalization that has marked China’s modern history from the beginning of the Republican era.

107. “East,” that is, in the convoluted geospeak of the Cold War, for China’s new allies were of course north by north-west.