

## Chiang Kai-shek and His Time

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# Revolution Deconstructed: Chiang Kai-shek and the Northern Expedition in the Japanese Press, 1926-28

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**Abstract** The Northern Expedition (1926-28) was a turning-point in the rise to power of the Nationalist Party in China, and instrumental in Chiang Kai-shek's own meteoric rise from the position of military commander to top political leader. Scholars have examined the international consequences of this turning-point in Republican history from many angles. Most studies, however, have focussed on inter-state relations at the institutional level, leaving public opinion rather on the sidelines. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper discusses Japanese press coverage of the Expedition, with a particular focus on the changing perception of Chiang's role in the Nationalist Party. The analysis brings to light the articulate response of the press and of other national figures to the events in China. If on the one hand the Expedition gave cause for anxiety because of the threat it posed to Japanese interests, on the other it raised the hope that a stable government would emerge after years of civil war. While some commentators expressed cautious optimism, however, other observers held strong reservations about Nationalist leadership. Furthermore, coverage of the Jinan Incident shows that even the advocates of a policy of conciliation could assume a hardline stance when the Japanese military took the initiative on the ground. These findings suggest that further research into the early years of the Nanjing government could help explain why public opinion shifted rapidly in favour of an aggressive policy in China after the Manchurian Incident in 1931.

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**Keywords** Nationalist Party. Sino-Japanese Relations. Jinan Incident. Public opinion.

## 1 Introduction

The Northern Expedition of 1926-28, the military campaign which led to the formal reunification of China under the Nationalist Party, has been con-

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sidered in a number of studies as a turning-point in the Republican period (in English, recent publications are Van de Ven 2003, 94-130; Zarrow 2005, 230-47; Taylor 2009, 52-85; the most detailed account is in Wilbur 1983). Debate has concentrated on the significance of the Expedition in terms of revolutionary movement, seen from the two opposite perspectives of the Nationalist (GMD) and Communist (CCP) Parties. For the latter, the breakup of the United Front in 1927 was a grave setback in the fight against the forces of reaction. For the former, on the other hand, it represented a 'purification' from deviant radicalism. From these mutually exclusive viewpoints, scholars have explored a wide range of Chinese and foreign sources in an attempt to reach a balanced assessment of the political process.

Research on Japanese documents has largely been confined to the institutional sphere (for instance, see Iriye [1965] 1990, 125-59; Satō 2009, 21-71, 224-82; diplomatic correspondence has been collected in Gaimushō 1989-90, vols. 1-2). Only a few scholars have examined those crucial years through the lens of Japanese public opinion. Gotō (1987, 248-97) has analysed editorials from the *Ōsaka Asahi shinbun* as part of an extensive study on how this leading newspaper closely observed the Chinese Revolution from its beginnings, in 1911. Eguchi (1972, 355-60) has praised the liberal magazine *Tōyō keizai shinpō* for its strong criticism of Japan's military intervention in China. The official histories of the two largest newspaper companies also consider their coverage of the Shandong Expeditions in 1927 and 1928 (*Asahi shinbun* 1995, vol. *Taishō-Shōwa senzen hen*, 299-301, 310-2; *Mainichi shinbun* 1972, 155-7; *Mainichi shinbun* 2002, vol. 1, 674-82). Underlying each of these works is an effort to present the relevant editorial line in a positive light, with the emphasis on the intention to establish a constructive Sino-Japanese dialogue. Eguchi, however, has stressed that the *Tōyō keizai shinpō* was the only voice that stood uncompromisingly against imperialism and militarism, while major newspapers held on to the notion of preserving Japan's "special interests" in Northern China.

More recently, other researchers have dealt specifically with the issue of Chiang Kai-shek's leadership. Yamada (2005, 643-53) has analysed the writings of journalist Tachibana Shiraki, who spent most of his professional life in China. Tachibana, who supported the Northern Expedition as a popular struggle against the warlords, criticised both the excesses of Communism and the reactionary character of the Nanjing government. Soon disillusioned with Chiang, he dismissed him simply as a military dictator who had betrayed the revolutionary cause. Matsushige (2013) focuses on the main Japanese newspaper in Manchuria, the *Manshū Nichinichi shinbun*, showing how expatriates responded with growing apprehension to the Expedition. Finally, Iechika (2013) has compared press coverage of Chiang's trip to Japan in the autumn of 1927 with the account left by Chiang himself in his diary, pointing out the difference there was between the public reception actually awarded him and Chiang's expectations.

Research based on Japanese press sources has a double merit. On the one hand, it presents additional viewpoints which contribute to balancing our understanding of the facts. On the other, it provides essential information on Sino-Japanese relations beyond government level. This paper, which presents a survey of major newspapers and magazines, aims to contribute in both ways to the literature on the Northern Expedition. The period examined covers July 1926 to June 1928, from the start of the military campaign to its completion after the capture of Beijing. The two newspapers considered are the *Ōsaka Mainichi shinbun* (OM) and the *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* (TA or simply *Asahi*), which were among the most widely read in Japan. According to police reports, at the end of November 1927 the *Mainichi* had a daily circulation of 1,166,432 copies, while the *Asahi* was selling about 400,000 copies; neither purportedly had a political bias (Keiho kyoku [1927] 1979, 7, 29).<sup>1</sup> Both *Mainichi* and *Asahi* had a partner in the same group: the *Tōkyō Nichinichi shinbun* and the *Ōsaka Asahi shinbun* respectively (about 450,000 and 1,260,596 copies; Keiho kyoku 1979, 7, 29). It is important to point out, however, that *Nichinichi* editorials tended to coincide with those of the *Mainichi*, while the two *Asahi* acted more independently. Therefore, a review of the Tokyo-based *Asahi* can highlight the differences with its Osaka counterpart. The other sources selected are *Chūō kōron* and *Kaizō*, which were among the most popular general-interest magazines of that period (about 20,000 and 100,000 copies, respectively; Keiho kyoku 1979, 21). Being specialised publication, *Gaikō jihō* is not considered here. As the main forum on foreign affairs, however, it will be discussed in another paper.

When dealing with press sources, the question of the extent to which articles may be representative of public opinion in the broadest sense arises inevitably. Japan was at the time a nation of 61 million people, 77% of whom resided in rural districts (Naikaku tōkei kyoku 1940, 5). The editorial market, on the other hand, catered chiefly to the urban middle class. The publications cited here, then, could hardly be said to be the 'voice of the people'. Nonetheless, they do shed light on the political leanings of an important section of Japanese society, which debated foreign affairs with a critical spirit.

The following paragraphs track press coverage of the Northern Expedition in its various stages, with a focus on the changing perception of Chiang Kai-shek and his role in the Nationalist Party. The first section addresses the question of GMD-CCP cooperation in the initial phase of the campaign. The next traces the widening of the Left-Right split in the GMD in the first months of 1927, up to the start of the 'red purge'. The central part then discusses later developments from the standpoint of

1 Higher figures (1,304,262 and 575,838 copies) appear in company figures, which refer to sales on New Year's Day. *Mainichi shinbun* 2002, *Bekkan*, 97; *Asahi shinbun* 1995, *Shiryō hen*, 320.

GMD factionalism. The final section re-examines the Expedition comprehensively in relation to Japan's interests in China. The conclusion ties up the results of the research comparatively with those of previous studies.

## 2 The Spectre of Communism Looms Over National Revolution

Japanese press coverage of the Northern Expedition started in a rather low key. Attention was still focussed on Beijing, where control of the nominal government of China had recently shifted to the Fengtian clique as a result of the latest clash of arms between the regional factions. Political instability brought with it concern over a range of international issues, such as the stalemate in negotiations for the revision of Chinese tariffs (TA 6 July). When the GMD officially launched the Expedition in Canton, reporters summed up the news in a few lines (TA 7, 10 July; OM 11 July). Only one of these articles commented on the appointment of Chiang Kai-shek as commander-in-chief of the Nationalist forces. Because of the extensive powers which accompanied the post, the article stated, "the position of Mr Chiang as dictator (*dokusaikan*) of Canton has been publicly acknowledged" (TA 7 July; a similar remark in TA 3 August).

Further explanation regarding Chiang's standing in the GMD and the Expedition in general, however, would soon follow as the Nationalists scored their first victories in Hunan. The *Asahi* (21 July) noted that the campaign against the Zhili-Fengtian coalition

is not a mere struggle for power between North and South, or military cliques; it is a fight between a nationalist, conservative military clique and a Communist Party that uses foreign power. It has to be looked at as a grave development in a struggle that will condition the fate of China.

Regarding the GMD leadership, in the same article the opinion was that

the Canton government has now become completely the realm of the Communist Party. Former chairmen of the central executive committee as Hu Hanmin and Wang Jingwei have lost their position one after the other; the last Right-wing leader, [...] Wu Tiecheng, has suddenly been removed, arrested and imprisoned [...]. In this way the central executive committee has lost half of its members and actual power in the Canton government has shifted to the despotic arbitrariness of Mr Chiang Kai-shek and the supreme political advisor, Mr Borodin.<sup>2</sup>

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2 For a portrait of Mikhail Borodin, see Furushō 1927.

This editorial introduced three key themes that would later crop up again in discussions on the Northern Expedition, namely: the role of the Soviet Union as foreign power behind the GMD; factional strife within the GMD; and Chiang's relationship with the Communists.

Concerning the first point, the *Mainichi* agreed that the Expedition was a Soviet-sponsored venture, which aimed to extend Communist influence over a vast territory. Russia, "after the failure of its Far East policy in Northern China [...] is injecting tremendous strength into Canton as its only foothold in Southern China" (10 August). This explained why, "taking the opportunity of disturbances in Hunan" (that is, Tang Shengzhi's rebellion against the local warlord), Russia "has supplied large amounts of weapons and ammunitions and has had [...] Mr Chiang Kai-shek carry out the Northern Expedition, in the attempt to stretch its arm over the Chang Jiang region" (10 August; a more detailed discussion of Russia's China policy is in TA 4 January 1927). According to this view, Moscow was manipulating the GMD:

It is no exaggeration to say that at present all foreign and domestic policies of the Canton government are based on Russia's guidelines. Mr Chiang Kai-shek and others embellish this truth by claiming that they have allied with Russia from an international standpoint as a first step towards the achievement of a world revolution, and internally for the grand ideal of accomplishing national revolution". (OM 10 August)

The same article concluded that, since the ultimate Russian goal was to "expel the powers' influence from South China and replace it with a red kingdom", the issue of GMD's relations with the foreign powers was deserving of careful consideration.

Such an emphasis on Soviet dominance was toned down somewhat elsewhere, by recalling that the Expedition had been a plan cherished by the GMD since the time of Sun Wen's leadership (OM 12 August, 21 November; TA 17 August). It was the Russian advisors, in fact, who in early 1926 had rejected as premature Chiang's appeal to launch the Expedition. This had also been the mainstream position of the CCP, until Chiang staged a coup in Canton – the so-called 20 March Incident – that forced the Communists to re-negotiate the terms for cooperation with the GMD. Chiang had acted pre-emptively, spurred by the suspicion that a conspiracy was about to strike him. It seems, however, that these fears were only the product of a climate of mutual distrust (Wilbur 1983, 573-5; Van de Ven 2003, 98-104). At the time, the Japanese press gave credit to the story of the aborted Communist coup (TA 28 March, 4 April; OM 1, 12 April; also OM 21 November, quoting from the GMD Right journal, the *Guomindang zhoukan*). Allegedly, the Communists wanted to get rid of Chiang because "while on the surface he takes the attitude of joining hands with Russia, on the other side he has

an anti-Communist colour” (OM 1 April). At the same time, Chiang seemed to behave independently from the Right-wing leaders of the GMD, whom he had already ousted from Canton (OM 1 April).

Gotō (1987, 247) notes that the Incident received little attention in the *Ōsaka Asahi*. This newspaper, indeed, only conjectured that the expulsion of “many Russians” from Canton would induce the Soviet Union to moderate its China policy (8 April). The *Tōkyō Asahi* took a closer look at the consequences of the coup in the GMD. Initially, it seemed that the purge of the radical Left had placed the “moderate faction” in a dominant position (3 April). Shortly after, though, it was reported that Communists within the party were still strong; as long as factional strife continued, a Northern Expedition stood no chance (19 April). Rather, there was a risk that Canton would fall into “a state of anarchy” (21 April). Finally, there came news that Chiang had managed to negotiate an agreement between the pro- and anti-Communist factions in the army, which would voluntarily dissolve their organisations (24 April).

In conclusion, at this stage, Chiang’s political leaning certainly appeared ambiguous. Because of his role in the repression of Right-wing leaders back in 1925 (as remembered in Ikeda 1927, 52; Yamamura 1927a, 42) and again after the renewed agreement with the CCP, journalists at times would portray him as a Leftist (as in OM 12 August 1926; TA 5 January 1927). Still, the economist Negishi Tadashi remarked that Chiang’s pro-Russian stand was only opportunism: he “has not turned red from his heart; rather, he is said to be an anti-Communist, but there is no way he could denounce Communism” (TA 5 January).

The tendency to associate Chiang with the Communists was in part the standard reaction to his appointment as commander of a Soviet-backed campaign. The *Mainichi*, however, also pointed to some incipient reasons for friction, which would become increasingly evident in the following months. In the first place, the Communist Party and labour unions were not necessarily ready to comply with the instructions of the GMD government, as proven by the authorities’ recourse to an order labelling strikes as “counter-revolutionary” activity to stop them (OM 12 August). Although the Nationalist Army claimed not to be responsible for violence committed by the labour union corps, this sounded like a lame excuse that would hardly win the trust of either foreigners or the Chinese people themselves, “aside from the violent and the lower classes” (16 December). Hence, no matter how hard Chiang tried to present himself as Sun Wen’s heir, “this will be useless [...] so long as he does not reject Communism and break up with Communists and Russian advisors” (4 October).<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it appeared that Chiang could

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3 As an instance of these attempts to distance themselves from the Communists, see an interview with Chiang in Jiujiang (TA 19 November evening). GMD member Yin Rugeng, who

not easily free himself of these bonds. Behind the successful advance of the GMD, the editor observed, there were “the young students and labourers” in China, and Russian support from abroad (3 September).

Whether initiative for the Expedition had come from Russia or the GMD, or whether Chiang was a Communist pawn or not, in the eyes of Japanese commentators the military campaign remained related to the threat of “reddening” (*sekka*). Quotations from the *Nationalist Party Weekly* included the following passage:

the Communist Party propagandises its ideology and in the end, wherever the Northern Expedition armies arrive, there arrives the influence of the Communist Party. Although originally it was the Nationalist Party’s Northern Expedition, the Communist Party has used it to gain power, wreaking havoc on the Nationalist Party. (OM 21 November)<sup>4</sup>

The *Asahi*, too, shared the view that the Expedition’s steady advance into the Yangzi region meant, without doubt, that “the reddening forces have come to control almost half of China” (30 November). The editor then pondered the disquieting consequences of such a situation:

The time when all of China turns red may not be far off. The reddening of all China is the emergence of a second Russia. Both the Canton government and the leaders of the Northern Expedition pledge that they will not carry out Communism, and that they uphold the Three Principles of the People of Mr Sun Wen. We also do not believe that today, after the failure of idealistic Communism in Russia, they will try to carry out in China this kind of Communism. However, if we look at the political structure of the Canton government, in the cell organisation based on the proletarian masses there is no difference from the Soviet organisation of workers/peasants. [...] Should they control all of China, the point is whether they will keep their reiterated hard line on the abrogation of established treaties. [...] Although the reddening of China is China’s own problem, if the effects of reddening involve indiscriminate repeal of the established treaties, that is a vital problem for Japan. For the sake of a vital problem, regardless of whether the counterpart turns red or not, one has to assert those rights that must be asserted.

had taken refuge in Japan during the previous war, spoke in defence of Chiang in an interview to the *Asahi* (10 September evening). Evening editions bear the following day’s date.

<sup>4</sup> In another article, Negishi explained how the organisation of the Revolutionary Army followed the Soviet model and how its political sections, in charge of propaganda, were under Deng Yanda, “red among the reds” (TA 3 January 1927). He also wrote about the ties between the GMD and Leftist mass organisations of peasants and workers (TA 6, 7 January 1927).

This view contrasts with the more positive attitude of the *Ōsaka Asahi*, which sympathised with the GMD as the only possible agent of China's reunification supported by popular legitimacy (Gotō 1987, 249-52), and considered likely a substantial reduction of Soviet influence over the party in the future (Gotō 1987, 249-53).

Undeniably, the GMD had an explicit anti-imperialist goal, that is to say: abrogation of the unfair treaties that set limits on China's sovereignty to the advantage of the foreign powers (TA 14 September). Even admitting that now the GMD targeted only British interests, it might soon turn its attention to Japan as well if the Expedition clashed with the Fengtian clique in the North (OM 18 September). The practical consequences of anti-imperialism in the context of the Expedition became clear at the start of 1927, with the takeover of British concessions in Hankou and Jiujiang. These events came as shocking news to the Japanese public. The *Mainichi* (7 January) called the occupation "a grave problem that [...] requires also the attention of our country". The *Asahi* (12 January) stated emphatically: "As a world problem, at present and in the future, there is no problem as great as this". Quite naturally, as discussed further below, anti-British incidents fuelled the debate on how Japan should protect its own interests in China.

On these developments, Chiang took an ambiguous stand. When addressing a large Chinese audience at a welcome rally in Nanchang, he stressed the need to fight imperialism so as to achieve the abolition of extraterritoriality and the restitution of concessions (OM 15 January evening). On the other hand, on a different occasion he allegedly stated that the Hankou concession should be given back to Britain, as occupation was the wrong means to that end (OM 16 January evening). As one journalist put it, "Chiang Kai-shek, having in mind the people's inclinations, has tried to cater to their will with ingenious propaganda, by professing aloud what the public wants him to say" (Ikeda 1927, 50). In this respect, Chiang's behaviour was similar to that of foreign minister Eugene Chen and other GMD officials, whose tones swung between the threatening and the reassuring. After interviewing the 'top five' men in government (Chen, Xu Qian, Song Ziwen, Deng Yanda and Sun Ke, in OM 4-6 January), the *Mainichi* reporter concluded (6 January) that they shared some common ideas regarding Japan. These were: the absolute necessity of Sino-Japanese friendship, based on an equal footing; the acknowledgment of Japan's special position in Manchuria; and, in the long-term, an agreement for the restitution of Japanese concessions. Commentators, however, remained wary of conciliatory statements. Negishi recalled that Chiang, after the capture of Wuhan, had declared that "the National Government will stifle British imperialism in the South; the National Army will stifle Japanese imperialism in the North" (TA 8 January 1927). Moreover, the spread of radical movements in the territories occupied by the GMD reinforced doubts about the ability of its officials to restrain the Communists and labour unions (OM 17, 22

March). For these reasons, the press kept a close eye on the mounting factional strife within the GMD.

### 3 Towards Rupture Point: the Path from Nanchang to Shanghai

From the start of the Expedition, it was clear that the political situation in Canton was unstable (TA 17 August). Internal divisions became rife at the end of 1926 when Chiang, in response to the establishment of a Provisional Joint Council in Wuhan by Leftist leaders, summoned from Canton the remaining group of party officials to form a rival political centre in Nanchang. Tension between the two factions soon escalated. At the Third plenum of the central executive committee (CEC), held in Hankou on 11 March, the Left majority stripped Chiang of his key posts (the most detailed account is in OM 13 April). Chiang, however, simply refused to recognise the legitimacy of those decisions. He and his allies started to use armed force against the Communists, repressing demonstrations and coups in several cities. The violent suppression of thousands of Communists in Shanghai on 12 April marked a point of no return in the break from the United Front. A few days later, a new government was formed in Nanjing in open opposition to Wuhan.

Thus, in the first months of 1927, Japanese newspapers had a growing body of evidence which set Chiang apart from the GMD's Left wing. Shortly before the Third plenum, the *Mainichi* (7 March) noted that both sides had their reasons to resent each other. On the one hand, the concentration of military and political power in Chiang's hands was in total disregard of the committee system that had so far been the norm in party governance (on the Soviet origins of this feature, see TA 5 January 1927). On the other, those in Wuhan were "more radical than Chiang and others"; their ability to instigate workers and take advantage of anti-foreign incidents was a cause of serious concern to the Nanchang group (the former aspect is emphasised in TA 1 March evening). Yet, since the CCP and the GMD had some powerful common enemies, the editor's prediction was that Chiang would not resort to a coup, as he had in March of the previous year, and that the GMD would not split unless Chiang struck a compromise with the Northern coalition. The *Asahi* (6 March) agreed that a formal split of the party was unlikely, offering a different reason: the senior officials had moved to Nanchang because there Chiang would protect them from the radical Left; as long as Chiang held military power, the Wuhan faction would not dare to act. However, in the wake of the party summit – in which Chiang did not even participate – the break appeared serious. Leftist propaganda accused the commander-in-chief of despotic behaviour, of conspiring in view of an agreement with the North, and of having turned pro-Japanese. This was nothing but an attempt "to beat down and reduce to

impotence Mr Chiang Kai-shek, who is a thorn in the side for the Communist faction of Wuhan”, so as to “carry out the reddening campaign as they wish” (OM 16 March evening). According to an anonymous GMD official, however, such high-handed behaviour would only hasten the explosion of internecine conflict (TA 16 March).

What had so emboldened the radical Left? The *Mainichi* (16 March evening) listed three causes: (Russian) financial support through Borodin; anti-Chiang popular sentiment in Wuhan, resulting from effective propaganda; and the elimination of Chiang’s military influence in Wuhan thanks to the cooptation of Tang Shengzhi. One other fact (already pointed out in OM 16 January evening, 14 March) signalled a process that would receive much attention in the press: the emergence of competing military factions within the GMD. Tang had been one of the first local leaders to join the party at the start of the Expedition; several others followed, defecting from the enemy. Moreover, the GMD had already coopted some powerful warlords, such as Li Zongren from Guanxi. There were also rising party members who took the Expedition as an opportunity to acquire a territorial base, as did Li Jishen in Guandong. Chiang himself, by advancing into the Lower Yangzi region, secured direct control of Chiangxi, Fujian and his home province of Zhejiang. Earlier, the *Mainichi* had already started to see Chiang as the leader of a “new military clique” (*shingunbatsu*) based in Nanchang (2 February). This was ironic, for one of the declared goals of the Expedition was precisely that of sweeping away warlordism. Instead, political conflict within the GMD created a fertile ground for the rise of military factions, old and new (24 September). Hence the comment: “Whenever they open their mouth, the Southerners attack the military cliques, but in this way they criticise the others’ defects without noticing their own, and rather deserve ridicule” (19 December).

The *Mainichi* observed that the allegiance of generals to either the Wuhan faction or to Nanchang/Nanjing depended more on personal convenience than on ideology (16 May, 16 December). In the case of Tang, for example, the opinion was that in the future he would abandon the Communists to “join with the new Beiyang faction that will emerge” (18 March evening). Shortly after, when he appeared to switch sides, this was seen as a predictable reaction to Communist violence in Shanghai (TA 24 March). Tang continued to support the Wuhan government, but in July he approved the occupation of the city by his subordinate commander He Jian. The coup led to the flight of Borodin and also of leaders of the extreme Left, resulting in a shift of power to the Wang Jingwei faction (OM 19 July; TA 20 July evening). Thus, by turning to the “pink party” (that is, the moderate Left), Tang tried to “fulfill his year-long ambitions” (OM 21 July). In the following months, Tang concentrated on strengthening his hold on Hunan and Hubei. When the main GMD factions reached a compromise for a new government in Nanjing (TA 20 September), Tang took a defiant attitude

(TA 21 September evening; OM 22, 24 September). Accused of plotting an alliance with the Fengtian clique, he had to deal with a punitive expedition and was forced to take refuge in Japan in November.

Chiang did not target Wuhan immediately after the Third plenum, apparently because his forces were still engaged in the offensive against Nanjing warlord Sun Chuanfang and his ally Zhang Zongchang. However, the *Mainichi* foresaw that after the capture of Nanjing and Shanghai the next target would be Wuhan; in the end, Chiang would prevail over the Left because of his superior military power (OM 16 March evening). The circumstances under which the Revolutionary Army took Shanghai and Nanjing, on 22-24 March, contributed to an escalation in the confrontation between factions. In Shanghai, troops led by Bai Chongxi repressed a Communist-sponsored uprising; in Nanjing, Nationalist units looted and assaulted foreign residents, provoking a retaliatory bombardment by British and US warships. Reporters sent horrified accounts of violence in Nanjing, especially the attack on the Japanese consulate (TA 25, 26 March; OM 30 March). Chiang protested that the looters must have been retreating enemy soldiers disguised as Nationalists, and gave assurance that he would look into the incident (TA 26 March; OM 27 March). However, the version prevailing overseas (see consul Morioka, in TA 29 March) was that the perpetrators were Communists in the GMD ranks. It was thought that the CCP had planned the incident with the purpose of causing Chiang trouble in two ways: on the one hand, they would thwart his efforts to win foreign support; on the other, by provoking the powers' retaliation, they would rouse xenophobic feelings among the Chinese people who would turn also against the moderate commander (Negishi 1927, 74; Maida 1927, 78-80; Yoshino 1927a, 108-9).<sup>5</sup> While the *Ōsaka Asahi* stressed the need to avoid a hardline reaction (Gotō 1987, 258-9), the *Tōkyō Asahi* (27 March) added that Chiang should promptly reform the army and punish the ringleaders. The *Mainichi* (27 March) commented that the GMD was at least morally responsible for what had happened, because it had instigated hatred against the foreigners; although its government officially rejected such violent measures, there were many Communists and other radical agitators in the party. The conflict, therefore, between Wuhan and Chiang's "moderate faction" could not but have serious international consequences (1 April). In other words, dissociating himself from the Left had become for Chiang ever more crucial to win international recognition.

Chiang attempted a *rapprochement* with Wang Jingwei (TA 5 April evening; OM 5 April; Yamamura 1927b, who also traces the story of their rela-

<sup>5</sup> The thesis of a Communist conspiracy was then extended to the anti-Japanese incident that occurred in Hankou on 3 April (OA 5 April, in Gotō 1987, 259; OM 5 April). The *Asahi* (5 April) stressed the responsibility of the Japanese government, which had not taken adequate pre-emptive measures.

tionship in the GMD), whom the Third plenum had summoned back from Europe to resume the chairmanship, but failed to dissuade him from going to Wuhan. There, the *Mainichi* expected, the Communists would use Wang's prestige for their own ends (17 March, 5 April). Although the *Ōsaka Asahi* still hoped that Wang might mediate so as to bring unity back to the party (7 April, quoted in Gotō 1987, 260-1), the following weeks saw an escalation of factional violence that led to Chiang's final break with the CCP and the formalisation of the GMD split. Chiang's motives seemed clear. There were rumours of imminent attempts on his life and on that of other members of his faction by the Communists in Shanghai (OM 2 April); he was concerned about internal order and foreign relations which he saw as "priority problems" (OM 4 April); his "moderate faction" was enraged about the effects of the "wild policies" of the Communist-dominated Wuhan government, such as relentless strikes and peasant violence (OM 10 April); and it was rumoured that Right-wing leaders, dissatisfied with Chiang's tolerance of Communists, were planning to establish an independent regime in Guanxi and Guandong provinces (TA 13 April evening). Hence, the red purge in Shanghai came as no surprise to the press (TA 13 April). It was, rather, the logical result of a combination of domestic and international factors.

#### **4 Revolution Stumbles as Factional Strife in the Nationalist Party Produces Warlords**

Although Chiang's coup had stopped the tide of Communism, journalists did not become any more optimistic about the situation in China. An editorial in the *Asahi* (30 April), entitled "The suicide of national revolution", remarked that the GMD-CCP alliance had been decisive for the success of the Northern Expedition (as explained also in Ikeda 1927, 51-4; Yamamura 1927a, 40-1). The premature end of the United Front, therefore, made the prospects of reunification of the country more difficult. Moreover, the *Mainichi* (16 May) pointed out that there were factional divisions in both the Wuhan and the Nanjing camps. In the former, apart from "three or four people" such as Xu and Deng, there were no members of the "true Communist faction" in top government posts; most of the higher military officers in the armies of Tang and Zhang Fakui were, if anything, anti-Communist and perhaps plotting a coup. In Nanjing, on the other hand, there were "surprisingly many members of the Communist Party" among the lower officers in Chiang's forces. In addition, both governments were under external threat. Wuhan faced its enemies on three sides: the Fengtian clique in the north, Nanjing in the east, and Canton (controlled by Li Jishen) in the south. Chiang, instead, had to confront both Wuhan and the Northern coalition. Neither branch of the GMD, then, seemed to have strength enough to break the stalemate.

In Wuhan, as recalled above, the balance of forces gradually swung against the Communists. There had been signs of this from the onset of the split (OM 22, 23 May; TA 22, 24 May). Yoshino Sakuzō, the well-known political scientist and columnist, noted that the Communist Party was in China “an extremely small group” and its recent rise to power was but “a temporary aberration” (1927a, 110). According to the *Mainichi* (25 May), the Wuhan government had lost popular support and was isolated because of its radical policies, which had wrecked the economy and social order. Even Moscow had no longer any interest in supporting such a failure.<sup>6</sup> As he had already done with Chiang, the editor pointed out that the expulsion of Communists from Wuhan, besides stemming from personal rivalries, had become necessary from the standpoint of external relations (25 July). This observation referred not only to other factions in the GMD (29 June), but also to the international sphere. Britain had severed all diplomatic ties with the Wuhan government, claiming that it lacked the ability to enforce any agreement. This had boosted the image of the Nanjing faction, which was promoting itself as a reliable negotiating partner for the foreign powers (see, for example, Wu Chaoshu in OM 17 May). The *Mainichi*, however, remained sceptical about how trustworthy Nanjing was (21 May). For *Chūō kōron* (editorial 1927c), the red purge in Wuhan marked the end of CCP influence: “In China the Communist Party is like something that flies away when it blows. We don’t know if one should rejoice or grieve for China; in sum, however, their power today does not pose a problem anymore”.

The *Ōsaka Asahi* (Gotō 1987, 269-71) greeted the ousting of Communists from Wuhan as the fruit of Japan’s moderate policy. The latter had convinced Chiang that Russia was not acting in China’s interests and consequently made the Wuhan faction realise that radicalism would only bring isolation. However, relations between the two Nationalist centres remained tense. Differently from the spring, Wuhan seemed now in a stronger position than its rival. As explained in the *Asahi* (26 July), financial recovery had been steady, and the advantage of troop numbers over Nanjing was clear. Chiang, instead, could trust only the armies of He Yingqin, Li Zongren and Bai Chongxi; the other commanders were former enemies on whom he could not rely. Moreover, after negotiations for a truce failed, Nanjing was losing ground under the counter-offensive of the Northern forces. As a condition for mending the split, Wuhan (especially Tang, as later pointed out in OM 14 August) demanded that Chiang be removed from power. It was hardly likely, however, that such a request could be accepted by the Nanjing faction (TA 26 July).

6 On this point, however, the *Asahi* (2 August) commented that Russia would learn from its mistake of supporting only one faction. Its ties with China would continue, because there were still many Communists both inside and outside the GMD.

The persistence of GMD divisions caused strong concern in the Japanese press. According to the *Mainichi* (4 August), it was possible that Wuhan's break with the CCP might open the path to the peaceful unification of China, since "for both North and South there is no need to continue further a useless war". This seemed to be flouting the GMD's ambition for national reconstruction through eradication of the Northern warlords. In fact, the editor's belief was that "the South's national revolution belongs already to the past" (13 August). On this issue, the *Asahi* (10 August) was more sympathetic to the GMD:

Revolution consists in putting first the destruction of the *status quo*, and building something new over destruction. [...] The value of revolution lies in whether arduous construction succeeds or not. [...] Having severed its relation with the Communist Party, will the Nationalist Party be able to proceed straight and forward on the path of national revolution in accordance with the Three Principles of the People? [...] The more the Nationalist Party splits and struggles, the more it will disappoint the Chinese people, and the Communist Party might ride on that chance.

At last, on 13 August Chiang's decision to step down for the sake of party unity ended the *impasse*. The *Asahi* (16 August evening) found several reasons to explain his 'retirement'. Besides having suffered heavy losses on the Northern front, Chiang had lost key allies. The top posts in Nanjing had been assigned to people originally from Zhejiang, causing resentment among the other regional factions. In particular, it was said that Li Zongren and Bai had persuaded He Yingqin to side with them in pressing Chiang to resign. Another article (TA 17 August a), which traced Chiang's rise and fall from the start of the Expedition, also indicated the concentration of power in the Zhejiang group as a cause of hostility against Chiang. Among the military, Chiang had lost most of his loyal officers from the Whampoa academy in battle; in the fragile coalition of commanders, it was now Li Zongren who held "the casting vote". During the Expedition, Li had always been sent to the front, hence missing the opportunity to strengthen his own territorial base. Until recently, he had hesitated to respond to overtures from Wuhan, but once the latter had carried out its own red purge, the main obstacle to an agreement had vanished. In conclusion, "superficially, the split between Wuhan and Nanjing factions is a split between Communism and anti-Communism, but that is not all. Rather, it is not an exaggeration to say that it is chiefly a split based on feelings and interests" (TA 17 August).

Further considerations on both the military and the political causes of Chiang's defeat led to a grim prediction about the GMD (TA 17 August b). Although Chiang's exit from the scene could pave the way to formal reunification of the party, the revolutionary spirit had grown thin. Chiang

had revived the party's Right wing (the so-called Western Hills faction) and made room for "bureaucratic" elements. His fall meant that the "new military clique" would give way to the "old military cliques" that had joined the GMD, such as those of Tang and Li, for whom national revolution was just a struggle for power, and so, "until the birth of a new revolutionary force, aimless disorder may continue". These concerns over the breakup of the GMD into military factions appeared again in the editorial of 30 August. The *Mainichi* (16 August) offered a similar, though less detailed, analysis of the causes of Chiang's retreat. The overall evaluation of his character was that "personally, he has a passion and spirit that are unlikely in a Chinese, and also frankness; nevertheless, his lack of political experience and ability to exert control [...] have been standing out more and more". Recalling that an American journalist had called Chiang "the strong man that China had been waiting for", the editor could not but point at the gap between this kind of prediction and reality.

It is true that, compared to just the year before, Chiang had acquired immense visibility on the international scene. The *Asahi* (TA 17 August a) noted that all the world now knew him as China's Kemal Pasha or Napoleon.<sup>7</sup> Analogy with great leaders, past and present, became popular from the spring of 1927, with the completion of the campaign in the lower Yangzi region. Journalist Furushō Kunio (1927b, 79) wrote that "looking at the history of China, his rapid success has no comparison"; at the same time (81-2), he wondered whether Chiang would become a second Kemal, or instead fall into disgrace like Lev Trotsky (the same question is put in TA 6 March). Furushō (1927c) also sketched one of the first 'private' portraits of the commander, touching on his habits and relating anecdotes that illustrated his virtues and defects. As noted by Matsushige (2013, 48-9), this interest for Chiang's private life developed in the wake of his resignation as commander-in-chief, which allowed for a separation of the public and private spheres in the 'massification' of Chiang's mediatic image. Representative of the new approach is a long report about a visit to Chiang in his home village (OM 8 September), in which the reporter's stated aim was to leave aside politics and other "hard talk" to capture instead some "enjoyable talk" (*omoshiroi hanashi*). This trend peaked during Chiang's trip to Japan (29 September-9 November), when especially the local newspapers gave the visit to Song Meiling's mother a clear romantic slant - with no apparent interest in the political implications of Chiang's imminent marriage into one of Shanghai's prominent families (Iechika 2013, 75-6; see also OM 26 September). There was no coverage of Chiang's private interview with premier Tanaka Giichi (for

7 For example, in the wake of Chiang's entrance into Shanghai, *Time* (4 April 1927) featured his portrait on the cover and an article entitled "Conqueror".

the official record, see Satō 2009, 225-7); this, however, is perfectly understandable in the light of the confidential nature of the visit.

The November issue of *Chūō kōron* featured a collection of short essays on Chiang, which together formed a kaleidoscope view of both his public role and moral qualities. At one extreme, was a laudatory piece by Yin Rugeng and at the other, a scathing critique by the Marxist economist Inomata Tsunao, who was a former member of the clandestine Communist Party of Japan. Inomata accused Chiang of first trying to reduce the GMD to a tool in the hands of the “semi-feudal bourgeois reaction” and then, having failed in this, of turning his back on the people to join forces with the military cliques and the imperialists. From a similar standpoint, the Marxist intellectual Yamakawa Hitoshi (1927) predicted that Chiang would return to power not “as the leader of national revolution”, but just as “one element of the old forces of warlordism”. Also on a negative note was the article by Socialist thinker Takabatake Motoyuki, who portrayed Chiang as an opportunist politician – like every other revolutionary leader in China. Protestant educator Shimizu Yasuzō, who had recently met Chiang in Nara, criticised his authoritarian ways but also praised his effort to avoid in China the excesses of the Russian revolution; he judged Chiang superior to all the other Chinese leaders he had met. Finally, former army captain and ruralist thinker, Nagano Akira, traced, in a more detached way, Chiang’s gradual re-positioning in the GMD through the years, from cooperation to conflict with the Communists. As causes of his recent fall from office, he cited Chinese intolerance of the concentration of power and Chiang’s excessive favoritism for his regional fellows – another typical Chinese trait. It seemed to Nagano that the GMD was growing weak in revolutionary punch and becoming more like a military clique. In such circumstances, Chiang had taken a wise decision to temporarily leave the country. He still stood a chance of running for leadership, but would be wise to take care not to become just another warlord.

Indeed, during Chiang’s ‘vacation’ in Japan, the struggle for power in the GMD had continued – to the advantage of the Northern coalition (OM 28 October). Both the *Asahi* (20 September, 10 October, 26 October) and the *Mainichi* (4 October) painted a pessimistic picture of the situation. Although negotiations among party factions had led in mid-September to the formation of a new government in Nanjing, the agreement did not work immediately. In defiance of Nanjing, where Li Zongren had the upper hand, Wang reasserted the independence of Wuhan with Tang’s military support. Rather than face the punitive expedition, however, on 12 November Tang fled to Japan. The *Asahi* (15 November) feared that the practical consequence for the GMD would be just a partitioning of Tang’s territorial base among his opponents. In the meantime, Wang had moved to Canton under the protection of Zhang Fakui, who was struggling with Li Jishen for control of Guandong.

It was amidst such disorder that the conditions matured for the return of Chiang to the political arena as a mediator. On the eve of Chiang's arrival in Shanghai (10 November), the Japanese public received news of his *rapprochement* with Wang. Chiang had supposedly written to his old rival that he could "not bear to stand by and watch the disarray of the Nationalist Party", and that he wanted "to stand up again to rescue it". In reply, Wang had agreed to start talks in Shanghai in preparation for a Fourth CEC plenum (OM 10 November evening; TA 10 November). Thus, another round of complex negotiations was set in motion (for a summary, see Wilbur 1983, 686-9). This time, Chiang led the field over Wang. Over the next weeks, Wang's position was badly damaged by his suspected involvement in two incidents: first, the coup that Zhang Fakui staged against Li's forces in Canton (17 November); then, the Communist uprising that devastated the same city on 11-13 December, until Zhang suppressed it ruthlessly. On 17th of that month, Wang left for exile in France. The very day before the insurrection, the preparatory conference in Shanghai had asked Chiang to resume his post as commander-in-chief, and entrusted him to call the Fourth plenum, scheduled for January.

While reporting on these facts, the *Asahi* (29 November) noted that the GMD was splintering further. After Tang's defeat, generals of the Hunan and Guanxi cliques were competing for control of the territories under the former Wuhan faction; moreover, Zhang's coup (discussed on 22 November) had led to the establishment of a separate regime in Canton. As a result of intricate factional balancing, the main leaders did not oppose Chiang's reinstatement as supreme commander. In practice, however, he could count neither on their support nor on the loyalty of their soldiers (12 December). At first, it seemed that the shock of the Communist capture of Canton might help the GMD to pull together (13 December; on a more optimistic tone, OA 15 December, in Gotō 1987, 279). Because of Wang's alleged role behind the coup, though, it would be more difficult for Chiang to cooperate with his faction (14 December). In the wake of Wang's departure, China's domestic situation showed no sign of improvement: both the Northern military cliques and the GMD seemed "neither dead nor alive" (21 December). This stark view contrasts, again, with the appraisal of the Nationalists' achievements that year by the *Ōsaka Asahi*. According to the editorial of 29 December (quoted in Gotō 1987, 280-1), criticism that the GMD had lost its revolutionary spirit was leaning towards the Communist interpretation of the facts. By expelling the radical elements, the party seemed to have found its way back to "bourgeois democracy". The *Mainichi*, too, kept a close eye on the interplay between Chiang and Wang. It appeared that both wanted to force the Western Hills faction into the background (7 December); this could explain why Wang sponsored Chiang's reappointment (12 December). However, it was expected that their cooperation would not last long (14 December). Chiang, it seemed,

“had tried to ride on two horses at the same time”, that is, Wang and the Western Hills group. Now, he was severing ties with the compromised Wang so as to re-establish his own faction (16 December).

With Tang, Wang, and soon also Zhang out of his way (Li Jishen retook Canton at the end of the year), Chiang moved on to regain leadership in the GMD. Despite the title of commander-in-chief, which he officially took again on 9 January, Chiang had only limited military power to back his authority. Hence, it was reported that Chiang and his associates were using their hold on fiscal resources and personal connections to buy – literally – the support of different military cliques (TA 6 January evening). However, as powerful generals from Guanxi, Hubei and other provinces formed a “new Wuhan faction”, Chiang’s position remained precarious (TA 6 January evening). It seemed that the near future, far from unifying them, would see the GMD fragmenting even further around the three main poles of Nanjing, Wuhan and Canton (TA 17 January). Nevertheless, the long-postponed Fourth plenum (13 January-3 February 1928) was a success for Chiang, whose proposals for conservative reorganisation of the party won the full approval of the participants (Wilbur 1983, 697-9). Still, the *Asahi* (15 February) objected that Chiang had managed to dispel the influence of the Western Hills faction, but not that of either the Wuhan or Canton military cliques. Therefore, as long as the South was divided, conditions for resuming the drive on Beijing would not be right. This prediction, however, proved wrong. Even without support from the Guanxi generals – Bai would lead reinforcements as late as May – in February, Chiang started preparations for a joint offensive with the armies of Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan in the North. By early June, the Nationalist flag was waving in Beijing.

## **5 Japan’s Interests in China and the Northern Expedition**

Since the early battles in the summer of 1926, the Japanese press had followed the advance of GMD forces in Southern China with some apprehension. As noted above, the campaign was perceived as a threat to Japanese interests because of strong Communist influence in the GMD and the anti-imperialist goals that were integral to the Nationalist ideology itself. While the red purges to some extent dispelled the fears of a radical takeover, the Northern Expedition remained a source of deep concern. It was towards the end of the campaign that heavy fighting broke out between Nationalist and Japanese troops in Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province. The Jinan Incident (3-11 May 1928) has been analysed in a number of studies (for example, Iriye [1965] 1990, 193-205; Wilbur 1983, 702-6; Satō 2009, 234-45; Taylor 2009, 79-83) for it left a scar on Sino-Japanese relations. On the one hand, it inflamed anti-Japanese sentiment in China

and convinced Chiang that Japan posed the greatest threat to the future of his country. On the other, it set a precedent for those in Japan who believed in military force as a means of asserting national interests on the continent. How did Japanese public opinion, however, react to such dramatic news? To put things into perspective, let us first review how the perception of risk evolved over the successive stages of the Northern Expedition, along with changes in Japan's China policy.

At the start of the Expedition, the foreign minister in a cabinet led by the liberal Kenseikai party was a seasoned diplomat, Shidehara Kijurō. Since his appointment in 1924, Shidehara had pursued a policy of international *détente*. An important achievement in this sense had been, in 1925, the normalisation of relations with the Soviet Union. Japan had made overtures to China for the recovery of customs tariff autonomy and professed a line of non-intervention in domestic affairs. When Shidehara declared that Japan would not take sides in the dispute over tariffs between Britain and Canton, the *Mainichi* (18 September 1926) commented that this decision was in line with the minister's established policy, which so far had not been detrimental to Japan. Nevertheless, the newspaper accused Shidehara of short-sightedness. Nationalist expansion would harass mainly the British in the Yangzi region; if war moved northward, however, Japan would be forced to abandon its policy of strict non-intervention. Although "the Fengtian Army does not have any special relation with Japan, nor does it receive any remarkable support", the Canton government and Feng Yuxiang would use the pretext of stopping Japanese expansionism in order to attack the North. These considerations logically raised the question of how Japan should pre-empt this menace.

For the *Asahi* (15 December), cooperation with Great Britain was problematic because the latter's position in either South or North China was very different from that of Japan.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in order to defend its "vital interests", Japan should "prepare autonomous measures" so as to "face any situation" that may arise in China. For "the near future", it seemed that only the Nationalists had the potential for establishing a strong government. In this perspective, it would be "disadvantageous to stick to the anachronistic old treaties". What was required on Japan's side, instead, was a "resolute attitude" to "solve neatly the unequal treaties". The *Mainichi* (23 October) agreed that at present there could be no effective cooperation among the foreign powers and that Japan, as the country with the closest ties with China, should work out a new basis for bilateral relations with its neighbour. In this way, Japan would play the leading role in the redefinition of China's international status, as Britain had done before

8 On this issue, the *Mainichi* (7 January 1927) quoted from the *New York Times* the opinion that Britain's foremost goal in Asia was rather that of restraining Japanese influence.

with Japan itself. For this strategy to succeed, however, an “absolutely necessary pre-condition” was that China drop its “useless and harmful foreign policy measures” (that is, economic boycotts and other anti-foreign activities). Of course, the lack of a unified government in China posed a major obstacle to negotiations. Should Japan deal directly with the Nationalists? For the *Mainichi* (30 November), the territorial advance of the GMD naturally raised the problem of diplomatic recognition. Japan, after all, had been the first country to acknowledge the Republic of China in 1913. However, there was a crucial difference: at that time the new regime had agreed to fulfil all previous international obligations. Although it would be sensible, “and maybe necessary”, to recognise a *de facto* regional government, Japan would have to proceed with caution.

In the wake of the Hankou and Jiujiang Incidents in the British concessions, the *Mainichi* (8, 10 January, 25 February, 26-28 February) collected the opinions of several representatives of big business regarding the situation in China. A few stressed optimistically - or cynically - that, since Britain was now the target of Nationalist attacks, Japanese firms would even benefit from this trend. The prevailing view, however, was that the anti-foreign tide could easily turn against Japan as well. The *Asahi* (19 January) summarised in general terms two sets of opposing viewpoints: on the one hand, that the GMD had fallen under Communist control and should be stopped somehow before it invaded the rest of China; on the other, that “reddening” was just a passing phase and that it should not be too difficult to settle bilateral disputes, in light of the strong reciprocal interests between the two countries. The latter position substantially corresponded to that of the government. Minister Shidehara, in his policy speech at the 52nd Imperial Diet (18 January, transcribed in both OM and TA), reaffirmed the four tenets of Japanese diplomacy towards China, namely: non-interference; economic cooperation in the spirit of “coexistence and co-prosperity”; sympathy and support for the just aspirations of the Chinese people; and the “defence with rational means” of Japan’s “legitimate and important rights and interests”. While the *Ōsaka Asahi* fully agreed with this policy (Gotō 1987, 255), there were also more tepid responses in the press. The *Mainichi* (19 January) observed that the problem did not lie in policy guidelines, but in the actual management of specific issues and incidents. The *Tōkyō Asahi* (20 January), too, wondered how the government would turn its abstract principles into practice.

Negotiations between British and Nationalist authorities offered further cause for reflection. The *Asahi* (12 January), looking at the meek response of London to rampant violations of international law, read it as a sign of the changing times. It seemed that Britain had no choice but to follow a line of non-resistance, as an aggressive reaction would only worsen the situation. The *Asahi*, then, was concerned about the rising voice of hard-liners among public opinion in Britain. In order to prevent an escalation of the

conflict which would further destabilise China to the disadvantage of all parties involved, Tokyo would have to persuade London to abandon all idea of armed resistance in Shanghai; at the same time, it would have to urge the GMD to give up its “fanatic” activism for the recovery of China’s international status. Going a step further, the *Ōsaka Asahi* (Gotō 1987, 254) also spoke in favour of gradual restitution to China of foreign concessions. The *Mainichi* (31 January) expressed similar views against the anachronistic recourse to military means, stressing (28 January) that Japan had no reason to get entangled in hazardous British initiatives. In the following weeks, while Anglo-Chinese relations remained strained, the Nationalists seemed to respond favourably to Shidehara’s policy of appeasement. The press reported with cautious optimism on the quasi-official mission to Japan of GMD representative Dai Jitao, who strove to present his party as a responsible partner for international dialogue (OM 4, 13, 17 February; TA 18 February a, b, 26 February evening, 27 February). The April issue of *Chūō kōron* (1927a) expressed sympathy for the revolutionary cause. The same magazine also featured two articles by China expert Komura Shunsaburō, formerly an interpreter in the diplomatic service. Komura (1927a) urged Japan not to antagonise the GMD, especially by backing the Fengtian clique, because this would only push China into the arms of Communist Russia, thus endangering the whole world (for a similar warning by an *Ōsaka Asahi* journalist, see Kamio 1927, 118). Later (1927b), he considered several arguments in favour of either direct or indirect interference, again in order to prove that neither, if not actually counterproductive, would serve to safeguard Japan’s interests.

However, the ever-widening fracture between Nationalist factions cast a shadow on the prospects for amicable relations. The Nanjing Incident, in addition, was a terrible blow to the image of the Revolutionary Army. As noted above, it also revived doubts about Chiang’s ability to enforce discipline. To further complicate matters, in April 1927 a financial crisis triggered a change of government in Tokyo. The new cabinet, in which retired army general Tanaka Giichi served at the same time as premier and foreign minister, was an expression of the Rikken Seiyūkai conservative party. Under its former president Takahashi Korekiyo (1921-25), the Seiyūkai had backed a policy of international cooperation and arms limitation, most notably at the Washington Conference held from November 1921 to February 1922. Since Tanaka had taken over the presidency, however, the party had started to adopt more assertive policies. While in opposition, the Seiyūkai had voiced strong criticism of Shidehara’s weak diplomacy (see, for instance, OM 26 January, 5 April evening; TA 1 April a, 2 April; Uehara 1927). This position appealed especially to those industries and trading companies that had direct interests in China (TA 1 April b, 12, 20 April). Hence, the *Asahi* (20 April) did not need to provide specific evidence to claim that the return to power of the Seiyūkai had aroused uneasiness

among the Chinese people. The *Mainichi* (24 April) worried that the cabinet's "positive policy", or "hard policy", might lead to another disaster such as the Siberian expedition (the anti-Bolshevik intervention launched in 1918, which Tanaka had supervised as war minister in 1918-21). The editor conceded that "even if premier Tanaka cannot read the trend of times, he will not fail to understand that such a reckless policy cannot receive the support of the majority of our nation". The editorial continued with an implicit warning not to defy "the strength of public opinion", since it was thanks to the latter's support for parliamentary practice that the Seiyūkai had been reinstated smoothly to government.<sup>9</sup> In conclusion, Japan was to intervene in the Chinese crisis only by providing "moral support", and diplomatic leadership for all the countries involved.

The events, however, would soon confirm that a shift in Japan's foreign policy was under way. Journalist Murofuse Kōshin (1927, 113) defined this change as a passage from "petty bourgeois opportunism" to "armed imperialism". On 27 May, the Tanaka cabinet decided to send a small expeditionary force to Shandong in order to protect the local Japanese residents. Although ostensibly the purpose was to prevent the re-occurrence of violent incidents, the operation did constitute an interference in the ongoing civil war, as the presence of Japanese troops might deter the Nationalists from moving northward. Moreover, differently from the stationing of troops in Tianjin and Beijing, this deployment was not contemplated in any international agreement. Although the cabinet tried to reassure the belligerent parties that the expedition was purely defensive and would end as soon as security conditions in the province allowed (the official statement was published in OM and TA 27 May), both the Nanjing and Beijing governments protested against this infringement of China's sovereignty.

The Shandong Expedition proved a controversial matter for Japan. The main opposition party, the Rikken Minseitō (formed at the start of June with the merger of the Kenseikai with a party seceded from the Seiyūkai) expressed reservations on what it judged a premature decision, and later demanded the withdrawal of the troops (OM and TA 17 June, 18 July). For the majority of the House of Peers, too, the cabinet's initiative was unnecessary and risky (TA 28 May a). The harshest criticism came from the so-called "proletarian parties" linked to the labour and tenant movements, which formed after the enactment of universal suffrage for men in 1925. The Nihon Rōnōtō (Japan's Labour-Farmer Party) denounced the expedition as an attempt to repeat in China the infamous Siberian intervention, and exhorted the people to resist "to make Japan's imperialists capitulate" (TA 28 May b). The Shakai Minshūtō (Social People's Party), which called premier Tanaka "the boss of the military clique for many

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9 Komura (1927c, 77) later expressed the same concept in a more straightforward way.

years”, claimed that the real objective of the expedition was to interfere with the belligerents’ strategy (TA 31 May). Both parties organised public rallies in protest. The reaction of the most radical party, the Rōdō Nōmintō (Labour-Farmer Party, which the government disbanded in March 1928 as part of a crackdown on Communists) is not documented in these articles. Chairman Ōyama Ikuo, however, referred to similar protest activities in a strongly-worded essay in *Chūō kōron*, where he called Chiang “the puppet of the rising urban bourgeoisie” (1927, 107). The *Asahi*, besides reporting on the reaction of political groups, interviewed some well-known personalities (29 May a). Apart from those aligned with the official stance of their party, there was independent Lower House member Ozaki Yukio. The veteran politician, a famous advocate of anti-militarism, voiced his alarm about the risk of undue interference: the army had always been partial to the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin, and “the boss of the military clique” was now leading the cabinet. In contrast, cotton magnate Miyajima Kiyojirō stressed that the expedition was inevitable because previous incidents proved that the Revolutionary Army could not be trusted; those Peers who objected “should go and see China once”. In addition, the same newspaper (29 May b) asked the opinion of those whom the expedition would affect most directly, that is, the Japanese residents in Northern China. According to this survey, the prevailing view was that such a grave initiative should be avoided; in case of actual danger, it would be more appropriate to evacuate the expatriates from Jinan to Qingdao.

On their part, both *Asahi* and *Mainichi* were critical of the Shandong expedition. They raised the same objections (OM 26 May; TA 28, 29 May c, 1 June). First, that sending troops might produce the opposite effect and therefore should be considered only as a last resort in the event that all other means failed. The *Ōsaka Asahi* (Gotō 1978, 265-7) expressed the same opinion. Secondly, they argued that the Communists had been responsible for previous incidents, but Chiang Kai-shek had now suppressed them. Moreover, the *Mainichi* (29 May) pointed out that the risk of clashing with Japanese forces along the Jinan railway could prevent the Southern army from advancing in that direction; this would clearly represent an interference.<sup>10</sup> It seemed that the military had dragged the cabinet into action, exposing the inconsistency of the latter’s China policy. The same article noted that war minister Shirakawa had already earned the hostility of the GMD while serving as commander of the Japanese forces in the leased territory in Manchuria. Afterwards, the *Asahi* repeatedly called for the withdrawal of troops (12 June, 28 June, 7 July, 26 August). Besides reiterating its arguments, the newspaper remarked that the expedition had

<sup>10</sup> *Chūō kōron* editorials (1927c, 1927d) and Yoshino (1927b, 119; 1927c, 92) put forward the same argument.

spurred widespread boycotts in China, seriously damaging Japanese business interests. The *Mainichi* (27 June, 7 July), also, reported this negative outcome. However, at least part of the enterprises involved still supported the cabinet's policy: a group of Kansai-based industries even lobbied for the sending of troops to Shanghai (TA 20 August), as Britain had done. The *Asahi* (26 August) commented that if the cabinet was to listen to this kind of request, the time for withdrawal would never come. The expedition had already cost four million yen: how could the Japanese people bear such a burden indefinitely for reasons that defied common sense? Yoshino, too, denounced the cabinet for its disregard of public opinion (1927c, 91-2).

In the end, it was the failure of Chiang's summer offensive to Northern China that solved the problem. Since there was no more imminent danger that Shandong would become a theatre of war, on 30 August Japan withdrew its expeditionary force. The press observed these developments with relief and criticised the government for pretending that the operation had been a success (TA 1 September; OM 1 October). On the other hand, the *Asahi* (1 September) urged the Chinese authorities to reflect on their inability to guarantee security, as it was this failure which had justified the expedition. The *Mainichi* (30 August), noting that trade in Northern China had declined remarkably less than in regions affected by the Nationalist revolution, concluded that the expedition had "not necessarily been a failure".

## 6 From Jinan to Beijing: an Uncertain Scenario

The situation, however, turned critical when Chiang resumed the northern advance in the spring of 1928. As the *Asahi* had foreseen (19 April), at the end of April the Tanaka cabinet again sent troops to Qingdao. From there the field commander, general Fukuda, decided to proceed to Jinan, home to about 2000 Japanese nationals. On 2 May, in response to Chiang's pledge to maintain order, Fukuda consented to clear part of the occupied area. The next day, however, a minor incident between the Japanese and the newly-arrived Nationalist troops escalated into intense fighting.<sup>11</sup> The version of the facts reported by various sources since the evening, which the War Ministry soon confirmed (OM, TA 5 May evening), was that some Chinese soldiers had shot at a Japanese patrol when it had tried to stop them from looting in the protected area. The skirmish had attracted more and more Southern forces, resulting in a general attack against the Japanese. The War Ministry suspected that it was a planned offensive (OM and

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<sup>11</sup> For further discussion of press coverage of the Jinan Incident, see Tamai Kiyoshi *kenkyūkai* 2015, which was published while this volume was in preparation.

TA 5 May evening, 5 May). Undisclosed sources from Tianjin and Beijing reported that “over one hundred” or “280” expatriates had been massacred by the Southern army in Jinan, and sent gruesome accounts of these atrocities (OM and TA, 4-5 May). The news, however, was not confirmed by sufficiently reliable evidence. Eventually, the consular police reported about 14 dead and over 20 missing (OM 15 May evening), that is about as many as already confirmed by the War Ministry (OM 8 May).

The balance of forces in Jinan was about 5,500 men to the Nationalist's 35,000, but Chiang had no intention of being bogged down in a conflict that would only jeopardise his advance northward. He reached an agreement for a cease-fire and left the city, soon to be followed by most of his troops. However, the Japanese command was not conciliatory. After obtaining reinforcements, Fukuda sent the Nationalists an ultimatum with humiliating conditions. Notwithstanding a partial acceptance of these requests, the imperial army attacked. By 11 May it had driven the Chinese garrison out of Jinan and inflicted heavy losses; many civilians, too, died in the bombardment of the walled city. The expeditionary corps did not leave Shandong until a year later, after long diplomatic negotiations which on 28 March led the Chinese and Japanese governments to sign a statement in which they expressed deep regret for the incident. The task of discussing compensation for both sides was deferred to a joint committee (Gaimushō 1993, vol. 3, 501-7).

The official histories of the *Asahi* and *Mainichi* (*Asahi shinbun* 1995, vol. *Taishō-Shōwa senzen hen*, 301-11; *Mainichi shinbun* 1972, 155-7; *Mainichi shinbun* 2002, vol. 1, 674-80) stress that, though they printed exaggerated news for some days of a massacre, these newspapers from the very beginning condemned the dangerous conduct of the Tanaka cabinet. On the other hand, however, they overlook other problematic aspects of the press coverage.

In the first place, both newspapers seemed to ignore the fact that on 3 May the Nationalist official in charge of negotiating the truce and his staff had been brutally killed at the hands of Japanese soldiers. When the Nanjing government publicly denounced the fact, the *Mainichi* (9 May) only reported that in the United States this statement had been afforded great attention, while the *Asahi* (9 May evening) dismissed it as “risible” propaganda. Later on, the *Mainichi* (12 May b) deplored the Chinese habit of slandering Japan abroad in more general terms.

Secondly, although both *Asahi* (5 May) and *Mainichi* (5 May a, 12 May a) held the Tanaka cabinet politically responsible for the incident, they also laid the blame for the military confrontation squarely on Chinese shoulders. According to the former newspaper (5 May), the Southern army lacked discipline and a unified command. Soldiers involved in the clash, led by He Yaouzu, had already been the perpetrators of the Nanjing Incident. It could not be ruled out that behind their actions there was again “a plot of

Communist-linked military corps to overthrow Mr Chiang Kai-shek". There were, moreover, "many banditesque elements" in the forces under Feng Yuxiang. In any case, this time there was plenty of evidence that the Southern army had acted "in an organised and planned manner", as proven by the deliberate damage to the railway and the telegraph lines. Therefore, as noted by Gotō (1987, 290-1) with respect to the *Ōsaka Asahi*, the editor completely absolved the Japanese army of taking any undue initiative. Initially, the *Mainichi* (5 May a) gave no credit to the claim that the Chinese had planned the attack. Nevertheless, it did observe that the Nationalist commanders had failed to prevent the recurrence of anti-Japanese agitation among the lower officers; this proved, if not their bad faith, at least their lack of authority. Therefore, "the responsibility of Mr Chiang Kai-shek and others is more grave than in the Nanjing Incident". The editor, however, changed his mind after receiving news that on the eve of the incident, officers had distributed hand grenades to the soldiers: this proved that, from the beginning, the Southern army had a treacherous plan to attack the expeditionary force (other evidence was reported from Beijing, in OM 5 May evening and OM 6 May evening). Although Chiang was certainly not involved in this scheme, he remained guilty of lack of control over his subordinates (6 May). The Japanese command, too, deserved censure, as they had been so naive as to trust the Nationalists (5 May b; the same opinion in TA 13 May). In a long article in the same newspaper (11-14 May), Kyoto University professor Yano Jin'ichi repeated similar arguments. Furthermore, he defended the expedition as a legitimate means to protect Japan's residents, and even called for the sending of more troops to Tianjin and Beijing.

Finally, over the course of the incident there was a considerable change in the attitude of the *Mainichi* towards the deployment of military force. At first the newspaper opposed the sending of reinforcements, as this would only cause further tension; although it was Japan's right to demand apology and reparation, these should be obtained by diplomatic means (6 May). Later on, however, false reports that the Nationalists had broken the truce sparked an outraged reaction:

At this point, the circumstances are clearly a provocation from the Chinese side; there is no reason for excuse. For the honour of our army, this wild Southern army must be crushed with determination. [...] Until today, for the sake of Sino-Japanese relations we have called repeatedly for the adoption of peaceful means; but against the extreme affront of this provocation by the Chinese troops, there are no means to be taken other than thorough retribution. Therefore from now on whatever grave situation may arise, and into whatever difficult position it may lead both countries, the responsibility is theirs; we must not endure any more. [...] The violent affront done to our army must be swept away, no matter at what sacrifice. (9 May)

Therefore, the claim that “our newspaper since the start opposed [the Shandong expedition], and tried to put a brake on the lone run of the military” (*Mainichi shinbun* 2002, 1, 682) is not entirely accurate.

The *Asahi*, instead, maintained a cautious tone. Although the sending of reinforcements had become inevitable for self-defence, it was now necessary to prevent an escalation; the risk was that it would trigger a chain of events as happened in the Siberian intervention, with far worse consequences (10 May). In this perspective, the Tanaka cabinet had already made a grave miscalculation:

From the start we opposed the imprudent expedition; we were extremely dissatisfied with the ignorant, inconsistent, reckless attitude [of the cabinet], as if there were no diplomacy other than the expedition. [...] The only reason for the expedition was the protection of our residents on the spot, but if we consider that both residents and Imperial Army got into a scrape and many have been brutally killed and wounded, what was the purpose of the expedition? (5 May)

The editor also expressed concern that prolonging the expedition would not only damage Sino-Japanese relations, but also arouse the suspicion of foreign powers. Although public opinion abroad had been sympathetic to Japan during the incident, there were signs that the mood was changing (13 May).

In this regard, the press survey that Japanese newspapers presented appears inconclusive. Some of the articles cited supported the Japanese position (the British *Morning Post* and *Daily News*, in TA 8 May; *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post*, in OM 9 May; *Daily Telegraph* and *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, in OM 10 May; *Herald Tribune*, in TA 13 May evening). Others, however, were either neutral or critical of Japan (*Manchester Guardian* in TA 8 May; *New York Times* and *New York World*, in TA 10 May; the British magazines *New Statesman*, *Outlook* and *Saturday Review*, and the *Berliner Tageblatt* in TA 13 May evening; *Allgemeine Zeitung*, in OM 10 May). The Russian *Pravda* (in TA 13 May evening) of course denounced Japan’s imperialism. According to the *Mainichi* (15 May), on the whole, Chinese propaganda had failed to persuade foreign public opinion because the facts were too evident. Although the American press was wary that Japan might use the incident as a pretext to occupy Shandong permanently, Washington would avoid becoming embroiled in the matter, since bilateral relations with Tokyo were too important. As for the British press, doubts about Japan’s intentions were more a reflection of the view of Japan as a trade rival rather than a sympathy for China. Therefore, as long as Japan upheld its legitimate rights, other countries would not interfere.

In Japan, though, opinions were mixed (Uchida et al. 1990, vol. 3, 30-3). The *Mainichi* hosted a round table of big business representatives, who

voiced support for a hard-line policy (10 May). The Chambers of Commerce and other business organisations also issued a joint resolution, which urged the cabinet to take effective measures for the protection of national interests in China (OM and TA 19 May; quoted in Eguchi 1973, 358). The Minseitō kept a low profile during the incident, and only on 21 June censured the cabinet's incompetency with a formal resolution. The *Asahi* (22 June) found this response disappointing, as the main opposition party seemed unable to do much more than criticise instead of formulating a valid policy alternative (as already criticised in OM 27 February). As before, it was the "proletarian parties" who took the strongest stance against the Shandong expedition, claiming that its real aim was only to protect the northern military cliques and Japan's capitalists (TA 10 May). In his column in *Chūō kōron*, Yoshino (1928a) expressed sympathy for the brave Japanese soldiers, but questioned the political responsibility of the cabinet, who had underestimated the risks involved in the expedition. He urged caution, stressing that no gain could come from treating China as an enemy.

In the following weeks, attention for the issues left over from the Jinan Incident waned as the Northern Expedition reached its final stage. Fearing that the Nationalist armies might penetrate Manchuria, the Tanaka cabinet pressed Zhang Zuolin to retreat behind the Great Wall; Chiang had already been warned not to cross that line (Wilbur 1983, 706-10). In this way, the Nationalists would win Beijing but remain outside Japan's special sphere of interest. However, events took an unexpected turn. Japanese officers dissatisfied with Zhang had plotted his assassination; they carried out their plan on 4 June, by blowing up the train that was taking the Fengtian leader back home. Zhang Xueliang, who eventually emerged as his father's successor, would soon prove unwilling to accept Japan's tutelage.

The spectacular bombing of Zhang's train warranted big headlines in the Japanese press, but the plot behind it remained long undisclosed to the public. Although in China there were immediate suspicions of Japanese involvement, the main newspapers supported the thesis that the authors were Nationalist agents (OM and TA 5 June evening, 5 June), as claimed by the War Ministry after investigation (TA 12 June evening; OM 12 June; for an extensive survey of Japanese press coverage of the incident and the consequences for Japan's domestic politics until the spring of 1929, see Tamai Kiyoshi *kenkyūkai* 2010). Journalists were more interested in the broader consequences of Zhang's demise, which was confirmed only on 19 June, and in the prospects for the reunification of China under the Nationalist Party. It was a shared opinion that the capture of Beijing, though a major development, did not mean that "national revolution" had been achieved, even in its military stage; it was still to be seen whether the fragile coalitions around Chiang, Feng and Yan would stabilise or break up (TA 5, 14 June; OM 9, 12 June). Moreover, beyond the Great Wall there was the very real risk of a fragmentation of power, which might lead to disorder, with

grave consequences for Japan's security (TA 8 June). The *Asahi*, nevertheless, reached an overall conclusion that left room for optimism. Although the new government in Nanjing was the product of compromise between different factions, this alliance had more solid foundations than those of past regimes in Beijing; it was unlikely that in the near future internal strife would put it at risk. Without doubt, "The reason for the existence of the Nanjing government and its significance are that it represents the popular will, and receives the people's support" (26 June).

Therefore, willingly or otherwise, it was time to rethink Japan's foreign policy, which so far had been "conceived in a dualistic way between Manchuria-Mongolia and the Chinese mainland". Despite their geography, sooner or later the Three Eastern Provinces would be assimilated by the mainland, politically and economically. Manchuria was "an important 'part', not the 'whole'", in Japan's China policy. Hence, there was no reason to sacrifice the whole for the sake of one part. Japan should strive to solve its problems in China, including Manchuria, by working with Nanjing as its only legitimate counterpart (26 June; see also TA 19 June, which complained about the Tanaka cabinet's poor diplomatic skills). These remarks, for once, were more outspoken than those in the *Ōsaka Asahi* (Gotō 1987, 296-301) in favour of concessions to the new regime. On a more tentative note, Yoshino (1928b) observed that the question of the future unification of Manchuria with the rest of China would depend on the solidity of the Nationalist government, which was still to be tested. He also agreed, however, that Japan needed to "revise from the foundations its general approach" towards China. It was time to abandon the established framework, even if it meant giving up some rights, and build anew relationship based on "coexistence and co-prosperity".

## 7 Conclusion

The press survey presented in this paper suggests that in Japan the prevailing public perception of the Northern Expedition evolved over three phases. In the first, the rapid advance of the Nationalist armies across the Yangzi region was associated with the threat of Communist expansion across China, as observed in the spread of radical movements and anti-foreign incidents. There were mixed judgements concerning Chiang Kai-shek and other GMD leaders, depending on how close to the Communists they seemed to stand. The breakup of the United Front in the spring of 1927, which marked the start of the second phase, led to a positive re-evaluation of Chiang's leadership. Opinions regarding the GMD, nevertheless, remained charged with criticism for its factional divisions, which were dragging the party into a process of 'warlordisation'. In the last phase, the campaign that led to the capture of Beijing stirred ambivalent feelings

towards the Nationalist government. On the one hand, there was hope for a return of stability in China after many years of civil war. On the other, besides persisting scepticism regarding the GMD's potential to achieve this goal, there was concern for the future of Sino-Japanese relations under the new regime. While the Jinan Incident again sparked doubts about Chiang's ability to exert control over his troops and eradicate Communist infiltration, the Nationalist advance to the borders of Manchuria brought to the forefront the issue of Japan's "special interests" in China, which remained an open question.

Although this progression of the debate basically matches the findings of Matsushige (2013), sources examined here show that responses to the Northern Expedition were more articulate. Matsushige (54) focuses on the sense of threat to national interests that prevailed after the Jinan Incident, and claims that expectations for government protection paved the way for popular endorsement of the occupation of Manchuria. The mainstream press, however, was still far from supporting a military solution to international problems; even its judgement of Tanaka's "positive policy" was severe. There was a significant difference, nevertheless, between the attitude of the two *Asahi* and the *Mainichi*. The former, while acknowledging the many shortcomings of the Nationalist Party, saw no viable alternative for the stabilisation of China, and stressed the need for sound dialogue between Nanjing and Tokyo in the interests of both countries. Although the *Ōsaka Asahi* was usually more forward-looking than its Tokyo partner, in the end the two reached similar conclusions.

The *Mainichi*, on the other hand, developed a pessimistic view of Nationalist leadership, which seemed bound to become just another incarnation of warlordism. Moreover, if only briefly, it shifted from a moderate to a hard-line stance during the fighting in Jinan. That the same incident exposed the weakness of both *Asahi* and *Mainichi* in reacting to the manipulation of news by the Japanese military - as again after the killing of Zhang Zuolin, should not, however, be underestimated. Still, this does not mean that an insufficient screening of sources would necessarily lead to unconditional support for the invasion of Manchuria a few years later. It is also important to note that in the 1920s censorship in Japan was lenient enough to give holders of opinions that were marginal on the political scene a hearing, for instance those who sympathised with the GMD Left and even with the CCP. Although little represented in the leading newspapers, these views found considerable space in progressive magazines, such as *Chūō kōron* and *Kaizō*.

In conclusion, press coverage of the Northern Expedition testifies to the diversity of Japanese public opinion in that period. While reasons for conflict with China were already looming, there was no widespread belief that a violent confrontation was either imminent or inevitable. Therefore, further research should ascertain whether the shift of public opinion to-

wards support for an aggressive policy, as seen following the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident in September 1931, was grounded in a changing perception of China in the early years of Nationalist rule.

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*Ōsaka Mainichi shinbun* 大阪毎日新聞

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- 18 September. Ed. "TaiShi fukanshōshugi no kongo" 対支不干涉主義の今後 (The Future of Non-Intervention Policy in China).
- 4 October. Ed. "Kanton gun no tachiba: shōhai tomo ni tanan" 広東軍の立場 勝敗共に多難 (The Stance of the Canton Army: Many Difficulties in Either Victory or Defeat).
- 23 October. Ed. "Shina no taido: jōyaku kaitei ni atari" 支那の態度 条約改訂に当り (China's Attitude: On Treaty Revision).

- 21 November. Ed. “Kanton ha no hōnichishi: iu tokoro wa nani ka” 広東派の訪日使 いふ所は何 か(The Canton Faction’s Envoys to Japan: What Will They Say?).
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1927

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- 31 January. Ed. “Eikoku taiShi gaikō no ranchōshi: rekkoku kyōdō no hakai” 英国対支外交の乱調子 列国共同の破壊 (Britain’s China Policy in Disarray: The Collapse of Coordination Among the Powers).
- 2 February. “Ankoku gun to Kantogun: ichibu de dakyō undō” 安国軍と広東軍 一部で妥協運動 (National Security Army and Canton Army: A Partial Movement for Compromise).
- 4 February. Ed. “Eikoku no shippai to rekkoku no tachiba” 英国の失敗と列国の立場 (Britain’s Failure and the Powers’ Stance).
- 7 March. Ed. “Kokumintō no naikō: bunretsu kuru ka” 国民党の内訌 分裂来るか (Discord within the Nationalist Party: Is a Split Coming?).
- 16 March evening. “Ima no tokoro kyōsanha ga zettaitekini yūsei: te mo ashi mo denu Shō ha” 今の所共産派が絶対的に優勢 手も足も出ぬ蔣派 (At the Moment the Communist Faction Has an Overwhelming Advantage: Chiang’s Faction Is Powerless).

- 17 March. Ed. “Shina jikyoku to taiShi kigyō: mukeikai ni sugiru na” 支那時局と対支企業 無警戒に過ぎるな (The Situation in China and China-based Companies: Don’t Be Too Guardless).
- 18 March evening. “Shō Kaiseki shi no kenryoku hakudatsu” 蒋介石氏の権力剥奪 (Mr Chiang Kai-shek Stripped of Power).
- 22 March. Ed. “Kokumingun no Shanhai senryō: kongo no taigai kankei” 国民軍の上海占領 今後の対外関係 (The Occupation of Shanghai by the Nationalist Army: Foreign Relations Hereafter).
- 27 March Ed. “Nankin jiken: waga kuni no tachiba” 南京事件 我国の立場 (The Nanjing Incident: Our Country’s Stance).
- 1 April. Ed. “Kokumingun no naikō ni tsuite: rekkoku to waga kuni” 国民軍の内訌に就いて 列国と我国 (About Discord in the Nationalist Army: The Powers and Our Country).
- 5 April. Ed. “Kankō bōkō jiken: Nintai dekinai” 漢口暴行事件 忍耐出来ない (The Hankou Assault Incident: It Cannot Be Endured).
- 9 April. Matsumoto Sōkichi 松本鎗吉. “Kakumei Shina no chūshin e (3): Nanpō no nairin kenka” 革命支那の中心へ 南方の内輪喧嘩 (To the Core of Revolutionary China: Internecine Struggle in the South).
- 10 April. Matsumoto Sōkichi. “Kakumei Shina no chūshin e (4): Bukan kyōsanha no gyōjō” 武漢共產派の行状 (The Demeanor of the Wuhan Communist Faction).
- 14 April. Matsumoto Sōkichi. “Kakumei Shina no chūshin e (7): Shō shi no seiryoku shittsui” 蔣氏の勢力失墜 (Mr Chiang’s Loss of Power).
- 24 April. Ed. “Shin naikaku no taiShi seisaku: shuppatsu o ayamaru na” 新内閣の対支政策 出発を誤るな (The New Cabinet’s China Policy: Don’t Get the Start Wrong).
- 16 May. Ed. “Shina no kyokumen sarani konton: ‘kyōsan’ to ‘hikyōsan’” 支那の局面さらに混沌 「共產」と「非共產」 (The Situation in China Gets Further Confused: ‘Communists’ and ‘Anti-Communists’).
- 21 May. Ed. “Eikoku no Bukan seifu zetsuen” 英国の武漢政府絶縁 (Britain’s Break with the Wuhan Government).
- 25 May. Ed. “Bukan ha no unmei: RoShi kankei ichidanraku ka” 武漢派の運命 露支関係一段落か (The Fate of the Wuhan Government: A Settlement in Russia-China Relations?).
- 26 May. Ed. “Waga kuni iyoiyo shuppei ka: nao kōryo no yochi ari” 我国愈出兵か 尚考慮の余地あり (Our Country on the Verge of an Expedition? There Is Still Room for Reflection).
- 29 May. Ed. “Futatabi Shina shuppei ni tsuite” 再び支那出兵について (Again on the China Expedition).
- 27 June. Ed. “Waga shuppei no daika: Shanhai no boikotto” 我出兵の代価 上海のボイコット (The Price of Our Expedition: Boycotts in Shanghai).
- 29 June. “Bukan seifu: akairo wa usureta ga nao sakan” 武漢政府 赤色は薄れたがなほ盛ん (The Wuhan Government: Red Colour Has Grown Thin But It’s Still Thriving).

- 7 July. Ed. "Sainan hahei" 濟南派兵 (The Dispatch of Troops to Jinan).
- 19 July. "Bukan de kūdetā: Ka Ken shi jūyō chiten senryō" 武漢でクーデター 何鍵氏重要地点を占領 (Coup d'état in Wuhan: Mr He Jian Occupies Key Points).
- 21 July. "Bukan seifu tsuini bunretsu" 武漢政府遂に分裂 (The Wuhan Government Finally Splits).
- 25 July. Ed. "Shina no bunkai sayō: Bukan ha no bunretsu" 支那の分解作用 武漢派の分裂 (The Dissolution of China: The Wuhan Faction's Split).
- 4 August. Ed. "Shina no heisō: heiwa wa koranu" 支那の兵争 平和は来らぬ (Military Conflict in China: Peace Is Not Coming).
- 13 August. Ed. "Kokumin kakumei no shūen: Borojin shi no haiin" 国民革命の終焉 ボロヂン氏の敗因 (The End of National Revolution: The Causes of Mr Borodin's Defeat).
- 16 August. Ed. "Shōshi no intai: Bukan Nankin ha dakyō no gisei" 蔣氏の引退 武漢南京派妥協の犠牲 (Mr Chiang's Retirement: A Victim of Compromise between Wuhan and Nanjing Factions).
- 30 August. Ed. "Santō teppei no gi: kore mata tōzen" 山東撤兵の議 これ亦当然 (The Opinion for the Withdrawal of Troops: It Is with Good Reason).
- 22 September. "Nankin seifu no nayami: Tō Seichi shi Bukan ni tachikomoru" 南京政府の悩み 唐生智氏武漢に立籠る (The Worries of the Nanjing Government: Mr Tang Shengzhi Shuts Himself in Wuhan).
- 24 September. Ed. "Shin Nankin seifu: sono shōrai ikan" 新南京政府 その将来如何 (The New Nanjing Government: What Future?).
- 1 October. Ed. "Handō jidai rai: gen naikaku gaikō" 反動時代来 現内閣の外交 (Coming of the Reactionary Age: The Present Cabinet's Foreign Policy).
- 4 October. Ed. "Mata ugokidaseru Shina no keisei" 又動き出せる支那の形勢 (China's Situation Can Move On Again).
- 28 October. Ed. "Kateru Hōten gun: Chō shi no chii" 勝てる奉天軍 張氏の地位 (The Fengtian Army May Win: Mr Zhang's Position).
- 7 December. "Kokumintō zentai kaigi wa jijitsu jō ketsuretsu shita" 国民党全体会議は事実上決裂した (The Nationalist Party General Congress Has Actually Fallen Apart).
- 12 December. "Shō shi no deyō hitotsu" 蔣氏の出様一つ (Mr Chiang's Attitude Is One).
- 14 December. Ed. "Kanton no bōdō to kyōsantō" 広東の暴動と共産党 (The Canton Insurrection and the Communist Party).
- 16 December. Ed. "NanShi tōitsu nan: jijō iyoiyo fukuzatsu" 南支統一難 事情愈複雑 (Unification of South China Is Difficult: The Situation Gets Complicated).
- 19 December. Ed. "Nanboku bunritsu no dairiyū shōmetsu: tōitsu no shinkikai" 南北分立の大理由消滅 統一の新機械 (The Big Reason for the North-South Split Has Disappeared: A New Chance for Unification).

29 December. Ed. “Shina wa doko e iku: naisō ni toshi kureru” 支那は何処へ行く 内争に年暮る (Where Is China Going? The Year Closes on Civil War).

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27 February. Ed. “TaiShi seisaku no teiton: mui no tōkyokusha musaku no hantaitō” 対支政策の停顿 無為の当局者 無策の反対党 (China Policy at a Standstill: Idle Government, Clueless Opposition).

5 May a. Ed. “Nisshi hei no shōtotsu: Shina gawa no sekinin jūdai” 日支兵の衝突 支那側の責任重大 (Clash of Japanese and Chinese Soldiers: Grave Responsibility on China’s Side).

5 May b. Ed. “Shuppei mokuteki no bōkyaku” 出兵目的の忘却 (Expedition’s Purpose in Oblivion).

6 May. Ed. “Sainan jiken zengo: saizen no doryoku o yō su” 済南事件善後 最善の努力を要す (Settlement of the Jinan Incident: Utmost Effort Required).

9 May. Ed. “Waga gun ni taisuru chōsen: tetteiteki yōchō o kise” 我軍に対する挑戦 徹底的膺懲を期せ (A Challenge to Our Army: Go for Thorough Punishment).

11-14 May. Yano Jin’ichi 矢野仁一. “Sainan jiken no ikkōsatsu” 済南事件の一考察 (Considerations on the Jinan Incident).

12 May a. Ed. “Soku ni sennin gaishō o oke” 即専任外相を置 (Appoint Immediately a Full-Time Foreign Minister!).

12 May b. Ed. “Shina no gyaku senden: keikai o yō su” 支那の逆宣伝 警戒を要す (China’s Counter-Propaganda: Caution Required).

15 May. Ed. “Sainan jiken no taigai hankyō” 済南事件の対外反響 (Foreign Responses to the Jinan Incident).

9 June. Ed. “Shina kakumei undō no zento” 支那革命運動の前途 (The Outlook for China’s Revolutionary Movement).

12 June. Ed. “Shō Kaisekishi noshintai: ken ni nite obietaru mono ka” 蒋介石の進退 賢に似て怯たるものか (Mr Chiang Kai-shek’s Course of Action: Looks Smart But Is He Scared?).

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3 April. “Kanton wa shibaraku onkenha no tenka” 広東派暫く穏健派の天下 (For the Time Being Canton Is the Realm of the Moderate Faction).

19 April. “Kanton wa izen sakeiha yūsei” 広東は依然左傾派優勢 (In Canton the Leftist Faction Still Prevails).

21 April. “Kanton no ryōha antō o tsuzuku” 広東の両派暗闘を続く (Secret Feud between Factions in Canton Continues).

- 6 July. Ed. "Kanzei kaigi no chūzetsu" 関税会議の中絶 (Interruption of the Tariff Conference).
- 21 July. Ed. "Shina jikyoku no jūdaisei" 支那時局の重大性 (The Gravity of the Situation in China).
- 17 August. Ed. "Shina gunbatsu no sansukumi" 支那軍閥の三すくみ (A Three-Way Deadlock for China's Military Cliques).
- 14 September. Ed. "Kakumei seiryoku no shinten" 革命勢力の進展 (The Advance of the Revolutionary Forces).
- 30 November. Ed. "Shina sekka no taisei" 支那赤化の大勢 (The Trend for China's Reddening).
- 15 December. Ed. "Shina jikyoku to Nihon" 支那時局と日本 (China's Situation and Japan).

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- 3-8 January. Negishi Tadashi 根岸佶. "Hokubatsugun to sekka" 北伐軍と赤化 (The Northern Expedition Army and Reddening).
- 12 January. Ed. "Kyōkōna Shina no taigai taido" 強硬な支那の対外態度 (The Foreign Policy Attitude of Hard-Line China).
- 19 January. "Kokumin seifu to wa nanzo ya: kōsubeki ka haisubeki ka" 国民政府とは何ぞや 興すべきか排すべきか (What Is the Nationalist Government? Should It Be Supported, or Should It Be Rejected?).
- 20 January. Ed. "Shina mondai no kongo" 支那問題の今後 (The China Question Hereafter).
- 27 February. Ed. "Nanpō Shina no shisetsu: Tai shi kitaru" 南方支那の使節 戴氏来たる (Southern China's Envoy: Mr Dai Has Come).
- 1 March evening. "Yōyaku rokotsu to natta kokumin seifu no nairin kenka" 漸く露骨となった国民政府の内輪喧嘩 (Internecine Struggle in the Nationalist Government Has Finally Become Plain).
- 6 March. Ed. "Nanpō chūshin seiryoku no dōyō" 南方中心勢力の動揺 (Trembling at the Core of Southern Power).
- 16 March. "Shō Kaiseki shi wa mattaku koritsu" 蒋介石氏は全く孤立 (Mr Chiang Kai-shek Completely Isolated).
- 24 March. "Tō shi Nanshō ha ni kishite:Kankō no keisei kyūten su" 唐氏 南昌派に帰して 漢口の形勢急転す (Mr Tang Returning to the Nanchang Faction: Reversal of Forces in Hankou).
- 27 March. Ed. "Nankin jiken no kaiketsu" 南京事件の解決 (Solution of the Nanjing Incident).
- 5 April. Ed. "Kankō no bōdō: Nihon seifu no sekinin" 漢口の暴動 日本政府の責任 (Violence in Hankou: The Responsibility of Japan's Government).
- 13 April. Ed. "Shō shi no kūdetā" 蔣氏のクーデター (Mr Chiang's Coup d'État).

- 30 April. Ed. “Kokumin kakumei no jisatsu: kongo no kōsei ikan” 国民革命の自殺 今後の更生如何 (The Suicide of Nationalist Revolution: Shall There Be a Rebirth?).
- 24 May. Ed. “Shina jikyoku no henka: kyōsan ha to Hōten ha” 支那時局の変化 共産派と奉天派 (Changes in China’s Situation: The Communist Faction and the Fengtian Faction).
- 28 May. Ed. “Tai Shi shuppei mondai” 対支出兵問題 (The Issue of the Expedition to China).
- 29 May a. “Santō shuppei o hyō su” 山東出兵を評す (A Comment on the Shandong Expedition).
- 29 May b. “Santō shuppei wa igi jūdai” 山東出兵は意義重大 (The Shandong Expedition Has Grave Meaning).
- 29 May c. Ed. “Santō shuppei kettei” 山東出兵決定 (Shandong Expedition Decided).
- 1 June. Ed. “Naisei fukanshō no gensoku” 内政不干渉の原則 (The Principle of Non-Intervention).
- 12 June. Ed. “Shuppei tachiōjō” 出兵立往生 (The Expedition Is Stranding).
- 28 June. Ed. “Tōhō kaigi ni nozomu” 東方会議に望む (We Have Expectations from the Eastern Conference).
- 7 July. Ed. “Santō shuppei mondai: iyoioyo fukami ni hairu” 山東出兵問題 いやいよ深味に入る (The Shandong Expedition Problem: It’s Getting Deep).
- 26 July. Ed. “Nankin ha to Bukan ha: chōteisetsu no kakuh” 南京派と武漢派 調停説の確否 (Nanjing Faction and Wuhan Faction: Reliability of the Conciliation Theory).
- 2 August. Ed. “Kokumin kakumei to Roshia” 国民革命とロシア (Nationalist Revolution and Russia).
- 10 August. Ed. “Kokumin kakumei no nanten” 国民革命の難点 (The Difficult Point of Nationalist Revolution).
- 16 August evening. “Shō shi shikkyaku no shin’in” 蔣氏失脚の真因 (The True Causes of Mr Chiang’s Disgrace).
- 17 August a. “Shō shi no botsuraku” 蔣氏の没落 (The Downfall of Mr Chiang).
- 17 August b. Ed. “Kakumei seikyoku no gyakuten: Shō shi no geya” 革命政局の逆転 蔣氏の下野 (A Reversal in Revolutionary Politics: Mr Chiang’s Retirement).
- 26 August. Ed. “Teppei wa hatashite itsu ka” 撤兵は果たして何時か (When Shall Withdrawal Come?).
- 30 August. Ed. “Shina jikyoku to Nanpō ha” 支那時局と南方派 (China’s Situation and the Southern Faction).
- 1 September. Ed. “Santō teppei o yorokobu” 山東撤兵を喜ぶ (We Rejoice at the Withdrawal from Shandong).
- 20 September. Ed. “Kokumintō no danketsu” 国民党の団結 (Union in the Nationalist Party).

- 10 October. Ed. "Nanboku no jikyoku: Kokumintō no kiki" 南北の時局 国民党の危機 (The North-South Situation: The Crisis of the Nationalist Party).
- 26 October. Ed. "Nanpō ha no tōsō" 南方派の闘争 (Struggle in the Southern Faction).
- 15 November. Ed. "Tō Seichi shi no botsuraku" 唐生智氏の没落 (The Downfall of Mr Tang Shengzhi).
- 22 November. Ed. "Kanton no kūdetā: Kokumintō gōdōnan" 広東のクーデター 国民党合同難 (Coup d'État in Canton: Union of the Nationalist Party Difficult).
- 29 November. Ed. "Shina jikyoku no chūshin" 支那の時局の中心 (The Core of the Situation in China).
- 12 December. "Shō shi no fukushoku wa kaette zento o sugiru" 蔣氏の復職はかへつて前途を過る (Mr Chiang's Restoration in Office Exceeds the Prospects).
- 13 December. Ed. "Kanton no saiseihen" 広東の再政変 (Another Political Crisis in Canton).
- 14 December. "Shō, Ō ryōkyotō bunri no keisei" 蔣、汪両巨頭分離の形勢 (Separation of the two Leaders, Chiang and Wang).
- 21 December. "RoShi no kankei danzetsu: fukasoku no jikyoku" 露支の關係断絶 不可測の時局 (Severance of Russia-China Relations: An Unpredictable Situation).

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- 6 January evening. "Shin Bukan ha nari: taisei Shō shi ni furi" 新武漢派なり 大勢蔣氏に不理 (The New Wuhan Faction Is There: Trend Unfavourable to Mr Chiang).
- 17 January. Ed. "Shō shi saiki no kōka" 蔣氏再起の効果 (The Effects of Mr Chiang's Return).
- 15 February. Ed. "Shina nanboku no keisei" 支那南北の形勢 (The Prospects in South and North China).
- 19 April. Ed. "Santō keisei no kikyū: saishuppei fuka" 山東形勢の危急 再出兵は不可 (Shandong's Dire Situation: Another Expedition Impossible).
- 5 May. Ed. "Nisshi ryōgun no shōtotsu" 日支両軍の衝突 (The Clash between the Japanese and Chinese Armies).
- 10 May. Ed. "Jitai no jūdaika" 事態の重大化 (Worsening of the Situation).
- 13 May. Ed. "Kokugai shoron ni kangamiyo" 国外の所論に鑑みよ (Bear in Mind the Foreign Opinion).
- 5 June. Ed. "Shinseimen no dakai ikan: Chō shi sōnan to Tōsanshō" 新生面の打開如何 張氏遭難と東三省 (How to Break the Deadlock? Mr Zhang's Disaster and the Three Eastern Provinces).

- 8 June. Ed. “Bakudan jiken no eikyō: jitai kyokudo ni jūtaika” 爆弾事件の影響 事態極度に重体化 (The Consequences of the Bomb Incident: The Situation Has Become Extremely Grave).
- 14 June. Ed. “Shina jikyoku no tenbō” 支那時局の展望 (The Outlook for China’s Situation).
- 19 June. Ed. “TaiShi gaikō no kekkan: Sainan jiken o kaiketsu seyo” 対支外交の欠陥 済南事件を解決せよ (The Shortcomings of Diplomacy towards China: Do Solve the Jinan Incident).
- 22 June. Ed. “Minseitō no taiShi ketsugi” 民政党の対支決議 (Minseitō’s Resolution on China).
- 26 June. Ed. “Nankin seifu no shōnin mondai” 南京政府の承認問題 (The Issue of Recognition of the Nanjing Government).

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- 8 April. Ed. “Roshiya no taiShi seisaku: hatashite itten ka” ロシアの対支政策 果たして一転か (Russia’s China Policy: A Turnabout?).

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- 7 April. Ed. “Jūdai jiki: Shina sarani midaren” 重大危機 支那更に乱れん (A Grave Crisis: China Plunges into Further Disorder).
- 21 July. Ed. “Innin gaikō no shōri: Kyōsantō taijō su” 隱忍外交の勝利 共産党退場す (Victory for the Diplomacy of Endurance: The Communist Party Leaves the Stage).
- 15 December. Ed. “Kanton no kyōsan bōdō: Kokumintō bunretsu no shosan” 広東の共産暴動国民党分裂の所産 (The Communist Uprising in Canton: A Product of the Nationalist Party’s Split).
- 29 December. Ed. “Kotoshi no Shina” 今年の支那 (This Year’s China).

Magazines

- Editorial (1927a). “Musān seitō ni kawarite Shina nanpō seifu daihyōsha ni tsugu” 無産政党に代りて支那南方政府代表者に告ぐ (We Speak in Place of the Proletarian Parties to the Representative of China’s Southern Government). *Chūō kōron* 中央公論 42, 4 (April), 2-3.
- Editorial (1927b). “Nisshi ryōgoku taishū no seishinteki renkei” 日支両国大衆の精神的連携 (The Spiritual Connection Between the Masses of Japan and China). *Chūō kōron* 42, 5 (May), 2-3.
- Editorial (1927c). “Shina jikyoku no seishi” 支那時局の正視 (A Straight View of China’s Situation). *Chūō kōron* 42, 7 (July), 2-3.

- Editorial (1927d). “Seiyūkai naikaku no tai ManMō seisaiku” 政友会内閣の対滿蒙政策 (The Seiyūkai Cabinet’s Policy towards Manchuria and Mongolia). *Chūō kōron* 42, 9 (September), 2-3.
- Furushō Kunio 古荘国雄 (1927a). “NanShi o ugokasu Borōjin no kaiwan” 南支を動かすボロヂンの怪腕 (Borodin’s Amazing Ability to Move South China). *Kaizō* 改造 9, 3 (March), 1-10
- Furushō Kunio 古荘国雄 (1927b). “Shō Kaiseki wa doko e iku (Kokumin kakumei no shōrai)” 蒋介石は何処へ行く (国民革命の将来) (Where Is Chiang Kai-shek Going? (The Future of Nationalist Revolution). *Kaizō* 9, 4 (April), 76-83.
- Furushō Kunio 古荘国雄 (1927c). “Hadaka ni shita Shō Kaiseki” 裸にした蒋介石 (Chiang Kai-shek Naked). *Chūō kōron* (April), 93-101.
- Ikeda Tōsen 池田桃川 (1927). “Shina no jikyoku to minshū undō” 支那の時局と民衆運動 (China’s Situation and Popular Movements). *Kaizō* 9, 3 (March), 47-56.
- Inomata Tsunao 猪俣津南雄 (1927). “Hankakumei no to Shō Kaiseki” 反革命の徒蒋介石 (The Counter-Revolution Mate, Chiang Kai). *Chūō kōron* 42, 11 (November), 105-6.
- Kamio Shigeru 神尾茂 (1927). “‘Shidehara gaikō’ shiren no toki” 「幣原外交」試練の時 (A Time of Trial for ‘Shidehara Diplomacy’). *Chūō kōron* 42, 3 (March), 111-8.
- Komura Shunsaburō 小村俊三郎 (1927a). “Chūseikiteki hōken gunbatsu to Soviēto shiki kakumei shinkō no Shina narabini sono kokusai kankei” 中世期的封建軍閥とソヴィエト式革命進行の支那並にその国際関係 (China between Medieval, Feudal Military Cliques and the Advance of Soviet-Style Revolution, and Its International Relations). *Chūō kōron* 42, 1 (January), 148-56.
- Komura Shunsaburō 小村俊三郎 (1927b). “Genka ni okeru taiShi shoiken no kaibō to hihan” 現下に於ける対支諸意見の解剖と批判 (A Dissection and Critique of Current Opinions on China). *Chūō kōron* 42, 2 (February), 114-30.
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