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Modern Chinese History Studies

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Modern Chinese History Studies

No. 2, 2021

From Allying with Russia to Fighting against Chinese Communists: Wu Peifu's Cognitive Changes about Russia *Yang Tianhong*(4)

At the beginning of 1920s, after defeating Anhui (or Wan) Clique and Fengtian (or Feng) Clique, Zhili (or Zhi) Clique became the dominant political force in China. As a response to Zhili Clique's dominance, Guangdong (or Yue) Clique formed a triangular alliance against Zhili Clique by allying itself with Anhui Clique and Fengtian Clique. A storm loomed large in Chinese politics. Meanwhile, the Soviet Russia started to court potential collaborators in China. Wu Peifu was initially the priority target of the Soviet Russia. Wu responded positively to the Soviet Russia's courtship. He insisted unconditional recognition of the Soviet Russia and accepted the latter's suggestion for cooperating with Sun Yat-sen. Moreover, under the guidance of the Soviet Russia, Wu even kept close contact with the Chinese Communist Party and supported the Beiping-Hankou Railway workers movement. These maneuvers by Wu served some of his hidden agendas. As far as Wu's basic political ideology was concerned, he was a faithful supporter of the western political model that he himself understood. As a leading figure of the Zhili Clique of the Beiyang Government, Wu was known for his unwavering belief that the Beiyang Government is the orthodox inheritor of China. Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to conclude that Wu's alliance with Russia was a tactical move against the triangular alliance. In other words, it was nothing but a political and diplomatic maneuver and we should not take it as an indication of the shift of Wu's political ideology. Wu Peifu hedged his bets by engaging with different political forces in both North China and South China and both Russia and the U. S. as well. Thus, his political ideas and diplomatic standpoints were notoriously inconsistent. Wu ultimately took the anti-communist route without noticing the shift of public support in China at the time, a failure that largely foretold his political demise.

Chiang Kai-shek's Strategic Decisions during the War of Wuhan: A Comparative Study on the Protracted War Strategies of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China

..... *Luo Min*(25)

During the War of Wuhan, Chiang Kai-shek's strategic decisions were conditioned and constrained by such factors like Japan-Russia relations, China-Japan peace talks and the relations between the CPC and the Kuomintang. Although some senior Kuomintang officials, including Chiang Kai-shek himself, came to realize the tactical effectiveness of mobile warfare and guerrilla warfare, they failed to recognize the strategic importance of the basic principles of the protracted war. At one point, they even planned to have a final military showdown with the Japanese in Wuhan. At the end of July, 1938, a military conflict broke out between Japan and the Soviet Union in China's Changkufeng area. The conflict with the Soviet Union somewhat slowed the Japanese military offensive against Wuhan. Consequently, Chiang's strategy shifted from "final military showdown in Wuhan" to "holding ground", hoping the changes in international environment would hold back the Japanese military offensive against Wuhan. Witnessing the British and French decision to appease Germany by sacrificing the interests of the Czech, Chiang agreed to hold direct peace talks with the Japanese under the precondition that China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected. Later, Japanese initiated its southward offensive, which threatened the interests of the U. K. and the U. S. in South China. Thus, Chiang shifted the gravity of China's diplomacy to the U. K. and the U. S. and persuaded them to fight against the Japanese in the Far East together with China. Just around the time of the War of Wuhan, Mao Zedong published his famous essays like *On Protracted War* and *The New Stage*, heralding the maturity of CPC's Protracted War Strategy. In contrast, the version of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang's Protracted War Strategy was less systemic, flexible and adaptive. The end of the War of Wuhan foreshadowed the most difficult stage of the Chinese People's Resistance War against Japanese Aggression. Guided by different versions of the Protracted War Strategy, the Kuomintang and the CPC fought the resistance war against Japanese quite differently.

Revisiting the Diplomatic Exchanges Between China and Vatican during the World War I

..... *Zhang Le*(45)

Internationalism, Localness and a Community of Common Interests: Chinese Representation in Shanghai International Settlement *Wang Min*(63)

The issue of Chinese representation in Shanghai International Settlement (SIS) emerged after the end of World War I.

With the aim to adjust its policy towards China, the British government supported the idea of increasing the Chinese representation in SIS and proposed a solution based on the principles of localization and incrementalism. The implementation of this solution, however, gave rise to a variety of contradictions and tensions in practice. To maintain its vested interests and position, Shanghai International Settlement Authority was primarily concerned with excluding any outside political influence, under the pretense of maintaining its autonomy. To contain the growing Japanese influences in SIS, the U. S. supported increasing Chinese representation. For its part, the Japanese also supported the British solution, hoping to change the majority of British and American representatives in Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC). Some low-key countries like Italy took this occasion to demand the diversity and internationality of SMC, aiming to increase their presence and weight in SMC. Competition among these divergent interests and the final balancing of them highlighted the fact that SIS was highly international as an international settlement on the one hand and deeply local on the other. The glue that helped bind the international and local dimensions of SIS together was a community of common interests built on the foundation of the prosperity of Shanghai.

American Financial Advisor Arthur N. Young and Prewar Currency Reform of the Nanking National Government Wang Li(79)

The Modern Dilemma of “the Feudal Remnant”: The Dispute over the Worship Fields in the Qufu Confucian Temple from 1928 to 1930 Wu Peilin and Yao Zhiliang(100)

The Worship Fields in the Qufu Confucian Temple were gifted to the Duke Yansheng Mansion by emperors of different Chinese dynasties in history, originally as a compensation for the costs of sacrifice ceremonies in the Qufu Confucian Temple. In February, 1928, the old practice of holding sacrifice ceremonies to worship Confucius in both spring and autumn was abolished, a move that triggered a brawl among the Nanking National Government, the Duke Yansheng Mansion and some social activists. Originally concentrated on the ownership of the Worship Fields in the Qufu Confucian Temple, it ultimately turned into an ideological dispute. People like Cai Yuanpei advocated for the nationalization of and taxation on the Worship Fields, a somewhat reasonable proposal under the background of the modern state building process in China. For its part, the Duke Yansheng Mansion spared no effort to oppose Cai’s proposal out of concerns for losing its economic resources on the one hand and discontinuing the Confucius-worshipping tradition on the other. Senior government officials like Kong Xiangxi and some social activists stressed the cultural values of the Worship Fields, laying bare the fact that the dispute was more than an economic one and it also had implications to the maintenance of the Confucian value system. With all these divergent views in place, the Plan for Reforming the Qufu Confucius Forest and Temple, originally designed to nationalize the Worship Fields, was shelved in the end. The dispute over the disposal of the Worship Fields shed new light on the political culture and political atmosphere in the early days of the Nanking National Government.

Trio Variations of Rice, Wine and Tax: The Prohibition of Brewing in Fujian in 1940s Wang Ronghua(117)

Who Killed Yang Yongtai Liu Wennan(132)

This article revisits the investigation and hearing process of the Yang Yongtai Assassination Case based on the author’s examination of relevant archives, newspapers and memoirs. The murder was orchestrated and carried out by Yang Erqian, a graduate from Whampoa Military Academy, and his accomplices. They had assassinated Tang Youren before then and once orchestrated to assassinate Zhang Qun and even Chiang Kai-shek. They claimed that they only assassinated those officials who succumbed to the Japanese. In the investigation of the Yang Yongtai Assassination Case, Dai Li found that Liu Luyin, a member of the Hu Hanmin Faction, provided the wherewithal for Yang Erqian. Thus, Liu Luyin was arrested and accused that he ordered Yang Erqian to assassinate Yang Yongtai due to jealousy. For his part, Liu Luyin repeatedly denied that he knew anything about the assassination beforehand. By examining the social network of Yang Erqian, however, we can find that apart from receiving the financial support from Liu Luyin, Yang Erqian also kept contact with some opponents of Chiang Kai-shek, like Wang Yaqiao and Chen Mingshu. It turns out that some anti-Chiang Kai-shek factions did pull the strings behind the Yang Yongtai Assassination Case. The Yang Yongtai Assassination Case shed light on the rampant political assassinations during the period of the Republic of China. It also epitomized the grand convergence trend between anti-Chiang Kai-shek forces and the forces that resisted Japanese aggression, against the background that the Pro-Japanese faction lost its public appeal as the Japanese stepped up its aggression against China.

The Plague and the Making of “Wu’s Mask” Zhang Meng(148)

English abstracts translated by Jia Yajuan

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