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Title	Russo-Chinese Myths and Their Impact on Japanese Foreign Policy in the 1930s
Author(s)	Paine, S.C.M.
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 21, 1-22
Issue Date	2004
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/39429
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	ASI21_001.pdf



Articles

RUSSO-CHINESE MYTHS AND THEIR IMPACT ON JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1930s

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The Far Eastern geopolitical environment of the 1930s was characterized by systemic Chinese instability from an interminable civil war, growing Soviet missionary activities to promote communism, and a collapse of Asian trade brought on by the Great Depression. While Western attention remained riveted on the more local problems of German compliance with the settlement terms of World War I and a depression that seemed to defy all conventional remedies, Japan focused with increasing horror on events in China. Japanese policymakers had great difficulty communicating to their Western counterparts their sense of urgency concerning the dangers presented by the unfolding events in Asia. Their task was greatly complicated by the many myths obscuring the true nature of Russo-Chinese relations. These myths then distorted foreign understanding of Sino-Japanese relations.

Russia is not usually considered in the context of the Far East. Both of its modern capitals – St. Petersburg and Moscow – are in Europe, its primary cultural ties are also with Europe, and yet much of its territory lies beyond the Ural Mountains in the Far East. While a general Western awareness of Russia's important role in Asia arose only during the Cold War, the Japanese awareness came much earlier, in the late nineteenth century, when Japan and Russia became engaged in a long struggle to dominate the northeastern Asian mainland.¹

Russia's Far Eastern influence has been long-standing, continuous, and profound. The modern histories of China and Japan cannot be understood without an examination of Russian activities. Russia has been involved in all major Far Eastern wars from the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) onward. In that conflict it spearheaded the Triple Intervention in combination with Germany and France to alter the peace settlement in China's favor. Russia sent one of the largest contingents of troops to relieve the besieged foreign legations in Beijing during the Boxer Uprising (1900).² Russia was one of the two belligerents in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), which was fought almost exclusively on Chinese territory. During World War I, Russian infiltration of Outer Mon-

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- 1 See the many books by George Alexander Lensen whose life's work was devoted to the study of Russo-Japanese relations. See also S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
 - 2 Andrew Malozemoff, *Russian Far Eastern Policy 1881-1904: With Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-Japanese War* (1958; reprint; New York: Octagon Books, 1977), pp. 124-126; Chester C. Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 112; Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 71-72, 76.

golia speeded its detachment from the Chinese sphere of influence. In the Russian Civil War (1918-22), not only did the Japanese intervene, but it was in the Far East that the Bolsheviks defeated the armies of such key White Russian officers as Admiral Aleksandr Vasilievich Kolchak (1874-1920) and Lieutenant-General Baron Roman Fedorovich von Ungern-Sternberg (1886-1921).

Soviet Russia then completed the Tsarist task of drawing Outer Mongolia into the Russian sphere of influence. In the 1929 Sino-Soviet War, the Guomindang (國民黨, the Kuomintang or the Chinese Nationalist Party) failed to regain control over the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria. In World War II, the Red Army finished off the Japanese Kwantung Army (關東軍, Kanto Army) in Manchuria (1945), took the southernmost Kurile Islands from Japan, and extended Soviet influence into North Korea. Thereafter, the Soviet Union became intimately involved in aiding both the North Koreans and the North Vietnamese in the Korean War (1950-53) and the Vietnam War (1954-75) respectively. Japanese proximity to the theaters of these conflicts gave them both a special interest in the outcomes and an acute awareness of the deep Russian involvement in them.

In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a growing communication gap between Japan and the West concerning the dangers presented by the increasing Soviet infiltration of China. This gap resulted, in part, from a whole web of myths concerning Russo-Chinese relations that distorted not only Western understandings of events in Asia, but also the Russian, Chinese, and Japanese understanding of them as well. These myths ranged from slight exaggerations to deliberate falsifications, which, through repetition, grew to become accepted truths regardless of the evidence to the contrary. These false beliefs became the prism through which Russians and Chinese viewed each other and through which others viewed them. They underlay assumptions concerning the nature of Russo-Chinese and Sino-Japanese relations, and predisposed certain policy choices. The myths ultimately hamstrung Japanese policymakers who proved incapable of breaking through them so that the Chinese public would recognize Japan's positive contributions to Chinese economic development and Westerners would recognize its role in containing Soviet expansion. When the Japanese Foreign Ministry's many attempts to do so by peaceful means failed, this exhausted the limited patience of the Japanese army stationed in Manchuria. It took the irrevocable step of invasion. Distortions of the historical record can have terrible consequences. The Japanese Foreign Ministry attempted to explain this situation to an incredulous international community: "Communism has already invaded China, and the alarming extent and success of the invasion is far too seldom realized. A communized China would constitute a problem for Europe and America beside which other questions would pale into insignificance."³ The United States would not reach this conclusion until the onset of the Korean War in 1950.

3 外交史料館 [Diplomatic Record Office], 外務省 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan], A.1.1.0-21-35, vol. 2, statement of the Japanese government to the League of Nations, 26

This article focuses on the distortions. It will examine in turn five myths that distorted people's understanding, then and now, of Far Eastern relations in the 1930s. (1) The first is the myth concerning the discontinuity of Soviet and Tsarist foreign policy in the Far Asia. This article will show that the Soviet Far Eastern agenda constituted a direct continuation of the Tsarist agenda. (2) A second widespread myth still infecting current scholarship presents Russo-Chinese relations as more friendly than China's relations with the other powers. This was true neither in the Tsarist nor in the Soviet period although many Chinese citizens fervently believed the myth. (3) The third myth of Chinese victimization is really an exaggeration. The Chinese have long exaggerated their mistreatment by the great powers. They have ignored entirely their own victimization of others and have made short shrift of the responsibility borne by their countrymen for China's tragic modern history. (4) The fourth myth concerns borders. According to the Chinese variant of this myth, much of the vast Russo-Chinese frontier area was Chinese until the Russian stole it. In the Russian variant of the myth, their countrymen simply stumbled into a no-man's land and did what was natural: they took it. In reality, Russia and China have long dominated the native peoples populating their frontier. The native peoples, for their part, have done their best to grasp at any opportunity to rid themselves of both Russian and Chinese colonialism. (5) The fifth myth, like the third myth, is an exaggeration. Chinese and Russians have presented the Japanese involvement in China as exclusively negative. The Chinese, in particular, have focused on the Japanese invasion and the accompanying atrocities. However, there is another equally important side to the Japanese involvement in China. It was the attempt, however misguided or heavy-handed, at nation building, a process with the constructive goal of creating a modern infrastructure in China and the modern institutions to run it.

This article will attempt to disabuse the myths and also to discuss some of their consequences.

THE MYTH OF THE SOVIET AND TSARIST RUSSIAN DISCONTINUITY

Immediately upon taking power, the Bolsheviks emphasized the discontinuity between Soviet and Imperial Russian foreign policy:⁴ Whereas Tsarist Russia had been imperialistic, expansionistic, and inherently evil, Soviet Russia embodied the hopes of the downtrodden and the promise of a just society, not only for Russia but for working men and women everywhere. The Russian

February 1932, p. 238. See also 防衛研究所図書館 [National Institute for Defense Studies], 史料閲覧室 [Archives], 満州：満州事変40関東軍司令官カ連盟調査委員トノ最後会見ニテ説明セラレタル事項、関東軍参謀部 [Matters concerning explanations made by the Kwantung Army to the Lytton Commission during the final meeting], Top Secret, 2 June 1932.

4 See for instance, *Ефимов Г. В., Дубинский А. М. Международные отношения Дальнем Востоке*. Т. 2. М., 1973. С. 61-64ъ *Жуков Е. М. (ред.) Международные отношения на Дальнем Востоке (1870-1945 гг.)*. М., 1951. С. 365.

Revolution and ensuing Russian Civil War had been so brutal and the communist victory so complete that many outsiders assumed that Soviet foreign policy did indeed constitute a sharp break with Tsarist foreign policy,⁵ which had been characterized by a continuous push for territorial expansion.⁶

In fact, the Bolsheviks remained faithful to the Tsarist agenda in Asia.⁷ The goal remained the maximization of Russian political influence. The means remained insulating Russia's extended frontiers by creating weak buffer states ever deeper into the traditional Chinese sphere of interest. The Soviet Union retained control over the extensive Tsarist railway concessions, which cut through the heart of Manchuria, from Lake Baikal straight to Vladivostok via Harbin. Although the Soviet Union sold these concessions to the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in 1935, it recovered most of them upon Japan's defeat in World War II. Despite consistent Chinese demands for their return, the Soviet Union retained them until after Stalin's death and the end of the Korean War (both in 1953); in other words, the Soviet Union retained the Tsarist concessions until several years after the communists came to power in China. These concessions were not trivial; they were the most extensive of any imperial power in China ever.⁸

Even at the very beginning of the Soviet period, the Bolsheviks faithfully pursued the Tsarist agenda in Asia. Only while the Russian Civil War raged in Siberia did they make conciliatory overtures: In 1919 in the original version of the Karakhan Declaration, they offered to annul all unequal treaties and immediately to return without compensation the Chinese Eastern Railway.⁹ Just a year later in 1920, Soviet diplomats denied ever having made the original offer and issued a revised version of the declaration.¹⁰

5 See for instance: Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: From 1368 to the Present* (New York: Pica Press, 1975), pp. 253-254; O. Edmund Clubb, *China and Russia: The "Great Game"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 210; Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, 4th ed. (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 515; Jean Chesneaux, Françoise Le Barbier, and Marie-Claire Bergère, *China from the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*, trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davis (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977), p. 124; Anatole G. Mazour, *Russia: Tsarist and Communist* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), p. 651; John W. Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations 1937-1945: The Diplomacy of Chinese Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 8.

6 John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire: 1650-1831* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), passim; John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), passim.

7 Bruce A. Elleman, *Diplomacy and Deception: The Secret History of Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1927* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), passim.

8 S.C.M. Paine, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia, and Their Disputed Frontier* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 187; Hsu, *Rise of Modern China*, pp. 466-468, 567; Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 67, 95, 119.

9 "Declaration of 1919," in H.G.W. Woodhead, ed., *China Year Book 1924-5* (Tientsin: Simplin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1926), pp. 868-869.

10 "Declaration of 1920," in *China Year Book 1924-5*, pp. 871-872; Bruce A. Elleman, "The Soviet

In 1921, the Bolsheviks completed the long process of detaching Outer Mongolia from the Chinese sphere of influence. During the Russian Civil War, the Red Army pursued White Russian troops into Outer Mongolia. After the end of the civil war Red Army troops remained, precluding a Chinese reoccupation. These Bolshevik troop deployments made possible the establishment of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1921, despite Chinese insistence that Outer Mongolia remained an integral part of China.¹¹ Similarly, the late-Tsarist de facto annexation of Tannu Tuva (Uriankhai), formerly the northwestern part of Outer Mongolia, was made de jure by Stalin in 1944 and public only in 1946.¹² The territory involved was not trivial - 65,000 square miles or approximately the size of Great Britain.¹³

Like the Tsarist government, the Soviet government vied with Japan for dominance over a greater share of the Asian mainland. This entailed funding a kaleidoscope of competing factions including the frontier warlords: Sheng Shicai (盛世才) in Xinjiang, who hoped to keep Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek, 蔣介石) at bay;¹⁴ Feng Yuxiang (馮玉祥) in north China, who also hoped to maintain independence from Jiang,¹⁵ and such political parties as Jiang Jieshi's Guomindang and its arch-rival, the Chinese Communist Party.¹⁶ Soviet universities

Union's Secret Diplomacy Concerning the Chinese Eastern Railway, 1924-1925," *Journal of Asian Studies* 52:2 (May 1994), pp. 459-486; Allen S. Whiting, "The Soviet Offer to China of 1919," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 10:4 (August 1951), pp. 355-364.

11 Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, pp. 287-332.

12 Peter S.H. T'ang, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia 1911-1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1959), pp. 399-400, 417, 428; David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia and the Far East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), pp. 82-91.

13 Tsien-hua Tsui, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute in the 1970s* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1983), p. 29; T'ang, *Russian and Soviet Policy*, p. 428; Alastair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 202. Tsui gives the figure of 65,000 sq. mi. while Lamb provides the figure of 80,000 sq. mil. Either way the amount of territory is considerable.

14 Linda Benson and Ingvar Svanberg, *China's Last Nomads: The History and Culture of China's Kazaks* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 65-78; Linda Benson, *The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944-1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), pp. 7, 27-28, 36, 39; Andrew D.W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang, 1911-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 144-148, 166, 232; A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of the Communist Takeover* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 247.

15 J.E. Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yu-Hsiang* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

16 Richard C. Thornton, *China: A Political History, 1917-1980* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1973), pp. 50-58, 206-207; C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-ying How, *Documents on Communism, Nationalism, and Soviet Advisers in China 1918-1927* (1956; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1972); Tony Saich, *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), pp. xxxix-lxiv; Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945-1948* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 31-36, 96, 128, 237-241.

educated the top leadership of both the Guomindang and the Communist Party.¹⁷ Tsarist and Soviet Russia were pursuing the typical strategy of a large continental empire, whose border defense required weak and pliable neighbors. In China during the 1920s and 1930s, this entailed funding all sides in the raging multilateral civil war in the hopes of preventing a strong united China from emerging along the vulnerable Siberian frontier.

Despite all outraged claims to the contrary, both China and Russia in the twentieth century remained vast continental empires whose frontier areas were glued to the empire, not by affinity but by force. This helps explain the rapid collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991. When effective military force no longer could be projected from the center, influence over the periphery evaporated and local populations stampeded toward independence. In China, control over Tibet and Xinjiang remains, but at a price of military occupation challenged by intermittent rebellion.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many Western policymakers were only vaguely aware of the events unfolding in Asia. Beyond various diplomats stationed in China, most Western policymakers were not overly concerned about the spreading Soviet influence there. It seemed hard to believe in the 1920s that the war-torn Soviet Russia could be in any position to realize an imperial agenda in the Far East. Moreover, its propaganda was so thoroughly anti-imperial. Events had yet to put a lie to the propaganda. The key issue for many Western governments vis-à-vis Soviet Russia was its renunciation of all Tsarist debts. The containment of German revanchism was an even greater concern. Then the Great Depression trumped all. Western concerns remained fixated on the West.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry and military, in contrast to much of the West, immediately understood the basic continuity of Tsarist and Soviet objectives in China. They considered the fusion of imperial Russian territorial expansion with Soviet ideological expansion to be a particularly dangerous mix.¹⁸ Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke (松岡洋右) warned the League of Nations that the Soviet Union was intent upon "revolutionizing the world" and "Sovietizing China, taking advantage of the chaos prevailing in that country." If Japan withdrew from Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, he argued that "Russia would instantly step in, invading these regions as far as South Manchuria" a region key to Japanese national security.¹⁹ Although the Japanese Foreign Ministry and military rejected the myth of Soviet and Tsarist discontinuity, the Foreign Ministry was unable effectively to communicate these concerns to Western governments, which, from the Japanese point of view, seemed foolishly oblivious

17 Miinling Yu, "Sun Yat-sen University in Moscow, 1925-1930," Ph.D. diss, New York University, 1995.

18 Alvin D. Coox, "The Kwantung Army Dimension," in Peter Duus et al., eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 407-408, 421-424.

19 外交史料館, 外務省, A.1.1.0-21-12-2, vol. 2, "Mr. Matsuoka's Conversations with the Members of the League Commission," 24 March 1932, pp. 124-125; 131.

to Soviet actions in Asia.²⁰ The Western governments, for their part, felt over-committed with the burdens of post-World War I reconstruction, the need to contain German international ambitions, and, with the onset of the Great Depression, the imperative to restore domestic prosperity.

From the mid-1920s onward, pressure within the Imperial Japanese Army began to build to counter the growing Soviet influence in China. The spread of communism threatened Japan's considerable economic investments on the Asian mainland and its domestic economic recovery. Japanese economic prosperity depended on the access to foreign markets that was largely cut off by the Western protectionist response to the Great Depression. Japan tried to enlist the cooperation of the Western powers to contain the expansion of Soviet influence in China, but to no avail.²¹ This served simultaneously to discredit the Japanese Foreign Ministry's approach of cooperating with the West within the framework of international law and to infuriate the Japanese military, which soon developed an entirely different approach.²² In 1931, the Kwantung Army responded to the Soviet Union's covert aid to China by a highly overt military invasion of Manchuria, the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933. The West fully appreciated the Soviet Union's imperial agenda in the Far East only after World War II, far too late to halt the cascade of events leading to world war in the Pacific.

THE MYTH OF RUSSO-CHINESE FRIENDSHIP

The Russians – both Tsarist and Soviet – have consistently argued that China's relations with them, in contrast to China's relations with the other powers, have always been genuinely friendly and that the Chinese have long held them in warm regard. Russian diplomats in the nineteenth century consistently alluded to two hundred years of uninterrupted Russo-Chinese friendship.²³ Russians have also often claimed that their relations with China have had a moral character absent from Sino-Western relations, which were polluted by the Western pursuit of commercial gain and imperial influence.²⁴

In the nineteenth century, the Russian belief in their monopoly of the moral high ground in China became a justification for a Russian civilizing mission

20 外交資料館, 外務省, A.1.1.0-21-12-2, Japanese testimony to the Lytton Commission at the League of Nations, vols. 1-6, *passim*.

21 Ibid.

22 Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895-1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. 117-118.

23 For a long list of Tsarist sources alluding to two centuries of Russo-Chinese friendship, see Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, p. 19n26.

24 Milan Hauner, *What Is Asia to Us? Russia's Asian Heartland Yesterday and Today* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 4; Robert Wesson, *The Russian Dilemma*, revised ed. (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1986), pp. 35, 48.

there. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the belief became a justification for exporting communism. However home-grown Mao Zedong claimed his communism to be, in fact, the Soviet Union was instrumental in founding the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and in providing crucial aid during the forty years preceding the 1960 Sino-Soviet split. The Russians have presented this relationship as one marked by Russian benevolence and Chinese gratitude.²⁵

The myth of Russo-Chinese friendship also gained currency in third countries,²⁶ especially during the 1950s at the height of the Cold War. The myth continues to mar current scholarship concerning Russo-Chinese relations. For example, works focused on Manchuria in the 1920s and 1930s routinely fail to mention the 1929 Sino-Soviet War at all or give it a page or two before resuming the discourse on Russo-Chinese friendship.²⁷ The war was not an insignificant event. It lasted five months (11 July 1929-22 December 1929)²⁸ and quashed the Guomindang's hopes of regaining control over the Soviet railroad concessions in Manchuria, all of which the Soviet Union had promised to return in the orig-

25 Сладковский Б. Н. Внешняя политика СССР на Дальнем Востоке 1945-1986. М., 1988. С. 3-9; Астафьев Г. В. Интервенция США в Китае 1945-1949, 2nd ed. М., 1985. С. 3; Тихвинский С. Л. Путь Китая к объединению и независимости 1898-1949 М., 1996. С. 3-4 70; Овчинников Ю. М. Становление и развитие единого национального фронта сопротивления Японии в Китае. М., 1985. С. 3; Юрьев М. Ф. др. Китай в период войны против Японской агрессии. М., 1988. С. 185, 4, 13, 251, 272; Катакова Э. Д. Китай и державы 1927-1937. М., 1995. С. 7, 235.

26 George Alexander Lensen, *The Russo-Chinese War* (Tallahassee: The Diplomatic Press, 1967), p. 70; George Alexander Lensen, *Balance of Intrigue: International Rivalry in Korea and Manchuria, 1884-1899*, vol. 2 (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1982), p. 477; Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 440; Nish, *Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 8; Louis E. Frechtling, "Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Eastern Turkestan, 1863-1881," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 26, part 3 (July 1939), p. 487; A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 144, 187; Steven G. Marks, *Road to Power: The Trans-Siberian Railroad and the Colonization of Asian Russia 1850-1917* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 39; Mazour, *Russia Tsarist and Communist*, pp. 296, 335-336; R.K.I. Quested, "Matey" Imperialists? *The Tsarist Russians in Manchuria 1895-1917* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1982), pp. 15, 45, 115, 125-126, *passim*. Quested's thesis is manifest in her book's title: Russian imperialism in China was "matey," a Briticism meaning companionable.

27 Felix Patrikeeff, has written a book detailing the significance of the 1929 Sino-Soviet War. He notes the tendency of scholars to ignore the conflict and the consequences of this oversight. See *Russian Politics in Exile: The Northeast Asian Balance of Power, 1924-1931* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 135 n2. For recent works on Manchuria in the 1920s and 1930s that virtually or totally ignore the war, see Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy*; James H. Carter, *Creating a Chinese Harbin: Nationalism in an International City 1916-1932* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 182-183; Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of Californian Press, 1998).

28 媛田光義 [Himeta, Mitsuyoshi] et al., eds. 『中国20世紀史』 [*History of China in the 20th Century*] (Tokyo: 東京大学出版社, 1993), p. 23.

inal version of the Karakhan Manifesto. To make a rather obvious observation: Wars are not friendly acts. They are evidence of deep hostility, not of friendship.

Evidence from Chinese foreign policy documents is overwhelming on this score. After the Opium Wars, the Chinese came to consider Russia as the most dangerous European power. Unlike the Western powers that came to trade, Russia came to take territory. China's preoccupation with Russian foreign policy is indicated by the distribution of the archival materials concerning Qing or Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) foreign policy: Nearly half of all these materials relate to Russia, while less than a third deal with Great Britain, and less than a tenth concern Japan or the United States.²⁹ In these archival documents, Chinese officials, over and over again, describe Russian designs on Chinese territory, using such terms as: "gnawing away like a silkworm" (蠶食), "gobbling up" (併吞), "eyeing predatorily like a tiger" (虎視), "drooling at the mouth" (垂涎), "insatiable" (得寸進尺), having "evil intentions" (禍心), "desiring that which belongs to others" (覬覦), and "unfathomable" (叵測) behavior.³⁰ Such documents clearly show that Russo-Chinese relations were deeply troubled from the start. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Sino-Japanese relations became equally troubled.³¹

During the Republican period (1912-49), Chinese opinion became divided. Until the very end of the Qing period, there had been no real public opinion, just a lettered elite often employed in government service. Modern newspapers did not really develop in China until after the First Sino-Japanese War.³² Publications in the spoken language that the general public could easily understand – as opposed to Classical Chinese, the archaic literary language that only the most highly educated could decipher – did not become widespread until the May Fourth Movement of 1919.³³ Therefore, public opinion was a very new thing in China.

At the time of the May Fourth Movement, many intellectuals and students believed the myth of Soviet and Tsarist discontinuity. They perceived the Bolshheviks as bearers of a modern credo that would liberate China from its century promise made in the original version of the 1919 Karakhan Declaration to return to China without compensation all Tsarist concessions.³⁴ This put Soviet

29 Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, pp. 10, 367-368.

30 Ibid., *Imperial Rivals*, pp. 10-11, 20-22. Many of these citations referring to Chinese officials come from documents originating from the Grand Council and archived at the Ming-Qing Archives at the Forbidden City, Beijing (第一历史档案馆)

31 Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War*, pp. 4, 7, 137, 268, 299, *passim*

32 Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: 'Shibao' and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 19, 21-2.

33 Chow Tse-tsung, *The May 4th Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 271-272.

34 "The Declaration of 1919," in *China Year Book 1924-5*, pp. 868-869; Elleman, *Diplomacy and Deception*, pp. 17-18, 24-27, 35-37

Russia in sharp contrast to the other powers, which openly insisted on retaining their own concessions. Chinese diplomats were outraged when the Soviets secretly demanded to resurrect the full complement of Tsarist concessions and privileges in China.³⁵ This diplomacy, however, remained secret. The vast majority of Chinese never knew about it at the time and remain ignorant of it to the present day. Rather, they continue to believe that the Soviet Union, in contrast to the self-interested West, offered China genuine assistance, particularly in the early period of their relations.

The settlement of World War I also gave credence the stereotypes of a rapacious West and a fraternal Soviet Russia. The Chinese public became outraged when the Versailles peace settlement had Germany turn over its concessions in China to Japan before Japan then returned them to China. The Chinese rejected this "indirect restitution" and demanded, to no avail, direct restitution from Germany. The diplomacy is extremely complicated. The settlement followed the terms of China's many treaties and China eventually got back the concessions in question. No matter. The Chinese public interpreted events as a slap in the face, considered dealing with Japan to be beneath China, blamed the United States, and looked ever more favorably on the Soviet Union as a result.³⁶

Many Chinese continue to believe that, in general, the Soviet Union treated China far more equitably than did the Western powers. They have not thought to tally the costs of Western imperialism in China, deduct any benefits such as infrastructure additions, and then compare these costs to those of the Soviet legacy that so marks Chinese institutions to this day. In particular, it is worth considering the economic costs of collectivized industry and agriculture as well as the human costs of China's police-state rule. Both followed Leninist and Stalinist models. In contrast, the imperial powers left China a legacy of infrastructure including railway lines, educational institutions, hospitals, buildings, and even dikes to prevent flooding in Manchuria.

In the 1930s the Japanese were well aware of the general misperception of the Chinese public concerning the Soviet Union, but they never developed a strategy to use Soviet imperialism in China in order to deflect Chinese hostility from Japan onto the Soviet Union. Instead, the Japanese military tried to beat the Soviets at their imperial game by countering Soviet covert influence with a very overt Japanese invasion and occupation. As the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) became protracted, Japan's military strategy backfired since it simultaneously gave ever more credence to Soviet propaganda, while undermining the Japanese pretext that such extreme means could ever be justified, no matter what the ends. Japanese military actions fueled the very anti-Japanese hatred that would preclude a negotiated settlement to the Sino-Japanese War.

35 "Declaration of 1920," in *China Year Book 1924-5*, pp. 871-872; Elleman, "The Soviet Union's Secret Diplomacy," pp. 459-486; Whiting, "The Soviet Offer to China of 1919," pp. 355-364; Elleman, *Diplomacy and Deception*, pp. 159, 161-165, 174, 177, 231, 240-241.

36 Bruce A. Elleman, *Wilson and China: A Revised History of the Shandong Question* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), *passim*.

Likewise, in the 1930s the Japanese were unable to explain to the Chinese public that the economic development offered by continuing Japanese investments would be mutually beneficial, whereas the absence of such foreign investment would leave China bound in poverty. Two generations later during the reform period initiated by Deng Xiaping, the Chinese came to the very belated conclusion that economic isolationism did not foster but actually precluded their country's economic development. In the meantime, they had suffered upheaval, famine, and two generations of foregone economic opportunities.

The Japanese inability to counter the twin myths of Soviet-Tsarist discontinuity and of Russo-Chinese friendship cost them dear. Instead of relying on military force to achieve their objectives in China, they needed to expose the myths that the Soviet Union had renounced its imperial concessions and that it treated the Chinese more equitably than the other powers. If the Chinese public had been disabused of these myths, this would have undercut the Soviet power base in China, which, in the early years, largely rested on a Chinese misperception of Soviet activities and intentions.³⁷ The widespread acceptance of these myths resulted in the Chinese public's focusing its nationalistic anger over China's endemic misgovernment and economic mismanagement on Japan and the West. Misidentifying the source of China's troubles did not contribute to their solution.³⁸ Rather, it allowed the Soviet Union to reap the benefits.

THE EXAGGERATION OF CHINESE VICTIMIZATION

The myths obscuring the Far Eastern diplomatic environment of the 1930s concerned not only perceptions about the fundamental nature of Russo-Chinese relations but also about the Chinese themselves. Many history books published by Chinese present their modern history as a succession of humiliations at the hands of foreigners broken only by the communist victory in 1949.³⁹ This understanding of Chinese history is encapsulated in a number of common Chinese expressions such as 外侮 or "humiliations caused by foreign powers," 雪恥復國 or "wipe out the national shame and recover the fatherland," 利權外溢, or "the loss of economic rights to foreigners," and 禦侮 or "to guard against the

37 Sow-then Leong, *Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917-1926* (Taipei: Rainbow-Bridge Book, 1976), p. 300.

38 Elleman, *Wilson and China*, *passim*.

39 This sense of national humiliation is also expressed the works of overseas Chinese authors. William L. Tung, *China and the Foreign Powers: The Impact of and Reaction to Unequal Treaties* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1970), p. vii; Luke S.K. Kwong, *The Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics, and Ideas of 1898* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 17; Ting Tsz Kao, *The Chinese Frontiers* (Aurora, IL: Chinese Scholarly Publishing, 1980), p. 124; Byron N. Tzou, *China and International Law: The Boundary Disputes* (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 13; Kwei Chungshu, *Plain Speaking on Japan: A Collection of Articles on the Sino-Japanese Conflict, Originally Published in the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury under the Column, "As a Chinese Sees It"* (Shanghai: Chinese Institute of International Relations, 1932), pp. 196, 198.

insults of foreign powers.” Many Chinese present China’s modern history in terms of its victimization by rapacious foreigners in order to place their country on a moral high ground vis-à-vis the West and Japan. These books present China as the victim of the predations of rapacious foreigners, never an aggressor itself.⁴⁰

Non-Han peoples, populating the regions bordering China proper, however, have a different story to tell. When the Chinese government has had the capability, it has mercilessly put down the country’s many simmering independence movements. The continuing unrest in Tibet and the Chinese suppression, not only of political activists, but also of Tibetan culture, are but the latest phase of a very long history of power politics over weak border peoples.⁴¹ Coercive Chinese policies in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia have also fueled the ethnic unrest there. Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia are not insignificant regions. Together they constitute about one-third of China’s current territory.

Despite China’s communist credentials, it remains the world’s last surviving vast continental empire. However ironically, it has remained imperialist long after the much criticized West and Japan abandoned their land empires. The only other continental empire to endure late into the twentieth century was the Soviet Union, which did so equally in contravention to Marxist orthodoxy: The communist credo of the Soviet Union and People’s Republic of China has proclaimed communism and imperialism to be mutually exclusive categories.

In reality, Chinese casualties at the hands of European forces during the Opium Wars do not compare to the slaughter during China’s numerous campaigns against its ethnic minorities.⁴² Chinese casualties in the Opium Wars ranged from several hundred to several thousand per battle.⁴³ Likewise, the death and destruction of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 – estimated at 10 million – do not come close to equaling the combined casualties suffered during the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64) and the Great Leap Forward (1958-60). Common estimates for the latter two are 20 million deaths each.⁴⁴ It is important to

40 See for instance, the opening chapter of the series edited by 沙健孫 [Sha Jiansun], ed. 『中國共產黨通史』 [*The History of the Chinese Communist Party*], vol. 1 (Changsha: 湖南教育出版社, 1995), pp. 2-3. See also: 章伯鋒 [Zhang Baifeng] 『抗日戰爭』 [*War of Japanese Resistance*], vol. 1 (Chengdu: 四川大學出版社, 1997), p. vii; 王建朗 [Wang Jianlang] 抗戰初期的遠東國際關係 [*Far Eastern International Relations at the Beginning of the War of Resistance*] (Taipei: 東大圖書公司遠東國際, 1996), p. 2.

41 Amnesty International provides a whole list of publications on Chinese mistreatment of their minority peoples. See <http://web.amnesty.org/library/>.

42 Wen-Djang Chu, *The Moslem Rebellion of Northwest China 1862-1878* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. vii; 巴бков И. Ф. Воспоминания о моей службе в Западной Сибири, 1859-1875 гг. СПб., 1912. С. 301; Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire: The Period of Submission 1861-1893*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1918), p. 111.

43 Gerald S. Graham, *The China Station: War and Diplomacy 1830-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 214-216, 273-274, 400.

44 R.J. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991), p. 103; J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War*,

note that in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan was not responsible for the many deaths from the ongoing civil war between the Communists and the Guomindang. Such horrendous comparisons give a sense of the terrible scope of the tragedy suffered by Chinese civilians during the last two centuries of endemic warfare. But most of the killing has been by Han Chinese of other Chinese nationals.

Although China was certainly a victim of imperialism, the slaughter in the nineteenth century of both its native peoples attempting secession and its Han subjects attempting the restoration of Han rule, the horrendous civil wars of the Republican period, and the political campaigns of the communist era together account for tens of millions of civilian deaths. No foreign power can compete with the destruction that the Chinese have wreaked upon themselves and visited on their minority peoples since the eighteenth century when the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆) employed widespread genocide to conquer Xinjiang and complete the Qing empire.⁴⁵

The Chinese have exaggerated their victimization at the hands of foreigners in order to avoid facing up to the dark side of their domination of vast non-Han territories and the domestic origins of the endemic civil wars that have savaged China. Instead, they have assumed the role of the forever righteous victim. Scholars in the West have unwittingly helped prolong the life of this Chinese myth by publishing voluminously on European imperialism in China, on the Opium Wars, on the rise Chinese nationalism as a response to the West, etc., while writing very little about the fate of China's many ethnic minorities or the particulars of its many civil wars. The Guomindang-Communist Civil War of the 1940s was but one of a long interlocking succession of regional and na-

1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook (New York: Wiley, 1981), pp. 67, 131. Singer and Small focus on military, not civilian, casualties. There is also a very interesting web page at <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstats.html> entitled, *Death Tolls for the Man-made Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century*. It contains numerous references to relevant sources.

- 45 Concerning the human costs of the Chinese conquest and occupation of Xinjiang in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see, Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940), pp. 170-171; Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Ili Crisis: A Study in Sino-Russian Diplomacy 1871-1881* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 6, 16, 193; Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 293-294; Wen-Djang Chu, *The Moslem Rebellion*, pp. vii, 1-3, 25-27, 96, 128, 132, 163; Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 11; Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1899" in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 64-65; Key-Hiuk Kim, "The Aims of Li Hung-chang's Policies toward Japan and Korea, 1870-1882," in Samuel C. Chu and Kwang-ching Liu, eds., *Li Hung-chang and China's Early Modernization* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), p. 2; Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1950), pp. 46, 126, 143-144; Kwang-ching Liu and Richard J. Smith, "The Military Challenge: The Northwest and the Coast," in John K. Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 241.

tional civil wars. Before the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre, whose live television coverage left no doubt about the bloodshed, many Westerners also viewed China with an equally uncritical eye. Averting their eyes from the harsh side of communist rule, they focused instead on the harsh side of Western imperialism in China. In doing so, they have unwittingly supported a double standard for China vis-à-vis not only the West but also Japan. Western scholars have tallied what Japan and the West did to China but never what the Han Chinese did to each other. This would put foreign violence in perspective. It would also fully implicate the Han in the massacre of their countrymen.

For Sino-Japanese relations, the consequences were two-fold. On the one hand, the Chinese refused to recognize any positive Japanese contributions to Chinese development. On the other hand, the Chinese have failed to see how their treatment of Japan only spurred Japan to take ever more punitive actions against them. When the League of Nations sent the Lytton Commission to investigate the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Japan produced inventories of cases documenting China's flaunting of international law at Japanese expense and its abuse of Japanese citizens.⁴⁶ Although the commission agreed with many of the Japanese complaints, it abhorred the Imperial Japanese Army's military solution.⁴⁷ Japan detailed the Soviet involvement in China but insisted that the Lytton Commission keep much of this information secret, which it did.⁴⁸ So the myths endured.

Japan's inability to counter Soviet propaganda – coupled with its invasion and occupation of Manchuria and then China proper – lent credence to Chinese misperceptions. It bolstered not only the myths of Soviet and Tsarist discontinuity and Russo-Chinese friendship, but also the Chinese exaggerations concerning their victimization by foreigners. The Chinese dire gainst the competing party armies and warlord armies whose leaders monopolized government funds to fight and devastate the country, debased the currency when the tax base proved insufficient to fund their armories, and generally wreaked havoc wherever they

46 See for example the Japanese Foreign Ministry's submission to the Lytton Commission: *Relations of Japan with Manchuria and Mongolia*, Document B, revised ed. (Tokyo: 外務省, 1932). See also Hoover Institution Archives, Vladimir Dmitrievich Pastuhov papers, box 17, Japan Economic Federation, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Japan, Japan-China Economic Association, "China's Treaty Violations in Manchuria," Tokyo, 1932; Ibid., box 33, League of Nations Association of Japan, "Anti-Japanese Laws, Ordinances and Instructions Issued by the Chinese Authorities," parts 1-3, Tokyo, 1931; Itoh Takeo, *China's Challenge in Manchuria: Anti-Japanese Activities in Manchuria Prior to the Mukden Incident* (Dairen: South Manchurian Railway Company, 1932).

47 江口圭一 [Eguchi Keiichi] 『十五年戦争小史』 [A Short History of the Fifteen Year War] rev. ed. (Tokyo: 青木書店, 1991), pp. 68-69; Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China, and the League of Nations, 1931-3* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), pp. 175-176.

48 外交史料館, 外務省, A.1.1.0-21-12-2, vol. 2, "Mr. Matsuoka's Conversations with the Members of the League Commission," 24 March 1932, p. 141.

went.⁴⁹ The unabating civil wars and the Soviet intervention that helped fuel them were the cause of China's plight and precipitated Japan's intervention.⁵⁰ It is no coincidence that Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937 right after the Goumindang formed the Second United Front with the Chinese Communists.

THE MYTH OF ORIGINAL SOVEREIGNTY

Both the Soviet Union and China claimed that it, not the other, possessed the original claim to much of central and northeastern Asia. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russia had taken advantage of China's preoccupation with internal rebellions besetting its interior – the Taiping, the Nian (1851-68), and the Panthay (1855-73) Rebellions – and the foreign wars along its coast – the first and second Opium Wars (1839-42, 1856-60) – to secure for Russia the entire northern bank of the Amur River, the coastline between the Ussuri River and the sea, and vast territories in central Asia. In the treaties of Aigun (1858), Beijing (1860), and Tarbagatai (1864), Russian gained about 665,000 sq. mi. of territory or roughly the equivalent to all of the United States east of the Mississippi River.⁵¹ In the Tsarist period, Russians took great pride in these gains, but the ideological shift following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 made it difficult for the Soviets to justify their territorial gains, which they had no intention of relinquishing.

While the Soviet Union could not justify its gains, China could not accept its losses. Instead, each fostered its own variant of the myth of original sovereignty. Both the Soviets and the Chinese⁵² claimed that the borderlands histor-

49 According to the Lytton Commission Report on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, military expenses constituted 80 percent of the government expenses of the deposed warlord, Zhang Xueliang (西村成雄 [Nishimura Shigeo] 「日本政府の中華民国認識と張学良政権」 [The Japanese Government's Recognition of the Republic of China and Zhang Xueliang's Political Power] in 山本有造 [Yamamoto Yuzo], ed. 『「満州国」の研究』 [Research on "Manchukuo"] (Tokyo: 緑蔭書房, 1995), p. 5). Arthur Waldron, *From War to Nationalism: China's Turning Point, 1924-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Lloyd E. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution 1937-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

50 Aleksandr Ya. Kalyagin, *Along Alien Roads* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 5-11; Lloyd E. Eastman, "Nationalist China during the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945," in John K. Fairbank and Albert Feuerwerker, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 576; Garver, *Chinese-Soviet Relations*, p. 271; Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims*, p. 144; Barnett, *China on the Eve of*, p. 247; Benson, *The Ili Rebellion*, p. 7; Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord*, pp. 164-169, 177-179.

51 Alan J. Day, ed., *Border and Territorial Disputes* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1982), pp. 259-261.

52 See in particular, the eight-volume series of historical maps published by the Cartographic Publishing House in the People's Republic of China. Each volume contains a complete map of China as well as many close-ups. Although the territory controlled by each Chinese

ically constituted an integral part of their empire. There is ample evidence that this was not the case, certainly at the time of the Romanov (1613-1917) and Qing dynasties.⁵³ Russians had not even been in the vicinity until the seventeenth century and did not arrive in significant numbers before the completion in 1905 of the railway connecting European Russia to Tashkent and the linking of Russia's two coasts, between 1891 and 1916, by the Trans-Siberian Railway.⁵⁴

Even today Siberia remains under-populated and cut off from the rest of Russia. Despite Siberia's administrative incorporation into Russia on paper, in practice, its remoteness meant that it was not completely integrated into the Russian empire until the Soviet period and, therefore, cannot be said to have been historically an integral part of Russian territory. Tsarist tariff policy supports this argument; tariff breaks at Cheliabinsk and Irkutsk treated Siberian grain like a foreign product.⁵⁵ The case for Russia's historical links to Central Asia is even more tenuous. The native populations bordering Xinjiang and Outer Mongolia bear no cultural or linguistic ties to the Great Russians. In 1991 when the opportunity arose, they immediately sought independence. While China does possess the more ancient historical claim⁵⁶ to ties with Central Asia and southern Siberia, the Han are as culturally and linguistically distinct from the native peoples inhabiting these regions as are the Great Russians.

Qing sources are extremely vague regarding the extent of Chinese territories; they discuss a plethora of changing place names referring to areas of unknown extent and vague location. Since the Chinese did not master Western

dynasty varied dramatically, every volume in the series shows very similar external boundaries. The huge loss of territory under the Ming dynasty, which came between the territorially two largest dynasties, the Yuan or Mongol dynasty and the Qing dynasty (neither Han Chinese), is concealed by including the Ming with the Yuan dynasty. In earlier dynasties, the lands of independent border peoples are included as parts of China as if they were provinces. 譚其驤 [Tan Qixiang], ed. 中國歷史地圖集 [Collection of Historical Maps of China] 8 vols. (Shanghai: 中華地圖出版社, 1975-1982). For other Chinese sources see: 吳相湘 [Wu Xiangxiang] 『俄帝侵略中國史』 [History of the Imperial Russian Invasion of China] (Taipei: 國立編譯館, 1986); 『沙俄侵略中國西北邊界史』 [History of the Tsarist Russian Invasion of Northwest China] (Beijing: 人民出版社, 1978); 『沙俄侵略華北』 [The History of the Tsarist Russian Invasion of China], 中國社會科學院近代史研究所 [Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences] (Beijing: 人民出版社, 1981); 陳登元 [Chen Dengyuan] 『中俄關係述略』 [Outline of Russo-Chinese Relations] (Shanghai: 商務印書館, 1926); 佟冬 [Tong Dong] 『沙俄與東北』 [Tsarist Russia and Manchuria] (Changchun: 吉林文史出版社, 1985), pp. 1-2.

53 Fred W. Bergholz, *The Partition of the Steppe: The Struggle of the Russians, Manchus and the Zunghar Mongols for Empire in Central Asia, 1619-1758, A Study in Power Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 419.

54 Глинка Г. В. (ред.) *Азиатская Россия* Т. 2. 1914 (reprint, Cambridge: Oriental Research Partners, 1974). C. 539, 549.

55 J. N. Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1964), p. 117.

56 James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 103-108, 213-214, 217.

cartography until the twentieth century, earlier Chinese maps have more artistic than practical value. Qing boundary negotiators before 1880 often did not have more than a very general idea about where allegedly integral territories were actually located. Mid-nineteenth-century court officials in Beijing displayed an astounding ignorance of the actual extent of Manchuria, the homeland of the ruling Qing dynasty: They knew virtually nothing about the lands north of the Amur River and little about the Ussuri River coastal region although the inhabitants of both areas paid regular tribute to the Qing court. Han and Manchu settlements were most concentrated on the lower reaches of the Amur River and in the Ussuri River region (the Russian Maritime Province) but there were also notable settlements further inland along the Amur, particularly between the mouth of the Zeia River (the site of modern-day Blagoveshchensk) and the mouth of the Bureia River to the south.⁵⁷

Although some Chinese have gone so far as to equate tributary relations with sovereignty, on the eve of the foundation of the Qing dynasty, Manchu sources refer to China, Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria as *gurun* (Manchu for country – or 國 in Chinese). This indicates that Manchuria was not an integral part of China at the time.⁵⁸ Yet in Chinese historiography, many authors take for granted that much of Siberia and Central Asia had long been Chinese. For each border area these authors point to the dynasty that extended furthest to justify their territorial claims. These views are fraught with contradictions and greatly exaggerate the integration of the borderlands into Chinese proper. On the one hand, the Mongol or Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) is considered an alien dynasty that subjugated China before being quite properly overthrown by a Han Chinese dynasty, the Ming (1368-1644). On the other hand, some Chinese imply that the lands constituting the territories of the Yuan dynasty, most of which had never before been even remotely connected with China, are part of the lost patrimony. By such an accounting, Moscow itself would be part of Chinese territory.⁵⁹

57 Шренк Л. Географическо-историческая и Антропо-этнологическая часты. Т. 1. Об инородцах Амурского края. СПб., 1883. С. 65-66, 72; Веньюков М. И. Опыт военного обозрения русских границ в Азии. СПб., 1873. С. 86, 127, 136; Барсуков И. П. Граф Николай Николаевич Муравьев-Амурский. Т. 2. М., 1891. С. 167; F.A. Golder, *Russian Expansion on the Pacific 1641-1850* (1914; reprint, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1971), pp. 46-48; вон Милдендорф А.Ф. Путешествие на Север и Восток Сибири. Т. 1. СПб., 1860-67. С. 154-155, 157, 163, 167; John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 15, 17; Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia*, pp. 109-111.

58 David M. Farquhar, "The Origins of the Manchus' Mongolian Policy," in John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 199-200.

59 R.K.I. Quesed, *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968), pp. xviii-xxi; 孫福坤 [Sun Fukun] 『俄帝侵華史』 [*The History of Russian Aggression in China*] (Taipei: 中央文物供應社, 1953), pp. 1-6; Alastair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 29-30; 佟冬 『沙俄與東北』, pp. 1-2.

The Russian and Chinese failure to come to terms with their mutual boundary created an opening for the Japanese. When Chinese central power collapsed with the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the Manchu abdication in 1912, the country fractured into a mosaic of competing warlord-fiefdoms. Manchuria came under the control of Zhang Zuolin (張作霖). Zhang aspired to maintain his independence from Russia, Japan, and the Guomindang, which had nominally unified the country with the Northern Expedition (1927-28). Manchuria, however, was the homeland, not of such Han Chinese as Zhang, but of the Manchus. The Kwantung Army found Zhang insufficiently attentive to Japan's interests and so assassinated him in 1928. His son Zhang Xueliang (張學良), who succeeded him, turned out to be even less compliant.

In 1931, the Japanese Imperial Army attempted to take advantage of the ambiguities in the contested myth of original sovereignty in order to create a base of operations in Manchuria.⁶⁰ To legitimize its actions, it tried to resurrect the Manchu dynasty, by spiriting its deposed ruler, Puyi (溥儀), out of retirement in Tianjin and onto the throne of Manchukuo – both the country and the throne created by Japan for this purpose. The justification was that Manchuria rightly belonged neither to China nor to Russia, but to the Manchus. Of course, Manchuria did not belong to the Japanese either, hence the need for Puyi. Actual power remained firmly in the hands of the Kwantung Army, which first set about restoring order and then realizing its vision for nation-building, a task it soon expanded into Jehol and North China

THE EXAGGERATION OF JAPAN'S NEGATIVE ROLE

For all the machinations of Japan to detach Manchuria from China and install Puyi on the throne, its role in Manchuria was by no means entirely negative. Prior to the ill-conceived invasion of China south of the Great Wall in 1937, the Japanese succeeded in stabilizing the Manchurian currency, making massive investments in the transportation infrastructure (especially in railways) and in heavy industry (particularly in resource extraction), and in restoring their own economy along with Manchuria's. Before the currency reform, there had been in circulation fifteen currencies and 136 types of bank notes, many of which regularly had been debased by warlord printing presses.⁶¹ Currency reform and economic restoration put Manchuria in stark contrast with the rest of China, which lacked a unified currency, suffered from often catastrophic bouts of inflation and grinding rural poverty, and no longer enjoyed foreign investment after the onset of the Great Depression.⁶² Economic recovery also put Manchuria and Japan in stark contrast with the West, which had been unable to shake the depression.

60 西村成雄「日本政府の中華民国認識」, pp. 5, 10.

61 安富歩[Yasutomi Ayumu]「『満州国』経済開発と国内資金流動」["Manchukuo" Economic Development and Internal Capital Flows] in 『『満州国』の研究』, p. 239.

62 Eastman, "Nationalist China," pp. 151-153.

The economic achievements of Japanese nation-building in Manchuria were considerable. They are revealed in Japanese investment and production statistics for Manchukuo, particularly for the 1931 to 1937 period, that is, before onset of the full-scale Sino-Japanese War in 1937. From 1932 to 1939, Manchukuo railroad mileage increased by over 15,000 kilometers. Coal production in 1941 was almost 2.5 times greater than what it had been in 1930, electricity was nearly seven times, while pig iron was about 3.5 times. By 1943, Manchukuo produced nearly half of all Chinese coal, 80 percent of its electricity, 90 percent of its pig iron, and over 60 percent of its concrete, making it the most industrialized region of China.⁶³ When Foreign Minister Yoshizawa Kenkichi (芳沢謙吉) addressed the Diet in 1932, he accused China of "ignoring the historical fact that the present development of Manchuria is entirely due to Japanese efforts." In contrast to the rest of China, he observed that Manchuria was enjoying peace and prosperity.⁶⁴

Manchukuo production peaked in the 1937 to 1941 period. With the expansion of the war south of the Great Wall and ever more deeply into the Chinese interior, both the Imperial Japanese Army and the Japanese home economy became overextended. The Kwantung Army took a growing share of Manchukuo government revenues; new investments from Japan declined; and Manchukuo economic growth slowed. Manchukuo production actually started to decrease soon after the expansion of the war to the United States in 1941. The United States Navy disrupted Japanese supply lines, overstretched the Imperial Japanese Navy, and undermined Manchukuo's trade. Japanese investment evaporated. The expansion of the war to China proper and then to the Pacific Ocean region culminated in the collapse of both the Manchukuo and Japanese economies.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the Soviet Union found the Japanese investments in Manchuria to be worth taking at the end of the war in the form of disassembled factories and equipment. Despite this Soviet "decapitalization" of Manchuria, it still remained the most industrialized region of China at the end of World

63 東北財経委員会調査統計所 [Statistical Survey Department of the Committee on Manchurian Finance and Economy], ed., 『旧満州経済統計資料』 [*Statistical Materials on the Economy of Old Manchuria*] (1949; reprint, Tokyo: 柏書房株式会社, 1991), p. 5. This statistical compilation was originally published in the People's Republic of China.

64 外交史料館, 外務省, A.1.1.0-21-35, vol. 2, "Address of Foreign Minister Yoshizawa to the 60th Session of the Diet," 21 January 1932, pp. 79-80.

65 For information about Japan's economic development and administration of Manchukuo, see: 山本有造 [Yamamoto Yuzo], 『『満州国』をめぐる対外経済関係の展開 — 国際収支分析を中心として』 [The development of 'Manchukuo's Economic Relations with the Outside: Focusing on an Analysis of International Receipts and Disbursements] in 山本有造, ed. 『『満州国』の研究』, pp. 198-199, 206-208, 214-215, 220, 230-231; 安富歩 『『満州国』経済開発と国内資金流動』, pp. 237, 239, 253; 西沢泰彦 [Nishizama Yasuhiko] 『『満州国』の建設事業』 ["Manchukoku" Construction Industry] in 山本有造 ed. 『『満州国』の研究』, pp. 407, 414; 塚瀬進 [Tsukase Susumu] 『中国近代東北経済史研究』 [*Research on Modern Chinese Economic History of Manchuria*] (Tokyo: 東方書店, 1993), pp. 29, 41, 50.

War II.⁶⁶ Manchurian economic development was a significant Japanese achievement.⁶⁷

Many Japanese had long felt that the West had applied a double standard to China and Japan.⁶⁸ Whereas prior to World War II the Chinese had committed all manner of atrocities on their fellow countrymen and often ignored international law, Japan, prior to the invasion of Manchuria, had hewed to a course set by international law and had given the West timely warning about Soviet intensions in the Far East. Yet Japan has reaped Western opprobrium for its brutality in China, while China has hidden behind a variety of myths to shield its own complicity in the horrors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The policy objective of the United States in Asia after World War II was essentially the same as that of Japan prior to the war: containment of Russia and the promotion of a market economy and a non-communist government in China. The United States was no more successful than Japan. In 1949, Americans berated themselves for "losing" China to the communists. After the 1969 Sino-Soviet border war, the People's Republic of China started to contain the Soviet Union on its own. Then under Deng Xiaoping, China finally started initiating the very economic policies so long ago recommended by Japan and the West. Political reforms, however, have yet to follow.

Had China heeded Japan's long-standing advice to adopt a Meiji reform program of its own, China might have been spared a Japanese invasion and the communist takeover that came in its wake. In the peace negotiations following the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the great Japanese statesman, Ito Hirobumi (伊藤博文), had begged the great Chinese statesman, Li Hongzhang (李鴻章), to follow Japan's example to embark on a national reform program to bring Chinese institutions more in line with those in the West, but to no avail.⁶⁹

The Chinese rejection of Japan's constructive role in China helped set Japan on a militaristic course that proved equally destructive to both China and Japan.

CONCLUSIONS

Japanese policymakers in the 1930s could not extricate themselves from the web of myths entangling their relations with China. The faith of the Chi-

66 A.M. Ledovsky, *The USSR, the USA, and the People's Revolution in China*, Nadezhda Burova, trans. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), p. 102; Борисов О. Совртский Союз и манчжурская революционная база 1945-1949. М., 1975. С. 49, 53-54, 57; Raymond L. Garthoff, "Sino-Soviet Military Relations, 1945-66," in Garthoff, ed., *Sino-Soviet Military Relations* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 83.

67 This discussion is not meant to dismiss the terrible human toll from the Japanese invasion of China, rather it is meant to fill a significant gap in the historical record.

68 西村成雄「日本政府の中華民国認識」, pp. 10-11; Mutsu, Munemitsu, *Kenkenryoku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1895-95*, Gordon Mark Berger, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 164.

69 Paine, *Imperial Rivals*, p. 346.

nese public in the myth of Soviet and Tsarist discontinuity and in the myth of Russo-Chinese friendship meant that the Chinese failed to understand the Soviet threat to their country. They did not realize that the Soviet Union did not want a strong, unified, and prosperous China on its border, but a weak and pliable buffer state. The Chinese belief in these myths fueled their prejudices against Japan, which they blamed for its reaction to their own country's endemic instability. The exaggerated myth of Chinese victimization then further heightened the Chinese sense of aggrievement vis-à-vis Japan. Chinese instability, however, was not caused by Japan, but by the interminable factional infighting within China that was financed to a certain extent by the Soviet Union. For the Soviet Union, the widespread Chinese acceptance of these myths was highly desirable. It needed China and Japan to be at odds so that no strong power emerged on its long and vulnerable Far Eastern frontier.

Prior to World War II, Japan never successfully countered any of these myths. Instead it played a weak hand when it attempted to overturn the Soviet and Chinese variants of the myth of original sovereignty by inserting its puppet state, Manchukuo, into the Sino-Soviet frontier. If Chinese and Russian sovereignty over their huge frontier zone was ambiguous, legitimate Japanese claims over these areas were non-existent. The installation of a defunct Qing emperor fooled no one as to the real power brokers in Manchukuo.⁷⁰ Japanese disingenuousness on this score coupled with the other three myths – of discontinuity, friendship, and victimization – created a fifth highly disadvantageous myth for the Japanese, the myth of their exclusively negative role in China.

The Chinese public reacted so vehemently to the creation of Manchukuo that no Chinese national political leader could accept its existence and hope to stay in power. Yet this was the Kwantung Army's price for peace. As a result, Japan could never bring the war with China to a close. Instead the hostilities went on and on, and the military theater kept expanding. Meanwhile, the Chinese missed important lessons concerning economic development that they could have learned from Japanese economic policies in Manchukuo. Instead, after the Communist Revolution, they employed Soviet economic models. Then within the decade, they tried to create their own model with the disastrous Great Leap Forward (1958-60) that brought, not economic development, but famine. The Chinese have continued to shun any positive lessons in nation-building offered by the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) in Japan or by Japan's impressive economic development of Manchuria in the 1930s.⁷¹

The myths infecting Sino-Japanese relations were as advantageous for the Soviet Union as they were disadvantageous for Japan. In comparison to Japan,

70 Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, pp. 175-176.

71 Chinese history journals have virtually no articles on the Meiji Restoration. I have read the tables of contents for the last two decades of such major Chinese history journals as: 『文史哲』 [*Literature and History*], 『中國社會經濟史研究』 [*Research on Chinese Social and Economic History*], 『中國史研究』 [*Research on Chinese History*], 『近代史研究』 [*Research on Contemporary History*], and 『歷史研究』 [*Historical Research*].

the Soviet Union played a very deft hand of diplomacy in China, escaping virtually all responsibility for its actions there. These ranged from its insistence on the First United Front that led to the Chinese Communist Party's near annihilation by Jiang Jieshi in 1927, to its prolongation of China's civil wars by funding multiple sides. It played its diplomatic cards so deftly that China and the United States bore the brunt of Japanese militarism in the 1930s and 1940s, not the Soviet Union, which Japanese policymakers had long considered to be their country's main national security threat. When the Chinese Communists were marginalized in Yan'an after the decimation of their forces in the Long March and when the possibility of a Guomintang accommodation with the Japanese still remained a possibility, the Soviet Union brokered a Second United Front. This provided the Chinese communists some protection from the Guomintang, but most important from the Soviet point of view, it precluded any Sino-Japanese peace that would have allowed Japan to turn on the Soviet Union. This left China and the United States to defeat Japan, not the Soviet Union.

The unanticipated result, however, was a strong and unified China under communist rule. The protracted Sino-Japanese War so inflamed Chinese nationalism and hatred for Japan that it forged the strong sense of nation necessary to create a unified China. The myths worked more to the advantage of the Chinese Communist Party than the Guomintang. The Chinese Communist Party had obvious ideological and political connections with the supposedly friendly Soviet Union, whereas the Guomintang was blamed for the Chinese inability to expel Japan. The Soviet Union had anticipated a divided China (like the future situation in Germany, Korea, and Vietnam) with the communists in the north and the Guomintang in the south. The United States, however, had walked away from Jiang Jieshi, who had failed to fight Japan with adequate vigor, and left him to his fate. Although the Chinese eventually became highly disenchanted with the Soviet Union, vociferously so after the 1960 Sino-Soviet split, they remain even more critical of the Japanese, in part, because of the endurance of the many myths surrounding Russo-Chinese relations. If nothing else, this essay has endeavored to show that widely held myths can have far-reaching consequences.