



**École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
Labex Tepsis**

State-Building through Political Disunity in Republican China

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First day's panel

Famine Relief Coordination under the Beiyang Regime

Pierre Fuller

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Scholarship has long recognized the relief campaigns performed by foreign actors and urban Chinese relief societies during famine in the pre-Nationalist Chinese republic (1912-27). The role of Beiyang officialdom in such times of severe social distress has received relatively little attention. Famine narratives have limited 'warlord' governance to a predatory role or have kept the military out entirely, leaving readers to assume such matters were left to civilian officials or to the philanthropic. This paper makes the case that our understanding of relief provisioning in the Beiyang period is in need of revision for us to appreciate the dynamic behind one of the more successful relief campaigns in modern Chinese history. It does this by focusing on the bureaucratic infrastructure behind price-levelling (pingtiao) and soup kitchen operation in Zhili (Hebei) Province where some 8 million residents were afflicted by drought famine in the autumn of 1920. It sketches how coordination between the leadership of the Zhili (Wu Peifu/Cao Kun) and Fengtian (Zhang Zuolin) factions mobilized and delivered sufficient grain and monies from Manchuria to afflicted sections below the Great Wall to avert catastrophe on a much grander scale. In the process it sketches the piecemeal fundraising strategies used by various levels of the fractured Chinese state to finance relief operations during the protracted diplomatic negotiations between Beijing and the treaty powers for a famine loan over 1920-21. Ultimately, the paper argues that the welfare provisioning often associated with the modernizing state apparatus was an active concern of central and local administrators of the Beiyang regime, and that the motivations behind these measures were varied, ranging from social stability and political legitimacy to notions of paternalistic governance inherited from the late imperial period that transcended factions and boundaries.

Fiscal Autonomy in Guangdong, 1928-1936

Emily M. Hill

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For most of the decade before the beginning of full-scale war against Japan began in 1937, southern China lay beyond the control of the National government in Nanjing. An irony of this disunity was that the government in Nanjing was the immediate successor of the National government nurtured by Sun Yat-sen in Guangzhou. After Sun's death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek donned the mantle of revolutionary leadership and marched north in pursuit of national unity. Guangdong, however, was only nominally part of the new unity proclaimed in Nanjing. The province commanded armies independently, printed its own currency, and appointed its own officials. Moreover, unlike other regions controlled at the time by autonomous militarists, from 1928 to 1936 Guangdong was led by a provincial political council, an anomalous but legitimizing body associated with the late President Sun. Guangdong's wealth, useful to Sun in rebuilding the Guomindang, and to Chiang in his national reunification campaign, provided the foundation for provincial autonomy. Nonetheless, the province was not openly autonomous. As well as supporting the government in Nanjing at the rhetorical level, Guangdong's leaders permitted the centralized national Customs to collect tariffs along its coast and kept accounts of "national" tax collection in the province. National tariffs and taxes were not actually remitted to Nanjing, but this fiscal separatism was not well understood by the public. Only a few officials dealing with taxation and finance understood that Guangdong's "national" revenue was a provincial asset. By conscientiously upholding a fictive fiscal centralism, Guangdong provided formal compliance to Nanjing, helping to strengthen the National government's international standing.

The Four Pillars and the Four Dynamics of State-building in Republican China

Xavier Paulès

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In this paper, I take a China-wide scale to address the issue of warlords' contribution to modernization and State-building during the 1916-1937 period. I argue that there were four different realms in which the contributions of warlords appears to have been particularly outstanding, namely: transport infrastructure, education, economic planning and statistics. Moreover, it seems relevant to differentiate between two periods: the time of the Beiyang governments (1916-1928), when warlords achievements were not very impressive. By contrast, the Nanking decade was characterized by much more spectacular accomplishments. Even if it seems risky to generalize, the overall picture that emerges suggests that the warlords' commitment to state-building remarkably paralleled the one of the central government (quite limited in the case of Beiyang government, and much stronger as for the Nanjing government).

Where Did Chinese City Governments Come From? Regional Politics, Administrative Scale, Institutional Staffing, and Municipal Agendas, 1916-1936

Kristin Stapleton

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Municipal governments began to be established in China in the 1910s. Over the next few decades, they proliferated across the country. This paper provides an overview of the expansion of this type of institution and discusses the extent to which it may be seen as a continuation of the New Policies administrative agenda of the last decade of the Qing. The Qing New Policies aimed in large part to strengthen the ability of the state to maintain order and prevent the rise of popular movements such as the Boxers. Another goal was to stimulate the economy via cooperation between state actors and local elites. After the fall of the Qing, these goals continued to be stressed by local powerholders, including regional militarists. At the same time, though, information about trends in urban administration worldwide made its way more fully into Chinese

political discourse, promoted by new types of municipal experts. Using evidence from Sichuan and other parts of the Republic, this paper explores how the fragmentation of the Chinese political order changed thinking about the proper scale and purpose of governing institutions as well as the politics of appointment to urban administrative offices and local politics more generally.

**Regulating Popular Political Knowledge:
the Presence of a Central Government in the Late 1910s**

Zhang Jing

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My paper inquires into the Beiyang government's strategies to curb the dissemination of unfavorable political information in popular readings under the framework of the state-led popular education from 1916 to 1919. After 1916 when power fell to an assortment of militarists, bureaucratic bodies, and local gentry, the ongoing military competitions and faction struggles vying for dominance had already rendered the state power in a rather fluid status and weakened its control in the cultural realm. Different from previous views about a nominal central government, I find that the state systemized its collaboration with cultural elites via the Popular Education Research Society 通俗教育研究會 and made great efforts at combating the stream of gossip and rumor about political figures. By screening public knowledge, communicating with independent writers and institutionalizing open lectures, the PERS insisted on the presence of the central government, rather than individual warlords or any regional powers, as the only state authority over the realm of moral guidance and knowledge production. The attempted regulation revealed the persistence of a centralized cultural view in the early Republic.

Second day's panel

**Intimate Relationships at the Heart of the Nation:
Wartime Healthcare and China's National Community**

Nicole Elizabeth Barnes

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This paper posits that modern China took shape in a period of profound disunity. During the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-45), the Nationalist party, Communist guerrillas, warlords, Japanese colonizers, and Chinese puppet governments all held political control over some portion of China's territory, yet this was precisely the period when thousands of people came together against all odds to help one another. People from around the world also went to China to help the besieged country fight a war against one of the world's most powerful militaries. Viewing this period through the lens of the history of emotion and employing a gendered analysis thereof, this paper argues that an event designed to bring China to its needs instead motivated its people to create the very foundation of a healthy state: a national community wherein citizens behave as if bound to one another. Political power is not merely taken, it is also granted when the people believe in their leaders and invest them with the power to lead. Yet people must first believe in themselves and in the strength of their own communal bonds before they have faith in any specific state formation. This paper illuminates the forces borne of war that created this faith in and strength of China's national community.

**Sitting on a Bamboo Fence:
Sino-Muslims and State-building between the Chinese Nationalists and the Japanese Empire**

Kelly Anne Hammond

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During WWII, there was a protracted battle to win the hearts and minds of Muslims on the Chinese mainland between the Chinese Nationalists and the Japanese Empire. In their appeals to Sino-Muslim populations living under their control in Manchukuo and North China, Japanese policy makers instituted a number of developmental programs in order to raise the standard of living of Muslims in the region. By building schools and hospitals for Muslims, funding the building of mosques, and providing vocational training in either Tokyo or in Manchukuo, Japanese imperial officials imagined that they would create a cadre of the loyal, Japanese-educated Muslims that they could deploy on diplomatic and trade missions to predominantly Muslim nations throughout North Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East. These attempts to curry favors to the Sino-Muslim community did not go unnoticed by the GMD. In response to the perceived successes of Japanese efforts to “lure” Muslims to their side, the Nationalists replied and responded in kind, offering incentives to Muslims that they might not otherwise have considered during the wartime.

This paper interrogates some of the Nationalist responses to Japanese-state building efforts among peoples that the Nationalists considered to be an integral part of the *Zhonghua minzu*, yet who went relatively underserved and unnoticed until they were made to take notice. The paper argues that it was the Nationalist *response* to Japanese successes recruiting and working among Sino-Muslim communities that prompted their efforts to go beyond the rhetoric of the nation-building and resistance and to engage in state-building projects in Free China to ensure the loyalties of people who may never have considered themselves to be “Chinese”.

**An Incomplete Party-State:
Zhou Fohai and the Creation of the Collaborationist Wang Jingwei Government in 1940**

Brian G. Martin

Australian National University, College of Asia and the Pacific

This paper discusses Zhou Fohai’s approach to collaboration in the Wang Jingwei government (1940-1945). Zhou considered that China could not win the war against a militarily more powerful and industrialised Japan, and so he believed in the need to reach a negotiated peace with Japan. Nevertheless, he was adamant that China should not become a puppet-state, and he excoriated the two existing collaborationist regimes – the Provisional Government in Beiping and the Reformed Government in Nanjing – as being merely creatures of the Japanese military. Like Wang Jingwei, Zhou believed that any government established in the occupied areas had to be a Guomindang Government that drew on the modernist, revolutionary traditions of the of the Nationalist Party as articulated by Sun Yat-sen. Zhou sought to recreate the Party State in the occupied areas, and so reinforce the fact of the Guomindang system as the only legitimate political form for modern China by gaining formal Japanese acquiescence to it. He argued fiercely for the retention of the Guomindang’s ‘blue sky white sun’ flag and for Sun’s Three Principles of the People to be the regime’s official ideology, as well as for the Guomindang party members to freely operate in the occupied areas.

Zhou pursued this end even despite Wang Jingwei who, at key points, was prepared to compromise over the flag and over the political structure of the regime – Wang was willing to consider a federal structure, while Zhou held out for a centralised political system. Within this

collaborationist Party-State, Zhou ensured that he controlled key levers of power: the regime's security service and its finances (and he even created his own independent military units in the Tax Police Regiment). In this way Zhou became the most important member of the regime after Wang Jingwei himself. Zhou's approach to collaboration depended on a clear commitment to the Wang Jingwei government from Japan. This was never fully achieved, and, Zhou had difficulties with the Japanese from the outset, many of whom resented the existence of this Guomindang government that they had not created and some continued to actively oppose it.

The onset of the Pacific War progressively changed Zhou's calculus of collaboration by late 1942, and this led him to seek reconciliation with Chongqing. The nature of Zhou's collaboration always left room for him in his own mind to be reconciled at some point with Chiang Kai-shek – he saw his role as part of a long double-game with Chongqing seeking victory through the War of Resistance and the Wang regime seeking 'victory' through collaboration with Japan, in order to ensure the maintenance or the reclaiming of China's sovereignty in the occupied areas. Since neither the Chongqing government nor the Nanjing government differed in their ultimate goal in Zhou's mind, this enabled him in 1943-45 to engage, almost seamlessly, in underground work for Chongqing through Dai Li's organisation, while continuing to play a leading role in the collaborationist Party-State.

The Occupation State as a Confederal Polity: Japan's Visions of China's Political Disunity during the War

David Serfass

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This paper aims at exploring a neglected chapter of the history of Chinese federalism: the use of this model as a means to legitimize Japanese rule over occupied China during the Sino-Japanese war (1937-45). To be sure, previous scholarship has already studied Japan's cynical plan to reshape China into a loose confederation of local governments through the implementation of the *bunji gassaku* 分治合作 policy. Yet, little is known about how Japanese authorities and early Chinese collaborators envisioned the organization of the occupation state during a short period that spans from the decision made in early 1938 by Tokyo to sponsor a new central government in China to the attempt by the Wang Jingwei's group (Zhou Fohai especially), in late 1939, to impose a political agenda committed to national unification under a pro-Japanese GMD. This paper focuses on the winter of 1938-1939 when a confederal Republic was on the verge of being created in occupied China. It explores the intellectual and political context in which this new polity was conceived. Although this Republic never came into existence, it had a lasting influence on the making of the occupation state in the following years.

Based on hitherto unused Japanese primary sources, this paper sheds light on previously overlooked aspects of state-formation under Japanese occupation, namely the difficult transition between the early collaborationist governments and the Wang Jingwei Reorganized Nationalist Government. On a broader level, it illuminates the adaptation of the federalist agenda by Japanese occupiers, thus contributing to the history of both Japanese imperialism and Chinese federalism.

At the Interface of Colonial and Occupation State-Building: The Government-General of Taiwan in Wartime South China, 1937-1945

Seiji Shirane

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Previous scholarship on Japan's military occupation of China during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) has largely focused on North and Central China. This paper illustrates how

Japanese occupation regimes in coastal South China, centered on Xiamen and Hainan, differed from other Chinese regions due to the extensive role played by the Government-General of Taiwan (1895-1945). The early years of the war reveal institutional rivalries and competing priorities between the Japanese military services and Government-General over administrative control in South China. Although jurisdictional authority ultimately lay with the Japanese military's Asia Development Board (Kōa-in), due to a lack of regional expertise and personnel the Navy and Army both drew extensively on Taiwan's institutions and manpower—Japanese and Taiwanese—for their local municipal governments. Using the case studies of economic development, policing, and medical treatment, this paper argues that the Government-General of Taiwan served as a critical interface between colonial and occupation state-building in Japan's southern wartime empire.

**A Critical Dimension of State-Building in Nationalist China
Business Tax in Sichuan, 1936-1945**

Xiaoqun Xu

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This paper extends prior research on taxation as state building in early twentieth-century China with a case study, based on primary sources, of business taxation in Sichuan Province where the Nationalist Government was relocated during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). It examines how a new tax category--business tax--was conceived and introduced by Chinese tax reformers, how it was implemented, what tax administrative issues were encountered and negotiated, and what results were achieved. Inspired by the global spread of modern taxation theory and practice, the Nationalist Government chose to launch business tax in Sichuan (and beyond) during the wartime, which entailed the growth of the state's legitimacy and capacity to extract revenue from society. Importantly, the practices established in Sichuan would be replicated nationwide after the war. By looking at the operations of the Sichuan Province Business Tax Bureau and its branch bureaus and tax collection offices, the paper shows the concrete steps of state-building in one province.