

TUNING IN: NATIONALIST RADIO IN CHINA,  
1928–1937



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## ABSTRACT

### TUNING IN: NATIONALIST RADIO IN CHINA, 1928–1937

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This dissertation has three primary aims. The first is to decentre Euro-America in the Anglophone literature of radio broadcasting during the Interwar Period, and the second is to decentre China in the Sinophone literature on early-period broadcasting before 1949. As radio was a global medium, a history of one without the other would be incomplete. The third aim of this dissertation is to decentre Shanghai in the study of Chinese radio history. To this end, it introduces the history of the Central Broadcasting Station, i.e., Nationalist Radio. Founded by the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1928, Nationalist Radio was the inspiration of a conservative group of revolutionaries within the party called the CC Clique, whose belief in scientism led them to place radio broadcasting at the centre of the party state. During the Nanjing Decade (1928–1937), the CC Clique employed radio as both a tool of governance to promote political tutelage and a weapon of war to mobilise the nation as broadcast propaganda became a fourth front in modern warfare.

The mission of Nationalist Radio was one of nationalisation in all senses of the word, which echoed developments in the global oecumene as countries mobilised on the fourth front. This dissertation looks at how the CC Clique carried out the radio nationalisation of China in three phases between 1928 and 1937. In the first phase, the CC Clique used broadcasting technology to unify the party state. As radio became a mass medium in China, the CC Clique embedded propaganda into entertainment to expand the reach of party-state broadcasting to a general audience from 1933 to 1935. During the third phase in 1936 and 1937 as China prepared for war against Japan, the CC Clique established a party-state broadcasting system and nationalised the industry in the name of radio education. Using primary sources from Mainland China, Taiwan, and abroad, this dissertation investigates the spirit of Nationalist broadcast propaganda to show how the CC Clique used radio broadcasting as a tool of governance and a weapon of war during each phase of radio nationalisation. This dissertation shows that CC Clique officials consolidated effective party-state control over a factious industry that they inherited in 1928 and established a national broadcasting network in 1937. It also shows that the spirit of political tutelage, i.e., broadcast propaganda, changed as the CC Clique focused on the radio nationalisation of the party state, the audience, and the industry.

*To Joanne and Evelyn*





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## INTRODUCTION: TUNING IN

When carrying out the mission of propaganda, we should have perseverance and cannot have a strong start and a weak finish. Because we want a person's heart to be sincere and contentedly obey, one morning or one night, one word or one action will not be enough to yield results. To be effective, we must place our doctrine deep inside the hearts of the people to move them invisibly and change them silently.

—Sun Yat-sen<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of China had a sound. One that cut across mountain ranges, rolling plains, and inland plateaux at the speed of light to bypass regional warlords, local administrators, and treaty-port officials to disseminate propaganda directly to audiences nationwide. The sound was the creation of the CC Clique, a group of nationalist revolutionaries whose ties to Chiang Kai-shek and influence within the civil bureaucracy made them powerful in party-state politics. The inspiration for the sound came one day to the leader of the clique, Chen Guofu, while raising money on the Shanghai exchanges for the Whampoa Military Academy:

One day in 1924 when I was in Shanghai listening to a radio station report on market prices, I suddenly thought of propaganda: if our party could have such a tool, would it not be more effective than running a newspaper?<sup>2</sup>

Chen and the CC Clique therefore shaped the sound into a tool to promote governance and wielded it like a weapon against enemies of the party state. The sound enabled them to carry out the mission of propaganda centrally from Nanjing and promote the party state as the legitimate heir of Sun Yat-sen, the Father of the Nation. The CC Clique imagined that the sound was like a virtual assembly hall of political tutelage wherein the nation came together to learn about Sunism, i.e., the teachings of Sun Yat-sen, and receive central guidance on local governance. From morning to night, the CC Clique infused the sound with education, information, and entertainment to instil Sunist principles, New Life practices, Western learning, and the Chinese tradition into the audience. The sound also gave voice to the promise of national unification, economic modernisation, and the restoration of Chinese civilisation to a golden age: a future time when China would stand as an equal among nations and its citizens would thrive in the modern world. To Chen and the CC Clique, the sound became an important medium with which central party headquarters could mobilise the party state, the audience, and the industry during the Nanjing Decade (1928–1937). They called this sound Nationalist Radio.

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<sup>1</sup> Zongli Yixun 總理遺訓, *Guangbo zhoubao* 廣播週報 (hereafter *GBZB*), 2 March 1935, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Chen Guofu 陳果夫, 'Guanyu wuxiandian jianshe' 關於無線電建設, in *Chen Guofu xiansheng quanji* 陳果夫先生全集 (hereafter *CGFXSQJ*), comp. Chen Guofu xiansheng yizhu bianyin weiyuanhui 陳果夫先生遺著編印委員會, vol. 1 (Taipei: Jindai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1991), 279.

## The Global Radio Oecumene

The story of Nationalist Radio began with the placement of Sun Yat-sen's Declaration of Peaceful Unification (和平宣言) on China's first radio station, XRO Shanghai, on 25 January 1923. Owned by the Radio Corporation of China, Station XRO was located in the International Settlement on Canton Road atop the Robert Dollar Building, an eponymous high-rise tower owned by a Scottish-American shipping magnate known as 'the grand old man of the Pacific'. British-American journalist and entrepreneur E. G. Osborn operated the station to promote the sale of foreign-made radios with the financial backing of overseas Chinese capital from Japan.<sup>3</sup> To promote the evening broadcasts and radio sales, Osborn formed a partnership with *The China Press*, which was an American-registered English-language newspaper financed by Sun Yat-sen's brother-in-law Kong Xiangxi.<sup>4</sup> Radio Corporation of China was a truly global venture, and Sun welcomed the advent of radio as a means to undermine the Beiyang Government and promote national unification under his Nationalist regime in Guangzhou:

We who are working for the reunification of this great country of ours welcome such forward steps as the radio. It will not only closely link China orally with the rest of the world, but it will greatly assist in knitting the various cities and provinces of the country much more closely together.<sup>5</sup>

Shanghai was abuzz with excitement about the launch of Station XRO. Just two nights before the station broadcast Sun's manifesto, a live audience filled its rooftop studio to watch China's first radio programme. The inaugural broadcast featured a live violin solo by Jaroslav Kocian of the Prague Conservatory, big band jazz by Earl Currens's Orchestra, a blues solo by saxophonist George Hall, and male vocals by the Golden Gate Quartet. Another audience of more than five hundred Western and Chinese residents, including Nie Qijie, the former Chairman of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce and grandson of Zeng Guofan, gathered at the Young Men's Christian Association to hear the broadcast over loudspeakers set up by former Purdue professor and avid radio engineer Clarence Robinson. Others went to the Grill Room at the Astor House Hotel and the Carlton Cafe near the Shanghai Recreation Grounds to listen in. There also were 500 radio owners tuned in at home, many of them on new receivers purchased from Osborn's company, and several households organised listening

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<sup>3</sup> Carlton Benson, 'From Teahouse to Radio: Storytelling and the Commercialization of Culture in 1930s Shanghai' (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1996), 78–80; Michael Alexander Krysko, 'China Tuned Out: American Radio in East Asia, 1919–1941' (PhD diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2001), 151–52.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen R. MacKinnon, 'Toward a History of the Chinese Press in the Republican Period', *Modern China* 23, no. 1 (January 1997): 13.

<sup>5</sup> 'Dr. Sun Yat-sen Congratulates China Press Radio', *China Press*, 27 January 1923, 23.

parties to celebrate the first local broadcast in China.<sup>6</sup> It was within this global oecumene that Station XRO broadcast Sun's declaration, as Sun prepared to issue another statement the next day with Soviet envoy Adolf Joffe about forming a united front with the Communists to secure much needed funding for the Nationalist Revolution.<sup>7</sup> Sun thus promoted his vision of peaceful unification to a cosmopolitan audience on the radio while preparing to launch a northern expedition for the military unification of China.

Radio in the early 1920s was a revolutionary medium in its heyday, representing the height of science and modernity, and its transnationality had a powerful and disruptive impact on nation states, much like the internet's integrated audio, video, images, and text have today. Radio came to China only two years after the world's first broadcasting station in the United States opened a new frontier on the airwaves, and former enemies joined forces to dominate a global industry. In 1920, Radio Corporation of America (RCA) formed a cartel with three manufacturers—Marconi from Britain, Telefunken from Germany, and the General Wireless Telegraphy Company from France—and the four signed an agreement to establish the Commercial International Radio Committee to share patents, coordinate traffic agreements, and bring order to global markets.<sup>8</sup> After establishing hegemony over South America in 1921, the cartel invited Japan to become a fifth member in Asia and set its sights on China.<sup>9</sup>

The first local broadcast in Shanghai was thus part of a wider struggle for Chinese national sovereignty following the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles. As early as 1920, the Beiyang Government ratified the 1912 International Radiotelegraph Convention to strengthen its bargaining position before sending a delegation to the Washington Conference to negotiate the Nine-Power Treaty in 1921 and 1922. Radio sovereignty was integral to China's objective to recover national sovereignty on all fronts; in fact, the Chinese delegation strenuously objected to the treaty's resolution on radio with a declaration based on the principles set forth in the 1912 convention:

The Chinese Government does not recognise or concede the right of any foreign Power or of the nationals thereof to install or operate, without its express consent, radio

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<sup>6</sup> 'Program Starts at Eight O'Clock; News, Music, Entertainment', *China Press*, 23 January 1923, 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> Tony Saich, *Finding Allies and Making Revolution: The Early Years of the Communist Party* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 163–67.

<sup>8</sup> Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007) 289; Headrick, *The Invisible Weapon*, 182–4.

<sup>9</sup> Winseck and Pike, *Communication and Empire*, 300–303.

stations in legation grounds, settlements, concessions, leased territories, railway areas or other similar areas.<sup>10</sup>

China sought sovereign control over radio for both security and fiscal reasons because broadcasting's technological cousins, radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony, were cutting-edge innovations and important sources of government revenue. Sovereign control over wireless within China was vital to national security because it had practical military applications in the field that foreign and domestic rivals could use against Peking. Moreover, sovereign control over the airwaves enabled the Beiyang Government to earn substantial income from domestic and international wireless communications. It therefore regarded the nascent medium of broadcasting as having a political, economic, and symbolic importance that was much greater than its small audience and insignificant revenue.

The Beiyang Government thus suppressed the first foreign broadcasting stations in Shanghai and Manchuria. In the south, Wu Peifu and his Zhili Clique used China's 1915 Electronic Messaging Regulations to shut down Station XRO and other foreign broadcasters before introducing a restrictive provisional law to license private radio equipment in 1924. Like wireless prohibitions during World War One in the West, China's 1915 radio law forbade extra-governmental ownership and operation of wireless equipment without prior approval; however, China never relaxed the ban after the Paris Peace Conference because it suffered from continual warfare between regional warlords, who international arms dealers supplied with surplus armaments from the Great War.<sup>11</sup> In Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin and his Fengtian Clique established a network of fifty-eight radiotelegraph stations with German, French, British, and American equipment to circumvent Japanese land-based telegraph networks in Northeast China and foreign-controlled submarine telegraphy in North Asia.<sup>12</sup> Most importantly, the Fengtian Clique established comprehensive broadcasting regulations to govern private radio ownership, and it built broadcasting stations in Harbin and Shenyang to stop Japanese encroachment of Chinese radio sovereignty in the Three Eastern Provinces.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Conference on Limitation of Armament. Washington, 1921–22 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1922), 57.

<sup>11</sup> Michael A. Krysko, *American Radio in China: International Encounters with Technology and Communications, 1919–1941* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 69, 73, 218n1.

<sup>12</sup> Wu Tiqing 吴梯青, 'Youguan Beiyang shiqi dianxin shiye de ji jian shi' 有关北洋时期电信实业的几件事, *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* 文史资料选辑 23, no. 66–68 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2000), 127–28.

<sup>13</sup> Shenyang shi renmin zhengfu difangzhi bangongshi 沈阳市人民政府地方志办公室, ed., *Zhangshi shuaifu zhi* 张氏帅府志 (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2013), 168; Huang Xueyou 黄学有, ed., *Shenyang guangbo shihua* 沈阳广播史话, (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2005), 23.

When Zhang Zuolin wrested control of the Beiyang Government from Wu Peifu in the Third Zhili-Fengtian War in 1926, his regime built two more radio stations in Peking and Tianjin and established a state-owned broadcasting network. He also planned to buy Shanghai's lone station, the foreign-owned Kellogg Radio Company, until learning that Sun Department Store on Nanjing Road had launched the city's first Chinese-owned station in March 1927. Peking then sent a delegation to the 1927 International Radiotelegraph Conference in Washington to participate in seven weeks of talks, which US Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover described as the 'largest international conference in history'.<sup>14</sup> At this first broadcasting convention, a bilingual radio engineer named Wu Tiqing coined a neologism for 'radio broadcasting', *wuxiandian guangbo* (無線電廣播), rather than borrow the Japanese term *fangsong* (放送) or adopt then current regionalisms *chuansheng* (傳聲) or *boyin* (播音).<sup>15</sup> Hence, by the time Chiang Kai-shek resumed the Northern Expedition in 1928, radio broadcasting had grown local roots in China and had an official name, which is still used today.

The International Telegraph Union convened the Washington radio conference to bring order to a global industry in 1927. The rapid diffusion of radio after the first broadcast in 1920 had led to chaos on the airwaves, as the League of Nations and the International Telegraph Union ignored the new medium because it 'was too "young" and changing too quickly'.<sup>16</sup> The absence of global governance prompted Europe to form the International Broadcasting Union in 1925 to regulate eighty-seven member stations, which grew to 200 by 1928.<sup>17</sup> In the United States, Congress established the Federal Radio Commission to end the sonic chaos caused by nearly 700 domestic stations jammed into the confines of the broadcasting spectrum.<sup>18</sup> These regional developments finally compelled the International Telegraph Union to impose national borders on the global airwaves by allocating call signs and frequencies to nations and colonies.

The global radio oecumene was in a protean state when the Chinese Nationalist Party approved funding to build a central broadcasting station in February 1928. The United States, with 677 stations and 8 million radio-owning households, adopted a commercial model in which individual stations sold advertising and sponsorship to finance operations, and networks

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<sup>14</sup> Irvin Stewart, 'The International Radiotelegraph Conference of Washington', *The American Journal of Law* 22, no. 1 (January 1928): 28.

<sup>15</sup> Wu, 'Beiyang shiqi dianxin', 132.

<sup>16</sup> Suzanne Lommers, *Europe—On Air: Interwar Projects for Radio Broadcasting* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 60.

<sup>17</sup> Lommers, *Europe—On Air*, 74–94.

<sup>18</sup> *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Bicentennial ed., pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975), 796.



formed corporations to increase profitability and produce quality entertainment for national audiences. The United Kingdom rejected the lowbrow commercialism of the American model, opting instead for a public services monopoly under the British Broadcasting Corporation, which was established by royal charter in 1927. Formed after a five-year experiment with a private monopoly, the corporation operated two national channels and six regional stations, broadcasting highbrow programming produced at Savoy Hill studios in London for 2.5 million households who paid an annual license fee for the radio service.<sup>19</sup> Under the leadership of John Reith in London, the British model spread to Canada in 1922, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in 1924, India in 1927, and Hong Kong in 1928.<sup>20</sup>

As other nations developed their broadcasting systems, experimentation led to the development of divergent institutions. Germany, Japan, France, and Italy initially adopted hybrid systems combining various elements of the US and UK models. Germany adopted the British model in 1923 to finance public radio with manufacturers' and listeners' license fees, but it also allowed private investors to operate stations whose profits were capped at 10 percent. By 1928, the Weimer Republic retained majority control over nine privately-owned regional stations that broadcast both local content and central newscasts to 2.6 million licensees before it established a state-owned system and ended private ownership in 1932 on the eve of Hitler's rise to power.<sup>21</sup> In 1925, Japan borrowed elements of both the German and British models and granted radio concessions to private investors in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya; however, only one year later it forced the three stations to merge into the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), which expanded to nineteen stations with 1.4 million listeners by 1932.<sup>22</sup> In France, commercial stations dominated a public-private hybrid system, despite a ban on new private broadcasters in 1928 and the introduction of listener fees to subsidise the public system in 1933, and Mussolini ended the national license of the foreign-owned Italian Radio Union to consolidate broadcasting into a state-owned monopoly in 1929.<sup>23</sup> Finally, the outlier in the global oecumene was the Soviet Union, which adopted a wired system after the People's Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs wrested control over the industry in 1928. Tapping into

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<sup>19</sup> *BBC Handbook 1929* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.), 45.

<sup>20</sup> *BBC Handbook 1928* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.), 302–305.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Christian Führer, 'A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany, 1923–1932', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (December 1997), 724–727.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 79–88.

<sup>23</sup> Rebecca P. Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 13, 46; Eli M. Noam, 'Broadcasting in Italy: An Overview', *Columbia Journal of World Business* 22, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 19.

an extensive pre-revolutionary telegraph network, the Soviets established fifty-nine stations to broadcast centralised content via wireless relays and wired connections to an audience of about two million listeners across the Eurasian landmass.<sup>24</sup>

The formation of national broadcasting networks in the late 1920s converged with technological innovation and international conflict to transform radio into a global medium in the 1930s. Networks enabled nations to produce centralised content economically and maintain strict control over its distribution; thus, radio often became a political tool to impress the values of the state upon subjects and citizens. Shortwave directional antennae allowed broadcasters to transmit farther and target audiences more effectively, and valve technology enabled audiences to receive distant stations and listen to broadcasts in groups, which changed the social dynamics of listening.<sup>25</sup> Nations therefore began using shortwave outside their borders to influence global public opinion and transform international relations. The Soviets first used shortwave to spread revolution in 1925, and their aggressive promotion of communism during the Great Depression prompted other nations to adopt the technology.<sup>26</sup> Philips Radio then connected faraway Dutch colonies with shortwave in 1928, and many others followed suit in the 1930s: the National Broadcasting Corporation in America, the Empire Service in Britain, Poste Colonial in France, Radio Bari in Italy, Zeesen Radio in Germany, Toa Relay Broadcasting in Japan, Vatican Radio in Rome, and the League's Radio Nations in Geneva.<sup>27</sup> Quickly and cheaply, shortwave enabled broadcasters to promote their various interests around the world: to spread religion, promote ideology, consolidate colonial possessions, advocate territorial expansion, preserve elite culture, and inspire revolution. As a result, broadcasting became the preferred medium for the global dissemination of news, information, and entertainment.

Broadcasting's strengths also made it the medium of choice in the propaganda wars of the 1930s as the airwaves became a fourth front in modern warfare.<sup>28</sup> The first radio war took place between Austria and Germany.<sup>29</sup> In 1933, Hitler launched an on-air campaign to undermine Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss, whose conservative government had banned both the Communist and Nazi Parties. Despite Austrian appeals to the League of Nations and the

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen Lovell, *Russia in the Microphone Age: A History of Soviet Radio, 1919–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 25–36.

<sup>25</sup> Lommers, *Europe—On Air*, 120.

<sup>26</sup> Lommers, *Europe—On Air*, 140–1.

<sup>27</sup> Jerome S. Berg, *The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013), 50–52.

<sup>28</sup> Charles J. Rolo, *Radio Goes to War: The "Fourth Front"* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Lommers, *Europe—On Air*, 218.

International Broadcasting Union to stop German broadcast propaganda, both organisations declined to intervene to maintain their neutrality.<sup>30</sup> However, the radio war turned into a putsch on 25 July 1934. Just before the one o'clock news, Austrian Nazis seized the national broadcasting station while another group disguised as home guards murdered Dollfuss at the chancellery. Throughout the afternoon, government forces surrounded the station building in the heart of Vienna and fought the Nazi rebels for control of Austria's airwaves.<sup>31</sup> The second radio war on the fourth front was the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 in which rival broadcasters presented their interpretations of the war to global audiences. Listeners could receive live updates from the battlefield and hear Emperor Haile Selassie speak in Addis Ababa on the Columbia Broadcasting System, and they could tune in to Radio Bari for speeches by Mussolini in Rome and Italian coverage at the front.<sup>32</sup> Given that Abyssinia and Italian Africa had fewer than 300 radios, the live coverage was not for local audiences but for global ones.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the Spanish Civil War was the third conflict on the new fourth front. In this proxy war between communism and fascism, rival national broadcasters produced multilingual coverage from various political, economic, and ideological perspectives. The purpose of the radio propaganda on either side of the conflict was to influence international public opinion and place indirect pressure on neutral governments to adopt policies favourable to their cause.<sup>34</sup> Radio propaganda thus became an essential weapon on the new fourth front.

The transformation of broadcasting into a weapon of war prompted a reluctant League of Nations to promote the use of broadcasting for the cause of peace. Although some League members had tabled proposals to abolish radio propaganda in the early 1930s, they had been dismissed as 'utopian'.<sup>35</sup> After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, however, thirty-seven nations concluded the International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace in September 1936.<sup>36</sup> Signatories pledged to prohibit domestic or international broadcasts that incited any group to commit acts that affected the order or security of another party to the non-binding convention. They also undertook to verify information on international

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<sup>30</sup> Lommers, *Europe — On Air*, 218–21.

<sup>31</sup> Frederick T. Birchall, 'Nazi Drama of "Vienna Madness" Acted with Daring and Cunning', *New York Times*, 27 July 1934, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ming 銘, Wuxiandian Shijie 無線電世界, *Wuxiandian* 無線電 (hereafter *Wuxiandian*) 2, November 1935, 73; Ming, Wuxiandian Shijie, *Wuxiandian* 2, December 1935, 63.

<sup>33</sup> Wuxiandian Shijie, *Wuxiandian* 2, August 1935, 76.

<sup>34</sup> Lommers, *Europe — On Air*, 221–4; Alan Davies, 'The First Radio War: Broadcasting in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 19, no. 4 (1999): 473–513.

<sup>35</sup> Rolo, *Radio Goes to War*, 56.

<sup>36</sup> Michael G. Kearney, *The Prohibition of Propaganda for War in International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26–28.

affairs before broadcast and vowed to prohibit misinformation that would harm mutual understanding between nations. In addition, the signatories agreed to provide each other with broadcast materials to promote knowledge of their respective civilisations, cultures, international relations, and contributions to world peace.<sup>37</sup>

Signatories to the convention included the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Soviet Union, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and Austria, among others. However, the actual targets of the agreement—Germany, Italy, and Japan—did not sign it.<sup>38</sup> One conspicuous non-signer was the United States, which only gave an assurance to follow the spirit of the convention.<sup>39</sup> Another non-signatory was China. As the League discussed the use of broadcasting for the cause of peace in September 1936, the Broadcast Section at Nationalist Radio published an editorial about ‘the front lines’ of broadcast propaganda in countries around the world. Nationalist Radio regarded the motivations of the signatories with cynicism and believed that the convention was a ploy, concluding that ‘there is not one country that is not constantly thinking about enhancing the power and influence of broadcast propaganda’.<sup>40</sup> The clear-eyed technocrats at Nationalist Radio were cynical because they were tuned in to the global ocumene and therefore regarded radio as a tool of propaganda and a weapon of war. Rather than focus on peace, they were busy building a national broadcasting network to serve as a radio rampart in a forthcoming propaganda war on the fourth front against Japan.

### **Tuning In to Nationalist Radio**

One evening in 2018 while chatting with the nonagenarian patriarch of my host family in Taipei, Uncle Cheng (Cheng Fasheng 程法盛), I asked him about Nationalist Radio content. An educated youth from Henan and a believer in Sunism, Uncle Cheng joined the Intellectual Youth Movement during the War of Resistance against Japan and served in the elite Youth Army 206th Division, which saw heavy fighting in the civil war before deploying to Kaohsiung in 1948.<sup>41</sup> Without hesitation, Cheng Fasheng replied: ‘It was all propaganda (宣傳)’. His response put the documents that I had read in the archives that day into perspective and made

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<sup>37</sup> League of Nations (hereafter LoN), *International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace*, 23 September 1936 (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937).

<sup>38</sup> ‘Radio Peace Enters Pact’, *New York Times*, 2 April 1938, 32; ‘Ninety-fourth Session of the Council, Fourth Meeting’, *League of Nations—Official Journal* 17, no. 11 (November 1936): 1197–8.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Reich and Japan Shun Radio Treaty’, *New York Times*, 27 March 1936, 17.

<sup>40</sup> Chuan 傳, ‘Shijie geguo boyin xuanchuan zhenxian zhi xianzhuang’ 世界各國播音宣傳陣線之現狀, *GBZZ*, 19 September 1936, 60.

<sup>41</sup> Kevin Paul Landdeck, ‘Under the Gun: Nationalist Military Service and Society in Wartime Sichuan, 1938–1945’ (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 461–62.

me reflect upon my own experiences working with party-state media in both Taiwan and China. Since then, the focal point of this dissertation in one way or another has been propaganda.

Why was broadcasting central to Nationalist governance, and how did the CC Clique integrate it into party-state governance during the Nanjing Decade? It has been argued by Laura De Giorgi that Chen Guofu and the CC Clique ‘just delegated’ the development of a national broadcasting network to the future, despite their technocratic expertise and grand designs, because they were unable to implement the measures required to assert party-state control over the broadcasting industry during the Nanjing Decade.<sup>42</sup> Diana Lary has further argued that Chiang Kai-shek ‘was unable to make full use of the new tools available to national leaders in the 1930s’ like broadcasting because ‘China in any case had only a rudimentary radio system, only available in the cities’ with ‘as few as 60,000 wireless sets in the whole country’ in 1934.<sup>43</sup> In addition, Leo Lee and Andrew Nathan have claimed that ‘it was not until after 1949 that a truly mass audience was created’ after a one-paragraph summary of Chinese broadcasting before liberation.<sup>44</sup> In this dissertation, I will show that Chen Guofu and the CC Clique consolidated party-state regulatory control over radio and established a national broadcasting network before the Second Sino-Japanese War. While showing how this was done, I will explain why CC Clique technocrats made Nationalist Radio central to party-state governance and how they integrated broadcasting into party propaganda between 1928 and 1937.

This dissertation argues that Nationalist Radio was an example of successful institution building during the Nanjing Decade. In the wider field of Republican Period history, this thesis aligns with more favourable analyses of Nationalist institutions by Julia Strauss, Morris Bian, William Kirby, and Hans van de Ven rather than with more negative critiques of Republican Period state building by James Sheridan, Lloyd Eastman, and Mary Wright. To show how the CC Clique integrated broadcast propaganda into Nationalist Radio programming, this study draws on primary materials from both sides of the Taiwan Straits and abroad, including memoirs, popular literature, listening guides, work reports, propaganda plans, institutional histories, on-air transcripts, radio plays, song lyrics, educational lectures, radio talks, children’s shows, broadcast news, newspapers, trade journals, programme schedules, consular reports,

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<sup>42</sup> Laura De Giorgi, ‘Communication Technology and Mass Propaganda in China: The Nationalist Party’s Radio Broadcasting Policy and Organisation during the Nanjing Decade (1927–1937)’, *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2 (January 2014): 317, 329.

<sup>43</sup> Diana Lary, *China’s Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 104.

<sup>44</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee and Andrew J. Nathan, ‘The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Ch’ing and Beyond’, in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 374–75.

musical records, memoirs, oral histories, official correspondence, and photographs. These sources reveal how Chen Guofu and the CC Clique consolidated control over a fractious hybrid industry that they inherited in 1928, despite significant political and financial constraints, and they explain why the CC Clique nationalised radio nine-years later in the name of education.

This dissertation therefore presents a Nanjing-centred analysis of the Nationalist effort to modernise China through the medium of broadcasting in a field largely dominated by Carlton Benson whose radio studies centred on Shanghai, which was the primary entrepôt for wireless technology and the bastion of private broadcasting in China.<sup>45</sup> My initial research benefitted from two landmark articles by Laura De Giorgi: the first analysed the institution of Nationalist Radio and broadcasting policies during the Nanjing Decade, and the second introduced the debate in Shanghai on the role of proper radio in China in the Interwar Period.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Michael Krysko's critique of American radio policies in East Asia amid rising Chinese nationalism and Japanese expansionism added a much needed transnational perspective to the study of Nationalist broadcasting before 1949.<sup>47</sup> This dissertation will build on this research in order to decentre Shanghai and thereby examine the role of radio in Nationalist nation-building, since the CC Clique expanded public radio and produced broadcast propaganda during the Nanjing Decade for a national audience rather than for just one cosmopolitan city. In fact, the mission of Nationalist Radio was the radioification (無線電化) of the nation.

This thesis is the result of four serendipitous developments. The first was a wave of official histories published by ageing Nationalist Radio officials on Taiwan to establish a record of their accomplishments on the Mainland before 1949. These include a history of Nationalist Radio as a cultural enterprise, a chronicle of important events, two anniversary collections, and the memoirs of Wu Daoyi. Although these accounts suffer from the problems that plague all official histories, such as a narrow institutional focus and hagiographic content,

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<sup>45</sup> Benson, 'From Teahouse to Radio'; Carlton Benson, 'The Manipulation of *Tanci* in Radio Shanghai during the 1930s', *Republican China* 20, no. 2 (April 1995): 117–146; Carlton Benson, 'Consumers are also Soldiers: Subversive Songs from Nanjing Road during the New Life Movement', in *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900–1945*, ed. Sherman Cochran (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1999), 91–132; Carlton Benson, 'Back to Business as Usual: The Resurgence of Commercial Radio Broadcasting in *Gudao* Shanghai', in *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai under Japanese Occupation*, ed. Christian Henriot and Wen-hsin Yeh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 279–301.

<sup>46</sup> Laura De Giorgi, 'Communication Technology', 305–329. Laura De Giorgi, 'Media and Popular Education: Views and Policies on Radio Broadcasting in Republican China, 1920s–30s', *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture* 7, no. 3 (December 2016): 281–296.

<sup>47</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 1–16.

their disuse in Taiwan has provided me the opportunity to introduce important aspects of Nationalist Radio before 1945 that largely have been ignored in Taiwan and Mainland China.<sup>48</sup>

The second development was the collation of historical materials on pre-1949 ‘early-period broadcasting’ (早期廣播) on the Mainland that began with opening and reform in 1979. The inclusion of Nationalist Radio under the banner of early-period broadcasting before 1949 was a radical divergence from Maoist polemics, making it part of Chinese broadcasting history. Nationalist Radio as an institution thereafter became a legitimate subject of research, and its people, policies, and content—although considered ‘reactionary’—could be studied. The inclusion of Nationalist Radio in early-period broadcasting also enabled the Communists to extend the historical narrative of Chinese modernisation to before 1949 to promote the four modernisations in the 1980s era of opening and reform. The most notable works from this period were a book based on local and oral histories by Wang Xueqi and Shi Hansheng and a collection of Shanghai archival materials.<sup>49</sup> General histories by Zhao Yuming followed in the aughts, along with numerous academic theses and articles as ‘Republican Fever’ swept Mainland China.<sup>50</sup> Since the rise of Xi Jinping in 2012, Mainland scholars have published several compilations of primary documents and local histories, which were first published separately in the 1980s, and media historian Li Yu has analysed Nationalist Radio from the perspective of historical institutionalism to trace the development of civil society from 1928 to 1949.<sup>51</sup> This dissertation has screened these sources for ideological bias to recontextualise the people, policies, and content of Nationalist Radio within the Interwar Period radio oecumene.

The third development was the rise of Euro-American radio studies in the 1990s. The field grew out of the cultural turn in the 1980s and led to a re-evaluation of the medium’s role

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<sup>48</sup> Asa Briggs, ‘Problems and Possibilities in the Writing of Broadcasting History’, *Media, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 1(1980): 5–13; Kao Yu-Ya 高郁雅, *Guomindang de xinwen xuanchuan yu zhanhou Zhongguo zhengju biandong, 1945–1949* 國民黨的新聞宣傳與戰後中國政局變動 (1945–1949) (Taipei: Taida chuban zhongxin, 2005), 4–5.

<sup>49</sup> Wang Xueqi 汪学起 and Shi Hansheng 是翰生, *Disi zhanxian: Guomindang zhongyang guangbo diantai duoshi* 第四站线: 国民党中央广播电台掇实 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1988); *Jiu Zhongguo de Shanghai guangbo shiye* 旧中国的上海广播事业 (hereafter *Jiu Zhongguo*), comp. Shanghai shi dang’anguan 上海市档案馆, Beijing guangbo xueyuan 北京广播学院, and Shanghai shi guangbo dianshiju 上海市广播电视局 (Beijing: Dang’an chubanshe, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> Zhao Yuming, ed., *Zhongguo guangbo dianshi tongshi* 中国广播电台通史 (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo yingshi chubanshe, 2014); Zhao Yuming 赵玉明, ed., *Zhongguo guangbo dianshi tushi* 中国广播电视图史 (Guangzhou: Nanfang ribao chubanshe, 2008); Zhang Qiang, and Robert Weatherly. ‘The Rise of “Republican Fever” and the Implications for CCP Legitimacy’, *China Information* 27 (2013): 277–300.

<sup>51</sup> Zhao Yuming 赵玉明, Ai Honghong 艾红红 and Liu Shufeng 刘书峰, eds., *Xinxu difangzhi: Zaoqi guangbo shiliao huibian* 新修地方志: 早期广播史料汇编 (Beijing: Zhongguo Guangbo yingshi chubanshe, 2014); Li Yu 李煜, *Zhongguo guangbo xiandaixing liubian: Guomin zhengfu guangbo yanjiu, 1928–1949* 中国广播现代性流变: 国民政府广播研究(1928–1949年) (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2017).

in popular culture, correcting for a general academic bias against radio in the early twentieth century and its eclipse by television at mid-century.<sup>52</sup> To be fair, the bias was related to the nature of radio: it is an oral medium, and history requires documents or recordings, which are often unavailable for various reasons. An important aim of this dissertation therefore is to (a) decentre Euro-America in the Anglophone literature to position China within the global radio oecumene during the Interwar Period, and (b) decentre China in the Sinophone literature to place global radio back into nationalistic narratives of Chinese broadcasting before 1949. As radio was global, a history of one without the other would be incomplete.

The fourth development was the widespread digitisation of archival materials, especially since the pandemic began in 2020. Digitisation now provides easier access to global sources on early-period Chinese broadcasting, thus enabling me to adopt an eclectic method to tune in to Nationalist Radio. I therefore hope to make a contribution to knowledge in the fields of modern Chinese history and global communications studies.

### **The Spirit of Nationalist Radio**

This dissertation traces the material aspects of Nationalist Radio as an institution and the evolution of its broadcast propaganda, or what I call its spirit. As Maggie Clinton has shown in *Revolutionary Nativism*, ‘spirit’ was an ambiguous catch-all term during the Nanjing Decade, which enabled the Nationalists to define a modern secular nationalism that was built upon cultural essentialism.<sup>53</sup> In Chinese political discourse over the past century, spirit has often been a means of political mobilisation amid rapid and uncertain political, economic, and social change. The spirit of Nationalist Radio, i.e., broadcast propaganda, changed greatly during the Nanjing Decade as China faced the uncertainty of foreign invasion, internecine conflict, and economic depression. This dissertation will look at Nationalist Radio as manifested in its broadcast propaganda to reveal the spirit of the party state, the audience, and the industry.

The central mission of Nationalist Radio from its inception in 1928 was the propagation of Sunism, i.e., the teachings of Sun Yat-sen, and the promotion of civics education during the phase of political tutelage, which followed military rule and preceded constitutional government in Sunist theory. The CC Clique considered radio ‘the pulse of domestic information and the voice of international propaganda’ and believed that radioification had the

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<sup>52</sup> Michele Hilmes, ‘Rethinking Radio’, in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2–8.

<sup>53</sup> Maggie Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism: Fascism and Culture in China, 1925–1937* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 89.



capacity to ‘perfect society’.<sup>54</sup> Their interest in using radio as a solution derived from a belief in scientism, which J. Megan Greene defines as the application of science and technology towards social, economic, and political modernisation.<sup>55</sup> According to Greene, the CC Clique espoused ‘neo-traditional scientism’, which ‘emphasized the utilization of modern, Western science for...modernization, and cultural preservation’.<sup>56</sup> The CC Clique used broadcasting as a tool of governance to awaken local party cadres and the audience as John Fitzgerald has illustrated in *Awakening China*.<sup>57</sup> However, they also wielded radio like a weapon against domestic and foreign enemies of the party state in multimedia mobilisation campaigns.

Chen Guofu and the CC Clique were above all zealous nationalist revolutionaries and party ideologues with extensive experience producing print-media propaganda.<sup>58</sup> In many respects, their attitude towards news and information resembled German political elites who believed that they could manipulate ‘the networks behind the news’ to influence public opinion and shape political, social, and cultural change.<sup>59</sup> It also enabled the party state to circumvent foreign domination of international wire services and give China a voice internationally, which Shuge Wei has demonstrated was a challenge for Chinese international print propaganda.<sup>60</sup> This was why radio inspired Chen Guofu to harness the power of the medium to shape public opinion with broadcast propaganda. The CC Clique desire to control ‘the networks behind the news’ led to the creation of the radio operator network during the Nanjing Decade and earned Nationalist Radio the nickname ‘master of the news agency’ (報館的主人).<sup>61</sup>

The Nationalists considered broadcasting a rampart against foreign control of the airwaves, which Daqing Yang has identified as ‘technological imperialism’ in his study of Japanese radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony.<sup>62</sup> The party state therefore fought for radio

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<sup>54</sup> Ye Chucang 葉楚傖, ‘Xu’ 序, in *Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai niankan* 中國國民黨執行委員會廣播無線電台年刊 (hereafter *Niankan*), ‘Xu’ 序 (Nanjing: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai, 1929), 1.

<sup>55</sup> J. Megan Greene, ‘GMD Rhetoric of Science and Modernity (1927–70): A Neo-traditional Scientism?’, in *Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics of a New China, 1920–1970*, ed. Terry Bodenhorn (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002), 224–27.

<sup>56</sup> Greene, 238–41.

<sup>57</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in Nationalist China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>58</sup> Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 44–45.

<sup>59</sup> Heidi J. S. Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 6–7.

<sup>60</sup> Shuge Wei, *News under Fire: China’s Propaganda against Japan in the English-Language Press, 1928–1941* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 1–13.

<sup>61</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一, ‘Zhongyang diantai fuwu de jingguo yiji jinhou de fangzhen’ 中央電台服務的經過以及今後的方針, *GBZB*, 17 November 1934, 3; Tworek, *News from Germany*, 6–7.

<sup>62</sup> Daqing Yang, *Technology of Empire: Telecommunications and Japanese Expansion in Asia, 1883–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 8–10.

sovereignty because wireless technology had practical military and commercial applications that were important to economic development; for example, the Nationalists prevailed in a 1935 lawsuit at the Hague against RCA in a six-year dispute over radio sovereignty.<sup>63</sup> Since broadcasting was a technological cousin of wireless communications, the CC Clique regarded it as having a political, economic, and symbolic importance that was greater than its small audience and insignificant revenue in 1928. Radio sovereignty not only enabled the CC Clique to consolidate control over domestic information but also provide China with an unmediated outlet to disseminate international propaganda, which was crucial to waging war on the fourth front. In fact, the CC Clique established the broadcast infrastructure that Hollington Tong (Dong Xiaoguang 董顯光) used to good effect during the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>64</sup>

The mission of Nationalist Radio was one of nationalisation in all senses of the word, which echoed developments in the global oecumene as countries mobilised on the fourth front. The CC Clique carried out radio nationalisation in three phases between 1928 and 1937, as global developments influenced rapid change in the radio oecumene. From 1928 to 1932, the CC Clique used broadcast propaganda to streamline the execution of political tutelage, policy implementation, and mobilisation campaigns at the local level in order to nationalise the party state. During this period, Nationalist Radio disseminated government information to bolster party unity, strengthen central-local relations, and promote knowledge about Sunism.<sup>65</sup> The most important broadcast propaganda in this early phase was *Central Memorial Week* and *Propaganda Report*, which promoted the cult of Sun Yat-sen to establish a ‘monolithic history of the revolution’— i.e., a mythic history of the nation—and transformed Sunist ritual into a means of on-air political mobilisation.<sup>66</sup> As Rebecca Nedostup has argued, ‘a connection to the Father of the Nation was to stake a claim to power’, and the CC Clique made this on-air connection every day.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the CC Clique used Nationalist Radio to mobilise the local party organisation to conduct mobilisation campaigns in real-time nationwide.<sup>68</sup>

Six months after launching Nationalist Radio in August 1928, the CC Clique decided to expand the station’s power so that its broadcast propaganda could cover all of China and

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<sup>63</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 42–68.

<sup>64</sup> Shuge Wei, *News under Fire*, 229–45.

<sup>65</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一, *Zhongguang sishi nian* 中廣四十年 (Taipei: Broadcasting Corporation of China, 1968), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 409–12.

<sup>67</sup> Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 259–63.

<sup>68</sup> Robert E. Bedeski, ‘The Tutelary State and National Revolution in Kuomintang Ideology, 1928–31’, *China Quarterly*, vol. 45 (June 1971): 317.

Southeast Asia. When completed in 1932, Nationalist Radio was the largest broadcasting station in East Asia. As radio became a mass medium with the confluence of the big station and a radio boom in 1932 following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and Shanghai, the CC Clique began to nationalise the audience, producing broadcast propaganda for all ages, but especially for children and youth. As Gina Tam has shown, CC Clique technocrats in the Ministry of Education incorporated both ‘sound and script’ into language textbooks after 1930. Nationalist Radio therefore rolled out the National Language (國語), i.e., Mandarin Chinese, as the voice of the party state. To this end, the CC Clique recruited a new generation of radio presenters to serve as on-air role models for the audience, while continuing to broadcast news and information in dialect for practical reasons.<sup>69</sup> During the New Life Movement in 1934, however, Nationalist Radio underwent a radical transformation as the CC Clique adopted international programme formats and adapted traditional art forms to educate the audience through entertainment in order to promote political tutelage and raise national consciousness, and it was the audience that demanded that radio content be presented solely in the National Language. At the same time, the CC Clique took tentative steps to regulate private radio to counter the threat of foreign broadcast propaganda on the fourth front.

Nationalist Radio’s turn towards entertainment to nationalise the audience reflected a wider spiritual turn in party doctrine to promote cultivation and enjoyment in order to supplement the four material necessities of life in Sunist theory (clothing, food, shelter, and transport). The turn towards entertainment also reflected the trend that all media throughout history begin to blur the lines between information, education, and entertainment once they become big enough industries to produce content for a mass audience, resulting in what Asa Briggs and Peter Burke call ‘edutainment’ and ‘infotainment’.<sup>70</sup> CC Clique technocrats began to blur the lines just as radio became a mass medium, and they observed other national broadcasters embed new ideas in radio propaganda to influence mass audiences through aestheticisation. After the launch of the New Life Movement, Nationalist Radio propaganda reflected the CC Clique’s belief in neo-traditional scientism wherein Western technology could promote both ‘modernisation and cultural preservation’.<sup>71</sup> The CC Clique therefore developed cultural construction to respond to the Blue Shirts’ New Life Movement. Cultural construction

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<sup>69</sup> Gina Anne Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism in China, 1860–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 98–99.

<sup>70</sup> Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*, 3rd edition (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2009), 179.

<sup>71</sup> Greene, ‘Neo-traditional Scientism’, 284–87.

was a syncretic ideology that incorporated Sunist principles, New Life practices, Western learning, and traditional values, and the CC Clique rolled out this ideology in party-state institutions under its control. As Maggie Clinton has argued, this conservative ideology was revolutionary because it transformed Chinese culture into a ‘transhistorical national spirit’, which the CC Clique promoted in print publications using modern aesthetics.<sup>72</sup> On the radio, the CC Clique used modern aesthetics to homogenise national culture, making it the foundation for a ‘political roof’ to unite a divided China.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the medium became the McLuhanesque message as the CC Clique transformed cultural content to nationalise the audience.<sup>74</sup> This dissertation will show how the CC Clique integrated the spirit of cultural construction into broadcast programming to promote a secular modern nationalism between 1933 and 1935.

During the third phase of radio nationalisation in 1936 and 1937, the CC Clique established a broadcasting network and nationalised the industry in the name of radio education. The CC Clique made Nationalist Radio the model for the domestic industry and consolidated party-state control over private broadcasting, expanded network infrastructure, and rolled out programme standards to strengthen propaganda at public and private stations. The CC Clique thereby centralised and standardised broadcast content in order to nationalise the industry.<sup>75</sup> As Ying Jia Tan has shown in *Recharging China*, the electrification of the interior for wartime industrial production was central to defence planning under the National Resources Commission, and Nationalist Radio followed war planning directives and expanded broadcasting into the interior because it was part of what Chen Guofu called China’s ‘spiritual national defence’.<sup>76</sup> To this end, the CC Clique radiofied all public secondary schools and institutes for popular education to broadcast radio education by 1937, and it expanded the programme to all primary and adult schools the same year. War planning also extended into the cultural sphere. Hence, the CC Clique consolidated party-state control over eleven key creative industries under a cultural enterprises planning system that integrated cultural construction into all aspects of Chinese life. Because broadcasting subsumed the creative content of multiple cultural industries and would be central to the war effort, the CC Clique made Nationalist Radio the centrepiece of the cultural enterprises system to strengthen

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<sup>72</sup> Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 18–19, 98–127.

<sup>73</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1–2, 47, 97–101.

<sup>74</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 7–21.

<sup>75</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 126–127.

<sup>76</sup> Ying Jia Tan, *Charging China in War and Revolution, 1882–1955* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021), 64–65, 89–99.

domestic propaganda and protect against Japanese and Communist broadcast propaganda. In short, the CC Clique transformed the spirit of Nationalist Radio to embody cultural construction in order to raise the radio ramparts and wage spiritual warfare (精神戰爭), i.e. psychological warfare, on the fourth front.

It also was during the third phase of radio nationalisation that broadcast section chief Fan Benzong discovered a solution for ‘the central problem of cultural engineering’ that Lee and Nathan have defined as ‘the conflict between the “elevation” of taste and content that is the commissar’s goal and the need to accommodate to existing popular tastes and values in order to achieve a wide audience’.<sup>77</sup> Fan blended education with entertainment to produce content that provided the listening audience with ‘variety, excitement, and fun’, something that Lee and Nathan argue political elites failed to do during the late Qing, Maoist era, and the early period of Opening and Reform.<sup>78</sup> By the end of the Nanjing Decade, Nationalist Radio produced broadcast propaganda that educated listeners through entertainment so that they would absorb the content in a state of distraction and learn a thing or two that would provide them spiritual comfort and strengthen the collective national defence, and to the CC Clique before the Second Sino-Japanese War that was what education was all about.

### **The Organisation of Chapters**

This dissertation has six chapters with two chapters apiece on the three phases of radio nationalisation. For each phase, the first of the two chapters looks at Nationalist Radio as an institution, and the second investigates the spirit of its broadcast propaganda. The first two chapters therefore discuss radio nationalisation of the party state from 1928 to 1932. Investigating Nationalist Radio’s institutional history in the early years, chapter one focuses on CC Clique conceptions of broadcasting to explain why the Nationalists placed radio at the centre of the party state and how they transformed the medium into a virtual assembly hall of learning, an incubator of institutions, and a weapon of war. Chapter two then looks at broadcast propaganda to explain why Nationalist Radio embodied the spirit of Sun Yat-sen and how the CC Clique used broadcasting as a tool of governance and a weapon of war in two case studies.

The middle two chapters look at radio nationalisation of the audience from 1933 to 1935. Chapter three goes behind the scenes to show how the CC Clique expanded Nationalist Radio and asserted Chinese sovereignty over the airwaves amid a radio boom, and it explains

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<sup>77</sup> Lee and Nathan, *Mass Culture*, 395.

<sup>78</sup> Lee and Nathan, 395.

why the Nationalists began to regulate private radio as they faced new threats on the fourth front. The fourth chapter then shows how the confluence of the big radio station, a mass audience, and the New Life Movement transformed broadcast propaganda, as Nationalist Radio turned to the audience for advice to develop entertainment and educational content to promote a modern secular nationalism based on cultural construction.

The final two chapters examine the radio nationalisation of the industry in 1936 and 1937. Chapter five shows how the CC Clique made cultural construction party-state doctrine and created the cultural enterprise planning system. Next, it explains why the CC Clique regarded culture as an essential weapon in China's arsenal of spiritual national defence, and how the clique made Nationalist Radio the centrepiece of the cultural enterprise system. Chapter six then shows how the CC Clique consolidated control over private radio before nationalising the industry in the name of education and establishing the national broadcasting network. It was at this time that the CC Clique defined the spirit of Nationalist Radio as the edification of the audience with 'education in entertainment and entertainment in education'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Fan Benzhong 范本中, 'Boyin jiaoyu yu yule' 播音教育與娛樂, *Jiaoyu yu minzhong* 教育與民眾 8, no. 9 (28 May 1937): 1429.

## CHAPTER 1: RADIO NATIONALISATION OF THE PARTY STATE, 1928–1932

The artisan must first sharpen his tools to do his craft well; using radio broadcasting as a tool of propaganda, what is propagated spreads widely and quickly! Used well, it can be the pulse of domestic information and the voice of international propaganda. Its effectiveness is great. Nothing has ever been greater.

—Ye Chucang<sup>80</sup>

### Introduction

During a break between central committee meetings in February 1928, Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang, and Dai Jitao met to discuss a party-owned central broadcasting station in Nanjing. The three men were leaders of a group of conservative revolutionaries known as the CC Clique whose close ties with Chiang Kai-shek and control of the central organisation department made them party-state powerbrokers. They envisioned an institution that would promote political tutelage, facilitate party-state administration, and speak directly to the public without regional powerholders in between. Their faith in scientism underlay their plan for radio to centralise party propaganda, streamline central-local communications, and standardise policy implementation. In short, they believed that radio would help them establish Nanjing as the conceptual centre of the nation.<sup>81</sup> This chapter will introduce the institution that Chen, Ye, and Dai created in 1928—hereafter called Nationalist Radio—and it will show how they transformed broadcasting into a tool of governance, a weapon of war, and an incubator of new institutions as they carried out the radio nationalisation of the party state through 1932.

The CC Clique used broadcasting as a tool of governance to promote a common ideology among rank-and-file cadre and coordinate policy implementation at the local level. Nationalist Radio thus broadcast programming replete with political tutelage, policy reports, and propaganda campaigns to local party cadre. This narrow focus was due in part to the limited reach of the central station and the small number of radios in China; at the same time, it was by design and sorely needed in 1928. Following Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925, mutual competition and distrust between the left and right wings of the Nationalist Party had taken its toll, leaving the organisation deeply divided near the end of the Northern Expedition. Chen, Ye, and Dai therefore placed radio at the centre of the party state and employed it to improve central-local integration and promote political tutelage because the medium enabled them to establish a direct one-way connection with local party-state offices. In fact, the CC Clique

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<sup>80</sup> Ye, 'Xu', in *Niankan*, 1.

<sup>81</sup> 'Sheli zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai jihuashu' 設立中央廣播無線電台計畫書, *Niankan*, 'Zhuanzai' 專載, 1.

imagined that radio was like a virtual hall of learning for political tutelage wherein the nation came together to cultivate common political ideals, symbols, and rituals, i.e., an Andersonian ‘imagined community’. To further expand the reach of Nationalist Radio, the CC Clique established a radio-operator network to shape public opinion through the distribution of broadcast news via print media nationwide.

Nationalist Radio however was only one voice among many in the Chinese radio oecumene. Its small transmitter and party-centric content limited its coverage and audience, while other public and private stations primarily aired entertainment for the average listener. The CC Clique therefore decided to build the biggest broadcasting station in East Asia in 1929. As the new station was under construction, Nationalist Radio continued to broadcast real-time propaganda implementation plans throughout the Central Plains War and Japanese invasions. During this turbulent period, the CC Clique weaponised radio to consolidate political power at the centre and mobilise the party state against foreign and domestic threats: whenever Nanjing expanded into a region, the CC Clique stationed a radio operator in the local party organisation to disseminate broadcast propaganda from the party centre and conduct surveillance. Nationalist Radio thus became a dual-purpose weapon of war at the centre of the party state.

The CC Clique also transformed broadcasting into an incubator for nascent institutions. To showcase broadcasting as a symbol of economic, political, and cultural modernisation, the CC Clique used Nationalist Radio to cultivate a virtual hall of learning, proxy news service, mobilisation centre, and intelligence agency. Like the Beiyang Period, radio was central to party-state efforts to develop wireless technology owing to its military and commercial applications. As a result, the technocrats at the CC Clique worked within party headquarters, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Communications to promote economic, political, and cultural modernisation whilst working closely with the Military Affairs Commission and National Reconstruction Commission under Chiang Kai-shek to maintain a party monopoly over radiotelegraphy, radiotelephony, and radio broadcasting. Their goal was to control domestic wireless networks and thereby shape public opinion. Unlike the Beiyang Period, the Nationalists adopted radio-friendly policies to promote radioification. It was within this context that the CC Clique created Nationalist Radio in 1928 to transform broadcasting into a tool of governance and a weapon of war.

### **The New Media at the Centre of the Party State**

As Chiang Kai-shek prepared to relaunch the Northern Expedition in February 1928, the party presidium approved a proposal by Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang, and Dai Jitao to



establish a party-owned radio station to promote the Nationalist Government.<sup>82</sup> The men planned to use radio to carry out the organisational, promotional, and educational work needed to reconstruct the local party organisation following the anti-communist purge of April 1927.<sup>83</sup> For Chen, the approval to establish a party-owned station ended a two-year quest that had begun when Chiang Kai-shek invited him to Guangzhou after the Zhoushan Incident.

Chen Guofu was an enterprising party activist with impeccable revolutionary credentials. A veteran of the Wuchang Uprising and nephew of nationalist leader Chen Qimei—who had been Chiang Kai-shek’s mentor—Chen and his younger brother, Chen Lifu, were soon to become director of the central organisation department and party general secretary, respectively. The Chen brothers led what was called the Organisation Clique, which the communists named the ‘Central Committee Club’ (中央俱樂部), and the Chens became known as one of the ‘Four Big Families’ of Nationalist China.<sup>84</sup> According to Maggie Clinton, the CC Clique was a conservative yet revolutionary group that held anti-imperialist, anti-communist, and anti-liberal political convictions and placed their faith in scientific learning and traditional culture. Hung-mao Tien estimates that the CC Clique had 10,000 members in the 1930s who occupied the middle and lower levels of the civil bureaucracy, and the group dominated the areas of education and culture through the Central Political Academy in Nanjing.<sup>85</sup>

Before Chen Guofu went to Guangzhou in mid-1926, however, he had worked undercover in a party shell company, raising money on the Shanghai markets to procure everything from blankets and horses to surgeons and equipment for the Nationalist Revolutionary Army, and he had recruited more than 4,000 cadets for the Huangpu Military Academy and helped another 3,000 recruits transit through Shanghai to Guangzhou. In Chen’s spare time, he worked with party propagandists Dai Jitao, Ye Chucang, and Shao Lizhi to write, edit, and distribute Nationalist Party newspapers in Shanghai.<sup>86</sup> Chen did all this despite suffering from tuberculosis since fighting in Hubei as a student soldier in the 1911 Revolution.

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo diantai dashiji’ 中央廣播電台大事紀, *Niankan*, ‘Jishi’ 紀事, 1.

<sup>83</sup> Wang Ke-wen, ‘Counter-Revolution from Above: The Party Consolidation Campaign of the Guomindang, 1928–1929’, *Republican China* 15, no. 1 (November 1989): 39–42.

<sup>84</sup> Chen Guofu 陳果夫, ‘Shiwu nian zhi shiqi nian jian congshi dangwu gongzuo de huiyi’ 十五年至十七年間從事黨務工作的回憶, *CGFXSQJ*, vol. 5, 82–83; Chen Boda 陳伯達, *Zhongguo si da jiazu* 中國四大家族. Hong Kong: Changjiang chubanshe, 1947).

<sup>85</sup> Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 67–71; Hung-mao Tien, *Government and Politics of Kuomintang China, 1928–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 50–51.

<sup>86</sup> Chen Guofu 陳果夫, ‘Guanyu xinwen jizhe ji xinwen shiye de jingli’ 關於新聞記者及新聞事業的經歷, 1947, *CGFXSQJ*, vol. 10, 27–28; Xu Yongping 徐詠平, *Chen Guofu zhuan* 陳果夫傳 (Taipei: Zhongzheng shuju, 1978), 449.

The Zhongshan Incident that brought Chen Guofu to Guangzhou was a watershed in the history of Nationalist Radio. Sun Yat-sen had first introduced wireless technology to the party in April 1923 when he issued an order to connect Guangzhou with nine other cities in Guangdong with ten radiotelegraph sets. He then approved the restoration of three second-hand wireless field sets for an eastern expedition against Chen Jiongming.<sup>87</sup> Two years later as Chiang Kai-shek swept away the remnants of Chen's troops, he felt that his army would need more radio operators for the Northern Expedition. Chiang therefore turned to Chen Guofu, his reliable source for men and materiel in Shanghai. Chen combed the lower Yangtze region to recruit wireless experts to no avail—even students in radio training schools were not interested. No one was willing to leave the comfort of Shanghai for the Nationalist's beleaguered basecamp in Guangzhou. It was too risky.<sup>88</sup>

The Zhongshan Incident also prompted Chiang Kai-shek to consolidate his power. Following the incident, Chiang became both party chairman and director of the organisation department. He therefore called on his patron Zhang Renjie and Chen Guofu to handle party affairs on his behalf while he led the Northern Expedition: Zhang became acting party chairman while Chen served as acting director of the organisation department. In Guangzhou, Chen and Zhang discovered that they had a common interest in wireless technology: Zhang wanted to build a national radiotelegraph network while Chen wanted to establish a party-state broadcasting system. They also found a radio engineer willing to move to Guangzhou: Li Fanyi. Li was a veteran of the Hunan Student Army and a graduate of Columbia University, who had recently returned to China after working several years in the American radio industry. Chiang placed radio under Li at the Huangpu Military Academy and financed the project with funds from the Military Affairs Commission. Chen and Zhang then worked with Li to produce army field sets, develop a wireless training programme, and plan a party-owned broadcasting station in Guangzhou. The first class of radio operators completed their training under Li on 6 April 1927, just after the Nationalists had occupied Nanjing and Shanghai on the Northern Expedition, and Chiang deployed them at once as tensions grew within the United Front.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> 'Zongli zhao zai hu dinggou wuxiandian ji shijia shuoling' 總理着在滬訂購無線電機十架手令 [Party Director's handwritten instruction ordering the purchase of ten radio sets in Shanghai], KMT Archives, *Yiban dangan* 一般檔案 [General archives], 051/254; Zongli zhao Mei chuzhang deng shefa gongzu wuxiandian ju jingfei ling' 總理着梅處長等設法供足無線電局經費令 [Party Director's order instructing Director Mei et al. to find a way to provide sufficient funds to the wireless bureau], *Yiban dangan* 一般檔案 [General archives], 051/148.41.

<sup>88</sup> Chen, 'Wuxiandian jianshe', 279.

<sup>89</sup> Chen Xingtang 陳興唐 and Wang Daozhi 王道智, eds., *Huangpu Junxiao shigao* 黃埔軍校史稿, vol. 5 (Beijing: Dang'an chubanshe, 1989), 434–35.

The struggle for Shanghai—China's most important manufacturing, commercial and financial centre—divided the United Front and ended in a brutal purge of labour activists, leftists, and communists on 12 April 1927. As a result, the lower Yangtze region fell firmly into the hands of a new coalition of moderate and right-wing factions in the Nationalist Party, enabling Chen and Zhang to move their radio operations north to Shanghai. On 10 May, they appointed Li Fanyi president of Nanyang University, which later became National Communications University, and they used the remaining project budget to build a campus factory called the Chinese Government Radio Works. Using a handwritten order from Chiang, the men secured an additional 100,000 yuan from Shanghai banks to produce wireless transceivers with student-intern labour. The factory produced thirteen units in the first two months: the first unit was installed in Chiang's office just days after he retired due to widespread demands for him to step down following the anti-communist purge. The timing of installation was fortunate, for the Nationalists soon used the device to coordinate troop movements when the Nanjing telegraph station broke down during a surprise attack by Sun Chuanfang. Wireless technology thus earned Chiang's trust. He shortly thereafter approved the CC Clique's radio station plan after coming out of retirement in February 1928.<sup>90</sup>

With the station launch scheduled on 1 August, Chen Guofu set an aggressive timeline to complete the project within five months. The first task was to secure a transmitter, so Chen turned to Li Fanyi at Nanyang University.<sup>91</sup> After making inquiries with industry contacts, Li learned that an American manufacturer, the Kellogg Switchboard and Supply Company, had a new 500-watt transmitter sitting unclaimed in a Shanghai warehouse. Chen therefore personally advanced 7,000-taels to cover a security deposit for the equipment in March, thereby avoiding bureaucratic approvals for the expenditure and shaving months off the lead time required to receive a new set of equipment from the United States.<sup>92</sup>

The director of the central propaganda department, Ye Chucang, appointed a young cadre in the organisation department to lead the station project in April: Xu Enzeng (徐恩曾).<sup>93</sup> Xu was a maternal cousin of Chen Guofu and was someone that the CC Clique could trust. He also was highly qualified for the job; in fact, he had read radio engineering at Nanyang University and earned a graduate degree in management at McGill University in Canada. After graduation, he even had interned at the US headquarters of Westinghouse Electric where the

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<sup>90</sup> Chen, 'Wuxiandian jianshe', 279–80.

<sup>91</sup> Li Fanyi 李範一, Guoshiguan [MACCAO Collection], 129000100269A.

<sup>92</sup> Chen, 'Wuxiandian jianshe', 280–81.

<sup>93</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 1.

world's first radio station, KDKA, was founded in 1920.<sup>94</sup> While managing the station project, Xu continued to work for his cousin, Chen Lifu, in the investigation section, monitoring party offices for communist infiltration.<sup>95</sup> Xu's appointment was an indication of broadcasting's strategic importance to the CC Clique effort to rebuild the local party organisation.<sup>96</sup>

The pace to complete the station project before the August deadline was relentless, leaving no room for error. Xu first commissioned a Shanghai company to build a mechanical room and erect two forty-three-metre antennae inside party headquarters. The party then gave the station a very long name: The Chinese Nationalist Party Central Executive Committee Broadcasting Radio Station (中國國民黨中央執行委員會廣播無線電臺). The short-form name was the Central Broadcasting Station, and the CC Clique gave it the call sign XKM, which meant 'China Nationalist Radio'.<sup>97</sup> However, Xu was sent to Peking in June after the Nationalists occupied the city, leaving no one to lead the station project.<sup>98</sup>

The CC Clique therefore appointed Wu Daoyi (吳道一) to handle station affairs. Apart from having the right qualifications—Wu was an experienced radio engineer who had worked at the Westinghouse Electric joint-venture in China—he too could be trusted. Wu and Xu Enzeng had been schooltime roommates for ten years, and Xu had invited Wu to join the central organisation department in April 1927. Moreover, Wu knew the project well because he had been helping Xu with site selection and technical planning since the station's inception. The project thus continued apace, and Wu recruited staff and drafted an operational plan.

As the central propaganda department reviewed Wu's operational plan in July, contractors raised the steel antennae in the party compound and soundproofed a small studio-cum-office adjacent to the central assembly hall with woollen carpets, velvet-wrapped walls, and a velour-covered ceiling.<sup>99</sup> The station's final construction cost was 34,040 taels, and the projected operating budget was 1,735 taels per month.<sup>100</sup> The station plan preamble justified this expense, claiming that radio would help unify the nation and reify China's political centre:

Recent scientific advancements in telegraphic communications have increasingly attained perfection, and wireless telephony in particular has become a tool of propaganda. With just a touch of a button, electronic information traverses mountains

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<sup>94</sup> Xu Enzeng 徐恩曾, Guoshiguan [MACCAO Collection], 129000100269A.

<sup>95</sup> Ma Zhendu 马振犊, *Guomindang tewu huodong shi* 国民党特务活动史 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2008), 10.

<sup>96</sup> Wang, 'Counter-Revolution from Above', 45–48.

<sup>97</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 3. 'X' was China's international call sign, and 'KM' stood for 'Guomin' 國民 [Nationalist] in the party's English acronym KMT (Kuomintang 國民黨), hence the name 'Nationalist Radio'.

<sup>98</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 2.

<sup>99</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 2–3.

<sup>100</sup> 'Diantai jihuashu', 3–4.

and crosses seas, fully covering the entire world. European and American countries frequently use it to relay market conditions and distribute news. This department, as the party's highest organisation for propaganda work, must always have an abundance of material, and the methods used should especially value agility and speed! Only then can we unify the will of the people throughout the nation and make the two words 'The Centre' exist forever in their minds.<sup>101</sup>

The operational plan contained two implicit assumptions: the first was that technological progress underlay social progress, and the second was that with great effort China could eventually catch up to the West. Although the CC Clique likened Chinese broadcasting to 'an infant in swaddling clothes', it believed that the party state could promote modernisation through a coordinated long-term effort to protect and subsidise the domestic industry.<sup>102</sup> The CC Clique therefore upgraded its small station as soon as possible: the studio-cum-office and 500-watt transmitter was a only stopgap until it could be replaced with a bigger and more powerful station.<sup>103</sup> Another assumption that underlay the push to upgrade the original station was a profound sense of doubt about print media's effectiveness to promote political tutelage and party-state policy, given China's high rate of illiteracy.<sup>104</sup> After one month on-air, the central committee therefore approved a proposal to replace the cramped studio-cum-office with a station building because staff found it difficult to share the workspace during broadcasts.<sup>105</sup>

Nationalist Radio moved into the new three-story station building in March 1929. Located next to the Central Library and the Central News Agency in the southwest corner of the party compound, the new facility was well suited for broadcasting operations. All offices and meeting rooms were on the ground floor. The middle level contained three sound studios: the largest held as many as one-hundred people, the medium-sized room was big enough for thirty, and the smallest was designed for one or two people to present newscasts, reports, lectures, or radio talks. Next to each studio was a green room where special guests could watch those on-air through soundproof windows, and between the studios was a master control room that allowed production engineers to monitor each studio through soundproof glass. The top floor of the building was divided into two large workspaces. The first was a mechanical room

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<sup>101</sup> 'Diantai jihuashu', 1.

<sup>102</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一, 'Wo guo zhi guangbo shiye' 我國之廣播事業, *Niankan*, 'Lunzhu' 論著, 5–6.

<sup>103</sup> 'Kuocong zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai jihua' 擴充中央廣播無線電台計劃, *Niankan*, 'Zhuanzai', 18.

<sup>104</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 3.

<sup>105</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 2; 'Cheng Zhongyang changwu weiyuanhui qingzhun jianzhu bangongshi' 呈中央常務委員會請准建築辦公室, *Niankan*, 'Baogao' 報告, 2, 24–25.

with a shortwave radiotelegraph, which enabled Nationalist Radio to transmit secret communications for the party centre, and the second was a laboratory with radio equipment.<sup>106</sup>

Nationalist Radio requested multiple wireless manufacturers to submit bids for a new station transmitter in February 1929. The initial plan was to buy at least a ten-kilowatt unit, which would have made Nationalist Radio as powerful as Station JOAK in Tokyo.<sup>107</sup> However, after learning that the price difference between a ten- and fifty-kilowatt transmitter was only 200,000 yuan, station officials therefore applied for a larger budget to build a fifty-kilowatt facility in June, which was approved, and they initiated the bidding process for a larger station. In September, Nationalist Radio invited a panel of outside experts to review the new station proposals, and shortlisted bids from RCA, Telefunken, and Marconi.<sup>108</sup>

Nationalist Radio held several rounds of negotiations with the three manufacturers before finally selecting Telefunken in February 1930. When notifying the company, Nationalist Radio asked whether the price could include a further power increase to seventy-five kilowatts so that the station signal could cover all of China. Two weeks later, Telefunken manager Johan Hansen and comprador Wang Zhitao delivered the purchase agreement to Wu Daoyi at the station building. When giving Wu the contract, Hansen and Wang also handed him three US-dollar-denominated bank drafts worth a total of 186,000 yuan, which was 20 percent of the 930,000-yuan purchase price, and they asked Wu to pass the other two cheques to Chen Guofu and Ye Chucang.<sup>109</sup> Shocked, Wu called Chen for instructions: Chen told him to return the bank drafts immediately and demand that Telefunken increase the transmitter size to seventy-five kilowatts.<sup>110</sup> As a result of Chen's honesty, Nationalist Radio got twenty-five more kilowatts of power and built the biggest broadcasting station in East Asia.

Although small in terms of staff size, Nationalist Radio was an influential organisation given the role that it played in intra-party communications and political tutelage. Opening with only fourteen employees in 1928, Nationalist Radio grew to thirty staff in 1930.<sup>111</sup> The station

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<sup>106</sup> 'Bentai shijiu niandu gongzuo jihua' 本台十九年度工作計畫, *Niankan*, 'Zhuanzai', 120–121.

<sup>107</sup> 'Shijiu niandu', 91; 'Dongya guangbo wuxian dantai yilanbiao' 東亞廣播無線電台一覽表, *Niankan*, 'Fulu' 附錄, 7.

<sup>108</sup> 'Shijiu niandu', 92.

<sup>109</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji: Zhongguo guangbo gongsi wushi zhounian jinian* 中廣大事記:中國廣播公司五十週年紀念, ed. Zhongguo guangbo gongsi yanjiu fazhan kaoxun weiyuanhui 中國廣播公司研究發展考訓委員會 (Taipei: Kongzhong zazhishe, 1978), 7. Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 24–25.

<sup>110</sup> Chen Guofu, 'Guangbo suibi' 廣播隨筆, quoted in Xu, *Chen Guofu zhuan* (Taipei: Zhongzheng shuju, 1978), 467; One of Eastman's interviewees identified Chen and his brother as not corrupt, see Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 320n50.

<sup>111</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 266.

and its personnel belonged to the party presidium and reported directly to the propaganda department under Ye Chucang at party headquarters. In terms of organisational structure, the institution was divided into two departments—technical and general affairs—which were further divided into three sections each. The technical department included presenters, engineers, and technicians, and the general affairs department consisted of administrators, coordinators, and copywriters. Nationalist Radio also managed a network of radio operators, who worked for the central propaganda department in local offices, distributing transcripts of broadcast information in their respective communities (see figure 1).<sup>112</sup>

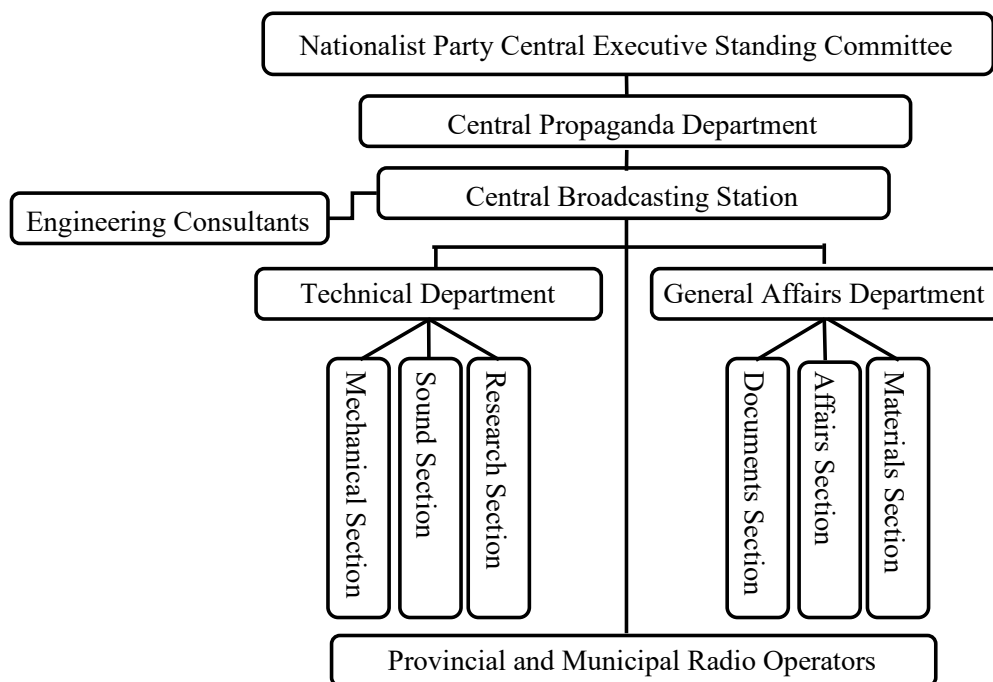


Figure 1. National Radio Organisation Chart, 1930. From *Niankan*, ('Zhuanzai'), 27.

## The Virtual Assembly Hall of Learning

When the CC Clique proposed to make the Central Station the most powerful broadcaster in East Asia, it imagined that Nationalist Radio would be like an assembly hall of learning wherein the nation would come together to learn about the party state. The preamble of the station plan exemplified this vision for Nationalist Radio:

Based on observations of general international trends and the state of domestic affairs, it is appropriate for our station to change to a ten-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter so that all places will circle around to hear central broadcasts. From here to there, the sound is as good as listening attentively to instructions face-to-face. Every word and phrase can be copied down, ranging from elucidations of party teachings,

<sup>112</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 2.

announcements of government orders and memorial week, to rally speeches and oaths, et cetera. It will be as if the entire nation is assembled in one hall.<sup>113</sup>

The CC Clique hoped to cover all of China with the Central Station and thereby connect the country 'like a spider web' into a network of smaller stations and listening posts so that the entire nation could learn about the party state in a virtual assembly hall of learning.<sup>114</sup>

The CC Clique's vision to build a broadcasting network like the United Kingdom, Germany, or Japan, however, was hobbled by war and political infighting from 1928 to 1932. These internal conflicts prevented the radio-operator network from entering new regions and inhibited the integration of existing public radio stations into a wider broadcasting system. For example, the Guangxi and Henan uprisings in 1929 prevented the radio-operator network from entering Nanning. The Central Plains War also interrupted the entry of radio operators into Xiamen and Xi'an until November 1930 after Zhang Xueliang tipped the scales in favour of Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>115</sup> However, the extent of Zhang's cooperation ended there. He never allowed the CC Clique to dispatch radio operators in Manchuria or integrate the four-station network that his father had established into the party-state orbit, even though the stations nominally belonged to the Ministry of Communications. This situation continued until the Manchurian Incident in late 1931 when Zhang lost Harbin and Mukden, thereby allowing Nanjing to assume control over the radio stations in Peking and Tianjin.

Technical and financial constraints also curbed the CC Clique's ability to form a national broadcasting network. The CC Clique was well aware of the benefits of such a system. The ability to centralise programme production and distribution in Nanjing probably was one of the most appealing aspects to the CC Clique. In addition to compensating for a lack of talent and resources locally, it would enable listeners to receive central programming via local network stations using inexpensive crystal radios.<sup>116</sup> However, technical and financial constraints made building such a system prohibitive. Although Nationalist Radio could establish a network using short-wave radio via telephone lines, the inferior sound quality of short-wave and the immense cost of laying cables across the country made this option impractical.<sup>117</sup> Another option that the CC Clique considered was a network using short- and medium-wave technology. Although this method would eliminate the need for costly cables,

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<sup>113</sup> 'Kuochong zhongyang', 19.

<sup>114</sup> Liu, 'Da boyintai', 23.

<sup>115</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 9.

<sup>116</sup> Liu, 'Da boyintai', *Niankan*, 23.

<sup>117</sup> Wu, 'Guangbo shiye', *Niankan*, 9.



Nationalist Radio engineers doubted the viability of this option, despite successful experiments, owing to short-wave's fluctuating tone and atmospheric distortion.<sup>118</sup> Another factor that made short-wave less appealing was that most listeners in China owned medium-wave radios.<sup>119</sup>

In July 1931, the CC Clique reorganised Nationalist Radio into the Central Broadcasting Radio Station Administration (中央廣播無線電台管理處). Nationalist Radio thereafter reported directly to the party presidium, except on matters of propaganda, which it still reported to Ye Chucang.<sup>120</sup> This new structure reflected the CC Clique aspiration for Nationalist Radio to play a larger role in industry development, political tutelage, and central-local communications. For example, the new administration was to establish an electronics factory to accelerate the diffusion of radio receivers in China and provide guidance to local governments on building radio stations.<sup>121</sup> It also was to expand the radio-operator programme to connect 1,500 county towns with the party centre.<sup>122</sup> Most importantly, it was to develop a comprehensive plan for a national broadcasting system.<sup>123</sup>

However, the Japanese invasions of Manchuria and Shanghai in late 1931 and 1932 delayed the formation of the radio station administration because Nationalist Radio needed to divide staff between the Central Station and a second facility in the temporary capital of Luoyang. During the emergency, Nationalist Radio broadcast from both cities while engineers built the big new station in Nanjing. As the launch date approached in November 1932, Nationalist Radio hired 14 more staff to operate the biggest broadcasting station in East Asia.<sup>124</sup>

### The Radio-operator Network

The radio-operator network was the primary means by which the CC Clique expanded the reach of the virtual assembly hall of learning between 1928 and 1932. The reason behind this institutional innovation lies in the bureaucratic motivations of Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang, and Dai Jitao. They imagined radio as a tool of governance that would enable the party state to promote political tutelage and realise the Sunist plan for county self-governance. Broadcasting's ability to transmit top-down communications instantly and distribute directives

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<sup>118</sup> 'Bentai dianli kuochong zhi choubei qingxing' 本台電力擴充之籌備情形 *Niankan* ('Zhuanzai'), 90; Liu, 'Da boyintai', 23–24; 'Shijiu niandu', 128.

<sup>119</sup> 'Kuochong zhongyang', 90–91.

<sup>120</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 11–12; 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu zuzhi tiaoli' 中央廣播無線電台管理處組織條例, *Zhongyang dangwu yuekan* 中央黨務月刊 (hereafter *ZDYK*), no. 36 (July 1931): 1498.

<sup>122</sup> 'Kuochong zhongyang', 24.

<sup>123</sup> 'Zuzhi tiaoli', 1498.

<sup>124</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang shisi*, 266.

simultaneously to offices nationwide was especially attractive to them. For example, Wu Daoyi noted that distributing news via Nationalist Radio was faster than both post and cable telegraphy because information via those communications channels could take anywhere from several days to several weeks to arrive at its destination.<sup>125</sup> The CC Clique therefore created the radio-operator network to disseminate government orders, news, and information to local offices since China did not yet have a well-developed national news agency or telegraph system.

The radio-operator network also allowed the CC Clique to expound on government policies and propaganda campaigns in an effort to standardise their implementation nationwide. In terms of political tutelage, the radio-operator network enabled the CC Clique to convey the spirit of the party centre through news reports and Sunist propaganda programmes every day. Radio operators mimeographed this content on broadsheets, called ‘broadcast news’, and distributed them to local newspapers, which reached a much larger audience than any domestic radio station. In 1929, radio operators distributed broadcast news to thirty-one newspapers in cities other than Shanghai, including Tianjin, Zhengzhou, Qingdao, Jinan, Changsha, Hankou, and Fuzhou.<sup>126</sup> In addition, radio operators posted broadcast news on another ubiquitous local medium—wall newspapers (壁報)—where communities congregated to consume news and information.<sup>127</sup> Through the radio-operator network, the CC Clique transformed Nationalist Radio into a distribution channel for local print media.

The radio-operator network, however, appears to have been an afterthought because the CC Clique formed it only two weeks before the Central Station launch. Thus, as engineers tested equipment and set the Central Station frequency in Nanjing, the propaganda department organised a week-long course for the first cohort of seventeen radio operators at the China Government Radio Works in Shanghai. Six of the trainees had been recruited by Xu Enzeng to serve in strategic provincial party offices in Anhui, Hankou, Peking, Tianjin, Guangdong, and Henan. Five trainees came from four provincial-level offices in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Nanjing, and Shanghai, which were areas under secure party-state control. The final six trainees were telegraphers who had been recommended by others for posts at provincial party offices in Jiangxi, Fujian, Hubei, Hunan, and Zhengzhou. These first radio-operators underwent one

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<sup>125</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 3.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Gongzuo baogao’ 工作報告, *Niankan*, ‘Baogao’, 10–11.

<sup>127</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 17.

week of intensive training in physics, mechanics, and transcription before setting out to their posts with radios receivers made by RCA, Pierce Airo, Telefunken, and Chigora.<sup>128</sup>

On 1 August 1928 at 5.00 p.m., the radio operators turned on their devices so that local party offices could tune in to the inaugural broadcast of Nationalist Radio. The cadres first heard the emcee address a full audience in the main assembly hall at central party headquarters. They then heard musicians perform a set of National Music before the emcee invited Li Fanyi from the Chinese Government Radio Works to read a report about the new broadcasting station. Next, they listened to Chiang Kai-shek, Chen Guofu, Dai Jitao and Ye Chucang present their remarks on the inaugural broadcast. The programme then concluded with one more set of National Music. With this simple on-air ceremony, Nationalist Radio began broadcasting ‘all of the Centre’s important resolutions, propaganda bulletins, orders, and notices’ to local party offices via the radio-operator network.<sup>129</sup> Throughout August, Nationalist Radio provided two one-hour newscasts on the formation of the Nationalist Government at 2.00 and 8.00 p.m.

The CC Clique considered the radio-operator network an effective communications channel for party state news and information. The party presidium therefore approved a plan to expand the scheme to all counties nationwide in January 1929. However, the network was not without problems. In addition to technical issues like interference and poor reception, the first cohort of operators struggled to perform their duties: some lacked work experience; others could not handle the equipment; still others were unable to transcribe well owing to bad memory and poor Mandarin.<sup>130</sup> The main problem was that the CC Clique found it difficult to find candidates with a strong foundation in both science and the arts. It therefore tried to improve the skills of the first cohort while designing a training programme to further expand the radio-operator network.

Nationalist Radio unveiled a new two-month training programme in January 1929. Designed for twenty students, the course taught the operators about wireless radio, Sun Yat-sen thought, transcription, and telegraphy. The programme combined two weeks of intensive coursework from 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 p.m., followed by six weeks of on-the-job training. To compete for a place in the course, candidates needed to be high-school graduates between the

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<sup>128</sup> ‘Xunlian shouyinyuan zhi gaikuang’ 訓練收音員之概況, *Niankan*, ‘Zhuanzai’, 69–70; ‘Yi nian yu gongcheng zhi huigu’ 一年餘工程之回顧, *Niankan*, ‘Zhuanzai’, 32–33. ‘Chigora’ was a composite word for ‘China Government Radio Works’ (Chi-go-ra).

<sup>129</sup> Xue Chuanhui 薛传会, vol. 3 of *Zhongguo xinwen fazhi tongshi* 中国新闻法制通史, ed. Ni Yannian 倪延年 (Nanjing: Nanjing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015), 191–92.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Xunlian shouyinyuan’, 72–73.

age of eighteen and twenty-five, have solid writing skills and a clear understanding of Sunism, be good at math with a basic knowledge of engineering, and, finally, be fluent in Mandarin Chinese, the National Language. The programme also required this second cohort to sign an oath to serve wherever the party posted them, and candidates needed to find a sponsor to guarantee their compliance to a radio-operator code of conduct. After an extended registration period ending in March 1929, Nationalist Radio accepted only thirteen of forty-five applicants into the training programme because it would not lower admission standards.<sup>131</sup>

On graduation in May 1929, this second group of radio operators stayed in Nanjing to help broadcast the state funeral of Sun Yat-sen before deploying to their posts in June. Some of the new radio operators replaced the first cohort in Hankou, Shanghai, and Zhengzhou, while others were sent to provincial party offices in Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Qingdao. The party also dispatched some of this cohort to municipal party offices in Xiamen, Jiujiang, Yichang, and Xuzhou.<sup>132</sup> After the network grew to twenty-two locations, provincial party offices in Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, and Shaanxi sent cadres to Nanjing for training, and three provinces established broadcasting stations with their own radio-operator networks.<sup>133</sup> For example, Jiangxi built a station inside the Nanchang Sun Yat-sen Memorial and purchased ninety sets to establish an operator network in every county.<sup>134</sup> In addition, Zhejiang installed radios in all seventy-five county towns and twenty-five other locations so that its radio-operator network would transcribe broadcast news from both Nationalist Radio and Radio Zhejiang.<sup>135</sup> The CC Clique thus established more than 200 listening stations in core offices by the end of 1932.

To further increase the reach of Nationalist Radio, the Central Station installed receivers in Nanjing to boost the number of local reception points so that residents could stay abreast of developments at party headquarters. For instance, Nationalist Radio placed radios at the residence of party chairman Tan Yankai, the Nationalist Government Building, the Naval General Headquarters, and the Central Party Affairs School in 1928.<sup>136</sup> By 1930, Nationalist Radio had distributed 128 radios to other institutions, including the *Central Daily News*, *Shanghai Republican Daily*, and *Wuhan Daily*.<sup>137</sup> In addition, the Central Station sold receivers

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<sup>131</sup> 'Xunlian shouyinyuan', 74–76, 82.

<sup>132</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 3–10; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 9–11.

<sup>133</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 5.

<sup>134</sup> 'Jiangxi sheng zhengfu ling wenzi di san ling ba hao' 江西省政府令文字第三〇〇八號, *Jiangxi sheng zhengfu gongbao* 江西省政府公報, no. 21 (21 April 1928): 29–30.

<sup>135</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一 and Liu Zhenqing 劉振清, 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai zhi gaikuang' 中央廣播無線電台之概況, *Wuxiandian yuebao* 無線電月報, vol. 1, no. 4 (October 1928): 41.

<sup>136</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 4.

<sup>137</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 1–4. 'Gongcheng zhi huigu', 33–34.

at cost to local residents because Nanjing initially had no radio shops.<sup>138</sup> Elsewhere, reception reports from 1929 indicate that local party-state offices, schools, and institutes for popular education around the country were already installing radios on their own to listen in.<sup>139</sup> This spontaneous growth probably inspired the CC Clique to expand the radio-operator network to every county town nationwide in 1930.<sup>140</sup>

### **The Chinese Radio Oecumene**

Chinese radio experienced tremendous growth between 1928 and 1932 despite China suffering chronic armed conflict amid a global economic depression. Unfortunately, little information exists on the actual size and composition of the audience, owing to a lack of uniform regulatory control across regions and foreign concessions. However, qualitative descriptions and quantitative data indicate that China had a promising broadcasting industry. This section introduces the Chinese radio oecumene and the policies that the CC Clique enacted to promote radioification, as China experienced a radio boom and began to feel its side effects.

Nationalist Radio was one of eleven broadcasting stations in Greater China in 1930. Apart from Station GOW in British Hong Kong and Station JQAK in Japanese-controlled Dairen, China had nine broadcasters. According to a 1929 survey, seven of the nine stations in China were party- or state-owned while the other two were private (see table 1). The survey also estimated that China had 8,500 radios. However, this number was a definite undercount because many radio owners in Shenyang, Harbin, Tianjin, and Peking did not register their receivers with the Ministry of Communications to avoid the local license fee.<sup>141</sup> Second, the survey did not include the number of receivers in Shanghai, which had two Chinese-owned private stations, Sun Sun Radio (Station SSC) and Amateurs Home Radio (Station XGAH).

Although broadcasting in Shanghai followed the American-style commercial model and was China's largest radio market, its roots were shallow and weak before 1932. In fact, no stations operated in the city for several weeks after the Great Crash of 1929 when both Sun Sun Radio and the Kellogg Radio Company shut down. Although Sun Sun's closure was only temporary, the American-owned Kellogg station went off the air permanently because it could not afford to replace an antenna tower that had collapsed just three days before the stock market

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<sup>138</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 3–4.

<sup>139</sup> 'Ge di zhuyue shouyin qingxing bijiaobiao' 各地逐月收音情形比較表, *Niankan*, 'Baogao', n.p.

<sup>140</sup> Wu, 'Guangbo shiye', 7–8; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 16.

<sup>141</sup> Liu, 'Da boyintai', 22.

crash.<sup>142</sup> As a result, a local radio manufacturer called the Yamei Company (亞美公司) launched Amateurs Home Radio on 29 December to provide a local broadcasting service to Shanghai listeners and ensure continued demand for its products.<sup>143</sup> By January 1932, six more private stations opened in Shanghai.<sup>144</sup>

Table 1. Radio Stations in Nationalist China, 1929

Station	City	Ownership	Power	Radios
XGZ	Nanjing	Guomindang	500 watts	300
XGY	Hangzhou	Provincial Government	500 watts	100
COMB	Shenyang	Ministry of Communications	2,000 watts	1,000
COHB	Harbin	Ministry of Communications	1,000 watts	3,000
COTN	Tianjin	Ministry of Communications	500 watts	3,000
COPK	Peking	Ministry of Communications	100 watts	1,000
SSC	Shanghai	Private	50 watts	—
XGAH	Shanghai	Private	50 watts	—
CMB	Guangzhou	Municipal Government	1,000 watts	100
Total			5,600 watts	8,500

Source: 'Zhongguo guangbo diaotai diaochabiao' 中國廣播電台調查表, *Niankan* ('Fulu'), 6.

Affluent urban listeners were the primary radio audience between 1928 and 1932. Broadcasting entered China with much fanfare when Station XRO opened in 1923, and the medium was a global symbol of modernity with much political and cultural cachet. For instance, press coverage of the first station proclaimed that radio was a 'marvel of the age', 'bringing Shanghai in line with the world's modern cities'.<sup>145</sup> Cosmopolitan intellectuals like Mu Shiying also depicted radio as a tool of the urban leisure class: 'Life is so comfortable! I take a shower and comb my hair in the morning, put on a bright spring dress and go to the office, in the evening I sit on the sofa and listen to the radio programme'.<sup>146</sup> In late 1929, Nationalist Radio estimated that China, including Shanghai and Wuhan, had approximately 20,000 radios.<sup>147</sup> By 1931, U.S. consular officials tracking the China radio market estimated that Shanghai had 50,000 receivers while Guangzhou had 100,000.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, although the U.S. Department

<sup>142</sup> 'Accident to a C.B.A. Tower', *North-China Daily News*, 28 October 1929, 14.

<sup>143</sup> Benson, 'From Teahouse to Radio', 82n21, 82–83.

<sup>144</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 388–89.

<sup>145</sup> 'Broadcasting: Marvel of the Age', *China Press*, 21 January 1923, 1; 'News and Music Radio Broadcasting Programs for Shanghai Tuesday', *China Press*, 21 January 1923, 1.

<sup>146</sup> Frank Dikötter, *Exotic Commodities: Modern Objects and Everyday Life in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 173, 173n101. Translation by Dikötter, see Mu Shiying 穆时英, 'Yan' 烟 in *Mu Shiying xiaoshuo quanbian* 穆时英小说全编 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1997), 449–56.

<sup>147</sup> Wu, 'Guangbo shiye', 8.

<sup>148</sup> J. C. Huston, 'The Use of Radio to Further Education in China', 3 October 1931, 3; Frederick W. Hinke, 'The Utilization of Radio for Educational Purposes in the Canton Consular District', 8 September 1931, 2; Central File: Decimal File 893.76, Internal Affairs of States, China, Wireless Telephone, March 26, 1930 – September 9, 1939; MS China: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1939: Part 2: Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of China, 1930-1939 (Part 2), U.S. National Archives.

of Commerce estimated in 1932 that China had 30,000 valve radios, it acknowledged ‘that the number might approach 1,000,000, in view of the large number of crystal radios used’.<sup>149</sup>

Radio being an expensive foreign import was the main reason that broadcasting was an elite urban phenomenon between 1928 and 1932. Euro-American units ranged in price from 11 yuan for the cheapest crystal set to 230 yuan for the most expensive six-valve receiver, making ownership unaffordable to the average person.<sup>150</sup> Even though units made by domestic manufacturers like the Yamei Company, and department-store brands sold by Sun Sun, Wing On, and Sincere were less expensive, they were still made with expensive foreign components to ensure quality. Nevertheless, the number of radios, and by extension audience size, grew steadily as more Chinese consumers bought inexpensive radios.<sup>151</sup>

Between 1928 and 1931, Maritime Customs recorded a tremendous increase in the value of imported telegraph and telephone equipment, which included broadcasting technology. Although the trade figures did not distinguish between radio, telegraph, and telephone, they indicate that the Nationalists were investing heavily in communications infrastructure. In 1932, Maritime Customs created a separate category for ‘Radio Sets and Parts’, which reflected the growing importance of broadcasting. That year, China imported 1,700,432 Custom Gold Units (CGU) of radio sets and parts, which exceeded the combined value of telegraph and telephone imports at 1,662,538 CGU (see table 2).<sup>152</sup> The strong growth in radio imports was the direct result of Nationalist regulatory reform and industrial policies adopted in 1928.

Table 2. Telegraph and Telephone Materials (Including Wireless Apparatus), 1928–1931

Year	Net Imports (Haiguan Taels)	Annual Growth	Cumulative Imports	Growth Index (1928 = 100)
1928	1,803,628	–	–	100
1929	4,015,551	223%	5,819,179	323
1930	6,933,228	173%	12,752,407	707
1931	9,352,011	135%	22,104,418	1,226

Source: *The Trade of China, 1928*, pt. 2, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1929), 626–27; *The Trade of China, 1931*, pt. 2, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1932), 663–64.

<sup>149</sup> Batson, *Radio Markets*, 99.

<sup>150</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai daiban shouyinji yilanbiao’ 中央廣播無線電台代辦收音機一覽表, *Niankan*, ‘Baogao’, 33.

<sup>151</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 379; Wang Ying 汪英, ‘Shanghai guangbo yu shehui shenghuo hudong jizhi yanjiu, 1927–1937 上海廣播與社會生活互動機制研究 (1927–1937) (PhD Diss., Huadong shifan daxue, 2007), 68.

<sup>152</sup> *The Trade of China, 1932*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1933), 168–169. The switch from Haiguan Taels to Custom Gold Units occurred in 1932.

The Nationalists promoted radio because Sun Yat-sen had made the industry a key part of his economic modernisation plan in *The International Development of China*.<sup>153</sup> They therefore allocated a minimum of ten million yuan each year to wireless infrastructure in the 1928 National Reconstruction Plan.<sup>154</sup> Chiang Kai-shek named Zhang Renjie to lead the National Reconstruction Commission, which was responsible for developing radiotelegraphy, and he was determined to build an efficient and profitable party-owned radiotelegraph system. In December 1928, Zhang abolished the 1915 Electrical Communication Ordinance, which had earlier hindered radio development, and then established a regulatory framework in the 1929 Electrical Communication Ordinance. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Communications drafted a national licensing scheme based on its four-station network under control of the Fengtian Clique.<sup>155</sup> However, Nationalist Radio opposed the collection of listeners' license fees until the industry had matured.<sup>156</sup> The CC Clique did not want listener licensing to hinder radiofication. Hence, the ministry 'temporarily' waived the fee in the final draft of the scheme in 1931.<sup>157</sup>

Private broadcasting stations proliferated after the lifting of the 1915 radio ban.<sup>158</sup> Commercial stations popped up around the country, increasing from seven in 1930 to sixty-three in 1932. In Shanghai, the number of private stations grew from two to thirty five, most of which were Chinese-owned commercial stations operating without a broadcasting license.<sup>159</sup> Outside of Shanghai, the boom was almost as big: the number of stations increased from five to twenty eight. These included private broadcasters in Suzhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, and Wuxi, and party-state stations in Taiyuan, Chongqing, Chengdu, and Kunming.<sup>160</sup> However, one event accelerated the radio boom more than anything else: the 1932 Shanghai Incident.

Although most Shanghai private stations went off the air during the incident, Amateurs Home Radio and Big China Radio (Station XHHU) continued to transmit news from the front

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<sup>153</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *The International Development of China* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), 5–8.

<sup>154</sup> 'Jianshe dagang ji qi shuoming' 建設大綱及其說明, in *GMWX*, vol. 22, *Guomin zhengfu chengli qianhou zhi zhengzhi jianzhi shiliao, Jinan shijian* 國民政府成立前後之政治建制史料, 濟南事件, no. 5 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenhua gongying she, 1960), 371–374.

<sup>155</sup> 'Guangbo wuxian dianhua shoutengji zhuangshe ji shiyong zanxing zhangcheng' 廣播無線電話收音機裝設及使用暫行章程, *Jiu Zhongguo*, 176–79.

<sup>156</sup> Liu, 'Da boyintai', 22–23.

<sup>157</sup> 'Zhuangshe guangbo wuxiandian shouyinji dengji zanxing banfa' 裝設廣播無線電收音機登記暫行辦法, comp. Jiaotongbu Dianzhengsi 交通部電政司, *Jiaotongbu dianzhengsi faling huikan* 交通部電政法令彙刊, vol. 1 (Nanjing: Nanjing dongnan yinshuasuo, 1933), 754–56.

<sup>158</sup> Jiang Hong 姜紅, *Xiwu dongjian yu jindai Zhongguo de jubian: Shouyinji zai Shanghai, 1923–1949* 西物東漸與近代中國的巨變:收音機在上海 (1923–1949) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2013), 25.

<sup>159</sup> L. Z. Yuan, 'Chinese Radio Stations Present Unique Programs', *QSP Wuxiandian zazhi* *QSP* 無線電雜誌 (hereafter *QSP*), 28.

<sup>160</sup> Zhao, *Guangbo dianshi tongshi*, 21, 26.



to Nationalist Radio, Radio Jiangsu (Station XGOZ), and Radio Zhejiang (Station XGOD) for rebroadcast nationwide.<sup>161</sup> In the absence of timely print media, the Battle of Shanghai highlighted radio's ability to present real-time news and information to the public, resulting in an even bigger boom as fourteen private stations opened during the conflict.<sup>162</sup> Nineteenth Route Army veteran Luo Jingyu praised radio as a valuable weapon of modern war afterwards, citing its ability to boost troop morale with news from home and Japan's effective use of the technology to coordinate military operations on land, at sea, and in the air.<sup>163</sup>

The proliferation of broadcasting stations, however, resulted in serious side effects, especially in Shanghai. These problems required the party state to assert regulatory control over the medium in the city's three sections—the Municipality of Greater Shanghai, the International Settlement, and the French Concession—something that it had never done before. The main problem was that Shanghai was awash with unlicensed private radio stations, operating on the American commercial model, and no central body existed to regulate them. Being businesses that relied on advertising, the city's private stations played popular entertainment peppered with commercial content on an overcrowded radio spectrum, which caused overlapping frequencies that resulted in static interference and unhappy listeners.

The CC Clique had established the Radio Station Administration in July 1931 to address these side effects. As the Radio Station Administration, Nationalist Radio assumed the tripartite role of broadcaster, policymaker, and regulator. But as a central party organisation, Nationalist Radio only set broadcasting policy in Nanjing and implemented it at arm's length via local offices under the Ministry of Communications. In Shanghai, the local office that managed broadcasting was the Bureau of International Telegraphs, which operated the international radiotelegraph station and radiogram service in the city. However, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and Shanghai delayed the formation of the administration, forcing the CC Clique to wait until the new Central Station opened on 12 November 1932.

To bring order to the sonic chaos in Shanghai, the Nationalists needed to assert Chinese radio sovereignty (see figure 3). On 25 November 1932, Harvard-educated Dr. Wen Yuqing (溫毓慶) of the Bureau of International Telegraphs delivered the Provisional Rules for the Control of Private Radio Broadcasting Stations to the Shanghai and French municipal

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<sup>161</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 370.

<sup>162</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, 387–91.

<sup>163</sup> Luo Jingyu 羅靜予, 'Huzhan Zhong Ri jun de wuxiandian' 滬戰中日軍的無線電, *QST Wuxiandian* QST 無線電雜誌 (hereafter *QST*), 15 October 1932, 51–52.



The Shanghai and French municipal councils, unwilling to submit to the new rules, took action to pre-empt Chinese control over private broadcasting stations in their jurisdictions. The International Settlement scheduled a discussion about promulgating its own broadcasting regulations at the next ratepayers meeting, and the French Concession gazetted rules to govern private stations within its jurisdiction immediately.<sup>166</sup> However, the French soon discovered that regulatory efforts were futile because private stations simply moved to another jurisdiction after receiving a registration notice from its municipal council.<sup>167</sup> After learning of this reaction in the Anglophone press, Wen Yuqing wrote the foreign councils again to remind them that only a uniform approach would bring an end to the sonic chaos and he reiterated that broadcast regulations fell under the purview of the Chinese Ministry of Communications.<sup>168</sup> The application of the provisional rules was a matter of radio sovereignty.

On 6 December, the foreign municipal councils convened a joint meeting to discuss the provisional rules. Those attending the meeting included station owners, radio manufacturers, and Shanghai officials. To the chagrin of the foreign councils, George Shecklen of RCA endorsed the new rules, saying that ‘only one body could regulate radio in China, and that was the Chinese government’, which was indeed the case under the International Telegraph Union Convention of 1927; moreover, Shecklen claimed that ‘China in promulgating the recent regulations had the desire to do the right thing’. Captain A. R. St. Louis from Asia Electric also endorsed the rules, stating that the Ministry of Communications ‘had power at the present time to make great changes’ and that the ‘allocation of call signs must be made by the Ministry’. The radio manufacturers thereupon passed a resolution to approve ‘the general tenor of the Government regulations’ and recommended that the Shanghai Municipal Council approach the Chinese government to apply the rules uniformly across the city’s three districts.<sup>169</sup> Despite this endorsement by industry leaders, who undoubtedly would benefit from the new rules, the municipal councils and diplomatic community did not welcome the application of Chinese regulations within their jurisdictions because it threatened the right of extraterritoriality under the treaty-port system. Nevertheless, they formed a joint committee of council officials, station owners, and industry experts to discuss a citywide regulatory framework with Wen Yuqing.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> ‘Council Making Inquiries into Broadcasting’, *Shanghai Times*, 29 November 1932, 7; ‘Local Radio Situation’, *North-China Herald*, 30 November 1932, 123.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Radio Broadcasting in Shanghai’, *Shanghai Times*, 7 December 1932, 16.

<sup>168</sup> ‘Guoji dianxinju gonghan’, 188–89.

<sup>169</sup> ‘Local Radio Situation’, *North-China Herald*, 14 December 1932, 123; ‘Broadcasting in Shanghai’, 16.

<sup>170</sup> ‘Committee Getting Results’, 5.

## Broadcast Programming

Nationalist Radio offered listeners a limited schedule in 1928, consisting of a dry mix of news, information, and entertainment. This was in part due to technical reasons because Nanjing did not yet have a stable power supply. Nationalist Radio therefore relied on a petrol generator and battery charger to broadcast two hours a day until the spring of 1929, when the Nationalists completed the installation of a power plant at central party headquarters.<sup>171</sup> Over the next year, the CC Clique lengthened the broadcast day and experimented with programme times to find an optimum schedule (see figure 2).<sup>172</sup> By 1930, Nationalist Radio broadcast an average of six hours and four minutes each day, and its programming mix consisted of 36 percent news, 34 percent information, and 30 percent entertainment.<sup>173</sup>

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9.00	Central Memorial Week	Propaganda Report					
10.00		National Government Policy Report					
11.00							
12.00	Gramophone Music						
13.00							Gramophone Music
14.00	China News (English)	Global News	Global News	China News (English)	Global News	Capital City Report	
15.00							
	Orders and Notices						
	Important News						
16.00		National Reconstruction Report	Celebrity Lecture		Science Lecture		
17.00							
18.00	Gramophone Music	Gramophone Music	Gramophone Music	Capital City Music	Gramophone Music	Special Music and Weather Report	
19.00			Weather Report				Music and Weather Report
							Important News. Sign off 20.00
20.00		Important News. Sign off 21.00				Important News. Sign off 21.00	

Figure 2. Central Station schedule, January 1930. From 'Xianxing boyin shijianbiao', 22.

<sup>171</sup> 'Dinggou wubai wate guangbo wuxiandian ji hetong' 訂購五百瓦特廣播無線電機合同, *Niankan*, 'Zhuanzai', 15; 'Gongcheng zhi huigu', 30–31.

<sup>172</sup> 'Boyin shijianbiao', 8–11.

<sup>173</sup> 'Xianxing boyin shijianbiao' 現行播音時間表, *Niankan*, 'Baogao', 22.

Nationalist Radio's programming mix made it unique among Chinese broadcasters because its broadcast day consisted of 70 percent news and information and 30 percent entertainment, which was the inverse of Shanghai private stations and public broadcasters under the control of Zhang Xueliang and the Fengtian Clique in North China and Manchuria.<sup>174</sup> Hence, Nationalist Radio was a curious combination of a privately-owned public broadcaster. The thing that distinguished it from public stations in the north and private ones in Shanghai was the centrality of Sunist ideology in its programming, i.e., broadcast propaganda. Owing to its mission to promote political tutelage and disseminate party information, Nationalist Radio was a tool of governance and a weapon of war for the party state. The following three subsections present Nationalist Radio's programming mix—i.e., news, information, and entertainment—during the radio nationalisation of the party state between 1928 and 1932.

### *News*

News constituted 36 percent of Nationalist Radio programming. Every morning, station copywriters walked across the party compound to the Central News Agency to collect the news, and they transformed the text into a colloquial language to create usable radio copy. In studio, announcers then presented news in the National Language, which was the lingua franca at Nationalist Radio, and the station adopted the *bopomofo* phonetic system to standardise on-air pronunciation.<sup>175</sup> With the exception of Huang Tianru, however, most announcers did not speak the official language well; for example, Lu Yihao presented the news in a thick Jiangsu accent, injecting words and phrases unique to the Wu dialect into his reports.<sup>176</sup> Another problem was that the audience had difficulty understanding the National Language. Presenters therefore developed reading techniques to aid listening comprehension. For each item, the presenters first read the headline and restated it in everyday language. While reading the story, they explained specialised vocabulary colloquially, repeating proper nouns and avoiding homonyms. They then summarised the main points at the end of the report to promote retention.<sup>177</sup> Although time consuming, this method improved listening comprehension, especially among radio operators, who produced more accurate transcriptions for distribution.

Nationalist Radio also produced foreign-language news for international listeners. Before the end of 1929, propaganda department language specialists presented news in English,

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<sup>175</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 8.

<sup>176</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 24.

<sup>177</sup> 'Duiyu fayin suode zhi jingyan' 對於發音所得之經驗, *Niankan*, 'Zhuanzai', 66–67.

French, and Japanese in an irregular rotation once each week. English was the most common language, constituting 43 percent of foreign-language newscasts, while French and Japanese comprised 31 percent and 26 percent, respectively. In January 1930, Nationalist Radio began airing foreign-language news twice each week in English only.<sup>178</sup> In terms of content, the CC Clique differentiated English-language news from Chinese: English reports presented major stories on the current domestic political situation—avoiding any mention of obscure proper nouns and bureaucratic minutiae—while Chinese stories focused on international trends.<sup>179</sup>

### *Information*

Information made up 34 percent of Nationalist Radio content. This broad category consisted of three subcategories: party propaganda, government information, and general information. Party propaganda included Nationalist rituals, Sunist teachings, and mobilisation campaigns. Government information consisted of ministry and commission reports, educational lectures, and legal orders and notices. General information encompassed weather updates, water levels, and time reports. The most important of these three subcategories was propaganda, which occupied the first timeslot at the top of the schedule six-days a week.

Mondays began with a live broadcast of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Week in a programme called *Central Memorial Week*. Aired from central party headquarters, radio listeners could participate in this solemn politico-religious ceremony in Nanjing. Each week, party cadres renewed their vow to complete Sun Yat-sen's nationalist revolution, and party leaders gave a sermon-like talk on Sunism, governance, or current events. The other weekdays began with a programme called *Propaganda Report*. In this hour-long segment, party propagandists expounded Sunist teachings and introduced political messaging, slogans, and action plans for mass mobilisation campaigns.<sup>180</sup> On average, *Propaganda Report* introduced one campaign every three episodes, which equalled two campaigns per week.<sup>181</sup> When it came to propaganda, Nationalist Radio followed Sun Yat-sen's prescription to 'provide a model for lower-level cadres', giving them a template to manage mobilisation campaigns in their communities.<sup>182</sup>

Government information was broadcast on weekdays in four regular segments. The first, *Policy Report*, aired Tuesday through Saturday from 10.15 to 11.00 a.m. This programme

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<sup>178</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 5.

<sup>179</sup> Wu, 'Guangbo shiye', 10–11.

<sup>180</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 5.

<sup>181</sup> 'Gongzuo baogao', 19.

<sup>182</sup> Liu Zhenqing 劉振清, 'Duiyu da boyintai jinxing zhong zhi jidian' 對於大播音台進行之幾點, *Niankan*, 'Lunzhu', 20; 'Shijiu niandu', 123.

featured a continuous rotation of government officials from fifteen ministries and commissions who presented work reports.<sup>183</sup> To facilitate programme appearances, Nationalist Radio built a studio in the Nationalist Government Building so that guests did not need to travel to party headquarters to present their reports.<sup>184</sup> The second segment, *Orders and Notices*, aired ten minutes every weekday at 1.20 p.m. to enable local offices to transcribe government directives and implement them straight away. In addition, Nationalist Radio aired two radio talks on economic modernisation every week. The Nationalist Reconstruction Commission presented progress reports on Tuesdays in *National Reconstruction Report*, and municipal officials hosted *Capital City Report* on Saturdays to discuss the reconstruction of Nanjing, which the Nationalists showcased as a model for urban development in China.<sup>185</sup>

General information included such everyday information as weather reports, water-level updates, and time announcements. Although seemingly innocuous, these brief segments appeared throughout the day and were classic examples of banal nationalism because they reified China's political centre in Nanjing and promoted the party-state claim to represent the entire nation.<sup>186</sup> This programme subcategory also included educational talks featuring top politicians in *Celebrity Lecture* and intellectuals in *Science Lecture*, which projected an image of Nanjing as a political, economic, and cultural hub, even though it did not compare with Beijing or Shanghai. General information programmes thus gave voice to party aspirations for national unification under the central government in Nanjing.

Information programming also presented Nationalist Radio with four challenges. First, many officials did not speak the National Language well, since they, unlike presenters, had not formally studied Mandarin pronunciation. Second, guest speakers had difficulty adapting their oratory style to radio. Most guests were used to addressing large groups without amplification by shouting or using a loud voice, so the adjustment to sitting in a small, empty, soundproof studio and speaking into a sensitive microphone was difficult. Station announcers therefore coached them on how to present in studio before going on-air. To ensure a high-quality sound, station staff also taught guests to sit about thirty to sixty centimetres away from the microphone and speak softly in a conversational tone. Nevertheless, many guests continued to speak in a loud high-pitched voice that distorted signal quality. Production engineers therefore installed a

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<sup>183</sup> 'Guofu ge jiguan shuliu boyin riqibiao' 國府各機關輪流播音日期表, *Niankan*, 'Baogao', n.p.

<sup>184</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 6. 'Shijiu niandu', 127.

<sup>185</sup> Charles D. Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual, and Response in Nanjing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 1–17.

<sup>186</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 1–12.

sound monitor in the master control room so that they could adjust the pitch and volume. Third, guests had difficulty sitting still in studio. Presenters therefore worked with them to reduce their body language when speaking because, unlike public oratory, the extra movement added nothing to the spoken message; conversely, it often prevented guests from fully expressing their meaning in words because they relied on gestures instead. Fourth, station staff helped guests change their traditional writing styles for radio. Since many officials were accustomed to writing classical prose without punctuation, announcers recommended that they write scripts in colloquial language and punctuate the text so that they would not lose their place while presenting in studio. By 1930, as station guests became accustomed to appearing on-air, Nationalist Radio overcame these challenges and developed its own presentation style.<sup>187</sup>

### *Entertainment*

Although entertainment was the smallest component of the programming mix at 30 percent, the CC Clique considered it integral to the cultivation of the individual and the transformation of China into a modern society. In the first phase of radio nationalisation, the CC Clique sought to incorporate wholesome and educational music into the schedule to complement broadcast propaganda and government information programming.

CC Clique officials appreciated musical entertainment for its instrumentality, and they regarded it an important hook for other programme elements because it ‘catered to the hearts of the masses to attract [their] attention’.<sup>188</sup> As Nationalist Radio engineers turned into social engineers, they valued the functionality of music, believing that it provided needed relief from everyday stress, monotony, irritation, and fatigue. In particular, they believed that music between news and information segments helped listeners reflect on the content and better remember what they had just heard. Nationalist Radio imagined the programming mix as a tapestry wherein ‘important programmes are the warp and music is the weft so that the audience gains the benefit of the wisdom and knowledge instilled in the aesthetics of entertainment’.<sup>189</sup>

The CC Clique’s elitist belief in the ability of music to transform the people—those who could be awakened and those who would never awaken at all—was similar to views held by national broadcasters in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan, all of which regarded cultural entertainment as a means to civilise the benighted masses. This elitist belief is most aptly described in *The Mourning Bride* by seventeenth-century English playwright William

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<sup>187</sup> ‘Fayin suode zhi jingyan’, 66–68. ‘Gongzuo baogao’, 16.

<sup>188</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 21.

<sup>189</sup> Liu, 21.



Congreve: ‘Music has charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rock, or to bend a knotted oak’. Similarly, the CC Clique used a metaphor from pottery and metal smelting to describe the importance of music in the cultivation of the individual:

This station is under the centre so as a matter of course its principal task is to propagate our party doctrine, important information of the central party administration, and news from the various regions. For the audience, however, it also is necessary to encourage their interests in order to mould their bodies and minds. Therefore, we also must pay the utmost attention to the subsidiary task of musical entertainment.<sup>190</sup>

For this reason, CC Clique officials sought to provide listeners with ‘tasteful entertainment’ (高尚娛樂) to serve as a cultural model.<sup>191</sup> They therefore equipped station studios with a piano and a gramophone to play music during programme segues. They also invited renowned singers, musicians, choirs, orchestras, and bands to perform live on-air.<sup>192</sup> Nationalist Radio thereby sought to transform the malleable masses into modern citizens.

The CC Clique officials were still dissatisfied, however, with the station’s musical entertainment. Their dissatisfaction derived from a wider concern about the state of Chinese popular culture, which they as social conservatives believed was decadent. Nationalist Radio therefore played an equal proportion of Chinese and Western music to compensate for a perceived lack of moral standards in contemporary Chinese music. Nevertheless, the fifty-fifty balance was still not ideal. On the one hand, Nationalist Radio officials believed that playing foreign music half of the time was inappropriate because most listeners were unfamiliar with it and did not understand the lyrics. On the other hand, they regarded the high-pitched songs and weak melodies of traditional Chinese music unsuitable for broadcast because it ‘lacked good quality and very rarely had artistic value’.<sup>193</sup> They also considered the association of popular Chinese music with unsavoury social activities and their venues problematic:

Recreation is one of the necessities of life. Of late, song and dance halls compete to be ever more ostentatious, and drinking clubs and tea houses vie to be the most raucous. At the bottom are brothels, opium halls, gambling dens, dog tracks, and cockpits. A variety of improper diversions are enough to debase a person’s disposition, impair the body, infect convention, and corrupt the mores of the nation.<sup>194</sup>

The CC Clique therefore sought to set a new musical standard for China on Nationalist Radio. To this end, Nationalist Radio stocked its library with a balanced mix of 200 Chinese and

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<sup>190</sup> ‘Kuochong zhongyang’, 23.

<sup>191</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 21; ‘Kuochong zhongyang’, 23.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Kuochong zhongyang’, 22.

<sup>193</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 21.

<sup>194</sup> Lu Yihao 陸以灝, ‘Guangbo wuxian dianhua xuanchuan zhi zhongyao’ 廣播無線電話宣傳之重要, *Niankan*, ‘Lunzhu’, 26.

Western gramophone records.<sup>195</sup> It also commissioned musicians to record new renditions of traditional music and write modern songs for a domestic audience.<sup>196</sup> In its musical segments, Nationalist Radio broadcast what it regarded as ‘tasteful music, refined opera, and lyrical music that expounded and propagated Sunist doctrine and patriotic resolve’. The goal of station musical programming was ‘to mould character and dispel troublesome thoughts when those in society turn on the radio to listen attentively in their leisure time’.<sup>197</sup>

However, Nationalist Radio was unable to revolutionise Chinese music before 1932. The reason was that Nanjing did not yet have the cultural capital to do so. For example, Nationalist Radio was even unable to purchase the latest gramophone discs in Nanjing because most musicians and record labels were located in Shanghai.<sup>198</sup> Nevertheless, Nationalist Radio improvised with cost-effective ways to improve musical entertainment by relaying performances from Shanghai via telephone, ordering the newest music from record companies, and inviting artists to perform live in the modern broadcasting studios at party headquarters.<sup>199</sup>

### **An Incubator of Institutions**

Nationalist Radio developed into an incubator of institutions between 1928 and 1932. This occurred ad hoc over time as the CC Clique turned to radio to solve problems of governance, reflecting the widely-held notion that ‘science saves the nation’ (科學救國). Nationalist Radio was a high-profile symbol of the party-state effort to improve everyday life through the application of cutting-edge technology. It therefore worked closely with other party-state institutions ‘to strengthen the people’s faith in science and demonstrate its importance to saving the nation’ because the CC Clique believed that modernisation would provide a stable foundation for the pillars of party-state governance.<sup>200</sup> For the masses who did not have access to radio, frequent images of Nationalist leaders in newspapers, magazines, and newsreels speaking into a big circular microphone emblazoned with ‘Central Station’ (中央電台) were reminders of the Nationalists’ association with this global symbol of modernity and the important role that science and technology played in the economic modernisation of China.

The CC Clique therefore fostered inchoate institutions in the areas of communications, scientific research, and espionage under the aegis of Nationalist Radio since its position at the

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<sup>195</sup> ‘Diantai jihuashu’, 3; ‘Boyin suode zhi jingyan’, 66.

<sup>196</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 21.

<sup>197</sup> Lu, ‘Wuxian dianhua xuanchuan’, 26.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Gongzuo baogao’, 2.

<sup>199</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 21–22.

<sup>200</sup> ‘Kuochong zhongyang’, 25.

centre of the party state allowed for operational flexibility, secrecy, and centralised control. In the field of communications, Nationalist Radio and its operator network served as a stopgap distribution channel for the fledgling Central News Agency.<sup>201</sup> The radio operators that the CC Clique embedded inside party offices and newspapers, such as *Wuhan Daily News*, provided local print publications nationwide with the latest broadcast news and information.<sup>202</sup>

Nationalist Radio also was a research-and-design incubator for the electronics industry. To reduce dependence on foreign goods, Nationalist Radio purchased radio equipment abroad so its technicians could reverse-engineer the technology under the banner of ‘restoring economic rights’ (挽利權).<sup>203</sup> Moreover, the research section worked closely with the China Government Radio Works under the Military Affairs Commission to localise production of transmitters, receivers, antennae, and other key components.<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, Nationalist Radio worked with the Geological Survey Institute to find crystals used in foreign radio receivers within China and test local substitutes for the ability to conduct sound waves.<sup>205</sup> In late 1932, station engineers also began to host two educational programmes, *Radio Basics* and *Telegraph Code Exercises*, to disseminate wireless knowledge and teach practical telegraphic skills.<sup>206</sup>

Finally, Nationalist Radio was an incubator for Nationalist intelligence institutions. This relationship was formalised in February 1931 when the party appointed Wu Daoyi to serve concurrently as the director of the Central Station and the central secretariat’s radiotelegraph, Station XHZ.<sup>207</sup> Nationalist Radio thus doubled as a communications hub for the organisation department’s investigation section and thereby became a weapon of war.<sup>208</sup>

## A Weapon of War

The CC Clique took concrete steps to transform Nationalist Radio into a weapon of war in 1932. As fighting raged in Shanghai, Nationalist Radio left behind a skeleton crew in Nanjing and set up a self-made 250-watt station in the temporary capital of Luoyang. There,

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<sup>201</sup> Wei, *News under Fire*, 140–142.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Diantai dashiji’, 9; ‘Shijiu niandu’, 122.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Kuochong zhongyang’, 24–25.

<sup>204</sup> ‘Gongzuo baogao’, 18–19.

<sup>205</sup> ‘Hanfu zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai zhun hanqing zhengji shouyinji suo yong gezhong jingti kuangzhi wuzhong yi ling gesheng kuangwu jiguan zhuanxing zunban qing chazhao wen’ 函復中央廣播無線電台准函請徵集收音機所用各種晶體礦質五種已令各省礦務機關剴行遵辦查照文, *Nongkuang gongbao* 農礦公報, no. 25, 1930, 57–58; ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai zhengji jingti kuangshi’ 中央廣播無線電台徵集晶體礦石, *Kuangwu zhoubao* 礦業週報, no. 99, 1930: 33–34.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu tonggao (di yi hao)’ 中國國民黨中央執行委員會廣播無線電台管理處通知(第一號), *QST*, 15 November 1932, 111.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Shijiu niandu’, 129; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 10.

<sup>208</sup> ‘Xunlian shouyinyuan’, 73.

the station installed more than fifty radio receivers in public offices and popular shops so that the public could follow the news. During the day, Radio Luoyang broadcast transcripts from the Central Station, bulletins from the Central News Agency, and special reports on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. In March, the party increased Nationalist Radio's operating budget more than tenfold from 1,735 yuan to 18,600 yuan per month. In April, the CC Clique appointed an experienced radio engineer from the organisation department, Wu Baofeng (吳保豐), to lead the radio station administration.<sup>209</sup> Wu and his deputy, Wu Daoyi, then put together a management team to integrate the nascent intelligence service into Nationalist Radio.

The connection between Nationalist Radio and party intelligence operations was deep. The protean nature and amorphous relationship between them reflected a need for organisational fluidity amid political volatility. The main link connecting the two institutions was the Chen family. As the director of the central organisation department, Chen Guofu oversaw the work of his younger brother Chen Lifu, who ran the department's investigation section and supervised the surveillance operations of their younger cousin, Xu Enzeng. Xu was the person that connected Nationalist Radio with the investigation section, as he was the first station director until leaving its affairs to his schoolmate and fellow radio engineer, Wu Daoyi.

After Peking, Xu then worked for Zhang Renjie at the National Reconstruction Commission. There, he established fifty-five radiotelegraph stations throughout China in 1929 and designed a portable shortwave radiotelegraph that could transmit long-range messages.<sup>210</sup> The device was produced by Li Fanyi at the China Government Radio Works, the on-campus factory that Chiang Kai-shek had founded with funds from the Military Affairs Commission. This briefcase-sized radiotelegraph enabled investigation section agents to travel discreetly and maintain confidential communications with central party headquarters.<sup>211</sup> After Wu Daoyi took charge of the central secretariat's radiotelegraph station, the connection between Nationalist Radio and intelligence section was made complete.<sup>212</sup>

Yet, the close connection between Xu with Nationalist Radio did not end there. He also had close ties to three other radio engineers at Nationalist Radio who later became 'the three big pillars' (三大台柱) of the Special Affairs Radio Station (特務電台), which was managed by

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<sup>209</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 14–15, 37.

<sup>210</sup> 'Jiaotong baogao' 交通報告, in *GMWX*, vol. 27, *Kangzhan qian youguan guofang jianshe shiliao* 抗戰前有關國防建設史料, ed. Luo Jialun 羅家倫, no. 2 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenhua gongying she, 1963), 337; Xu, *Guoshiguan*, 129000100269A.

<sup>211</sup> Wang Chongzhi 王崇植 and Yun Chen 惲震, *Wuxiandian yu Zhongguo* 無線電與中國 (Shanghai: Wenrui yinshuguan, 1931), 98.

<sup>212</sup> 'Tantan baowushi' 談談報務室, *GBZB*, 19 September 1936, 84–85.

the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Their names were Liu Zhenqing, Feng Jian, and Fan Benzong.<sup>213</sup> The first pillar was Liu Zhenqing. Liu joined Nationalist Radio in 1928 as chief engineer and oversaw the radio-operator training programme. Under his guidance, the operators not only learned how to transcribe broadcast information but also how to send and receive telegraphic messages.<sup>214</sup> In fact, Liu required trainees to practice telegraphy regularly so that they would be ‘a source of reserve talent who were adept and quick at sending and receiving messages’.<sup>215</sup> The second pillar was Feng Jian. Feng was a graduate of Nanyang University and received a master’s degree from Cornell University before working for General Electric in the United States and Siemens in Germany. Before joining Nationalist Radio in April 1930 to build the new Central Station with German engineers from Telefunken, Feng was a professor of wireless radio at North-eastern University in Mukden. He then later built the shortwave broadcasting station in Chongqing during the Sino-Japanese War.<sup>216</sup> The third pillar was Fan Benzong. Fan was a radio engineer who played multiple roles at Nationalist Radio. He was Xu’s classmate at Nanyang University and McGill University in Canada, and he worked with Xu at the National Reconstruction Commission in 1929, serving as bureau chief of the Shanghai radiotelegraph station.<sup>217</sup> Fan then joined Nationalist Radio as an engineering consultant in October 1931—one month after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria—and his first job was to manage the radio-operator network.<sup>218</sup> A man of many talents, Fan later became broadcast section chief in 1934 and oversaw station programming until the Sino-Japanese War began, whereupon he rejoined Xu Enzeng at the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics.<sup>219</sup>

As Feng Jian and Telefunken engineers completed the big radio station in July 1932, the party presidium integrated Station XHZ into Nationalist Radio as the Telegraph Room.<sup>220</sup> It also established the Service Room to manage the radio-operator network and appointed a management team at the radio station administration in September: Wu Daoyi became general affairs section chief; Fan Benzong was named service room director; Feng Jian was appointed

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<sup>213</sup> Fan Benzong 范本中, Guoshiguan [MACCAO Collection], 129000016635A.

<sup>214</sup> Liu, ‘Da boyintai’, 20.

<sup>215</sup> ‘Xunlian shouyinyuan’, *Niankan*, 75; ‘Zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai zhiyuanlu 中央執行委員會廣播無線電台職員錄’, *Niankan* (‘Fulu’), 32; ‘Shijiu niandu’, 121–22.

<sup>216</sup> Zhang Qiyun 張其昀, ‘Feng Jian’ 馮簡, vol. 6 of *Geming renwu zhi 革命人物誌*, ed. Huang Jilu 黃季陸 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongyingshe, 1971), 198–200.

<sup>217</sup> Fan, Guoshiguan, 129000016635A.

<sup>218</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 12.

<sup>219</sup> Fan, Guoshiguan, 129000016635A.

<sup>220</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 15–16; ‘Tantan baowushi’, 85–86.

chief engineer; and Liu Zhenqing became deputy chief engineer and technical section chief.<sup>221</sup> This team would transform Nationalist Radio into a tool of governance and a weapon of war, and its appointment was just in time for the launch the new Central Station on 12 November to commemorate the birth of Sun Yat-sen, whose teachings embodied the spirit of the party, and to whom station presenters addressed using the honorific title (after a reverent two-second pause) ... Father of the Nation.

## Conclusion

Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang, and Dai Jitao of the CC Clique established Nationalist Radio to implement the radio nationalisation of the party state. Nations around the world were exploring ways to use radio technology in 1928, and the CC Clique leaders were keen to embrace broadcasting because they considered it an important symbol of global modernity. A belief in scientism thus underlay the adoption of broadcasting to promote economic, political, and cultural modernisation. The CC Clique leaders applied wireless technology to improve central-local relations, standardise policy implementation, centralise political tutelage, and circumvent regional powerholders because they regarded radio as an effective means to streamline party-state governance. As a result, they transformed Nationalist Radio into a virtual assembly hall of learning, a proxy news service, an intelligence agency, a mobilisation centre, and an incubator of party-state institutions between 1928 and 1932. It was within this context that the CC Clique placed Nationalist Radio at the centre of the party state to promote party-state unity, economic modernisation, and multimedia mobilisation campaigns.

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<sup>221</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 16.

## CHAPTER 2: THE SPIRIT OF THE PARTY STATE

The spirit of the Party Director is immortal!  
Make the spirit of the Party Director our spirit!  
Remember the great spirit and cause of the Party Director!  
– Nationalist propaganda slogans, May 1929

### Introduction

Like a celestial body encircling the ever-constant North Star, Nationalist Radio revolved around Sun Yat-sen to construct an image of the man as the virtuous father of the nation, showing reverence to his memory and teachings in daily broadcasting programmes. After all, the *raison d'être* for the creation of Nationalist Radio and placing it at the centre of the party state was to promote Sun Yat-sen's teachings.<sup>1</sup> This chapter therefore will look at two programmes—*Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week*—to illustrate the centrality of Sunist content on Nationalist Radio and show how the CC Clique used broadcast propaganda to promote political tutelage and mobilise the party state between 1928 and 1932.

*Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week* were regular programmes in the weekly broadcast schedule that promoted Sunism and drew upon the memory of Sun Yat-sen to inspire the party rank and file. *Propaganda Report* was a sixty-minute programme that aired from Tuesday to Saturday at 9.00 a.m. Presented by the central propaganda department, the programme sought to awaken the political consciousness of listeners, i.e., local cadres, and mobilise them to organise mass political action in their communities. To this end, *Propaganda Report* introduced mobilisation campaigns, explaining their significance, messaging, slogans, events, and timelines. *Central Memorial Week* was a weekly sixty-minute programme on Monday at 9.00 a.m. This show sought to inspire local cadres and imbue their work with meaning through the ritual commemoration of Sun Yat-sen. Together, these two programmes channelled the Sunist spirit directly from party headquarters to local offices to instil a unity of thought and action in the philosophical tradition of Wang Yangming. The CC Clique thereby created an on-air assembly hall of learning—i.e. an Andersonian imagined community—to cultivate camaraderie among cadres who were united in action and shared a common cause.

To demonstrate the dual nature of Nationalist Radio as a tool of political tutelage and a weapon of war between 1928 and 1932, this chapter looks at the role that broadcast propaganda played in the mobilisation of the party state during two events: the Funeral Train Rally Tour

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<sup>1</sup> 'Diantai jihuashu', 1; 'Diantai dashiji', 1.

and Sun Yat-sen's state funeral in 1929, and the Anti-Japanese Boycott following the Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents in 1931 and 1932. An analysis of *Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week* during these events reveals the dual nature of Nationalist Radio as both a tool of governance and a weapon of war. It also highlights the import of the Sunist cult and shows how the CC Clique used Sun Yat-sen's spirit to mobilise the party state on the radio.

### ***Propaganda Report and Sun Yat-sen's Funeral***

Henrietta Harrison in *The Making of the Republican Citizen* has shown how Chiang Kai-shek manipulated his affinal relationship with Song Qingling to strengthen his position as Sun Yat-sen's political heir during Sun's state funeral in 1929. This section will look at the funeral from the perspective of radio to show how the CC Clique organised a multimedia mobilisation campaign to engineer Sun's apotheosis in order to establish a bond of fictive kinship between rank-and-file party cadres and the spirit of Sun Yat-sen as Father of the Nation. In short, the CC Clique manipulated the symbolism of the event to create a supernatural filial obligation so that party cadres, as fictive sons, would feel that it was their duty to complete Sun's unfinished nationalist revolution. This section therefore will look at how the CC Clique used *Propaganda Report* to mobilise the party state, and how the clique elevated Sun to the status of the party's patriarchal ancestor, thereby transforming him into the spirit of the party.

On 1 June 1929, Nationalist Radio aired a live broadcast of the internment ceremony for Sun Yat-sen from the steps of his mausoleum on Purple Mountain. The objective of the programme was to produce an emotionally moving experience to unify the party state in ritual action and forge a sense of national consciousness. However, the funeral was only the final event in a series of multimedia mobilisation campaigns that the CC Clique introduced on *Propaganda Report* during the month of May. In these campaigns, the CC Clique drew on the living memory of Sun Yat-sen and his nationalist revolution to organise an eighteen-day Funeral Train Rally Tour to retrieve Sun's body from the Temple of Azure Clouds in the Western Hills of Peking, and they used broadcasting to mobilise local party offices to hold political rallies along the way. At each stop, Nationalist Radio broadcast the disembodied voice of Sun Yat-sen as the embodiment of the nationalist revolutionary spirit to the crowds, and it relayed broadcast propaganda from Nanjing. Thus, Nationalist Radio expanded the reach of Sun's funeral from the locus of the physical event to envelop the nation.



### *The Spirit of the May Revolution*

In late April 1929, the CC Clique announced a series of mass mobilisation campaigns on *Propaganda Report* to be launched on important dates during the revolutionary month of May. The CC Clique called the series of campaigns the May Revolution Memorial Period because it commemorated important dates in the revolutionary calendar and culminated in the commemoration of Sun Yat-sen at his state funeral on 1 June 1929. The central propaganda department presented the detailed mobilisation plan for each campaign during the commemoration period on *Propaganda Report*, which afterward appeared in *Central Weekly* (中央週報). This was done so that party cadres in faraway places could follow a standard blueprint to integrate above-the-line print media promotions with below-the-line mobilisation campaigns. To foster a common understanding among the party rank and file, *Propaganda Report* introduced the official party-state narrative and the main themes of each event. The programme then provided local party officials with implementation plans to mobilise their communities using standardised materials that included talking points, official reports, rally speeches, campaign slogans, and event banners.<sup>2</sup>

The May Revolution Memorial Period consisted of propaganda campaigns commemorating May Third, May Fourth, May Fifth and May Ninth. The first target of these campaigns was imperialism. The commemoration on 3 May marked the 1928 Jinan Incident, which was still fresh in the public's memory. *Propaganda Report* presented the official party-state narrative of the event, recounting how Japanese troops in the Kwantung Army had blocked the Nationalist Revolutionary Army's advance on Peking, executed a negotiating team during a parley, and bombarded Jinan for three days, resulting in thousands of military and civilian deaths.<sup>3</sup> The Nationalist Party therefore organised an anti-Japanese boycott,<sup>4</sup> and the subsequent harm that it inflicted on Japanese business interests in China appeared to have pressured Japan to agree to a compromise in the March 1929 Jinan Settlement.<sup>5</sup> On the eve of the incident's first anniversary, Japanese troops had just withdrawn from a thirty-kilometre-wide zone along the Jiaozhou-Jinan railway, where Nationalist officials had been forbidden

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<sup>2</sup> 'Wuyue geming jinian zhou xuanchuan yaodian ji xuanchuan dagang' 五月革命紀念週宣傳要點機宣傳大綱, *Zhongyang zhoubao* 中央週報 (hereafter ZYZB), no. 47 (29 April 1929): 6–14.

<sup>3</sup> 'Jinan can'an zhounian jinian xuanchuan dagang' 濟南慘案週年紀念宣傳大綱, ZYZB, no. 47 (29 April 1929): 6–7.

<sup>4</sup> Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921–1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 147.

<sup>5</sup> Wei, Shuge. 'Beyond the Front Line: China's Rivalry with Japan in the English-Language Press over the Jinan Incident, 1928.' *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 1 (2014): 208.

entry for nearly a year.<sup>6</sup> The CC Clique attributed the success of this boycott to Sun Yat-sen, who had argued that China should adopt Mahatma Ghandi's principle of non-cooperation to counter foreign imperialism:

In the year since this massacre, what Sun Yat-sen said has been even more fully proven to be absolutely true—'non-cooperation is passive resistance that makes foreign imperialism less effective... therefore saving the nation from peril'—because the ardent movement to cut off economic relations with Japan in the past year has actually been the only weapon to contain the economic and political aggression of imperialism.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the Jinan Settlement, the Nationalists continued to promote the anti-Japanese boycott on *Propaganda Report* with slogans like 'To commemorate the Jinan Incident, we must expand the economic break with Japan!' because they believed that Japan still had designs in North China and would not stop its territorial expansion.<sup>8</sup>

The other three propaganda campaigns targeted liberalism and warlordism for good measure, urging the people to follow the example of Sun Yat-sen. May Fourth of course commemorated the eponymous student movement that erupted during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Although *Propaganda Report* praised the youth movement for awakening countless others to the nation's plight, the programme nevertheless urged students to cast aside liberalism to avoid 'going down the road of anti-social and anti-national interests' when trying to save China. It also encouraged them to embrace their studies and contribute to national reconstruction by following Sun Yat-sen's advice: 'when studying, do not forget the revolution'. Thus, students were urged to channel their energies into authorised social causes, such as literacy campaigns, and let the party save the nation instead.<sup>9</sup> May Fifth commemorated Sun Yat-sen's 'fearless spirit and brave determination' when he confronted warlords and imperialists as extraordinary president in 1921. *Propaganda Report* therefore encouraged cadres 'to carry on the Party Director's independent spirit, and fight to the end to save the party state against imperialism, communism, and all reactionary forces'.<sup>10</sup> Finally, May Ninth marked the signing of the Twenty-one Demands whose revelation had sparked the May Fourth Movement. *Propaganda Report* declared the agreement illegitimate and connected it to Japanese aggression in China since 1919. The programme called on party cadres to follow the

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<sup>6</sup> Iriye, *After Imperialism*, 248–50.

<sup>7</sup> 'Jinan can'an', 7.

<sup>8</sup> 'Jinan can'an', 8.

<sup>9</sup> 'Wu si xuesheng yundong jinian xuanchuan yaodian' 五四學生運動紀念宣傳要點, *ZYZB*, no. 47 (29 April 1929): 8–9.

<sup>10</sup> 'Zongli jiu dazongtong zhi diba zhounian jinian xuanchuan yaodian' 總理就大總統職第八週年紀念宣傳要點, *ZYZB*, no. 47 (29 April 1929): 9–10.

example of Gou Jian and expunge the humiliation of the Twenty-one Demands by avenging Japanese imperialism through economic warfare.<sup>11</sup>

Nationalist Radio capped the May Revolution Memorial Period with a call-to-arms to renew the National Goods Movement through the substitution of Japanese goods with Chinese products. To invest the everyday purchase of ordinary commodities with a higher purpose, *Propaganda Report* once again cited Sun Yat-sen to mobilise party cadres:

It was only because China lost the concept of the nation that the political power and economic strength of foreign countries were able to break us. If the concept of the nation had not been lost, the political power and economic strength of foreign countries would not have broken us.... If we want to restore the standing of the nation today, then we must first restore the spirit of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

Like Germany in the late nineteenth century, the Nationalists hoped to transform China into a modern industrial power by preserving traditional values and cultivating a mythic national spirit. However, owing to its undeveloped economy and weak institutions, China was unable to resort to blood and iron like Bismarckian Germany. It therefore used import substitution to promote national goods as an economic weapon to counter the harmful effects of Japanese imperialism without losing a soldier or firing a shot. In fact, *Propaganda Report* argued that the first step ‘to awaken national consciousness and arouse the spirit of the people’ was to promote national goods. For example, two slogans in this campaign were ‘Promoting national goods can arouse the spirit of the people and preserve the beautiful virtues of the nation!’, and ‘Promoting National Goods is the fulfilment of the Party Director’s Principle of the People’s Livelihood’!<sup>13</sup> *Propaganda Report* thus invoked Sun Yat-sen to promote economic modernisation upon a foundation of cultural conservatism and anti-imperialist nationalism.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Funeral Train Rally Tour Propaganda Campaign*

The Funeral Train Rally Tour that followed the May Revolution Memorial Period on 10 May was the first mass mobilisation campaign to incorporate radio broadcasting in China. Coordinated in real time on *Propaganda Report*, the tour was an eighteen-day multimedia mobilisation campaign that combined radio, print, film, and event to criss-cross North China in order to retrieve Sun Yat-sen’s remains in Peking for a funeral on 1 June in Nanjing. As

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<sup>11</sup> “‘Wu jiu’ guochi jinian xuanchuan yaodian’ ‘五九’國恥紀念宣傳要點, *ZYZB*, no. 47 (29 April 1929): 10–11.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Tichang guohuo xuanchuan dagang’ 提倡國貨宣傳大綱, *ZYZB*, no. 47 (29 April 1929): 13.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Tichang guohuo’, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Charlotte Brooks, *American Exodus: Second-Generation Chinese Americans in China, 1901–1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 75–114.

*Propaganda Report* conducted the revolutionary commemoration in early May, Nationalist Radio assigned three cadre to prepare for the Funeral Train Rally Tour to Peking, one of whom was Wu Daoyi.<sup>15</sup> The Nationalist Party painted the ten-carriage funeral train in the colours of the party flag, with the entire exterior in blue and propaganda slogans along the sides in white. A large portrait of Sun adorned the front of the locomotive under two flagpoles bearing a national flag and a party flag that jutted out each side of the train engine headlight.<sup>16</sup> Nationalist Radio occupied the sixth coach in the procession, behind blue-and-white orbs decorating the carriage corners of the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in the middle of the train. To create a soundscape for the rally tour, Nationalist Radio brought sound equipment: a Westinghouse public address system, three loudspeakers, a gramophone, a record collection, a five-valve Telefunken radio, a retractable nine-by thirty-metre antenna, electrical cables to connect outdoor venues, and a sixty-hour supply of rechargeable batteries. In addition, Nationalist Radio placed a three-by-six-metre antenna and nine loudspeakers atop the train so that cadres and participants could stay abreast of the latest news from Nanjing during the tour.<sup>17</sup>

More than 135 people, including guards and workers, rode aboard the propaganda train. The eighteen-day journey began with a festival and funeral rally at the Pukou Railway Station in Nanjing. Thereafter, the funeral train stopped at twenty-seven stations to hold forty-one rallies over the next fifteen days, as the train moved north to retrieve Sun Yat-sen's remains. In all, Nationalist Radio broadcast fifty-one hours and forty-five minutes during the funeral tour. The length of each rally and festival on the tour varied from fifteen minutes to three hours, depending on the size of the city. Some stops like Tai'an, Xuzhou, Tianjin, and Peking organised multiple rallies over two or three days, attracting crowds ranging from 30,000 to 50,000 per day.<sup>18</sup> The largest rallies occurred in Jinan, where nearly 100,000 people came each day over three days for a total of 290,000 spectators.<sup>19</sup> As for total participants during the tour, Nationalist Radio estimated that 225,000 people attended the special welcome ceremonies, and the central propaganda department recorded more than one million attendees at all events, including ceremonies, rallies, and festivals for the period 10–21 May.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 'Canjia yingchen xuanchuan lieche suoji' 參加迎觀宣傳列車瑣記, *Niankan*, 'Jizai', 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Zongli feng'an shilu* 總理奉安實錄, ed. Sun Zhongshan zangshi choubei weiyuanhui 孫中山葬事籌備委員會 (N.p.: Sun Zhongshan zangshi choubei weiyuanhui, n.d. [1929?]), 61a–61b.

<sup>17</sup> 'Yingchen xuanchuan', 11–12.

<sup>18</sup> 'Yingchen xuanchuan', 13–15.

<sup>19</sup> *Feng'an shilu*, 70b–71b.

<sup>20</sup> 'Yingchen xuanchuan', 13–15; *Feng'an shilu*, 72b.

At each welcome ceremony along the way, Nationalist Radio broadcast a recording of the recently commissioned ‘Party Song’ over loudspeakers as the funeral train entered the station. On the platform, local party-state officials and representatives of different mass organisations waited in military formation to greet the funeral train. After coming to a full stop, a central party official read a report from the funeral committee over a public address system, and both central and local party officials gave their remarks. Nationalist Radio then played three gramophone recordings of Sun Yat-sen introducing his Three Principles of the People.<sup>21</sup> According to Nationalist Radio, crowds became visibly moved when hearing Sun’s disembodied voice broadcast over the loudspeaker system over the course of the tour.<sup>22</sup>

The sombreness of the welcome ceremonies often transformed into light-hearted festivals at many stops during the Funeral Train Rally Tour. The public lined up at the memorial hall in the fifth carriage to view a series of oil paintings of Sun beside ten portraits of revolutionary martyrs, along with some of Sun’s personal items, such as letters, books, and keepsakes. In a conspicuous table-top display at the centre of the memorial hall lay three versions of *The Three Principles of the People* in English, German, and French, apparently to demonstrate the international appeal of Sun’s political philosophy. Outside, a band accompanying the train played for the crowds, and a Shanghai film company presented a video montage of Sun and the Northern Expedition on an outdoor screen, thus connecting Sun with his faithful followers who had carried out his wish to unify the nation. Like grassroots events that are part of larger national tours in China (even today), local party officials and communities commemorated the arrival of the funeral train in vastly different ways. Some held mass propaganda rallies with many speeches, while others held festivals that featured entertainment from magicians, street performers, folk artists, and opera troupes. During these events, central party cadres handed out eighteen different kinds of print propaganda, many of which displayed illustrations with simple slogans for easy reading. The tour even distributed playscripts about Sun’s revolution and a transcript of an academic lecture entitled ‘The Spirit and History of the Party Director’s Revolution’.<sup>23</sup> While these activities took place, Nationalist Radio relayed the

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<sup>21</sup> These are the only recordings of Sun, see Sun Yat-sen, speaker, ‘Guofu Sun Zhongshan xiansheng’ 國父孫中山, sound recording. 30 May 1924, from Guojia zhongyang tushuguan 國家中央圖書館, Shuwei yingyin fuwu xitong 數位影音服務系統, Liusheng huiyin 留聲迴音, Mingren yuyin 名人餘音. [www.dava.ncl.edu.tw](http://www.dava.ncl.edu.tw). (accessed 1 August 2022).

<sup>22</sup> ‘Yingchen xuanchuan’, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Feng’an shilu, 59b.

Central Station over loudspeakers, distributed broadcast news to local print media, and played gramophone music for the crowds.<sup>24</sup>

The rally tour concluded with three final events in Peking from 23 to 25 May.<sup>25</sup> The venue for these rallies was replete with imperial symbolism. On the southwest side of the Forbidden City, Sun Yat-sen lay-in-state within the Worship Hall adjacent to the Altar of Land and Grain, where former emperors had worshipped the earth from the five directions in hopes of promoting prosperity throughout the empire. Directly east of a new Central Park lay the Imperial Temple, where Ming and Qing dynastic households had worshiped their imperial ancestors. Even the phrase used for Sun's funeral, *feng'an* (奉安), was a term specifically used for the funeral rites of one's father, an emperor, or the enshrinement of a god or spirit tablet. The Nationalists thus borrowed from the redolent symbolism of the imperial era to allude that Sun Yat-sen was the patriarch of a modern dynasty. In fact, the Nationalists made the fictive-kinship allusion explicit in a tour slogan on *Propaganda Report*: 'The Party Director is the National Father of the Republic of China'.<sup>26</sup> The later enshrinement of Sun in Nanjing therefore marked his ascension to the status of the immortal patriarch of the Nationalist party state.<sup>27</sup>

As the propaganda train stopped at major cities on the tour, *Propaganda Report* also drew upon traditional cultural symbols to mediate the apotheosis of Sun Yat-sen. In daily broadcasts, the programme attributed the successful unification of China to the party-state's adherence to Sunism and the power of Sun's memory in the popular imagination:

After purging the Communists, we intensified the struggle against all reactionary forces and opposed red and white imperialists. Our party repeatedly endured countless hardships, disputes, and divisions. However, owing to our ability for steadfast adherence to *The Teachings of the Party Director*, sincere unity, and unmatched enthusiasm, along with the general public's memory of the Party Director and support for our party, we thus were finally able to arise from a deep-rooted and complex situation to restore the nation at a time of collapse and disintegration, eliminate all enemies, and complete the unification of China. Is it not by carrying out the spirit of the Party Director, relying on the aura of the Party Director, and the inspiration of the Party Director's great moral character that we have achieved this?<sup>28</sup>

Like the selection of the rally tour site in Peking, the CC Clique here, too, drew upon mythic, religious, and imperial allusions to establish the Nationalist Party as Sun's political heir. Apart from attributing the party's success to Sun Yat-sen's spirit (精神) and moral character (人格),

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<sup>24</sup> 'Yingchen xuanchuan', 11–15.

<sup>25</sup> 'Yingchen xuanchuan', 15.

<sup>26</sup> 'Zongli anzang xuanchuan dagang' 總理安葬宣傳大綱, *ZYZB*, no. 50 (20 May 1929): 19.

<sup>27</sup> Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911–1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 214.

<sup>28</sup> *Feng'an shilu*, 65a. The last sentence also appears in Harrison, *Republican Citizen*, 233.

*Propaganda Report* also credited the accomplishment to Sun's aura (靈爽),<sup>29</sup> which could connote a 'deity' (神靈), 'mist' (雲氣), and 'vital energy' or 'spirit' (元氣). This third connotation also was a mythic allusion to the cool vapours that arose when a dragon—the fabled ancestor of the Chinese people (and an imperial symbol)—took flight. Moreover, mist was a common trope to describe the colourful aura emitted by a king or an emperor, i.e., the kingly aura (王氣), the imperial aura (帝王氣), or the son-of-heaven aura (天子氣). These rhetorical allusions to ancient myth and the imperial past were central to the apotheosis of Sun as Father of the Nation in the 1929 Funeral Train Rally Tour, and they epitomised the cultural construction of Sun into a venerable ancestral spirit. They were, as Prasenjit Duara has shown in *Rescuing History from the Nation*, the aporia that enabled the party state to bridge a break with the past and anchor representations of the historic past in a timeless present.<sup>30</sup>

However, disagreements over proposed troop reductions with north-western warlords threatened the Funeral Train Rally Tour as it travelled across the North China Plain. First, Yan Xishan blocked Chiang Kai-shek from attending the funeral rallies in Peking when he forbade central government troops from accompanying the train north of the Yellow River.<sup>31</sup> Feng Yuxiang then threatened to block the funeral train in mid-May when his army sabotaged bridges and tracks along the Peking-Hankou and Longhai railways. The Nationalist Party therefore launched a campaign on *Propaganda Report*, accusing Feng of being an unfilial son (忤逆) to Sun and expelling him from the party, as Chiang moved central government troops to counter Feng in Henan. As a result, Chiang was unable to join the funeral train until it reached Bengbu on the return trip from Peking.<sup>32</sup>

Despite these challenges, the Nationalists continued to prepare for Sun's state funeral. In Nanjing, Nationalist Radio laid ten kilometres of cable from central party headquarters to Sun's mausoleum on Purple Mountain and installed a public address system to broadcast the event on 1 June.<sup>33</sup> It also dispatched the second cohort of radio operators to set up reception points along Zhongshan Road so that Nanjing residents could listen to the funeral ceremony over loudspeakers.<sup>34</sup> When the funeral train returned to the capital city on 28 May, the

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<sup>29</sup> I translate *lingshuang* 靈爽 as 'aura' instead of 'soul' and *weida renge* 偉大人格 as 'great moral character' instead of 'instruction', cf. Harrison, *Republican Citizen*, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 102–03.

<sup>31</sup> Harrison, *Republican Citizen*, 234.

<sup>32</sup> 'Tao Feng xuanchuan yaodian' 討馮宣傳要點, *ZYZB*, no. 51 (27 May 1929): 8.

<sup>33</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 9.

<sup>34</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 9–10; 'Xunlian shouyinyuan', 81–82.

Nationalists organised thousands of party-state officials and members of mass organisations to pay their last respects to Sun as he lay in state at central party headquarters for three days.

Nationalist Radio amplified the enshrinement of Sun Yat-sen not only in Nanjing but also throughout the nation. Using both the sound and silence of the funeral ceremony, Nationalist Radio broadcast the entire event from Purple Mountain to its primary audience—party-state cadres—and a growing number of radio owners. Most importantly, radio coverage of the event reached a much larger secondary audience of print readers, who obtained news and information via the radio-operator network, and who participated in smaller-scale commemoration ceremonies held by local party organisations in communities nationwide. *Propaganda Report* called on listeners to follow the Nationalist Party because it remained true to Sun's teachings and sought to realise his vision for a modern China, urging them 'to make the spirit of the Party Director our spirit' in order to keep Sun's revolutionary legacy alive in the hearts and minds of the people.<sup>35</sup>

On the morning of the interment, roughly 10,000 people representing party-state offices and mass organisations set out from central party headquarters at 4.00 a.m. in a disciplined procession and arrived at the foot of Purple Mountain by 9.30 a.m.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps it was this early morning march and the long trek to the funeral site that prompted a British diplomat to note that the well-organised funeral cortege seemed like a bureaucratic affair with little public interest along the route. Or, perhaps, he was unaware that apart from the mourners attending the ceremony on-site, a national audience was listening to a live broadcast of the enshrinement, and an even larger audience would later consume news reports, photographic stills, and video images of a disciplined and orderly funeral procession for the man who had urged his compatriots to correct the perception that China was the sick man of Asia.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Nationalist Radio transmitted the funeral ceremony to listeners nationwide at a speed of 300,000 kilometres per second. After the emcee instructed mourners to bow three-times towards Sun and listen to the auspicious boom of a 101-gun salute—a Western military honour reserved for an emperor or a king—the emcee then directed mourners on-site and on-air to lower their heads for three minutes of silent contemplation, as work and traffic stopped across the nation to pay tribute to the spirit of Sun Yat-sen.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Feng'an shilu, 64a.

<sup>36</sup> Yizhou Dashi Shuping 一週大事述評, *ZYZB*, no. 52 (2 June 1929): 1.

<sup>37</sup> Harrison, *Republican Citizen*, 228–9.

<sup>38</sup> Yizhou Dashi Shuping 一週大事述評, *ZYZB*, no. 50 (20 May 1929): 1. Atatürk of Turkey also had a 101-gun salute in 1938, see Christopher S. Wilson, 'Representing National Identity and Memory in the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 62, no. 2 (June 2009): 227.



## ***Central Memorial Week and the Anti-Japanese Boycott***

*Central Memorial Week* was the centrepiece in Nationalist Radio's weekly programme schedule between 1928 and 1932. A live broadcast of Party Director Memorial Week (總理紀念週) on Monday morning at 9.00 a.m., *Central Memorial Week* evoked the spirit of Sun Yat-sen through the singing of his lyrics in 'Party Song', the recital of his last will, and the application of his teachings to current events. In August 1928, Nationalist Radio set up a cable between the central assembly hall and the Central Station so that a national audience could partake in the one-hour political ritual that resembled a solemn church service.<sup>39</sup> During the programme, party leaders—many of whom were close to Sun—shared allegories and homilies about him to inspire local cadres and imbue their work with higher meaning in a radio talk or political report. The sermon-like radio talks addressed problems of governance or highlighted ongoing propaganda campaigns, channelling the spirit of Sun Yat-sen from central party headquarters to the far reaches of the party state. In this politico-religious programme, the CC Clique instilled in local cadres the revolutionary spirit of Sun in order to inspire them to face the tedious tasks of everyday governance. The CC Clique thus sought to use radio to unify party members in thought and action so that they would act as one across the nation.

The analysis of the Anti-Japanese Boycott in this section will illustrate how Nationalist Radio transformed *Central Memorial Week* into a tool of political tutelage and a weapon of war after the Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents in 1931 and 1932. The first half will introduce Party Director Memorial Week to show how the politico-religious ceremony was designed to foster feelings of fraternity and camaraderie among cadres. The second half will analyse how the CC Clique used the content of *Central Memorial Week* and *Propaganda Report* as a weapon to mobilise the local party organisation to wage economic warfare against Japan.

### *Format and Content of Central Memorial Week*

Being a live programme, the format and content of *Central Memorial Week* derived from the commemoration ceremony for Sun Yat-sen known as Party Director Memorial Week. The ceremony had developed spontaneously among military units in Guangdong after Sun's death in 1925 and soon became a party-wide observance with the promulgation of the Memorial Week Ordinance in February 1926. Before becoming *Central Memorial Week*, central party headquarters had held the hour-long ceremony at 7.00 a.m. so that it would 'not

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<sup>39</sup> 'Diantai dashiji', 4.

impede work' and help party cadre 'cultivate a habit of early rising'.<sup>40</sup> However, the CC Clique moved the event to 9.00 a.m. in 1928 to accommodate its live broadcast on Nationalist Radio.

Central party headquarters attached great importance to attendance at the political ritual. Attendance was mandatory for all party members according to the Memorial Week Ordinance, and any senior cadre who did not hold the ceremony in a local office, or merely feigned compliance, were subject to dismissal. Rank-and-file cadre who accumulated three unexcused absences also were at risk of being punished by the party organisation. The Nationalist Party therefore devised a two-step mechanism to track attendance. At central party headquarters, for example, officials signed a register outside the assembly hall and received a receipt in an attendance booklet that was adorned with Sun's portrait and emblazoned with mottos from his last will and testament.<sup>41</sup> The officials then took their seats before the broadcast began.

*Central Memorial Week* sought to mobilise the party organisation with the Sunist spirit. The ceremony was redolent with the symbolism of Sun Yat-sen and designed to inspire cadres to follow his moral character, spirit of dedication to the revolution, and sacrifice for the nation. In fact, the liturgy included a song whose lyrics were written by Sun, the recitation of a covenant in the form of his last will and testament, obeisance to him based on ancestor worship, moments of silent contemplation, and sermon-like speeches that applied Sunist teachings to current affairs. Moreover, *Central Memorial Week* provided local party offices with a model on which to hold their own commemoration ceremonies each week, and it extended the ritual experience from the party centre to radio-owning households nationwide. Furthermore, the programme was a weekly reaffirmation that the party state was the true heir of Sun's revolutionary spirit and the bearer of his political legacy, lending sorely needed symbolic legitimacy to the embattled regime.

Nationalist Radio broadcast *Central Memorial Week* for the first time on 3 September 1929, and it continued to do so throughout the radio nationalisation of the party state. On Mondays at 9.00 a.m., Nationalist Radio aired Party Director Memorial Week in a one-hour timeslot.<sup>42</sup> The highest-ranking cadre in attendance that day chaired the ceremony, which was

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<sup>40</sup> Chen Yunxi 陈蕴茜, 'Shijian, yishi weidu zhong de "Zongli jinianzhou"' 时间,仪式维度中的'总理纪念周', *Kaifang shidai* 开放时代, no. 4 (2005): 65; 'Zhongyang dangbu jinianzhou yi an' 中央黨部紀念週議案, *Guomin zhengfu gongbao* 國民政府公報, Ningzi 寧字, no. 4 (1 June 1927): 2.

<sup>41</sup> 'Zhonghua Minguo Guomindang jinianzhou tiaoli' 中華民國國民黨紀念週條例, *Guomin zhengfu gongbao* 國民政府公報, Ningzi, no. 4 (1 June 1927): 1–2; 'Jinianzhou yian', 2–3.

<sup>42</sup> 'Zhongyang banfa tongyi juxing jinianzhou tiaoli yaodian ji yizhu judu, zongli jinianzhou tiaoli' 中央頒發統一舉行紀念週條例要點及遺囑句讀總理紀念週條例, *Hubei sheng zhengfu gongbao* 湖北省政府公報, no. 53 (1 July 1929): 67.

an indication of its importance to the party organisation. The ritual was led by a master of ceremonies, and a secretary transcribed the chairman's talk in the final part of the service. Consisting of five segments, the programme began with the emcee announcing the start of the ceremony. He then directed attendees to rise for the first segment: the singing of 'Party Song'. Nationalist Radio then played the song on a gramophone over an indoor loudspeaker as the audience listened to a long instrumental introduction before singing the lyrics:

The Three Principles of the People,  
Are what our party follows,  
To rebuild the Republic,  
To enter the Great Unity.

Oh, you many men of merit,  
Be the vanguard of the people,  
Morning and night never idle,  
Always obey the Doctrine.

Vow to be diligent, vow to be brave,  
You must be true, you must be loyal,  
Be of one heart and one mind,  
Persevere from beginning to end.<sup>43</sup>

'Party Song' had not always been part of *Central Memorial Week*, but it became a part of the liturgy in April 1929.<sup>44</sup> Nationalist Radio founder Dai Jitao proposed creating a party anthem in October 1928 and recommended that its lyrics use a poem written by Sun Yat-sen for the opening of the Huangpu Military Academy in 1924. The propaganda department thus held a song writing competition, inviting composers to create a musical score for the poem. From among 139 submissions, the party announced the winning entry in January 1929. The song was written by Cheng Maoyun, a young music teacher from Jiangxi who had read voice and composition at Tokyo Music Academy.<sup>45</sup> His score was a western-style anthem that used modern music theory to construct four-part vocal harmonies with an orchestral accompaniment to express the solemn spirit of Sun and his nationalist revolution.

The second segment in *Central Memorial Week* segued from the aestheticisation of Sun Yat-sen in song to the observance of a religious rite in ancestor worship. While still standing after the party anthem, the emcee directed participants to bow three times towards a giant portrait of Sun that hung above the assembly hall stage, just as a filial son would show

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<sup>43</sup> 'Jinianzhou tiaoli yaodian', 67.

<sup>44</sup> 'Zhongguo Guomindang geji dangbu lianchang dangge zanxingfa' 中國國民黨各級黨部練唱黨歌暫行辦法, ZDYK, no. 9 (April 1929): 7–8.

<sup>45</sup> 'Kuomintang Party Song', *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 14, no. 3 (July 1930): 389–90.

reverence towards an ancestor or a secret society member would show devotion to fictive kin. As the emcee counted in a crisp measured cadence, the cadres at central party headquarters publicly demonstrated their obeisance to the Father of the Nation with three deep bows.

The third segment featured the recitation of the Will of Sun Yat-sen, which was a political testament that Sun had signed while lying on his deathbed in Peking in March 1925. Sun's will was ubiquitous during the Nanjing Decade. In addition to appearing at the front of Nationalist Party publications, every party meeting began with a recitation of his last testament. It was at this point that the emcee introduced the chair of the ceremony to act as an officiant. The chair then approached the microphone to lead the congregation in reciting the will, using pauses that were prescribed by the propaganda department to enhance its emotional effect:

I have devoted myself to the Nationalist Revolution...  
For forty years...  
My goal was to seek freedom and equality for China...  
In view of my forty years of experience...  
I am deeply aware that if we wish to attain this goal...  
We must awaken the people...  
And ally with nations of the world that treat us equally...  
To struggle together.

The revolution has yet to succeed...  
All my comrades...  
You must act in accordance with my writings...  
Programme for National Reconstruction...  
Fundamentals of National Reconstruction...  
Three Principles of the People...  
And Manifesto of the First Congress of Representatives...  
Continue to endeavour...  
To seek their effectuation.

Our recent stance...  
To convene the National Assembly...  
And abolish unequal treaties...  
We must particularly in the shortest time...  
Hasten their realisation...  
This is my heartfelt charge to you.<sup>46</sup>

The recitation of this on-air political testament resembled a religious covenant, establishing a commitment by party members to follow Sun's teachings and complete his revolution.

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<sup>46</sup> 'Jinianzhou tiaoli yaodian', 67. Wording is based on Price's translation with modifications—the final line follows Price verbatim, see Sun Yat-sen, 'Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Will' in *San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People*, trans. Frank W. Price 畢範宇, ed. L.T. Chen 陳立廷 (Shanghai: China Committee, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1927), n.p.

The fourth segment connected the daily effort of each party cadre to Sun's revolution. Here, the emcee directed cadres to bow their heads towards Sun's portrait, contemplate his charge to them, and reflect upon their own work in relation to Sun's unfinished revolution. Silence filled the airwaves, bringing together cadres and the audience in quiet contemplation. This period of meditation was followed by the final segment of the programme—the radio talk by the ceremony chair—before the emcee concluded the service and dismissed the congregation. *Central Memorial Week* then ended and Nationalist Radio went off-air until noon.

### *The Function of Central Memorial Week*

Once *Central Memorial Week* concluded at 10.00 a.m., the propaganda work began. Nationalist Radio then set out to forge a cohesive party organisation that not only shared a common belief system and ritual experience, but also shared a common purpose and action plan. The work happened behind the scenes at the station building, where the ceremony's emcee and secretary completed a transcript of the programme's radio talk and circulated it to major publications.<sup>47</sup> In local party offices, radio operators finished their programme transcripts and distributed those to other print media outlets. In addition, party offices at all levels held memorial week ceremonies whose content often derived from *Central Memorial Week* and *Propaganda Report*. This effect was further magnified by local public stations that broadcast their own memorial week ceremonies and circulated programme transcripts locally to cultivate the Sunist spirit in their communities. The Nationalists thus embedded propaganda in *Central Memorial Week* to produce a steady flow of consistent information that cascaded from the party centre to party-state offices at the provincial, municipal, and county level.

The CC Clique used *Central Memorial Week* as a tool of governance to promote political tutelage and mobilise local party offices to agitate for collective political action in their communities. In radio talks and political reports in *Central Memorial Week*, party leaders applied Sunist teachings to contemporary problems and elaborated party-state positions on current affairs, which is precisely what Sun Yat-sen had intended when he published *The Three Principles of the People*. In fact, Sun hoped cadres would apply his ideas to new situations and improve upon his work so that his teachings would become like a 'propaganda textbook'.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Chen, 'Zongli jinian zhou', 65–66; 'Guomin zhengfu xunling di liu ba ling hao' 國民政府訓令第六八〇號, *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, no. 645 (11 December 1930): 5.

<sup>48</sup> Sun, 'Author's Preface', *Sun Min Chu I*, xii; *Sun Zhongshan xiansheng yijiao* 孫中山先生遺教, bk. 2 (Shanghai: Minzhi shuju, 1928), 451–52.

Although Western critics derided Sun's thought for lacking philosophical rigour, their analyses overlooked the primary function of Sunist teachings: to serve as political propaganda. According to Paul Linebarger, Sun's critics ignored that 'virtually all his writings and speeches were occasional pieces, improvisations designed as propaganda'.<sup>49</sup> Robert Bedeski advanced Linebarger's interpretation in his analysis of Sunism as an ideology, noting that Sun was 'more interested in action than theory'.<sup>50</sup> Bedeski further argued that Sunism functioned as 'a prelude to action' and that 'its articulation is intrinsically linked to the form of action which will follow'.<sup>51</sup> It was in this tradition that the CC Clique produced broadcast propaganda.

The CC Clique's conception of broadcast propaganda was deeply rooted in education. Chen Guofu regarded propaganda as having an educational and informative aspect, which required two very different methods of delivery. When used for moral, intellectual, and political edification, i.e., political tutelage, he believed in 'the more, the better'. Chen considered that information about government achievements in the form of news, however, should only be based on fact and should not be excessively promoted to avoid 'reducing the value of fact'.<sup>52</sup> Unlike in the West, the Nationalists regarded 'propaganda' (*xuanchuan* 宣傳) positively after the Chinese language borrowed the lexeme from Japan following the First World War, and adopting a Leninist party system and Soviet propaganda methods in the mid 1920s.<sup>53</sup> Nationalist Radio often used the term *xuanchuan* as a noun and a verb in the sense of 'to promote' or 'promotion'. In fact, Nationalist Radio also applied the term to both commercial advertising and religious programming on private broadcasting stations.<sup>54</sup> Considering themselves awakened elite, the CC Clique sought 'to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct the behaviour' of party cadres so that they would respond to calls to action from the party centre and organise mobilisation campaigns in their local communities.<sup>55</sup> With this

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Myron Anthony Linebarger, *The Political Doctrines of Sun Yat-sen: An Exposition of the San Min Chu I* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press First Greenwood Reprinting, 1973), 18.

<sup>50</sup> Bedeski, 'Tutelary State', 317.

<sup>51</sup> Bedeski, 311–12.

<sup>52</sup> Chen Guofu 陳果夫, 'Xuanchuan wenti' 宣傳問題, *CGFXSQJ*, vol. 5, 198–99.

<sup>53</sup> Ohlberg, Mareike Svea, 'Creating a Favorable International Public Opinion Environment: External Propaganda (Duiwai Xuanchuan) as a Global Concept with Chinese Characteristics' (PhD Diss.: Heidelberg University, 2013), 41–115.

<sup>54</sup> Xingzheng yuan xinwenju 行政院新聞局, 'Guangbo shiye' 廣播事業, November 1947, ([Nanjing]: Xingzheng yuan xinwenju, 1947), 22; Zhang Daofan 張道藩, 'Chen Guofu xiansheng yu Zhongguo guangbo shiye' 陳果夫先生與中國廣播事業, in *Chen Guofu xiansheng bainian danchen jinianji* 陳果夫先生百年誕辰紀念集, ed. Chen Guofu xiansheng bainian danchen jinianji choubei weiyuanhui 陳果夫先生百年誕辰紀念集籌備委員會 (hereafter *CGFXSBDJ*) (Taipei: Jindai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1991), 276; 'Zanding minying diantai boyin jiemu shijian biao zhun shuoming' 暫定民營電台播音節目時間標準表說明, *GBZB*, 10 April 1937, 28.

<sup>55</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 7–17.

understanding in mind, the last half of this chapter analyses *Central Memorial Week* and *Propaganda Report* during the Anti-Japanese Boycott to show this functionality, as the Nationalist Party drew on the Sunist spirit to mobilise both the party and the people to wage economic warfare against Japan.

### *Mobilising the Anti-Japanese Boycott*

The lightening advance of Japan's Kwantung Army across Manchuria in September 1931 shocked both China and the world. In the wake of the invasion, the CC Clique used Nationalist Radio to facilitate the swift mobilisation and real-time coordination of the local party organisation via *Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week*. As Chinese troops under Zhang Xueliang withdrew from the northeast, Nationalist Radio presented the Nationalist strategy to counter Japanese aggression in *Propaganda Report*, and it embedded key propaganda messaging in political reports and radio talks in *Central Memorial Week*. The CC Clique also further sharpened Nationalist Radio into a weapon of war after the Shanghai Incident. In the absence of a truly national news agency or telegraph network, Nationalist Radio coordinated party-state communications to respond to Japanese aggression, especially after the Nationalist Government quit Nanjing for Luoyang in February 1931. While in the temporary capital, the party presidium placed Nationalist Radio in charge of the central secretariat's top-secret radiotelegraphic communications at Station XHZ in addition to its regular operations.<sup>56</sup>

In 1931 and 1932, the CC Clique used Nationalist Radio to launch an effective and sustained boycott against Japan despite party-state leaders and central government institutions being scattered across the country. In a move that foreshadowed future responses to later emergencies, Nationalist Radio pre-empted entertainment programming to concentrate all its resources on producing news and information to mobilise the party state against Japan.<sup>57</sup> In the days after the invasion, the CC Clique called on local party-state offices to organise a widespread boycott against Japan, arguing that the planned and organised invasion of Manchuria must be met with a planned, organised, and continuous response by the party state.<sup>58</sup> Nationalist Radio therefore instructed party offices in *Propaganda Report* to revive a waning boycott that had been in place since the Wanbaoshan Incident in June 1931.<sup>59</sup> The local party

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<sup>56</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 14–16.

<sup>57</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 14.

<sup>58</sup> 'Kang Ri yuwu wanjiu weiwang xuanchuan dagang' 抗日禦侮挽救危亡宣傳大綱, *ZYZB*, no. 174 (5 October 1931): 14.

<sup>59</sup> The Wanbaoshan Incident was as a minor land dispute between Chinese and Korean settlers in Manchuria that resulted in the massacre of hundreds of Chinese residents in Japanese-held Chosen (Korea).

organisation thus began to mobilise Anti-Japanese Associations to intensify the existing boycott and promote the national goods movement in order to apply more pressure on Japanese economic interests in China.<sup>60</sup> In the months that followed, Nationalist Radio conveyed the tactics and rationale of this two-fold strategy in daily broadcasts of *Propaganda Report*, and party leaders infused their weekly talks in *Central Memorial Week* with Sunist spirit and allegory to boost rank-and-file morale and encourage grassroots mobilisation.

The Nationalists took steps to mobilise economic warfare against Japan on *Propaganda Report* immediately after the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. To set the tone in the wake of the invasion, Nationalist Radio aired frequent updates from Manchuria and called on cadres to put aside their differences for the good of the nation.<sup>61</sup> It also provided in-depth explanations of the diplomatic effort under way at the League of Nations. Most importantly, however, it instructed local cadres to do no harm to Japanese expatriates so as to deprive Japan of any pretext for expanding the conflict. Other than that proscription, local cadre ‘were permitted to the greatest extent possible to proceed calmly anytime and anywhere’ when carrying out the anti-Japanese boycott.<sup>62</sup> The campaign slogans on *Propaganda Report* called on the people to ‘struggle to the end’ with Japanese imperialism,<sup>63</sup> asking them to follow a policy of Gandhi-style ‘non-cooperation’ and ‘the severing of economic relations’.<sup>64</sup> The Nationalists thus targeted all Japanese economic interests in China, broadening the scope of previous boycotts that focused solely on products to include services too.<sup>65</sup> In addition to delivering daily information on the boycott of goods and services, *Propaganda Report* instructed Anti-Japanese Associations on how to implement a National Salvation Programme, which included an investment plan to displace Japanese commercial interests in local textile, shipping, and finance industries.<sup>66</sup>

Anti-Japanese Associations under the leadership of local merchants and party activists mobilised communities in anti-Japanese rallies in late September and formed investigation

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<sup>60</sup> ‘Wuhu! Ri jun jing zhanling wo dongbei ge yaodi yi’ 嗚呼!日軍竟佔領我東北各要地矣, *ZYZB*, no. 172 (21 September 1931): n.p. [before 1].

<sup>61</sup> ‘Wuhu!’, n.p. ; ‘Zhongyang zhi geji dangbu jidian’ 中央致各級黨部急電, *ZYZB*, no. 172 (21 September 1931): n.p. [before 1].

<sup>62</sup> ‘Kangri yuwu’, 14.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Zhongyang xuanchuanbu banfa dui Ri xuanchuan biao’ 中央宣傳部頒發對日宣傳標語, *ZYZB*, no. 173 (28 September 1931): 8–9.

<sup>64</sup> ‘Kangri yuwu’, 14.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Kangri yuwu’, 14.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Shanghai quan shi dangyuan yiding jiuguo fang’an’ 上海全市黨員議定救國方案, *ZYZB*, no. 174 (5 October 1931): 9.



teams to monitor local shop inventories for Japanese goods.<sup>67</sup> Businesses were required to register any Japanese merchandise in stock, which the Anti-Japanese Association then auctioned off to fund Chinese ventures that would undermine Japanese interests in China, the most prominent of which were in the textile industry.<sup>68</sup> For example, the Anti-Japanese Association of Shanghai seized \$1,270,000 of registered Japanese goods from local merchants over a two-week period ending 10 December 1931, and it planned to auction the goods off and donate the proceeds to the national salvation fund for industrial development.<sup>69</sup> The effectiveness of the zealous Anti-Japanese Associations, however, prompted Japan to attack Shanghai in late January 1932 to protect its commercial interests in China.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to Anti-Japanese Associations, *Propaganda Report* mobilised the local party organisation to form a Volunteer Army (義勇軍) to harness the energy of student outrage. On 25 September, Nationalist Radio directed local offices to mobilise secondary and university students into Youth Voluntary Army units to promote economic sanctions against Japan, and primary schools organised pupils into Child Voluntary Army units. Students and teachers took an oath to forego Japanese goods and wore a blue-and-white insignia on the left breast of their school uniform that read ‘united and brave, wipe away the shame and save the nation!’.<sup>71</sup> However, the volunteers were not headed onto the battlefields of North China. Their mission in the short term was to form propaganda teams on city streets and promote the Anti-Japanese Boycott after school; however, their long-term mission was to apply their learning towards the development of local industry to displace the need for Japanese goods. The Nationalists thus attempted to channel the students’ energy towards learning and officially sanctioned activism, explicitly prohibiting them from going on strike. Each day in morning assembly, students nationwide shouted the slogans: ‘Forever be loyal and brave citizens, swear to wash away China’s national humiliation, recover Chinese territory, rejuvenate the Chinese nation: Long live the Three Principles of the People! Long live the Republic of China!’.<sup>72</sup>

Although the Anti-Japanese Associations and Volunteer Army largely obeyed the party’s injunction against violence towards Japanese citizens and their property during the

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<sup>67</sup> Yizhou Dashi Huishu 一週大事彙述, *ZYZB*, no. 173 (28 September 1931): 4–9.

<sup>68</sup> LoN, ‘Appeal by the Chinese Government: Report of the LoN Commission of Inquiry’, 1 October 1932, Series of LoN Publications, VII. Political 1932. VII. 12 (Geneva: LoN, 1932), 117.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Japanese Goods Sealed Up’, *North-China Daily News*, 14 December 1931, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Donald A. Jordan, *China’s Trial by Fire: The Shanghai War of 1932* (The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Yiyongjun jiaoyu gangling’ 義勇軍教育綱領, *ZYZB*, no. 173 (28 September 1931): 9–10.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Yiyongjun jiaoyu gangling’ 義勇軍教育綱領, *ZYZB*, no. 174 (5 October 1931): 15–16.

boycott, a fact that the Lytton Commission noted in its report, boycott activists did not spare compatriots who were found violating the ban on Japanese goods and services.<sup>73</sup> In fact, they often dispensed public humiliation and organised violence against Chinese violators in the name of ‘economic warfare’.<sup>74</sup> The Nationalist Party thereby targeted the domestic source of demand for Japanese goods and services. At the same time, it applied further economic pressure on Japanese commercial interests abroad through the mobilisation of Chinese communities in Southeast Asia who dominated international trade, shipping, and finance in the region.<sup>75</sup>

### *Motivating the Party during the Anti-Japanese Boycott*

The solemn setting of *Central Memorial Week* was an important forum for party leaders to speak directly to local cadres about the conflict with Japan and establish a personal connection with the rank and file on the airwaves. In fact, one of the most important goals of holding the Monday ceremony was ‘to strengthen the bonds of friendship between comrades’.<sup>76</sup> The party leadership therefore sought to connect the everyday duties that cadres performed with the existential struggle against Japan in *Central Memorial Week*. Referring to themselves as ‘younger brother’ and addressing the audience as ‘comrades’, Nationalist leaders provided local cadres with updates on the political situation and promoted the boycott. For example, Shao Lizi urged cadres to continue the mass mobilisation campaign on 28 September 1931. He also challenged them to disprove Japanese ridicule that Chinese suffered from ‘five-minute enthusiasm’ and ‘extreme selfishness’, owing to a tendency for ‘everyone to look out only for oneself’.<sup>77</sup> To conclude, he encouraged them to continue to follow the path of ‘non-cooperation’ and ‘sever economic relations’ for at least six more months, arguing that Japan would restrain the Kwantung Army once the financial costs of military aggression grew too dear.

*Central Memorial Week* also played an important part in boosting local cadre morale. After the initial shock of the Manchurian Incident subsided, talks on *Central Memorial Week* imbued everyday tasks with patriotic significance as the party leadership attempted to maintain an esprit de corps among local apparatchiks. For example, Wu Tiecheng spoke on 12 October,

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<sup>73</sup> LoN, ‘Report’, 116.

<sup>74</sup> Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia Center, 2003), 179.

<sup>75</sup> LoN, ‘Appeal by the Chinese Government: Supplementary Documents to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry’, 1 November 1932, Series of LoN Publications, VII. Political 1932. VII. 14 (Geneva: LoN, 1932), 234.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Zenyang zuo zongli jinianzhou’ 怎樣做總理紀念週, *Guizhou linshi zhengwu weiyuanhui gongbao* 貴州臨時政務委員會公報 (15 August 1929): 72–73.

<sup>77</sup> Shao Lizi 邵力子, ‘Juguo shangxia tuanjie qilai nuli ziji’ 舉國上下團結起來努力自救, *ZYZB*, no. 174 (5 October 1931): 4.

urging cadres to suppress the impulse to react with passion because it was unsustainable; instead, he told them that rational devotion to duty was required in the struggle to defeat Japanese aggression.<sup>78</sup> On 2 November, Ye Chucang enjoined cadres to remain loyal to their administrative duties instead of enlisting in the volunteer army to fight in Manchuria, arguing that carrying out office work under enemy artillery fire was no less courageous than that of the volunteers on the battlefield.<sup>79</sup> On 16 November, Yu Youren portrayed the crisis as an existential struggle and identified the spirit of Sun Yat-sen as the key ingredient to making the nationalist revolution a success:

The significance of holding Memorial Week is that we should always make progress with our regular work, advancing day by day, and bring it to a conclusion each week. That is, we shall build the nation with the party and govern the nation with the party in the great spirit of the Party Director. And, with the principles of the party, we shall bring about Great Unity in the world and complete our revolutionary mission.

How can we advance work in the great spirit of the Party Director? Because the spirit of the Party Director is outstanding amid diversity and boldly advances without fear, no matter what the difficulty, no matter what the danger, if it is handled in the spirit of the Party Director, there is no way that cannot be opened, there is no thing that cannot be achieved. There also is no undertaking that cannot be realised. In other words, if we use the principles of the Party Director and the spirit of the Party Director to transform China and build China, we can certainly fulfil our wish to put China in a position of rock-like stability. Comrades, please take this meaning to heart.<sup>80</sup>

Dai Jitao further expounded on one's loyalty to duty in the next broadcast on 23 November, the final day of the Nationalists' Fourth National Congress.<sup>81</sup> In his radio talk, Dai called on all party members to swear an oath to Sun Yat-sen's spirit in heaven 'to do our best to fully contribute all knowledge and ability to our duty and calling' because 'loyalty to duty is the true way to save the nation, and also the true kung fu to build the nation'.<sup>82</sup>

After the Manchurian Incident, the Nationalist party state was truly in need of saving. The government was on verge of insolvency and was hard pressed to pay the salaries of its soldiers, let alone finance the building of a modern economy. Moreover, Chiang Kai-shek's strategy to quell internal rebellion before resisting Japan was extremely unpopular within the party and the public. Amid violent student protests and the exacerbation of an existing split

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<sup>78</sup> Wu Tiecheng 吳鐵城, 'Dui bao Ri ying ruhe fuchou xuezchi' 對暴日應如何復仇雪恥, *ZYZB*, no. 176 (19 October 1931): 4–5.

<sup>79</sup> Ye Chucang 葉楚傖, 'Aiguo xu zhongyu zhiwu' 愛國須忠於職務, *ZDYK*, no. 41 (December 1931): 2844–45.

<sup>80</sup> Yu Youren 于右任, 'Bendang de shengsi guantou' 本黨的生死關頭, *ZDYK*, no. 41 (December 1931), 2830.

<sup>81</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Dai Jitao, 'Jinzhong zhiwu shi jiuguo de weiyi tujing' 盡忠職務是救國的惟一途徑, *ZDYK*, no. 41 (December 1931): 2842–44.

between Chiang and the Guangdong arm of the party, Chiang resigned in mid-December.<sup>83</sup> On the eve of his departure, Dai Jitao invoked Sun Yat-sen in an apology for Chiang on *Central Memorial Week*: ‘Foreign aggression is not worthy of concern. Foreign enemies are not deserving of worry. What is worrisome is that we ourselves cannot unite as one’.<sup>84</sup> The Guangdong faction then assumed control of the party state just before Japan attacked Shanghai, which returned Chiang to power in a new coalition with Wang Jingwei.<sup>85</sup>

### *Nationalist Radio in the Shanghai Incident*

Japan invaded Shanghai on 28 January 1932 despite the fact that China had already acceded to Tokyo’s demand to disband the Anti-Japanese Associations and stop the boycott.<sup>86</sup> The fighting quickly blocked transport, stopped telegraph traffic, and halted newspaper production in the region, making broadcasting an even more important source of news and information.<sup>87</sup> Jiangsu Provincial Chairman Gu Zhutong ordered the establishment of three broadcasting stations on the coast to issue government announcements and calm the public.<sup>88</sup> In Shanghai, Nationalist Radio joined Amateurs Home Radio and other local stations to relay a programme called *Voice amid the National Crisis* to satisfy nationwide demand for timely updates on the fighting,<sup>89</sup> which sparked the subsequent radio boom of 1932.<sup>90</sup>

The invasion of Shanghai thus transformed Nationalist Radio into a weapon of war. The previous tone of *Central Memorial Week* turned from an inward focus on cadre behaviour to an outward expression of open defiance against Japan. While the fighting raged on 8 February, Zhu Jiahua (朱家驊) declared that the time had come to stand up to Japan and teach it a lesson, warning that Japan should not mistake China’s previous restraint in Manchuria for submission. He also declared that Japan’s recent proposal to treat Shanghai and Manchuria as separate issues was delusional.<sup>91</sup> The rhetoric grew bolder over the next fortnight as the

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<sup>83</sup> Jordan, *Trial by Fire*, 5–6, 16.

<sup>84</sup> Dai Jitao 戴季陶, ‘Minguo mingri de xiwang’ 民國明日的希望, *ZDYK*, no. 41 (December 1931): 2835.

<sup>85</sup> Jordan, *Trial by Fire*, 6.

<sup>86</sup> Jordan, *Trial by Fire*, 10–43; LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 221.

<sup>87</sup> Yin Na 殷訥, ‘Shanghai guangbo wuxian diantai zhi jingguo’ 上海廣播無線電台之經過, *Wuxiandian wenda huikan: Guangbo tekan* 無線電問答匯刊:廣播特刊, 10 October 1932, 336.

<sup>88</sup> Zhejiang sheng zhengfu dian junzheng buzhang He Yingqin 浙江省政府電軍政部長何應欽 [Zhejiang provincial government telegram to Ministry of Military Administration Department He Yingqin], 5 February 1932, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection] 002000002927A.

<sup>89</sup> Zhao, *Guangbo dianshi tongshi*, 7 March 1937, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Hu Daojin 胡道靜, ‘Shanghai guangbo wuxian diantai de fazhan’ 上海廣播無線電台的發展, *XGOI boyin erzhoukan* XGOI 播音二週刊, 21 March 1937, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊, ‘Yi xin yi de wei guo xisheng’ 一心一德的為國犧牲, *ZDYK*, no. 42–44 (March 1932): 90–91.

Nineteenth Route Army disproved the assumption that Japanese troops would ‘occupy Shanghai in four hours; occupy China in three months’.<sup>92</sup> On 15 February, Chen Zhaoying further argued that Japan would fail—despite its superior military—because the invasion was without virtue and faced political opposition in Tokyo.<sup>93</sup> The next week as Japanese companies faced immediate cash calls from New York banks to settle their debts,<sup>94</sup> Ju Zheng questioned Japan’s ability to fight a protracted war given its reliance on China as a source of raw materials and a dumping ground for unsold goods, arguing that ‘the so-called national wealth of Japan is nothing more than a paper tiger that cannot withstand one poke’.<sup>95</sup> Then, on 29 February, the same day that the Lytton Commission arrived to Tokyo and Japanese troops landed behind Chinese lines in Shanghai, an artist and rising star in the party, Zhang Daofan (張道藩), delivered a report on the fighting. Zhang declared that the Battle of Shanghai symbolised the awakening of China’s national spirit—what he called ‘the first roar of the sleeping lion in East Asia’—and that the strong defence of the city had changed Western perceptions of China.<sup>96</sup>

Although the fighting in Shanghai soon ended with the evacuation of Chinese troops, *Central Memorial Week* continued to focus on the other front of the Sino-Japanese conflict: the economic boycott of goods and services. On 4 April, Zhu Jiahua shared his personal assessment of the Anti-Japanese Boycott, which had become the primary target of Japanese protests and a focal point of the League of Nation’s inquiry. Zhu countered Japanese claims that xenophobia motivated the boycott, and he defended the movement by citing successful examples of foreign investment in China. Zhu therefore laid full blame for the boycott on Japan, asserting that the movement was a defensive measure in response to the Manchurian Incident. He also tied ending the boycott to Japan ending its invasion, stating: ‘whether or not this kind of movement of the Chinese people can be moderated depends on whether or not Japanese soldiers can abandon military aggression’.<sup>97</sup>

As the Lytton Commission was about to depart Peking for Manchuria on 18 April, Dai Jitao appeared again on *Central Memorial Week* to advocate for the National Goods

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<sup>92</sup> Jordon, *Trial by Fire*, 27, 27n9.

<sup>93</sup> Chen Zhaoying 陳肇英, ‘Daode yu kexue hu wei liguo zhi ben’ 道德與科學互為立國之本, *ZDYK*, no. 42–44 (March 1932): 91–92.

<sup>94</sup> ‘105,000 in U.S. Ask Boycott of Japanese Goods’, *China Press*, 27 February 1932, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Ju Zheng 居正, “‘Ribei guo fu’ zhi gujia” ‘日本國富’之估價, *ZDYK*, no. 42–44 (March 1932): 93–94.

<sup>96</sup> Zhang Daofan 張道藩, ‘Dongya shuishi zhi diyisheng nuhou’ 東亞睡獅之第一聲怒吼, *ZDYK*, no. 42–44 (March 1932): 94–96.

<sup>97</sup> Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊, ‘Bao Ri dui Hua qinlue zhenxiang’ 暴日對華侵略真相, *ZDYK*, no. 45–46 (May 1932): 194–199.

Movement.<sup>98</sup> Drawing a parallel between China in 1932 and the Balkans Wars of 1912–1913, Dai argued that China must develop a self-sufficient national economy to supply the grain, clothing, weapons, and steel needed to defend itself against foreign powers like Japan and prevent the balkanisation of China's periphery. Rather than 'rely on the heavens to rain down all the everyday foreign products' that China needed in wartime, Dai argued that the National Goods Movement could supply those things, and that China could achieve true equality as a nation by engaging with other world civilisations and restoring traditional values.<sup>99</sup>

### *Nationalist Radio and the Boycott*

Nationalist Radio was pivotal in creating a sense of community among the local party organisation and mobilising an effective Anti-Japanese Boycott after the Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents. The CC Clique did this through the weekly invocation of the spirit of Sun Yat-sen on *Central Memorial Week* and *Propaganda Report* and the organisation of on-the-ground boycott activities in cities across China. An American reporter who witnessed the boycott claimed that it was 'a nation-wide boycott, a boycott such as China, the past master of the art of boycott, had never known before'.<sup>100</sup> In fact, the Lytton Commission in its final report concluded that the boycott had been 'the most extensive, best organised and probably most efficient movement of its kind ever launched by the Chinese against Japanese economic interests'.<sup>101</sup> Nationalist Radio was one of the most important tools in the Nationalist Party's propaganda kit to promote the boycott because it enabled the CC Clique to quickly mobilise the party organisation nationwide and channel popular patriotic fervour against Japanese business interests in China. As a result, the CC Clique provided local party offices with a standard blueprint to organise Anti-Japanese Associations in order to replicate the boycott in local communities and promote the National Goods Movement across the nation. Nationalist Radio therefore was an effective way for China, as the weaker party in the conflict, to organise 'the use of the boycott as a defensive weapon' against Japanese aggression.<sup>102</sup>

The Anti-Japanese Boycott and the National Goods Movement had a devastating impact on the sale of Japanese goods and services in China. While bilateral trade between

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<sup>98</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 15.

<sup>99</sup> Dai Jitao 戴季陶, 'Yu jiu Zhongguo ying hui fu Zhongguo guyou zhi daode zhineng' 欲救中國應恢復中國固有之道的智能, *ZDYK*, no. 45–46 (May 1932): 208–9.

<sup>100</sup> Gerth, *China Made*, 179; quotation from Edna Lee Booker, *News Is My Job: A Correspondent in War-Torn China* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 248.

<sup>101</sup> LoN, 'Supplementary Documents', 217.

<sup>102</sup> LoN, 'Report', 118.

China and Japan accounted for only 5 percent of total world trade, China was Japan's largest trading partner in Asia, and it was the destination for more than 95 percent of all Japanese foreign direct investment.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, an average of 51 percent of Japan's four primary export items—aquatic products, refined sugar, coal, and cotton tissues—were sold to China.<sup>104</sup> In 1931, the export of Japanese goods to China proper declined 40 percent.<sup>105</sup> However, year-on-year exports to China in the five months after the Manchurian Incident dropped even further, averaging 66 percent per month.<sup>106</sup> The four business sectors most affected by the Anti-Japanese Boycott were textiles, shipping, banking, and trade.

The boycott hit the production of goods in the Japanese textile industry the hardest. This industry was especially vulnerable to the boycott because the export of Japanese cotton textiles to China constituted more than 18 percent of Japan's total export trade. The Lytton Commission also noted that 'a large share of the remainder [of Japanese textiles] goes to Chinese merchants in other parts of Asia, and is consequently subject to boycott measures'. As a result, the annual export of Japanese cotton textiles dropped from eighty-six million yen in 1930—the year before the boycott—to thirty-eight million yen in 1932; moreover, 'wool, silk, and knitted goods were affected in a similar degree'.<sup>107</sup>

The exposure of the textile industry in Japan did not end there, however, because Japanese foreign investment also accounted for nearly 50 percent of all textile spindles operating in China, most of which were in Shanghai.<sup>108</sup> Cotton textile production in Japanese mills dropped precipitously following the invasion of Manchuria, and it stopped altogether after the Shanghai Incident.<sup>109</sup> The industry's troubles further multiplied when the boycott spread to the United States, which bought 42 percent of Japanese exports, the most lucrative of which was raw silk.<sup>110</sup> In just one month after the invasion of Shanghai, more than 105,000 Americans signed a petition supporting the boycott, and Albert Einstein became the face of the movement, going on the radio to promote 'an economic boycott of Japan in order to force her to cease hostilities against China'.<sup>111</sup> This negative publicity startled international financial

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<sup>103</sup> China accounted for nearly two billion yen of Japan's total foreign investment of 2.1 billion yen in 1929, see LoN, 'Supplementary Documents', 232–233, 236.

<sup>104</sup> LoN, 234.

<sup>105</sup> 'Memorandum on the Chinese Boycott', *Memorandum* 2, no. 5 (16 March 1933): 1.

<sup>106</sup> 'Memorandum on the Chinese Boycott of Japanese Goods', *Memorandum* 1, no. 4, (30 March 1932): 2.

<sup>107</sup> 'Chinese Boycott', 3.

<sup>108</sup> LoN, 'Supplementary Documents', 234; 'Boycott of Japanese Goods', 3.

<sup>109</sup> 'Boycott of Japanese Goods', 3.

<sup>110</sup> LoN, 'Supplementary Documents', 234.

<sup>111</sup> '105,000 in U.S.', 1; 'Dr. Einstein Urges Boycott of Japan Goods', *China Press*, 1 March 1932, 1.

markets; as a result, American creditors pressured Japanese clients ‘for immediate cash payment of debts’, and the value of the yen weakened against the dollar ‘due to the reports of the increasing severity of the anti-Japanese boycott in the United States’.<sup>112</sup>

In addition to targeting goods, the boycott also sought to punish Japanese services in the shipping, banking, and trading sectors. In shipping, Japan ranked only behind the United Kingdom in the number of vessels and tonnage in China, and Japanese shipping companies carried more than 27 percent of all Chinese coastal and inland traffic in 1931.<sup>113</sup> However, Japanese vessels virtually disappeared from Chinese waters during the boycott, and carriage on international routes dropped 30 to 90 percent as Chinese travellers boarded passenger ships flying the flags of other nations.<sup>114</sup> In banking, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce forbade commercial transactions with Japanese banks and merchants, thus blocking their access to bills of trade and silver to conduct local transactions.<sup>115</sup> In trade, importers instructed overseas parties not to send cargo on Japanese shipping lines because dockworkers refused to handle it and recipients declined its delivery—regardless of origin—if the freight was carried on a Japanese cargo ship.<sup>116</sup> In addition, the Anti-Japanese Associations also pressured Chinese individuals to sever economic relations in other areas of everyday life. For example, many compradors left Japanese trading houses during the boycott, effectively cutting Japanese traders off from local business networks.<sup>117</sup> Although large Japanese companies could weather the storm, the boycott drove many small and medium firms into bankruptcy by December 1931. For instance, the Lytton Commission reported that sixty Japanese manufacturers in Shanghai closed in October, and the American Council reported that thirty-three of forty Japanese factories with more than thirty employees shut down in November.<sup>118</sup> The Shanghai correspondent for *The New York Times*, George Sokolsky, estimated that Japanese losses in the service sector, what he called ‘invisible items’ like insurance, banking and shipping, were probably equal to or even greater than Japanese losses in the export trade.<sup>119</sup>

While the purpose of the boycott was to pressure Japan through punitive economic measures, the National Goods Movement was intended to develop domestic industry in order

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<sup>112</sup> ‘Tokyo Finances Serious’, *China Press*, 1 March 1932, 1.

<sup>113</sup> LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 237; ‘Boycott of Japanese Goods’, 3.

<sup>114</sup> LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 244.

<sup>115</sup> LoN, 219, 243–244.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Boycott of Japanese Goods’, 3; LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 244.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Boycott of Japanese Goods’, 3.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Boycott of Japanese Goods’, 3; LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 244.

<sup>119</sup> George E. Sokolsky, ‘Big Japanese Loss Shown in 1931 Trade’, *New York Times*, 27 January 1932, 10.



to eliminate the need for Japanese goods through important substitution. According to the Lytton Commission, the expansion of the Chinese textile industry during the boycott was the most representative example of this import substitution strategy.<sup>120</sup> The boycott actually boosted the profitability of Chinese mills as Anti-Japanese Associations forced the closures of Japanese mills and seized Japanese goods in merchant inventories.<sup>121</sup> In the coal industry, increased duties on Japanese coal directed domestic demand to local producers.<sup>122</sup> However, the Anti-Japanese Boycott was not motivated by xenophobia. As Frank Dikötter has shown in *Exotic Commodities*, Chinese consumers preferred foreign things, especially when comparable domestic products were unavailable.<sup>123</sup> This trend continued during the boycott but with a twist: Chinese consumers substituted goods and services from other countries to undermine Japanese economic interests. In fact, the Anti-Japanese Boycott was a boon for Dutch East Indies sugar, Norwegian paper, British shipping, Lancashire textiles, and American cotton.<sup>124</sup> The same was true for radios, as Chinese consumers bought British, German, and Dutch receivers instead of Japanese-made products.<sup>125</sup>

In its five-month inquiry into the Anti-Japanese Boycott in 1932, the Lytton Commission concluded that ‘it is evident that the Nationalist Party is the real driving, organising, co-ordinating and supervising power responsible for the uniformity in methods which particularly characterise the present movement’.<sup>126</sup> The commission recognised the central role of the Nationalist Party in the nationwide boycott, noting that ‘while many separate bodies are involved in the organisation, the main controlling authority is the Kuomintang’.<sup>127</sup>

It rather co-ordinated their efforts, systematised and made uniform their methods, and put unreservedly behind the movement the moral and material weight of its powerful party organisation. Having branches all over the country, possessing vast propaganda and information services, and inspired by a strong nationalist sentiment, it rapidly succeeded in organising and stimulating a movement which had, up to that time, been somewhat sporadic.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> LoN, ‘Report’, 117.

<sup>121</sup> LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 222.

<sup>122</sup> ‘Chinese Boycott’, 3.

<sup>123</sup> Dikötter, *Exotic Communities*, 42–44.

<sup>124</sup> ‘Boycott on Japan Sugar Booms Price of Dutch Products’, *China Press*, 3 December 1931, 5; ‘Japanese Boycott Boosts Norwegian Paper Sales Here’, *China Press*, 12 October 1931, 11; ‘Brevities: City and General’ *China Press*, 22 December 1931, 14; ‘British Textiles Sweep Upward as Pound Falls’, *China Press*, 29 December 1931, 15.

<sup>125</sup> *The Trade of China, 1933*, vol. 3 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1934), 191. American radio sales remained relatively unchanged.

<sup>126</sup> LoN, ‘Supplementary Documents’, 217–218.

<sup>127</sup> LoN, ‘Report’, 119.

<sup>128</sup> LoN, 116.

The Lytton Commission seemed to struggle with the ambiguity between the role of the party and the role of the state when trying to determine the extent of the Chinese government's responsibility for the boycott, since the commission could not ascertain 'at what point the responsibility of the party ends and that of the government begins'.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, the commission claimed that it had evidence to prove that the boycott continued 'in a subterranean way' after the dissolution of the Anti-Japanese Associations in January 1932.<sup>130</sup> The commission also was concerned over whether 'the boycott is a legitimate weapon of defence against military aggression by a stronger country', and whether 'the organised application of the boycott to one particular country is consistent with friendly relations or in conformity with treaty obligations'.<sup>131</sup> The issue was a matter of debate for another day. Yet, if the commission had tuned in to Nationalist Radio, it would have discovered that the boycott had not continued in a subterranean way. The commission would have learned that the converse was true: The Nationalist Party had openly promoted the Anti-Japanese Boycott on Nationalist Radio.

## Conclusion

*Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week* played a central role in the radio nationalisation of the party state between 1928 and 1932 because they extended the physical and conceptual reach of central party headquarters nationwide. By combining radio content and on-the-ground events, these programmes channelled the spirit of the party centre directly to the local level to create a forum for cadres who shared a common cause and were united in action. Thus, the CC Clique cultivated an on-air community to transform the party from a regional organisation into a national governing body. The analysis of the Funeral Train Rally Tour and Sun's state funeral illustrated how the CC Clique used broadcast propaganda as a tool of political tutelage to mobilise local party organisations. It also showed how the CC Clique apotheosised Sun Yat-sen the man into the Spirit of the Party Director and the Father of the Nation. The analysis of the Anti-Japanese Boycott showed how the CC Clique wielded broadcasting like a weapon by using broadcast propaganda to foster camaraderie and mobilise the national party organisation to wage economic warfare against Japan. Together, broadcast propaganda around these two events demonstrate the dual nature of Nationalist Radio as a tool of governance and a weapon of war, and they shine a light on the importance of the cult of Sun Yat-sen to mass mobilisation during the first phase of radio nationalisation.

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<sup>129</sup> LoN, 'Report', 120.

<sup>130</sup> LoN, 'Supplementary Documents', 240.

<sup>131</sup> LoN, 'Report', 120.

## CHAPTER 3: RADIO NATIONALISATION OF THE AUDIENCE, 1933–1935

Radio is in fact, of all Western inventions, probably the one that has the widest appeal to the Chinese masses, and consequently the one that may be expected most quickly to extend its already considerable hold on the country.

—Louis Beale and G. Clinton Pelham, UK Department of Overseas Trade, 1933

### Introduction

This chapter will demonstrate how the CC Clique extended the reach of Nationalist Radio to expand the virtual assembly hall of learning beyond the narrow confines of the party state during the radio nationalisation of the audience between 1933 and 1935. This period began with the opening of the seventy-five-kilowatt station to commemorate Sun Yat-sen's birthday and the party-state's return to Nanjing on 12 November 1932, and it ended with a reorganisation of the Radio Station Administration in January 1936. During this phase, Nationalist Radio extended its footprint to cover all of China by enlarging the radio-operator network, and it facilitated the expansion of public radio stations in the interior as part of China's war planning under the National Defence Planning Commission. Most importantly, the CC Clique focused on producing educational and entertaining broadcast propaganda to appeal to a mass audience so that radio could further 'extend its already considerable hold on the country'.<sup>1</sup>

The radio nationalisation of the audience occurred as a result of the convergence of the technical capacity to broadcast nationwide and the formation of a mass audience. Nationalist Radio established the technical prerequisite to reach a mass audience with the completion of the 'Big Radio Station' just as urban areas experienced a radio boom in late 1932. Beale and Pelham were at the centre of the boom in Shanghai, where entrepreneurs launched private stations, households installed radios, and companies sponsored programmes in the freewheeling commercial metropolis and throughout the lower Yangtze region. In its new role as the Central Station and Radio Station Administration, Nationalist Radio was responsible for administering the growth of broadcasting during the radio boom. At first, it took tentative steps to establish control over a fractious private industry with a simple regulatory regime to license operators, censor content, and register radios. However, the CC Clique's priority was to develop Nationalist Radio into a model for the domestic broadcasting industry through the production of educational and entertainment programming for a mass radio audience.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Beale and G. Clinton Pelham, *Trade and Economic Conditions in China: 1931–33 Report* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1933), 77.

This chapter will present the backstory of Nationalist Radio as an institution as the CC Clique changed tack to attract a mass audience and promote political tutelage. The CC Clique therefore transformed Nationalist Radio into a media organisation that produced creative content for a mass audience in order to promote a positive image of China on the airwaves. Like the internet oecumene in the twenty-first century, this effort took place amid intense political, social, and cultural change as nations struggled to harness the power of the new medium. In the 1930s, the radio world was in a state of flux as countries formed national networks to exploit the popularity of broadcasting, and they built shortwave stations to promote their national interests and protect themselves against foreign broadcast propaganda.

This chapter will begin with one typical day on Nationalist Radio in 1935 to illustrate the kind of content that the CC Clique broadcast to a nationwide audience. It then will go behind the scenes to look at Nationalist Radio as an institution. Finally, it will trace the rapid growth during the radio boom to show how the CC Clique expanded party-state broadcasting and regulated private stations in order to bring Shanghai's airwaves under party-state control and protect the nation against foreign threats along the new fourth front, i.e., radio. This chapter also will show that bringing order to China's airwaves was a prerequisite for the CC Clique to harness the power of broadcasting and nationalise the audience between 1933 and 1935.

### **One Day in Nationalist Radio**

Nationalist Radio became a familiar part of the Chinese soundscape from 1933 to 1935, especially in cities, as the radio boom expanded across the country after the Shanghai Incident. While broadcasting developed into a mass medium, the CC Clique experimented with new programme genres and formats to attract a nationwide audience to listen to Nationalist Radio, and the CC Clique integrated more educational and entertainment content into the programming mix to readapt its tool of political tutelage and weapon of war for a mass audience. This section will present one day on Nationalist Radio to illustrate the programming that the CC Clique produced for this mass audience. The day in the spotlight is 21 May 1935.

Apart from being the same day that Mao Dun featured in his classic book, *One Day in China*, the selection of this date is entirely random and of no special significance to China radio. However, the day is important for another reason: it represents 1,094 other days in which Nationalist Radio aired an average of ten hours each day between 1933 and 1935. Its significance therefore derives from its quotidian nature. Nationalist Radio was a physical place on the radio dial and a conceptual space on the airwaves, where listeners tuned in for everyday news, information, education, and entertainment.

### *The Broadcast Day*

The programme guide in *Broadcast Weekly* for Tuesday 21 May 1935 divided an eleven-and-a-half-hour schedule into three blocks: morning, midday, and evening. Avid listeners subscribed to the guide for transcripts of previous radio talks and lectures, scripts of forthcoming radio plays, and schedules for all forty-three public and private stations in China with more than 100 watts of power. The broadcast schedule also was often listed in newspapers so that listeners could check the times of their favourite programmes in advance. Although programming began at 7.00 a.m. and ended at 11.30 p.m., broadcast section chief Fan Benzong discouraged all-day listening, saying that ‘this station does not want the entire audience to listen in all day from dawn to dusk’.<sup>2</sup> As a proponent of Sunism, Fan believed in selective listening because the audience had a nation to build and a revolution to complete.

The morning broadcast started at 7.00 a.m. with the solemn sound of ‘Party Song’ to remind listeners to be diligent, brave, true, loyal, united, and persistent as they began their day. The audience then could practice a martial arts routine designed by the Central National Arts Institute (中央國術館) during *Morning Exercise*, which was followed by marching band songs from around the world in *Military Music*. The segment on 21 May featured German songs, such as ‘Koelner Funken Infanterie Marsch’ and ‘Annen Polka’ by Strauss. At 7.30 a.m. was *English Lesson*, where an on-air instructor taught listeners how to use ‘can and cannot’ with a middle-school reader written by Lin Yutang (林語堂). To complement the lesson, the station then aired a set of instrumental music from Europe and America in *Western Music*. For cultural balance, Nationalist Radio scheduled a Chinese instructor to host *National Literature Lesson* on alternating weekdays and played a set of instrumental *National Music* in the same timeslot. A propaganda programme called *Various Topics* then followed the music. In this twenty-five minute talk show, three co-hosts discussed science, society, and religion three days a week, rotating in the same timeslot with *The Teachings of Sun Yat-sen* on alternative weekdays. The science topic on 21 May was a product essential to economic modernisation: ‘The Manufacture of the Electric Light Bulb’. At 9.30 a.m., Nationalist Radio concluded the morning broadcast with a twenty-minute segment of *National Music* and the early edition of *News*.

The midday schedule began at 11.30 a.m. and ended at 1.00 p.m. Nationalist Radio played a thirty-minute segment of Peking opera to start the lunchtime hour after the art form had become a national sensation in 1935. In response to listener demand, Nationalist Radio

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<sup>2</sup> Tingzhong Yijian 聽眾意見, *GBZB*, 28 September 1935, 58.

was in the midst of connecting major opera houses in Peking via cable to relay live performances from the former capital's theatre district.<sup>3</sup> The noontime segment, however, was played on gramophone discs from major Western record labels like Odeon, Beka, and Victory, which provided the music in return for on-air mentions and acknowledgments in *Broadcast Weekly*. At twelve noon, presenters announced Central Standard Time, read the national weather forecast from the Central Observatory, and reported business news and market prices for grain, flour, and other commodities in *Commercial Report*. The centrepiece of the noon hour was a ten-minute segment called *Great Figures in Chinese History*. On Tuesday, the storyteller told the tale of Zhang Yi as part of a weeklong series featuring diplomats from the Warring States period. To conclude the midday broadcast, Nationalist Radio played gramophone recordings of 'Hallelujah Chorus', 'Praise My Soul', 'Once upon a Time', and other English songs in another segment of *Western Music* before signing off at 1.00 p.m.

The evening time block ran from 4.00 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. every weekday. The content alternated between educational and informational programming with musical segues in between to warm-up and cool down the audience. The afternoon began with thirty minutes of mixed verse (雜曲) and regional folk music from Fujian and Guangdong. The next programme at 4.30 p.m. was *Children's Show*. In this half-hour segment on Tuesday, students from Shanxi Road Primary School talked about the basics of air defence and sang five songs, including 'Compatriots Do Not Forget them' and 'Kill the Enemy', which called for the death of Japanese 'dwarf slaves' and the return of all occupied Chinese territory.<sup>4</sup> At 5.00 p.m., Nationalist Radio presented commercial news and stock market information. A musical selection of mixed verse then followed before station hosts led a thirty-minute discussion of 'The Meaning and Conditions of Success' for young men and women on *Youth Forum*. The six o'clock hour began with the rousing beat of live percussion in a regular programme called *Big Drum*, which featured Dong Lianzhi on vocals in a rendition of a scene from *Dream of the Red Chamber* where a broken-hearted Lin Daiyu burns her manuscript. At 6.30 p.m., *Mass Education* used a question-and-answer format to teach adult learners about tea cultivation and storage that segued to Verdi's *La traviata*, which fittingly was known in Chinese as 'The Lady of the Camellias' (茶花女). The after-dinner hour began at 7.00 p.m. with thirty minutes of Peking opera and Mandarin music followed by a half-hour programme called *Children's Education*, which aired

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<sup>3</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 16 March 1935, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Liu Xuetao 柳雪濤, 'Sha di' 殺敵, in *Gegu xinji* 歌曲新集, comp. Liu Xuetao 柳雪濤 (Tianjin: Baicheng shuju, 1932), 93; Liu Xuetao, 'Tongbao qi wu wang' 同胞其勿忘, *Gegu xinji*, 98–99.

historical stories and scientific information nightly. In the episode on the 21 May, the host taught students about Warring State strategist Zou Ji, who used his zither to school King Wei of Qi on the rectification of names and moral governance. The radio host then discussed zoology before closing with an apt song for the evening: 'Boya Plays the Zither'.

Eight o'clock marked a transition from educational content to news and information. News presenters first announced Central Standard Time so listeners could reset their clocks; then, they delivered a recap of the day's major stories in *News Brief* and provided the national weather forecast. Next, *International News Commentary* presented a ten-minute analysis of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's pledge to expand the Royal Air Force after Hitler's repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>5</sup> To lighten the mood after the news and commentary, a music club from the capital performed a twenty-minute in-studio concert. The next segment featured a talk by Professor Xin Shuzhi, who was head of the National Translation and Editing Bureau, to discuss the compilation of primary and middle school science textbooks. At 9.05 p.m., Nationalist Radio presented China's perspective on world events to a foreign audience in *English Language Commentary*, which aired three days a week, before introducing the programme schedule for 22 May at 9.25 p.m. The final two hours of the broadcast day was evenly divided between news and entertainment. At 9.30 p.m., presenters slowly read the day's top stories in *Broadcast News* as hundreds of radio operators transcribed the content for distribution to local print media and wall papers nationwide. To finish the evening broadcast, Nationalist Radio aired one more hour of *National Music* and Peking opera before signing off—as it always did—with the tune 'Party Director Memorial Song' (總理紀念歌).<sup>6</sup>

## The Big Radio Station

On 12 November 1932, Nationalist Radio attained the technical ability to broadcast more than ten hours a day and cover all of China with its new Telefunken transmitting station. Nicknamed the 'Big Radio Station', the seventy-five-kilowatt Central Station with its two 120-metre towers sat on the eastern outskirts of Nanjing. Nearly ten kilometres from central party headquarters,<sup>7</sup> the big radio station occupied a 6.23-hectare compound on a tract of high ground amid marshland just upstream from the confluence of the Jiajiang and Yangtze Rivers.<sup>8</sup> To

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<sup>5</sup> 'M'Donald Pledges British Air Arming and 3-Power Unity', *New York Times*, 3 May 1935, 1, 10.

<sup>6</sup> 'Diantai boyin jiemu yugao' 電台播音節目預告, *GBZB*, 11 May 1935, 2–3.

<sup>7</sup> *Wuxiandian wenda huikan*, 11 November 1932, 451.

<sup>8</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu zuzhi tiaoli cao'an' 中央廣播無線電台管理處組織條例草案 [Draft plan of Central Broadcasting Radio Administration organisational regulations], July 1931, KMT Archives, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 3.3/175.31.

prevent flooding, Nationalist Radio chief engineer Feng Jian added 5,400 cubic metres of soil on the site to raise the foundation of the station compound another fifty centimetres above the highest-ever recorded water level.<sup>9</sup> German architects at Siemens then designed a station building with simple lines and shapes in a minimalist Bauhaus style to contain offices, studios and mechanical rooms, which Nationalist Radio outfitted with state-of-the-art technology and aesthetic materials to optimise signal production and evince a modern style (see figure 4).

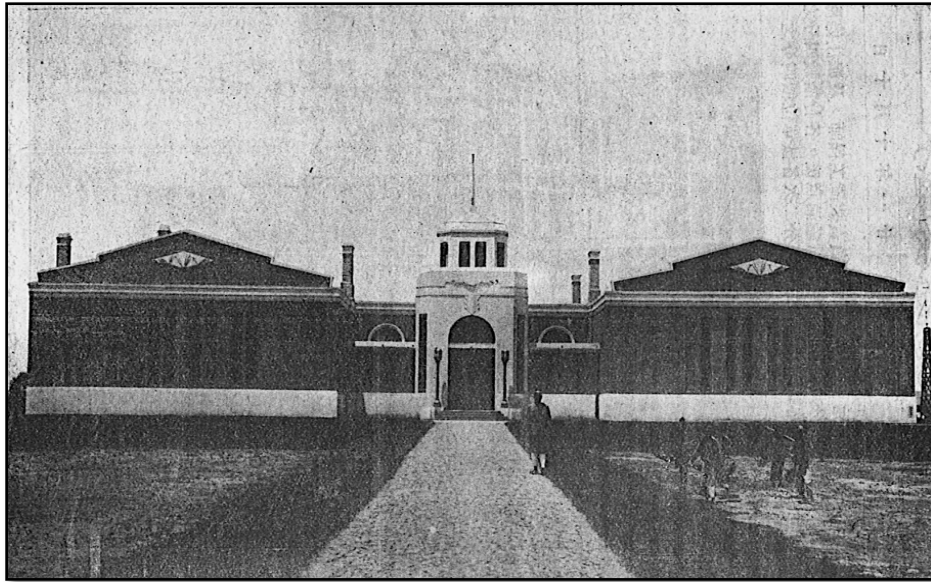


Figure 4. Station XGOA in 1932. Photo from *Wuxiandian wenda huikan: guangbo tekan*, 315.

From the imported copper rooftop with silver welds to the asphalt felt and terrazzo in the transmitter room, the reinforced concrete structure combined form with function, serving as an electromagnetic buffer between a hub-and-spoke system of underground cables and T-shaped antenna wires that hung above the complex to ensure a clear broadcast signal.<sup>10</sup> Even the fountain and water pools in the compound garden combined form with function, serving as containers for a cooling system that circulated 250,000 litres of cold water each day from an artesian well to prevent station equipment from overheating.<sup>11</sup> This Bauhausian fusion of stylish form and function in the building design embodied the CC Clique's desire to harness the power of technology to modernise China with the most powerful radio station in East Asia. For the station opening, the Nationalists invited 1,000 party-state officials, business leaders, and foreign diplomats to show off their new tangible symbol of modern science and culture.

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<sup>9</sup> Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui, 'Guangbo dadiantai choubai gongzuo jianbao' 廣播大電台籌備工作簡報, November 1932, 18–20; Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 26.

<sup>10</sup> 'Guangbo dadiantai', 27.

<sup>11</sup> 'Guangbo dadiantai', 27, 32.



The *Capital Gazetteer* praised the big radio station as a major accomplishment, claiming that it had brought glory to China and honour to the Far East.<sup>12</sup>

Most importantly, however, the strong medium-wave signal that emitted from the station's powerful transmitter extended the technical reach of Nationalist Radio to all of China and many other parts of the world (see figure 5). In fact, the big radio station was the largest in East Asia and the third largest in the world.<sup>13</sup> The station's footprint easily covered Siberia, Japan, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, and British possessions in Malaya, India, and Burma.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Nationalist Radio could be heard as far away as New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as documented in reception reports from overseas listeners who wrote in to receive collectable verification cards from Nanjing.<sup>15</sup> The big radio station thus enabled Nationalist Radio truly to become the pulse of domestic information and the voice of international propaganda for the Nationalist party state.

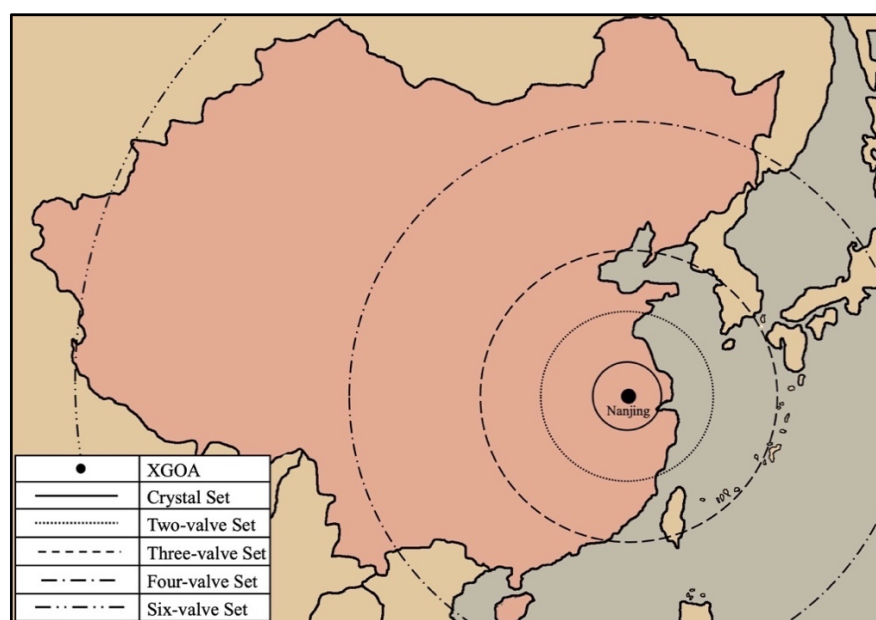


Figure 5. Nationalist Radio reception by radio type. Map by author. From 'Zhongyang guangbo diantai boyin shecheng fanwei tu' 中央廣播電台播音射程範圍圖, *GBZB*, 17 October 1934, n.p.

<sup>12</sup> *Shoudu zhi* 首都志, ed. Ye Chucang 葉楚傖 and Liu Yizheng 柳詒徵 (Taipei: Zhongzheng shuju, 1966), 881.

<sup>13</sup> Zhao, Ai and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 546.

<sup>14</sup> 'Guowai ge di shouting zhongyang diantai boyin qingxing yilanbiao' 國外各地收聽中央電台播音情形一覽表, *Wuxiandian* 1, February 1934, 45.

<sup>15</sup> 'Guowai ge di shouting zhongyang diantai tebo jiemu qingxing baogaobiao' 國外各地收聽中央電台特別節目情形報告表, *Wuxiandian* 1, April 1934, 37.

## The Reorganisation

The CC Clique restructured Nationalist Radio in 1932 so that the organisation could expand the virtual assembly hall of learning and implement the nationalisation of the audience. To accommodate this mission, the CC Clique built new facilities at the new station compound and central party headquarters. At the compound, Nationalist Radio built five dormitories to accommodate office staff, labourers, engineers, technicians, and guards.<sup>16</sup> It also built additional offices, studios, and workshops at the site. However, Nationalist Radio did not abandon its old office building and studio complex at central party headquarters, since it was at the heart of the party state and a more convenient location for guest appearances.<sup>17</sup> The CC Clique therefore moved Radio Station Administration offices into an adjacent building and built more studios with lounges and equipment rooms within the party compound. To transmit programmes from the party compound to the big radio station, the CC Clique installed nine-and-a-half kilometres of lead-encased cable to ensure a stable signal.<sup>18</sup>

Nationalist Radio also hired more personnel to support station operations and produce content for a longer broadcast day. Between 1933 and 1935, the number of employees grew from seventy to 115, an increase of 64 percent.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the station reorganisation that the CC Clique initiated before the Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents finally took shape during this period (see figure 6). In addition to establishing a design committee and engineering section to formalise previous ad-hoc relationships with outside experts, the CC Clique made four major changes to the organisational structure. First, it created the Guidance Section to manage an expanded radio-operator network. Second, it incorporated Station XHZ into the Telegraph Room to handle Central News Agency dispatches and top-secret communications for party headquarters. Third, it created the Editing and Translation Room to research global broadcasting and publish radio magazines for domestic consumption. Fourth, it elevated the Sound Section to a department-level unit so that it could produce more content to support an expanded schedule. Together, these four changes became the locus of CC Clique efforts to implement the radio nationalisation of the audience.

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<sup>16</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai pingmiantu' 中央廣播無線電台平面圖, *Wuxiandian* 1, no. 1, February 1934, 39.

<sup>17</sup> 'Kuochong zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai jihua' 擴充中央廣播無線電台計劃, *ZDYK*, no. 8 (1 March 1929): 218.

<sup>18</sup> Wu Baofeng 吳保豐 and Wu Daoyi 吳道一. 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai gongcheng' 中央廣播無線電台工程, *Gongcheng zhoukan* 工程週刊 1, no. 20 (22 November 1932): 292.

<sup>19</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 266.

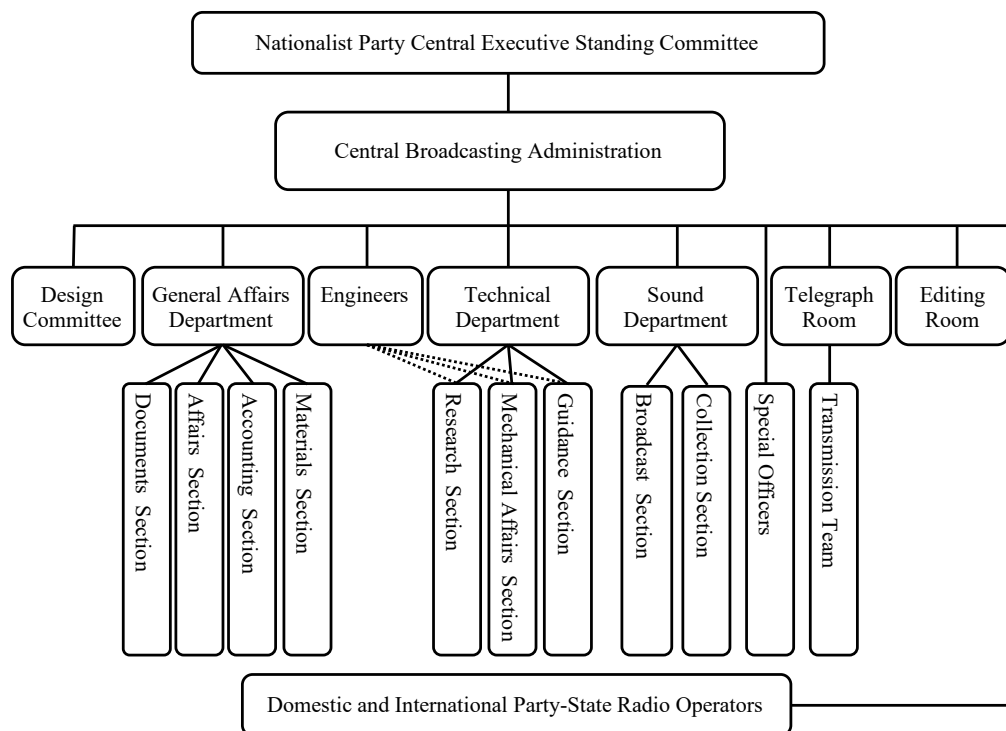


Figure 6. Nationalist Radio Organisation Chart, 1933. From ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu zuzhi xitong tu’ 中央廣播無線電台管理處組織系統圖, *ZDYK*, no. 49 (August 1932): 397.

### *The Guidance Section*

The Guidance Section under the Technical Department managed the expansion of the radio-operator network between 1933 and 1935, which was a key mission of the organisation. Nationalist Radio assigned wireless engineer Fan Benzong, the classmate of spy boss Xu Enzeng, to lead the Telegraph Room and manage all aspects of radio-operator training. According to a contemporary news presenter, Fan recruited fluent Mandarin speakers for the radio-operator network and dispatched them across the country to transcribe station content for local distribution ‘because Mandarin was still not common in southern China at that time’.<sup>20</sup>

The CC Clique extended the reach of party-state news and information from the centre to the periphery by expanding the radio-operator training programme between 1933 and 1935. The first cohort of 144 trainees arrived at Nanjing in February 1933 to undergo five-months of instruction, and Fan Benzong trained 435 candidates in three separate cohorts over the next

<sup>20</sup> ‘Zai Guomindang guangbo diantai li de jianwen’ 在国民党广播电台里的见闻, *Xi’an wenshi ziliao* 西安文史资料, vol. 3 (Xi’an: Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang weiyuanhui Shaanxi sheng Xi’an shi weiyuanhui 1982), 123.

eighteen months. In all, 391 qualified to become party-state radio operators.<sup>21</sup> The trainees came from cities and counties in eighteen provinces; the notable exceptions were Shanxi and Guangdong where Yan Xishan and Bai Chongxi maintained their autonomy. Ninety-four percent of the operators were males between the ages of nineteen and thirty-three; moreover, all of them were middle school graduates, nearly two-thirds of whom also held a high-school diploma or tertiary degree.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these central radio operators, five more provinces—Hunan, Fujian, Guangxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan—joined Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Jiangxi to establish provincial radio-operator networks that tuned in to Nationalist Radio.<sup>23</sup>

The radio operators underwent rigorous technical training in Nanjing. Trainees attended thirty-six hours of class each week for a minimum of 720 hours during the course, and they took comprehensive examinations in each subject every month. The material covered was broad: it included coding, shorthand, electronics, history, geography, Chinese, and English, because the radio operators needed to hone their transcription skills on a wide range of subjects. The training of the first class of radio operators went very smoothly. Most of them, who were from the more affluent coastal regions, returned as scheduled to their posts after six months. However, Fan Benzong found that many trainees from the interior in the second cohort lacked the basic skills to do the job properly. He therefore required seventy-two of them—nearly 38 percent of the 192 candidates—to stay on for another two months before sending them into the field. As a result, Fan extended the training period of the third cohort to eight months. This final group of radio operators reported to their posts in August 1934 with Chigora-brand receivers made by the National Reconstruction Commission.<sup>24</sup>

The ideological training of radio operators was as important as technical competence. Upon arriving to Nanjing, the trainees went through a thorough background check. Cadres from the central organisation department interviewed each person to assess their personality, interests, abilities, thinking, experience, and family background to better understand them and

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian dantai guanlichu shouyinyuan xunlian baogao’ 中央廣播無線電台管理處理收音員訓練報告 [Central Broadcasting Radio Administration radio operator training report], October 1934, KMT Archives, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 4.3/164.9.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo dantai guanlichu shouyinyuan xunlianban gaikuang’ 中央廣播電台管理處收音員訓練班概況, *Wuxiandian* 1, February 1934, 58–60.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Xiang jianting xianqi chengli ge xian shouyinshi’ 湘建廳限期成立各縣收音室, *Shouyin qikan* 收音期刊 1, no. 4 (June 1935): 22; ‘Tingling guanyu ge xian shouyinji daigou liyou bing zhuoding banfa’ 廳令關於各縣收音機由廳代購理由並酌定辦法, *Fujian sheng zhengfu gongbao* 福建省政府公報, no. 333 (1933): 36–38; ‘Ge xian kaosong shouyinyuan banfa’ 各縣考送收音員辦法, *Guangxi gongbao* 廣西公報, no. 65 (21 April 1933): 6–7; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 902; Xu Tingting 徐婷婷, ‘Yunnan guangbo shiye yanjiu, 1931–1949’ 云南廣播事業研究 1931–1949 (master’s thesis, Yunnan University, 2016), 9–11.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Xunlian baogao’, KMT Archives, *Hui*, 4.3/164.9.

prevent communists from infiltrating the organisation. After the initial screening, the Guidance Department then divided the trainees into small groups that underwent ideological education together over the course of the radio-operator programme. The trainees participated in the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Week ceremony at party headquarters, attended lectures on Sunism, and participated in small-group political and ideological discussions each week.<sup>25</sup> While the third cohort was training in 1934, CC Clique officials added the book *Theory of Vitalism* by Chen Lifu to the curriculum because they felt that the trainees needed more ideological guidance.<sup>26</sup> This occurred after armed members of the central organisation department detained four people in the radio-operator training programme during a class after suspecting them of being communist spies. An instructor, a female trainee, and two station technicians were arrested in the raid, and the trainee reportedly later died in custody.<sup>27</sup> Given that Nationalist Radio was at the centre of the party state, the CC Clique was vigilant about communist infiltration and went to great lengths to ensure the ideological integrity of members in the organisation.

Nationalist Radio required radio operators to perform a number of duties at their posts. Apart from transcribing broadcast news and distributing broadsheets to local newspapers, they monitored the airwaves and promoted radio in their communities. The promotion took many forms. For example, operators were responsible for maintaining radio receivers and loudspeakers in public places.<sup>28</sup> They also helped local residents, stores, and offices install and repair their devices. They sometimes even taught volunteers how to become radio operators.<sup>29</sup> In addition, they organised public events as part of their duties in the propaganda department; for instance, one radio operator in Hunan organised educational workshops in the local dialect to complement radio talks and musical programmes on Nationalist Radio.<sup>30</sup>

The broad scope and long hours, however, made many operators feel overworked and underpaid. They spent many hours beside their receivers transcribing radio programmes and preparing daily broadsheets for local distribution. The work required to produce the broadsheets was tedious and frustrating, as one operator using the pen name ‘Cultivating Forbearance’ described in a poem entitled ‘The Feeling of Radio Reception’:

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<sup>25</sup> ‘Shouyinyuan xunlianban gaikuang’, 58.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Xunlian baogao’, KMT Archives, *Hui*, 4.3/164.9.

<sup>27</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Ge di shezhi shouyinyuan baosong zhongyang guangbo diantai guanlichu shouyinyuan xunlianban xueyuan yingxing zhuyi shixiang 各地設置收音員保送中央廣播電台管理處收音員訓練班學員應行注意事項, *Hubei sheng zhengfu gongbao* 湖北省政府公報, no. 37 (15 January 1934): 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ge shixian shouyinyuan fuwu tongze 各市縣收音員服務通則, *Hubei sheng zhengfu gongbao*, no. 37 (15 January 1934): 4.

<sup>30</sup> Fu Lin 傅霖, ‘Shouyinyuan zhi zeren’ 收音員之責任, *Shouyin qikan*, no. 4 (June 1935): 13.

Turning on the switch I hold my breath to hear,  
Transcribing the news happy the signal is clear,  
But I hate when atmospherics come to interfere,  
Words and phrases lost and left out wait to be emended.<sup>31</sup>

Fortunately for the radio operators, station announcers took interference into account when reading the nightly news reports. Presenters therefore read each story very slowly, more than once, repeating key words and sentences, so that the radio operators would be able to emend their copy to produce an accurate broadsheet of the day's news and information. Yet, the late nights and daytime office duties took its toll on many operators, leaving them with a feeling that they were underappreciated in the local offices in which they served. This problem was a direct result of the way that the CC Clique funded the programme: the cash-strapped party centre ordered local governments, which often were even more short of funds than the party centre, to cover the salary and expenses of the radio operators with their own budgets.<sup>32</sup> Depending on the location, governments paid radio operators a salary of twenty to fifty yuan a month and reimbursed them twenty to forty yuan each month for related expenses like mimeograph printing.<sup>33</sup> The shortcomings of the radio-operator model were the most acute in Henan. In 1935, the provincial government there used the national minimum salary set in 1932 to reduce the monthly salary of its 100 county radio operators from thirty to twenty yuan a month.<sup>34</sup> Naturally, this situation caused young radio operators stationed in faraway places to yearn for home, and their poetry revealed feelings of separation and homesickness, like in this poem by Chen Fengxian entitled 'Thinking of Family':

Cold wind and bitter rain pierce the frosty window,  
The heart for no reason wells up with a sense of sorrow,  
Gazing north at white clouds encircling the residence,  
Home suddenly seems like another person's place.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the hardships and feelings of loneliness, radio operators seemed to have developed an esprit de corps, as shown in their writings in *Journal of Radio Reception*, where many expressed the belief that they were members of a new profession and proponents of science and modernity in Chinese society.

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<sup>31</sup> Pei Shu 培恕, 'Shouyingan' 收音感, *Shouyin qikan*, no. 1 (February 1935): 47.

<sup>32</sup> 'Shouyinyuan fuwu tongze', 4.

<sup>33</sup> 'Shouyinyuan fuwu tongze', 4.

<sup>34</sup> 'Yu sheng ge xian shouyinyuan daiyu jidi' 豫省各縣收音員待遇極低, *Shouyin qikan*, no. 1 (February 1935): 53.

<sup>35</sup> Chen Fengxian 陳奉先, 'Si qin' 思親, *Shouyin qikan*, no. 1 (February 1935): 47.

The expansion of the radio operator network between 1933 and 1935 seems to have magnified the effect of Nationalist propaganda across the country. According to Wu Daoyi, the number of daily readers of broadcast news distributed by the radio-operator network was several hundred times greater than the actual listening audience, as it was estimated that one broadsheet could reach an average of 1,000 households per media outlet in the interior.<sup>36</sup> In *China's Contested Capital*, Charles Musgrove attributed this effect to the Central News Agency, observing that Nationalist Party 'speeches were more often republished in newspapers across the country than the words of the Guomindang's rivals' and 'central tenets of the Guomindang state cult were more consistently propagated than the visions of others'.<sup>37</sup> This broad coverage can actually be ascribed to Nationalist Radio and its radio-operator network.

### *The Telegraph Room*

The Telegraph Room was responsible for disseminating news and information for the Central News Agency via the radio-operator network and transmitting secret communications for the central secretariat and the central organisation department's investigation section.<sup>38</sup> Nationalist Radio employees therefore referred to the Telegraph Room as the 'Central Intelligence Station' or the 'General Station of Central Intelligence'.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it appears that the radio-operator network under Fan Benzong was an extension of the party intelligence service in the Telegraph Room. Wang Xueqi and Shi Hansheng have implied such a connection between the radio-operator network and the investigation section because operator training included telegraphic coding.<sup>40</sup> A closer look at the curriculum does suggest that radio-operator training did place more of an emphasis on telegraphy than on transcription; in fact, trainees practiced coding nine hours each week as compared to three hours of shorthand.<sup>41</sup> Such an imbalance does seem to suggest that Nationalist Radio was preparing trainees for something other than simple transcription of broadcast news. Moreover, some radio operators later join the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics after its formation in 1938. For example, Chen Fengxian, who wrote 'Thinking about Family' above, was one such recruit. The Communists

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<sup>36</sup> Zhenzhi 震之 [Zhong Zhenzhi 鐘震之], Bianzhe Tanhua 編者談話, *GBZB*, 29 September 1934, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Musgrove, *Contested Capital*, 199.

<sup>38</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu zuzhi tiaoli (fu zuzhi xitong tu)' 中央廣播無線電台管理處組織條例(附組織系統圖), *ZDYK*, no. 49 (August 1932): 395; 'Tantan baowushi', 84–85.

<sup>39</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 17.

<sup>40</sup> Wang and Shi, 17.

<sup>41</sup> 'Xunlian baogao', KMT Archives, *Hui*, 4.3/164.9.

executed him shortly after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the relative importance of the Telegraph Room as a command centre for the collection of intelligence and the distribution of news gradually declined as the investigation section and the Central News Agency developed their own communication networks. By 1936, the Telegraph Room primarily collected on-air information, such as water-level reports and market updates, and handled off-air communications with public stations.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Editing and Translation Room*

The Editing and Translation Room researched the global broadcasting industry, translated academic works on wireless electronics, and produced radio-related publications.<sup>44</sup> The staff in this small office lived and worked in obscurity at the transmitter compound on the outskirts of the capital until they began to publish *Radio* (無線電) in February 1934 and *Broadcast Weekly* (廣播週報) in September 1934. The first periodical, *Radio*, was a bimonthly magazine that carried technical articles on wireless electronics as well as news and information on the global broadcasting industry. It also published translations of articles that discussed the role of radio in society and transcripts of important lectures broadcast by the Central Station. The second magazine, *Broadcast Weekly*, was for a mass audience. *Broadcast Weekly* published the Central Station's programme schedule for the coming week as well as transcripts from recent broadcasts, such as political speeches, educational lectures, and children's programmes. In addition, the guide also published lyrics and radio-play scripts in advance so listeners could follow along while listening if they were not proficient in Mandarin Chinese. Beginning in May 1935, *Broadcast Weekly* began publishing the daily schedule of all radio stations with a transmitter of 100 watts or greater so that listeners could tune in public and private stations across the country.<sup>45</sup> In 1934, distribution of these publications was modest—approximately 1,000 issues for *Radio* and 3,000 issues for *Broadcast Weekly*—but by 1936 the sales of both magazines had multiplied to 4,000 and 20,000, respectively.<sup>46</sup> After sales of the magazines took off, Nationalist Radio moved this office to the party compound so that it could work closely with on-air talent in the Sound Department to produce the periodicals.

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<sup>42</sup> Li Huabai 李花白, 'Wo suo zhidao de Suining tewehui' 我所知道的遂宁特委会, vol. 14 of *Suining wenshi ziliao xuanji* 遂宁文史资料选辑 (Suining: Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Sichuan sheng Suining shi zhongqu weiyuanhui wenshi xuexi weiyuanhui, 1998), 143–148.

<sup>43</sup> 'Tantan baowushi', 84–85.

<sup>44</sup> 'Zhuzhi xitong tu', 395.

<sup>45</sup> 'Quanguo diantai boyin jiemubiao' 全國電台播音節目表, *GBZB*, 11 May 1935, 16–27.

<sup>46</sup> 'Bianyishi yan' 編譯室言, *GBZB*, 19 September 1936, 86–87.



### *The Sound Department*

The Sound Department produced all of Nationalist Radio's programming in-house at the station office building and studio complex at central party headquarters.<sup>47</sup> The department was divided into two sections. The first was the Broadcast Section, whose staff wrote copy and presented programmes, and the second was the Collection Section, whose personnel worked back-of-house researching topics, writing copy, organising appearances, and confirming schedules. During the radio nationalisation of the audience, the Collection Section also managed corporate sponsorship and commercial advertising after Nationalist Radio began selling airtime in October 1934; moreover, the Collection Section was responsible for monitoring and censoring domestic broadcasts, which did not begin in earnest until December 1936.<sup>48</sup> Together, these two sections produced the content to fill the expanded programme schedule during the radio nationalisation of the audience. Between 1933 and 1935, the Sound Department lengthened the average broadcast day from six hours and four minutes in late 1932 to eight hours and twenty-nine minutes in early 1933. By the end of 1935, Nationalist Radio further expanded the average broadcast day to ten hours and ten minutes.<sup>49</sup>

To expand the broadcast schedule and produce a wider variety of programming in 1933, Nationalist Radio decided to recruit female presenters who were good writers and speakers of Mandarin Chinese. However, finding suitable candidates in the lower Yangtze region who met these qualifications was difficult.<sup>50</sup> Nationalist Radio thus commissioned renowned linguists Liu Bannong (劉半農) and Zhao Yuanren (Chao Yuen Ren 趙元任) to organise an examination in Peking to hire three female presenters in the autumn of 1933.<sup>51</sup> Liu was known for championing the vernacular in lowbrow fiction as a professor at Peking University, and Zhao had been instrumental in setting scientific standards for a national language at Tsinghua University.<sup>52</sup> The CC Clique therefore considered Li and Zhao the most qualified examiners to select radio presenters who were to become living models of the everyday use of the National Language. Zhao would later make regular appearances on the Central Station and work closely with Nationalist Radio to teach his method of pronunciation to mass audiences, as the CC

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<sup>47</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> 'Zhuzhi xitong tu', 395.

<sup>49</sup> 'Guanlichu tonggao', 111.

<sup>50</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> *Zhongguang wushi nian jinianji, 1928–1978* 中廣五十年紀念集 1928–1978, ed. Zhongguo guangbo gongsi 中國廣播公司 (Taipei: Kongzhong zazhishe, 1978), 155.

<sup>52</sup> Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism*, 86–122.

Clique technocrats in the Ministry of Education and Nationalist Radio promoted the unity of sound and script on the radio.<sup>53</sup>

In a front-page announcement in the *North China Press* on 4 September 1933, Nationalist Radio placed an advertisement for female applicants between the age of twenty and twenty-five, who held a high school diploma and were conversant with history, geography, and current affairs, to register for an examination at Radio Peking near the Temple of Heaven.<sup>54</sup> One skill that Nationalist Radio looked for in the female announcers was the ability to speak the National Language for more than one hour without interruption, so that they could present *Broadcast News* at night to local radio operators. On 15 September, several hundred young women sat for a written examination that included essay writing, general knowledge questions, and a translation of Chinese text into *bopomofo* phonetic symbols, known as *zhuyin fuhao* (注音符號).<sup>55</sup> The next day, shortlisted candidates underwent an oral examination that included reading a proclamation, discussing a news article, and participating in a question-and-answer session with Nationalist Radio's chief engineer Feng Jian, who was a professor of wireless electronics from Manchuria and was an important member in the party intelligence apparatus.<sup>56</sup> On 20 September, Nationalist Radio announced the three successful candidates in a front page advertisement in the *North China Press*. It instructed Liu Junying (劉雋英), Wu Xianghu (吳祥祐) and Zhang Jielian (張潔蓮) to report to the Central Station before 1 October to secure their post as female radio presenters.<sup>57</sup>

The female presenters were a welcome addition to Nationalist Radio in 1933. They not only spoke the National Language using standard pronunciation, but they also possessed creative imaginations and strong writing skills that Nationalist Radio desperately needed. The first presenter, Liu Junying was twenty-five years old in 1933. A Hebei native whose family lived in Heilongjiang before the Manchurian Incident, Liu had gone to Peking boarding schools since primary school and attended Peking Women's Normal University when she joined Nationalist Radio.<sup>58</sup> Apparently, Liu had such a beautiful voice that Japanese listeners in Osaka and Tokyo tuned in to hear her read the news, and the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* even dispatched a

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<sup>53</sup> Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism*, 87, 98.

<sup>54</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo diantai guanlichu zhaokao nu boyinyuan guanggao' 中央廣播電台管理處招考女播音員廣告, *Huabei ribao* 華北日報, 4 September 1933, 1.

<sup>55</sup> 'Zhaokao nu boyinyuan', 1.

<sup>56</sup> Gao Guoqing 高国庆, *Zhongguo boyinxue shi yanjiu* 中国播音学史研究 (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2016), 52n2.

<sup>57</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo diantai guanlichu bugao' 中央廣播電台管理處佈告, *Huabei ribao*, 20 September 1933, 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Zhongguang wushi*, 155.

reporter to Nanjing in April 1934 to interview her. The article likened Liu's soft, clear Peking accent to the sound of the Japanese goddess of spring, Saohime, ringing her golden bell.<sup>59</sup> The second presenter, Wu Xianghu was a twenty-year-old graduate of the Affiliated Secondary School of Peking Women's Normal University. Wu's family also had lived in Manchuria before the Japanese invasion, and she too had attended boarding school in Peking. Before joining Nationalist Radio, Wu had served in the ambulance corps during the Shanghai Incident and at the Battle of the Great Wall at Gubei Pass. Wu's vivacious personality and creative talent would later make her an important writer and on-air contributor at the Central Station.<sup>60</sup> The third presenter, Zhang Jielian, was a recent high-school graduate from Harbin who travelled to Peking in July 1933 to participate in the annual university entrance examinations.<sup>61</sup> The younger sister of writer and translator Zhang Junti (張君勱, pen name 金人), Zhang was a writer in her own right and an avid track-and-field athlete before accepting her post at the Central Station for sixty yuan a month.<sup>62</sup> These three female presenters—who like Feng Jian were refugees from Manchuria—became central to Nationalist Radio's production of innovative content for a mass audience and breathed new life into the Central Station's stale content with their writing, presenting, and acting skills. These three young female presenters and the other male and female announcers that Nationalist Radio hired in subsequent annual examinations became the living models for standard pronunciation of the National Language.<sup>63</sup>

## The China Radio Oecumene

The convergence of the radio boom and the big radio station in late 1932 contributed to the subsequent formation of a mass audience between 1933 and 1935. In January 1933, *QST Amateur Radio* estimated that China had seventy-seven broadcasting stations.<sup>64</sup> However, many stations were operating without a license, which made accurate record keeping difficult.

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<sup>59</sup> Gao, *Zhongguo boyinxue*, 53n3; Ji Yun, 'Quan Ri wenming de Nanjing zhi ying' 全日聞名的南京之驚, *Shenbao*, 20 May 1935, 14; 'Yoshi no omo to e tai uruwashi no ana: naru hodo Kinrei no' 美聲の主捕へたい麗しのアナ嬢: なるほど金鈴の聲, *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* 東京朝日新聞, 15 April 1934, 11.

<sup>60</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 39–41; Chen Ertai 陈尔泰, *Zhongguo guangbo shikao* 中国广播史考 (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2008), 130.

<sup>62</sup> Chen, *Guangbo shikao*, 131; Wang Qishan 王岐山, photographer, 'Haerbin tianjing xin jianjiang Zhang Jielian nushi' 哈爾濱田徑新健將張潔蓮女士, photograph, *Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報, 8 March 1931, 2; Qishan 岐山, photographer, 'Haerbin nu zuojia Zhang Jielian fu Beiping shengxue' 哈爾濱女作家張潔蓮赴北平升學, photograph, *Harbin wuri huabao* 哈爾濱五日畫報, 20 July 1933, 2.

<sup>63</sup> The presentation of the National Language on Nationalist Radio can clear up the 'foggy picture of how policies were enacted' in the Interwar Period, see Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism*, 97–99.

<sup>64</sup> Zhu Shun 朱舜, 'Guonei guangbo diantai diaochabiao' 國內廣播電台調查表, *QST*, 15 December 1932, 134–35.

The number of radios also was unknown because the party state did not yet require owners to register their sets and pay a license fee. As a result, the extent of growth still remains a mystery. The U.S. Department of Commerce admitted that ‘under the conditions maintaining even in normal times it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory estimate of the number of receiving sets in use in China’. The truth was that neither party-state bureaucrats nor foreign commercial officers could keep up with the boom. Nevertheless, the centre of growth appears to have been in ‘the northern areas...including American and European developments in Shanghai, and Chinese in cities within several hundred miles’, which ‘have shown a much more progressive interest in broadcasting’.<sup>65</sup> This section will analyse the emergence of radio as a mass medium in the China oecumene from 1933 to 1935. Although short, this period was transformative because Nationalist Radio began to produce programming for a national audience. At the same time, it encouraged local governments to establish public stations in order to promote balanced regional growth, and it regulated private broadcasting programming to shape its moral content.

### *The Emergence of a Mass Audience*

This section will present a montage of primary sources to illustrate the emergence of a mass radio audience in China between 1933 and 1935. An analysis of individual observations, trade reports, import statistics, literature, and party-state estimates from this period all show that a thriving radio-sphere developed in urban areas across the country. Although estimates for the number of radios ranged from 30,000 to 1,000,000 units,<sup>66</sup> this wide range was due to a global focus on competition between radio manufacturers to export completed units in the high-end valve-radio category. However, valve radios only represented 4 percent of all receivers in China. The other 96 percent that were not counted were low-cost crystal sets that were home-made using blueprints from radio magazines, assembled in small workshops and sold in local markets, or produced in domestic factories for and sold as private-label brands in Chinese department stores.<sup>67</sup>

Nationalist Radio conducted its only widescale radio survey in the autumn of 1934. The survey estimated that China had 81,642 radios across eleven provinces and nine cities.<sup>68</sup> This figure was based on mailed-in responses from radio owners, which were supplemented with additional estimates by radio operators and local party-state offices. The survey also estimated

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<sup>65</sup> Batson, *Radio Markets*, 98–99.

<sup>66</sup> Batson, 99.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Guonei ge di shouyinji shumu diaocha tongji’ 國內各地收音機數目調查統計, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 21–25.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Shouyinji shumu diaocha tongji’, 21–25.

that China had an audience size of 810,000 listeners based on a ratio of ten people per radio, which was roughly 0.17 percent of the entire population.<sup>69</sup> Hence, although the market penetration rate of radio in China was at the bottom of the global rankings—it was only higher than Morocco at 0.16 percent—the overall size and density of China’s population made it the seventh largest radio market in the world in terms of audience size (see table 3).<sup>70</sup>

Table 3: Size of China’s Radio Audience as Percentage of Population, 1934

No.	Country	Audience	Population	Percentage
1	United States	50,000,000	105,710,000	47.60%
2	Soviet Union	12,000,000	134,000,000	8.95%
3	United Kingdom	5,768,000	37,385,242	15.40%
4	Germany	4,837,000	63,224,872	7.65%
5	Japan	1,571,000	59,736,704	2.64%
6	France	1,236,000	39,209,766	3.15%
7	China	810,000	485,160,000	0.17%
8	Sweden	649,000	6,087,923	10.70%
9	Holland	614,000	6,865,314	8.95%
10	Czechoslovakia	520,000	13,611,717	2.82%

Source: ‘Geguo wuxiandian tingzhong’, 25.

The potential for growth therefore made China an important market to international radio manufacturers like RCA, Phillips, Telefunken and Marconi, especially since the Nationalists had developed an aggressive plan to modernise China’s wireless infrastructure.

Import statistics also indicate that a rapid increase in the number of radios occurred and, by extension, the audience greatly increased (see table 4). Recognising that the first radio survey undercounted the actual number of units, Nationalist Radio began using custom’s data to estimate market growth because most domestic radios were made with imported parts. Using twenty custom gold units (CGU)—the equivalent of forty yuan—as the value of one receiver, Nationalist Radio calculated that China added 10,000 new units per month in the first seven months of 1934, which resulted in 100,000 new audience members per month based on ten listeners per radio.<sup>71</sup> Using the same method, we can extrapolate the number of new radios in China during the entire second phase of radio nationalisation. Between 1933 and 1935, China imported an average of 2,155,330 CGU in radio sets and parts, which equalled 107,776 units

<sup>69</sup> ‘Shijie geguo wuxiandian tingzhong ji renkou tongji yilanbiao’ 世界各國無線電聽眾及人口統計一覽表, *Wuxiandian* 1, April 1934, 25.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Geguo wuxiandian tingzhong’, 25.

<sup>71</sup> Zhong Zhenzhi 鐘震之, ‘Zhongyang guangbo dadiantai chuangli er zhounian jinian ganyan’ 中央廣播大電台創立二週年紀念感言, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 6.

at 20 CGU per unit and 1,077,760 new listeners at ten people per radio.<sup>72</sup> Given variations in the average exchange rate between CGU and the yuan over time, an increase of 100,000 new units and 1,000,000 new listeners per year is a conservative estimate, especially given that the price of electronics tends to fall over time with technological improvements and greater economies of scale. Therefore, it is safe to say that the total number of new radios in China may have increased by more than 300,000 units between 1933 and 1935, and the Chinese listening audience may have expanded by more than 3,000,000 people.

Table 4: Imported Radio Sets and Parts, 1933 to 1935

Year	Net Imports (Custom Gold Units)	Annual Growth	Cumulative Imports	Growth Index (1933 = 100)
1933	1,940,556	–	1,940,556	100
1934	2,328,635	20%	4,269,191	220
1935	2,196,798	-6%	6,465,989	333

Source: *The Trade of China, 1934*, vol. 2, (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1935), 86–87; *The Trade of China, 1935*, vol. 2, (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1936), 262–63.

We also know that broadcasting became an important part of city soundscapes as the number of radios increased. From provincial capitals like Hangzhou and Guangzhou to small cities and towns in the interior, residents gathered in city parks and market squares to listen to local party-state radio stations that broadcast over public loudspeakers.<sup>73</sup> Radio also became an integral part of the retail experience on high streets throughout the country:

Many shops, particularly in Shanghai, have loud speakers installed to attract passers by; and though the din of raucously emitted Chinese music, mingled with the roar of traffic, does not appeal to foreign taste, to the Chinese it is apparently an adequate substitute for the brass band that can only be expected on great occasions.<sup>74</sup>

In addition, the sound of radio saturated the apartment buildings and courtyards along the tree-lined streets and alleyways of Shanghai, much to the chagrin of Lu Xun, who wrote about one neighbourhood soundscape in a story that was set on a hot summer day in 1934:

The weather is terribly hot. The windows are all open. The households that have installed wireless radio receivers turn the sound towards the street to ‘share their joy with the people’. Yee-yee aye-aye. They sing and sing. I don’t know about foreign countries, but Chinese broadcasting is all opera singing from morning to night. It’s

<sup>72</sup> *The Trade of China, 1934*, vol. 2, (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1935), 86–87; *The Trade of China, 1935*, vol. 2, (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1936), 262–63.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Much Excitement in Hangchow’, *North-China Daily News*, 29 February 1932, 6; ‘Shifu chiling zengshe boyintai gonggong changsuo fangyinji’ 市府飭令增設播音公共場所放音機, *Guangzhou shi zhengfu shizheng gongbao* 廣州市政府市政公報, no. 481 (10 November 1934): 123.

<sup>74</sup> Beale and Pelham, ‘Conditions in China’, 77.

sharp for a moment then scratchy for a while. If willing, you simply can make your ears not have a moment of quiet.<sup>75</sup>

Besides changing city soundscapes, radio also changed the way that cities looked. Across the country in provincial capitals and major cities, steel antennae of party-state stations pierced the sky to cast their signals across broad plains and high mountain ranges. In Changsha, for example, it was hard to miss the two forty-five-metre antennae that towered over the city.<sup>76</sup> In Hankou, the spiky aerials that poked up from building rooftops were a visible indication of radio's popularity in the interior.<sup>77</sup> Radio receivers also became a symbol of modernity that the average person could enjoy, as inexpensive Chinese-made crystal sets sold for as little as ten yuan and high-quality six-tube receivers cost about sixty yuan.<sup>78</sup> By 1935, even the poor could enjoy 'the luxury of radios', as one American put it, after seeing squatters in the slums outside Nanjing listening to crude crystal sets. Even the former US Minister to China, Charles Crane, noted in a letter to President Roosevelt that 'cheap radios have been planted all over China'.<sup>79</sup>

The Nationalist's first effort to register radios provides us with an important insight into the state of Chinese broadcasting in 1935. In the summer of that year, the Ministry of Communications organised a registration drive in Shanghai to prepare for the launch of the city's first public station and the Sixth National Games in October. As you will recall from chapter one, the Nationalists decided to forego the listener's license fee until the radio market matured. However, the problem in Shanghai was not the maturity of the market but the refusal of the foreign councils to allow China to apply the 1932 provisional rules inside their jurisdictions.<sup>80</sup> As a result, China developed a hybrid public-private broadcasting system like in France, which also did not charge a listener's license fee until the government there expanded public radio under the Ferrié plan in 1933.<sup>81</sup> In this light, the first radio-registration drive in Shanghai was a sign that the Nationalists were confident in their ability to enforce radio regulations and collect listeners' license fees to fund public broadcasting.

When the Ministry of Communications launched radio registration in August 1935, it required all owners in Shanghai to register their receivers at the Bureau of International Telegraphs, which then issued the license for free. At this stage, the Nationalists only wanted to

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<sup>75</sup> Lu Xun 鲁迅 [Deng Dangshi 鄧當世, pseud.], 'Zhiliao shijie' 知了世界, *Shenbao*, 12 July 1934, 16.

<sup>76</sup> 'Changsha's Radio Station', *North-China Herald*, 23 May 1934, 7.

<sup>77</sup> 'Ceremonies in his Majesty's Memory', *North-China Herald*, 5 February 1936, 215.

<sup>78</sup> Jiang, *Xiwu dongjian*, 41-43.

<sup>79</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 80-81, n. 42.

<sup>80</sup> Krysko, 86.

<sup>81</sup> Scales, *Politics of Sound*, 13-14.

register radios and did not want to collect the listener's license fee. In all, 52,000 owners, including 3,000 foreigners, registered their radios with the bureau before a September deadline to avoid a potential fine of up to 200 yuan.<sup>82</sup> After an extension of the submission deadline, 16,000 more radio owners registered their sets for a total of 68,000 receivers. However, many owners avoided registration for fear that the ministry would begin to collect a license fee. Nevertheless, the ministry estimated that Shanghai still had 32,000 unregistered receivers, which when added to the number of registered radios in the city made for a total of 100,000.<sup>83</sup> The ministry quoted this round figure for Shanghai until the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>84</sup>

### *Expanding Party-State Radio*

As momentum of radio sales continued apace, the number of broadcasting stations also increased rapidly.<sup>85</sup> Between 1933 and 1935, industry growth exhibited four characteristics. First, private stations outnumbered public ones: 107 broadcasters were private while 32 were public. Second, public stations were bigger: the cumulative transmitting power of the 32 public broadcasters was 93,763 watts while that of the 107 private stations was only 10,619 watts. After excluding the Central Station, the 31 local public broadcasters still outpowered the 107 private stations: 18,763 watts versus 10,619 watts. Moreover, the average transmitting power of a local public station was 605 watts while a private station equalled 99 watts. Third, the station growth outside of Shanghai outpaced growth in Shanghai: In 1933, Shanghai had 59 stations versus 30 elsewhere; by the end of 1935, the city had 57 stations versus 58 everywhere else. Fourth, public station funding was more stable than private station advertising revenue, which gave public stations a better chance of survival. For example, only two public stations—Station COTN and Nankai Radio (both in Tianjin)—closed due to financial reasons between 1933 and 1935, whereas nearly one in five private broadcasters went out of business.<sup>86</sup> As a result, public stations tended to have a broader geographic reach and produce a wider range of programming than their private counterparts.<sup>87</sup>

A total of 32 public radio stations operated in China between 1933 and 1935. The period began with 11 public stations and ended with 29 stations.<sup>88</sup> As part of its mission to facilitate

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<sup>82</sup> 'Over 52,000 Radio Sets Registered', *North-China Herald*, 2 October 1935, 16.

<sup>83</sup> 'Wo guo shouyinji jinkou gaikuang' 我國收音機進口概況, *Henan tongji yuebao* 河南統計月報 2, no. 4 (April 1936): 144–45; Wang, 'Shanghai guangbo yu shehui', 72n1.

<sup>84</sup> Chu, *Postal and Other Communications*, 193.

<sup>85</sup> Zhao, Ai and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 1–1, 159.

<sup>86</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, 58–65.

<sup>87</sup> Zhao, Ai and Liu, 1–1, 159.

<sup>88</sup> Apart from the two Tianjin stations, Radio Hebei closed due to the He-Umezu Agreement.



the establishment of a national broadcasting network, the CC Clique developed the Central Station as a model for local public broadcasting, which included stations owned by the Nationalist Party, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Education, Nationalist Army, and local governments at various levels. In addition to the Central Station, the Nationalist Party established two regional stations at Peking and Fuzhou and opened Radio Nanjing (Station XGON), which it closed in 1936 because everyone listened to the Central Station.<sup>89</sup> The Ministry of Communications operated broadcasting stations in Peking, Shanghai, and Tianjin, which modelled themselves on the Central Station, while the Ministry of Education owned stations in Peking, Tianjin, Jinan, and Wuxi. Finally, twenty-one provincial, city, and county governments also operated radio stations that modelled themselves on the Central Station. In keeping with its remit, Nationalist Radio provided these public stations with technical and operational support for such things as station design, equipment purchasing, facility construction, and programme creation.<sup>90</sup> In Nanchang, for example, Nationalist Radio provided the transmitter and built the station for the Field Headquarters in 1933.<sup>91</sup> By the end of 1935, China had twenty-nine public broadcasters in operation with four more under construction, including a ten-kilowatt station in Chengdu and a shortwave station in Nanjing that broadcast programmes for an international audience (see figure 7).

The CC Clique expanded the party-owned network to two strategic locations—Peking and Fuzhou— between 1933 and 1935. Nationalist Radio first expanded to the north in November 1933 when the Ministry of Communications closed down a long-wave telegraph station at the Temple of Heaven in Peking. Nationalist Radio refitted the old station with a 500-watt transmitter and named it Radio Hebei (Station XGOT). The CC Clique chose to establish its first branch station in Peking for three reasons. First, it would have wide coverage. Nationalist Radio called the station ‘the voice of propaganda for North China’ since its signal could easily be received at night up to 1,500 to 2,000 kilometres away in Manchuria, Mongolia, Korea, and China proper.<sup>92</sup> Second, it helped Nationalist Radio accumulate cultural capital because the CC Clique could use local presenters who spoke the Peking dialect to broadcast to northern audiences. Moreover, the branch station transmitted Peking opera from the city’s

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<sup>89</sup> Li, *Xiandaixing liubian*, 52–53.

<sup>90</sup> Li, 31–65.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai guanlichu’ 中國國民黨中央執行委員會廣播無線電台管理處, ‘Gongzuo baogao’ 工作報告, January 1934, 5.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Hebei guangbo diantai gongzuo gangyao ji zuzhi tiaoli cao’an’ 河北廣播電台工作綱要及組織條例草案 [Draft plan of Hebei broadcasting radio station work outline and organisational regulations], 12 October 1934, KMT Archives, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 4.3/163.18.

theatre district so that Nationalist Radio could rebroadcast performances nationwide.<sup>93</sup> Third, Radio Hebei was important to Nationalist Radio for technical reasons. When refitting the station, the CC Clique installed underground cables and encased the relay-room ceiling and north-eastern walls in lead sheathing to prevent Japanese jamming of Central Station relay broadcasts.<sup>94</sup> Radio Hebei thus served three purposes: to promote the party-state in the north, provide Peking opera to the Central Station, and thwart Japanese jamming on the fourth front.

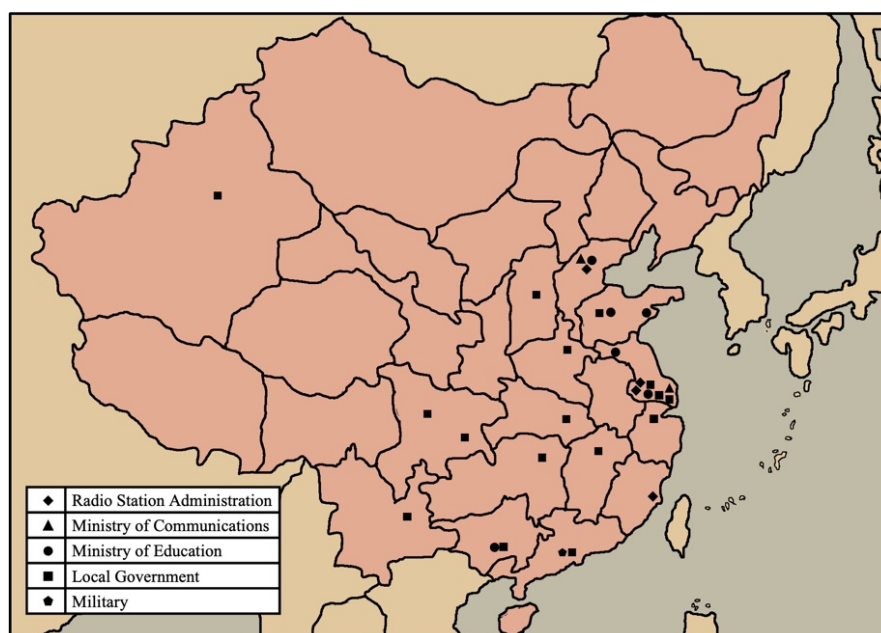


Figure 7. Party-state stations, 1935. Map by author

As Nationalist Radio outfitted Radio Hebei in November 1933, the Fujian Rebellion provided the CC Clique an opportunity to expand in the southeast. The rebellion rattled the party state when Cai Tingkai and his Nineteenth Route Army joined provincial officials Li Jichen, Chen Mingshu and Jiang Guangnai to establish the People's Revolutionary Government of the Republic of China (中華共和國人民革命政府) on 20 November. Seeking to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek and resist Japan, the rebels also lobbied such Nationalist leaders as Bai Chongxi and Hu Hanmin to join their uprising. In addition, they signed a preliminary agreement with the Jiangxi Soviet for a ceasefire with the promise of future military cooperation against Chiang and Japan. Although the party state suppressed the rebellion in less than sixty days, the crisis interrupted Chiang's fifth encirclement campaign in Jiangxi, allowing the Jiangxi Soviet enough time to reposition troops and secure supplies.<sup>95</sup> It also exposed deep

<sup>93</sup> 'Hebei guangbo diantai', KMT Archives, *Hui*, 4.3/163.18.

<sup>94</sup> Guanlichu, 'Gongzuo baogao', 11.

<sup>95</sup> William F. Dorrell, 'The Fukien Rebellion and the CCP: A Case of Maoist Revisionism', *China Quarterly*, no. 37 (January–March 1969): 31–53.

divisions within the party and the tenuous hold of Nanjing over its own officials. What concerned the CC Clique, however, was that the rebels aired their revolutionary platform and anti-Chiang messaging four hours a day from the brand-new provincial radio station, reaching domestic listeners in South China and overseas Chinese audiences in Southeast Asia.<sup>96</sup>

After the government recovered Fuzhou in January 1934, Nationalist Radio dispatched broadcast section chief Huang Tianru (黃天如) and a technician to inspect the Fuzhou station. The facility was in good condition, having just been completed at a cost of 44,000 yuan three months earlier. Like Radio Hebei, the Fuzhou station had been converted from an abandoned telegraph station, and the provincial government had installed a 250-watt American transmitter from Asia Electric, which had recently invested Chinese \$1,200,000 in a Shanghai factory.<sup>97</sup> Despite being small, Radio Fuzhou (Station XGOL) had a footprint of 1,000 to 1,500 kilometres. At night, it could be clearly heard as far away as Peking in the north, the Philippines in the east, Indochina in the south, and Hankou in the west.<sup>98</sup> It thus covered the Jiangxi Soviet, South China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, making it an important broadcast propaganda outlet.

Huang negotiated the transfer of Radio Fuzhou to the Radio Station Administration during his inspection tour, and Nationalist Radio began operating the new station on 1 March 1934 as Chiang Kai-shek launched the New Life Movement in neighbouring Jiangxi.<sup>99</sup> After becoming acquainted with Fuzhou culture, Huang made education the most important element in the programme mix and sought ‘to enlighten the people and popularise education’. Moreover, he established a provincial radio-operator network and relayed Central Station content throughout the broadcast day. Furthermore, he produced local news, information, education, and entertainment programmes in the Fukien and Amoy dialects to cater to a local audience.<sup>100</sup>

### *Regulating Private Radio*

While Nationalist Radio set up its branch stations and promoted public broadcasting, it also planned to enter the largest and most complex radio market in the country—Shanghai. However, the Nationalists first needed to regulate private broadcasting in the city’s three

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<sup>96</sup> Zhao, Ai and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 698–99.

<sup>97</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, 698–99; John J. Ehrhardt, US Trade Commissioner of Shanghai, ‘Asia Electric Company, Federal Inc., U.S.A., Shanghai’, National Archives and Records Administration, General Records of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce (RG151), Entry 14, Box 115, Folder ‘Shanghai—Special Reports, December 1932’, 8 December 1932, 16–18.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Fuzhou guangbo diantai gongzuo baogao’ 福州廣播電台工作報告, March 1935, 32–36; Zhao, Ai and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 698.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Fuzhou guangbo diantai gaikuang’ 福州廣播電台概況, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 18–19.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Fuzhou guangbo diantai’, 4

districts and bring order to the airwaves before entering the city. By mid-1933, no substantive progress had been made between the foreign municipal councils and the Shanghai Bureau of International Telegraphs regarding the implementation of the provisional rules for private radio stations in the foreign concessions. The only agreement that had been reached was that foreign stations would use China's call sign beginning with 'X' in accordance with international conventions.<sup>101</sup> The truth of the matter was that the foreign municipal councils did not want to grant Chinese authorities the right to licence and inspect radio stations in their jurisdictions. For example, the Shanghai Municipal Council rejected the idea altogether because it believed that 'there cannot be two independent authorities exercising administrative control in the settlement over the same subject matter'. Moreover, the council was willing to resort to force if necessary to stop Chinese authorities because 'it controls the police power in the Settlement and possesses the physical power to prevent officials representing outside authorities from functioning in the Settlement'.<sup>102</sup> The council in fact did use force during negotiations when settlement police raided Wang Jingwei's residence to seize his radio station and arrest his operator.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the French Municipal Council rejected using a Chinese call sign for Alliance Française (Station FFZ), insisting on its right to regulate radio in its jurisdiction.<sup>104</sup> Such foreign resistance compelled the Nationalists to resort to extra-legal means—just as the Beiyang regime had done in 1924—to assert Chinese sovereignty over Shanghai's airwaves.

The Nationalists gained control over Shanghai radio through political manoeuvre and technical manipulation. The Bureau of International Telegraphs enlisted the help of Chinese private station owners in the Broadcasting Association of China to encourage its membership in the foreign concessions to apply voluntarily for a broadcasting license from the Ministry of Communications.<sup>105</sup> It appears that the bureau then began to sandwich foreign broadcasters in Shanghai between stronger Chinese stations to block reception.<sup>106</sup> The Nationalists thereby placed indirect pressure on the municipal councils via foreign listeners, who published letters in local newspapers demanding that the councils take action to stop the radio interference.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> 'Confusion in Local Radio Broadcasting Clogs Ether', *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, 17 June 1933, 1, 6.

<sup>102</sup> Quotations from Krysko, *American Radio*, 86; also see Shanghai Municipal Council Archives, file U001-04-0002812, 12 June 1933, 137.

<sup>103</sup> 'Radio Station on Kiaochow Road', *North-China Herald*, 11 January 1933, 55.

<sup>104</sup> 'Protest against Radio Station', *North-China Herald*, 25 January 1933, 137. 'Radio Stations in Shanghai', *North-China Herald*, 21 June 1933, 456.

<sup>105</sup> 'Problem of Local Broadcasting', *North-China Herald*, 14 June 1933, 414.

<sup>106</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 87.

<sup>107</sup> 'Radio Troubles: Local Interference', *North-China Herald*, 30 November 1932, 343.

As Michael Krysko has shown, this strategy was very effective because it pressured foreign stations to comply with the regulations or lose listeners and advertising revenue. The Chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council, Harry Edward Arnhold, expressed the situation as follows:

Foreign broadcasting stations are compelled to comply with these regulations or go out of business as powerful Chinese stations located outside the settlement and controlled by the Chinese government can easily blot out and in other ways interfere with the broadcasting stations which refuse to comply.<sup>108</sup>

By June 1933, the foreign municipal councils were presented with a *fait accompli* when all but one foreign station voluntarily applied for a broadcasting license, which led to a symbolic call-sign agreement on 17 June 1933.<sup>109</sup> However, this agreement did not address the most important issue—Chinese sovereignty—so the interference continued. The Nationalists thus prevented the foreign councils from regulating radio in their respective jurisdictions, thereby enabling the party state to assert Chinese sovereignty over Shanghai's airwaves. The CC Clique then turned its attention to shaping the content of private broadcasting stations in the city.<sup>110</sup>

### *Shaping Programme Content*

The struggle to assert Chinese radio sovereignty in 1933 turned into a fight to regulate the content of Shanghai private broadcasting stations in 1934. This was done to prepare for the launch of two Shanghai public broadcasting stations in 1935. Like an invasion, Nationalist Radio first softened up the city with broadcast programming from the big radio station in 1932. In March 1933, the Shanghai Education Bureau then began to place thirty-minute social education programmes on two local private stations—East West Radio (Station XHHH) and Greater China Radio (Station XHHU).<sup>111</sup> In April, the Nationalist Government ordered all stations of 100 watts or more to relay *Central Memorial Week* on Monday and *Important News* every day if they were on-air when the Central Station broadcast the programmes.<sup>112</sup> However, most private stations were smaller than 100 watts, and most of the larger ones subject to the order did not operate during the programmes' scheduled times. As a result, only one of the twenty-four stations of 100 watts or more relayed *Central Memorial Week* and three

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<sup>108</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 87.

<sup>109</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 388–390, 396. 'Radio Stations in Shanghai: New Call Signs Being Adopted by Seven Stations', *North-China Herald*, 22 March 1933, 465.

<sup>110</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 88.

<sup>111</sup> 'Shanghai shi jiaoyuju gongbu shixing wuxiandian boyin zanxing banfa' 上海市教育局公布施行无线电播音暂行办法, 21 March 1933, *Jiu Zhongguo*, 191–192.

<sup>112</sup> 'Guomin zhengfu xunling di yi si yi hao' 國民政府訓令第一四一號, 4 April 1933, *Guomin zhengfu gongbao*, no. 1098 (6 April 1933): 1–2.

rebroadcast *Important News*.<sup>113</sup> In 1933, compliance among both public and private stations was weak, and enforcement of regulations was essentially non-existent.

The enforcement of the provisional regulations began in earnest after the Nationalists announced plans to open two public radio stations in Shanghai. In March 1934, the municipal government announced that it would build a station behind the Civic Centre with a studio inside the city government building to make it convenient for municipal officials to appear on-air.<sup>114</sup> The Municipal Public Land Bureau selected the China Radio Corporation to build the 500-watt station, costing 30,000 yuan, and set the completion date for October 1935 so that the station could broadcast the 1935 Shanghai Sixth National Games.<sup>115</sup> In July 1934, the Ministry of Communications announced that it would build a ten-kilowatt station under the auspices of the Municipal Bureau of International Telegraphs.<sup>116</sup> With these two public stations in Shanghai, the Nationalists planned to bring an end to the sonic bedlam on the bund.

The Nationalists introduced radio regulations to consolidate party-state control over Shanghai private broadcasting in the summer of 1934. Although the Shanghai Education Bureau had been responsible for monitoring radio content, it had done little more than issue one vague order in October 1932 that politely admonished stations for airing music whose lyrics and tones conveyed ‘obscene and socially harmful meanings’. In the order, the education bureau issued a toothless warning, urging station owners to ‘choose broadcast materials carefully in order to avoid corrupt practices and preserve moral discipline’.<sup>117</sup> As a result, radio content in Shanghai would not come under scrutiny until during the New Life Movement.

In early June 1934, the Nationalist Party office in Shanghai wrote a letter to the education bureau demanding that it ‘find a way to improve programme content to conform with the primary aim of New Life’ because ‘the song and dance tunes broadcast by the radio stations in this port city can easily arouse the corrupt thoughts of the people’.<sup>118</sup> The education bureau thereupon formed a task force with five other organisations: the Public Health Bureau, Shanghai Sports Association, Bureau of International Telegraphs, the Citizen’s Military

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<sup>113</sup> ‘Fulu: Quanguo guangbo diantai yilانبiao’ 附錄:全國廣播電台一覽表, *QSP*, 15 October 1933, 60–66.

<sup>114</sup> Notes of the Day, *Shanghai Times*, 13 March 1934, 20.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Hu shifu guangbo diantai ben yuedi jiang kaishi boyin’ 滬市府廣播電台本月底將開始播音, *Yule zhoubao* 娛樂週報 (hereafter *Yule*), 7 July 1935, 3.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Powerful Wireless Station to Be Initiated Here by Ministry of Communications’, *North-China Herald*, 18 July 1934, 94.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Jiaoyuju guanyu boyin zhi xunling’ 教育局關於播音之訓令, *Wuxiandian wenda huikan*, 10 October 1932, 354.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Shi dangbu qing gaishan boyin cailiao’ 市黨部請改善播音材料, *Minbao* 民報 (hereafter *Minbao*), 10 June 1934, 7.

Training Committee, and the New Life Movement Promotional Association. On 11 June, the task force formed a design committee to develop ‘measures for the review of broadcast materials’, which set 1 July as its deadline to determine content standards. At the same time, the task force assigned the Bureau of International Telegraphs to liaise with station owners.<sup>119</sup> By month’s end, the design committee review content before broadcast, and the bureau had met with station owners to introduce the new regulatory regime.

The response in the local press to the new content review was mixed. After the first task force meeting, a commentary in *People’s Journal* supported the content review, noting the great harm that obscene and decadent content caused society; at the same time, it urged authorities to develop consistent standards to eliminate lasciviousness as well as protect against censorship of satirical content that could be used to correct bad customs.<sup>120</sup> An editorial in *Movietone* raised concerns about whether a pre-broadcast review was viable given the spontaneousness of radio, and it was sceptical about whether city officials had enough manpower to complete timely reviews.<sup>121</sup> However, although the press questioned how to implement censorship, no one seemed to doubt that private radio content needed to be regulated.

In addition to conservative bureaucrats in the party state, intellectuals across the political spectrum were critical of Shanghai radio. As Laura De Giorgi has demonstrated, progressives and leftists both criticised private stations for their heavy reliance on entertainment and lack of educational programming. According to De Giorgi, the vacuousness of Shanghai broadcasting content had not lived up to an implicit promise that radio—as a symbol of modernity—should contribute to the economic, social, and cultural modernisation of China.<sup>122</sup> Carlton Benson also pointed out that cultural conservatives were highly critical of Shanghai broadcasting for airing too much lyric storytelling (*tanci* 彈詞) because it often contained obscene lyrics and promoted consumerism, two things that were anathema to proponents of the New Life and National Goods Movements.<sup>123</sup>

Private radio pioneer Su Zuguo (蘇祖國) attributed Shanghai private broadcastings’ reliance on entertainment to its dependence on advertising revenue for survival. Su was in a unique position to comment on the broadcasting industry because he was a publisher of several

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<sup>119</sup> ‘Shi jiaoyuju ji mou gaishan wuxiandian boyin cailiao’ 市教育局亟謀改善無線電播音材料, *Xinwen bao* 新聞報 (hereafter *Xinwenbao*), 12 June 1934, 12.

<sup>120</sup> Hong Zhi 弘之, ‘Shencha boyin jiemu’ 審查播音節目, *Minbao*, 14 June 1934, 11.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Diantai boyin jiemu jiaoben shencha wenti’ 電台播音節目腳本審查問題, *Diansheng zhouban* 電聲週刊 (hereafter *Diansheng*), 10 August 1934, 596.

<sup>122</sup> De Giorgi, ‘Popular Education’, 286–288.

<sup>123</sup> Carlton Benson, ‘From Teahouse to Radio’, 73–211.

radio magazines, the owner of Amateurs Home Radio and part-owner of the Yamei Company. Su lamented that private stations like his could not afford to broadcast high-quality educational and entertainment programming because it would cost several hundred dollars each month to produce.<sup>124</sup> Like national broadcasters in the United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany, Nationalist Radio was the only entity with the means and the motivation to fund the production of high-quality educational and entertainment programming. In some ways, China was like France, which also had a hybrid public-private system, and both countries regulated private radio to facilitate the development of public broadcasting.<sup>125</sup> However, unlike France, China had the additional complication of private broadcasters operating in foreign concessions and Japanese and Soviet stations airing Chinese-language broadcast propaganda. As a result, Nationalist Radio focused on shaping the content of private broadcasters in Shanghai until the city's two public stations were ready to launch in 1935.

The formal review of radio content and enforcement of technical requirements began in August 1934. The material review required that private stations submit scripts of all entertainment programming to the Bureau of International Telegraphs for prior approval before broadcast. The Bureau of Education then reviewed the material for the following content:

1. Language relating to international interference
2. Wording that is vulgar, obscene, or harmful to morals and culture
3. Intentional slander or vilification
4. All speech and singing already banned by the government<sup>126</sup>

In August, private stations submitted 218 scripts for review, including 107 lyric verses, 89 songs, 10 dramas, 6 operas, 5 stories, and 1 scroll recitation. On 6 October, the education bureau completed its review of the first batch: 90 percent of all material passed, 5 items (2 percent) required further revision, and 18 items (8 percent) were banned.<sup>127</sup>

As the education bureau continued to review content into the fall of 1934, the Ministry of Communications stopped issuing new broadcasting licenses to private stations because Shanghai already had more than fifty broadcasters on a wave range of 950 kilocycles. According to the ministry, the city needed to have fewer than thirty-five stations to prevent

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<sup>124</sup> De Giorgi, 'Popular Education', 290; Su Zuguo 蘇祖國, 'Boyin yu jiaoyu' 播音與教育, 5 May 1934, *Jiu Zhongguo*, 251–52.

<sup>125</sup> Scales, *Politics of Sound*, 156–57.

<sup>126</sup> 'Guoji dianxinju zhengli ge diantai boyin yu shi jiaoyu shencha yanci' 國際電信局整理各電台播音與市教育局審查演詞, *Shibao* 時報, 30 August 1934, 3.

<sup>127</sup> 'Shi jiaoyu zhengdun dianbo cailiao' 市教育局整頓電播材料, *Minbao*, 5 October 1934, 6.



interference.<sup>128</sup> It therefore planned to reduce the number of Shanghai private broadcasters to improve radio reception and make room for the two new party-state stations.

### *Cleaning Up the Airwaves*

The Nationalists launched two Shanghai public radio stations in 1935. Although the city government was the first to announce its plan to establish a station in 1934, the Ministry of Communications was the first to open its station in early 1935. It did so by acquiring an existing private station rather than wait for the arrival of the ten-kilowatt Telefunken transmitter that it had ordered from Germany. According to Minister Zhu Jiahua, the ministry changed its plan to avoid the possible loss of the station in a second Japanese attack on Shanghai. The ministry therefore placed the new radio station in Chengdu to strengthen broadcast propaganda in the interior in accordance with war planning; at the same time, the ministry also moved part of the Shanghai international radiotelegraph station to Chengdu to prevent the loss of wireless telecommunications in the event of another Japanese invasion.<sup>129</sup> The Nationalists thus began moving wireless infrastructure into the interior as early as 1934 to prepare Chinese broadcasting and radiotelegraphy for a forthcoming war on the fourth front.

Acquiring an existing station in Shanghai enabled the Nationalists to advance a long-term policy goal: the elimination of foreign radio stations in China.<sup>130</sup> The ministry bought China Broadcast Limited (Station XQHC 美靈登), which was owned and operated by a British advertising company, Millington Limited.<sup>131</sup> China Broadcast was known for its news and entertainment, owing to its Reuters-sponsored newscasts and extensive record library maintained by expatriate radiophiles in the China Broadcast Association.<sup>132</sup> However, Millington liquidated China Broadcast in late 1934 because clients were cutting advertising budgets and failing to pay their bills amid the deepening global recession, resulting in heavy

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<sup>128</sup> Jiaotongbu guoji dianxinju wei tingzhi fagei zhuangzhi minying guangbo diantai xukezheng tonggao 交通部国际电信局为停止发给装置民营广播电台许可证通告, *Xinwenbao*, 24 August 1934, 9; 'Committee Getting Results', 5.

<sup>129</sup> 'Wo zai Jiaotongbu rennei de zhongyang gaige' 我在交通部任内的重要改革, in *Zhu Jiahua xiansheng yanlunji* 朱家驊先生言論集, eds. Wang Yee-chun 王聿均 and Sun Pin 孫斌 (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1977), 414.

<sup>130</sup> 'Diantai zhi shouhui' 外商設立廣播電台之收回, *Zhongguo Guomindang zhidao xia zhi zhengzhi chengji tongji* 中國國民黨指導下之政治成績統計 (hereafter ZGZX), no. 2 (February 1935): 112.

<sup>131</sup> Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, United States of America Department of Commerce, *Broadcast Advertising in Asia, Africa, Australia and Oceania*, Trade Information Bulletin, no. 799 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 3–5.

<sup>132</sup> 'China Broadcast Association: Discussions with Council on Control Question', *North-China Herald*, 26 April 1933, 18.

losses at the station since 1933.<sup>133</sup> Millington's financial distress provided the Nationalists an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: acquire a well-established Shanghai station and eliminate one of the six foreign broadcasters in China for only 5,000 yuan. As part of the deal, the ministry acquired the station assets, including its music library, and Millington became the exclusive advertising agency for foreign clients at 30-percent commission. The ministry then installed a state-of-the-art Marconi transmitter and designed a bilingual programme schedule that alternated between Chinese and English broadcasts throughout the day.<sup>134</sup> After the ministry launched the station on 9 March 1935, it began to clean up China's airwaves.

As Radio Shanghai hit the airwaves and the municipal radio station neared completion, the Ministry of Communications purchased a second foreign station in Peking. The ministry acquired Hirsbrunner Radio (Station XOMO)—the only foreign broadcaster in Peking—for 12,000 yuan in March 1935. It then transformed the 280-watt facility into a branch station of Radio Peking (Station XGOP). Afterwards, Hirsbrunner and Company signed a long-term lease agreement with the Peking Telegraph Office and continued to broadcast entertainment on the branch station.<sup>135</sup> With the acquisition of these two foreign broadcasters, the Nationalists thus reduced the number of independent foreign stations to five by March 1935.

The Ministry of Communications then began to scrutinise the operations of Chinese radio stations in Shanghai. At the end of April, the ministry suspended five broadcasters for technical problems and another two for airing improper content.<sup>136</sup> Hongkang Radio (Station XHHM), for instance, was suspended on 27 April for one week owing to the broadcast of a sexually explicit song called 'Eighteen Caresses'; however, the Hongkang owner sold his station equipment and licence (illegally) during the suspension period to an investor who launched another station on the same frequency under a new name on 4 May.<sup>137</sup> This kind of commercial gymnastics kept administrators at the ministry on their toes. In August, the ministry then ordered the closure of nine Shanghai stations after finding numerous problems, such as using substandard equipment and airing 'obscene language and perverted music'.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> 'Company to Reduce Its Capital: Extraordinary General Meeting of Shareholders of Millington, Limited', *North-China Herald*, 4 July 1934, 24.

<sup>134</sup> 'Diantai zhi shouhui', 112.

<sup>135</sup> 'Diantai zhi shouhui', 112.

<sup>136</sup> 'Jiaotongbu guoji dianxinju guanyu bufen minying diantai zanting boyin jingguo qingxing yilanbiao' 交通部国际电信局关于部分民营电台暂停播音经过情形一览表, 17 July 1935, in *Jiu Zhongguo*, 214–217.

<sup>137</sup> 'Bufen minying diantai', 217.

<sup>138</sup> 'Jiaobu mou fangzhi liubi zhengchi guangbo diantai' 交部謀防流弊整飭廣播電台, *Shenbao*, 7 November 1935, 11.

Shanghai City Radio (Station XGOI) opened with great fanfare on 10 October 1935, coinciding with National Day and the Sixth National Games.<sup>139</sup> To prepare for the games, the station began broadcasting in late July, and the municipal government installed 150 loudspeakers in public buildings and outdoor venues across the city.<sup>140</sup> According to Andrew Morris, the Nationalists used the National Games to produce ‘spectacles’ that were ‘strange brews of celebratory nationalism, Guomindang political hype and swagger, media overkill, and lavish commercialism’. To this end, Shanghai City Radio broadcast the opening ceremonies live and aired an hour-long recap from the Shanghai Municipal Stadium each day at 6.30 p.m. To promote national pride, the Central Station relayed the evening recap to broadcast the achievements of the 2,273 athletes from thirty-four provincial-level teams, including occupied territories, and Chinese teams from Hong Kong, Malaya, Java, and the Philippines.<sup>141</sup> Immediately after the games, Shanghai City Radio returned to its regular studios at the city government building to relay Central Station content and broadcast academic lectures to local schools. In addition, the Ministry of Communications closed two private stations in Shanghai to reduce the total number of broadcasters in the city to thirty-nine at the end of 1935.<sup>142</sup>

### The Fourth Front

The Chinese government’s acquisition of China Broadcast and Hirsbrunner Radio raised concerns in the international community that the days of foreign-owned stations were numbered.<sup>143</sup> As Nationalist Radio developed its programming and expanded the network of public stations between 1933 and 1935, the Nationalists became more assertive in their dealings with foreign broadcasters and the diplomatic community. Nationalist Radio deputy director, Wu Daoyi, foreshadowed this new-found assertiveness in December 1934 in a radio talk on the Central Station. Addressing the harmful effects of radio propaganda, Wu argued that broadcasting by the ‘big powers’ in China was a form of ‘cultural invasion’:

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<sup>139</sup> *Minguo ershiwu nian Shanghai shi nianjian* 民國二十五年上海市年鑑, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), A 10–11; ‘New Broadcasting Station Opens’, *North-China Herald*, 16 October 1935, 17.

<sup>140</sup> ‘New Radio Station for Shanghai’, *Shanghai Sunday Times*, 23 June 1935, 5; ‘Hu shifu guangbo diantai’, 1; Andrew D. Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 149.

<sup>141</sup> ‘Shifu diantai bosong jiemu chengji’ 市府電台播送節目成績, *Shishi xinbao tekan* 時事新報特刊, 10 October 1935, 10, 32; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 392, 394.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Jiaobu yu liang nian lai dui guangbo shiye zhi zhengdun’ 交通部於兩年來對廣播事業之整頓, *Zhongyang ribao*, 6 March 1936, 7.

<sup>143</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 84–89; ‘Status of Foreign Owned Broadcasts: Stations May Be Taken Over by China’, *North-China Herald*, 11 March 1936, 441.

In the past, cultural invasion used missionary work and religious proselytising. Today, it can use radio broadcasting to inflame the populace and promote reactionism. How many times greater will the effect of its invasion be is unknown.<sup>144</sup>

The Ministry of Communications, as the government entity entrusted with regulating private radio, subsequently took a tough stance towards foreign-owned stations ‘because broadcasting has an extremely large impact on a country’s political culture’.<sup>145</sup> This attitudinal change resulted in a new interpretation of the 1932 provisional rules governing private broadcasting, which allowed foreign nationals and their entities to register with the Nationalist Government for a license. Thereafter, the Ministry of Communications would not issue broadcasting licenses to foreigner owners. The ministry justified this new interpretation on international convention and the principle of reciprocity, stating that ‘the countries of Europe and America on the whole do not allow foreigners to set up broadcasting stations, our country also has adopted this kind of government policy’.<sup>146</sup> The reason behind this change was that broadcasting was becoming a fourth front as nations fought for control of the airwaves.

An emphasis on the suppression of private broadcasting in the secondary literature, owing to news coverage in the Anglophone press and later communist historiography, has diverted attention from the larger aim of the application of the provisional rules in Shanghai. Apart from technical considerations, the primary drive to regulate the domestic broadcasting between 1933 and 1935 was the assertion of party-state sovereignty over the airwaves. In this respect, the Nationalists suppressed unlicensed broadcasters equally. For example, the Ministry of Communications applied the same provisional rule in 1934 to shut down Zhang Jiaying’s Meteor Radio in Shanghai and American R. J. Mueller’s amateur station in Hankou, because both men were operating unlicensed broadcasting stations.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, the motivation to acquire China Broadcast and Hirsbrunner Radio was not xenophobic. The Nationalists bought the stations to expand the footprint of party-state broadcasting as well as to supervise foreign participation in the China radio oecumene, not eliminate it altogether, as demonstrated in the subsequent relationships between Millington and Hirsbrunner with the public broadcasters.<sup>148</sup> We therefore must look beyond the confines of Shanghai private radio and focus instead on the wider conflict between China, Japan, and the Soviet Union in East Asia.

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<sup>144</sup> ‘Lieqiang guangbo shiye yu Zhongguo’ 列強廣播事業與中國, *GBZB*, 15 December 1934, 8.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Diantai zhi shouhui’, 112.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Diantai zhi shouhui’, 112.

<sup>147</sup> ‘Jiaotongbu guoji dianxinju wei kandeng sishe diantai chahuo chufa xinwengao zhi ge baoguan jianhan’ 交通部国际电信局为刊登私设电台查获处罚新闻稿致各报馆笺函, 14 July 1933, *Jiu Zhongguo*, 195–96; Krysko, *American Radio*, 84–85.

<sup>148</sup> ‘Diantai zhi shouhui’, 112.

Just like radio had become a European battleground in 1935 during the Nazi-backed July Putsch in Austria, and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, China and Japan were forming battle lines along the fourth front in East Asia. In late 1932, the launch of the Central Station in Nanjing marked the start of a radio race between China and Japan as both countries lobbied for international support at the League of Nations. In one fell swoop, the big radio station with its seventy-five kilowatts exceeded the combined power of the five largest stations in the Broadcasting Corporation of Japan, which were ten-kilowatts each.<sup>149</sup> The timing of this development was crucial because the Lytton Report and the debates between the Chinese and Japanese delegations were transmitted around the world on the League of Nations' new wireless station in Geneva, Radio-Nations.<sup>150</sup> The CC Clique showed its willingness to use broadcasting as weapon of war when it used Nationalist Radio's strong signal to broadcast over Japanese domestic frequencies during the Battle of the Great Wall in 1933. On 5 January, Nationalist Radio began transmitting fifteen-minute phantom broadcasts in fluent Japanese during prime time in Japan to protest the Kwantung Army attack at the Shanhai Pass.<sup>151</sup>

The prime-time phantom broadcasts of 1933 appear to have triggered the radio race. In the north, Japan began to increase the power of its broadcasting stations in Manchuria. At Hsinking (Changchun), it replaced a one-kilowatt station with a 100-kilowatt facility to promote multilingual broadcast propaganda after Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in February 1933.<sup>152</sup> Upon completion of the station in November 1934, Japanese authorities adopted China's radio-operator model in Manchuria to install radios in more than 1,000 county and government offices throughout the region. In the south, colonial authorities on Taiwan began building a 500-kilowatt broadcasting station in Jiayi to counter Nationalist Radio interference there and improve the dissemination of broadcast propaganda in South China.<sup>153</sup> On the Japanese archipelago, the government upgraded Tokyo Number One Station (JOAK) and Osaka Number One Station (JOBK) to 150 kilowatts each to connect the metropole (*naichi* 内地) with colonial broadcasting stations (*gaichi* 外地). According to Jane Robbins, Japan

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<sup>149</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 13.

<sup>150</sup> 'Yen and Matsuoka Heard on the Radio', *New York Times*, 5 December 1932, 8.

<sup>151</sup> 'Sankai Jiken de mata kai hōsō, rei no Nankin musendendai kara' 山海關事件でまた怪放送, 例の南京無線電台から, *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 6 January 1933, 7.

<sup>152</sup> Kawashima Shin 川島真, 'Wei manzhouguo de guangbo zhengce' 伪满洲国の广播政策, *Jindai Zhongguo dongbeibu wenhua guoji yantaohui*, 近代中国東北部文化国際研讨会, September 2004, 1–8; Jane M. J. Robbins, 'Tokyo Calling: Japanese Overseas Radio Broadcasting 1937–1945' (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 1997), 28.

<sup>153</sup> Lu Shao-li 呂紹理, 'Rizhi shiqi Taiwan guangbo gongye yu shouyinji shichang de xingcheng', 1928–1945' 日治時期台灣廣播工業與收音機市場的形成 (1928–1945), *Taiwan guoli zhengzhi daxue lishi xuebao* 國立政治大學歷史學報, no. 19 (May 2002): 301. Robbins, 'Tokyo Calling', 78.

strengthened its network to counter threats from both Nationalist China and the Soviet Union.<sup>154</sup> Japan even attempted to establish a radio station in territory not under its control. In September 1935, the Japanese Radio Fans Association in Shanghai tried to open an NHK-affiliated station in the Shanghai International Settlement, which the Nationalist Government rejected outright.<sup>155</sup> However, as the conflict between China and Japan escalated on the fourth front, Nationalist Radio also had to contend with another foe.

The Communist threat on the fourth front was both an internal and external one. Although the Chinese Communists did not have a broadcasting station until 1940, they did use wireless radio against the Nationalists to coordinate troop movements and espionage operations. The threat that this posed to the integrity of the party state was the primary reason that the CC Clique integrated intelligence gathering under Nationalist Radio before 1938. To the Communists, who were dispersed across the country in rural areas, wireless telegraphy was essential to maintaining contact with other soviets and communicating with the outside world. The Communist Central Political Bureau, for instance, operated at least seven wireless stations in Shanghai until Xu Enzeng and his agents captured 184 communists and their equipment in a citywide raid on 14 June 1934.<sup>156</sup> In February 1935, the Ministry of Communications offered monetary rewards for information that led to the capture of illegal radiotelegraph receivers (Mexican \$100 each) and transmitters (Mexican \$300 each),<sup>157</sup> which resulted in the seizure of numerous underground wireless stations around the country.<sup>158</sup> The suppression of radiotelegraphic equipment was central to the Nationalist effort to isolate military units like those under Mao Zedong, whose troops carried three wireless sets to evade the Nationalist Army and monitor their communications, as the Nationalists pursued them in the mountains of Sichuan and Gansu Provinces at the tail end of 1935.<sup>159</sup>

One final threat on the fourth front came from the Soviet Union.<sup>160</sup> The powerful Soviet shortwave station at Khabarovsk near Manchuria produced Mandarin-language propaganda for Chinese audiences. It also sought to expand its audience by shipping 10,000 radios to Shanghai

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<sup>154</sup> *Shanghai Times*, 6 December 1934, 18; 'Ribei guangbo diantai yilanbiao' 日本廣播電台一覽表, *Wuxiandian* 2, January 1935, 29; Lovell, *Microphone Age*, 24–25; Robbins, 'Tokyo Calling', 49–53.

<sup>155</sup> 'Radio Station Plan by Japanese Here', *Shanghai Times*, 21 September 1935, 5.

<sup>156</sup> U. T. Hsu [Xu Enzeng 徐恩曾], *The Invisible Conflict* (Hong Kong: China Viewpoints, 1958), 97–99.

<sup>157</sup> 'Jiaobu zhengqiu gaomi sishe diantai' 交部徵求告密私設電台, *Wuxiandian* 2, February 1935, 55; 'Yanli qudi sishe diantai' 嚴厲取締私設電台, *Xinwenbao*, 28 May 1935, 9.

<sup>158</sup> 'Red Radio Station Owners Sought', *Shanghai Times*, 4 July 1935, 6; 'Kiangsi Communists Have Big Losses: Radio Receiver and Telephones Recovered', *North-China Herald*, 3 July 1935, 14.

<sup>159</sup> 'Reds Starved to Death', *North-China Herald*, 9 October 1935, 52.

<sup>160</sup> Lovell, *Microphone Age*, 24–25.

and flooding the market with inexpensive receivers to promote its Chinese programming. However, the Nationalists uncovered the plot before the shipment of radios arrived in port, and they took countermeasures to stop the operation. The Soviet plan was discovered owing to daily monitoring of Soviet and Japanese broadcasts and other electronic communications by the Nationalist party state.<sup>161</sup> Given the threats posed by Japan, the Chinese Communists, and the Soviet Union in the radio oecumene, the strict regulation of private stations became even more essential as a mass audience developed in China and a fourth front formed in East Asia.

## Conclusion

This chapter began with one typical day on the Central Station on 21 May 1935 to illustrate Nationalist Radio content between 1933 and 1935. The first part of this chapter demonstrated how the CC Clique organised the institution after the completion of the big radio station in 1932 and extended its footprint to Peking and Fuzhou. It also showed how Nationalist Radio expanded the radio-operator network to reach a wider audience via print and facilitated the expansion of public broadcasting across the country. The second part of this chapter traced the growth of the China radio oecumene after the radio boom of 1932. Moreover, it showed how the Nationalists asserted radio sovereignty over the foreign concessions in Shanghai and consolidated party-state control over private broadcasting in the city. The final part of this chapter explained why the Nationalists sought to expand public broadcasting while suppressing private radio in Shanghai. Apart from seeking to establish Nationalist Radio as a model for the domestic industry and imposing regulatory control over local content, which was commonplace during the Interwar Period,<sup>162</sup> the CC Clique sought to prevent the Chinese Communists from using wireless radio technology and counter the Japanese and Soviet threat on the fourth front.

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<sup>161</sup> 'Sulian guangbo diantai dui wo eyi xuanchuan zhi jiaoshe' 蘇聯廣播電台對我惡意宣傳之交涉, *ZGZX*, no. 3 (March 1936): 32–33.

<sup>162</sup> Kasza, *Mass Media*, 72–73.

## CHAPTER 4: THE SPIRIT OF THE AUDIENCE

The Party Director taught us that of the six great necessities of life, in addition to clothing, food, shelter and transport, do not abandon pleasure and entertainment.  
—Lu Boying, General Affairs Department, Nationalist Radio

### Introduction

Although Sun Yat-sen's Principle of the People's Livelihood had only four necessities of life, Nationalist Radio official Lu Boying attributed pleasure and entertainment to the Father of the Nation at the height of the New Life Movement in 1934.<sup>1</sup> Pleasure and entertainment had a striking resemblance, however, to the two necessities of life that Dai Jitao had added to the Principle of the People's Livelihood in order to inject a spiritual element into the inherent materialism of Sunism in the late 1920s. In fact, pleasure (*yu* 娛) and entertainment (*le* 樂) were a wordplay on cultivation (*yu* 育) and enjoyment (*le* 樂), which Dai had formulated after carefully reading Sun's notes and discussing them with his widow Song Qingling.<sup>2</sup> Dai thus hoped that these spiritual necessities of life would strengthen the ideological foundation of Sunism and counter the emotive appeal of communism.

Dai considered cultivation and enjoyment important because they concerned the moral development of the individual. Among the Sunist necessities of life, he regarded cultivation as the most important because of its connection with raising children, educating youth, and caring for the elderly. Moreover, he believed that beautiful and tasteful pleasures in life were needed to realise the People's Livelihood and that enjoyment was of 'paramount importance to modern political organisations'.<sup>3</sup> This chapter will show the important role that cultivation and enjoyment played in the aesthetic transformation of Nationalist Radio between 1933 and 1935, as the CC Clique tuned in to the spirit of the audience to produce educational and entertainment broadcast propaganda to instil cultural construction into the minds of the audience.

This chapter also will show that the promotion of cultivation and enjoyment was part of a wider trend in Sunist doctrine that embraced 'spirit' (精神) to mobilise the people. According to Guannan Li, the spiritual turn reflected Chiang Kai-shek's conviction that cultural transformation was a prerequisite for economic modernisation and national revival;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Guanyu guangbo yule jiemu de jianjie' 關於廣播娛樂節目的見解, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Dai Jitao 戴季陶, *Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhixue de jichu* 孫文主義之哲學的基礎 (Shanghai: Minzhi shuju, 1927), 13–14; Brian Tsui, *China's Conservative Revolution: The Quest for a New Order, 1927–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 41–42.

<sup>3</sup> Dai, *Sun Wen zhuyi*, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Guannan Li, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity in China: The Guomindang's Ideology and Enterprise of Reviving China, 1927–1937' (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2009), 4–6, 195–96, 457–58.



in party-state parlance, Chiang believed that spiritual construction was needed before material reconstruction.<sup>5</sup> In a lecture series at Mount Emei Training Corps in September 1935, Chiang elaborated on the spiritual necessities of life and psychological construction (心裡建設) to prepare officers and officials in Sichuan for an upcoming encirclement campaign.<sup>6</sup> When discussing political construction, Chiang noted that cultivation and enjoyment were realised in wholesome and enriching activities, which were key to shaping ‘complete citizens’ (完完全全的公民).<sup>7</sup> The training corps also taught officials and officers about spiritual warfare (精神戰爭), which integrated propaganda and mass mobilisation to enlist public support for the military campaign.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the spiritual training and tactics at Mount Emei in 1935 resembled Jiangxi in 1933, when Chiang Kai-shek integrated spiritual instruction into the Officers Training School at Mount Lu, and civilian officials in the Nanchang Field Headquarters prepared a multimedia mass mobilisation campaign called the New Life Movement to complement the fifth encirclement campaign against the Jiangxi Soviet.

To prepare for full-scale spiritual warfare against the Communists in Sichuan, the Nationalists followed the Jiangxi model to establish print and broadcast media throughout the province to promote the military operation and organise mass mobilisation campaigns to promote cultural construction. For example, the Nationalists established more than twenty newspapers in Sichuan to promote the civil and military objectives of the encirclement campaign in 1935. In fact, one of these newspapers, *Sichuan East Daily*, was set up by party propagandist, Nationalist Radio official and *Broadcast Weekly* editor, Zhong Zhenzhi (鐘震之).<sup>9</sup> Radio was integral to the civilian mobilisation campaign. For instance, Radio Chongqing (Station XGOS) rebroadcast Central Station programmes while the Ministry of Communications raced to complete the ten-kilowatt transmitter for Radio Chengdu (Station XGOG).<sup>10</sup> To strengthen party-state propaganda in the countryside, the provincial government formed a radio-operator network in 1935. Over three-months, thirty graduates of the radio-operator programme in Nanjing taught 120 local trainees, who then deployed across Sichuan with powerful seven-valve radios to establish listening rooms in county reconstruction

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<sup>5</sup> Li, ‘Culture, Revolution, and Modernity’, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Li, 5, 195–96; Landdeck, ‘Under the Gun’, 179, 179n115.

<sup>7</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, ‘Di’er jiang: Zhengzhi jianshe zhi yaoyi’ 第二講:政治建設之要義, 15 September 1935, in *ZJSYZJ*, ed. Qin Xiaoyi 秦孝儀, vol. 3 ([Taipei]: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshihui, 1985), 32–35.

<sup>8</sup> Li, ‘Culture, Revolution, and Modernity’, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Wang Luping 王綠萍, ed., *Sichuan baokan: Wushi nian jicheng, 1897–1949* 四川報刊:五十年集成 1897–1949 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2011), 334–37.

<sup>10</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 907.

departments and institutes for popular education (民眾教育館).<sup>11</sup> These local radio operators disseminated broadcast news to newspapers across Sichuan. The integration of radio into spiritual warfare therefore occupied a special place in the propagation of cultural construction, and this special status was encapsulated in the term that the CC Clique used to describe the expansion of party-state broadcasting: ‘oral teachings’ (聲教).<sup>12</sup> This term that once referred to the moral teachings of the Son of Heaven during the imperial era now applied to radio content. This chapter will analyse the Nationalist’s broadcast propaganda between 1933 and 1935 to understand the nature of these ‘oral teachings’.<sup>13</sup>

The injection of the cultivation and enjoyment into Sunist doctrine had two effects. First, spiritual cultivation became a precondition for realising the People’s Livelihood, which extended political tutelage and dampened the voices of those calling for constitutional rule. Second, it consolidated the ideological underpinnings of the New Life Movement and contributed to the rise of mass politics in China. The injection of cultivation and enjoyment into Sunism and the rise of mass politics provided the Nationalist Radio broadcast section with an opportunity to use artistic license to promote a modern secular nationalism through aestheticisation. To this end, station writers and presenters engaged with listeners to better understand the spirit of the audience. This chapter therefore begins with the catalyst for this transformation: the New Life Movement.<sup>14</sup>

### **The New Life Movement and Aestheticisation**

The New Life Movement was a watershed in the development of Nationalist Radio. The confluence of the big radio station, a mass audience, and the first mass movement contributed to the aestheticisation of broadcast propaganda and a transition from the radio nationalisation of party state to the radio nationalisation of the audience. During this transition, Nationalist Radio increased educational and entertainment content and reduced information programming to diversify the broadcast schedule for popular consumption. Most importantly, the CC Clique used arts and entertainment to aestheticise content and promote party doctrine. Between 1933 and 1935, Nationalist Radio adopted international genres and adapted traditional arts to diversify its repertoire. For example, it localised such global formats as radio plays and

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<sup>11</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 902.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Choujian duanbo guangbo diantai an’ 籌建短波廣播電台案 [Shortwave broadcasting station preparatory construction plan], 23 December 1935, KMT Archives, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 5.3/3.43.

<sup>13</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, ‘Di’er jiang’, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Tsui, *Conservative Revolution*, 43–49.

children's shows and produced general knowledge programmes on topics ranging from science and technology to philosophy and religion. Moreover, it transformed traditional culture and regional arts into tangible symbols of modern Chinese identity like other national broadcasters did during the Interwar Period in such programmes as *National Literature*, *National Music* and *National Learning*.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, this section will demonstrate that the aesthetic transformation of broadcasting content began with the New Life Movement in 1934.

As Nationalist Radio injected entertainment into the schedule to attract a mass audience, the CC Clique began to blur the lines between information, education, and entertainment content in the programming mix to redefine the spirit of the nation and construct an essentialist yet modern nationalism. The first section will analyse the catalysis of this transformation—the New Life Movement—and demonstrate how the Nationalists used radio to promote the movement in Nanchang. It then will analyse the programming mix between 1933 and 1935 to show how the CC Clique increased educational and entertainment content to promote a modern secular nationalism that integrated the principles of cultural construction after the movement. The final section will analyse the techniques that the CC Clique used to infuse content with the principles of cultural construction to create a mythic narrative of the nation. Nationalist Radio thereby summoned a usable past to encourage listeners to face the challenges of the present while focusing their energies on a more promising future.<sup>16</sup> However, it did so with a good dose of what Walter Benjamin prescribed for such a condition: entertainment.<sup>17</sup>

### *Aestheticisation on the Radio*

Although Walter Benjamin's ideas regarding art, film, and culture are better known today, he was no stranger to radio. In fact, Benjamin produced eighty-six radio talks, readings, dialogues, stories, and children's plays on German radio between 1929 and 1933 before the Nazis assumed power and forced him off the air.<sup>18</sup> In his 1935 essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin wrote about aestheticisation in artistic production, which was a technique that states were using to fuse art and politics to 'marshal collective

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<sup>15</sup> Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920–1950* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 42–62.

<sup>16</sup> Laurie A. Brand, *Official Stories: Politics and National Narratives in Egypt and Algeria* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 8–10; Van Wyck Brooks, 'On Creating a Usable Past', *The Dial* 64, no. 764 (11 April 1918): 337–341.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Conversation with Ernst Schoen', in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, Eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin (Boston: Belknap Press, 2008), 397.

<sup>18</sup> Lecia Rosenthal, 'Appendix: Walter Benjamin's Radio Broadcasts', in *Radio Benjamin*, ed. Lecia Rosenthal (Verso: London, 2014), 375–84.

experiences as a powerful social force' and cultivate 'ideological visions for the nation'.<sup>19</sup> Although aestheticisation has often been ascribed to fascist regimes, which used it to harness the power of the masses for the benefit of the state, the technique also was widely used by nations across the political spectrum to produce radio and film for mass consumption. In fact, Benjamin recognised that Hollywood employed aestheticisation to great effect to create collective dreamscapes in Disney animations and immunise audiences from mass psychoses through laughter in Charlie Chaplin comedies.<sup>20</sup> The CC Clique even appropriated one of Benjamin's favourite symbols of aestheticisation—Mickey Mouse—as an icon in its listening guide to represent a regular column called *Mixed Tidbits* (雜俎). Written by Fan Benzong, the column included National Learning trivia questions and National Music (see figure 8). The motivation behind the appropriation of Mickey Mouse to promote Chinese culture could not be clearer: the cultivation of traditional arts and culture on the radio was to be entertaining.

Walter Benjamin attributed the effectiveness of aestheticisation to apperception, which describes a process in which the mind makes sense of a new concept by assimilating it into a larger body of existing ideas.<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s, content producers around the world were using aesthetic techniques to embed new concepts like nationalism, fascism, communism, and socialism into the minds of audiences with the aid of familiar language, images, sounds, and ideas to influence thought and behaviour.<sup>22</sup> According to Benjamin, the age of mechanical reproduction had forever changed the relationship between art and the audience, resulting in 'an immediate, intimate fusion of pleasure', as mass audiences absorbed electronic entertainment absent-mindedly while their minds were diverted in a state of pleasant distraction.<sup>23</sup> Benjamin believed that aestheticisation was an effective technique because the collective reception of art in mass audiences enabled individuals to overcome resistance to change, adopt new habits, and view the world from a different perspective. Aestheticisation therefore became an important tool to nation states because, according to Benjamin, 'art will tackle the most difficult and most important tasks wherever it is able to mobilize the masses'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Desmond Manderson, 'Here and Now: From "Aesthesizing Politics" to "Politicizing Art"', *No Foundations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Law and Justice* 13 (2016): 3, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility: Second Version', in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephscott, Rodney Livingstone, Howard Eiland, et al. (Belknap Press: Cambridge, MA, 2018), 36.

<sup>21</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, September 2020, s.v., 'Apperception', <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/9621>.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edit. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 18–19.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin, 18–19; Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility', 36.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility', 40.



Figure 8: Mickey Mouse icon in Mixed Tidbits by Xingsu. From Xingsu 行素 [Fan Benzong], 'Guoxue changshi wubai wen (xu)' 國學常識五百問(續), in Zazu 雜俎 GBZB, 6 July 1935, 63.

### *A Mass Medium for a Mass Movement*

Although many historians have written about the New Life Movement, none have looked at its relationship to broadcasting. Recent research by Brian Cui, Maggie Clinton, and Guannan Li on the conservative revolution and its manifestations has added texture to the ideological milieu that shaped the radio content of this period. Wennan Liu has identified New Life as a modern movement that 'inserted new political meaning into moral terms' in order to

‘complement the rule of law’.<sup>25</sup> Liu further argues that the Nationalists considered New Life part of political tutelage and used the movement to expand the role of the state ‘in people’s everyday lives in order to build a strong nation-state’.<sup>26</sup> Although New Life was inspired by Blue Shirt militarists, who were attracted to the powerful aesthetic of European fascism, New Life was originally designed to be a six-month mobilisation campaign.<sup>27</sup> As Federica Ferlanti has shown in her study of the movement in Jiangxi, New Life was incredibly complex and its later metamorphosis into a long-term social platform grounded in traditional culture and promoted with Christian-style missionary methods were later accretions from other Nationalist Party influences, namely the CC Clique and Madam Chiang Kai-shek, as the movement expanded from Jiangxi and swept across the nation.<sup>28</sup>

The origins of aestheticisation lay in the military and ideological conflict between the Nationalists and Communists in rural Jiangxi Province. The Nationalists’ overriding political concern in 1933 was ideological. It was at this time that the Nationalists realised that more than mere military might was needed to counter the Communist threat in the countryside.<sup>29</sup> After four failed attempts to wipe out the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek assumed command over the Nanchang Field Headquarters, which had broad administrative powers over civil and military affairs in Jiangxi and four other provinces, and he began to address the conflict with the Chinese Communists as ‘three parts military and seven parts politics’.<sup>30</sup> To steel his officer corps for the ideological challenges of the fifth extermination campaign, Chiang therefore drew upon the Sunist theory of psychological construction (心裡建設) to integrate the concepts of propriety, righteousness, integrity and a sense of shame (禮義廉恥) into officer training. The Nanchang Field Headquarters then civilianised the military training programme to create, according to Hans van de Ven, ‘an essentialized and secularized Confucianism, married to a redemptive view of history, as the core nature of Chinese identity and a set of values around which to make

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<sup>25</sup> Wennan Liu, ‘Redefining the Moral and Legal Roles of the State in Everyday Life: The New Life Movement in China in the Mid-1930s’ *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, e-journal no. 7 (June 2013): 42–43.

<sup>26</sup> Liu, 51–53.

<sup>27</sup> Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, ‘The New Life Movement of Nationalist China: Confucianism, State Authority, and Moral Formation’, (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 200), 80.

<sup>28</sup> Federica Ferlanti, ‘The New Life Movement in Jiangxi Province, 1934–1938’, *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 5 (September 2010): 972–81.

<sup>29</sup> Arif Dirlik, ‘The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counter Revolution’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (August 1975): 8–9; Hans van de Ven, ‘New States of War: Communist and Nationalist Warfare and State building (1928–1934)’, in *Warfare in Chinese History*, ed. Hans van de Ven (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 352–53. The other provinces were Hunan, Hubei, Fujian and Guangdong.

<sup>30</sup> Li, ‘Culture, Revolution, and Modernity’, 6.

the army and society coalesce'.<sup>31</sup> The ideological foundation of the movement was thus born out of the battle between the Communists and Nationalists for hearts and minds in rural Jiangxi. In the ideological warfare that ensued, the Nanchang Field Headquarters made radio broadcasting its mass medium of choice to promote China's first mass social movement.

### *Field Headquarters Radio*

Although little is known about the role of radio broadcasting in the early days of the New Life Movement, we do know that Chiang Kai-shek sent an order to Lieutenant General Qiu Wei of the Jin-pu Railway Administration to transport two radio transmitters to Jiangxi Province on 1 July 1933. Chiang ordered Qiu to send a smaller unit with a range of 150 kilometres to the Officers Training School at Mount Lu and a more powerful transmitter to the Nanchang Field Headquarters.<sup>32</sup> Chiang also ordered Qiu to dispatch all available radios in his depot to Nanchang and procure enough receivers to equip every regiment and division under his command at the Nanchang Field Headquarters with one unit each.<sup>33</sup> On 20 August, the Central Station dispatched a radio engineer with a 250-watt station transmitter and loudspeaker system to Nanchang to select a site for Field Headquarters Radio (Station XGOC) and complete construction of the facility before 10 October for National Day.<sup>34</sup>

We also know that the Nanchang Field Headquarters extended the reach of its radio station to local print media and educational institutions to wage 'spiritual warfare' against Communists in the rural countryside as part of New Life mobilisation in the countryside.<sup>35</sup> First, it used the provincial radio-operator network in ninety locations across Jiangxi to distribute broadcast news to newspapers and wall papers in order to support the ideological struggle in rural and urban areas during the fifth extermination campaign. Second, it equipped more than 200 Zhong Shan People's Schools (中山民眾學校) with radios to supplement 'special education' (特種教育) in sixty rural counties.<sup>36</sup> The schools provided rural residents with civic, vocational, and military training to cultivate them into well-rounded citizens who were adept

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<sup>31</sup> van de Ven, 'New States of War', 366–67.

<sup>32</sup> Jiang Zhongzheng dian Qiu Wei 蔣中正電邱煒 [Chiang Kai-shek telegram to Qiu Wei], 1 July 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000000103A.

<sup>33</sup> Jiang Zhongzheng dian He Guoguang 蔣中正電賀國光 [Chiang Kai-shek telegram to He Guoguang], 6 August 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000000105A.

<sup>34</sup> 'Nanchang xingying guangbo dantai zhuangzhi jingguo yipie' 南昌行營廣播電台裝置經過一瞥, *Wuxiandian* 1, February 1934, 47; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 719; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> Ferlanti, 'New Life Movement', 966–72.

<sup>36</sup> 'Gan Min Wan E Yu wu sheng tuixing tezhong jiaoyu jihua' 贛閩皖鄂豫五省推行特種教育計劃, September 1934, in *Zhonghua Minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian* 中華民國史檔案資料匯編 (hereafter *ZMSDZH*), ser. 5, pt. 1, (education), vol. 2 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1997), 1154. The Nationalists also established Zhong Shan People's Schools in Fujian, Anhui, Hubei and Henan.

at wielding the hoe, the pen, and the gun.<sup>37</sup> As the military recovered rural areas, the field headquarters established the schools, where both children and adults received two hours of instruction a day in literacy, New Life, Sunism, hygiene, vocational skills, military training, and physical education.<sup>38</sup> Third, the field headquarters required local governments and political bureaux to procure radios, if feasible, to broadcast Nationalist Radio programming over loudspeakers in village squares to promote literacy and civic education.<sup>39</sup> However, one fact about New Life that has received no attention at all is that Chiang Kai-shek launched the movement on the radio.

Chiang Kai-shek launched the New Life Movement in a regular broadcast of *Field Headquarters Memorial Week* on 12 February 1934. Broadcast live from the provincial assembly hall in Nanchang every Monday morning, the local version of *Central Memorial Week* was a forum to mobilise the local party-state organisation just as it had done during the Anti-Japanese Boycott. On 12 February, which was the day before lunar new year's eve, Chiang presented the first of six radio talks on New Life.<sup>40</sup> The first talk was called 'The Priority of National Rejuvenation: The Essentials of Education, Cultivation, Defence'. Couching his introduction in extracts from *The Great Learning* (大學), Chiang argued that the only way to revitalise China in the face of foreign aggression was to substitute military might with education. He then defined the essential elements of national rejuvenation in terms of what later became the cardinal values of New Life: propriety, righteousness, integrity, and humility. However, Chiang did not identify the movement by name.<sup>41</sup> After this first appearance, Chiang presented five more radio talks on *Field Headquarters Memorial Week* over the next seven weeks to elaborate on the principles of New Life and mobilise public support for the movement.

The Field Headquarters coordinated the start of the mobilisation campaign with the lunar new year celebration to commence the New Life Movement on a festive note. On 19 February, Chiang presented 'The Essentials of the New Life Movement' on *Field*

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<sup>37</sup> Cheng Shikui 程時燧, ed., *Tezhong jiaoyu de hanyi yu shishi* 特種教育的涵義與實施 (Nanchang: Jiangxi sheng tezhong jiaoyuchu yanjiubu, 1934), 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Zhonghua Minguo ershiwu nian xingzheng zong bao* 中華民國二十五年行政總報, comp. Xingzheng yuan mishuchu (n.p.: Xingzheng yuan mishuchu, n.d.), 75.

<sup>39</sup> 'Gan Min Wan E Yu', 1148.

<sup>40</sup> Arif Dirlik, 'The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution', *Journal of East Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1975): 249. *Field Headquarters Memorial Week* first aired in October 1933. Chiang presented New Life talks on 19 February, 26 February, 19 March, 26 March, and 2 April.

<sup>41</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, 'Fuxing minzu zhi genben yaoyi—jiao yang wei zhi yaoyi' 復興民族之根本要義:教養衛之要義, 12 February 1934, in *ZJSYZJ*, ed. Qin Xiaoyi 秦孝儀, vol. 12 ([Taipei]: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshihui, 1985), 61.



*Headquarters Memorial Week* to launch the movement on the sixth day of the spring festival.<sup>42</sup> The sixth day of the new year was an auspicious day when merchants reopened shops with a cacophony of crackling firecrackers, clattering abacus beads, and tinny clanking of scale arms against balance pans. The tradition expressed hope for a new beginning and a prosperous future, which was consonant with the spirit of the New Life Movement. The Chinese New Year in 1934, however, was even more festive in Nanchang—and all over China for that matter—because the Nationalists had just lifted an unpopular 1912 ban on the celebration of the lunar new year that the party-state had enforced since 1928.

In a memo issued in early 1934, the Nationalists finally ended the suppression of the traditional holiday in a memo tinged with resignation, concluding that ‘in regard to the end of the old calendar year, except for government organisations, it is inadvisable to unduly interfere with popular customs’.<sup>43</sup> The timing of this measure was no coincidence, or very serendipitous, because it enabled the Nanchang Field Headquarters to tap into symbols of rebirth and renewal in the traditional calendar and channel popular participation in mass rallies. On 21 February, the field headquarters established the Nanchang New Life Movement Association to organise a series of public events that culminated in two massive political rallies around the ninth anniversary of Sun Yat-sen’s death on 12 March 1934. The Nationalists thus combined the New Life Movement and traditional cultural to launch a new era in modern Chinese history.

More than 100,000 members of the public attended the City Resident’s Rally at the provincial sports stadium on Sunday 11 March to express support for the New Life Movement. The event exuded modernity. Field Headquarters Radio broadcast the ‘New Life Movement Song’ over public loudspeakers, musicians played cheerful music, and drama societies performed New Life skits on a stage in the centre of the stadium as the crowd entered the venue for a 5.00 p.m. start time. Above, a military plane dropped leaflets from the sky as people lined up in military formation on the pitch below. Field Headquarters Radio broadcast the rally via a network of telephone lines that connected six raised platforms on the stadium grounds. On the chairman’s platform to the east sat Chiang Kai-shek and other dignitaries, flanked by rally performers occupying two musical stages on the north and south. To the far north and south sides of the pitch, two elevated podiums rose above mass organisations representing students, women, merchants, party cadres, public servants, workers, soldiers, police and general citizens.

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<sup>42</sup> The 1934 lunar new year (*jiaxu* 甲戌) began 14 February and ended 28 February, see <https://www.hko.gov.hk/tc/gts/time/conversion.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> Wu Yechun 伍野春 and Ruan Rong 阮荣, ‘Minguo shiqi de yi feng yi su’ 民国时期的移风易俗, *Minsu yanjiu* 民俗研究, no. 2 (2000): 61–62, 62n5.

To the west, a round dais stood opposite the chairman's platform so that the event director could coordinate the movements of rally participants on the pitch. Encircling the stadium grounds were scores of curious spectators on concrete stands who came to watch the spectacle that ushered in a new era of mass political participation under the direction of the party state.<sup>44</sup>

The City Resident's Rally employed fascist tactics to exhibit a disciplined and loyal citizenry whose primary responsibility was to follow the lead of authority and act as one body.<sup>45</sup> To begin, the assembly stood for the raising of the party and national flag, bowed three times to Sun Yat-sen's image on the chairman's platform, sang 'Party Song', recited the Will of Sun Yat-sen, and observed three minutes of silence. The crowd then sang the 'New Life Movement Song' as the stadium loudspeaker system broadcast it over Field Headquarters Radio.

Propriety, righteousness, integrity, and a sense of shame,  
Manifest in clothing, food, shelter, and transport,  
This is precisely the spirit of the New Life Movement.

Neat and clean,  
Simple and plain,  
Set an example with your own behaviour,  
Put yourself in the place of others.

Transform social practices,  
Respond together,  
The moral standard is right,  
The teaching is clear.

Rejuvenate the new foundation of the nation,  
All in the future is born today.<sup>46</sup>

The audience next listened to Chiang Kai-shek burnish his public persona as he spoke on the importance of practicing New Life. He offered himself up as an example of one who lived in accordance with New Life principles and encouraged the crowd to aspire to become civilised modern citizens like him. The audience also listened to other speeches by field headquarters officials and local dignitaries. At one point in the rally, Chiang approached the microphone again and stopped the programme to call an aggressive cinematographer onstage to upbraid him for his dishevelled appearance and poor behaviour, offering the public an example of what

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<sup>44</sup> 'Shi wan yu shimin yongyue relie canjia xiongzhuang zhengsu zhi shimin dahui' 十萬餘市民踴躍熱烈參加雄壯整肅之市民大會, *Jiangxi minguo ribao* 江西民國日報, 12 March 1934, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Oldstone-Moore, 'New Life Movement', 110–111.

<sup>46</sup> 'Xinshenghuo yundong ge' 新生活運動歌, *Xinshenghuo yundong shimin dahui tekan* 新生活運動市民大會特刊, *Jiangxi minguo ribao*, 11 March 1934, 3.

to expect when one did not adhere to New Life standards.<sup>47</sup> Next, the public announcer read aloud all ninety-five prescriptions on etiquette and cleanliness in the New Life Instructions. Upon completion, the crowd joined the announcer to shout six slogans: ‘Understand propriety and righteousness! Know integrity and humility! Assume responsibility! Observe discipline! Be punctual! Love cleanliness!’ As the crowd continued to shout the slogans, rally participants exited the stadium in a long procession that wended along the streets of Nanchang for hours through throngs of onlookers until the march ended at the Gate of Virtuous Victory on a note of triumph at 11.00 p.m.<sup>48</sup> The field headquarters then began preparing for the next big event.

Sunday 18 March began with thousands of city residents cleaning streets, alleyways and courtyard walls in the morning under the supervision of New Life inspection teams, and it ended with a New Life lantern parade that began in the afternoon and continued into the night. In between, the field headquarters held another rally in the provincial stadium and broadcast it live on Field Headquarters Radio. At 4.00 p.m., 80,000 people gathered to honour Sun Yat-sen and enjoy music and theatre inspired by New Life. The stadium filled with a festive panoply of New-Life-themed multicoloured floats and kaleidoscopic lanterns for the evening parade. The broadcasting of ‘New Life Movement Song’ and New Life Instructions over public loudspeakers only added to the vibrant scene within the stadium. Acting troupes on the floats, who were adorned as model citizens and ne’er-do-wells, gave the pageantry a bizarre and motley carnivalesque air. Entertainers in the clean and proper attire of farmers, merchants, workers, students and soldiers, who symbolised those strengthening the nation, contrasted sharply with thespian foils in the garb of shabby and dissolute opium addicts, drunkards, gamblers, prostitutes and johns, whose decadence was weakening China.

The format of the rally programme was the same as the previous week. The assembly stood at attention, sang ‘Party Song’ and ‘New Life Song’, and bowed three times towards the party and national flags that stood next to Sun Yat-sen’s image. The assembly then recited Sun’s will and observed three minutes of silence. Next, the New Life Association urged participants to be ordered, earnest, polite, and well behaved during the lantern parade. At 5.00 p.m., the assembly chanted the six New Life slogans and the parade began. Led by the Central Army Band, a three-kilometre-long procession wound through the streets of Nanchang for six

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<sup>47</sup> ‘Shi wan minzhong relie canjia Xinshenghuo yundong shimin dahui’ 十萬民眾熱烈參加新生活運動市民大會, *Saodang ribao* 掃蕩日報, 12 March 1934, 6; Oldstone-Moore, ‘New Life Movement’, 80n14; ‘The Generalissimo and a Cameraman’, *North-China Herald*, 21 March 1934, 447.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Youxing qingxing’ 遊行情形, *Jiangxi minguo ribao*, 12 March 1934, 2; ‘Shimin dahui kouhao’ 市民大會口號, in ‘Xinshenghuo yundong shimin dahui tekan’ 新生活運動市民大會特刊, *Saodang ribao*, 11 March 1934, 2.

hours chanting slogans and singing ‘New Life Song’ before more than 200,000 onlookers. Along the way, the procession stopped so that the acting troupes could demonstrate the proper behaviour of civilised, modern citizens through the positive and negative examples of their *dramatis personae*. Finally, as the parade approached the Gate of Virtuous Victory at 11.00 p.m., everyone stopped to relight their torches to illuminate Nanchang in the glow of multicoloured lantern light to complete the procession in a unified and disciplined whole.<sup>49</sup>

### *From Movement to Medium*

The New Life Movement quickly spread as competing factions in the Nationalist Party sought to maintain their respective power bases by demonstrating support for Chiang Kai-shek’s social movement.<sup>50</sup> Although it began as a fascist inspiration of the Blue Shirts, the CC Clique soon transformed the mobilisation campaign into a long-term programme of cultural construction. CC Clique officials promoted the revival of traditional values and the building of a modern nation in such publications as *Vitalism* (唯生論) and *Cultural Construction* (文化建設), which they published under the Chinese Cultural Construction Association.<sup>51</sup> Unlike their militant in the Vigorous Action Society (力行社), the Blueshirts, CC Clique officials emphasised the integration of New Life principles into educational, cultural, and media institutions, such as Nationalist Radio. The cultivation of a harmonious society with fascist aesthetics had great appeal among a broad coalition of cultural conservatives, liberals, and bourgeoisie alike, owing to its focus on nationalism, anti-imperialism, and a vision of a united China free from class struggle.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, underpinning this aesthetic was a widespread syncretic belief that China could transform itself into a modern society through the selective preservation of traditional values and the strategic adoption of foreign learning.<sup>53</sup> In the realm of radio, the CC Clique turned to mass education in February 1934 to promote traditional culture, civic values, and foreign learning, just as Chiang Kai-shek launched the movement.<sup>54</sup>

As Chiang and the Blueshirts rolled out the New Life Movement nationwide, however, Wang Jingwei challenged Chiang’s use of ‘coercive police power to maintain social order beyond the scope of enacted laws’ in Nanchang to instil morality and discipline; instead, Wang

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<sup>49</sup> ‘Xinshenghuo yundong tideng dahui’ 新生活運動大會, *Saodang ribao*, 20 March 1934, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Fukamachi Hideo, ‘Prairie Fire or The Gimo’s New Clothes? Chiang Kaishek’s New Life Movement’, *Chinese Historical Review* 17, no. 1 (2010): 71–74.

<sup>51</sup> Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 42–45, 60n129.

<sup>52</sup> Tsui, *Conservative Revolution*, 1–19.

<sup>53</sup> Li, ‘Culture, Revolution, and Modernity’, 220.

<sup>54</sup> Xu Xuekai 徐學鑑, ‘Wu guo guangbo shiye duiyu minzhong jiaoyu de gongxian’ 吾國廣播事業對於民眾教育的貢獻, *Wuxiandian* 1, February 1934, 46–47.

urged Chiang to use the power of elite influence and social mores to discipline the people through moral suasion.<sup>55</sup> According to Wennan Liu, Chiang seemed to have accepted Wang's criticisms of party-state enforcement of New Life Instructions. In a telegram to the Capital New Life Promotional Association on 3 April 1934, Chiang therefore discouraged the mandatory enforcement of New Life Instructions and the formation of inspection teams in the capital to monitor the public, examine homes, inspect bodies, and mete out punishments. Publicly, he recommended a gradual approach with a narrow focus on cleanliness and etiquette among public servants and students in government offices, schools, and other public venues because he wanted to promote New Life by example and moral suasion rather than through coercion.<sup>56</sup> However, Chiang meanwhile integrated top officials at every level of the party-state into the New Life Promotion Association 'to use persuasion as a soft method to enforce discipline among the people within a hierarchical framework of power relationships'.<sup>57</sup> Amid this political environment, CC Clique officials demonstrated their support for the movement by integrating New Life into broadcast propaganda to educate and entertain the audience.

Radio was one medium among many that underwent an aesthetic transformation after the launch of the New Life Movement. As the recognised stewards of education and culture in the party state, the CC Clique established the Chinese Cultural Construction Association in March 1934 to transform the principles of Chiang's short-term mobilisation campaign into a long-term cultural construction project. The principles of cultural construction included Sunist principles, New Life practices, traditional culture, and foreign learning, and the CC Clique made them the basis for the construction of a mythic cultural narrative and modern secular nationalism. CC Clique officials integrated the principles of cultural construction into books, newspapers, magazines, music, radio, and film to make the philosophy a part of everyday life. Moreover, they placed special emphasis on integrating cultural construction into educational institutions to influence the most impressionable groups in society: children and youth.<sup>58</sup>

The aestheticisation of content thereafter became the focus at Nationalist Radio. To make programming more appealing, writers and presenters blended entertainment into news, information, and education to blur the lines between them. The educational content, in fact,

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<sup>55</sup> Liu, 'Everyday Life', 33–36.

<sup>56</sup> Jiang Zhongzheng dian Nanjing shoudu xin shengguo yundong cujinhui 蔣中正電南京首都新生活運動促進會 [Chiang Kai-shek telegram to Nanjing Capital New Life Movement Promotion Association], 3 April 1934, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000002081A.

<sup>57</sup> Liu, 'Everyday Life', 36–39.

<sup>58</sup> Matthew David Johnson, 'International and Wartime Origins of the Propaganda State: The Motion Picture in China, 1897–1955 (PhD diss.: University of California, San Diego), 119.

reflected the special education curricula at Zhong Shan People's Schools in areas that had been under Communist control in Jiangxi, Fujian, Anhui, Hubei and Hunan.<sup>59</sup> From literacy, hygiene, science, and industry to civics, philosophy, history and music, Nationalist Radio produced propaganda grounded in traditional culture and foreign learning to provide listeners with a mythic narrative that served as the building block of a modern secular nationalism. One of the leading academic proponents of cultural construction, Professor Wang Xinming (王新命), regarded radio as an effective tool for social education, even more effective than in-school instruction, owing to its ability to engage people as they carried on with their everyday lives.<sup>60</sup> Nationalist Radio was therefore central to the CC Clique effort to integrate the principles of cultural construction into educational yet entertaining content for a mass audience.

### Broadcast Programming

Asa Briggs and Peter Burke in *A Social History of the Media* have shown that publishing, broadcasting, and the internet all began to blur the lines between information, education and entertainment once they became commercial industries producing content for a mass audience.<sup>61</sup> Briggs and Burke also have shown that the blurring of the 'media trinity'—i.e., information, education, and entertainment—resulted in the creation of hybrid forms of new media content known as 'infotainment' and 'edutainment', which are neologisms that did not appear in the English language until the 1980s.<sup>62</sup> The evolutionary process that they describe also applies to Nationalist Radio. In fact, the CC Clique blurred the lines of the media trinity just as radio broadcasting was becoming a mass medium in China. Moreover, Nationalist Radio began producing infotainment and edutainment at the same that the CC Clique established an advertising company to monetise airtime on the three stations under its control in October 1934.<sup>63</sup> Thereafter, Nationalist Radio sold commercial advertising in two-minute units and corporate sponsorship of twenty-minute segments at four standard rates (see table 5):

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<sup>59</sup> 'Gan Min Wan E Yu', 1148–52.

<sup>60</sup> 'Wuxiandian boyin de jinghua' 無線電播音的淨化, *Wenhua jianshe* 文化建設 1, no. 10 (10 July 1935): 5–7.

<sup>61</sup> Briggs and Burke, *Social History*, 179. The authors subsume 'news' under 'information'.

<sup>62</sup> Briggs and Burke, 181; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (2009), s.v. 'infotainment'; *Oxford English Dictionary Additions Series*, vol. 3, (1997), s.v. 'edutainment'.

<sup>63</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 20; Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 42–44.

Table 5: China Electroacoustic Advertising Agency Rates for the Central Station in Yuan

Time Slot	2-minute Rate	20-minute Rate	Continuous Rate
07.00–12.00	4	12	10% off for 3 times a week
12.00–17.00	6	18	15% off for 3 times a week for more than 4 consecutive weeks
17.00–21.00	8	24	20% off for 7 times a week
21.00–23.00	6	18	30% off for 7 times a week for more than 4 consecutive weeks

Note: Radio Peking and Radio Fuzhou rates were 25 percent of the Central Station rate.

Source: Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 43–44

To blur the lines between content categories further and increase advertising revenues à la infotainment and edutainment, Nationalist Radio localised international radio genres and formats and nationalised traditional arts and culture to produce more entertainment programming (see figure 9).<sup>64</sup> This section will demonstrate that Nationalist Radio turned towards entertainment during the New Life Movement to attract a mass audience.

中央廣播電台

地址：南京路三十二號

電話：二八八

播音廣告費暫行徵費覽表

本台自承辦中央廣播電台，為宣傳無上利器，管理處京閩河北各台播音，廣告以來成效卓著，如蒙委託，無任歡迎。詳細章程，函索即寄。

格價續連	格價次每	格價時
每週三次九折連續四週以上八折連續八週以上七折連續十二週以上六折	十元 四元 六元 八元 十元	七角 三角 二角 一角 五分

備註：一、國貨用品暫打對折。二、訂立播廣告約單時期，最長不得超過十二週。

Figure 9: Advertisement for commercial time on the Central Station. From *GBZB*, 1 June 1935, n.p.

<sup>64</sup> 'Zhongyang diantai liang nian lai meizhou boyin jiemu chengfen bijiaobiao' 中央電台兩年來每週播音節目成分比較表, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, n.p.

### *The Turn Towards Entertainment*

The big radio station with its stable power supply enabled the CC Clique to lengthen the broadcast day and expand programming between 1933 and 1935. Nationalist Radio therefore planned to increase the average broadcast day by 50 percent to ten hours per day to make room for more education and entertainment.<sup>65</sup> It also set the target programming mix at news (30 percent), information (13 percent), education (30 percent), and music (27 percent).<sup>66</sup> In 1933, Nationalist Radio did lengthen the broadcast day and produce more educational and entertainment content. However, the average broadcast day in January 1934 was only nine hours and thirty-five minutes and the target programming mix had not been achieved (see figure 10).<sup>67</sup> Nationalist Radio did not meet its targets because the CC Clique preferred to produce high-quality content and set the bar high for the domestic broadcasting industry.

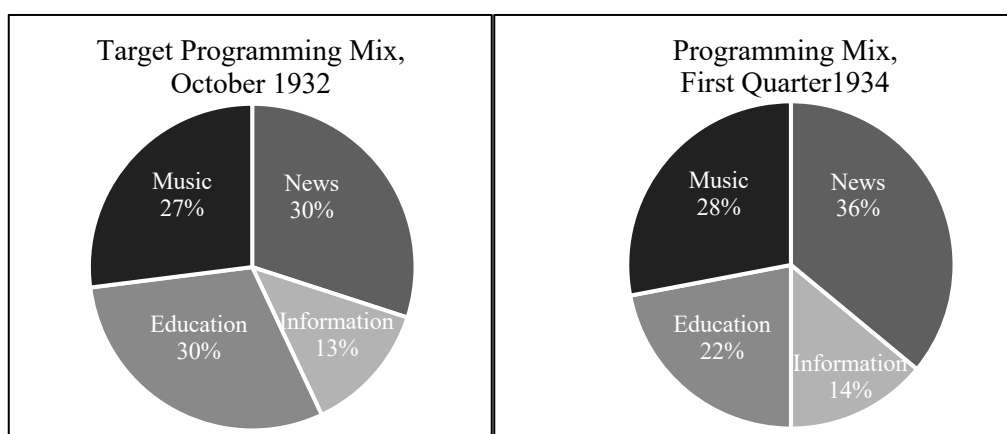


Figure 10: Target Programming Mix versus Actual Programming Mix, First Quarter 1934. From *Zhongguang dashiji*, 16–17 and ‘boyin jiemu chengfen bijiaobiao’, n.p.

Just as Chiang Kai-shek launched the New Life Movement in Nanchang, Nationalist Radio announced a shift in programme composition to educational content. In fact, the station released a new schedule to change the programming mix on 15 February 1934. In addition to lengthening the average broadcast day by twenty-four minutes, the new schedule increased the proportion of education and entertainment from 50 to 54 percent. Moreover, the station continued to integrate more educational and entertainment content into the schedule throughout 1934. By year’s end, education and entertainment comprised 66 percent of all on-air content (see figure 11). This change came about as the CC Clique injected entertainment into

<sup>65</sup> *Niankan* (‘Baogao’), 22; ‘Guanlichu tonggao’, 111; *Wuxiandian* 1, February 1934, 44; *GBZB*, 26 October 1935, n.p.

<sup>66</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 16–17.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Zhongyang diantai liang nian lai’, n.p.; Zhongyang guangbo diantai guanlichu, ‘Xianxing boyin shijian jiemubiao’ 現行播音時間節目表, in ‘Gongzuo baogao’ 工作報告, January 1934, n.p.



educational programmes to create hybrid forms of edutainment and infotainment. Hence, entertainment and education became essential building blocks in the CC Clique's cultural construction project and their integration into radio content was a central feature in the promotion of a modern secular nationalism rooted in the Chinese tradition.

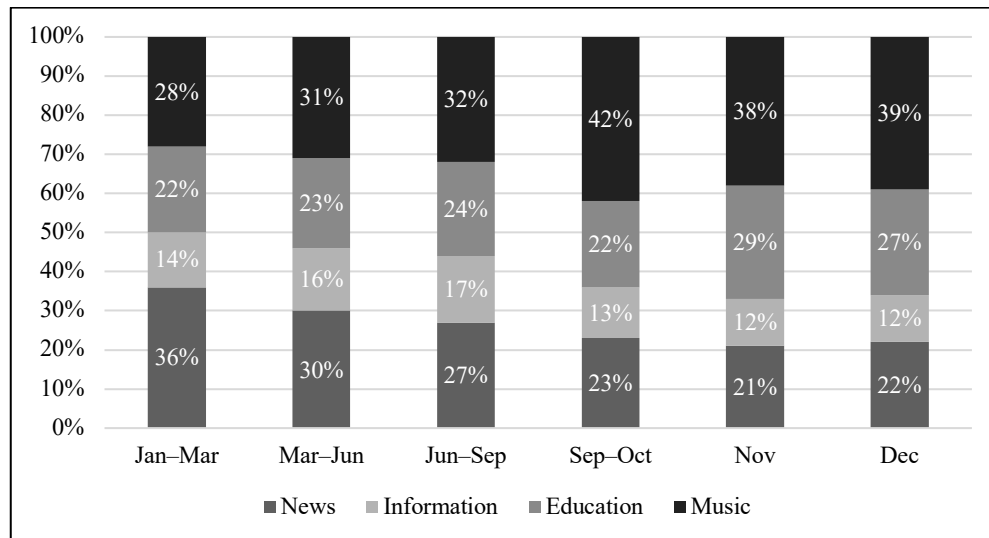


Figure 11: Change in Programme Composition by Category, 1934. From 'Zhongyang diantai liang nian lai', n.p.; 'Gongzuo baogao', October 1935, n.p. (chart 7).

In 1935, the turn towards entertainment became even more pronounced as Nationalist Radio added more educational and entertainment programming. A snapshot of the year-on-year change between October 1933 and 1935 shows the progression of this trend over time (see figure 12). Whereas the education and entertainment comprised 50 percent of the programming mix in 1933 before the New Life Movement, and 63 percent in 1934 after its launch, they constituted 71 percent of all Nationalist Radio programming by October 1935.

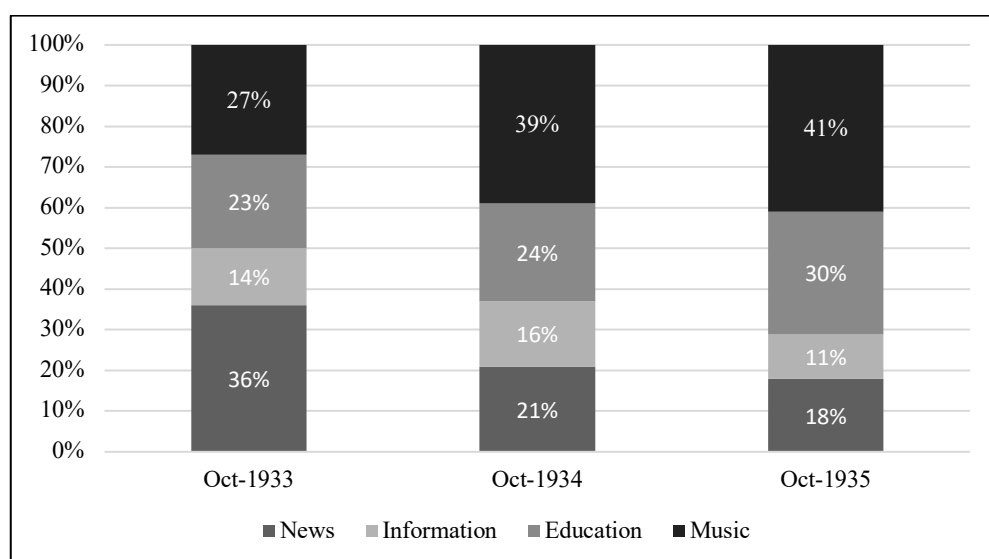


Figure 12. Programming Mix by Category in October from 1933 to 1935. From 'Zhongyang diantai liang nian lai', n.p.; 'Gongzuo baogao', October 1935, n.p. (chart 7, chart 12).

This section has presented a quantitative analysis of Nationalist Radio content to demonstrate that the CC Clique turned towards entertainment following the New Life Movement. However, a quantitative analysis of the content categories and their respective broadcast times, while revealing, is unable to show how the CC Clique transformed content to promote cultural construction on the radio. For that, a qualitative analysis using concrete examples is required to illustrate how the CC Clique blurred the lines between news, information, education, and entertainment. The next section will introduce how Nationalist Radio entered into a dialogue with the audience to improve content and attract a mass audience. The catalyst for this transformation was the disappointing results of a listener survey that prompted Nationalist Radio to turn to the audience for advice.

### *Learning from the Audience*

A listener survey in the fall of 1933 raised the alarm that the CC Clique needed to improve Nationalist Radio programming in order to attract a mass audience. In November, Nationalist Radio mailed questionnaires to 7,000 Nanjing radio owners to learn about their impressions of Central Station programmes. The results were disconcerting. Out of 1,965 respondents, 73 percent said that they had ‘no opinion’ at all about station content, prompting the CC Clique to draw the conclusion that there was ‘sufficient proof that most listeners did not care for the programming’.<sup>68</sup> Nationalist Radio therefore reorganised the broadcast section and looked for a better way to educate and entertain the audience. The shake-up began when Nationalist Radio dispatched broadcast section chief Wang Zhongquan (王中權) to establish Radio Hebei in Peking and set up a cable connection with the theatre district.<sup>69</sup> His replacement was Huang Tianru (黃天如), who held the post until he was dispatched to Fujian in July 1934 to become station director at Radio Fuzhou.<sup>70</sup> Huang’s successor was Fan Benzong. Fan was an unlikely candidate on paper, but he was a person of many talents like many radio pioneers.<sup>71</sup>

Fan Benzong became broadcast section chief just as the New Life Movement was sweeping across the country in 1934. Previously, he had been guidance section chief and concurrent director of the telegraph room, managing the radio operator network and top-secret communications for the party centre. A classmate and former colleague of spy boss Xu Enzeng, Fan was a big, tall man with a sanctimonious air, read Buddhist scripture, ate vegetarian, and

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<sup>68</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 19. The station distributed 7,000 surveys, and the response rate was 28 percent. This was respectable response in my experience, given that the survey was done by post.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Hebei guangbo diantai’, KMT Archives, *Hui*, 4.3/163.18.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Gongzuo baogao’, 9–10.

<sup>71</sup> Two notable examples are David Sarnoff of RCA and Peter Eckersley of BBC.

sported black sunglasses. He wrote under the pen name Xingsu (行素) because he vowed after the Manchurian Incident to become a vegetarian until China had defeated Japan and recovered all its lost territory to end the long, dark period of national humiliation.<sup>72</sup>

Integral to Fan's overhaul of broadcast programming was audience feedback. Following the disconcerting results of the listener survey, Nationalist Radio decided to introduce its philosophy on broadcasting to the public and solicit opinions from listeners in the inaugural issue of *Broadcast Weekly* in September 1934. In a column called Editor's Chat, Zhong Zhenzhi published a series of editorials in the first seven issues to express Nationalist Radio's and, by extension, the CC Clique's position regarding the role of radio broadcasting in society. First, it wished to transform radio from being a mere tool for the provision of entertainment into a powerful weapon that promoted propaganda and education. To Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang and Dai Jintao, the value of radio lay in its ability to popularise politics and culture and cultivate a common conviction among the people to work hard for the nation.<sup>73</sup> Second, it considered broadcasting not only a technology but also an art form because radio opened up a new world for literature and art to reach a much larger audience through the medium of sound.<sup>74</sup> Third, it regarded radio as an excellent medium 'to inject the spirit of the New Life Movement into children' in educational programming that incorporated information about hygiene, science, morals, physical education, and society. Moreover, it believed that radio was the ideal medium for educating through entertainment.<sup>75</sup> Finally, it thought that radio was the best mass medium owing to its reliance on 'the most primitive form of expression', i.e., speech, and the intimate connection that it had with everyday life and the needs of the people.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, Nationalist Radio turned to the audience for advice in late 1934:

We hope that listeners will often send letters to critique aspects of music, news, general knowledge, education, children's and other types of programmes; however, opinions must not be empty, idealistic, or biased; they need to be rational, feasible, and fair. We will accept your comments with an open mind and try to improve.<sup>77</sup>

Learning from the audience on how to improve programming was coincidentally the same advice that German playwright Bertholt Brecht had given to German radio in 1932. In 'The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication', Brecht argued that radio should become a

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<sup>72</sup> Wang and Shi, *Disi zhanxian*, 28–29.

<sup>73</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 17 September 1934, 42.

<sup>74</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 22 September 1934, 25.

<sup>75</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 6 October 1934, 27.

<sup>76</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 13 October 1934, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 29 September 1934, 35.

two-way medium to enable broadcasters ‘to put its instruction into an artistic form’ and produce educational content that interested people. This could be done, Brecht claimed by ‘turning the audience not only into pupils but into teachers’.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Editor’s Chat elicited a two-way discourse that took place in another column called Listener Opinions.<sup>79</sup> In February 1935, Nationalist Radio created Listener Opinions to publish listeners’ letters and address their questions, criticisms, suggestions, and requests. Hence, the column became a public forum wherein Nationalist Radio and the audience exchanged ideas. The editorial responses in the column shone a light on the CC Clique’s rationale behind station programming, and listeners’ letters provided important insights into audience tastes. As a result, Nationalist Radio transformed its listeners into teachers so that it could ‘put its instruction into an artistic form’ and produce creative educational content that interested people.<sup>80</sup>

In the lead up to the second anniversary of the big radio station, Wu Daoyi presented a retrospective of operations since November 1932. In his talk, he revealed that Nationalist Radio was ‘borrowing from the most recent theories from Europe and America to stimulate audience interest, inculcate scientific knowledge, enhance party rule, and promote culture’.<sup>81</sup> He also shared that Nationalist Radio was reassessing the talent and materials that were needed to integrate listener opinions into programming and meet the needs of society, as it diversified programming with commentaries, everyday scientific knowledge, vocal and instrumental music, stories, talk shows, weather forecasts, commercial news, and children’s programming.

In a special broadcast to commemorate the second anniversary, Wu appeared again to present a vision for the future. He acknowledged that a great divide existed between China’s coastal and interior regions, which required Nationalist Radio to produce content for two very different audiences. For the interior, the Central Station would continue to air *Broadcast News* to the radio-operator network, despite ridicule labelling Nationalist Radio as ‘master of the news agency’ because the radio-operator network differed from Western broadcasting.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, Wu defended the network as a successful innovation that ensured consistent print media coverage nationwide. For the coast, Nationalist Radio would follow the global trend to produce a variety of content so that the average person could find something to enjoy in their

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<sup>78</sup> Bertolt Brecht, ‘The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication’, in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. John Willet (London: Eyre Methuen, 1964), 52.

<sup>79</sup> Briggs and Burke, *Social History*, 1.

<sup>80</sup> Brecht, ‘Radio as an Apparatus’, 52.

<sup>81</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一, ‘Er zhounian licheng zhi huiyi ji jinhou zhi qiwan’ 二週年歷程的回憶及今後之期望, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 5.

<sup>82</sup> Wu Daoyi 吳道一, ‘Diantai fuwu’, 3.

leisure time. He further revealed that Nationalist Radio would have flexibility in the future to make programming decisions based on the needs of the situation.<sup>83</sup> Finally, Wu touched upon the most important point in his presentation when he announced that Nationalist Radio content belonged to listeners and invited them to participate in making it better:

Everyone please remember that the programmes that a radio station provides are the listeners' programmes. They are not the private possession of the radio station itself. We hope that you mail us your advice if you have suggestions for improvements to a programme broadcast by the Central Station. We will collate the wishes of the majority of people and make improvements as a matter of course.<sup>84</sup>

### **Transforming Content**

This final section will show that the CC Clique transformed Nationalist Radio content to reflect the spirit of the audience and promote cultural construction between 1933 and 1935. Their method was simple and operated on two separate levels. The first level was the incorporation of more entertainment into the schedule. To blur the lines between content categories and entertain the audience, the CC Clique infused the broadcasting schedule with entertainment and reduced the proportion of news and information. It then diffused ideological concepts into entertainment in the hope that the audience might absorb the ideas while in a state of pleasant distraction.

The second level was the integration of cultural construction into radio programming. To this end, the CC Clique produced content that embraced the two tenets of cultural construction—Chinese tradition and Western learning—and integrated them into the schedule. The CC Clique wanted Nationalist Radio programming to place the Chinese tradition side-by-side as an equal to the West and thereby promote a sense of pride in things Chinese. It sought to achieve this effect in four ways. First, it produced cultural content that featured the character for 'national' (國) as a prefix to promote an essentialised Chinese tradition. Second, it balanced Chinese and Western content in the schedule to create a cultural contrast that essentialised both the Chinese and Western traditions. Third, it created educational content for children that promoted pride in the past and cultivated national consciousness in a series featuring the adventures of a boy and his father as they toured China and the world. Finally, it localised global genres to produce entertainment integrating the principles of cultural construction that sought to foster national consciousness among listeners. The CC Clique thus employed

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<sup>83</sup> Wu, 'Diantai fuwu', 5

<sup>84</sup> Wu, 5.

entertainment and cultural construction to promote an essentialised yet secular modern nationalism that placed an equal emphasis on Western learning and the Chinese tradition.

The remainder of this chapter will analyse concrete examples of programming to show some of the many ways that the CC Clique transformed content to produce entertainment that reflected the spirit of the audience and promoted cultural construction. The first section will look at the neutralisation of news and information, which enabled Nationalist Radio to infuse entertainment into the programming mix. The second section will analyse the diffusion of ideological content into entertainment programming throughout the broadcast day. The final section will focus on four other prominent features of cultural construction on the radio: apotheosising Sun Yat-sen, balancing East and West, cultivating the masters of the new generation, and dramatising the nation. Using Listener Opinions and Editor's Chat from *Broadcast Weekly*, this section will show the transformation of content between 1933 and 1935.

### *Neutralising News and Information*

The reduction of radio news and information had its origins in the Communist extermination campaigns in Jiangxi and the suppression of the Fuzhou Rebellion in 1933. Although the Central News Agency was supposed to be the exclusive provider of Nationalist Radio information, the expansion of the broadcast schedule in late 1932 had outstripped the news agency's ability to supply enough material to produce another sixty-minute newscast every day.<sup>85</sup> As a result, Nationalist Radio turned to Shanghai newspapers to supplement material for the evening news.<sup>86</sup> However, using Shanghai papers to fill the gap became a problem. One day in May 1933, Nationalist Radio used *Shanghai Journal* to report that Chiang Kai-shek met League of Nations technical advisor, Dr. Ludwik Rajchman, who was a vociferous critic of Japan, just after China and Japan began fighting near Peking.<sup>87</sup> As a result, Chiang reprimanded Nationalist Radio for revealing sensitive information so soon after Japan's withdrawal from the League,<sup>88</sup> and Chen Guofu and Ye Chucang ordered the propaganda

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<sup>85</sup> 'Xianxing boyin shijianbiao', *Niankan* ('Baogao'), 22; 'Guanlichu tonggao', 111.

<sup>86</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 36.

<sup>87</sup> Harumi Goto-Shibata, 'The League of Nations as an Actor in East Asia: Empires and Technical Cooperation with China', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 17, no. 3 (September 2017): 445–456; 'Guolian weisheng buzhang Lasiman zuo di Nanjing' 國聯衛生部長拉西曼昨抵京 *Shenbao*, 10 May 1933, 3. Dr. Rajchman later played an important role in founding UNICEF.

<sup>88</sup> Jiang Zhongzheng dian Ye Chucang 蔣中正電葉楚傖 [Chiang telegram to Ye Chucang], 11 May 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000000542A.

department to review all news copy to eliminate sensitive information before broadcast.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, this solution came under scrutiny the following year during the Fujian Rebellion.

On 30 November 1934, Chiang ordered General Chen Yi to investigate the broadcast of sensitive military information in a Nationalist Radio newscast. The story in question had identified the location of a central military unit that was responding to the Fujian Rebellion. Chiang compared the revelation as ‘tantamount to the intentional leaking of military secrets’. He then ordered Chen to notify commanders that divulging any information that the Nanchang Field Headquarters had not first released would be considered ‘mutinous speech’ (亂說).<sup>90</sup> In a cable dated 2 December, Chiang ordered Ye Chucang and Chen Lifu to investigate the leak and overhaul the news selection process.<sup>91</sup> He also ordered that they send the person responsible for the leak, Wu Daoyi, to Nanchang for punishment. Fortunately for Wu, Ye exonerated him after finding that the story came from a foreign dispatch in *Shanghai Journal*.<sup>92</sup> Thereafter, Ye met with Wang Jingwei every day to review Central Station news copy and coordinate propaganda strategy until Nationalist troops crushed the rebellion.<sup>93</sup>

The broadcast of sensitive military information, however, was the last straw for Chiang. The fallout from the incident prompted the Nationalists to revamp the selection process for broadcast news. Afterwards, only Central News Agency material was permitted on-air, and Ye, as party secretary general, or Shao Yuanchong, as propaganda director, was required to approve all news copy before airing, which sometimes delayed the broadcast of the evening news. According to Wu Daoyi, radio news reports thereafter did not mention military operations, owing to security concerns, and they avoided all mention of ‘anti-communist’ and ‘resist Japan’.<sup>94</sup> Apparently, Chiang wanted to deny Japan and the Chinese Communists the opportunity to use Nationalist Radio news and information in their counter propaganda.<sup>95</sup> This cumbersome approval process contributed to a reduction in the amount of news and

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<sup>89</sup> Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang dian Jiang Zhongzheng 陳果夫葉楚信電蔣中正 [Chen Guofu, Ye Chucang telegram to Chiang Kai-shek], 13 May 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000001475A.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Jiang Zhongzheng dian Chen Yi 蔣中正電陳儀 [Chiang Kai-shek telegram to Chen Yi], 30 November 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000000114A.

<sup>91</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 36; Jiang Zhongzheng dian ling Ye Chucang ji Shao Yuanchong 蔣中正電令葉楚儉及邵元沖 [Chiang Kai-shek telegram order to Ye Chucang and Shao Yuanchong], 2 December 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000000115A.

<sup>92</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 36; Ye Chucang dian Jiang Zhongzheng 葉楚儉電蔣中正 [Ye Chucang telegram to Chiang Kai-shek], 5 December 1933, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 0020000001525A.

<sup>93</sup> Ye Chucang dian Jiang Zhongzheng, Guoshiguan, 0020000001525A.

<sup>94</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 36.

<sup>95</sup> Daytime newscasts were not problematic because Nationalist Radio used Central News Agency stories. If Ye or Shao were absent, the department secretary approved the news, see Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 36.

information on Nationalist Radio. However, another factor that contributed to this reduction was that the audience wanted it that way.

In addition to Chiang's suppression of controversial news and information from above, the listening audience demanded that Nationalist Radio produce shorter and fewer news reports. To fulfil its role as the voice of international propaganda, Nationalist Radio originally broadcast news in Chinese dialects and foreign languages during prime time. On weeknights, Nationalist Radio alternated the broadcast of *Cantonese Report* and *Hoklo Report* to cater to overseas Chinese communities that had provided Sun Yat-sen and the Nationalists much financial support during the revolution. On Sundays, Nationalist Radio also recapitulated the week's news and presented national reconstruction reports in *Overseas Chinese Report*. These programmes were presented in dialect and played Cantonese and Hoklo folk music.

The mass audience that materialised in the early 1930s, however, wanted to hear news and information in the National Language, i.e., Mandarin Chinese. Listeners therefore demanded that Nationalist Radio devote less airtime to news and music in local dialects. One listener in Nanjing, for example, suggested that programmes in dialect be moved to the afternoon because he did not want to hear them in his leisure time.<sup>96</sup> Another listener demanded that Nationalist Radio cancel the Cantonese and Hoklo programmes altogether.<sup>97</sup> According to Editor's Chat, listeners seemed to have little patience for news in dialect during prime-time. In fact, one common complaint was that listeners disliked the privileged status of Cantonese and Hoklo speakers, and they insisted that Nationalist Radio should only present news in Mandarin to force them to assimilate into the national culture.<sup>98</sup> Opposition to these news programmes was so strong that Nationalist Radio reduced their frequency to once a week by April 1935.<sup>99</sup>

The audience also was averse to spending its leisure time listening to foreign-language news every evening, so Nationalist Radio reduced the proportion of this programme category. Before 1932, Nationalist Radio had broadcast news reports in many languages, but the primary foreign-language had been English until Japanese gained equal prominence after the Shanghai Incident. In January 1933, Nationalist Radio aired both *Japanese Report* and *English Report* in prime time as the League of Nations deliberated the Lytton Report. These programmes featured a ten-minute commentary along with popular music to attract listeners in the target

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<sup>96</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 2 March 1935, 30.

<sup>97</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 9 March 1935, 38.

<sup>98</sup> Chuanyin ke 傳音科, Xiaoyan 小言, *GBZB*, 21 December 1935, 6.

<sup>99</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai XGOA meizhou boyin jiemu' 中央廣播無線電台 XGOA 每週播音節目時間表, *GBZB*, 9 March 1935, 1.



language. By 1934, however, only *English Report* remained in the schedule, and its frequency dropped to three times a week by April 1935. The CC Clique retained *English Report* because it promoted China's official position to the world. For example, the broadcast section used *English Report* to dispel misconceptions about China in the West, a problem that the station felt was endemic among treaty-port expatriates. It therefore promoted China's international standing in the global arena and addressed Japanese claims about China in the foreign press.<sup>100</sup>

The audience was nonetheless uninterested in *English Report* and was not swayed by Nationalist Radio's rationale for retaining the programme in prime-time. For instance, Yao Weixi of Baoji County, Shaanxi, recommended shortening *English Report* because 'listeners in the interior have no way to understand its meaning'.<sup>101</sup> Others wanted to reduce the programme's frequency in favour of familiar Chinese music, while still others wanted to eliminate its Western music for nationalistic reasons.<sup>102</sup> In short, the audience wanted to hear Mandarin-language programmes.

Listener feedback thus forced CC Clique officials to confront an inherent flaw in their broadcasting operations: they were trying to please too many audiences on one channel. The CC Clique therefore decided to build a shortwave station with a twenty-kilowatt transmitter; meanwhile, it tasked station engineers to develop a 500-watt shortwave station that could broadcast content in foreign languages and Chinese dialects until the larger station was complete.<sup>103</sup> In December 1935, the party presidium approved the purchase of an even larger thirty-kilowatt shortwave station from British Marconi to broadcast party-state news and information to overseas audiences; however, this international shortwave station would not be complete until 1939. In the meantime, Nationalist Radio planned to broadcast international content on the self-built 500-watt international shortwave station in Nanjing.<sup>104</sup>

As the CC Clique planned for the international station, Nationalist Radio streamlined news and information to make it more appealing. First, it hired more native Mandarin speakers to present newscasts in the National Language. After hiring the first three female announcers in 1933, Nationalist Radio continued to hire fluent Mandarin speakers from the north, such as Xiao Zhiyi, who replaced older presenters who spoke non-standard Mandarin. The new presenters made broadcast news more intelligible for a mass audience and served as models

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<sup>100</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 21 December 1935, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 9 February 1935, 34.

<sup>102</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 9 March 1935, 38; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 19 October 1935, 49.

<sup>103</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 20–22.

<sup>104</sup> 'Choujian duanbo guangbo diantai', KMT Archives, *Hui*, 5.3/3.43.

for speaking the National Language. Nationalist Radio also shortened news segments over time to reduce the overall proportion of the news and information in the programming mix. One example was the nightly newscast for the radio-operator network, which Nationalist Radio shortened because listeners expressed their displeasure with the segment in letters to *Broadcast Weekly*: they tired of the slow reading and repetition of key terms in the news programme.<sup>105</sup>

Another common complaint about the final newscast for the radio operators regarded its timeliness. Nationalist Radio attributed this to an information disparity between the lower Yangtze and the interior because news that was fresh in Xi'an had often already gone stale in Shanghai. Nevertheless, Nationalist Radio needed to balance the needs of an urban audience with a multitude of readers in the interior whose newspapers relied on broadcast news.<sup>106</sup> This unfortunate trade-off was necessary until local party-state stations could tailor news content for listeners in the interior. To ameliorate the problem, the CC Clique added a five-minute news brief for a mass audience and shortened the radio-operator newscast by twenty minutes. Following the radio-operator news, Nationalist Radio broadcast a final thirty-minute set of Peking opera or popular Mandarin music to end the broadcast day.

One unintended benefit of the restriction on political news was that it allowed for the diversification of news for listeners with other interests like business, current affairs, and science. The first addition was *Shanghai Exchange Market Conditions* in 1933, which reported on the bourse twice a day. By 1935, business news had expanded to cover commerce, finance, and trade in three segments: *Commercial Information*, *Shanghai Exchange Market Conditions*, and *Commercial News*. Unlike political news, however, copywriters could use stories from Shanghai newspapers to produce radio reports, if they arrived to Nanjing in time.<sup>107</sup> Nationalist Radio also integrated Peking opera and mixed-verse musical recordings into these midday and afternoon news segments to entertain listeners and keep them tuned in.

The second addition was *Current Affairs Commentary*. Broadcast in prime-time, this programme only covered international affairs at first. By the end of 1935, however, Nationalist Radio had expanded its scope to include one theme each night between Monday and Friday in the following order: national goods, domestic politics, natural disasters, international affairs, and social problems. According to the broadcast section, writing *Current Events Commentary* required much effort, as its objective was to present a persuasive analysis on an issue to help

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<sup>105</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 16 February 1935, 30. Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 23 March 1935, 40. Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 6 April 1935, 57.

<sup>106</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 29 September 1934, 35.

<sup>107</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 15.

the audience develop the ‘correct idea’, understand the main points, and to foster a sense of belonging among listeners to a larger national community.<sup>108</sup>

The third addition was *Science News*, which first aired in March 1934. This segment introduced news stories in foreign magazines from around the world on new applications of science and technology in everyday life.<sup>109</sup> Nationalist Radio first scheduled *Science News* on Wednesday afternoons to attract a student audience; however, the programme soon became so popular that it was moved to Sunday to reach a larger audience. The CC Clique thus promoted Western learning and encouraged listeners to answer Sun Yat-sen’s call to catch-up with the West by developing science and technology for economic modernisation.<sup>110</sup>

The fourth addition to the news category was a discussion-style programme called *Various Topics*. At first, this segment aired on Friday afternoon, but it later became an important part of the weekday morning line-up to supplement Sunist programming. The segment covered issues relevant to daily life in the areas of science, society, and religion through the lens of Chen Lifu’s theory of vitalism.<sup>111</sup> On Tuesday, presenters discussed science and the economy to popularise scientific knowledge and highlight the role of technology in national reconstruction. On Thursday, hosts talked about social issues and the cultivation of national consciousness ‘to inspire listeners to climb the path towards self-revitalisation and self-strengthening’. On Saturday, presenters talked about religion ‘to elucidate the true meaning of life and foster a supreme faith in the spirit wherein the body and mind can find sustenance’.<sup>112</sup> Fans of this third segment, like Chen Desheng from Nanjing, tuned in every Saturday morning to listen to interpretations of Buddhist scripture.<sup>113</sup> Another listener, Wang Peiling, thought that the discussions in *Various Topics* improved social mores because it embodied the Sunist maxim: ‘one must transform the heart before revolution’.<sup>114</sup> The CC Clique thereby employed an engaging discussion format to cultivate national consciousness and educate listeners about science, society, and religion.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Chuanyin ke, 15.

<sup>109</sup> Xiao, ‘Diantai li de jianwen’, 124.

<sup>110</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 21 December 1935, 6.

<sup>111</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, 15.

<sup>113</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 26 October 1935, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 77.

<sup>115</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 15.

### *Diffusing Propaganda into Entertainment*

As the CC Clique reduced the proportion of news and information, it also diffused ideological soundbites into entertainment so that listeners would absorb broadcast propaganda while in a state of distraction. Every week, Nationalist Radio selected six sayings around a central theme, and presenters introduced them in segues from morning to night. The CC Clique thus packaged new concepts in familiar language to instil a modern secular nationalism in the audience. The soundbites used the principles of cultural construction to promote nationalism on a foundation of Sunism, New Life, traditional culture and Western learning, and the CC Clique regarded them as education under the category of political tutelage. Nationalist Radio grouped the sayings into three categories—*Lessons of the Party Director* (總理遺教), *Admonitions* (警策語), and *Exhortations of the Ancients* (古人箴言)—and the segments were diffused in programming throughout the day to reach a wider audience.<sup>116</sup>

*Lessons of the Party Director* was Sunist canon redux. The segment decontextualised Sunist teachings into homey metaphors so that listeners in the mid 1930s could relate to them. For example, it connected Sunist sayings about current events to raise awareness and promote activism in officially sanctioned party-state events, such as flood prevention during flood-relief campaigns.<sup>117</sup> It also promoted inclusive conceptions of citizenship around National Day:

Now the Republic is a nation for all. Everyone is a shareholder. Everybody has stock. So, we should spare no effort to safeguard it. Only then can we be counted as majority shareholders of a big company.<sup>118</sup>

However, citizenship came at a price—doing one's duty—which had ominous implications for minority shareholders: 'People can be considered citizens only if they are able to fulfil their duty; if they cannot fulfil their duty then they cannot be considered citizens'.<sup>119</sup> Finally, the segment promoted the adaptation of Confucian values if they benefited modern life:

The Chinese people still often speak of the old moral virtues to this day. But those who are obsessed with new culture reject the old moral virtues and do not know our traditional things. If they are good, we must of course preserve them. If they are bad, only then can we abandon them.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 6 October 1934, 27.

<sup>117</sup> Zongli Yijiao 總理遺教, *GBZB*, 14 September 1935, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Zongli Yijiao, *GBZB*, 5 October 1935, 29.

<sup>119</sup> Zongli Yijiao, 29. Exclusion from the rights of citizenship was not necessarily based on Confucianism, but on whether one fulfilled one's obligations towards the party-state, contra Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 104–112.

<sup>120</sup> Zongli Yijiao, *GBZB*, 26 October 1935, 28.

By relying on the charismatic authority of Sun, the CC Clique wove cultural construction into entertainment programming as listeners enjoyed listening to the radio in their leisure time.<sup>121</sup>

The second segment, *Admonitions*, integrated quotations by Chiang Kai-shek. The cultural inspiration for *Admonitions* came from a practice in Chan Buddhism in which masters strike postulants with a flat hardwood stick on the back to induce enlightenment during meditation. The segment title derived from the name of the stick, which is called a wake-up or warning stick, because it represents the sword that the Mahayana Boddhisattva Mañjuśrī uses to slash through earthly illusions.<sup>122</sup> In an effort to awaken listeners, Nationalist Radio presenters read excerpts of Chiang's speeches to promote awareness about the revolution, education, industry, economics, and national defence.<sup>123</sup> Borrowing from Chan Buddhism's anti-scholastic tradition, which values practice over theory, and Buddhist conceptions of interdependence, *Admonitions*, emphasised the agency of the individual in the attainment of national salvation.<sup>124</sup> In this vein, *Admonitions* encouraged the audience introspection while listening to entertainment programming:

Our fellow countrymen should change direction and not take others as the object but take ourselves as the object. To not face outward to change the life of others, but to face inward to change one's own heart. One should cut out all thought of selfish interest and extravagant pleasure to save oneself and then work with great vigour. Only then can the nation be rejuvenated and China have hope!<sup>125</sup>

Nationalist Radio thus linked personal redemption with national salvation as reflected in Chiang Kai-shek's speeches like 'The Soul of China', which he presented in a memorial week ceremony at the Mount Lu Officers Training School in July 1934. Chiang identified a strong faith in Sunism and the implementation of Sunist teachings in everyday life as the path to personal and national salvation because, according to Chiang, 'the fundamental spirit of the Three Principles of the People are the crystallisation of China's traditional history and culture and the inheritance of national virtue, which is the spirit of the nation and the soul of the country'.<sup>126</sup> Chiang's words of warning struck a chord with many in the audience who worried

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<sup>121</sup> Wu Daoyi, 'Fakan ci' 發刊詞, *GBZB*, 17 September 1934, n.p.

<sup>122</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, ed. John Bowker, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), s.vv. 'kyosaku, also Keisaku', 'Mañjuśrī'; Damien, Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), s.v. 'kyōsaku'.

<sup>123</sup> Jingceyu 警策語, *GBZB*, 19 October 1935, 28. In October 1935, *Admonitions* quoted Luo Jialun on Abyssinian resistance against Italy to encourage China in its own struggle against Japan.

<sup>124</sup> Hershock, Peter, 'Chan Buddhism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/buddhism-chan/>>.

<sup>125</sup> Jingceyu, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 2.

<sup>126</sup> Chiang Kai-shek, 'Zhongguo hun' 中國魂, 16 July 1934, in *ZJSYZJ*, ed. Qin Xiaoyi 秦孝儀, vol. 12 ([Taipei]: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshihui, 1985), 348–54.

about China's fate, and listeners like Gao Zhongheng in Anhui and Jiang Guilin from Jiangsu requested that Nationalist Radio embed more of his sayings into musical entertainment.<sup>127</sup>

The third segment, *Exhortations of the Ancients*, integrated classic aphorisms into entertainment to promote traditional culture. Copywriters translated these excerpts from classical prose into everyday language so that listeners could easily understand them on the radio. The segment addressed the cultivation of the individual through themes like learning, filial piety, family, bravery, righteousness, hard work, emotions, freedom, and kindness. Except for one passage that referred to both Xunzi and Zhuangzi, the aphorisms were not attributed to a specific person or book.<sup>128</sup> In fact, the sayings were all attributed to 'the ancients' (古人) and the excerpts were referred to as 'old sayings' (古語, 古話).<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the presenters referred to the radio audience who shared this cultural tradition with the ancients in the segment as 'we' (吾們, 吾人).<sup>130</sup> By being anonymous and timeless, *Exhortations of the Ancients* presented a holistic version of traditional culture as an amalgam of secular knowledge that was disentangled from its origins in the past. The CC Clique thus essentialised traditional culture to promote contemporary secular values and construct a modern national identity.

### *Apotheosising Sunism in Song*

The revamp of programming in 1934 also resulted in less Sunist content, which had been a mainstay of the broadcast schedule since 1928. According to Briggs and Burke, the original function of information was related to the root meaning of the word—'forming the mind'—and as such was important to education.<sup>131</sup> Content related to political tutelage on Nationalist Radio fit this description because it was meant to educate and enlighten the audience. However, Nationalist Radio began phasing out this content as the focus turned from the party state to the audience between 1933 and 1935. Gone were programmes that coordinated propaganda and policy implementation with local party-state offices like *Propaganda Report*, *Policy Report*, and *Orders and Notices*. The only segments that remained were *Political Report*, *Teachings of the Party Director* and *Central Memorial Week*. However, these programmes began to disappear as the CC Clique adapted to the spirit of the audience.

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<sup>127</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 8 August 1936, 60; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 17 October 1936, 62.

<sup>128</sup> Guren Zhenyan 古人箴言, *GBZB*, 7 December 1935, 28; Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 41.

<sup>129</sup> Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 2 November 1935, 26; Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 28 June 1935, 27; Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 3 August 1935, 28.

<sup>130</sup> Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 1 January 1935, 9; Guren Zhenyan, *GBZB*, 26 January 1935, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Briggs and Burke, *Social History*, 179.

To make more room in the schedule for cultural entertainment and educational content, the CC Clique reduced the airtime of *Political Report* and *Teachings of the Party Director*. The frequency of *Political Report*, for example, was cut from six episodes a week to one because listeners thought it was boring. The broadcast section even recognised this fact, but it was resigned to air the programme as a public service, stating: ‘the dull style of the radio talks is regrettable and is a fact that is hard to avoid’.<sup>132</sup> Nationalist Radio also cut the airtime of *Teachings of the Party Director*, which had been the bedrock of Sunist content since 1928. The main reason for this cut was the programme’s uninteresting presentation. According to radio presenter Xiao Zhiyi, ‘the most unpopular programme was *Teachings of the Party Director*’ because ‘this kind of regular programme was usually read word-by-word by the person on duty, which made people drowsy’.<sup>133</sup> On 1 October 1934, Nationalist Radio therefore cut the segment from five episodes a week to three and added *Party Director Biography* (總理傳記) and *The Three Principles of the People* into the same time slot for variety.<sup>134</sup>

The final remnant of Sunist content in the programme schedule was *Central Memorial Week*, which had been the cornerstone of Nationalist Radio programming since its inception. On 21 January 1935, without warning or explanation, Nationalist Radio stopped broadcasting Sun Yat-sen Memorial Week at central party headquarters, which also had been relayed to some local stations since March 1933.<sup>135</sup> This cancellation surprised many listeners. Professor Tang Shanru of National Central University, for example, asked Nationalist Radio to reinstate the programme because he felt that it was effective at promoting party doctrine and implementing political education.<sup>136</sup> Liu Xinmin from Yangzhou also wrote in, asking: ‘I have not heard the Party Director Memorial Week recently, but Radio Fuzhou broadcasts have it. Why? I still hope that it stays on-air’! Apparently, central party headquarters was still debating the issue because the broadcast section answered Liu’s question with a simple note: ‘to be discussed’.<sup>137</sup> However, the audience reaction became so overwhelming that Fan Benzong felt compelled to address the matter two months later in Listener Opinions: ‘Whether or not *Central Memorial Week* is broadcast each week is determined by order of the Centre. We are

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<sup>132</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 14 March 1936, 41.

<sup>133</sup> Xiao, ‘Diantai li de jianwen’, 123.

<sup>134</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 7; ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai XGOA meizhou boyin jiemu shijianbiao’ 中央廣播無線電台 XGOA 每週播音節目時間表, *GBZB*, 6 October 1934, n.p.

<sup>135</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai boyin jiemu yugao’ 中央廣播無線電台播音節目預告, *GBZB*, 12 January 1935, 2; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 18.

<sup>136</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 16 February 1935, 49.

<sup>137</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 23 February 1935, 31.

not in a position to comply with the will of the audience'.<sup>138</sup> After this abrupt announcement, Nationalist Radio never aired the programme again, although public stations like Radio Fuzhou continued to broadcast the local memorial week ceremony. The CC Clique therefore turned to music to apotheosise Sun Yat-sen.

Nationalist Radio began introducing Sun-related songs to the broadcast schedule just before *Central Memorial Week* was cancelled. On 24 December 1934, the station began signing on with 'Party Song' every morning. In the same week that the programme was dropped, Nationalist Radio added 'Party Director Memorial Song' before *Teachings of the Party Director*,<sup>139</sup> and it began to signing off with the song every night on 11 February.<sup>140</sup> The song's composer, Li Jinhui (黎錦暉), specialised in the fusion of Eastern and Western musical styles and was a popular artist in the Shanghai School; in fact, he had created 'Drizzle' (毛毛雨), which is considered the first Mandarin pop song of the modern era.<sup>141</sup> Li's ballad recounted Sun Yat-sen's legacy, urging listeners to encourage one another, remember Sun's last words, and complete his unfinished revolution.<sup>142</sup> Nationalist Radio thus drew on the cultural capital of one of China's most popular songwriters to aestheticise broadcast propaganda and reach a wider audience with music.

### *Constructing Culture on the Radio*

Nationalist Radio also created programmes to embed principles of cultural construction into the schedule to educate the audience and cultivate pride in traditional culture. This final section will look at four techniques that the CC Clique used to integrate the principles of cultural construction into radio content between 1933 and 1935: nationalising culture, balancing East and West, cultivating the masters of the future, and dramatising the nation.

The CC Clique integrated cultural construction on the radio by nationalising culture. Nationalist Radio produced many programmes prefixed with the character 'nation' (國) to promote traditional culture and the arts as symbols of modern China. For example, Nationalist Radio broadcast *National Martial Arts Morning Exercises* (國術早操), *National Music* (國樂), and *National Literature Instruction* (國文). The first programme, *National Martial Arts Morning Exercises*, was designed by the Central Martial Arts Academy, which as Andrew

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<sup>138</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, 39.

<sup>139</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai boyin jiemu yugao', *GBZB*, 15 December 1934, 1–5.

<sup>140</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo wuxian diantai boyin jiemu yugao', *GBZB*, 2 February 1935, 2.

<sup>141</sup> Szu-wei Chen, 'The Music Industry and Popular Song in 1930s and 1940s Shanghai: A Historical and Stylistic Analysis (PhD diss., University of Stirling, 2007), 2.

<sup>142</sup> 'Zongli jinian ge' 總理紀念歌, *GBZB*, 17 August 1935, 63.



Morris has shown was an institution that sought to construct ‘a modern indigenous physical culture’ based on science as an alternative to Western physical culture and thereby unify Chinese martial arts under one roof in a symbolic nation building project like National Music in the performance arts.<sup>143</sup> Every morning after the playing of ‘Party Song’, an academy coach led the audience in a martial arts routine, calling out the forms to the rhythm of National Music. Nationalist Radio then cut a record of the routine to make airing the exercise show easier (see figure 13).<sup>144</sup> The CC Clique created *National Music* as a separate programme on 1 October 1934 to nationalise regional music genres like Peking opera, big drum, mixed verse, and lyric poetry, presenting them as integral parts of the National Music tradition.<sup>145</sup> To promote cultural construction, Nationalist Radio invited artists and celebrities to perform in studio when in Nanjing.<sup>146</sup> According to Carlton Benson, Nationalist Radio invited popular artists from Shanghai with attractive appearances fees and free room and board so that they would be willing to travel to Nanjing.<sup>147</sup>

*National Literature Instruction* was a programme created especially for students at institutes for popular education nationwide. In coordination with the Social Education Department, Nationalist Radio published the syllabus for this educational programme in *Broadcast Weekly*.<sup>148</sup> Three mornings each week, an on-air instructor taught Chinese literature using a six-volume middle-school textbook approved by the Ministry of Education and published by the party-owned Cheng-Chung Book Company (正中書局).<sup>149</sup> The textbook, whose editor was Nationalist Radio founder Ye Chucang, consisted of modern essays by Hu Shi, Hu Hanmin, Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Jingwei, and Cai Yuanpei, among others. Interspersed among these modern essays was a wide selection of excerpts from Confucian texts, classical poetry, and writings by Sima Qian, Ouyang Xiu, and Han Yu that nowadays appear in anthologies of classical prose.<sup>150</sup> The CC Clique thus mixed old and new into an integral whole to promote the Chinese cultural tradition and cultivate national consciousness.

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<sup>143</sup> Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 185, 204–07, 215–27.

<sup>144</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 7.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian dantai XGOA meizhou boyin jiemu shijianbiao’, *GBZB*, 6 October 1934, n.p.

<sup>146</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 18 April 1936, 49.

<sup>147</sup> Benson, ‘From Teahouse to Radio’, 148–49.

<sup>148</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 18 January 1936, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 31 August 1935, 68.

<sup>150</sup> Ye Chucang, ed., *Chuzhong guowen* 初中國文, vols. 1–6 (Nanjing: Cheng-Chung shuju, 1935).



Figure 13: Illustration of the form Lion Rolls the Ball in National Martial Arts Morning Exercises. From ‘Guangbo guoshu zaocao tujie’ 廣播國術早操圖解, in *Wuxiandian* 1, August 1934, 13.

Another programme that nationalised culture was *National Learning Chat* (國學叢談). This show first aired three times a week in the morning and was presented by former Nanyang College president and National Learning proponent Tang Wenzhi (唐文治). In addition to discussing classical literature, Tang talked about national salvation and the Confucian concepts of learning, benevolence, and governance. The show also featured a series of public figures and intellectuals as guest hosts, such as Luo Jialun, Wang Jingwei, and Cai Yuanpei, and it soon became an audience favourite. Listeners like Xu Yazi of Xinghua, Jiangsu, asked Nationalist Radio to move the show to the evening so that he could enjoy it after work.<sup>151</sup> However, arranging guest appearances was time consuming, and many potential hosts could not speak the National Language well enough to present the programme on the radio.<sup>152</sup> Fan Benzhong therefore moved the programme to prime time and produced it in-house to avoid the vagaries of guest hosts’ diaries and unintelligible accents.

As the CC Clique blurred the lines between news, information, education, and entertainment, it also balanced Chinese and Western content in the schedule to reflect the equal emphasis that cultural construction placed on Chinese tradition and Western learning. A quick

<sup>151</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 23 February 1935, 31.

<sup>152</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 1 January 1936, 78.

look at the morning schedule shows that Nationalist Radio embedded the principles of cultural construction to promote both Western Learning and the Chinese tradition (see table 6). For example, after ‘Party Song’, listeners could practice eight-section brocade *qigong* to the rhythmic melodies of National Music and the steady instructions of a martial-arts coach. This was followed by European and American army band music to rouse the audience’s spirit for the day ahead. Nationalist Radio then broadcast *National Literature Instruction* and *English Language Instruction* on alternating days so that adult learners could study before work. Next, Nationalist Radio aired *Party Director Biography* or *Various Topics* between musical segments before ending the morning time block with a thirty-minute newscast at 9.00 a.m.

Table 6. Balancing East and West in the morning programme schedule, November 1935.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7.00 a.m.	‘Party Song’					
7.05 a.m.	<i>Morning Callisthenics (Ba duan jin 八段錦)</i> [Eight-section brocade]					
7.20 a.m.	<i>Military Music</i>					
7.30 a.m.	<i>National Literature Instruction</i>	<i>English Language Instruction</i>	<i>National Literature Instruction</i>	<i>English Language Instruction</i>	<i>National Literature Instruction</i>	<i>English Language Instruction</i>
8.00 a.m.	<i>National Music</i>	<i>Western Music</i>	<i>National Music</i>	<i>Western Music</i>	<i>National Music</i>	<i>Western Music</i>
8.15 a.m.	‘Party Director Memorial Song’	<i>Various Topics (Science)</i>	‘Party Director Memorial Song’	<i>Various Topics (Society)</i>	‘Party Director Memorial Song’	<i>Various Topics (Religion)</i>
8.20 a.m.	<i>Party Director Biography</i>		<i>Party Director Biography</i>		<i>Party Director Biography</i>	
8.40 a.m.	<i>Western Music</i>	<i>National Music</i>	<i>Western Music</i>	<i>National Music</i>	<i>Western Music</i>	<i>National Music</i>
9.00 a.m.	<i>News</i>					

Source: ‘Zhongyang guangbo wuxian dantai XGOA meizhou boyin jiemu shijianbiao’, *GBZB*, 26 October 1935, n.p.

Striking a balance between East and West in the schedule embodied the balance that the CC Clique strove to achieve in the construction of Chinese culture for the modern age. *National Music*, for example, integrated traditional musical genres from around China into a national style that symbolised the Sunist political vision for a united China that was grounded in traditional culture. Moreover, the combination of both classical and modern styles in *Western Music* represented a balance between old and new that the CC Clique wanted to replicate in *National Music* and Chinese culture. As a result, Nationalist Radio used Western music as a model to develop modern Chinese music. However, listeners frequently wrote in demanding that Nationalist Radio cancel *Western Music* and broadcast Chinese music instead, forcing Fan Benzong to defend *Western Music*’s place in the programme schedule:

Music has no intrinsic distinctions between national boundaries. The current trend in National Music hopes to integrate great works from China and abroad. It should not stick to the old ways but has to innovate just like philosophy, science and all the arts. It must adopt the strengths of others to compensate for its own weaknesses. If we can

thus invent and create, then musicians in other countries will regard our National Music as an evolution in the arts too. Therefore, we at present cannot abandon Western Music and only broadcast National Music.<sup>153</sup>

The balance between East and West was further reinforced in other cultural programmes about music, language, and religion. The programme, *Music Forum* (音樂叢談), for example, introduced musical theory and instruments from both China and the West. Moreover, the balance between English- and Chinese-language instruction reflected another fundamental principle of cultural construction: individual cultivation and national reconstruction both required the practical pursuit of Chinese and Western learning. The CC Clique also applied this technique to storytelling in *Short Biographies of Eminent People from China and the World* (中外名人傳略) and the philosophy of religion in *Culture Forum* (文化叢談). This programming presented Chinese culture side-by-side as an equal to the West to cultivate an appreciation of the Chinese tradition from a global perspective and instil a sense of cultural pride in the audience.

#### *Cultivating the Masters of the New Generation*

With the advent of the big radio station in late 1932, Nationalist Radio produced educational content that promoted general knowledge to multiple audiences, the most important of whom were children and youth. Children's programming was a relatively new programme category, as Nationalist Radio only had begun producing content for kids until the Manchurian Incident in late 1931.<sup>154</sup> For this special audience, which Nationalist Radio called 'the masters of the future' (未來的主人翁), the station produced two programmes: *Children's Show* and *Children's Education*. Nationalist Radio embedded the principles of cultural construction into these edutainment segments in an effort to shape the ideas of the younger generation.<sup>155</sup> This section will analyse *Children's Show* and *Children's Education* to show how the CC Clique integrated broadcast propaganda content into educational programming.

Nationalist Radio created *Children's Show* in September 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria. Each episode of the programme was akin to an on-air primary school assembly. Three times a week youngsters from the Nanjing area went to Nationalist Radio to tell stories, read essays, sing songs, and perform radio plays that embodied the principles of cultural construction. Using plain language and simple examples, the programme segments extolled the

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<sup>153</sup> Xingsu [Fan Benzong], Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 23 March 1935, 39.

<sup>154</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 12.

<sup>155</sup> Wu, 'Diantai fuwu', 4.

exploits of folk legends like late-Qing martial artist Huo Yuanjia, who dispelled the myth of China as the sick man of Asia in public competitions with foreign strongmen, and it lauded Sui-era heroine Hua Mulan (花木蘭) for her filial piety and loyalty to the state when she was conscripted to fight foreign invaders.<sup>156</sup> The programme thus drew on the plasticity of folklore to subsume new ideas into a mythic past to promote a modern secular nationalism.

*Children's Show* also promoted Sunism from the everyday perspective of a child. The programme followed a formula that focused on raising awareness, speaking out, and taking action, and it presented the child version of Sun Yat-sen as a model for children to follow:

Little friends! You are the masters of the coming age. It also will not be difficult for you to do something great like Mr. Sun Yat-sen in the future. However, you must now learn from the childhood of Mr. Yat-sen: ideas have significance, words have significance, and actions have significance!<sup>157</sup>

In stories, Sun was portrayed as a precocious child who questioned the world around him and took action to address problems and effect social change, such as correct the antiquated style of his private-school teacher, the abusive corruption of soldiers in his village, the inhumane treatment of slave girls in his neighbourhood, and the painful injustice of foot binding in his family. Sun was depicted as a young revolutionary and the embodiment of ideology in action.

*Children's Show* also employed stories to encourage the young to contribute to economic development by pursuing practical learning and channelling their energy into social causes. For example, the programme introduced historical figures like Qing philosopher Gu Xizhai (顧習齋). As a child, Gu worked in the fields and later became a proponent of utilitarian education. The CC Clique used Gu's story to advocate for practical learning, i.e., 'study for practical use' (學以致用), so that students would apply their knowledge towards national reconstruction when they became adults.<sup>158</sup> The programme also encouraged youth to 'go to the countryside' (到鄉村去) as volunteers in the Rural Reconstruction Movement to learn about New Life values and contribute to economic development by using national goods.<sup>159</sup> The CC Clique thus romanticised the countryside as a place where one could discover a modern Chinese identity, something that Kate Merkel-Hess has argued appealed to urbanites.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Louise Edwards, 'Transformations of the Woman Warrior Hua Mulan: From Defender of the Family to Servant of the State', *Nan Nu* 12, no. 2 (December 2010): 177–78.

<sup>157</sup> Ji Lue 濟略, 'Ertong shidai de Zhongshan xiansheng' 兒童時代的中山先生, *GBZB*, 10 November 1934, 49.

<sup>158</sup> Xu Bohua 徐伯華, 'Yige laodong de xuezhe' 一個勞動的學者, *GBZB*, 22 September 1934, 22–23.

<sup>159</sup> Xu Zongying 徐宗英, 'Dao nongcun qu' 到農村去, *GBZB*, 29 September 1934, 28–29.

<sup>160</sup> Kate Merkel-Hess, *The Rural Modern: Reconstructing the Self and State in Republican China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 216), 57.

*Children's Show* also cultivated a spirit of patriotism and anti-Japanese nationalism. Three times a week, out of the mouth of babes came condemnation of unscrupulous merchants in skits about the selling of Japanese products under the guise of national goods.<sup>161</sup> The programme also produced plays like *Eternal Regret* that encouraged anti-Japanese nationalism. Set during the Shanghai Incident, the play featured a group of affluent Shanghainese students, who lived in the international settlement, and an orphaned brother and sister from Shenyang, who shared their misfortune at the hands of the Japanese with their Shanghainese compatriots. In the end, the children all agreed on the need to fight Japan; moreover, the little girl from Shenyang expressed a wish to emulate Korean nationalist An Chunggŭn (安重根) and assassinate Japanese leaders. The children then sent off Nationalist troops marching towards the front to the sound of drums and a rousing chorus of 'Kill the Enemy Song':

Compatriots! Compatriots!  
Awake! Awake!  
Rise up! Rise up!  
Advance! Advance!

Talk about what truth?  
Discuss what peace?  
Only on iron and blood can we rely.  
Depend on what League?  
Listen to what Report?  
The enemy is already closing in on the body and will swallow us up.  
Lift up your spirit.  
Take aim at your enemy.

Sacrifice my all.  
Sacrifice my life.  
Die for the nation on the battlefield.  
Become a ghost and leave behind a good name.  
Sprinkle our blood to cleanse our national shame.  
Cut off our heads to stop our national territory from being invaded.

Advance! Advance!  
Kill all the cruel enemy soldiers!  
Charge forward to kill the enemy!  
Cleanse the shame and resist the brutal invasion!<sup>162</sup>

Primary students thus vented popular sentiments about Japan in songs like 'Return Our Manchuria' and 'Battle Song', whose lyrics called for 'slaughtering the dwarf slaves' and slaying the 'national enemy'—ideas that would be impolitic for party-state officials to express

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<sup>161</sup> 'Jianshang guke duihua' 奸商顧客對話, *GBZB*, 6 October 1934, 20.

<sup>162</sup> Yi hen 遺恨, *GBZB*, 24 November 1934, 31–34.

on the radio.<sup>163</sup> Perhaps because of this, children and adults alike enjoyed the songs, stories, and dramas about patriotism and anti-Japanese nationalism in *Children's Show*. For instance, Zhao Gongding and his family in Nanjing liked to listen to the programme's songs and asked for more because 'listening to them sing like cheerful little angels spreading seeds of happiness, we unconsciously become mesmerised by the radio'.<sup>164</sup> The CC Clique thereby aestheticised entertainment so that audiences would absorb broadcast propaganda in a state of distraction.

Nationalist Radio introduced *Children's Education* in November 1934. Created by Fan Benzong, the programme aired Monday to Friday and contained such segments as 'Historic Landmark Tour' and 'Stories from Chinese History'. 'Historic Landmark Tour' featured a boy who accompanied his father on a mission for central party headquarters. The father-son duo began their tour at Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum, which often was the first stop for pilgrims to Nanjing.<sup>165</sup> They then introduced local culture, history, famous sites, industry, and geography, for every part of China—including Manchuria, Mongolia, Hong Kong, and Tibet—all the while taking notes and sending special reports via radiotelegraph to Nanjing. By starting and ending the tour in the capital and visiting disputed territories, *Children's Education* asserted China's territorial sovereignty and anchored the conceptual centre of the nation in Nanjing, which had been the motive for the CC Clique to create Nationalist Radio in 1928.<sup>166</sup> To complement the young boy's modern-day adventures on the landmark tour, Fan added a segment called 'Stories from Chinese History' so that young listeners also could enjoy heroic adventures from the Chinese past.<sup>167</sup>

'Historic Landmark Tour' was so popular that Nationalist Radio moved *Children's Education* to 7.30 p.m. in April 1935. One Chinese listener in Japan, Kang Zigang, commented that 'the sound of *Children's Education* is clear; moreover, the reporting and storytelling of the female announcer makes me long very much for home'.<sup>168</sup> The final episode of 'Historic Landmark Tour' featured a birds-eye narration of geographical landmarks across China as the father and son flew from Lhasa to Nanjing. To end the series, the boy presented his reflections of the tour to classmates who responded with cheers of 'Long Live the Republic of China'!<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> 'Huan wo Manzhou' 還我滿洲, *GBZB*, 15 December 1934, 30; 'Zhan ge' 戰歌, *GBZB*, 3 November 1934, 27–28.

<sup>164</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 11 April 1936, 52.

<sup>165</sup> Musgrove, *Contested Capital*, 139.

<sup>166</sup> Kirby, 'The Nationalist Regime', 213–14; 'Diantai jihuashu', 1.

<sup>167</sup> Xingsu [Fan Benzong], *Zhongguo Lishi Gushi* 中國歷史故事, *GBZB*, 9 March 1935, 30.

<sup>168</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 2 February 1935, 25.

<sup>169</sup> Zhang Jieliang, Shengji Daoyou 勝跡導遊, *GBZB*, 7 September 1935, 68.

Nationalist Radio then created a sequel to ‘Historic Landmark Tour’ called ‘Around the World Tour’ where the same father and son duo travelled the globe on behalf of central party headquarters. Like the domestic tour, Nationalist Radio added a segment called ‘Short History of the World’ to introduce world civilisations, religions, and historical figures from ancient to modern times. On the tour, the father and son set out as soon as they returned to Nanjing, stopping first in Korea, and then on to Japan, before sailing across the Pacific to the Americas aboard the USS President Hoover. From there, they sailed to Europe, where they visited the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Germany, among other countries, before moving on to the Middle East, Africa, India, Southeast Asia, and Australasia. During the tour, the young protagonist telegraphed stories about the culture, history, industry, and commerce of each country in reports to party headquarters. Nationalist Radio thus took young listeners around the world in the service of the party state, portraying China as an equal among the community of nations.

### *Dramatising the Nation*

The dramatisation of the nation in broadcast dramas and radio plays began in late 1934 as Nationalist Radio was blurring the lines between education, propaganda, and entertainment. In *Broadcast Weekly*, editor Zhong Zhenzhi wrote that owing to its reliance upon sound,

a new kind of revolution in literary and artistic techniques has taken place in radio because broadcasting itself is a kind of technology and also a kind of art. As for broadcast dramas, they are still in their infancy. In future, what direction they take and how their characteristics develop will depend on the practical effort and creativity of those in art and literary circles to complete the mission of art.<sup>170</sup>

Nationalist Radio therefore began experimenting with the global genre to create short broadcast dramas and dialogues for *Children’s Show* and *Civic Education*, which was a programme for school dropouts that also aired around dinner time on weekdays.<sup>171</sup> The demand for more broadcast drama came from parents writing in to say how much they liked it. A father from Shaoxing wanted Nationalist Radio to add one children’s play every week.<sup>172</sup> Another father in Wuhu shared the reason that his children liked *Children’s Show* the most:

There was a musical segment—what the title was we couldn’t make out—but the spoken parts and singing were very good. Moreover, it also dubbed a lot of bird calls and the sound of circling aircraft and booming artillery. The production drew on

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<sup>170</sup> Zhenzhi, Bianzhe Tanhua, *GBZB*, 22 September 1934, 25.

<sup>171</sup> Chuanyin ke, Xiaoyan, *GBZB*, 14 March 1936, 41.

<sup>172</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 28 March 1936, 50.



material that was meaningful to begin with and adding the many dubbed sounds made it feel even more scintillating.<sup>173</sup>

The short dialogues in *Civics Education* were just as popular with the audience. Shi Zhijun of South China Middle School thought that National Radio should broadcast two or three a week because ‘dialogues like “Wife of an Artist” and “An Evening Debate”, et cetera, are delightful. Compared to the language of a lecture format, it seems easier to interest people’.<sup>174</sup> Through the dramatisation of spousal relationships in comedies like ‘Wife of an Artist’ and plays like ‘An Evening Debate’, the CC Clique also sought to shape family values in modern society.<sup>175</sup>

Nationalist Radio aired its first full-length broadcast drama on 28 January 1935. Adapted from a stage play of the same name by American-trained playwright Xiong Foxi, *Sleeping on Brushwood Eating Gall* (臥薪嘗膽) was an eighty-five-minute production. The five-act drama told the story of Goujian, whose historical significance has been written about in detail by Paul Cohen in *Speaking to History*.<sup>176</sup> Using colloquial language, the broadcast drama portrayed Goujian, Zheng Dan, and her father as model heroes and idealised sacrifice as a means to wash away national humiliation.<sup>177</sup> The story also served as a metaphor for modern China, seeking to address the problems of ignorance, poverty, poor health, and selfishness that many listeners believed were hindering the progress of Chinese society.<sup>178</sup>

*Sleeping on Brushwood Eating Gall*, however, had been a last-minute replacement for what was supposed to be the first broadcast drama on Nationalist Radio: *A Waif* (苦兒流亡記).<sup>179</sup> Adapted from a 1933 Shaw brothers’ film based on Hector Malot’s 1878 French novel *Sans Famille*, *A Waif* told the story of a Chinese teenager from Shenyang named Huaxing (華興 [China Rising]) whose family was murdered by Japanese soldiers, and who was reunited with his maternal uncle in Peking after the Manchurian Incident. At the end of the play, Huaxing joined the Volunteer Army to seek revenge and wash away China’s national humiliation to the sound of cheering crowds and a chorus of ‘Return My Manchuria’.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 11 April 1936, 52.

<sup>174</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 9 March 1935, 38.

<sup>175</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Bentai boyin huaju yilanbiao’ 本台播音話劇一覽表, *GBZB*, 23 May 1936, 54–56.

<sup>176</sup> Jerome A. Cohen, *Speaking to History: The Story of King Goujian in Twentieth-Century China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), XVII–XXI; Xiong Foxi 熊佛西, *Woxin changdan* 臥薪嘗膽 *GBZB*, 24 July 1937, 76–81; Xiong Foxi, *Woxin changdan*, *GBZB*, 31 July 1937, 53–63.

<sup>177</sup> Cohen, *Speaking to History*, 68–76.

<sup>178</sup> Cohen, 50–53.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Jinji shengming’ 緊急聲明, *GBZB*, 26 January 1935, 10.

<sup>180</sup> ‘Kuer liuwang ji’ 苦兒流亡記, *GBZB*, 19 January 1935, 21–32.

Nationalist Radio's inspiration for *A Waif* came from European broadcast dramas and World War One patriotic stage plays in England, France, and Germany. The broadcast section believed that contemporary radio plays in Europe were a good model for radio because they had 'more or less become a successful weapon of national defence and a good tool for influencing national thought'.<sup>181</sup> The broadcast section therefore wanted to produce European-style radio plays to instil listeners with a patriotic spirit.<sup>182</sup> However, Nationalist Radio was ordered to cancel *A Waif* to avoid 'affecting diplomatic relations' with Japan. As a result, it broadcast *Sleeping on Brushwood Eating Gall* instead.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, the replacement was a smash. Listeners like Yu Wenming from Dezhou, Shandong Province wrote *Broadcast Weekly* to share his reaction and ask for more:

I heard your station's drama tonight and was so moved that I wept, and my whole body shook when hearing those words of warning. Your station clearly understands the duty of broadcasting. However, this programme was last-minute. In my humble opinion, there is a real need to add this kind of drama rich in national consciousness each week to educate the public and restore the nation.<sup>184</sup>

Nationalist Radio did continue to produce one short radio play a week and one major broadcast drama every month throughout 1935, and listeners wrote in to share their reactions and comment on how to improve the live performances. By year's end, the broadcast section had written and produced nearly forty dramas in-house. The productions addressed social issues using the realist aesthetic to promote service to others and elicit a sense of social responsibility among listeners. They also promoted secularised traditional values like sincerity, trust, and righteousness. Moreover, they created dramas about 'glorious stories from Chinese history' featuring Yue Fei, Shi Kefa, and Wen Tianxiang, among others, that employed historical allegory to promote veiled anti-Japanese nationalism.<sup>185</sup> The CC Clique thus dramatised the nation to entertain the audience and influence them on Nationalist Radio.

## Conclusion

The transformation of broadcast propaganda was part of a spiritual turn that incorporated culture and enjoyment into Sunist doctrine between 1933 and 1935. This chapter has demonstrated that the New Life Movement sparked this transformation just as radio

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<sup>181</sup> 'Tan boyin huaju zhi tedian' 談播音話劇之特點, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 52–54.

<sup>182</sup> 'Tan boyin huaju', 54.

<sup>183</sup> 'Tan boyin huaju', 54.

<sup>184</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 9 February 1935, 34.

<sup>185</sup> 'Boyin huaju zhi shiming yu yingqu zhi tujing' 播音話劇之使命與應取之途徑, *GBZB*, 23 May 1936, 51–54; Cohen, *Speaking to History*, 41–48.

developed into a mass medium in China. This chapter also showed that the CC Clique integrated the principles of the New Life Movement into a long-term programme of cultural construction in media and educational institutions under the group's control. Nationalist Radio therefore injected entertainment and education into broadcast propaganda to blur the lines between news, information, education and entertainment. Using various production techniques, the CC Clique embedded the principles of cultural construction into radio content to instil an essentialised yet modern secular nationalism into listening audiences. Nationalist Radio programming thus embodied cultural construction, and the CC Clique planned to make Nationalist Radio the model for the broadcasting industry.

## CHAPTER 5: RADIO NATIONALISATION OF THE INDUSTRY, 1936–1937

In terms of broadcasting, it was only a type of curious plaything before. It was nothing more than a means to provide the common leisured class with a diversion after drinking or over tea. Now its usefulness has far exceeded that of ordinary entertainment. It has become a powerful tool for the promotion of cultural construction.

—Wu Baofeng, Director of the Central Broadcasting Administration<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The radio nationalisation of the industry occurred between January 1936 and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937. During this phase, the CC Clique prepared Nationalist Radio for war by reinforcing China's radio ramparts. The group transformed Nationalist Radio into a cultural enterprise and expanded public broadcasting into the interior to protect the industry against Japanese invasion, and it took steps to ensure the continued domestic production of key wireless components in the event that China lost access to wireless imports in wartime.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the CC Clique coordinated radio development in accordance with defence planning and prepared to steel the industry for a 'spiritual national defence' on the fourth front.<sup>3</sup> To this end, the CC Clique made Nationalist Radio the model for the broadcasting industry and consolidated control over private radio to promote nationalism through cultural construction.

To implement this plan, Chiang Kai-shek turned once again to Chen Guofu. In late 1935, Chen set out to transform Nationalist Radio into a cultural enterprise, which was a state-guided business model that his younger brother, Chen Lifu, had developed for the film industry in mid-1935. The elder Chen reorganised Nationalist Radio into the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee (中央廣播事業指導委員會) and the Central Broadcasting Administration (中央廣播事業管理處) to mobilise the industry to promote national unity through the methodical application of cultural construction. This is why Wu Baofeng regarded radio as 'a powerful tool' in the epigraph above. In 1936, the CC Clique technocrats at Nationalist Radio began to integrate cultural construction into broadcast propaganda with a systematic zeal that reflected their engineering backgrounds. Although formulaic, the content tapped into popular sentiments about nationalism, cultural essentialism, and modernism. In this way, the CC Clique employed

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<sup>1</sup> Wu Baofeng 吳保豐, 'Shi nian lai de Zhongguo guangbo shiye' 十年來的中國廣播事業, in *Shi nian lai de Zhongguo* 十年來的中國, ed. Zhongguo wenhua jianshe xiehui (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), 693.

<sup>2</sup> Tan, *Recharging China*, 89–93.

<sup>3</sup> Tan, 64, 91–94.

broadcast propaganda as a tool of governance to raise national consciousness and as a weapon of war to mobilise the people to defend the Chinese nation.

This penultimate chapter looks at the transformation of Nationalist Radio into a cultural enterprise that occurred in 1936 and the steps that the CC Clique took to establish a national broadcasting network in 1937, as the group prepared the industry for an eventual war. The first section introduces the CC Clique's motive for establishing a cultural enterprise system in 1936, arguing that Chen Guofu regarded culture an essential weapon in China's arsenal of spiritual national defence. The second section examines the role of the Supervisory Committee and the Broadcasting Administration in developing the industry and explains why the CC Clique made radio the showcase of the new cultural enterprise system. The final section then analyses the actual details of the National Broadcasting Network Plan to show that the Nationalists were already well on their way to completing a nationwide network by mid 1937, as the CC Clique prepared the industry for war on the fourth front.

### **Radio as a Tool for National Unity**

Nationalist Radio commemorated the Republic's twenty-fifth anniversary on the morning of 1 January 1936 with a special broadcast to the nation. Inside a comfortable studio at party headquarters, President Lin Sen and Chiang Kai-shek addressed the nation in a relay broadcast via all public and private stations in China. President Lin spoke first. In his radio talk, Lin urged listeners to subordinate their individual rights and freedoms to secure freedom and equality for the nation, and he introduced a timeline to draft a constitution and hold elections for the National Assembly later in the year. The announcement was good news, as China was about to enter the third and final period of constitutional government in Sunist political theory.<sup>4</sup>

Chiang then spoke into the microphone as China's premier, a role that he assumed after an assassin nearly killed Wang Jingwei just outside the studio complex in November 1935. Chiang addressed the audience as compatriots, and his talk focused on the individual and the important role that each person played in changing the fate of the nation. This, he said, required the integration of New Life practices into everyday life to improve one's thinking, values, spirit, and character. Next, he added that the collective cultivation of the individual would put China on the 'Great Way' (大道), which would transform the country into a wealthy and powerful nation. Chiang further asserted that the Great Way would not be found in the 'modern' or

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<sup>4</sup> Lin Sen 林森, 'Minguo nianwu nian zhengfu yu renmin ying jin zhi zeren' 民國念五年政府與人民應盡之責任, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 36–37.

‘fashionable’ but in New Life and in China’s ‘long and glorious history’ and ‘elegant and great culture’.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the path to wealth and power lay upon a solid foundation of cultural construction. The special New Year’s Day programme then segued to a segment of National Music, which featured four songs produced by Pathé Records to conclude the broadcast.

On 6 January 1936, *Shanghai Journal* published a political commentary entitled ‘Broadcasting and the Unification of China’ that praised the special broadcast on New Year’s Day. The commentary argued that ‘the improvement and expansion of the radio broadcasting industry is the truly urgent plan at the moment’ because the intimate connection between speaker and listener on the radio made it the most effective tool to promote nationalism:

The most effective tools to construct a unity of the psyche are journalism and broadcasting. Since the war, all the new states have spared no effort to introduce nationalism. There is not one that has not made full use of these two tools for effective control. However, journalism is not as powerful as radio in agitating national sentiment. It is better to use speech to communicate with the people than greet them in writing.<sup>6</sup>

Marshall McLuhan identified the emotive power of radio as a ‘tribal drum’ that absorbed the human psyche in the reverberating tattoo of tradition, and he attributed this phenomenon to the rise of collectivism during the Interwar Period, which was expressed as nationalism.<sup>7</sup> The *Shanghai Journal* editorial also noted this global trend, citing the successful use of radio in the Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States to construct a new culture, project political power, and speak directly to the people.<sup>8</sup> The editorial thus signalled the CC Clique plan to transform radio into a metaphorical drum in order to mobilise the people and unify the nation.

On 11 January, *Broadcast Weekly* republished the editorial along with a note from broadcast section chief Fan Benzong. On behalf of Nationalist Radio, Fan thanked the political commentator for recognising their effort to produce innovative content. He also thanked the commentator for recommending that more should be done to realise the full potential of radio ‘to construct a unified national psyche and a strong national consciousness’.<sup>9</sup> Given that the CC Clique had just established the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee and Central Broadcasting Administration to consolidate the industry into a cultural enterprise and expand party-state broadcasting, the timing of the *Shanghai Journal* commentary suggests that its placement was not coincidental.

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<sup>5</sup> Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, ‘Guomin ziji jiuguo zhi yaodao’ 國民自救救國之要道, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 40.

<sup>6</sup> Xing jun 星君, ‘Guangbo shiye yu Zhongguo tongyi’ 廣播事業與中國統一, *Shenbao*,

<sup>7</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 297, 299–300, 304.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Zhongguo tongyi’, 6.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Guangbo shiye yu Zhongguo tongyi’ 廣播事業與中國統一, *GBZB*, 11 January 1936, 55.

## Broadcasting as a Cultural Enterprise

Radio was one part of a much wider consolidation of party-state control over culture and the arts, as the CC Clique mobilised creative industries to promote national consciousness. It also exemplified Christopher Rea's 'collective enterprise model' of Republican-era cultural entrepreneurs in *The Business of Culture*. In this particular case, the CC Clique risked political capital to establish a broadcasting system based on their entrepreneurial experience in radio.<sup>10</sup> In November 1935, the Fifth National Assembly passed a motion entitled 'Proposal to Confirm the Principles of Cultural Construction and Advance Policies to Rejuvenate the Nation', which sought to assert party-state control over the cultural sphere.

The motion proposed the creation of a new institution called the Central Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee (中央文化事業計畫委員會) whose job was to standardise the production of content across creative industries using the principles of cultural construction. After the conclusion of the Fifth National Assembly, the presidium approved the motion, and Lin Sen and Chiang Kai-shek ratified it into law on 1 January 1936, on the day of the special nationwide broadcast to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the republic. The new law provided for the Central Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee to shape content in eleven spheres of cultural production:<sup>11</sup>

1. Rites and Customs
2. Education
3. History and Geography
4. Linguistics and Philology
5. Publishing
6. Journalism
7. Broadcasting
8. Film
9. Drama
10. Music
11. The Arts<sup>12</sup>

In 1936, the Planning Committee formed cross-ministry committees and research groups with outside experts to apply the principles of cultural construction to these eleven cultural spheres, and it would establish party-state enterprises to censor creative content in those spheres.

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Rea, 'The Cultural Entrepreneur', in *The Business of Culture: Cultural Entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia, 1900–65*, eds. Christopher Rea and Nicolai Volland (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 9–31.

<sup>11</sup> 'Guomin zhengfu xunling di liu hao' 国民政府训令第六六号, 1 January 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1: 25–26.

<sup>12</sup> 'Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui wenhua shiye jihua weiyuanhui zuzhi tiaoli' 国民党中央执行委员会文化事业计划委员会组织条例, 3 March 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:1–2.

The CC Clique integrated the ideology of cultural construction into creative industries so that the party state could draw upon the power of a cultural arsenal in a war against Japan. Hence, the group established two fundamental conditions for cultural production. First, it was to strike a positive balance between Chinese tradition and Western learning. Unlike the New Culture Movement, which had attacked tradition, the cultural enterprise system was a syncretic institution that sought “to save our nation’s traditional culture from the roots” and “absorb foreign culture to integrate and master it”.<sup>13</sup> Second, although the cultural enterprise system would produce creative content for everyone in Chinese society, its primary focus would be on the education of children and youth, an area that Eric Hobsbawm identified as ‘the most powerful mechanism at the disposal of the state for inculcating proper civic behaviour and, not least, for turning the inhabitant of a village into the (patriotic) citizen of a nation’.<sup>14</sup> Cultural enterprises therefore focused on developing national consciousness in the masters of the future.

The fusion of the Chinese tradition and Western learning in cultural construction was a modern remix of the *ti-yong* concept—‘Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function’ (中學為體，西學為用)—from the nineteenth-century Self Strengthening Movement.<sup>15</sup> However, the Nationalists went one step further than the earlier generation of modernisers to integrate art and culture into the military-industrial programme for national revitalisation. Their innovation was to combine secular nationalism with cultural essentialism and modernism, which Eric Hobsbawm described as a nationalist ‘cocktail’ that when drunk ‘would slake the consumers’ spiritual and material thirst’.<sup>16</sup> Spiritually, cultural construction sought to boost the morale of the people and restore their self-confidence through the coordinated promotion of Sunism, New Life and secularised Confucianism. Materially, it sought to train a new generation in modern arts and sciences who would go on to develop key industries and strengthen national defence.<sup>17</sup> Through the integration of cultural construction into creative production, the CC Clique hoped to instil a mythic narrative of Chinese history and culture into the people who would then subordinate their individual interests to the nation, which by no means was unique to Chinese nationalism. Thus, cultural construction was to develop national consciousness.

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Queding wenhua jianshe yuanze yu tuijin fangzhen yi fuxing minzu an’ 确定文化建设原则与推进方针以复兴民族案, 1 January 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:26.

<sup>14</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875–1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 305.

<sup>15</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufano, comps., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 through the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2, second ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 244–45.

<sup>16</sup> Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Queding wenhua jianshe’, 26–27; ‘Guomindang zhongyang wenhua shiye jihua gangyao’ 国民党中央文化事业计划纲要, 2 April 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:29.



The CC Clique considered the cultural enterprise system essential to national security. It therefore sought to harness the power of culture through central planning and coordination and thereby organise a ‘spiritual national defence’ (精神上的國防). Chen Guofu regarded the mission of the cultural enterprise system as paramount.<sup>18</sup> In fact, he thought that it was more important than military might:

We know that strengthening military might is the material side of national defence construction work. Planning culture is the spiritual side of national defence construction work and is even more important than military might. The Centre attaches great importance to this matter. Therefore, after the Fifth National Assembly, it established the Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee and drafted the Essentials of the Cultural Enterprises Programme to determine China’s future cultural policies.<sup>19</sup>

Broadcasting thus became the first cultural enterprise that the Nationalists formed in 1936 because radio content subsumed the work product of most of the other creative industries and therefore was central to the integration of the cultural enterprise system.

### *The Supervisory Committee*

The party presidium established the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee on 6 February 1936, one month before the organisation of its parent organisation, the Central Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee.<sup>20</sup> The inspiration for the enterprise came from Chen Guofu’s younger brother, Chen Lifu.<sup>21</sup> The younger Chen had advocated for stricter regulatory control over the movie industry since 1932, and had supported the production of educational and feature films integrating cultural construction. This early foray in movies resulted in the formation of the Film Enterprise Supervisory Committee in May 1935 and the creation of the Central Sound Film Studio in August 1935.<sup>22</sup> The mission of the film studio was ‘to release powerful dramas to the public to effect a unity of emotion and spirit among them’ and bring about ‘a unity of thought and action through the dramatic appeal of the sound picture’.<sup>23</sup> To

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Wenhua shiye jihua’, 29.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Chen Guofu guanyu zhongyang wenhua shiye jihua weiyuanhui chengli yilai gongzuo zhuangkuang de baogao’ 陈果夫关于中央文化事业计划委员会成立以来工作状况的报告, 19 October 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:31.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Guomindang Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui zuzhi dagang’ 国民党中央广播事业指导委员会组织大纲, 2 February 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:6–7; ‘Wenhua shiye jihua weiyuanhui zuzhi tiaoli’, 1–2; ‘Guomindang Zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui wenhua shiye jihua weiyuanhui ge yanjiu zuzhi guicheng’ 国民党中央执行委员会文化事业计划委员会各研究会组织规程, 5 March 1936, in *ZMSDZH*, ser. 5, pt. 1 (culture), vol. 1:2–3.

<sup>21</sup> Gu Qian 顾倩, *Guomin zhengfu dianying guanli tizhi, 1927–1937* 国民政府电影管理体制 1927–1937 (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2010), 166–68.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew David Johnson, ‘International and Wartime Origins’, 135–36.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Sound Film Studio in Nanking’, *North-China Herald*, 7 August 1935, 215.

this end, the film studio produced newsreels about current events and national reconstruction, educational videos, and motion pictures integrating cultural construction.<sup>24</sup> The CC Clique therefore adopted the enterprise model for the film industry and applied it to radio broadcasting.

The transformation of Nationalist Radio into a cultural enterprise ushered in the third of radio nationalisation. Whereas the first phase focused on the party state and the second on the audience, the third phase centred on the nationalisation of the industry. This new focus meant that Nationalist Radio would do much more than operate stations and produce content: it also would determine policy and coordinate its implementation across multiple organisations. Unlike the film cultural enterprise, whose supervisory committee consisted of representatives from two institutions, the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee included members from eight organisations: the Military Affairs Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Communications, Central Propaganda Department, Central Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee, and Central Broadcasting Administration.<sup>25</sup> The composition of the committee reflected the complexity of radio and the intergovernmental coordination required to administer the global medium: broadcasting was a tool of propaganda and a weapon of war; a forum for education and an outlet for entertainment; a channel for commerce and a medium for the community. Hence, the Supervisory Committee set out to nationalise the industry on the model of Nationalist Radio.

Broadcasting was central to the cultural enterprise system because radio programming subsumed the content of other creative industries. Apart from music, education, and journalism, Nationalist Radio also absorbed content from history, linguistics, publishing, and drama during its eleven-hour daily programme schedule in 1936, which expanded to twelve hours in 1937. The CC Clique therefore transformed Nationalist Radio into a multimedia showcase that featured the work product of the entire cultural enterprise system. The CC Clique thus enhanced the physical reach of the other cultural enterprises and amplified the all-absorbing effect of McLuhan's tribal drum.

Cultural construction was the cement that bonded the mythic national narrative together. After combining the Chinese tradition with Western learning, the CC Clique mixed in cultural aggregates to create 'national art and literature' (民族文藝).<sup>26</sup> With awards and subsidies, the CC Clique funded work that embodied cultural construction in the fields of film, art, literature,

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<sup>24</sup> 'Sound Film Studio', 215; 'Talkie Studio Is Dedicated in Nanking', *China Press*, 17 July 1935, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Diyici huiyi jilu 第一次會議紀錄 [First meeting record], 20 February 1936, Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui 中央廣播事業指導委員會 (hereafter CBSC), Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>26</sup> 'Wenhua jianshe', 28.

theatre, and academia, among others. It also funded entities like the Central Sound Film Studio to centralise the best resources, talent, and technology in an industry. Moreover, it founded educational institutions to train industry talent, such as the National Theatre Academy (國立戲劇學校), and popularise arts and culture like at the National Central Museum (國立中央美術陳列館).<sup>27</sup> Most importantly, it implemented a centralised review in each cultural enterprise to censor material that was unacceptable under the principles of cultural construction, i.e., art and literature that was considered feudal, proletarian, and decadent.<sup>28</sup> The CC Clique thus further amplified the effect of cultural construction across all creative enterprises and thereby reduced the influence of competing voices in the cultural sphere.<sup>29</sup>

The promulgation of cultural construction also changed the tenor of the radio industry. The CC Clique applied the principles of cultural construction ‘to awaken the collective consciousness of the public nationwide’ in order to prepare the people for war with Japan.<sup>30</sup>

At this moment as the national crisis becomes more urgent by the day, how to foster patriotism and restore national self-confidence, so that people nationwide strive together under the same banner to save the nation and ensure its survival through the establishment of a spiritual national defence that can withstand foreign cultural invasion, is truly the most pressing task.<sup>31</sup>

The CC Clique thereafter made broadcasting a central part of its cultural arsenal ‘to develop the spirit of our national culture and strengthen the foundation of the Chinese nation’,<sup>32</sup> and it sought to use radio as ‘a powerful tool of universal education to reform customs, boost public morale, and unify thought and language’.<sup>33</sup> In short, the CC Clique wanted to use radio to promote nation building.

On 24 December 1935, Chen Guofu proposed that the party presidium first create the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee and Central Broadcasting Administration as he put together the cultural enterprises system. Quoting Sun Yat-sen, he argued that the China radio oecumene was like ‘a sheet of loose sand’, owing to the coexistence of both public and private broadcasting. He criticised the uneven quality of the private industry, which suffered from a mishmash of call signs, weak wavelengths, substandard facilities, and poor management.

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<sup>27</sup> Qin Xianci 秦賢次, ‘Zhang Daofan de yisheng ji qi dui wenyi de gongxian’ 張道藩的一生及其對文藝的貢獻, in *Suan tian ku la de huiwei: wenyi doushi Zhang Daofan huiyilu* 酸甜苦辣的回味:文藝鬥士張道藩回憶錄, ed. Cai Dengshan 蔡登山 (Taipei: Xinrui wenchuang, 2020), 140.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Wenhua jianshe’, 28.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Wenhua shiye’, 29.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Wenhua jianshe’, 26.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Wenhua shiye’, 28–29.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Queding wenhua jianshe’, 28.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Wenhua shiye’, 30.

Moreover, he noted a lack of enforcement despite clear regulations, which was veiled criticism of the Ministry of Communications. Chen therefore recommended that the party establish the Supervisory Committee to set policy, and the Broadcasting Administration to coordinate it. He also shared that the use of multi-agency commissions to manage industry development was a global trend. He then finished his introduction with the most important point: 'radio broadcasting is very important to the culture of a nation'.<sup>34</sup>

An analysis of broadcasting systems from around the world then followed. Chen presented four business models in the global radio oecumene: the German state-run system, the British government-supervised commercial system, the American commercial system, and the Soviet party-run system. He then introduced each system and evaluated them based on their ability to promote party-state governance. Although the United States had the biggest and most profitable system, Chen recommended that the party reject the American commercial model straightaway, owing to historic and economic differences between China and the United States. Instead, he recommended that the party state develop a hybrid system and adopt the best practices from Germany, Britain, and the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup>

In his proposal, Chen defined two necessary conditions for success. First, the broadcasting enterprise must remain under the direct control of the party owing to its importance to propaganda and education, which were essential to political tutelage. This arrangement ensured that radio would fall outside the scope of the Ministry of Communications, which managed the radiotelephony and radiotelegraphy monopolies, because Chen wanted to prevent a repeat of the ministry's 1929 hostile takeover of party-run radiotelegraphy from the National Reconstruction Commission. Second, the Supervisory Committee must retain complete administrative control over the broadcasting enterprise.<sup>36</sup>

On 9 January 1936, the presidium approved Chen's proposal and entrusted him to organise and lead the broadcasting enterprise. Over the next month, Chen pushed through all the necessary approvals, organised the Broadcast Administration, and convened the inaugural meeting of the Supervisory Committee.<sup>37</sup> The committee contained many Nationalist Radio veterans. Chen was the chair and Wu Baofeng was the deputy. Wu would play an important role in his capacity as director of the Broadcasting Administration, director of the Central

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<sup>34</sup> 'Ni zengshe guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui an' 擬增設廣播事業指導委員會案 [Broadcasting Supervisory Committee establishment plan file], 24 December 1935, KMT Archives, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 5.3/3.44.

<sup>35</sup> 'Ni zengshe', KMT Archives, *Hui*, 5.3/3.44.

<sup>36</sup> 'Ni zengshe', 5.3/3.44.

<sup>37</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 24.

Station, and as a senior Ministry of Communications official. Wu Daoyi would continue to serve as Wu Baofeng's right-hand man, managing the daily affairs at the Broadcasting Administration and Central Station. One new member on the Supervisory Committee was Zhang Daofan. Zhang not only was a respected artist, writer, and playwright, he also was vice chair of the Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee and vice minister in the Ministry of Communications. The CC Clique thus assembled its team to nationalise the industry.

The presidium granted Chen the power that he requested on 6 February, establishing the Supervisory Committee under the party and investing it with full authority over China's hybrid industry. The priority was to develop a national broadcasting network.<sup>38</sup> To this end, the presidium charged the committee with managing a listener licensing system to fund the network, developing a self-sufficiency plan for equipment production, reconnoitring domestic and foreign broadcast programming, handling domestic and international relays, and representing China at international conferences. In addition, the presidium gave the committee the operational power to open and close radio stations as well as enact industry regulations regarding wavelengths, call signals, equipment standards, and programming.<sup>39</sup> These powers enabled the Supervisory Committee to regulate the industry and promote growth.

The most important power that the presidium granted Chen, however, regarded the ability of the Supervisory Committee to exercise total control over its constituent members. This gave Chen, as committee chair, the power to delegate tasks to member organisations and hold them responsible for carrying out committee resolutions. He asserted this control through the Broadcasting Administration, which managed daily affairs between committee meetings.<sup>40</sup> This organisational structure enabled Chen to centralise policymaking and its implementation, and thus speed up the pace of industry consolidation, because he could drive inter-agency coordination between meetings, which occurred about every fifteen weeks before the war.<sup>41</sup> For example, Chen assigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to collate broadcasting regulations from nine countries and delegated their translation to the Ministry of Communications in the first meeting to ensure that the national network plan conformed to global standards.<sup>42</sup> Chen

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<sup>38</sup> Chen Guofu 陳果夫, 'Zhuxi baogao' 主席報告 [Chairman's report], 20 February 1936, in Diyici huiyi jilu 第一次會議紀錄 [First meeting minutes], CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>39</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui zuzhi dagang' 中央廣播事業指導委員會組織大綱 [Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee organisational outline], 16 March 1936, Guoshiguan [Nationalist Government Collection], 001000000987A.

<sup>40</sup> 'Zuzhi dagang', Guoshiguan, 001000000987A.

<sup>41</sup> Five meetings occurred between February 1936 and July 1937, see CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001823A, 017000001824A.

<sup>42</sup> Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A.

also exercised this power to establish the Central Radio Manufacturing Works in Changsha to produce inexpensive valve radios and other key components for the national network.<sup>43</sup> In this example, Chen assigned the Ministry of Communications and the Military Affairs Commission to work with the National Reconstruction Commission to import the plant and equipment from the United States and find a suitable site for the radio factory by early 1937.<sup>44</sup> Without these organisational powers, managing the complex interactions between eight party-state organisations would have been extremely difficult in such a short timeframe.

Chen developed an effective intergovernmental institution to manage the industry.<sup>45</sup> Chen became known as the ‘Nannie of Nationalist Radio’ for his hands-on management style, as he chaired every meeting of the Supervisory Committee. However, he established a clear division of labour between committee members and coordinated their efforts to ensure close cooperation.<sup>46</sup> For example, he entrusted national security and international issues to the Military Affairs Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Central Propaganda Department, and he relied on the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior to work together on programme content and radio education. For private station management, he depended on the Ministry of Communications. Finally, Chen assigned the Broadcasting Administration to conduct industry planning, supervise public broadcasting stations, and handle inter-agency coordination.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Broadcasting Administration*

Although the new Broadcasting Administration was similar to the old Radio Station Administration, its purpose and scope were different. Except for the broadcast section, which was subdivided into three smaller groups to produce more entertainment, the structure of the administration was the same.<sup>48</sup> Operationally, it managed the same assets: the Central Station, Radio Fuzhou, Radio Hankou (Station XGOW), and Radio Nanjing (Station XGON). It also continued to build Radio Xi’an (Station XGOB) and the 500-watt Central Shortwave Station

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<sup>43</sup> ‘Zhongyang wuxiandian qicai gongsi chubu fazhan baogaoshu’ 中央無線電器材公司初步發展報告書 [Preliminary Development of the Central Radio Corporation], Guoshiguan [NRC Collection], 003000007472A.

<sup>44</sup> Dierci huiyi jilu 第二次會議紀錄 [Second meeting record], 19 March 1936, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>45</sup> Julia C. Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities: State Building in Republican China, 1927–1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1–11.

<sup>46</sup> Xu Yongping 徐詠平, ‘Guangbo baomu Chen Guofu’ 廣播樞母陳果夫, in *CGFXSBDJ*, 299–312.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui zuzhi dagang’ 中央廣播事業指導委員會組織大綱 [CBSC organisational outline], 20 February 1936, in *Diyici huiyi jilu* 第一次會議紀錄 [First meeting record], 20 February 1936, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A.

<sup>48</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 23.

(Station XGOX) in Nanjing, which when operational could be heard as far away as Australasia. The Broadcasting Administration, however, required an additional level above the Central Station to enable the CC Clique to expand the station into a broadcasting enterprise, which required a different institutional focus.

As a cultural enterprise, the Broadcasting Administration needed to focus on industry development rather than station operations. The CC Clique therefore assigned key station personnel to apply their industry experience towards developing content standards and operational guidelines for the national broadcasting network plan. It also assigned station staff to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Supervisory Committee and coordinate intergovernmental cooperation. Nationalist Radio therefore staffed up to handle the expanded scope of its organisational mission, increasing personnel from 115 to 159 in 1936.<sup>49</sup> This shift in focus can be seen in the rise of station manager Wu Daoyi. On 20 November 1935, Wu set sail for Europe and America to collect intelligence on the global industry, negotiate agreements with foreign manufacturers, research radio education, and represent China at the International Broadcasting Union.<sup>50</sup> In the year that he was away, Wu Baofeng, who usually worked in an office at the Ministry of Communications, took up a desk at the Central Station to implement the radio nationalisation of the industry.<sup>51</sup>

### **Raising the Radio Ramparts**

In order to promote the mythic national narrative and mount a spiritual national defence, Nationalist Radio officials needed to consolidate control over the domestic industry and build a national network, which required long-term planning and infrastructure investment. They referred to such infrastructure as ‘ramparts’ (壁壘) because it acted as virtual walls that fortified China’s spiritual defences and prevented foreign propaganda from breaching China’s airwaves. The first time that ‘rampart’ appeared as a metaphor for broadcasting was in a radio address by Wu Baofeng in September 1936.<sup>52</sup> In later writings, Wu argued that China must build ‘broadcasting ramparts’ (播音壁壘) throughout the nation ‘to resist the invasion of international broadcasting’ (抵抗國際播音之侵略).<sup>53</sup> After radio had become a weapon of war against weaker nations in Spain, Austria, and Abyssinia, Wu regarded Soviet and Japanese stations as the

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<sup>49</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 266.

<sup>50</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 23, 27.

<sup>51</sup> *Zhongguang wushi*, 252.

<sup>52</sup> Wu Baofeng, ‘Wo guo guangbo shiye jinhou yingqu zhi tujing’ 我國廣播事業今後應取之途徑, *GBZB*, 19 September 1936, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Wu, ‘Zhongguo guangbo shiye’, 734–35.

biggest threats because broadcasting had become ‘the sole weapon of aggression for international propaganda’ (國際宣傳侵略之惟一利器).<sup>54</sup>

The threat was real: the Soviet Union had powerful 100-kilowatt stations in the Far Eastern Territory and Siberia broadcasting Chinese-language news that sought to undermine the effectiveness of party-state broadcast propaganda.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Japan had recently completed a 100-kilowatt station in Hsinking, and NHK was building 150-kilowatt stations in Tokyo and Osaka to expand its international network.<sup>56</sup> Wu was concerned that the powerful Japanese and Soviet ‘ramparts’ in the north would soon overwhelm China’s if nothing was done to boost the power of the Central Station and build an integrated broadcasting network to strengthen the integrity of the system.<sup>57</sup> In short, a three-way race for supremacy over the airwaves was under way in East Asia and China was falling behind. However, Wu felt that China still had time to raise the ramparts.<sup>58</sup>

### *The Industry in 1936*

The Chinese broadcasting industry suffered from three imbalances in January 1936. The first imbalance was that forty-one of China’s ninety-two stations, or nearly 45 percent, were located in Shanghai. The second imbalance was that thirty-nine of those forty-one Shanghai stations were private. The third imbalance was that the Central Station comprised 77 percent of the broadcasting industry’s power (see table 7). Nationalist Radio therefore sought to correct these imbalances, which were the result of many years of lax regulation and neglect. The Ministry of Communications first began to rein in private broadcasting after the establishment of Radio Shanghai and Shanghai City Radio in 1935. That year, the ministry stopped issuing private broadcasting licenses and closed thirteen Shanghai private stations for technical reasons.<sup>59</sup> It also bought two foreign stations to reduce the influence of foreign broadcasting on China’s airwaves. The problem was that sixty four private stations with only 8 percent of industry power occupied most of the available radio spectrum, which resulted in

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<sup>54</sup> Wu Baofeng, ‘Jianshe quanguo guangbowang jihua cao’an’ 建設全國廣播網計畫草案 [Draft plan to build a national broadcasting network], *Wuxiandian* 4, April 1937, 89.

<sup>55</sup> Wu, ‘Zhongguo guangbo shiye’, 734–35.

<sup>56</sup> Bill Sewell, *Constructing Empire: The Japanese in Changchun, 1905–1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 142–43; Robins, ‘Tokyo Calling’, 50; ‘Ribei diantai kuochong jihua’ 日本擴充電台計畫, *Wuxiandian* 2, April 1935, 75; ‘Ribei JOAK guangbo diantai jiang wei yuandong zui da zhi diantai’ 日本 JOAK 廣播電台將為遠東最大之電台, *QSP*, 15 December 1935, 20.

<sup>57</sup> Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 90.

<sup>58</sup> Wu, ‘Zhongguo guangbo shiye’, 734.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Minguo shiqi Shanghai guangbo diantai yilanbiao’ 民國時期上海廣播電台一覽表, Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 387–98.



crowding and interference. The CC Clique therefore set out to rectify this situation so that Nationalist Radio would dominate China's airwaves.

Table 7: China Broadcasting Industry by Type, Level, and Ownership, January 1936.

Type	Level	Ownership	Stations	Stations (%)	Power (watts)	Power (%)
Public	Central	Central Radio Administration	3	3%	75,450	77%
		Ministry of Communications	2	2%	800	1%
		Army	1	1%	100	0%
	Local	Provincial	8	9%	6,700	7%
		Municipal	5	5%	7,058	7%
		Party	2	2%	90	0%
		Educational	7	8%	345	0%
	Subtotal		28	30%	90,543	92%
Private	Shanghai	Chinese commercial	34	37%	1,963	2%
		Foreign commercial	5	6%	1,130	1%
	Ex Shanghai	Chinese commercial	25	27%	4,479	5%
	Subtotal		64	70%	7,572	8%
	Total		92	100%	98,115	100%

Source: Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*; Wu, 'Shi nian lai de Zhongguo guangbo shiye', 715; Table format from Li, 'Biao 1-7' (表 1-7) [Table 1.7] in *Guangbo xiandaixing liubian*, 65.

The CC Clique also sought to consolidate control over party-state broadcasting stations. On top of the public-private hybrid industry that had developed since 1923, Nationalist Radio had inherited a patchwork of state-owned and party-run stations. For example, three central-level organisations operated six stations, and the other twenty-two public stations were run by different organisations at various levels of the party state. The Supervisory Committee therefore wanted to develop regional party-state stations in key locations at the provincial and municipal levels to counterbalance the cluster of private broadcasters in Shanghai.<sup>60</sup> Wu Baofeng regarded the organisation of these public stations into a 'spiderweb-like' network was essential to national defence because it would:

enable instant access to the same information nationwide that would not lose its accuracy while transmitting from place to place, making a strong rampart against the machinations of counter-propaganda, and let the sound waves of our nation go deeply into the eardrums of our people so that the false words of foreign countries have no way to mix in.<sup>61</sup>

The CC Clique therefore planned to establish a broadcasting network to raise the radio ramparts and counter Japanese and Soviet broadcast propaganda on the fourth front.

<sup>60</sup> Chen, 'Zhuxi baogao', in *Diyici huiyi jilu*, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A.

<sup>61</sup> Wu, 'Wo guo guangbo shiye', 2.

### *The Central Shortwave Station*

In January 1936, Chen Guofu had lobbied for one year to build an international shortwave station that would strengthen China's radio ramparts against Japanese and Soviet broadcast propaganda. He had first lobbied for a twenty-kilowatt station in January 1935, but the presidium shelved the plan after a multi-departmental review owing to insufficient funds.<sup>62</sup> However, the review committee did allow Chen to invite tenders in order to gather information. Nationalist Radio therefore entered into talks with foreign manufacturers to identify a vendor while trying to find a way to finance the project. In May, an outside panel of wireless experts selected British Marconi as the ideal candidate after the first round, and Nationalist Radio asked the top three vendors to revise their bids for a second round of negotiations.<sup>63</sup> In the meantime, Chen cut operational costs to save as much as possible from Nationalist Radio's monthly budget allocation of 40,000 yuan and monthly advertising revenue of about 5,000 yuan, and he applied those savings towards the shortwave project. On 23 December 1935, Chen presented a revised proposal to the presidium for an even more powerful shortwave station, and he proposed that Nationalist Radio contribute 300,000 yuan towards its cost.<sup>64</sup>

Chen's revised proposal addressed how a powerful shortwave station would fortify China's radio ramparts both at home and abroad in anticipation of potential objections within the presidium about funding both a shortwave and medium-wave central station. He argued that shortwave technology was needed to improve China's presence abroad because it would provide better reception than the existing Central Station, whose medium-wave signal had caused overseas listeners to complain. He then pointed out the different applications of radio waves in Europe and America, explaining that nations were using shortwave for international diplomacy and propaganda while medium-wave was used primarily for domestic broadcasting.

The remainder of Chen's presentation was reserved for his most persuasive argument: shortwave radio was better in the event of an invasion. He first highlighted that shortwave equipment was smaller, lighter, and more mobile than medium-wave technology, making it easier to move to safer locations deep in the interior. Second, shortwave stations were easier to hide in bunkers, owing to their size, and antennae could be installed farther away to prevent detection. Third, recent innovations in shortwave technology enabled it to connect to medium-wave stations, thus allowing for the cost-effective establishment of a national network. This

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<sup>62</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 21; Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 64.

<sup>64</sup> 'Choujian duanbo guangbo diantai', KMT Archives, Hui, 5.3/3.43.

development enable audiences with crystal radios to listen to Nationalist Radio programming on local stations via relay broadcast, which they otherwise would be unable to receive. In other words, shortwave technology would improve reception abroad, provide flexibility in wartime, connect a national network, and expand the reach of party-state broadcast propaganda.<sup>65</sup> The presidium therefore approved Chen's plan.

Nationalist Radio resumed negotiations on the shortwave project in February 1936, inviting Telefunken and Marconi to compete against one another in a final bid. According to Wu Daoyi, they asked Telefunken to reduce its price and Marconi to increase its power in order to secure the best deal. In the end, Marconi won the bid. On 16 February, the administration purchased a thirty-five-kilowatt transmitter, directional antennae, and other equipment for £43,600. To sweeten the deal, Marconi also covered the travel and living costs for five station engineers so that they could observe the building of the shortwave station in Great Britain.<sup>66</sup>

The final step was to select a safe site for the international shortwave station. Nationalist Radio considered three cities—Nanjing, Changsha, and Chongqing—and selected Chongqing in April 1936. However, communication between Chen Guofu and Chiang Kai-shek indicates that the Nationalists waited until the last moment to confirm the location. In fact, it appears that Nationalist Radio reconsidered the station site after April 1936 and chose Changsha instead. On 19 April 1937, Chen asked Chiang for a final decision because British Marconi needed a shipping address for the station equipment. Chiang settled the matter by choosing Chongqing.<sup>67</sup> During the Second Sino-Japanese War, the shortwave station became China's most important radio rampart because it connected a reconstituted broadcasting network in the interior, reached Chinese listeners in occupied areas, and directed multilingual broadcasts to Europe and America, as Shu Gewei has pointed out in her study on China's propaganda against Japan.<sup>68</sup> In short, the shortwave station accomplished what Chen had set out for it before the war.<sup>69</sup>

### *Guiding Network Growth*

Nationalist Radio set out to grow the national network just after the creation of the Supervisory Committee and Broadcasting Administration in January 1936. Using a two pronged approach, the committee promoted policies to subdue private radio while expanding

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<sup>65</sup> 'Choujian duanbo guangbo diantai', KMT Archives, *Hui*, 5.3/3.43.

<sup>66</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 64.

<sup>67</sup> Chen Guofu deng dian Jiang Zhongzheng 陳果夫等電蔣中正 [Chen Guofu et al. telegram to Chiang Kai-shek], 21 April 1937, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000001870A.

<sup>68</sup> Wei, *News under Fire*, 229–33.

<sup>69</sup> Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 89.

public broadcasting. In January, the Ministry of Communications froze the power levels of private stations, citing a need to prevent interference after recent power increases.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime, the Supervisory Committee encouraged public stations to increase their power to expand coverage and improve reception, which accelerated a trend that had begun in 1935 when Radio Zhejiang doubled its power and Radio Guangzhou purchased a fifty-kilowatt station to replace its old one-kilowatt facility.<sup>71</sup> The strategy to subdue private radio and expand public broadcasting was most noticeable in Shanghai. In March, the municipality officially launched Shanghai City Radio after the National Games. The Ministry of Communications then quadrupled Radio Shanghai's power to two-kilowatts in April, making it the most powerful station in the city.<sup>72</sup> Nationalist Radio thus restricted Shanghai private radio while expanding the power of public broadcasting.

Nationalist Radio also helped governments in other regions establish public stations. The model for this effort was Radio Hankou in the tri-city region of Wuhan, where Chiang Kai-shek established the Army Reorganisation Bureau under General Chen Cheng to train new divisions for the National Defence Army.<sup>73</sup> Centred in the middle reaches of the Yangtze, where Chiang planned to stage a flexible defence against Japan,<sup>74</sup> Nationalist Radio launched Radio Hankou in February 1935. The CC clique equipped the station with a state-of-the-art Westinghouse five-kilowatt transmitter, making it the second most powerful station in China.<sup>75</sup> Radio Hankou exemplified the close connection between broadcasting, mass mobilisation, and national defence that had evolved since the fifth Communist extermination campaign in Jiangxi. In Hankou, the Broadcasting Administration produced educational and entertaining broadcast propaganda to complement General Chen's strategy to build 'an organisation admired for its spiritual and ideological qualities'.<sup>76</sup> The subsequent expansion of public broadcasting in 1936 and 1937 would follow Radio Hankou as a model.

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<sup>70</sup> 'Ge guangbo diantai dianli kuochong zhi xianzhi' 各廣播電台電力擴充之限制, *ZGZX*, no. 1 (January 1936): 104; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*.

<sup>71</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo diantai gouzhi qicai hetong' 中央廣播電台購置器材合同 [Agreement for Purchase and Installation of a 50-kilowatt Medium Wave Broadcasting Equipment], Guoshiguan [Nationalist Government Collection], 001000006921A; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 674, 832.

<sup>72</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 399; 'Kuochong Shanghai guangbo diantai zhi chouhua' 擴充上海廣播電台之籌劃, *ZGZX*, no. 4 (April 1936): 106.

<sup>73</sup> van de Ven, *War and Nationalism*, 160–61.

<sup>74</sup> van de Ven, 158.

<sup>75</sup> *Wuhan zhi: Xinwen Zhi* 武漢志:新聞志, comp. Wuhan difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 武漢地方志編纂委員會 (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 1991), 244. The Military Affairs Commission established the bureau under Chen in March 1934, see van de Ven, *War and Nationalism*, 159–60. XGOW began construction in May 1934, was completed in October, and opened in February 1935.

<sup>76</sup> *Wuhan zhi*, 251; van de Ven, *War and Nationalism*, 150–156, 162.

The Supervisory Committee continued the expansion of public broadcasting in 1936. In April, Radio Jiangsu increased the power of its facility in Zhenjiang tenfold to one kilowatt in April 1936 and built a branch station in Huaiyin (Huai'an) to improve reception in the north, and the Ministry of Communications increased the power of Radio Peking to one kilowatt.<sup>77</sup> In August, the Broadcasting Administration opened Radio Xi'an in the northwest, and the Ministry of Communications launched Radio Chengdu in September. With a ten-kilowatt transmitter, Radio Chengdu surpassed Radio Hankou to become China's second largest station. In October, Chen asked Chiang Kai-shek to release £30,000 for the purchase of the new station equipment for Radio Guangzhou so that it could be moved to Kunming; however, Chiang denied Chen's request because the finance ministry claimed that no funds were available.<sup>78</sup> Finally, Hunan Province doubled the power of Radio Changsha to one kilowatt at year's end.<sup>79</sup> The expansion of public radio in 1936 went hand in hand with the National Resources Commission's expansion of infrastructure in the interior to power China's defence industries.<sup>80</sup> In fact, the two organisations began working together on the Central Radio Manufacturing Works in 1936, which the Supervisory Committee established in Changsha in April 1937.<sup>81</sup>

Nationalist Radio further accelerated the network expansion after the Xi'an Incident. In April 1937, Radio Jiangxi increased power tenfold to five-kilowatts. In May, the Broadcasting Administration launched Radio Changsha with a self-built ten-kilowatt transmitter and seventy-one-metre single-mast antenna.<sup>82</sup> The self-built transmitter was a milestone because it was designed and built by Nationalist Radio engineers; moreover, except for its valves, all components were made in China. Furthermore, Central Station engineers were already building two more ten-kilowatt transmitters to install elsewhere.<sup>83</sup> One such place was Guangxi, where provincial officials established a preparatory committee to build a ten-kilowatt station in Guilin.<sup>84</sup> In June 1937, Chen Guofu's persistence to purchase the fifty kilowatt station

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<sup>77</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 667; Wu, 'Shi nian lai de Zhongguo guangbo shiye', 711; 'Guanyu guangbo diantai zhi gaijin zhongzhong' 關於廣播電台之改進種種, *Shenbao*, 16 July 1936, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Chen Guofu deng dian Jiang Zhongzheng 陳果夫等電蔣中正 [Chen Guofu et al. telegram to Chiang Kai-shek], 31 October 1936, Guoshiguan [CKS Collection], 002000001867A.

<sup>79</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 826–27.

<sup>80</sup> Tan, *Recharging China*, 62.

<sup>81</sup> 'Choujian shouyinji zhizaochang jihuashu' 籌建收音機製造廠計劃書 [Radio factory construction plan], 7 June 1936, in Disanci huiyi jilu 第三次會議紀錄 [Third meeting record], CBSB, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A; 'Zhongyang wuxiandian qicai gongsi', Guoshiguan, 003000007472A.

<sup>82</sup> Wu, 'Zhongguo guangbo shiye', 706, 714.

<sup>83</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Zhongguang dashiji*, 26–27; Wang Sanwei 王三畏, 'Changsha guangbo diantai zhuangzhi yaoshu' 長沙廣播電台裝置述要, *Wuxiandian* 4, April 1937, 113.

<sup>84</sup> Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxiu difangzhi*, 876.

in Guangzhou paid off when the presidium agreed to underwrite the cost and move the station to Kunming. In February 1938 after the Japanese invasion, the Broadcasting Administration met the American manufacturer's representatives in Hankou, where the parties signed a transfer agreement and arranged to transport the station equipment to Kunming.<sup>85</sup>

Before the war, the final addition to the party-state network occurred on 17 June 1937. In a secret petition, Nationalist Radio sought immediate approval to upgrade the Central Station:

Global broadcasting has advanced by leaps and bounds and is already regarded as a weapon of national defence. The present electrical power of the Central Broadcasting Station is inadequate to withstand the suppression of enemy sound waves. Please quickly allocate a large sum to expand electrical power to 300 kilowatts as soon as possible in order to strengthen our nation's broadcasting ramparts.<sup>86</sup>

Broadcasting Administration monitors had learned that Japan intended 'to incite the Chinese people and stir up confusion in international public opinion to satisfy its ambition to invade', which raised concern that 'the entire territory of our nation will fall ill under the shroud of an adverse reactionary atmosphere, affecting public trust, and the severity of the misfortune will be too great quantify'.<sup>87</sup> The administration therefore asked the presidium to upgrade the Central Station to at least 300 kilowatts so that it would be twice the size of the 150-kilowatt stations being built in Tokyo, Osaka and Kyushu, and three times larger than the Japanese station in Hsinking.<sup>88</sup> The fear was that Japan would soon be able to jam the Central Station and prevent reception in North China, Manchuria, and abroad. The petition presented a Telefunken quotation with two options to upgrade the Central Station to prevent 'another on-air invasion': the first option would cost 1,100,000 yuan to upgrade the existing facility, and the second option would cost 2,000,000 yuan to build a new station in a safer location.<sup>89</sup> The presidium chose the latter option and approved the appropriation immediately. Nationalist Radio then began planning to move the seventy-five-kilowatt station to Northwest China to reinforce the broadcasting ramparts further inland and ensure coverage to North China.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 81; 'Gouzhi qicai hetong', Guoshiguan, 001000006921A.

<sup>86</sup> 'Zhongyang guangbo shiye chu micheng' 中央廣播事業處密呈, 17 June 1937, in *Zhongguo Guomindang diwuji Zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui huiyi jilu huibian* 中國國民黨第五屆中央執行委員會常務委員會會議紀錄彙編, 'Di sishiliu ci huiyi' 第四十六次會議, comp. Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu 中央委員會秘書處 (n.p.: Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu, n.d.), 154.

<sup>87</sup> 'Qing xunbo jukuan', KMT Archives, Hui, 5.3/4.26.

<sup>88</sup> Diwuci huiyi jilu 第五次會議紀錄 [Fifth meeting record], 13 May 1937, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001823A.

<sup>89</sup> 'Qing xunbo jukuan congsu kuochong Zhongyang guangbo diantai dianli an' 請迅撥鉅款從速擴充中央廣播電台電力案 [File requesting the quick allocation of a large sum to expand Central Broadcasting Station power without delay], 7 June 1937, KMT Archives, Hui 會 [Meeting records], 5.3/4.26.

<sup>90</sup> 'Micheng', 154; Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 90–91.

## The National Broadcasting Network

The Broadcasting Administration released the National Broadcasting Network Plan (全國廣播網計畫) to the public in April 1937.<sup>91</sup> In the magazine *Radio*, Wu Baofeng presented the network plan that the Supervisory Committee had ‘introduced step by step’ since its first meeting on 20 February 1936.<sup>92</sup> The plan was a prime example of practical engineering: its design was scalable on a per-unit basis, much like a set of building blocks, so that the CC Clique could adjust for financial and manpower constraints over time and expand the network piece by piece.<sup>93</sup> This final section introduces the design of the network and analyses its structure, costs, and funding to show how the mechanics of the plan worked as the Broadcasting Administration carried out the radio nationalisation of the industry.

### *The Network Structure*

On 13 May 1937, the Supervisory Committee approved the National Broadcasting Network Plan. The plan divided China into nine regions, covered by four tiers of radio stations at the central, regional, provincial, and local levels. At the central level, the administration would operate one medium- and one short-wave station that covered the entire country. The administration also would operate one medium- and one short-wave station in nine cities at the regional level. Thus, Nationalist Radio would control the largest twenty stations in the country to ensure overlapping coverage at the top two layers of the system. At the provincial level, there would be between two and six stations, which would be operated by provincial and municipal governments. Finally, there also would be between ten and fifteen stations at the local level, except for Shanghai, which would be allowed to have as many as twenty-five stations. At the local level, towns, counties, and private citizens could also operate a station. Hence, the network could have between 128 and 219 broadcasting stations, depending on the number of provincial and local stations in each region (see table 8).<sup>94</sup> In addition, the network plan also provided for the installation of at least one outdoor loudspeaker in 2,000 county towns to broadcast network content in public spaces throughout the day.<sup>95</sup>

Nationalist Radio planned to connect the network using chain broadcasting, which was a technique that national networks in the United States, Britain, and Germany used to relay

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<sup>91</sup> Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 89–98.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Fenpei banfa’ 分配辦法 [Distribution method], 20 February 1936, in *Diyici huiyi jilu* 第一次會議紀錄 [First meeting record], CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A; Laura De Giorgi, ‘Communication Technology’, 317.

<sup>93</sup> Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 96.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Fenpei banfa’, in *Diyici huiyi jilu*, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

<sup>95</sup> Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 95–97.

programmes in their own broadcasting systems. Unlike in Europe and America, though, Nationalist Radio would use shortwave radio and diversity reception to relay programming instead of using underground cables and telephone lines, owing to the high cost required to wire the network. According to Wu Baofeng, this method was superior to medium-wave relays and less expensive than a wired-to-wireless system, which was only feasible between Nanjing and Shanghai. Thus, the Central Station and the nine regional stations would transmit content using shortwave directional antennae, and they would receive the content from each other with at least two antennae spaced several hundred metres apart. The receiving station would then blend the shortwave signals together to eliminate fading and interference and then convert the blended signal into a medium-wave frequency for local rebroadcast. In this way, listeners with crystal radios could receive network content via a small local station.<sup>96</sup>

Table 8: Station Distribution for Minimum and Maximum Number of Stations per Level

Network Plan - Minimum			
Network Levels	Medium-wave Stations	Shortwave Stations	Subtotal by Level
Central	1	1	2
Regional	9	9	18
Provincial	18	0	18
Local	90	0	90
Total Stations - Minimum			128
Network Plan - Maximum			
Network Levels	Medium-wave Stations	Shortwave Stations	Subtotal by Level
Central	1	1	2
Regional	9	9	18
Provincial	54	0	54
Local	145	0	145
Total Stations - Maximum			219

Source: 'Fenpei banfa', in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

The network design would facilitate administration, improve programming, and protect system integrity. The regional structure was based on the Ministry of Communications' administrative divisions to facilitate radio registration and the collection of listeners' license fees at local telegraph bureaux and post offices.<sup>97</sup> It also would enable the Broadcasting Administration to decentralise network operations in nine regional centres with staff who

<sup>96</sup> Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 91–94.

<sup>97</sup> 'Fenpei banfa', in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.



understood the local dialect and culture and therefore could better monitor station operations, provide technical advice, and produce content to accommodate local tastes, which would alleviate pressure on the central administration in the capital.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, this regional set-up would enable a rapid expansion of the audience since most local stations would operate in poor and remote areas without electricity, where listeners would use crystal radios costing only a few yuan that did not need batteries.<sup>99</sup> The network thus was designed to enrich the listening experience, especially in the interior, so that a listener in Zunyi, Guizhou with no electricity could listen to radio plays from Nanjing, regional storytelling from Chengdu, and provincial news from Guiyang, all by tuning in to a local station using a crystal radio with headphones.

Table 9: National Broadcasting Network, Regional Centres, and Regions by Province

No.	Regional Centre	Region
1	Shanghai	Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Shanghai
2	Peking or Tianjin	Shandong, Hebei, Chahar, Jehol, the Northeast
3	Taiyuan	Shanxi, Shaanxi, Suiyuan, Mongolia
4	Hankou	Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Henan
5	Lanzhou	Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai
6	Guangzhou	Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian
7	Chengdu	Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou
8	Dihua	Xinjiang
9	Lhasa	Xikang, Tibet

Source: 'Fenpei banfa', in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A; Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 91–96.

The network design also would enable Nationalist Radio to fortify the broadcasting ramparts and mobilise a spiritual national defence. First, the four overlapping layers in the network design would hinder enemy jamming, owing to the use of directional antennae to send separate shortwave signals between the central and regional levels. Second, the network design would enable the Nationalists to distribute frequencies evenly across the radio spectrum and thereby prevent foreign broadcasters from breaching gaps in the system.<sup>100</sup> Third, the design allowed the Nationalists to transfer operations to any the nine regional centres in case the central shortwave and medium-wave stations fell to the enemy. Fourth, the regional design also would enable the Nationalists to quickly expand the National Broadcasting Network. Moreover,

<sup>98</sup> Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 91–92.

<sup>99</sup> 'Fenpei banfa', in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

<sup>100</sup> 'Quanguo guangbo diantai zhoulu ying zhao xialie guiding tuo wei fenpei' 全國廣播電台週率應照下列規定妥為分配 [Broadcasting station frequencies nationwide shall be properly allocated according to the following rule], 13 May 1937, in Diwuci huiyi jilu 第五次會議紀錄 [Fifth meeting record], CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001823A.

the party state already had or was already building core stations in the network. Apart from the existing shortwave and medium-wave station at the central level, six of the nine regional centres already had a public broadcasting station. In addition, four regions already had the minimum number of two provincial-level stations, and a fifth region already had one provincial-level station.<sup>101</sup> Thus, Nationalist Radio was already prepared to roll out the national network in mid-1937.<sup>102</sup>

### *The Network Cost*

Wu Baofeng knew that the national network needed to be both robust and cost-effective. He therefore presented an itemised budget with a breakdown of set-up and operational costs per station at each level of the network. According to Wu, the total set-up cost for a 128-station network would have been 6,872,000 yuan (see table 10). However, the CC Clique never intended to complete the entire network at one time. Given the scalable design of the plan and the fact that costs would be borne by different parties, it is necessary to analyse per-unit set-up costs by stakeholder. For example, the Broadcasting Administration would have needed 140,000 yuan to build one regional centre with one shortwave station (20,000 yuan) and one medium-wave station (120,000 yuan); hence, the total set-up cost for nine regional centres would have been 1,260,000 yuan. For a provincial-level station, a province or municipal government would have needed 20,000 yuan. At the local level, a town, county or private owner would have needed 5,000 yuan to set up a station. Finally, the set-up cost for one county town to install at least one loudspeaker in a public space would have been 700 to 900 yuan.

Table 10: Network Set-up Cost in Yuan, 128-station Network

Network Set-up Cost—128-station Network					
Category	Operator	Unit(s)	Power	Cost per Unit	Subtotal
Central Station	Centre	1	300 kW	2,000,000	2,000,000
Central Shortwave Station	Centre	1	35 kW	1,270,000	1,270,000
Regional Station	Centre	9	10 kW	120,000	1,080,000
Regional Shortwave Station	Centre	9	1 kW	20,000	180,000
Provincial Station	Centre, Province, City	18	500 W–1 kW	20,000	360,000
Local Station	Public or Private	90	100–250 W	5,000	450,000
Big Radio Loudspeakers	County	660	20 W	900	594,000
Small Radio Loudspeakers	County	1,340	10 W	700	938,000
Total					6,872,000

Source: ‘Fenpei banfa’, in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A; Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 95–96.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Fenpei banfa’, in Diyici huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A; Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 91–93; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 160, 371, 385–86, 549–51, 665, 674, 697, 715, 752–53, 791–92, 805, 826–27, 831–33, 859–61, 933, 1142.

<sup>102</sup> The network was not ‘just delegated to the future’, contra De Giorgi, ‘Communication Technology’, 317.

Although most governments could afford the set-up costs for one station or one public loudspeaker, the challenge was how to cover outlays for electricity, salaries, replacement valves, and operations. According to Wu Baofeng, the total operating cost of a 128-station network would have been 693,640 yuan per month, or 8,323,680 yuan per year (see table 11). By stakeholder, Nationalist Radio would have needed 7,350 yuan per month to cover operating expenses for one region, a province or municipality would have needed 2,500 yuan per month, and a local station would have needed 1,000 yuan per month. In addition, a county town would have needed 200 yuan per month to power at least one public loudspeaker every day.<sup>103</sup> Given the financial constraints of cash-strapped local governments, how to fund operations was the most important aspect of the network plan.

Table 11: Regular Expenses per Month and Year in Yuan, 128-station Network

Operating Costs—128-station Network									
Station Details				Cost in Yuan per Month					
Category	Operator	Units	Power	Electricity	Valve Use	Operations	Salaries	Unit Subtotal per Month	Category Total per Month
Central Station	Centre	1	500 kW	13,000	25,000	10,000	8,000	56,000	56,000
Central Shortwave Station	Centre	1	35 kW	4,500	8,640	5,000	3,350	21,490	21,490
Regional Station	Centre	9	10 kW	1,000	1,250	1,000	1,600	4,850	43,650
Regional Shortwave Station	Centre	9	1 kW	400	400	600	1,100	2,500	22,500
Provincial Station	Province or Centre	18	1 kW	300	400	600	1,200	2,500	45,000
Local Station	Public or Private	105	50–250 W	100				1,000	105,000
Radio Loudspeakers	County	2,000	10–20 W					200	400,000
Subtotal per Month									693,640
Total per Year									8,323,680

Source: ‘Fenpei banfa’, in *Diyici huiyi jilu*, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A; Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 96.

### *Funding the Network*

Chen Guofu addressed how to fund the network plan at the Supervisory Committee’s first meeting on 20 February 1936.<sup>104</sup> The committee agreed that listeners’ license fees should underwrite the cost of the network, so it assigned a working group to draft a plan. At the next meeting on 19 March, the committee approved the basics of the plan, which the Supervisory Committee adopted together with the network plan on 13 May 1937.<sup>105</sup> The Supervisory Committee therefore would rely on budget allocations and listeners’ license fees from urban radio owners to fund the operations of the National Broadcasting Network.

<sup>103</sup> Wu, ‘Guangbowang jihua’, 96.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Guanli quanguo shouyinji ji tingzhong yingfou nafei an’ 管理全國收音機及聽眾應否納費案 [Proposal on the management of radio receivers nationwide and whether or not listeners shall pay a fee], 20 February 1936, in *Diyici huiyi jilu* 第一次會議紀錄 [First meeting record], 20 February 1936, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Guanli quanguo shouyinji’, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A.

Under the licensing scheme, valve-radio owners would pay two yuan each quarter, while crystal-set owners would be exempt for a time in order to promote the diffusion of radio. The Broadcasting Administration would receive 80 percent of the license fee for network development, while the Ministry of Communications would receive 20 percent as an administration fee. The Broadcasting Administration would use its allocation to build new stations and upgrade existing facilities (50 percent), reward good station management (25 percent), fund radio research (12.5 percent), and purchase and install loudspeakers (12.5 percent).<sup>106</sup> At the same time, the Supervisory Committee requested the Executive Yuan to order local governments to allocate funds from their national reconstruction budgets to underwrite loudspeaker costs and radio-operator salaries in the 1937 fiscal year.<sup>107</sup>

The audience seems to have reached a sufficient size to support listener-funded broadcasting by 1937. According to Wu Baofeng, China had nearly one-million radio receivers in September 1936, although this estimate is most likely an undercount.<sup>108</sup> Listeners still wanted radios made with imported parts, and local factories, workshops, and radio enthusiasts continued to assemble receivers with imported components.<sup>109</sup> According to Maritime Customs, China imported 3,459,397 CGU in radio sets and parts and 22,303 completed units in 1936 and 1937.<sup>110</sup> The growth of radio ownership during this period thus continued apace as more people bought radios to tune in. Based on 20 CGU per unit and ten listeners per radio, China added an estimated 195,273 units, including completed imports, and more than 1,950,000 listeners in 1936 and 1937. Radio had developed a mass audience and the market was mature enough to collect listeners' license fees.

The final element of the listener's licensing scheme was its enforcement mechanism. Like other public broadcasting systems, the Supervisory Committee assigned the Ministry of Communications to handle radio registration and fee collection in the ministry's local offices. The Nationalists had not really bothered with radio registration until local governments began opening public stations in such cities as Shanghai, Chengdu, and Hangzhou.<sup>111</sup> In Shanghai,

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<sup>106</sup> 'Zhengshou quanguo shouyinji zhizhaofei ji qi fenpei bili' 徵收全國收音機執照費及其分配比例 [Collection of national radio licensing fees and their distribution ratio], in Diwuci huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001823A.

<sup>107</sup> Diwuci huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

<sup>108</sup> Wu, 'Wo guo guangbo shiye', 3.

<sup>109</sup> Jiang, *Shouyinji zai Shanghai*, 26–28; Zhao, *Guangbo dianshi tushi*, 9; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 27 June 1936, 60–61; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 4 July 1936, 56.

<sup>110</sup> *The Trade of China, 1937*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1938), 255–56.

<sup>111</sup> 'Shouyinji shu tongji' 收音機數統計, *Zhejiang jingji qingbao* 浙江經濟情報, vol. 1, no. 7 (11 December 1936): 5; 'Guangbo wuxiandian shouyinji dengji shengqingshu' 廣播無線電收音機登記聲請書. *Sichuan sheng*

for instance, the ministry required radio registration only after Radio Shanghai opened in 1935, and about 70,000 households registered radios at that time. However, the ministry estimated that there were still 30,000 unregistered sets in the city.<sup>112</sup> The local telegraph bureau did not enforce registration at that time because the party-state had not yet begun to collect a listener's licence fee. Nevertheless, the ministry's local bureau already had a plan to provide financial incentives to local inspectors, radiogram deliverers, and postmen who reported unregistered radios on their routes, which were easy to spot owing to the large antennae needed for reception.<sup>113</sup> The ministry was therefore poised to mobilise personnel nationwide to exact fines and collect fees when the time came. In Shanghai, the ministry's local bureau estimated that it would take about one month to register and fine unlicensed radio owners.<sup>114</sup> The Supervisory Committee was thus poised to launch radio registration to fund the network.

## Conclusion

The CC Clique transformed Nationalist Radio into a cultural enterprise in 1936 to consolidate party-state control over creative industries and mobilise culture and the arts to promote a mythic narrative of the nation using the principles of cultural construction. This chapter traced the transition of Nationalist Radio from a broadcasting station into a policy-making and regulatory administration for the entire industry. It also showed that radio became the centrepiece of the newly established cultural enterprise system because it subsumed the work product of multiple creative enterprises. Moreover, this chapter demonstrated why the CC Clique expanded party-state broadcasting and developed a network plan: radio was an important part of war planning so the party state considered it an essential weapon in China's arsenal of spiritual national defence. The CC Clique in fact likened radio to a system of ramparts that were central to promoting national consciousness within China, and it planned to use radio as a weapon on the fourth front to counter foreign propaganda and mobilise the nation.

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*zhengfu gongbao* 四川省政府公報 [Sichuan provincial government gazette], no. 53 (11 August 1936): 36–37; *The Trade of China, 1936*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1937), 255–57; The Customs Service began a separate classification for completed radio sets in 1937, see A. Viola Smith, 'Radio Developments in China', 5–6, Records Relating to Commercial Attaches' Reports, China (Peiping), 1937, Box 117, Entry 14, Box 125, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

<sup>112</sup> 'Jiaobu yu liang nian lai', 7; 'Wo guo shouyinji jinkou gaikuang', 144–45

<sup>113</sup> 'Dianxinju lixing shouyinji dengji' 電信局厲行收音機登記, *Yule*, 10 September 1935, 9.

<sup>114</sup> 'Dianxinju lixing shouyinji dengji', 9.

## CHAPTER 6: THE SPIRIT OF THE INDUSTRY

The most ideal broadcasting programme blends entertainment and education into one. In other words, we have education in entertainment and entertainment in education.<sup>1</sup>

—Fan Benzong, Broadcast Section Chief, Central Station

### Introduction

This final chapter will show how Nationalist Radio consolidated regulatory control over private broadcasting to pave the way for a national network that was modelled on the Central Station. As the CC Clique expanded and upgraded network infrastructure to reinforce the radio ramparts in 1936, it also introduced centralised programming and regulatory measures to integrate local stations into the national network and consolidate control over the industry's finished product: broadcast content.

Between January 1936 and April 1937, Nationalist Radio rolled out regulations to govern station airtime, content, and operations in a gradual three-step process. The first step was the nationalisation of airtime, which occurred in April 1936 when Nationalist Radio required local stations of 100 watts or more to relay a prime-time programme six days a week. The second step was the nationalisation of content that began in July when Nationalist Radio ordered local stations to submit programme transcripts for review before broadcast and monitored the airwaves to monitor compliance. The third step was the nationalisation of operations, which began in January 1937. In this phase, Nationalist Radio cracked down on private broadcasting in Shanghai to standardise private station operations. The culmination of this process was the nationalisation of the industry. On 25 March 1937, the Nationalist presidium passed a resolution to make Chinese broadcasting a party-state affair. The CC Clique thus realised its vision to establish a party-state broadcasting network. However, it still had to address one issue: what would be the spirit of the industry?

Although the CC Clique had already determined that the principles of cultural construction would guide the production of creative content, it still needed a spokesperson who could animate its principles—i.e., Sunism, New Life, Chinese tradition, and Western learning—and integrate them into broadcast propaganda to raise the national consciousness. This person was Fan Benzong. Fan was a radio engineer turned broadcast section chief, whose patriotism had prompted him to become a vegetarian after the Manchurian Incident, and whose

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<sup>1</sup> Fan, 'Boyin jiaoyu', 1429.

creativity derived from an intense interest in esoteric Chinese culture, philosophy, and religion. In two seminal essays, Fan defined the core mission and target audience of the national broadcasting network: it was to educate the average person.

Borrowing from mystic dualism in yin-yang philosophy, Fan provided content producers at local stations with a conceptual framework on how to make broadcast programming. He told them to produce entertainment that was educational and educational content that was entertaining, arguing that they should strive to blur the lines between the two.<sup>2</sup> In other words, he advocated the aestheticisation of edutainment for an audience that was primarily illiterate or semi-literate and that would listen to radio in a state of distraction. Fan thereby defined the spirit of the industry: it lay in the education of the average person—not only in terms of book learning but also in relation to life skills and civic awareness. To Fan and the conservative revolutionaries in the CC Clique, all three were important to the party state. Academic knowledge, skills training, and ideological indoctrination were essential to the cultivation of the individual, economic modernisation, and national rejuvenation.

The Nationalists therefore established the National Broadcasting Network in the name of radio education in March 1937. To this end, Nationalist Radio established an ‘Open School’ (空中学校) to promote radio education to all ages and broadcast programming over public loudspeakers nationwide. At this time, the Supervisory Committee also imported an electronics factory from the United States to produce valve radios and loudspeakers to popularise broadcasting and inculcate the mythic narrative of the Chinese nation in the audience through cultural construction. The goal was for the average listener to learn a thing or two as he or she listened to edutainment on the radio every day while in a state of distraction, and thereby through accretion strengthen the spiritual national defence. However, the CC Clique first needed to subordinate private broadcasting to the party-state network.

### **Nationalisation of Airtime**

The consolidation of the industry began with the nationalisation of airtime in April 1936. On 27 March, the Broadcasting Administration petitioned the party presidium to approve the relay of a central programme via all public and private radio stations nationwide. Except for Sunday, the central programme would broadcast from 8.00 to 9.05 p.m. beginning 20 April ‘to raise societal general knowledge in peacetime or propagate the will of the Centre and unify

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<sup>2</sup> Fan, ‘Boyin jiaoyu’, 1429.

national consciousness during an emergency’.<sup>3</sup> To appropriate the airtime of local stations, Nationalist Radio cited a precedent from 1933 that required local stations to relay *Central Memorial Week* and *Important News*, which did not broadcast during prime time. However, the central programme at 8.00 p.m. would occupy the most valuable commercial airtime in a much larger radio market. On 13 April, the Executive Yuan ordered public stations to relay the central programme and issued a separate order to the Ministry of Communications to notify private broadcasters. If a station could not relay the central programme for technical reasons, it was to go off-air between 8.00 and 9.05 p.m.

### *The Central Programme Relay*

The central programme featured a potpourri of Nationalist Radio programming. From Monday to Friday, the central programme began with a time signal followed by four segments that featured news, information, education, and entertainment. On Saturday, Nationalist Radio would alternate the broadcast of a one-hour live concert or radio play. At 8.00 p.m., a time signal sounded so that listeners across China’s five time zones could adjust their clocks. The Central Station introduced a new time signal with the soothing strums of a Chinese zither, followed by a rendition of a traditional saying from a popular children’s primer, *Expanded Sagacious Proverbs* (增廣賢文):

A bit of time, a nub of gold  
A bit of time, a nub of gold  
A nub of gold cannot buy a bit of time  
A nub of gold cannot buy a bit of time  
A bit of time, a nub of gold  
A nub of gold cannot buy a bit of time.<sup>4</sup>

Cloaked in the trappings of traditional pentatonic verse, the time-signal’s music, ‘Treasure Time Song’ (惜陰歌), repurposed tradition to promote economic modernity, i.e., the efficient use of time, which Maggie Clinton argues was a hallmark of CC Clique conservative nationalism.<sup>5</sup> The new time signal also was an example of banal nationalism, reminding listeners in an unobtrusive way to follow the New Life prescription to use time well in order to develop one’s potential and contribute to national reconstruction.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Ben chu cheng Zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui qing zhuanhan xingzheng yuan tong lingchi ge di gongsu diantai zhuanbo zhongyang diantai jiemu wen’ 本處呈中央執行委員會請轉函行政院通令飭公私電台轉播中央電台節目文, *GBZB*, 18 April 1936, 51.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Genggai baoshi fangshi’ 更改報時方式, *GBZB*, 19 December 1936, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, 66.

<sup>6</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 1–12.



The central programme news segment was a ten-minute report that recapped the day's headlines and provided a national weather update. The weather update also was an example of banal nationalism wherein the party state delineated the political and geographic scope of the nation. Moreover, the use of the deictic marker 'our nation' (我國) throughout the news segment was a frequent but easy-to-disregard reminder of national identity.<sup>7</sup> Owing to China's internal strife and thorny relationship with Japan, news coverage tended towards conservatism, which annoyed Shanghai listeners, who had access to the latest global news and information. However, the target audience of the central programme news segment was not Shanghainese, but a nationwide audience who did not have access to the latest information. Thus, Nationalist Radio chose accuracy over speed in the selection of news reports. The CC Clique considered the central programme news segment an opportunity to present the party-state perspective, quash rumours, and influence a national audience. This conservative bent consequently contributed to the anodyne nature of the news segment.<sup>8</sup>

The central programme information segment presented a ten-minute current-events commentary. On Monday, the segment discussed international events like the Spanish Civil War, while the segments on Tuesday and Thursday talked about domestic topics, such as home affairs, economics, and bandit suppression. The commentaries presented analyses of issues from the perspective of individual listeners to help them form the 'correct idea' about the topic. On Wednesday, the segment promoted disaster relief with heart-wrenching stories of suffering, which were written to elicit sympathy and compassion for victims and enlist public support for national reconstruction. On Friday, the segment promoted New Life to encourage 'a life in step with the times and circumstances that seeks the rejuvenation of the state and nation'.<sup>9</sup>

The central programme entertainment segment was a fifteen-minute musical interlude between the news and information segments at the top of the hour and the education and entertainment segments in the bottom half of the show. The rationale for having musical entertainment in the middle of the programme was based on global practice as well as traditional conceptions of the proper role of music in Chinese society. First of all, the Nationalist Radio broadcast section wanted the audience to take a mental break after listening to twenty-minutes of news and commentary. Station writers and presenters had discovered that unlike lecture-hall audiences, who could rely on body language, facial expressions, and non-

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<sup>7</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 154–173.

<sup>8</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Da Shanghai Xie Daogong xiansheng guanyu zhuanbo jiemu neirong yongyi zhi shuoming' 答上海謝道功先生關於轉播節目內容用意之說明, *GBZB*, 6 June 1936, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Xie Daoguang', 60–61.

verbal cues to aid understanding, radio audiences needed to concentrate much harder to follow on-air news, commentary, and educational segments, and they became easily fatigued. Nationalist Radio therefore kept the length of lectures, talks, and educational segments shorter than thirty minutes, a threshold which they set based on their research of global radio programmes.<sup>10</sup> Second, the broadcast section placed music in the middle of the central programme to provide a flexible buffer for time shortfalls or overruns at the top or bottom half of the show.<sup>11</sup> Third, broadcast section producers placed the musical interlude in the middle of the programme because they believed that music was an important tool to cultivate moral character and national consciousness. In fact, broadcast section musical selections were guided by a traditional belief in the transformative power of music as set forth in the *Classic of Filial Piety*: ‘nothing is better than music for changing ways and customs’ (移風易俗,莫善於樂).<sup>12</sup> Broadcast section producers therefore took great pains to design the musical interlude because they believed that music was the most effective tool to shape the moral disposition of listeners, and thereby unify the hearts and harmonise the actions of the audience.<sup>13</sup>

Nationalist Radio’s conception of music was influenced by the Confucian thinker Xunzi (荀子), whose ‘Discourse on Music’ had been ‘the prevailing Confucianist view of music’ during the imperial period.<sup>14</sup> Broadcast section producers found inspiration in Xunzi’s analysis of the social, political, and ethical function of music during the political disunity of the Warring States Period. Like Xunzi, they believed that ‘music brings great uniformity to all under heaven and is the key to balance and harmony’ (樂者,天下之大齊也,中和之紀也), which had been the role of music under the system of rites and rituals that had governed behaviour in the imperial past.<sup>15</sup> Rather than wishing to resurrect the music, rites, and rituals of the past, however, Nationalist Radio sought to define a new standard for Chinese music in the modern age.

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<sup>10</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Xie Daoguang’, 61.

<sup>11</sup> Chuanyin ke, 61.

<sup>12</sup> Chuanyin ke, 61; Henry Rosemont, Jr., and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 112. Quotation based on Rosemont and Ames with modifications for the *Broadcast Weekly* text. For original source text, see <https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=416718>.

<sup>13</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Xie Daoguang’, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy: A Systemic Account of Chinese Thought from Its Origins to the Present Day*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 150.

<sup>15</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Xie Daoguang’, 61; Eric L. Hutton, trans., *Xunzi: The Complete Text*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 20.44–45, 219. Translation based on Hutton with modifications for *Broadcast Weekly* text. See *Xunzi* 20/99/7–8. *Xunzi* references cite page, section and line numbers from *A Concordance to the Xunzi* (荀子逐字索引), ed. D.C. Lau, Ho Che Wah and Chen Fong Ching, ICS series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996). They also can be found using the Chinese Text Project website: <http://ctext.org/tools/concordance>.

As the former kings of antiquity had unified the people and brought order under heaven with music from the *Book of Odes* (詩經), programme producers wanted to develop music that cultivated proper moral conduct and national unity. In this pursuit, the ‘Discourse on Music’ informed their musical selections. According to *Xunzi*, the intentions of the people become pure when they listen to ‘proper sounds’ (正聲), i.e., music attuned to the sound of heaven, which enables the formation of ‘compliant *qi*’ (順氣) that fosters harmony between the leader and the led. When combined with the study of the rites, music attuned to the sound of heaven changes the ways and customs of the people and brings peace under heaven. Conversely, listening to ‘wanton sounds’ (姦聲) leads to the formation of ‘perverse *qi*’ (逆氣), which results in chaos.<sup>16</sup> Broadcast section producers therefore played ‘pure music’ (純正音樂) and avoided musical selections with ‘decadent and licentious sounds’ (靡靡之聲) because they wanted to edify the public with ‘tasteful’ (高尚) and ‘beautiful’ (優美) music to cultivate proper moral conduct and national unity.<sup>17</sup>

The philosophy governing music selection, however, shrank the available pool of Chinese music, which the broadcast section supplemented with Western music. Fan Benzong regarded most Chinese music as too lowbrow, vulgar, and base, and he attributed this problem to a wide gap between popular and elite culture in Chinese society. As section chief, Fan found selecting the weekly playlist difficult because he needed to reconcile elite conceptions of music with cacophonous popular songs that featured traditional percussion, strings, and wind ensembles.<sup>18</sup> Fan also thought that contemporary Chinese music lacked diversity because, even though numerous regional styles existed, most songs were variations on the same stories and themes in dialect.<sup>19</sup> Fan therefore balanced Chinese and Western music in the programme schedule, which dovetailed with the principles of cultural construction. Yet, this strategy attracted audience criticism. Some listeners disliked foreign music because it was unfamiliar and they could not understand the lyrics,<sup>20</sup> while other members of the audience wanted to forgo musical entertainment altogether and broadcast patriotic harangues to awaken the people to the dangers facing China.<sup>21</sup> These criticisms resulted in Nationalist Radio playing less musical entertainment than its European and American counterparts:

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<sup>16</sup> Hutton, *Xunzi*, 220.113–133; See *Xunzi* 20/100/4–9.

<sup>17</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Xie Daoguang’, 61–62.

<sup>18</sup> Fan Benzong 范本中, ‘Guangbo shiye zai wenhua shang zhi diwei’ 廣播事業在文化上之地位, *Wuxiandian* 4, June 1937, 195.

<sup>19</sup> Fan, 194–95.

<sup>20</sup> Chuanyin ke, ‘Xie Daoguang’, 60, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Fan, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 195.

Table 12: Music as a Percentage of Broadcast Time by Country, 1935

Country	Music (percent)
China	37.7
America	64.8
Britain	71.0
Germany	60.6
France	51.7
Italy	44.2

Source: Tan Yutian 譚玉田, 'Liang nian lai zhi guangbo shiye' 兩年來之廣播事業, *Zhongguo Xinlun* 中國新論 3, no. 4–5, 25 April 1937, 293. Japan's proportion of music was 17.0 percent.

Given these challenges, Fan had to use entertainment airtime wisely. He therefore followed 'a path of "balance and harmony"' to build up a larger repertoire of Chinese music that was acceptable to the audience and fill in the gap with instrumental music from the West.<sup>22</sup>

Fan integrated Western instrumental music into the central programme as he sought to solve the musical entertainment problem. Fan believed that music as an art without national borders (音樂本無國界). He attributed China's widely divergent tastes and levels of music appreciation to differences in education and cultivation.<sup>23</sup> In an analysis of radio music in April 1937, Fan identified a lack of popular music education and elite training institutions as the main cause for the shortage of suitable Chinese broadcast entertainment.<sup>24</sup> He therefore played Western instrumental music—i.e., violin, piano, harmonica, symphony and band numbers—because the audience did not need to understand the lyrics to appreciate the music.<sup>25</sup> To Fan, the music's origin was secondary to its function 'as an instrument of moral education'.<sup>26</sup>

Fan also believed that regional instrumental musical in China had no provincial or dialectical boundaries.<sup>27</sup> Nationalist Radio therefore mostly broadcast instrumental Chinese music of all varieties. The exception to this rule was Mandarin-based Peking opera and North China folk music. The broadcast section producers combined regional instrumental music and Mandarin-language folk songs together to promote National Music, and they invited amateur groups to perform the music because there were no professional national- or provincial-level ensembles yet.<sup>28</sup> The broadcast section also introduced Chinese choral music based on the Western model to promote patriotic songs, which it featured in radio plays to raise national

<sup>22</sup> Fan, 'Guangbo shiye', 195.

<sup>23</sup> Fan, 195.

<sup>24</sup> Fan, 194.

<sup>25</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Xie Daoguang', 62.

<sup>26</sup> Fung, *Chinese Philosophy*, 150.

<sup>27</sup> Fan, 'Guangbo shiye', 195.

<sup>28</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Xie Daoguang', 62; Fan, 'Wenhua shang zhi diwei', 194–95; Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 50.

consciousness.<sup>29</sup> Fan's long-term goal was to form a National Music Band that would perform live musical entertainment like bands and orchestras in Europe and America; however, Fan refused to indulge lowbrow tastes with regard to regional music.<sup>30</sup> In fact, he insisted on highbrow music because he believed in Xunzi's notion that music was an important tool for cultivating moral character and national consciousness.<sup>31</sup>

The educational segment was the fourth and final element in the central programme. This thirty-minute segment featured a science lecture on Monday, a radio talk by a party leader on Tuesday, and a lecture by scholar or public intellectual on Wednesday. On Thursday, the broadcast section produced a live radio play, whose purpose like the musical segment was educational. The radio play sought to cultivate national consciousness through half-hour dramas about Chinese heroes, national reconstruction, revolutionary struggle, self-sacrifice, and service to the nation, and they encouraged proper social conduct, values, and ethics.<sup>32</sup> On Friday, the educational segment featured *Music Forum* to promote musical appreciation.<sup>33</sup>

One year after the inaugural central programme began, Wu Baofeng expressed satisfaction with the broadcast. He considered the central programme an effective means to unify broadcast propaganda and exert a positive influence on society. According to Wu, the nationwide relay broadcast had enabled Nationalist Radio to reach a much larger audience because owners of small crystal radios could receive the central programme via local stations.<sup>34</sup> In short, it had helped to raise the radio ramparts and raise national consciousness.

### *Response to the Relay Broadcast*

While the central programme benefited CC Clique nation-building, it impacted the bottom line of private broadcasting stations in Shanghai. The five foreign stations in Shanghai expressed their displeasure in the press while Chinese owners in the Shanghai Commercial Broadcasting Station Association discussed the matter behind closed doors. The government order to requisitioned airtime in the middle of prime time upset both Chinese and foreign owners alike because it affected lucrative sponsorship and advertising revenues.<sup>35</sup> The delegation from the station association therefore petitioned the Broadcasting Administration to cancel the

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<sup>29</sup> Fan, 'Guangbo shiye', 196.

<sup>30</sup> Fan, 195.

<sup>31</sup> Fan, 195; Fung, *Chinese Philosophy*, 150.

<sup>32</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Boyin huaju zhi shiming', 50–53.

<sup>33</sup> Chuanyin ke, 'Xie Daoguang', 62–64.

<sup>34</sup> Wu Baofeng, 'Changsha guangbo diantai de shiming' 長沙廣播電台的使命, *GBZB*, 8 May 1937, 7–8.

<sup>35</sup> 'Hua ren diantai dazhi zun ban: Xiren diantai bu zhuanbo zhongyang diantai jiemu' 華人電台大致遵辦:西人電台不轉播中央電台節目, *Yule*, 2 May 1936, 471.

order.<sup>36</sup> In a press interview after talks with the station owners in late April, Wu Baofeng adopted a conciliatory tone, stating that ‘the Central Broadcasting Station has realised the difficulties encountered by Chinese as well as foreign radio stations in Shanghai and other cities in relaying the station’s programme from 8.00 to 9.05 every evening, and plans are being devised to remove these difficulties’.<sup>37</sup> A protracted struggle thus began between the Broadcasting Administration and private station owners over the nationalisation of airtime.

Despite vocal appeals in the Anglophone press, the Shanghai foreign station owners’ effort to lobby the Broadcasting Administration were unsuccessful. Unable to achieve a consensus and form a united front, two foreign broadcasters—Stations XQMA and XQHB—relayed the central programme on 20 April to avoid trouble with the government. For example, the American owner of Station XQHB, C. M. Robertson, who broadcast from her kitchen, complied with the order because she preferred ‘to face the ire of her advertisers rather than an official withdrawal of her Chinese license’. The American owner of Station XQHA, S. M. Howard, ignored the order to relay the central programme for four days while he renegotiated advertising contracts before he began signing off at 8.00 p.m.<sup>38</sup> By the end of the first week, two foreign stations still refused to relay the central programme: Station XQHE, which was owned by American J. J. James, and Alliance Française (Station FFZ).

Although their first attempt for an exemption from the relay order failed, the American station owners sought help from the US government to petition Chinese authorities.<sup>39</sup> On 23 May, the U.S. State Department and the Chinese Foreign Ministry agreed on a compromise: the American stations would relay Central Station programming from 8.35 to 9.35 p.m., which included the last half of the central programme and *English Commentary* and *Western Music* from 9.05 to 9.35 p.m.<sup>40</sup> By late August 1936, four foreign stations, including Alliance Française, relayed the central programme at 8.35 p.m. or went off the air. The only holdout was J. J. James at Station XQHE. James still refused to relay the central programme, despite knowing that Chiang Kai-shek was enquiring about whether he had observed the compromise, and despite repeated attempts by the U.S. Embassy to persuade him to comply.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Chinese Programme’, *North China Herald*, 29 April 1936, 190.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Chinese Programme’, 190.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Foreign Radio Studios Retreat before Orders’, *Shanghai Evening Post*, 24 April 1936, 1.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Shanghai Mei shang diantai qing mian zhuanbo zhongyang diantai deng jiemu’ 上海美商電臺請免轉播中央電臺節目等案 [Proposal for Shanghai American commercial radio stations requesting to be exempt from rebroadcasting Central Station programmes and other files], 11 December 1947, Guoshiguan [MFA Collection], 020000002813A.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Mei shang diantai’, Guoshiguan, 020000002813A.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Mei shang diantai’, 020000002813A.

Even though the station association expressed support for the relay order in public, many members refused to spend the US\$100 needed to refit their stations to relay the central programme. Instead, they went off-air from 8.00 to 9.05 p.m. to protest the requisition of their airtime.<sup>42</sup> For example, *North-China Herald* reported that only twelve Shanghai stations relayed the central programme in its first week on-air.<sup>43</sup> *Variety Weekly* reported that many stations took advantage of a loophole in the Executive Yuan order, which required stations to sign off between 8.00 and 9.05 p.m. if their equipment could not rebroadcast the central programme. According to the report, city shops turned off their radios when local stations signed off at 8.00 p.m., causing an abnormal silence to fall over Shanghai's shopping districts. This situation prompted the reporter to call on the government to rectify the odd phenomenon.<sup>44</sup>

### *Improving the Relay Broadcast*

The passive-aggressive response of the Shanghai owners caused Wu Baofeng to lose patience with the station association. He therefore summoned association leaders to the capital to rebuke them for not ensuring that their members rebroadcast the central programme.<sup>45</sup> Nationalist Radio thus established inspection teams in Nanjing and Shanghai to monitor private station broadcasts, and it suspended non-compliant stations to deprive them of advertising revenue.<sup>46</sup> Afterwards, the Ministry of Communications issued a seven-day suspension to three Shanghai stations for ignoring the relay order. It also issued a ten-day suspension to a Suzhou station that not only ignored the relay order but also changed its frequency to be next to Shanghai City Radio on the dial to attract more listeners.<sup>47</sup> Nationalist Radio thus improved coverage of the central programme.

Nationalist Radio had one other partner to monitor the central programme relay: the audience. For example, Chen Jiade of Dongtai County reported to Nationalist Radio that two foreign stations were not carrying the central programme in June 1936.<sup>48</sup> Another listener in Tianjin, Li Changji, reported to Nationalist Radio that four private stations in the area had stopped airing the central programme. Li requested that the central government compel the

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<sup>42</sup> 'Mei shang diantai', 020000002813A; 'Foreign Radio Studios', 1.

<sup>43</sup> 'Chinese Programme', 190.

<sup>44</sup> 'Shanghai diantai zhi bu zhuanbo zhengce' 上海電台之不轉播政策, *Yule*, 20 June 1936, 471.

<sup>45</sup> 'Zhongyang ji shifu tongshi jinxing zhengdun Shanghai zhi boyinjie' 中央及市府同時進行整頓上海之播音界, *Yule*, 6 June 1936, 433.

<sup>46</sup> Wu, 'Zhongguo guangbo shiye', 724.

<sup>47</sup> 'Chufa bu zunling zhuanbo zhongyang jiemu zhi guangbotai' 處罰不遵令轉播中央節目之廣播台. *Dianyou yuekan* 電友月刊 12, no. 3 (July 1936): 45.

<sup>48</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 20 June 1936, 61.

stations to resume the central programme relay so that he could listen in on his crystal radio.<sup>49</sup> Liu Guangjian in Tangshan also reported to Nationalist Radio that a Tianjin company and local silk trading house had launched a 150-watt private station but were not relaying the central programme. Reports like these from concerned listeners helped Nationalist Radio better monitor whether private stations complied with the relay order. They also contributed to the party-state decision to expand Radio Peking from 300 watts to one kilowatt in July 1936.<sup>50</sup>

Nationalist Radio also conducted experiments to improve the reception of the central programme. In the summer of 1936, radio engineers began using the new Central Shortwave Station to relay the central programme to local stations when thunderstorms bedevilled the lower Yangtze region. According to Wu Baofeng, they discovered that the shortwave relay was less susceptible to electrical interference than the big radio station's medium-wave relay, and the reception was comparable to expensive cable relays.<sup>51</sup> On 1 July 1936, Nationalist Radio therefore ordered all public stations to install shortwave transceivers to receive the central programme via shortwave. At the same time, the Ministry of Communications also ordered private stations to install shortwave transceivers for the relay.<sup>52</sup> Thus, experimentation to improve reception of the central programme led to the development of shortwave to medium-wave diversity reception in the National Broadcasting Network Plan.

Apart from using shortwave for the relay, Nationalist Radio built infrastructure to improve coverage of the central programme. In May 1936, it began building a transmitter station on the western outskirts of Shanghai to improve reception of the central programme in the city, which sometimes suffered from fading and electrical interference in poor weather.<sup>53</sup> The transmitter station would enable Nationalist Radio to exercise complete control over local frequencies by preventing private stations from ignoring the relay order or signing off at 8.00 p.m.<sup>54</sup> Nationalist Radio thus connected Shanghai broadcasters to the transmitter station via a local cable system that broadcast the central programme over all local frequencies. The CC Clique believed that this arrangement would improve the propaganda effect of the central programme, as Shanghai listeners tended to keep their radios on when their favourite local station remained on-air at 8.00 p.m. for the relay.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 4 July 1936, 56.

<sup>50</sup> 'Diantai zhi gaijin', 22.

<sup>51</sup> Wu, 'Guangbowang jihua', 94.

<sup>52</sup> 'Zhengdun yu qudi' 整頓與取締, *GBZB*, 4 July 1936, 57.

<sup>53</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 26.

<sup>54</sup> 'Radio Programmes to Be Censored', *North-China Herald*, 6 May 1936, 233.

<sup>55</sup> 'Zhengdun yu qudi', 57.



In addition to improving the propaganda effect of the central programme, Nationalist Radio built the transmitter station to improve national security. The transmitter station enabled Nationalist Radio to prevent Japan from using open frequencies to broadcast black propaganda. Nationalist Radio officials were concerned about Japan using broadcast propaganda to sow confusion within the Chinese and international communities in Shanghai. In fact, they had received reports from listeners about unidentified broadcasts on various frequencies claiming to be the Central Station. They therefore set up a surveillance team to track Japanese broadcast propaganda.<sup>56</sup> In a letter to the Ministry of Communications, Nationalist Radio urged the ministry to ensure that all local stations continue to relay the central programme until the transmitter station was complete:

Before the establishment of the transmitter station, please continue to enforce the requirement that Shanghai private stations with wavelengths close to any station of the neighbouring country, no matter what the circumstance, must continue to relay the Central Station programme to consolidate our broadcasting ramparts.<sup>57</sup>

To Nationalist Radio, the integrity of Shanghai's airwaves was essential to national defence.

Nationalist Radio also adjusted central programme content to find better ways to educate and entertain the audience. On 7 August 1936, it replaced 'Academic Lecture' on Friday with 'Readings from Chairman Chiang's Manuscripts' to create a theme that featured National Music, New Life, and readings of Chiang's essays by a station presenter.<sup>58</sup> On 6 January 1937, Nationalist Radio replaced 'Academic Lecture' on Wednesday with 'Symposium' (討論會), which featured three hosts who explored the relationship between science, technology, culture, and modernisation in a talk-show format; meanwhile, the broadcast section lengthened the musical interlude by shortening the educational segment. On 12 April 1937, Nationalist Radio then flipped the programme sequence to begin with an even shorter educational segment and a longer newscast at the end of the show. The final change occurred on 5 July, two days before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, when the central programme began with the national anthem, which was the Nationalist's 'Party Song', as a reminder that even though the party and the state were one and the same, the party came first.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 25 April 1936, 54; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 30 May 1936, 60–61.

<sup>57</sup> 'Zhengdun yu qudi', 57.

<sup>58</sup> Zhongyang Shiye Guanlichu Zhongyang Diantai Boyin Jiemu Yugao 中央事業管理處中央電台播音節目預告, *GBZB*, 25 July 1936, 6–7.

<sup>59</sup> Zhongyang Shiye Guanlichu Zhongyang Diantai Boyin Jiemu Yugao, *GBZB*, 26 June 1937, 2; Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu 中央委員會秘書處, in 'Di sishiwuci huiyi' 第四十五次會議, 3 June 1937, *Zhongguo Guomindang diwujie zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui huiyi jilu huibian* 中國國民黨第五屆中央執行委員會常務委員會會議紀錄彙編 (N.p.: Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu, n.d.), 149.

## Nationalisation of Content

Nationalist Radio set out to nationalise content beginning in April 1936. Over the next year, the Supervisory Committee enacted a series of regulatory measures to censor private stations, especially in Shanghai. The process began in April 1936 with the local review of station programming, a process which the Broadcasting Administration later centralised in December, and it ended with the announcement of new standards in April 1937. At that time, Wu Baofeng declared that the nationalisation of content had been a success, saying:

Since the implementation of these measures, the results have been quite impressive, especially among privately-run radio stations. At first, these people were bound to feel constrained because they were accustomed to being left alone. Now that things are on track and every task has an instruction, they have come to appreciate the convenience.<sup>60</sup>

This section will show how Nationalist Radio asserted regulatory control in Shanghai to standardise content and subordinate private radio stations to the national network.

On 28 April 1936 the Supervisory Committee introduced an industry-wide content review that would commence at once and go into effect on 1 July, after which all radio content was to undergo a formal approval process before broadcast.<sup>61</sup> To implement such a large task, the Broadcasting Administration would handle local public stations and the Ministry of Communications would manage private ones. To expediate the process in Shanghai, the ministry adopted the same method that it had used in 1934 during the New Life Movement.<sup>62</sup> Thus, private stations submitted transcripts of all content in triplicate to the local telegraph bureau, which would review the material with officials from the education and social affairs bureaux.<sup>63</sup> By the end of May, Shanghai stations had submitted more than 1,000 transcripts, which local officials censored according to the following criteria:

1. Purity of purpose
2. Does not endanger public security
3. Must be compatible with the principles of party ideology
4. Must not be licentious
5. Does not contain gods, spirits, and demons
6. Does not go against the principles of science
7. Does not violate moral principles
8. Must not have filth and vulgarity

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<sup>60</sup> Wu, 'Zhongguo guangbo shiye', 724.

<sup>61</sup> 'Dianbaoju jian du dian bo' 電報局監督電播, *Shenbao*, 29 April 1936, 11.

<sup>62</sup> 'Shanghai guangbo jiemu qudi banfa zhi guiding' 上海廣播節目取締辦法之規定, *ZGZX*, no. 2 (February 1936): 111.

<sup>63</sup> 'Radio Programmes', 233.

9. Must not promote the spread of feudal thinking<sup>64</sup>

At the same time that the Supervisory Committee introduced the content review, the ministry also ordered private stations to submit the educational credentials and work experience of all personnel so that the Broadcasting Administration could review the information and, equally important, register those responsible for producing and presenting content on the radio.<sup>65</sup>

As Shanghai officials reviewed programme content in June, the municipal bureau of education called a meeting with station association owners and record company executives to announce a ban on the sale and broadcast of obscene music and an airtime restriction on ten kinds of local folk music.<sup>66</sup> The censorship and airtime restriction would apply to Shanghai and Ningbo opera, local ballads, ditties, Buddhist lyric storytelling, among others.<sup>67</sup> The education officials cited widespread complaints about obscene lyrics to justify the local music ban and airtime restriction, arguing that the music was harmful to society and hindered social education.<sup>68</sup> The telegraph bureau first planned to limit the folk music to two hours a day; however, station owner protests and an appeal by the Ningbo Guild in Shanghai led to a loosening of the airtime restriction. As a result, stations were allowed to air the ten genres of local music up to three hours a day, but their broadcast was forbidden from 7.00 to 10.00 p.m.<sup>69</sup>

Although the ban on non-approved content went into effect on 1 July, Shanghai local officials failed to meet the deadline. In early July, they had only completed 700 of the first 1,000 submissions. Eighty-three of these 700 items—or 12 percent—were banned, even though more than 50 percent belonged to the ten restricted musical genres. Some songs like ‘The Monk Divorces Seeking Love’ (和尚離婚求愛), ‘In the Cinema’ (電影院中), and ‘Silly Love’ (滑稽愛情) were banned outright. Other songs were approved subject to revision; for example, ‘One-Two-Eight’ (一二八), commemorating the Shanghai Incident, was allowed to air under the title ‘Lost Ground Chronicle’ (失地記).<sup>70</sup> One problem with the review process was that too many parties

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<sup>64</sup> ‘Dianbaoju zhengli guangbo jiemu gailiang shehui xiguan zhi xiansheng’ 電報局整理廣播節目改良社會習慣之先聲, *Xinwenbao*, 2 July 1936, in *Jiu Zhongguo*, 222–23.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Shanghai dianbaoju zhengli guangbo jiemu zhi banfa’ 上海電報局整理廣播節目之辦法, *Yule*, 11 July 1936, 531.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Shanghai zhi boyinjie’, 433.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Dianbaoju zhengli guangbo jiemu, 222–23; ‘Shanghai dianbaoju zhengli guangbo jiemu zhi banfa zuijin nijiu geng juti zhi guiding’ 上海電報局整理廣播節目之辦法最近擬就更具體之規定, *Yule*, 11 July 1936, 531.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Guangbo jiemu zhi banfa’, 531; ‘Siming nanci deng shixiang jiemu kuanfang bochang shijian’ 四明南詞等十項節目寬放播唱時間, *Shenbao*, 16 July 1936, 15.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Siming nanci’, 15.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Shanghai dianbaoju fabiao chajin dantai guangbo jiemu’ 上海電報局發表查禁電台廣播節目, *Xinwenbao*, 15 July 1936, in *Jiu Zhongguo*, 223–24.

were involved. Station owners therefore centralised the submission of materials through their association to improve communication within its membership and streamline the process.<sup>71</sup>

As officials in Shanghai reviewed programme materials, the Supervisory Committee established inspection teams to monitor local broadcasts for non-approved content. The Ministry of Communications expanded the inspection team in Shanghai and established other teams in Tianjin and Hangzhou.<sup>72</sup> Inspection teams monitored private-station broadcasts from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. in three shifts every day. In July 1936, one inspection team discovered that a Suzhou broadcaster had increased station power without approval when looking into a report that it had played music during the three-day mourning period for Hu Hanmin. The ministry therefore suspended the station for two weeks to deprive it of advertising revenue.<sup>73</sup> The rest of the summer was uneventful as stations began to comply with the relay order, as Nationalist Radio broadcast a twenty-minute sports report each evening from Berlin on the Summer Olympic Games.<sup>74</sup> However, a breach in the broadcasting ramparts in late August brought an abrupt end to an uneventful summer.

### *The Station XQHA Incident*

A *Variety Weekly* headline on 29 August 1936 blindsided Nationalist Radio with news that Shanghai would soon have its first Japanese radio station. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified Chiang Kai-shek right away, and the Nationalists mobilised to close the breach in the radio ramparts. According to a subsequent investigation, Japanese national Hiroshi Takagi (高木寛) signed an agreement with American national S. M. Howard to purchase the equipment of Station XQHA for 6,000 yuan on 21 August. Takagi then moved the equipment to the Japanese enclave in Hongkou and broadcast under the original call sign—Station XQHA—without a broadcasting license from the Chinese Ministry of Communications.<sup>75</sup> Takagi's illegal station played Japanese music and broadcast Mandarin newscasts that were translated from the Japanese newspaper *Shanghai Daily* (*Shanghai Nippō* 上海日報). In addition, the station relayed

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<sup>71</sup> 'Boyin gonghui xun' 播音公會訊, *Shenbao*, 23, July 1936, 14.

<sup>72</sup> 'Jiaobu zhengdun guangbo shiye liang nian lai chengji' 交通部整頓廣播事業兩年來成績, *Yule*, 14 March 1936, 193; 'Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao' 中央廣播事業指導委員會工作報告 [CBSC work report], KMT Archives February 1937, *Hui* 會 [Meeting records], 5.2/170.8.

<sup>73</sup> 'Guanyu guangbo diantai', 22.

<sup>74</sup> 'Zhuanbo shi yunhui jiemu' 轉播世運會節目, *Jiaotong xiaoxi* 交通消息 4, no. 78 (August 1936): 110.

<sup>75</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 70–71.

national and international newscasts in Mandarin Chinese from Tokyo, produced by Dōmei (*Dōmei Tsūshinsha* 同盟通信社)—Japan's official news agency in Tokyo.<sup>76</sup>

The XQHA affair soon became a thorny diplomatic incident once China discovered that the Japanese and American consulates in Shanghai had facilitated the transaction. Because the incident was a flagrant violation of Chinese sovereignty under International Telegraph Union conventions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs first pursued a diplomatic solution. In Nanjing, Chen Guofu convened a meeting of the Supervisory Committee on 3 September to discuss a regulatory response. The committee passed a resolution in the meeting to ban foreign ownership of private radio stations, and it finalised regulatory guidelines that had been under consideration since March.<sup>77</sup> Chen then designated the Ministry of Communications to coordinate the party-state response in Shanghai. On 5 September, it convened a task force with other officials from the foreign ministry, central propaganda department, and the city government. Also in attendance were broadcast section chief Fan Benzong and chief engineer Liu Zhenqing from the Central Station. The task force determined their division of labour and agreed that the party state should either ban all foreign-owned stations or buy them out.<sup>78</sup>

The Nationalists attempted to resolve the Station XQHA incident through diplomacy for the next three months without result. Apart from the U.S. Consulate confirming that Howard had not transferred his broadcasting license and call sign to Takagi as part of the transaction, both American and Japanese officials claimed that they had no jurisdiction over the matter. Yet, Howard was unable to account for his broadcasting license when asked to return the original documentation. He claimed that the documents had been lost several years before, but he had neither reported them missing to local authorities nor placed a declaration in the newspaper as required by law.<sup>79</sup> The city government therefore asked Howard to report the documents missing, which he did, so that China could prove that Takagi had no legal right

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<sup>76</sup> 'Dadong diantai yizhu: Shanghai de diyijia riben diantai' 大東電台易主:上海的第一家日本電台, *Yule*, 29 August 1936, 613.

<sup>77</sup> 'Shouhui huo chexiao wairen zai wo guo jingnei suoshe guangbo diantai yi du yinhuan an' 收回或撤銷外人在我國境內所設廣播電台以杜隱患案 [Proposal to reclaim or abolish broadcasting stations that are established by foreigners in our country to prevent hidden dangers], 3 September 1936, in *Disici huiyi jilu* 第四次會議記錄 [Fourth meeting record], CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>78</sup> *Ri ren Gao Mukuan shoumai Shanghai Dadong guangbo diantai an* 日人高木寬收買上海大東廣播電台案 [Japanese national Hiroshi Takagi purchases Shanghai XQHA file], in *Riben yu wo guo kuochong dianxin sheshi bing kaishe zhida dianlu deng an* 日本於我國擴充電信設施並開設直達電路等案 [Japan expands telecommunications facilities and establishes direct electrical lines in our country and other files], Guoshiguan [MFA Collection], 020000001258A.

<sup>79</sup> 'Dadong guangbo', 020000001258A.

to the XQHA frequency and force him off the air. Nevertheless, Takagi continued to broadcast with the tacit support of Japan.

After exhausting diplomatic efforts, China quit negotiations in mid-December and pursued extra-legal means to silence the Japanese station. Two developments in North China on the fourth front influenced this decision. First, the Japanese-backed Hebei-Chahar Political Council had set up two radio stations in Hebei after the HQHA incident. Just east of Peking in Tong County, the political council arrogated a Nationalist Government call-sign ('XG') on 9 October to open Station XGCT, which broadcast entertainment and administrative orders of the council. A second station under Japanese patronage at Tangshan then launched on 13 November, and its strong signal prevented local reception of party-state stations in the area.<sup>80</sup>

The second development that led to the decision to silence Takagi's station was the Xi'an Incident. On 12 December, troops led by Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng seized Nationalist Radio's newest station, Radio Xi'an, and captured Chiang Kai-shek in a bloody assault. Nationalist Radio therefore adjusted public-station frequencies in Jinan, Hankou, and Kaifeng to sandwich Radio Xi'an's signal, and it dispatched engineers to Luoyang with a 200-watt transmitter to jam the Xi'an station.<sup>81</sup> On 23 December, the transmitter began emitting static noise that blacked out Radio Xi'an altogether. According to James Bertram, who presented English news with Agnes Smedley on Radio Xi'an during the incident, the jamming was effective. In fact, writing about it in 1938, he recalled: 'Nanking or Hankow or some more powerful station cut in on the same wave-length with a siren that made the night hideous; and very few of the famous Sian broadcasts could be heard clearly, even in Sian'.<sup>82</sup> National Radio would use the same technique to jam Takagi's station in Shanghai.

Nationalist Radio launched a multi-pronged plan to silence the Japanese station on 18 December. The Ministry of Communications first rescinded the frequency and call sign of Howard's station and transferred its rights to the Broadcasting Administration, which dispatched Li Ziliu to Shanghai with a 200-watt transmitter under the name Righteous Sound Radio (正音廣播電台).<sup>83</sup> As Nationalist Radio set up the station near Hongkou, Japan sent

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<sup>80</sup> Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 21 November 1936, 50; Tingzhong Yijian, *GBZB*, 5 December 1936, 60.

<sup>81</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 72.

<sup>82</sup> James M. Bertram, *First Act in China: The Story of the Sian Mutiny*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), 175.

<sup>83</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 70–71. 'Quan Shanghai guangbo diantai shang yuedi tingzhi boyin yiri' 全上海廣播電台上月底停止播音一日, *Diansheng*, 5 March 1937, 460; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 28; 'Zhongyang changwu weiyuanhui jiaoxia zhongyang wenhua shiye jihua weiyuanhui suo ni guangbo jiaoyu shishi banfa zhi qianxu yijian ji shuoming' 中央常務委員會交下中央文化事業計畫委員會所擬廣播教育事實辦法之簽叙意見及說明 [Annotated comments and explanations from central executive committee to Central Cultural Enterprises

envoys to the Shanghai government to attempt a fait accompli on 23 January. The Japanese diplomats expressed a wish for Takagi to be able to register his station with the Ministry of Communications as a private enterprise in accordance with Chinese law. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the city to reject the Japanese proposal.<sup>84</sup> The next week, Righteous Sound Radio began relaying content from Radio Shanghai, Shanghai City Radio, and other local stations whenever Takagi's station went on-air. Operating on the same frequency, Righteous Sound Radio jammed Takagi's station signal until the Battle of Shanghai began in August.<sup>85</sup>

### *Nationalising Content*

The onset of the XQHA incident prompted Nationalist Radio to centralise the content review under the Broadcasting Administration in September 1936.<sup>86</sup> The Supervisory Committee adopted a set of content guidelines that it had been developing since March to standardise the review process and planned for the new rules to take effect on 15 December. Thereafter, stations would be required to submit materials each week using a schedule template listing the title of each item, its transcript, and the person responsible. Because the Broadcasting Administration was a station owner itself, it understood the vagaries of live radio and the need for operational flexibility, so the guidelines gave station managers leeway when dealing with contingencies. For example, the new rules allowed for last-minute changes as long as they did not exceed 20 percent of the entire broadcast day. In addition, although educational programming was to use Mandarin Chinese, the rules allowed for the 'temporary' use of local dialects in areas where the standard of Mandarin was poor as long as the station added extra National Language educational programming.<sup>87</sup> To the CC Clique, the practical consideration of audience comprehension was more important than the language that it was presented in.<sup>88</sup>

Although the guidelines provided local stations with some operational flexibility, private station owners regarded the guidelines as onerous when Nationalist Radio introduced

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Planning Committee regarding implementation measures for radio education], 3 September 1936, in Disici yihui jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>84</sup> Dadong guangbo diantai an, Guoshiguan, 020000001258A.

<sup>85</sup> Dadong guangbo, 020000001258A; Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 70–71.

<sup>86</sup> Disici huiyi jilu 第四次會議紀錄 [Fourth meeting record], 3 September 1936, CBSC, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>87</sup> 'Zhidaoguo guangbo diantai bosong jiemu banfa' 指導全國廣播電台播送節目辦法 [National guidelines for radio station broadcast programmes], 7 June 1936, in Disanci huiyi jilu 第三次會議紀錄 [Third meeting record], CBSB, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>88</sup> Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism*, 99.

them on 28 October.<sup>89</sup> The station owners considered airtime restrictions on entertainment and advertising detrimental to commercial operations. For example, one guideline capped entertainment content at 60 percent of total airtime and required that the other 40 percent consist of educational programming, while another guideline limited advertising to 20 percent of total airtime and required that all advertising occur within entertainment content. The combined effect of these two regulations resulted in a radical restructuring of private station content: entertainment (40 percent), education (40 percent), and advertising (20 percent). Private station owners therefore expected the new guidelines to result in lower advertising revenues and higher operational costs.<sup>90</sup>

The Broadcasting Administration centralised the content review on 15 December 1936, and the other members of the Supervisory Committee made accommodations to facilitate this transition. The Ministry of Communications transferred Wu Baofeng to head the Shanghai Administration of Electrical Communications in December, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the administration with a Shanghai office in January 1937.<sup>91</sup> The Central Station then seconded three staff from the broadcast section in Nanjing to handle the review of private-station materials in Shanghai.<sup>92</sup> Thereafter, the Broadcast Administration separated the review of local public stations in Nanjing and private stations in Shanghai. This is because many public stations already relayed Central Station content while most private broadcasters were concentrated in Shanghai. In the first seven months of 1937, local stations submitted 1,800 items to the Broadcasting Administration for approval: 80 percent passed on the first review, 11 percent were approved subject to revisions, and 9 percent were banned.<sup>93</sup>

The primary focus of the content review was entertainment.<sup>94</sup> This fact reflected the emphasis on entertainment and pleasure in the Sunist spiritual turn and traditional conceptions

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<sup>89</sup> Bosong Jiemu Zhidao 播送節目指導, *GBZB*, 10 April 1937, 27.

<sup>90</sup> Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui, 'Zhidao quanguo guangbo diantai bosong jiemu banfa' 指導全國廣播電台播送節目辦法 [National guidelines for radio station broadcast programming], in Disanci huiyi jilu 第三次會議紀錄 [Third meeting record], 3 September 1936, CBSB, Guoshiguan [MOC Collection], 017000001824A.

<sup>91</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 27; China Ministry of Foreign Affairs letter to Shanghai Municipal Council Public Works Department, 18 January 1937, in *Jiu Zhongguo*, 228.

<sup>92</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 27.

<sup>93</sup> Boyin Jiemu Zhidao 播音節目指導 [Broadcasting Programme Guidance], *GBZB*: 30 January 1937, 24–26; 6 February 1937, 29–30; 13 February 1937, 29–32; 20 February 1937, 28–29; 27 February 1937, 22–24; 6 March 1937, 20; 20 March 1937, 22–23; 3 April 1937, 21–22; 10 April 1937, 30–31; 20 April 1937, 23–24; 1 May 1937, 36–37; 8 May 1937, 36–37; 15 May 1937, 22–25; 22 May 1937, 25–26; 29 May 1937, 32–33; 5 June 1937, 29–31; 12 June 1937, 33–34; 26 June 1937, 32–33; 10 July 1937, 25–27; 17 July 1937, 27–30; 24 July 1937, 29–30; 7 August 1937, 23.

<sup>94</sup> Zhao, *Guangbo dianshi tongshi*, 35.



about the role of music in society in Xunzi's 'Discourse on Music'. The Broadcast Administration therefore rejected songs associated with the communism for 'being incompatible with the national situation', such as 'Song of the Motherland' (Песня о Родине 祖國進行曲) from the Soviet Union and the ballad 'Defend Madrid' (保衛馬德里) from the Spanish Civil War.<sup>95</sup> It also rejected songs for 'impure lyrics', such as 'Chinese Don't Fight Chinese' (中國人不打中國人) because it echoed Communist calls for a united front, and 'Fresh Flowers of May' (五月的鮮花) because it contravened Chiang Kai-shek's policy to first secure domestic stability before resisting foreign aggression.<sup>96</sup> In addition, songs like 'The Mover Song' (搬夫曲) and 'Dock Worker' (碼頭工人) were approved with the caveat that stations were forbidden from trying to incite class struggle when introducing them to the audience.<sup>97</sup>

The Broadcasting Administration banned most music, however, for moral or ethical reasons—not for political content. For example, censors banned 'Unequal' for insulting women, 'Flower of Love' for frivolousness, 'Shabby Old Woman' for inelegance, 'In Love with a Star' for vulgarity, 'Wineshop Chronicle' for lewdness and violence, 'Sexual Abstinence' for being too one-sided, 'Black Basin Chronicle' for superstitiousness, 'Woman Gets a Man' for being out-of-step with the times, and 'Fast Car' for being too commercial.<sup>98</sup> The fact is that most songs were banned or revised for moral or ethical reasons because private station owners as a group were either too savvy to reveal their ideological leanings, too indifferent to politics, or too bourgeois. Most owners were businessmen who ran companies in an exciting new industry that embodied the cutting-edge of modern science and culture, and their primary goal was to entertain a large audience with popular content that attracted large advertising revenues.

The centralised censorship review created winners and losers in private broadcasting. The three most popular entertainment categories from among all submissions were introductions for lyric storytelling (26 percent), comic dialogues (10 percent), and popular songs (13 percent).<sup>99</sup> Nationalist Radio published the results of each review in *Broadcast Weekly* so that the public would better understand the process and support the implementation of cultural construction in the industry. The losers under this new regime were Shanghai artists

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<sup>95</sup> Zhao, 35–36; Boyin Jiemu Zhidao, *GBZB*, 22 May 1937, 26.

<sup>96</sup> Boyin Jiemu Zhidao, *GBZB*, 29 May 1937, 32; Zhao, *Guangbo dianshi tongshi*, 35–36.

<sup>97</sup> Boyin Jiemu Zhidao, *GBZB*, 12 June 1937, 33.

<sup>98</sup> Boyin Jiemu Zhidao, *GBZB*: 'Bu pingdeng' 不平等, 10 April 1937, 30; 'Ai de hua' 愛的花, 17 July 1937, 29; 'Lata po' 邋遢婆, 10 July 1937, 25; 'Lianai mingxing' 戀愛明星, 1 May 1937, 36; 'Se jie' 色戒, 24 July 1937, 29; 'Jiu gang ji' 酒缸記, 27 February 1937, 22; 'Nu zhong zhangfu' 女中丈夫, 8 May 1937, 37; 'Feikuai che' 飛快車, 15 May 1937, 23.

<sup>99</sup> Percentages are based on Boyin Jiemu Zhidao in *GBZB* from 30 January to 7 August 1937.

specialising in comic dialogues and lyric storytelling who were either unable or unwilling to conform with the new content guidelines; as a result, they were banned from appearing on-air. However, entertainers like Shen Juyin (沈菊癮), who avoided risqué language and integrated ideas about social education and national salvation into his work, became the winners. In 1937, Shen created a new kind of radio entertainment called ‘cultural comedy’ (文化滑稽). Using Central Station transcripts published in *Broadcast Weekly*, Shen produced skits, operas, and radio plays that listeners enjoyed and local officials lauded.<sup>100</sup>

### Nationalisation of Operations

The nationalisation of operations occurred in tandem with the nationalisation of content under the supervision of Wu Baofeng in the first half of 1937. In his capacity as head of the Shanghai Administration of Electrical Communications, Wu led the party-state effort to subordinate private radio stations in Shanghai to the forthcoming national network. On 21 January—three days after the Broadcasting Administration established its Shanghai office—the municipal telegraph bureau, which was part of Wu’s bailiwick, ordered the closure of eight private stations in Shanghai, effective 1 February.<sup>101</sup> The bureau issued the order under the pretext of operational shortcomings: increasing transmission power without permission, interfering with other signals, ignoring administrative procedures, and another case of transferring ownership rights without the prior approval of the Ministry of Communications.<sup>102</sup> Taken by surprise by the closure order, the Shanghai station association protested the closures in the local press and petitioned the Central Party Training Department and Executive Yuan in Nanjing to pressure the Ministry of Communications to allow the eight stations to continue operations.<sup>103</sup> The station owners’ attempts were in vain because Wu was in Shanghai to clean house: his mission was to prevent another breach of China’s broadcasting ramparts.

Once the station association realised that the government would not revoke the order, they resigned themselves to negotiate compensation for their hapless colleagues. The owners did this in part because they too worried about their own fate. In fact, the rumour was that the

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<sup>100</sup> ‘Zi you boyin yilai Shanghai boyintai jiemu zhi bianqian’ 自有播音以來上海播音台節目之變遷, *Diansheng*, 22 January 1937, 260.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Jiaotongbu zhengdun benshi boyin shiye tingzhi ba diantai boyin quan’ 交通部整頓本市播音事業停止八家電台播音權, *Shenbao*, 22 January 1937, 16.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Qudi Shanghai fangmian banli bu shan ge guangbo diantai’ 取締上海方面辦理不善各廣播電台, *Jiaotong zazhi* 交通雜誌 5, no. 3 (March 1937): 203; ‘Boyin gonghui chengqing jiuji ba diantai’ 播音公會呈請救濟八電台, *Shenbao*, 29 January 1937, 17.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Jiaobu tongzhi minying diantai hou quan hu diantai renyuan fasheng konghuang’ 交部統治民營電台後全滬電台人員發生恐慌, *Diansheng*, 20 March 1937, 579.

Ministry of Communications would soon close twelve more private stations in a wider crackdown.<sup>104</sup> Notwithstanding the closure order, the eight stations were still on-air in February as the ministry and the owners engaged in talks. On 27 February, association leaders petitioned the Ministry of Communications and Executive Yuan again to revoke the order or compensate the affected owners for the original value of their station equipment. In addition, they asked the government to revise the ‘stifling’ guidelines on educational and entertainment airtime.<sup>105</sup>

In a show of solidarity, the Shanghai station association announced a collective shutdown the next day as the station owners awaited instructions from the central government. On 28 February, only four stations broadcast during the day. Apart from the three public stations—Righteous Sound Radio, Shanghai City Radio, and Radio Shanghai—the other station was operated by the Shanghai Christian Broadcasting Association (Station XMHD), which was a Chinese private station supported by the American missionary movement.<sup>106</sup> According to Michael Krysko, the American missionaries ‘forged close ties’ with Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Song Meiling (Soong Mei-ling 宋美齡) owing to their common interest in ‘rural reform and public health initiatives’.<sup>107</sup> In return, the Chiangs supported the missionary reform programmes in the countryside and Station XMHD, which was the second most powerful station in Shanghai, and the Christian broadcaster and the American missionary movement supported Nationalist policies and moral reform in the New Life Movement.<sup>108</sup> In the evening, these four stations were joined by two more Shanghai broadcasters who, wishing to hedge their bets and stay in the government’s good graces, powered up at 8.00 p.m. to relay the central programme. In the absence of local private stations that night, Shanghai listeners were able to receive large party-state broadcasters from Changsha and Wuhan, as well as private stations in Suzhou, Wuxi, Hangzhou, Peking, and Tianjin.<sup>109</sup> In an ironic twist of fate, the shutdown revealed the collective weakness of the Shanghai private stations, rather than demonstrate their collective strength. It became obvious to all that the many smaller private stations in Shanghai were replaceable.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> ‘Qudi bajia zhi hou you shier jia yao tingzhi boyin’ 取締八家之後又有十二家要停止播音, *Diansheng*, 26 February 1937, 419.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Hu minying diantai daibiao qingyuan xiuzheng qudi boyin banfa’ 滬民營電台代表請願修正取締播音辦法, *Xinwenbao*, 28 February 1937, 7.

<sup>106</sup> Krysko, *American Radio*, 126–136.

<sup>107</sup> Krysko, 141.

<sup>108</sup> Krysko, 142.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Quan Shanghai guangbo’, 460.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Tingzhi boyin yiri’, 460.

Now aware of the precariousness of their situation, the Shanghai station owners petitioned the central government to compensate the eight stations for their economic losses. Their entreaties were further tempered by the fact that the stations finally closed in early March; moreover, word on the street was that another fourteen closures were forthcoming.<sup>111</sup> The Ministry of Communications at this time agreed to talk to the owners about the stations' old equipment. The ministry therefore ordered the telegraph bureau to liaise with the station association to discuss a purchase. Yet even with the assent of the ministry, talks between the bureau and the station association did not go well. In their first meeting on 14 March, the association presented bureau officials with an itemised quotation for the eight stations' equipment at the original purchase price, and the meeting adjourned with no agreement. By late March, anxiety among private owners heightened when the ministry ordered the closure of a ninth broadcaster, Station XHHL, which cast a cloud of uncertainty over the future of private broadcasting in China.<sup>112</sup> The bureau's silence after the first meeting seemed to confirm the rumour about a wider crackdown on private broadcasters in the city.

The station owners resorted to an emotional appeal to the press in late April 1937 to force the telegraph bureau to respond to their earlier request for compensation. The station association pleaded for financial relief because its members were unable to sell their station equipment on the open market due to the ban on new private radio stations.<sup>113</sup> Thus pressured, the bureau finally agreed to meet the association to discuss the equipment's value. On 29 April, telegraph bureau radio engineers offered the association pennies on the dollar for the equipment. The station owners rejected the counter-offer and appealed once again to the press, asking for the government to show compassion for the plight of the owners and the families of their employees.<sup>114</sup> However, perhaps annoyed with the tiresome back and forth of the negotiations, the telegraph bureau ignored the association's pleas and carried on with the consolidation of the private broadcasting industry.<sup>115</sup>

As Wu Baofeng brought Chinese private broadcasters to heel in Shanghai, he also sought to consolidate control over the remaining foreign radio stations in China. After the XQHA incident in August 1936, the Supervisory Committee was concerned about the latent threat of foreign stations becoming distribution channels for Japanese and Soviet propaganda.

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<sup>111</sup> 'Fasheng konghuang', 579.

<sup>112</sup> 'Fasheng konghuang', 579; Zhao, Ai, and Liu, *Xinxu difangzhi*, 395.

<sup>113</sup> 'Weile bei qudi de liu diantai Shanghai boyin gonghui zai xiangjiaobu qingyuan' 為了被取締的六電台上海播音公會再向交部請願, *Diansheng*, 30 April 1937, 779.

<sup>114</sup> 'Liu diantai', 779.

<sup>115</sup> Smith, 'Radio Developments', 2.

Wishing to prevent another breach in the broadcasting ramparts, which could undermine the integrity of cultural construction, sow confusion among listeners, and sap public morale, the Broadcasting Administration put together a plan to purchase the remaining four foreign-owned radio stations in Shanghai while they were still small and cheap.<sup>116</sup>

The telegraph bureau under Wu Baofeng approached American restaurateur J. J. James—the owner of Station XQHE—to buy him out in January 1937.<sup>117</sup> Founded by James at his own St. George Cabaret in 1932, Station XQHE broadcast from the centre of the hustle and bustle of foreign night clubs, brothels, and opium dens on Bubbling Road near Jing'an Temple in the Shanghai International Settlement. According to U.S. Trade Commissioner Viola Smith, who interviewed James afterwards and reported on the buyout to the U.S. Department of Commerce, ‘much mystery has surrounded the purchase price, but radio circles claim it to be Chinese \$15,000. Mr. James declines to comment on this sale other than to state that he lost C\$40,000 since its construction five years ago’.<sup>118</sup> It seems that the Chinese government’s purchase of Station XQHE created ‘a mild sensation’ in the industry and fuelled even more speculation about the future of private broadcasting in China.<sup>119</sup> After signing the purchase agreement for Station XQHE on 24 June 1937, however, the telegraph bureau did not buy the other three foreign stations. It did not have enough time before the Battle of Shanghai. Nationalist Radio probably bought James’s station first owing to his previous recalcitrance, as he had been the only foreign owner who had refused to accept the Sino-American compromise on the central programme relay in May 1936. Although we do not know whether the telegraph bureau was in discussions with the other three foreign stations in Shanghai at the same time, they were probably next on Wu Baofeng’s shopping list.

### **Nationalisation of the Industry**

As Wu Baofeng consolidated party-state control over private radio stations in Shanghai, Chen Guofu and Zhang Daofan of the Central Cultural Enterprises Planning Committee proposed to the party presidium that the party state nationalise the broadcasting industry in the name of radio education. The presidium approved their ‘Radio Education Implementation Plan’

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<sup>116</sup> Quotation from Broadcasting Administration report in fourth committee meeting, see Zhao Yuming 赵玉明 and Ai Honghong 艾红红, eds., *Zhongguo guangbo dianshi shi jiaocheng* 中国广播电视史教程 (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 2009), 19; ‘Shouhui huo chexiao’, in *Disici huiyi jilu*, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001824A.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Government Buys Station XQHE’, *North-China Herald*, 30 June 1937, 547.

<sup>118</sup> Smith, ‘Radio Developments’, 9n1.

<sup>119</sup> Smith, 1.

on 25 March 1937. The objectives of the plan were to reform habits and customs, boost public morale, and unify thought and language, which were the original goals that the presidium had set for the Planning Committee with regard to radio in 1936. The plan essentially nationalised the industry, stating that ‘the broadcasting industry shall be established as a state-run enterprise operated by the central, provincial and municipal governments’. Under the plan, the industry would become a part of the party-state’s educational enterprise and broadcasting content would be based upon educational needs. In addition, the central government would establish professional programmes to train station personnel in the National Broadcasting Network.<sup>120</sup>

The Radio Education Implementation Plan also proposed to further the reach of the party-state broadcasting network into the schools. The plan therefore expanded a radio education programme that Nationalist Radio and the Ministry of Education launched in October 1935. In March 1937, Nationalist Radio already delivered daily instruction to 3,465 secondary schools and institutes for popular education nationwide.<sup>121</sup> From 1937 to 1942, Nationalist Radio further planned to expand radio education to nearly nine-million students in 128,737 schools. This included 5,101,770 students in 39,934 primary schools and 3,867,158 mature learners in 88,803 adult schools.<sup>122</sup> Nationalist Radio also planned to establish one radio station in each province and at least one radio receiver in every autonomous district, township, village, and linked security group, which was part of the National Broadcasting Network Plan.

The Radio Education Implementation Plan also elucidated the CC Clique’s vision for local radio content. To this end, Nationalist Radio would provide each station with pre-approved materials for broadcast and a selection of suitable publications from which to produce new radio content. In addition to using the Central News Agency as their exclusive source for domestic and international news, network stations were to broadcast positive news reports about local road building, afforestation, hygiene, fire prevention, agriculture, industry, and commerce. Moreover, presenters in local talk shows also were to focus on local improvements in everyday life and the societal need for national reconstruction. In short, local stations were to produce broadcasting content that was relevant to the everyday life of the radio audience.

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<sup>120</sup> ‘Guangbo jiaoyu shishi banfa’ 廣播教育實施辦法, *GBZB*, 24 April 1937, 22–23.

<sup>121</sup> ‘Jiaobu ling ge xianshi xiaoxue ji minxiao zhuangshe wuxiandian shouyinji’ 教部令各縣市小學及民校裝設無線電收音機, *Zhejiang sheng minzhong jiaoyu fudao banyuekan* 浙江省群眾教育輔導半月刊 3, no. 18 (1 July 1937): 1102.

<sup>122</sup> *Zhonghua Minguo tongji tiyao* 中華民國統計提要, comp. 國民政府主計處 Guomin zhengfu zhujichu, (Chongqing: Directorate-General of Budgets, Accounts and Statistics, 1940), 196–200; ‘Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu xingzheng jihua’ 二十六年度播音教育行政計畫, *Boyin jiaoyu yuekan* 播音教育月刊 (hereafter *BYJK*) 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 171.

Most importantly, the implementation plan required that local governments cover the cost of radio education in their annual operating budgets.<sup>123</sup>

Although the party presidium approved the Radio Education Implementation Plan on 25 March 1937, Nationalist Radio did not announce it until 20 April. During this interim, the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee introduced a series of measures to launch the plan. On 12 April, the Ministry of Communications issued ‘Radio Programme Censorship Criteria’ so that broadcasting’s content standards aligned with other creative industries in the cultural enterprise system. Thereafter, the Broadcasting Administration censored content that:

1. Contravenes Nationalist Party doctrine
2. Endangers national security
3. Harms social order
4. Violates good customs
5. Insults other people or the ancient sages
6. Promotes superstition
7. Contains obscene words and lyrics
8. Advertises banned products or publications
9. Advertises drugs or venues that are harmful to body and mind
10. Violates other government laws and decrees<sup>124</sup>

This new set of criteria further consolidated party-state control over private broadcasting content and paved the way for the CC Clique to nationalise the industry.

The same day that the ministry announced the Radio Programme Censorship Criteria, the Supervisory Committee passed two more measures to standardise the industry operations. The first measure was a set forth penalties for violating the censorship criteria. Afterwards, private stations would receive a warning for minor offences and up to a seven-day suspension for multiple violations. If content promoted foreign propaganda, harmed social order, or slandered party doctrine, a private station could receive up to a thirty-day suspension or even lose its broadcasting license.<sup>125</sup>

The second measure mandated that private stations must follow a standard industry schedule. Modelled on the Central Station, the Broadcasting Administration provided private broadcasters with templates to organise their daily schedule. The standards required that all private stations must broadcast a minimum of five hours each day. The maximum airtime per day depended on station size: stations with less than fifty watts were limited to ten hours a day; stations with fifty watts to one kilowatt were limited to twelve hours a day; and stations with

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<sup>123</sup> ‘Guangbo jiaoyu shishi banfa’, 22–23.

<sup>124</sup> ‘Boyin jiemu neirong shencha biao zhun’ 播音節目內容審查標準, *GBZB*, 1 May 1937, 32.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Minying guangbo diantai weibei “zhidao bosong jiemu banfa” zhi chufen jianze’ 民營廣播電台違背指導播送節目辦法之處分簡則, *Jiaotong gongbao* 交通公報, no. 862 (14 April 1937): 10–12.

more than one kilowatt were limited to fifteen hours per day. Moreover, the standards forbade broadcasting between the hours of 12.00 and 6.00 a.m., except for Saturday and Sunday when stations could stay on-air until 1.00 a.m. Private stations were allowed to choose from a range of start times between 6.00 and 10.00 a.m. and stop times between 9.00 p.m. and 12.00 a.m., and they were to broadcast in three time blocks each day, taking breaks during non-peak hours.

The standard templates also mandated the length and sequence of local programming. The templates provided for a 62:38 ratio of entertainment to educational content with entertainment and educational programmes alternating throughout the broadcast day. To ensure a 60:40 entertainment to education ratio, Nationalist Radio required that private stations embed commercial news, weather reports, Chiang Kai-shek's *Words of Warning*, and common knowledge segments within entertainment. In addition, the templates restricted the ten most popular local genres in Shanghai to two hours of airtime each day (see figure 14).<sup>126</sup>

Start	End	Total	Programme Content	Category
07.00	07.20	00.20	Morning Exercise (relay or record)	Education
07.20	07.30	00.10	Sports Knowledge or hygiene, moral character or self-cultivation	Education
07.30	08.10	00.40	Storytelling, lyric verse, drama or music (national, military, or western (no dancing music)) or majestic songs	Entertainment
08.10	08.40	00.30	National language instruction or other educational programme suitable for primary school students (a series)	Education
08.40	09.00	00.20	Storytelling, lyric verse, drama or music (national, military, or western (no dance songs)) or majestic songs	Entertainment
09.00	12.00	—	Break	—
12.00	12.40	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments (ten genres, regional operas, comic dialogues, cross talk, drama, western music (including dance songs))	Entertainment
12.40	13.00	00.20	Defence knowledge or other national defence learning	Education
13.00	13.40	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
13.40	14.00	00.20	Educational programme (everyday life skills)	Education
14.00	16.00	—	Break	—
16.00	16.40	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
16.40	17.00	00.20	Educational programme (long or short stories)	Education
17.00	17.40	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
17.40	18.00	00.20	Family Programme	Education
18.00	18.40	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
18.40	19.00	00.20	Children's education	Education
19.00	20.00	01.00	Fine music programme - one to two segments (national, military, majestic, western (no dance songs), Peking opera, drama, big drum, regional operas, popular historical stories, storytelling, lyric verse)	Entertainment
20.00	21.05	01.05	Relay of Central Station	Education
21.05	22.00	00.55	Fine music programme - one to two segments	Entertainment
22.00	22.20	00.20	Educational programme (all types of common knowledge)	Education
22.20	23.00	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
23.00	23.20	00.20	Educational programme (long or short stories)	Education
23.20	24.00	00.40	All types of entertainment - one or two segments	Entertainment
24.00	—	—	Sign off	—

Figure 14: A standard twelve-hour private station schedule for a 100-watt station. From 'Zanding minying diantai boyin jiemu Shijian biao' 暫定民營電台播音節目時間標準表, GBZB, 10 April 1937, 29.

<sup>126</sup> 'Minying diantai boyin jiemu', 28.



To facilitate the production of educational content at local public and private stations, Nationalist Radio also published the ‘Educational Programme Material Standards’ in April 1937. Based on reference works that programme writers at the Central Station used to produce entertainment and educational programming, the material standards were a do-it-yourself guide for radio content from pre-approved publications in eight categories (see figure 15).

No.	Programme Name	Materials
1	Sports knowledge and other learning about hygiene, moral character, and self-cultivation	All sports magazines; hygiene textbooks; New Life Movement theory and practice; essays and speeches on the cultivation of youth that promote the four bonds and eight virtues
2	Educational programmes for upper primary and middle school students	National language records by Bai Dizhou, Ma Guoying or Zhao Yuanren; primary and middle school textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education
3	Foreign language instruction	Spoken English records and middle school textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education
4	Educational and general knowledge lectures	<i>Broadcast Weekly</i> ; <i>Broadcast Education</i> ; transcripts of Memorial Week talk in local newspapers; <i>Scientific China</i> ; <i>Science Illustrated</i> ; <i>Science World</i> ; <i>Science</i> ; <i>Citizen Training Lecture Series</i> by New World; Civil education textbooks by major publishers; history and geography textbooks and border issues by major publishers; travel accounts of China and abroad; travel magazines; provincial and county gazetteers
5	Defence knowledge or other learning about national defence	<i>Defence Knowledge</i> , volumes one and two by the Central Station; <i>War Knowledge</i> series by New World; essays and speeches promoting national consciousness, patriotism, and the national goods movement; Hygiene and first-aid knowledge in Central Station transcripts
6	Family programmes and children’s education	<i>Modern Parents</i> ; <i>Noah’s Ark</i> ; <i>Family Knowledge Compilation</i> ; <i>Family Weekly</i> ; books on family issues by major publishers; newspaper supplements on family issues in major newspapers; <i>Children’s Library</i> and <i>Grimm’s Fairy Tales</i> by Commercial Press; all categories of children’s books by Children’s Press; <i>Youth Story Collection</i> by Cheng Chung Book Company; any children’s book or writing by a major publisher carried in the newspaper
7	Long and short stories	Popular historical novels from the <i>Twenty-Four Histories</i> ; popular historical novels by Hui Wen Tang book company; <i>Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou Kingdoms</i> ; <i>Romance of the Sui and Tang Dynasties</i> ; <i>Speaking on the Tang</i> ; <i>Fragmentary Texts of the Five Dynasties</i> ; <i>Accounts of the Emperors</i> ; <i>Speaking on Yue Fei</i> ; <i>Heroic Accounts of the Great Ming</i> ; <i>Zheng He’s Journey to the Western Seas</i> ; <i>Flowers in the Mirror</i> ; <i>A Tale of Heroes and Lovers</i> ; <i>Stories of Caution to the World</i> ; <i>Stories to Awaken the World</i> ; <i>Illustrious Words to Instruct the World</i> ; <i>A Fate in Tears and Laughter</i> ; <i>Brief Biographies of Great Men in Imperial China</i> ; <i>Records of Great Men in Chinese History</i> ; <i>Great Men of Science</i> ; biographies of great men by major publishers; stories of great men in history published in the ‘popular lectures column’ in the <i>Shanghai Journal</i> supplement; patriotic stories from around the world; <i>History of National Humiliation</i> ; <i>Regret for a Fallen Nation</i> ; and, <i>Adventure Stories</i> by Cheng Chung Book Company
8	News	Central News Agency dispatches or local newspaper articles marked ‘Central News Agency Wire Service’

Figure 15: Education Programming Material Standards, April 1937. From ‘Jiaoyu jiemu cailiao biaoqun’ 教育節目材料標準, GBZB, 8 May 1937, 34–36.

The material standards thus targeted the weakest link in the local station programming mix. Often understaffed and underfunded, local stations needed help to produce enough educational content to comply with the sixty-forty ratio in the Radio Education Implementation Plan. However, Central Station broadcast section chief Fan Benzong also was critical of public broadcasters. While Fan believed that private stations played too much entertainment, he also thought that public stations broadcast too much governmental information:

As for the public radio stations that in general belong to provincial and municipal governments, the original purpose for their creation was to disseminate provincial and municipal government orders and decrees. However, a province after all does not have many government orders and decrees that can be broadcast to a listening audience every day. Moreover, there are still aspects that are not convenient to publicise at will. Therefore, the programme content of these public radio stations must depart from the primary subject of propaganda and become more generalised and educational.<sup>127</sup>

Fan therefore believed that both public and private stations needed to diversify by developing more educational content. The reference works in the material standards functioned as a scalable blueprint for local content producers to create quality programmes that were entertaining, educational, and complied with the principles of cultural construction.<sup>128</sup>

The final element of the nationalisation of the industry was the training of radio talent. Under the Radio Education Implementation Plan, Nationalist Radio planned to provide station personnel with training in the areas of party doctrine, technology, linguistics, and management,<sup>129</sup> which would include the 457 private-station employees in Shanghai.<sup>130</sup> Even though the educational level of broadcasting talent in Shanghai was higher than the national average (see table 13), Nationalist Radio wanted to raise the bar to the level of the Central Station, which required that all staff hold at least a middle-school diploma:<sup>131</sup>

Table 13: Educational Background of Broadcasting Personnel in Shanghai, 1936

School Type	Number	Percentage
Illiterate, No Education	61	13%
Some Primary School	74	16%
Traditional Private School	159	35%
Primary School Graduate	25	5%
Middle School Education	120	26%
University Education	18	4%
Total	457	100%

Source: ‘Congyeyuan chushen diaocha’, 300.

In preparation to roll out industry training, the Broadcasting Administration published instructional materials for local-station staff in *Broadcast Weekly*.<sup>132</sup> On 1 May 1937, it issued ‘Broadcasting Guide’, which was written by Harvard linguist Zhao Yuanren. Zhao’s guide

<sup>127</sup> Fan Benzong, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 193.

<sup>128</sup> ‘Jiaoyu jiemu cailiao biao’, 36.

<sup>129</sup> ‘Zhongyang changwu weiyuanhui jiaoxia’, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Shanghai guangbo congnyeyuan chushen diaocha’ 上海廣播從業員出身調查, *Diansheng*, 29 January 1937, 300.

<sup>131</sup> Pei Gao, ‘Risen from the Chaos: The Development of Modern Education in China, 1905–1948’, (PhD Diss., London School of Economics, 2015), 68, 70–71, 75–76, 82.

<sup>132</sup> Diwuci huiyi jilu, CBSC, Guoshiguan, 017000001823A.

summarised the learnings of the Central Station since 1928, organising thirty skills into six areas: equipment, sound, language, copywriting, content, and etiquette. From tips on how to speak into the microphone to guidance on pronunciation, word selection, paragraph structure, and programme length, Nationalist Radio issued the guide in an effort to improve the overall quality of broadcasting operations in the National Broadcasting Network.<sup>133</sup>

The guide's most important section concerned the preparation of programme content. The content section instructed presenters to keep topics small and concrete in order to avoid vague generalisations. It also taught them that, unlike written composition, each part of a radio talk was to have a short summary before moving on to the next section, and the talk's end should summarise the main points because repetition on the radio was important to improving listening comprehension. Moreover, the content section instructed presenters not to include too much information in one segment because 'listeners cannot learn many things in a short amount of time'. Instead, Zhao conveyed to them that 'the value of broadcasting is that it can inspire questions and arouse an interest in continued research'. Zhao therefore advised presenters to provide specific chapters or page numbers in a book so that listeners could read them off-air. Moreover, he warned them to avoid referring only to a book's title because he believed that the idea of reading an entire book would intimidate many listeners. Finally, the content section recommended that presenters should encourage listeners to take some kind of action, such as buying a notebook to keep a journal after a self-improvement programme, or studying plants in a nearby garden or field after a botany lecture. In short, the objective was to inspire listeners to apply what they learned on-air to their everyday lives.<sup>134</sup>

### **The Spirit of the Industry**

The nationalisation of the industry was a turning point in Chinese broadcasting history. By combining the National Broadcasting Network Plan and the Radio Education Implementation Plan, the CC Clique not only created the first national network but also ensured that the industry would remain firmly under its control.<sup>135</sup> The Radio Education Implementation Plan also determined the spirit of the industry. Radio broadcasting therefore became an important tool in the delivery of education not only to schools but also to the general public. In 1937, the CC Clique launched a three-phase plan radioify the schools and public

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<sup>133</sup> Zhao Yuanren 趙元任 [Yuen Ren Chao], 'Guangbo xuzhi' 廣播須知, *GBZB*, 1 May 1937, 32–35.

<sup>134</sup> Zhao, 'Guangbo xuzhi', 35.

<sup>135</sup> 'Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu', 172.

spaces over a five-year period.<sup>136</sup> As a result, the spirit of the industry became the edification of the general public through radio edutainment based on the principles of cultural construction.

### *Rolling-out Radio Education*

The CC Clique first laid the foundation for the nationalisation of the industry in mid-1935. As Chen Guofu lobbied to establish the cultural enterprise planning system in 1935, Nationalist Radio and the Ministry of Education launched a plan to deliver centralised instruction to 3,465 educational venues (1,956 government secondary schools and 1,509 institutes for popular education) on 10 October 1935.<sup>137</sup> To this end, the ministry conducted a nationwide survey to determine the number of radio receivers needed for the roll-out, and it discovered that 855 secondary schools and institutes for popular education already had radios. The ministry therefore devised a distribution plan to install 2,610 radios in the remaining secondary schools by December 1936 and institutes for popular education by June 1937.<sup>138</sup>

The Ministry of Education centralised the production and distribution of receivers to speed the radioification of secondary schools and institutes for popular education. To reduce cost, improve quality, and speed installation, the ministry commissioned the Chinese Government Radio Works to produce the first batch of 1,000 Chigora-brand receivers in June 1935 and distributed 810 set to schools and institutes by year's end.<sup>139</sup> To accelerate radioification in poorer peripheral regions, the ministry ordered provincial education departments to reimburse the full cost of each receiver—about 100 yuan—to schools and institutes in Gansu, Xinjiang, Chahar, Suiyuan, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan.<sup>140</sup> In Tibet, the ministry spent 1,000 yuan to install an American-made radio in Lhasa and powered it with a 1,000-yuan electrical generator to broadcast the Central Station over loudspeakers.<sup>141</sup> In all other provinces, education departments reimbursed schools for half the cost of each radio, which was about fifty yuan. Furthermore, to ensure that schools and institutes used the radios, the ministry ordered education bureaux to subsidise the cost to power them. In 1935, bureaux

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<sup>136</sup> 'Jiaoyubu dingding ershiliu niandu quanguo xiaoxue ji minzhong xuexiao zhuangshe wuxiandian shouyinji banfa' 教育部訂定二十六年全國小學及民眾學校裝設無線電收音辦法, *BYJK* 1, no. 9 (July 1937): 155.

<sup>137</sup> *Zhonghua Minguo tongji*, 196, 200.

<sup>138</sup> 'Quanguo zhongdeng xuexiao ji minzhong jiaoyu guan zhuangshe wuxiandian shouyinji banfa dagang' 全國中等學校及民眾教育館裝設無線電收音機辦法大綱, *BYJK* 1, no. 1 (November 1936): 203–05.

<sup>139</sup> 'Jiaoyubu ershiwu niandu shishi boyin jiaoyu jihua' 教育部二十五年度實施播音教育計畫, *BYJK* 1, no. 2 (December 1936): 171–72; 'Quanguo zhongdeng xuexiao ji minzhong jiaoyu guan zhuangshe wuxiandian shouyinji banfa dagang', *BYJK* 1, no. 1 (November 1936): 171.

<sup>140</sup> 'Buzhu ge shengshi ershisi niandu zhuangzhi wuxiandian shouyinji banfa' 補助各省市二十四年度裝置無線電收音機辦法, *BYJK* 1, no. 1 (November 1936): 210–11.

<sup>141</sup> 'Xizang jiang zhuangshe juxing shouyinji' 西藏將裝設巨型收音機, *BYJK* 1, no. 8 (June 1937): 168.

provided schools with alternating-current radios a twenty-yuan subsidy to cover the estimated annual cost of electricity, and they gave schools with direct-current radios an annual 100-yuan subsidy to replace dry-cell batteries every three months.<sup>142</sup>

The radioification of schools and institutions continued apace in 1936 and 1937. In early 1936, the ministry ordered a batch of 1,000 receivers from the China Government Radio Works and purchased another 809 from the China Electric Company.<sup>143</sup> In early 1937, it supplied the remaining schools and institutes with Chigora and China Electric radio receivers from a third batch of 1,370 sets.<sup>144</sup> By mid 1937, the CC Clique had radiofied all 3,465 government secondary schools and institutes for popular education, and 482,522 students were tuning in to in-school radio education programmes four times each week.<sup>145</sup>

### *Organising Radio Education*

The CC Clique placed radio education under the Ministry of Education's social education department. In the fall of 1936, the social education department organised a two-month course for 146 audio-visual educators from twenty-five provinces at Ginling College in Nanjing. Radio educators received academic instruction in pedagogy, physics, electronics, and mechanics, and they gained practical experience making, repairing, and operating audio-visual equipment.<sup>146</sup> The social education department divided the educators into a two groups: the radio group had fifty-four trainees and the film group had ninety-two. Apart from the radio group receiving extra instruction in receiver design and component testing, both groups took the same set of core courses so that they could manage both audio and visual education in their home provinces.<sup>147</sup>

The Ministry of Education established audio-visual offices at the provincial to administer radio education in early 1937. The ministry divided China's thirty-one provinces and direct municipalities into 157 districts where audio-visual educators inspected local operations, held in-school events, and repaired electrical equipment.<sup>148</sup> In Zhejiang, audio-

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<sup>142</sup> 'Ershiwu niandu Jiaoyubu buzhu ge shengshi zhuangzhi wuxiandian shouyinji banfa' 二十五年度教育部補助各省市裝置無線電收音機辦法, *BYJK* 1, no. 3 (January 1937): 149–50.

<sup>143</sup> 'Shishi boyin jiaoyu jihua', 172–73.

<sup>144</sup> 'Jiaoyubu boyin jiaoyu weiyuanhui disanci huiyi jixiang' 教育部播音教育委員會第三次會議記詳, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 167.

<sup>145</sup> *Zhonghua Minguo tongji*, 196.

<sup>146</sup> 'Jiaoyubu kaiban dianhua jiaoyu renyuan xunlianban' 教育部開辦電化教育人員訓練班, *BYJK* 1, no. 1 (November 1936): 202.

<sup>147</sup> 'Shishi boyin jiaoyu jihua', 173.

<sup>148</sup> 'Ge shengshi jiaoyu tingju zhuban dianhua jiaoyu xingzheng renyuan zhuyi yaodian' 各省市教育廳局主辦電化教育行政人員注意要點, *BYJK* 1, no. 8 (June 1937): 172–73; 'Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu', 159.

visual educators commissioned local manufacturers to produce radios for all primary schools and trained local audio-visual personnel to expand radio education within the province.<sup>149</sup> In Jiangsu, audio-visual educators developed a model ‘Open School’ in Zhenjiang to promote radio education provincewide.<sup>150</sup> However, the ministry discovered that the first cohort of audio-visual educators were better administrators than technicians, so it organised a second course to train technicians to support radio education in the spring of 1937.<sup>151</sup> For the second training course, the ministry only admitted high-school graduates with degrees in science and engineering, who could handle both the administrative and technical aspects of audio-visual education at the district level.<sup>152</sup> On 15 July 1937, 110 trainees from twenty-six provinces arrived to Nanjing to study pedagogy, mechanics, physics, and electronics taught by professors from Ginling College and the Central University. They then began a six-month apprenticeship in the ministry’s new radio factory in Nanjing, under the personal supervision of an army drill sergeant who instilled military discipline in the young male (and one female) trainees.<sup>153</sup> Their training, however, was interrupted by the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

The ministry also developed infrastructure to support the expansion of radio education. The ministry first established a workshop in late 1936 to make dry-cell radio batteries in order to reduce the cost of powering direct-current receivers in places that had no electricity.<sup>154</sup> By February 1937, the ministry workshop had grown into a small factory that produced battery chargers and high-voltage rechargeable batteries that were cheaper and longer lasting than regular batteries and could be used in places with night-time power generation.<sup>155</sup> The ministry then decided to produce radio receivers for both primary and adult schools. In June, the ministry announced that the first batch of 200 receivers for the schools would be completed by August, and that the radio factory would ramp up production to 1,000 sets before the end of 1937.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> ‘Zhejiang sheng jiaoyuting ershiliu niandu dianhua jiaoyu shishi jihua 浙江省教育廳二十六年電化教育實施計畫’, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 178.

<sup>150</sup><sup>150</sup> ‘Jiangsu shengli Zhenjiang minzhong jiaoyu guan dianbo jiaoyu zhi shiyan’ 江蘇省立鎮江民眾教育館電播教育之實驗, *BYJK* 1, no. 9 (July 1937): 167–68.

<sup>151</sup> ‘Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu’, 171–72.

<sup>152</sup> ‘Jiaoyubu shehui jiaoyusi yu ge shengshi hanshang boyin jiaoyu jishu ren yuan zhi xunlian shiyi’ 教育部社會教育司與各省市函商播音教育技術人員之訓練事宜, *BYJK* 1, no. 9 (July 1937): 155–56.

<sup>153</sup> ‘Jiaoyubu dianhua jiaoyu ren yuan xunlian ban di er qi gaikuang 教育部電化教育人員訓練班第二期概況’, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 169–70.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu’, 173.

<sup>155</sup> ‘Jiaoyubu boyin jiaoyu weiyuanhui zizhi gaoya xudianchi dinggou banfa shuoming’ 教育部播音教育委員會自製高壓蓄電池訂購辦法說明書, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 176–77.

<sup>156</sup> ‘Disanci huiyi jixiang’, 167.

## *Producing Radio Education*

The social education department became an important production centre for radio education. Upon completion of the first academic year in 1936, the department published a collection of the best lectures for secondary schools and institutions of popular education in two separate two-volume sets.<sup>157</sup> The social education department then launched the trade publication *Radio Education Monthly* (播音教育月刊), which featured news, information, essays, and Central Station lectures for local station staff and educators.<sup>158</sup> It also published a seven-volume set of radio lectures based on the Central Station programme *Adult School Textbook Instruction*. Each book contained a series of twenty-minute radio lectures for local stations in the areas of home economics, nutrition, global education, popular science, pesticides, National Language, and Chinese philosophy.<sup>159</sup> To produce content in-house, the Ministry of Education built a sound studio to record new lectures, such as Zhao Yuanren's talks on the National Language, which Pathé Records reproduced and distributed to local stations and institutes for popular education.<sup>160</sup> As the ministry built up its in-house production capabilities, Nationalist Radio continued to broadcast lectures to schools and institutes from Monday to Saturday. Furthermore, the ministry formed a Radio Education Committee that included Central Station broadcast section chief Fan Benzong to work out the bugs in radio education.

The biggest problem with radio education early on had been the instructors. At first, the ministry had invited university professors to give the radio lectures. However, their topics were often too 'esoteric' for the audience and their Mandarin was hard to understand.<sup>161</sup> The main issue was that the professors did not present topics suitable for young un- or under-educated youth.<sup>162</sup> The education ministry therefore later adjusted the in-school radio lectures to synchronise the content with the actual curriculum in secondary schools and institutes for popular education. Lectures for secondary students focused on mass education to inculcate basic academic skills and attitudes, and the lectures for institutes for popular education targeted working teens and young adults who had not been able to complete their education when

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<sup>157</sup> 'Jiaoyubu chuban jiaoyu boyin jiangyan ji bojiao yuekan' 教育部出版教育播音講演集及播教月刊, *BYJK* 1, no. 3 (January 1937): 147–48; 'Jiaoyu boyin jiangyan ji diersi chuban' 教育播音講演集第二輯出版, *BYJK* 1, no. 8 (June 1937): 168.

<sup>158</sup> 'Chuban jiaoyu boyin jiangyan', 148.

<sup>159</sup> 'Jiaoyubu shehui jiaoyusi bianyin jiaoyu boyin xiacongshu jinkuang' 教育部社會教育司編印教育播音小叢書近況, *BYJK* 1, no. 8 (June 1937): 168; 'Zhongyang guangbo diantai boyin jiemu yugao' 中央廣播電台播音節目預告, *GBZB*, 23 January 1937, 2.

<sup>160</sup> 'Jiaoyubu deng she guanyinshi' 教育部等設灌音室, *BYJK* 1, no. 6 (April 1937): 136; 'Jiaoyubu guanzhi liushengpian' 教育部灌製留聲片, *BYJK* 1, no. 7 (May 1937): 141.

<sup>161</sup> Fan, 'Boyin yu Jiaoyu', 1429.

<sup>162</sup> 'Ershiliu niandu boyin jiaoyu', 170.

younger. Thus, secondary-school lectures focused on science (36 percent), current events (18 percent), personal cultivation (14 percent), and they covered such topics as career guidance, sports, hygiene, art appreciation, and general education. Lectures for students at institutes for popular education tended to be more general, teaching students about military knowledge (15 percent), current events (13 percent), and civics (11 percent). The institutes also taught students about occupation skills, nature, hygiene, home economics, history, and geography.<sup>163</sup> Local education bureaux and radio stations also promoted the educational lectures at institutes for popular education in local newspapers. In Shanghai, for instance, *Shanghai Journal* published the broadcast times so that the general public could attend.<sup>164</sup>

Instead of using part-time professors and paying them honorariums, the social education department later hired a team of full-time radio presenters who spoke fluent Mandarin and who could write age-appropriate content based on the actual curricula used in secondary schools and institutes for popular education.<sup>165</sup> For secondary students, the Central Station adjusted the schedule to broadcast three lectures each week: the first was about social science (history, geography, politics, or economics); the second was on natural science (physics, chemistry, natural phenomena, or hygiene); and the third provided Chinese- or English-language instruction. During holidays, secondary school lectures focused on the arts, music, crafts, and aesthetics. For learners at institutes for popular education, the weekly radio lectures supplemented a one-year in-class curriculum focusing on the development of occupational skills, general knowledge, civic education, literacy, and National Language pronunciation.<sup>166</sup>

With its team of professional writers and presenters in place, the education ministry was ready to roll-out radio education to primary and adult schools in the fall of 1937. To prepare for the launch, the ministry conducted a survey in early 1937 to determine which schools needed radios. The survey found that many urban schools already had receivers; for example, thirty-three primary schools in Shanghai already had installed radios.<sup>167</sup> In the first phase of the roll-out, the ministry planned to distribute 3,000 radios to pilot schools in large county towns.<sup>168</sup> To accelerate distribution, it underwrote the total cost of each unit and required local government to reimburse schools for the cost of electricity. By all accounts,

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<sup>163</sup> ‘Boyin jiaoyu jihua’, 174.

<sup>164</sup> ‘Boyin jiaoyu jihua’, 175.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Gaijin jiaoyu boyin jiemu fang’an’ 改進教育播音方案, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 174.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Gaijin jiaoyu boyin’, 174–75.

<sup>167</sup> Wang, ‘Shanghai guangbo yu shehui’, 75–76.

<sup>168</sup> ‘Jiaoyubu banfa ge xianshi chouji xiaoxue ji minzhong xuexiao shouyinji weichi jingfei banfa dagang’ 教育部頒發各縣市籌集小學及民眾學校收音機維持經費辦法大綱, *BYJK* 1, no. 10 (October 1937): 168.



primary schools were enthusiastic about bringing radio education into the classroom. For example, local governments in Fujian, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang purchased their own radios in advance rather than wait for a free receiver so that they could start radio education in the fall of 1937.<sup>169</sup> It was within this context that Fan Benzong shared his experience with local broadcasters and educators on how to produce radio entertainment that was educational and education that was entertaining, as the Central Station prepared to roll-out the national broadcasting network and produce radio education for the general public.

### *Popularising Radio Education*

As broadcast section chief at the Central Station, Fan Benzong had been involved with radio education since its inception in 1935 and was a member of the radio education committee that had overhauled on-air instruction in early 1937. Since his focus was to produce content for a mass audience, however, his interpretation of radio education was much broader than his colleagues at the education ministry. In fact, Fan regarded music, drama, sports, propaganda, and news programming just as rich in educational content and even more effective in promoting national consciousness, boosting morale, and encouraging the healthy physical and mental development of individual.<sup>170</sup> As a result, he was critical of university professors who presented on-air lectures because ‘the average educational radio programme often overestimates the knowledge level of the audience, assuming that listeners are high school and university graduates, or even those who have studied abroad’.<sup>171</sup> He argued that radio education should be made for the average listener, i.e., ‘the illiterate masses who did not possess general knowledge’. He therefore advised local station writers and presenters to imagine the listeners circling around the radio on the other side, and he urged them to make the content for them:

Those who shoulder the responsibility of speaking should first close their eyes in front of the microphone and think about the listeners circling around the radio on the other side. They are not secondary school students or university students but are the general public with superficial knowledge. You should think about how to broadcast to them using simple analogies, detailed interpretations, and repeated explanations.<sup>172</sup>

Fan Benzong advocated for the integration of education and entertainment into the programming mix since becoming the Central Station broadcast section chief in 1934. In mid-

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<sup>169</sup> ‘Xiaoxue yule shi zhuangzhi shouyinji’ 小學娛樂室裝置收音機, *Jimei zhouban* 集美周刊 21, 1 June 1937, 65–66; ‘Gao’an ge xiao jiang pu zhuang shouyinji’ 高安各校將普裝收音機, *Jiangxi difang jiaoyu* 江西地方教育, no. 87 (21 July 1937): 31; ‘Zhejiang sheng jiaoyuting’, 178.

<sup>170</sup> Fan, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 203–04.

<sup>171</sup> Fan, ‘Jiaoyu yu yule’, 1429.

<sup>172</sup> Fan, 1429.

1937, Fan believed that the broadcasting industry should focus on radio programming, arguing that earlier interest in medium as a novel ‘student apparatus’ and ‘household plaything’ to receive sound from afar had been eclipsed by an even greater interest in content. Fan regarded the ideal radio programme as one that blended entertainment and education into one because Fan believed that entertainment was the thing that interested the audience the most.<sup>173</sup>

After eight hours of work in a government office, factory, school, shop, or field, the average listener needs a considerable amount of diversion and entertainment for his mind and body when he returns home. If we only provide long speeches with many lessons or theories for reception all the time, how disappointed will they be when facing the radio at this time! The natural instinct of most people is to love leisure and hate labour, and there is no one who does not pay attention to entertainment on the radio.<sup>174</sup>

Fan thus argued that the nature of educational programming on the National Broadcasting Network should differ from book learning because the way that the average listener absorbed information on the radio was very different from traditional in-school instruction.<sup>175</sup>

Fan’s ideas on radio education were based on his observations of listening habits. He had noticed ‘a curious phenomenon’ over time, namely that the audience would ‘hear but not listen’ (聽而不聞), i.e., they would listen passively when the radio was on at home, the office, a shop, or the classroom. Fan hypothesised that listeners’ interests governed whether they paid attention to ambient radio content. He first noticed this phenomenon when women began to turn on the radio throughout the day while doing housework. He then noticed that men paid attention to selective bits of broadcasting content like one would skim a newspaper. He also observed that groups of mahjong players did not seem to pay attention to radio music when at the tables.<sup>176</sup> Fan postulated that these different audiences had one thing in common: they listened to the radio in a state of distraction. He therefore argued that the National Broadcasting Network should integrate radio education into entertainment because ‘it can be a constant source of spiritual comfort to both the educated and uneducated’.<sup>177</sup> Fan hoped that listeners would feel the positive physical and mental effects of radio education when ‘they unconsciously hear a couple of sentences or become aware of a few points’ while listening to

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<sup>173</sup> Fan, ‘Jiaoyu yu yule’, 1429.

<sup>174</sup> Fan, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 203–204.

<sup>175</sup> Fan, 203.

<sup>176</sup> Fan, ‘Jiaoyu yu yule’, 1428.

<sup>177</sup> Fan, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 197.

entertainment in a state of distraction.<sup>178</sup> According to Fan, ‘this sort of effect is most easily obtained in entertainment programming, and that is what education is all about’.<sup>179</sup>

## Conclusion

The establishment of Nationalist Radio as a cultural enterprise in January 1936 and the subsequent nationalisation of airtime, content, and operations paved the way for the nationalisation of the Chinese broadcasting industry under the guise of radio education in 1937. During this period, the CC Clique through the Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee consolidated regulatory control over private broadcasting, built radio infrastructure, and established the National Broadcasting Network. Nationalist Radio also imported an American radio factory to produce valves to reduce China’s reliance on foreign technology and launched a plan with the Ministry of Education to radioify schools and public spaces across the nation. Although the CC Clique had already determined that the principles of cultural construction would govern radio programming in the future, it still needed to conceptualise the nature of broadcasting content. To this end, Fan Benzong defined the spirit of the industry: radio education was to entertain the audience so that the average listener would learn a thing or two about Sunist doctrine, New Life practices, the Chinese tradition, and Western learning and thereby raise national consciousness and strengthen the spiritual national defence.

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<sup>178</sup> Fan, ‘Guangbo shiye’, 204–05.

<sup>179</sup> Fan, 204–205

## CONCLUSION: THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALIST RADIO

In the midst of international turmoil, China must determine the path that it should take on its own, especially on the eve of this world's second great war, and how should we actively prepare for it.

The second world war is key to the rise and fall of the Chinese nation. If we do not work hard, the pain one to two years from now is bound to be much deeper than today. Therefore, we live in this extraordinary time and will undoubtedly bear this extraordinary task with extraordinary spirit. In this world where the weak become the prey of the strong, there is no sympathy or compassionate assistance.

We must never forget that we are Chinese, the descendants of the Yellow Emperor! 'China will absolutely never die, because why? I am here!' All 450 million compatriots must think this way. We must believe in ourselves with the utmost confidence.<sup>1</sup>

—Zhang Lin, *Broadcast Weekly*, 10 July 1937

The Marco Polo Bridge Incident on 7 July 1937 ended the expansion of the National Broadcasting Network and inaugurated an eight-year struggle to rebuild a network in the interior to support the war effort. After Chiang Kai-shek defined the limit of China's endurance at the Second Lushan Conference on 17 July, Nationalist Radio mobilised the nation for war. As the Twenty-ninth Army fought Japanese troops in Hebei, Nationalist Radio replaced Peking opera and other musical entertainment with Chiang Kai-shek's *Words of Warnings*, marching band music, and patriotic songs, which the writer Mao Dun welcomed,<sup>2</sup> and it established a sound studio at the Central News Agency to broadcast live updates from the front.<sup>3</sup> According to Carlton Benson, radio sales in Shanghai hit record levels in September as the Philco radio company reported that 'wholesale was never better'.<sup>4</sup> The Japanese assault on Shanghai and subsequent aerial bombing of Nanjing in August, however, resulted in the destruction of the small shortwave station on Purple Mountain and the death of radio engineer Zhang Dezhang, who had just returned to China after eight months in England working at British Marconi on the new thirty-five-kilowatt shortwave station that was bound for Chongqing.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Central Station suffered minimal damage during the bombing raids, the writing was on the wall. Nationalist Radio transferred personnel and equipment to Changsha in September and established a makeshift shortwave station in Wuhan. In October, non-

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang Lin 張琳, 'Zhongguo de qiantu' 中國的前途, *GBZB*, 10 July 1937, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 79; Carlton Benson, 'Business as Usual', 285.

<sup>3</sup> *Zhongguang dashiji*, 30.

<sup>4</sup> Carlton Benson, 'Business as Usual', 284.

<sup>5</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 74.

essential staff were allowed to return home as the fighting intensified in Shanghai, and a skeleton crew remained behind to operate the Central Station. On 23 November, three days after the government evacuated Nanjing, Chen Lifu ordered station personnel to stop broadcasting at midnight and transfer the XGOA call sign to Radio Changsha. They then sabotaged all immovable equipment and transported a shipload of mobile wireless gear upriver.

One day after the equipment arrived to Wuhan, Chiang Kai-shek countermanded Chen Lifu's order and sent a team back to Nanjing to broadcast from the capital while government troops still held the city. Fan Benzhong therefore led three others downriver to operate the station, arriving on 1 December. However, the situation was hopeless. The capital had no power, and station generators were inoperable. Fan and his team therefore salvaged as much equipment as possible and set sail on two wooden junks after their steamer failed to collect them at the Xiaguan pier. At the same time, Wu Daoyi commandeered a ship in Wuhan and set out to find Fan and his team on the Yangtze. Wu found them four days later just north of Wuhu, which lay in ruins, and they returned to Wuhan on 13 December, the day that Nanjing fell to Japan. With this final shipment of equipment, Nationalist Radio was able to build a ten-kilowatt Central Station in the wartime capital of Chongqing.<sup>6</sup>

By the end of December 1937, the Nationalists transferred all assets and personnel under the Broadcasting Administration to the Military Affairs Commission.<sup>7</sup> The CC Clique then deployed Nationalist Radio on the fourth front to mobilise the nation and counter Japanese propaganda. Thus, broadcast propaganda promoted cultural construction for domestic audiences and solicited the support of the international community. To this end, the CC Clique began to build broadcasting ramparts in the southwest. By 1941, Nationalist Radio operated twelve stations in the interior, while another seven provincial and municipal broadcasters relayed its programming daily.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the number of radios was estimated to be 2 million units, which reached 'a much vaster audience since for several years every official department, every office of the governing party, and every school is obliged to possess a

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<sup>6</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 79–80.

<sup>7</sup> 'Mishuchu baogao' 秘書處報告, 23 December 1937, in *Zhongguo Guomindang diwujie zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui changwu weiyuanhui huiyi jilu huibian* 中國國民黨第五屆中央執行委員會常務委員會會議紀錄彙編, 'Di liushi ci huiyi' 第六十次會議, comp. Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu 中央委員會秘書處, 167. N.p.: Zhongyang weiyuanhui mishuchu, n.d.

<sup>8</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 102.

receiving installation accessible to all the inhabitants'.<sup>9</sup> The war only seemed to have accelerated radio nationalisation of the industry and the distribution of receivers nationwide.

The mission to produce broadcast propaganda for the party state remained the same during the war years. Nationalist Radio still served as the pulse of domestic information with powerful medium-wave stations in Chongqing and Kunming, and it possessed an even more powerful voice of international propaganda in a new shortwave station, the Voice of China. Nationalist Radio kept the virtual assembly hall of learning open, providing radio education and children's programming from the interior, and it promoted a spiritual national defence with cultural-construction-inspired radio plays, choral music, traditional operas, and stories of heroism from China's past to boost morale. Moreover, it broadcast live performances of both Western and Chinese music by the Central Station Band and National Music Orchestra.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Nationalist Radio aired *Transcript News* (紀錄新聞) at 3.30 a.m. to disseminate 'broadcast news' via the radio-operator network and provide occupied areas with news and information from Chongqing. Nationalist Radio ended the programme at 5.00 a.m. with 'March of the Volunteers' (義勇進行曲) to encourage the audience to contribute to the war effort. In my opinion, it is not a coincidence that 'March of the Volunteers' is the national anthem of China today because Nationalist Radio played the song every morning throughout the war. Such is the power of radio. Nonetheless, the CC Clique continued to use broadcasting as a tool of governance and a weapon war to promote nation-building. During the war years, the CC Clique continued to use broadcasting as a tool of governance and a weapon of war to instil military discipline into everyday life during the National Spiritual Mobilisation Movement.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Spirit of Radio Nationalisation**

This dissertation set out to show that Chen Guofu and the CC Clique consolidated regulatory control over radio and established a national network before the Second Sino-Japanese War. I therefore have argued that Nationalist Radio was an example of successful institution building. To this end, I have shown why broadcasting was central to Nationalist governance, and how the CC Clique integrated propaganda into radio during the Nanjing Decade. It had to do with what Cheng Fasheng identified as the most prominent feature of Nationalist Radio: propaganda. The mission of Nationalist Radio was to promote Sunism

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<sup>9</sup> Arno Huth, *Radio Today: The Present State of Broadcasting* (Geneva: Geneva Research Centre, 1942, repr., Arno Press, 1971), 124–25.

<sup>10</sup> Wu, *Zhongguang sishi*, 50–51; *Zhongguang dashiji*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Tsui, *Conservative Revolution*, 22.

during the phase of political tutelage, so the CC Clique placed broadcasting at the centre of the party state to propagate political tutelage.

Nationalist Radio was important to party-state governance for other reasons as well. The CC Clique's use of broadcasting to promote social, political, and cultural modernisation reflected a belief in scientism that was central to national reconstruction. The clique therefore used radio like a tool to streamline central-local communications and wielded it like a weapon in multimedia mobilisation campaigns. Broadcasting also was a tangible symbol of Chinese sovereignty and its relation to other forms of wireless communications had practical military and economic applications that magnified its strategic importance to the party state. Radio in fact was central to party-state efforts to employ science to overcome 'technological imperialism', and the CC Clique established 'networks behind the news' to influence public opinion domestically and give China an unmediated voice on the world stage.<sup>12</sup> The CC Clique thus established the radio-operator network and produced foreign-language newscasts in an effort to shape both domestic and international public opinion.

The CC Clique also implemented the nationalisation of the party state, the audience, and the industry. In the early years, Nationalist Radio promoted camaraderie through political activism in programmes like *Propaganda Report* and *Central Memorial Week*. The clique also used broadcasting to build a language that was 'unified in sound and script', as radio presenters became models for how to speak the National Language in everyday life.<sup>13</sup> With the spiritual turn and formation of a mass audience, the CC Clique aestheticised content to educate through entertainment and nationalise the audience.<sup>14</sup> The medium thereby became the message as radio embodied culture to become the foundation for a modern secular nationalism.<sup>15</sup> As China faced new threats on the fourth front and prepared for war against Japan, the CC Clique established Nationalist Radio as the model for the industry and made radio the centrepiece of the cultural enterprise system. The CC Clique therefore regulated private broadcasting, expanded infrastructure, and nationalised the industry in the name of education to raise the radio ramparts. As the Second World War approached, Fan Benzhong defined the spirit of the industry: broadcast propaganda was to educate the average listener with edutainment that conveyed cultural information to raise national consciousness and boost morale, as well as teach him or her practical knowledge for life in the modern world, which included total war.

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<sup>12</sup> Yang, *Technology of Empire*, 8–10; Tworek, *News from Germany*, 6–7.

<sup>13</sup> Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism*, 98–99.

<sup>14</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–2, 47, 97–101.

<sup>15</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 7–21.

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### Abbreviations

The bibliography contains English translations of all citation information to supplement the pinyin and Chinese characters that appear in the notes. The following short forms, abbreviations, and initialisations are used in the footnotes to avoid lengthy annotation:

<i>BYJK</i>	<i>Boyin jiaoyu yuekan</i> 播音教育月刊 [Radio education monthly]
CBSC	Zhongyang guangbo shiye zhidao weiyuanhui 中央廣播事業指導委員會 [Central Broadcasting Supervisory Committee]
<i>CGFXSBDJ</i>	<i>Chen Guofu xiansheng bainian danchen jinianji</i> 陳果夫先生百年誕辰紀念集
<i>CGFXSQJ</i>	<i>Chen Guofu xiansheng quanji</i> 陳果夫先生全集
CKS Collection	Jiang Zhongzheng zongtong wenwu 蔣中正總統文物 [President Chiang Kai-shek Collection]
<i>Diansheng</i>	<i>Diansheng zhoubao</i> 電聲週刊 [Movietone]
<i>GBZB</i>	<i>Guangbo zhoubao</i> 廣播週報 [Broadcast weekly]
<i>GMWX</i>	<i>Geming Wenxian</i> 革命文獻 [Documents of the revolution]
Guoshiguan	Guoshiguan 國史館 [Academia Historica]
<i>Jiu Zhongguo</i>	<i>Jiu Zhongguo de Shanghai guangbo shiye</i> 旧中国的上海广播事业 [Shanghai broadcasting industry in old China]
KMT Archives	Zhongguo Guomindang dangshiguan 中國國民黨黨史館 [Kuomintang Party Archives]
MACCAO	Junshi weiyuanhui weiyuanzhang shicongshi 軍事委員會委員長侍從室 [Military Affairs Commission Chairman's Aides Office]
MFA	Waijiaobu 外交部 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs]
<i>Minbao</i>	<i>Minbao</i> 民報 [Min Pao, People's journal]
MOC	Jiaotongbu 交通部 [Ministry of Communications]
<i>Niankan</i>	<i>Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui guangbo wuxian diantai niankan</i> 中國國民黨執行委員會廣播無線電台年刊 [Yearbook of the Chinese Nationalist Party Central Executive Committee Broadcasting Radio Station]
NRC	Ziyuan weiyuanhui 資源委員會 [National Resources Commission]
<i>QSP</i>	<i>QSP Wuxiandian zazhi</i> QSP 無線電雜誌 [QSP Amateur Radio]
<i>QST</i>	<i>QST Wuxiandian zazhi</i> QST 無線電雜誌 [QST Amateur Radio]
<i>Shenbao</i>	<i>Shenbao</i> 申報 [Shun Pao, Shanghai Journal]
<i>Wuxiandian</i>	<i>Wuxiandian</i> 無線電 [Radio]
<i>Xinwenbao</i>	<i>Xinwen bao</i> 新聞報 [Sin Wan Pao, The News]
<i>Yule</i>	<i>Yule zhoubao</i> 娛樂週報 [Variety Weekly]
<i>ZDYK</i>	<i>Zhongyang dangwu yuekan</i> 中央黨務月刊 [Central party affairs monthly]
<i>ZGZX</i>	<i>Zhongguo Guomindang zhidao xia zhi zhengzhi chengji tongji</i> 中國國民黨指導下之政治成績統計 [Political achievements and statistics under the guidance of the Chinese Nationalist Party]
<i>ZJSYZJ</i>	<i>Zongtong Jiang gong sixiang yanlun zongji</i> 總統蔣公思想言論總集 [Complete collection of President Chiang's thought and speeches]
<i>ZMSDZH</i>	<i>Zhonghua Minguo shi dang'an ziliao huibian</i> 中華民國史檔案資料匯編 [Collection of archival materials on the history of the Republic of China]
<i>ZYZB</i>	<i>Zhongyang Zhoubao</i> 中央週報 [Central weekly]



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Archives of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica 中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館, Taipei

Kuomintang Party Archives 中國國民黨黨史館, Taipei

National Archives of the UK (TNA), Kew

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Bracketed translations in italics indicate the official English title of the publication.

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*China Press* [大陸報]

*Diansheng zhoubao* 電聲週刊 [Movietone]

*Dianyou yuekan* 電友月刊 [Electric Companion]

*Fujian sheng zhengfu gongbao* 福建省政府公報 [Fujian provincial government gazette]

*Gongcheng zhoubao* 工程週刊 [Engineering weekly]

*Guangbo zhoubao* 廣播週報 [Broadcast weekly]

*Guangxi gongbao* 廣西公報 [Guangxi gazette]

*Guangzhou shi zhengfu shizheng gongbao* 廣州市政府市政公報 [Guangzhou municipal government gazette]

*Guizhou linshi zhengwu weiyuanhui gongbao* 貴州臨時政務委員會公報 [Guizhou provisional governmental affairs committee gazette]

*Guomin zhengfu gongbao* 國民政府公報 [Nationalist Government gazette]

*Haerbin wuri huabao* 哈爾濱五日畫報 [Harbin Friday pictorial]

*Henan tongji yuebao* 河南統計月報 [Henan statistical monthly]

*Huabei ribao* 華北日報 [North China Press]

*Hubei sheng zhengfu gongbao* 湖北省政府公報 [Hubei provincial government gazette]

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*Jiangxi minguo ribao* 江西民國日報 [Jiangxi republican daily]

*Jiangxi sheng zhengfu gongbao* 江西省政府公報 [Jiangxi provincial government gazette]

*Jiaotong gongbao* 交通公報 [Communications gazette]

*Jiaotong zazhi* 交通雜誌 [Communications magazine]

*Jiaoyu yu minzhong* 教育與民眾 [Education and the people]

*Jimei zhoubao* 集美週刊 [Jimei weekly]

*Kuangwu zhoubao* 礦業週報 [Mining industry weekly]

*Minbao* 民報 [Min Pao, People's journal]

*New York Times*

*Nongkuang gongbao* 農礦公報 [Agro-mining gazette]

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*Saodang ribao* 掃蕩日報 [Mop up daily]

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*Shanghai Times*  
*Shenbao* 申報 [*Shun Pao, Shanghai Journal*]  
*Shibao* 時報 [*Eastern Times*]  
*Shishi xinbao* 時事新報 [*China Times*]  
*Shouyin qikan* 收音期刊 [Journal of radio reception]  
*Sichuan sheng zhengfu gongbao* 四川省政府公報 [Sichuan provincial government gazette]  
*Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* 東京朝日新聞 [Tokyo morning news]  
*Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報 [*Eastern Times Photo Supplement*]  
*Wenhua jianshe* 文化建設 [Cultural construction]  
*Wuxiandian* 無線電 [Radio]  
*Wuxiandian wenda huikan* 無線電問答匯刊 [Compilation of radio questions and answers]  
*Wuxiandian wenda huikan: Guangbo tekan* 無線電問答匯刊:廣播特刊 [Compilation of radio questions and answers: broadcasting special edition]  
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*XGOI boyin erzhoukan* XGOI 播音二週刊 [XGOI broadcast biweekly]  
*Xinwen bao* 新聞報 [*Sin Wan Pao, The News*]  
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