

# IMMEDIATE OPINION: THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE KWANTUNG INTO MANCHURIA

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*History is in the past, but this report does not write of what has been. It puts the reader in the immediate time of the Manchurian Invasion, before anyone knew what the outcome would be. Immediate Opinion: The Advancement of the Kwantung into Manchuria, examines the Japanese invasion into Manchuria through the eyes of four different points of view, because the main events in history only skim the top of what is really going on. The reader sits with a Chinese Communist, a Chinese Nationalist, a young Japanese officer, and an American diplomat, while they explain the real issues hidden behind the guise of this international dilemma.*

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I need you to believe something. I haven't the time for doubters and little time to explain, so listen well. Though your environment feels and looks the same, you have, upon turning the title page of this paper embarked on a journey that took you from your present to theirs. It is nearly December and the year is 1931. I cannot disclose your exact location, as you are nowhere and yet everywhere, in relative geographic necessity of Manchuria. Almost two and a half months ago a small explosion attempted to derail the Japanese-owned, Manchurian Railway. It did not succeed in absolute destruction; however, since then the Japanese have invaded further into the land and are meeting only minor pockets of resistance. You are going to sit with four individuals who are going to give you their accounts of the events thus far. Do not interrupt them. Absorb what they say and when they are done, you will 'transport' to the next. They of course will be speaking in their native language, but you will understand. When you've seen all four, you will return to our time and give me a summary of their opinions. You will never know their names, nor will they yours. Your first visit will be a young Japanese Officer in Manchuria, you will not be far from a small resistance that has appeared. God speed.

## Manchuria

私たちは早くいかなければ。。。Do you understand me? As I said, we must be fast. I serve under Colonel Itagaki Seishirō. He is a gifted operations-oriented leader.<sup>1</sup> In the first half of September he informed the other officers that he and Lieutenant Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, were aware of an attack that would happen on our railway. Before the Colonels broke into a smaller group of more trusted individuals, he warned us all of an imminent need to ready ourselves for reply with force. To no one's surprise, an attack which consisted of the Chinese bombing our rail happened within two days. I believe that was September 18<sup>th</sup>. Many of us officers were relieved when the attack took place. It allowed our civilian government, who was ever weakening to the pressures of our people back home, to see that "to yield aspects of Japan's position in Manchuria for increased trade with China...was sacrificing national security for the sake of profits,"<sup>2</sup> and that China in no way will ever be a trusted ally. Two months later, I now hear, like swells of wave after wave, that our government did not order the retaliation. I cannot believe this rumour. Though they are not militarily run, they are also not stupid. Our might has been proven time and again, against the Chinese and the Russians. We cannot be defeated and as the most powerful nation in the East we cannot let the acts of the Chinese, which include the destruction of our rail go unpunished. Even if the civilian government can't see this obvious point, they are well aware of the over-population of our land and that Manchuria's agricultural space would not only put ease on the population at home, but also introduce a vast increase in food supply.<sup>3</sup> Either reason is enough for our people, the Japanese people, protected by Amaterasu, to continue this invasion and claim Manchuria as our own.

## Nanjing

It's the Communists' fault. It is imperative I be clear on this, and that you understand. Many will claim that Chiang Kai-shek *chose* limited resistance against the Japanese invasion; that he should no longer be leader of the Nationalist Government, but indeed, Chiang Kai-shek merely had to decide of the lesser of two evils. And in that, the choice was one every proud Chinese nationalist would make. The Kuomintang is much better used to deal with the Communists in the south and leave the local forces to contend with the Japanese in the north.<sup>4</sup> A small territory of land in the northeast occupied by the Japanese is much less of an issue than our entire country being overrun by the plague of Communists. Besides, the influx of nationalism being produced by the Japanese invasion is awe-inspiring. All one must

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<sup>1</sup>Weland, *Misguided Intelligence*, 445-460.

<sup>2</sup>Weland, 448.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, *The New Paradise*, 249-86.

<sup>4</sup>Lee, *Counterinsurgency in Manchuria*, 8.

do is read the national Chinese press releases and it is easy to see that Ma Zhanshan's published telegrams of his resistance to the Japanese is sparking proud *nationalist* Chinese to stand their ground. Student groups have formed in Shanghai to aide in Ma's battles and those who can't fight are raising substantial funds to ensure his fight can continue.<sup>5</sup> Protests also surge, not just in Shanghai, but in many cities across China. Nationalism has never been stronger and yet, while this carries on, the Communists try only to defame our efforts, and those Communists in Manchuria make pleas to the Soviets for aid rather than arming themselves and making a stand for their country.<sup>6</sup> The Japanese will be dealt with accordingly, but the world we live in is not the same as it was in the past. We will settle our internal issues our way and relieve the international one the new way. At this moment, Chiang Kai-shek has already "appealed to the League of Nations in hopes of winning international sympathy and support against Japan's aggressions."<sup>7</sup> This is the new way to overcome international conflict and the Communists and the Japanese do not understand. This will be both of their undoings.

## Southern China

Treaties? The League of Nations? "The Japanese are already destroying these treaties...by their military occupation in Manchuria."<sup>8</sup> This invasion is a matter of our national security. If America, or England wish to aid us they can do so through loans, sales of weapons and airplanes, or create a blockade against the Japanese.<sup>9</sup> Then we can properly rise up and evict not only the Japanese, but the Nationalists who wish to see our country fall under foreign rule. Until then we will not listen to the government and will not engage in these volunteer armies, as cooperating with non-Communist leaders is forbidden according to the Sixth World Congress.<sup>10</sup> And how can we be sure that the Nationalists are not in cahoots with the Japanese? It is no coincidence that the Japanese invade Manchuria, a position so close to our Soviet allies to the north. These volunteer armies are no more than a "charade, part of a conspiracy to facilitate a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union."<sup>11</sup> I assure you that is the League of Nations' true wish, to rid the world of Communism, so Capitalism and Imperialism can reign uninhibited. It is why the Soviets are not members. This fallacy is something, though, that no Communist will fall for and China will only be secure when the true revolution has begun and the Communist Chinese become victorious. Which I assure you, will happen. Under Japanese

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<sup>5</sup>Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth*, 148.

<sup>6</sup>Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, 176.

<sup>7</sup>Huang, *Chiang Kai-shek's diplomatic strategy against Japan*, 199-217.

<sup>8</sup>Schram, *Mao's Road to Power*, 251.

<sup>9</sup>Schram, 251.

<sup>10</sup>Coogan, *Northeast China and the Origins of the Anti-Japanese United Front*, 282-314.

<sup>11</sup>Coogan, 286.

occupation or not and if China must be retaken from Japan by us Communists, I can doubly assure you they will not retain one inch of Chinese territory.

## **American Embassy, Japan**

This is an interesting time, indeed. America's stance on Japan's invasion of Manchuria can only come after looking on the episode with great scrutiny, for it was not only seven years ago a campaign came about here in Tokyo where rallies erupted and leaflets were stuck to American cars around the embassy, in protest of the exclusion law.<sup>12</sup> We do not want to strain relations again with the people of Japan. To examine this current situation with greater depth we thus have to look at certain facts. To begin with, Japan had every right to station their army in Manchuria, especially on the land owned by the Railway company, and with the right to protect the over two-hundred thousand Japanese living there, not to mention the one million Koreans who would be protected by the Japanese army.<sup>13</sup> Having said this, the presence of the Kwantung Army should not be looked at as an aggressor, but merely a presence that any country under the same circumstances would be able to do in their own right. Thus, and though there are conflicting reports coming out of Manchuria at this stage, if China provoked an attack by attempting to disable or destroy the Japanese-owned railway lines, then it is also in their full right to exact retribution. Beyond the simple act of two nations having issues with each other, this invasion has triggered eyes from around the world. It has also revealed that though the United States of America is not an official member of the League of Nations, it is indeed a country which the Nations is keeping in the loop, and relying heavily on.<sup>14</sup> This particular incident is also of great importance to us, as we have multilateral treaties in the area, as I am aware the Soviets do as well.<sup>15</sup> Should the Japanese continue in their efforts beyond the zone of the rail purely for security and safety, as they announced in the beginning of October,<sup>16</sup> I see no reason this incident cannot be resolved efficiently and expeditiously.

The Invasion of Manchuria is not a two-player issue. Two months into it is impossible to see who is in the wrong, who is defending, who is attacking, and for what purpose. Rumours and reports are surfacing that the attack was staged by the same officers who claimed to know of its coming. An already shaky China, is being driven further apart, not only by the Japanese, but by the Nationalists and the Communists. Both sides with obviously opposing views on how the invasion should be handled, and neither side willing to work with the other to create a united

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<sup>12</sup>Hirobe, *Japanese Pride, American Prejudice*, 22.

<sup>13</sup>Hirobe, 153.

<sup>14</sup>Clyde, *The Diplomacy of Playing No Favorites*, 187-202.

<sup>15</sup>Clyde, 187.

<sup>16</sup>Clyde, 193.

front. The Americans are dealing with two nations they have treaties or pacts with and at the moment have their hands tied, with only the ability to surmise and assist the League of Nations. The Soviets also show interest as they do not want Imperialists on their border, threatening their own way of government, not to mention a repeat of being the first western nation to lose a war to an eastern nation. Surely the threat of also being the second, has their backs against the wall. The Japanese greed for more land seems insatiable. It is impossible for them to push on and claim their actions are only for their security and the safety of their Japanese and Korean citizens living in Manchuria. If the Japanese don't stop, what happens then? The Chinese Communists, under the Bukharin theory state that another world war is on its way. If this is true, then surely this will be the start of it.

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