Modern Asian Studies (2024), 1–23
doi:10.1017/S0026749X23000458

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

FORUM ARTICLE

Cosmopolitan collaboration and wartime collaborationism: The Chinese Maritime Customs Service and its staff, 1932–1941

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(Received 20 February 2023; revised 30 October 2023; accepted 6 November 2023)

Abstract

This article discusses the continuity between cosmopolitan collaboration and wartime collaborationism from 1932–1941 by exploring the Chinese Maritime Customs Service (CMCS) and its international staff. The CMCS managed China's international trade and directed the custom houses in northern China before 1937, and in occupied China and free China from 1937–1941. The customs revenues generated by this international trade were pledged to service China's international obligations. This article argues that both Chinese and Japanese staff members' activities to maintain the status quo could be considered as wartime collaborationism from the perspectives of Japan, Manchukuo, and the Collaborationist and Chongqing governments, but all parties tolerated their activities until the outbreak of the Pacific War. The reason for this was that all parties benefitted from the CMCS's management of international trade and its implementation of international obligations which had existed since the mid-nineteenth century. This article situates wartime collaborationism within the long-existing institutional network that was welcomed as cosmopolitan collaboration in the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods, rather than treating it as a unique wartime setup and ideology. Such a view also illuminates the postwar exchange of personnel and cooperation among former enemies, which grew out of prewar collaboration and wartime collaborationism.

Keywords: Second World War; War of Resistance; collaborationism; Chinese Maritime Customs Service; Manchuria

Introduction

In July 2015, President Xi Jinping stated that 'the Chinese people had struggled for fourteen years and won the great victory of the War of Resistance'.[1] Before this statement,

[1]Xi Jinping (習近平), 'The seventieth anniversary for the victory of the War of Resistance', *People's Daily*, 3 September 2015, http://jhsjk.people.cn/article/28577814, [accessed 29 November 2023].

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the War of Resistance was considered to have broken out on 7 July 1937, but its starting point has been changed to the day of the Mukden Incident—18 September 1931. This 14-year timeframe leads to a new periodization of the war: the partial War of Resistance (局部抗戰) from 1931–1937 and the total War of Resistance (全面抗戰) from 1937–1945, which raises two new questions of political and moral gravity.[2]

First, if China and Japan were already engaged in a partial war, how should we evaluate the conduct or relations of Sino-Japanese collaboration from 1931–1937? Secondly, how can a war be fought 'partially' and how can a 'partial war' be defined? This notion of 'partial war' creates ambiguities, for it can be interpreted as part of China at war with Japan and/or as intermittent military engagements from 1931–1937. In either rendition, this new periodization raises problems of where we should draw the line for identifying wartime activities, particularly collaborationism.

The Chinese Maritime Customs Service (CMCS) provides a convincing case study to reflect on the questions generated by this new periodization. The CMCS was put in charge of the administration of China's international trade and of the implementation of her international obligations, namely the foreign loans and the Boxer indemnity. Thus, since 1901, the CMCS was participating in cosmopolitan collaboration with foreign states. During the War of Resistance, the CMCS's functions remained the same, which raised suspicions about wartime collaborationism. But in the eyes of the CMCS staff, their activities simply resulted from the necessity of international trade, and their obligations to prewar military preparations, wartime consumption, and postwar rehabilitation always outranked the cruelty of eliminating enemies and the periodic hostility between China and any other foreign state.

The CMCS experience could shed light on the following three aspects. First, both Brooks' and Zanasi's works apply the French experience of collaborationism to China, namely an out-of-touch politician's attempt to establish an identical government. This article agrees with them that although China and France had experienced collaborationism, which America and Britain had not,[3] the CMCS's unique role made the Chinese experience controversial. Secondly, this article agrees that their definition of collaborationism explains why the Chinese would work with Japan.[4] However, this definition

[2]Apart from the two mainstream opinions about the starting points of the War of Resistance in 1931 and 1937, the May Third Incident in 1928 is also discussed by historians. However, historians have viewed the end of the Second World War in China as 1945 or 1949, until recently when Hans van de Ven extended it to 1952—the end of the Korean War. See Hans van de Ven, *China at war: Triumph and tragedy in the emergence of the New China, 1937–1952* (London: Profile Books, 2017).

[3]The historical writings of the Second World War have been dominated by American and British perspectives, but their wartime experiences were different from other countries. Neither was occupied and thus confronted with issues of collaborationism. Three out of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, namely, France, Russia, and China, had to live with a number of collaborationist bodies. The purpose of the Second World War in their eyes was not just to resist the aggression from fascist foreign invaders but to fight a civil war for the legitimacy of a central government. See Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese agents and local elites in wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) and Margherita Zanasi, 'Globalizing *hanjian*: The Suzhou Trials and the post-World War II discourse on collaboration', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 3, 2008, pp. 730–751.

[4]Brook uses Henrik Dethlefsen's definition in relation to the phenomenon of collaboration as 'the continuing exercise of power under the pressure produced by the presence of an occupying power' to interpret China's wartime collaborationism. Henrik Dethlefsen, 'Denmark and the German occupation: Cooperation, negotiation, or collaboration?', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1990, pp. 198–200.

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cannot explain why the Japanese actually worked with China. Thirdly, while their research focuses on the wartime period, this article looks back to the prewar period and extends to postwar rehabilitation.

This article also challenges the received wisdom for identifying collaborationism with respect to the notion of a nation.[5] The CMCS, with its role in international trade, it obligations, and its cosmopolitan staff (with over 20 nationalities represented) should not be situated within the struggles or dilemmas of Chinese nationals. Their image as professionals or technocrats could lift them above periodic Sino-foreign hostilities. Thus, their activities were not just wartime phenomena, but in fact had existed long before the war and naturally continued to operate during and after the War of Resistance.

This article also contributes to the histories of northern China from 1932–1941 and the CMCS. For the former, Marjorie Dryburgh's and Lincoln Li's studies on the Japanese military's strategies before and after July 1937 frame the big picture of China and Japan's competition over the control of northern China.[6] This article traces back this competition to before 1933 and emphasizes its financial aspect. Hans van de Ven, Robert Bickers, Philip Thai, and Felix Boecking have all studied the financial aspect of the CMCS during the War of Resistance.[7] Van de Ven and Bickers cover the Chongqing side rather than the collaborationist side, and Thai and Boecking take a macroeconomic perspective to analyse interrelations between smuggling, revenues, and wartime China. This article aims to provide what has not yet been fully explored, namely the CMCS's interrelations with collaborationism in occupied China.

Deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations, 1931–1939

The Japanese empire's occupation of China from 1931–1945 led to a chain of collaborationist regimes which created a tension between political and financial concerns.

Zanasi then quotes Petain's theory of 'shield and sword' to explain what Petain or Wang had done. Zanasi sharply indicates the similarities shared by China and France during wartime. Zanasi, 'Globalizing *hanjian*', p. 732.

[5]See Brian Martin, 'Collaboration within collaboration: Zhou Fohai's relations with the Chongqing government, 1942–1945', *Twentieth Century China*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2009, pp. 5–18; Jeremy Taylor, 'Cartoons and collaboration in wartime China: The mobilization of Chinese cartoonists under Japanese occupation', *Modern China*, vol. 4, 2015, pp. 406–435; Zhiyi Yang and Jeremy E. Taylor (eds), Special issue: 'Elite accommodation, collaboration and cultural production in Japanese-occupied China', *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, no. 2, December 2020; and Po-shek Fu, *Passivity, resistance and collaboration: Intellectual choices in occupied Shanghai, 1937–45* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). They study individuals' decisions and analyse the struggles between their pragmatic strategies and ethical guilt.

[6]See Marjorie Dryburgh, *North China and Japanese expansion 1933–1937: Regional power and the national interest* (London: Routledge, 2000); Lincoln Li, *The Japanese Army in North China 1937–1941: Problems of political and economic control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[7]See Hans van de Ven, *Breaking with the past: The Maritime Customs Service and the global origins of modernity in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Robert Bickers, 'The Chinese Maritime Customs at war, 1941–45', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2008, pp. 295–311; Felix Boecking, *No Great Wall: Trade, tariffs, and nationalism in Republican China, 1927–45* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Philip Thai, *China's war on smuggling: Law, economic life, and the making of the modern state, 1842–1965* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

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First, there were two resulting financial issues for Manchukuo. If the Manchurian custom houses had left the CMCS, it would have resulted in a loss to China's customs revenues. Secondly, had the CMCS not worked with Manchukuo, the cross-Great Wall smuggling would also have caused a loss, which would have meant that the customs revenues would have been insufficient for China to meet its international obligations. To resolve the two problems, the Nanjing government would have had to start up bilateral negotiations with Manchukuo and set up custom houses along the Great Wall, but this would have implied that it recognized Manchukuo as a foreign country. On the one hand, this would be politically perilous, but, on the other, the loss of revenues would be financially disastrous. The Nanjing government therefore was faced with a dilemma. The first two cases examined in this article narrate how CMCS staff members designed solutions to address the two financial issues, but that the political concern defied resolution. The third case is about how the Japanese staff adapted themselves to the situation after July 1937, when they were put in charge of the CMCS and of the evacuation of custom houses from coastal cities. The three cases—in 1932, 1933, and 1939—are introduced to demonstrate how the Chinese and Japanese employees' pragmatism served the best interests of China, but drew suspicion from both China and Japan.

Manchukuo

It was not the first time Inspector-General Frederick Maze had confronted a crisis whereby some custom houses would leave his control with the support of local authorities: in 1930 and 1931 the Nationalists' factionalism had led to the seizure and detention of the Tientsin and Canton custom houses' revenues.[8] However, Maze clearly believed that the nature of Manchukuo, as a 'sovereign' state under the Japanese patronage, was different because 'Manchuria formally seceded and declared its independence as a separate foreign state, whereas both the Tientsin and the Canton "Governments" claimed to be Chinese-not alien-institutions.'[9]

Manchukuo was established on 1 March 1932 and the negotiations for keeping the Manchurian custom houses' revenues in the hands of the CMCS fell on the shoulders of Chinese Secretary Ding Guitang (丁貴堂, Ting Kwei-tang)[10] and Dairen Commissioner Fukumoto Jinzaburo (福本順三郎). Fukumoto, due to his Japanese nationality, was in a position to obtain massive amounts of confidential information which he always fed to the Inspectorate. The first round of negotiations seemed successful. Ding and Fukumoto forwarded a memorandum from the Manchukuo foreign minister in which he stated that the 'Customs revenue and administration have very important bearing on foreign loans and indemnities formerly contracted by the ROC'. Therefore, 'in order to avoid changes in trade and with a view to smooth international relations',

[8]Donna Brunero, *Britain's imperial cornerstone in China: The Chinese Maritime Customs Service, 1854–1949* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 131.

[9]Second Historical Archive of China (hereafter SHAC), 679(1) 26912, IG Circular No. 95, 20 April 1933.

[10]The romanization of Chinese names can be an issue as *Hanyu pinyin* had not yet been coined. Thus, in this article, in quotations and citations Ding Guitang is spelt as Ting Kwei-tang, Zhang Yongnian as Chang Yung-nian, Zheng Lai as Loy Chang, and Zhang Sumin as Sherman Chang.

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Manchukuo would 'maintain temporarily [the] existing system of Customs administration'.[11]

It was a satisfactory result, but too good to be true. Thus, if this temporary state of affairs could not last forever, Maze, Fukumoto, and Ding all suggested that 'it would be in China's interest—both financially and politically—to compromise and accept an understanding whereby the Manchurian Government would pay a share of the [Boxer] Indemnity and the foreign loans'.[12] This meant that the Manchurian custom houses would be under the jurisdiction of the Manchukuo Customs, but the pro rata share of China's Boxer indemnity would still be deposited with the foreign creditors. It was probably the most acceptable way for both sides if Nanjing could not afford a war against the Kwangtung army.

The success of this outcome was attributed to Fukumoto. He earned Maze and Ding's trust as Ding reminded Maze that 'information from Fukumoto should not be quoted or published', 'otherwise his safety will be at stake, and he will not be able to render any assistance',[13] and Fukumoto was 'absolutely loyal and did particularly meritorious service'.[14] The internal trust of the CMCS was not enough as Fukumoto also needed the trust of both the Chinese and Japanese governments. However, Nanjing could neither accept this solution nor trust him fully. Fukumoto could not bear the pressure and sent his resignation in a telegram. He told Maze that, 'a passive attitude is the only one possible for me at the present moment' and hoped Maze could 'realise the impossibility of my taking such a responsibility upon myself'.[15]

This telegram was too short to demonstrate the struggles Fukumoto confronted. But his visit to the British consular-general to Dairen provides more information. Fukumoto assured him that he had 'done his best as he saw it to effect a settlement of a very difficult question in the safest and sanest way', which should be 'acceptable to both Manchukuo and Nanjing', and his goal was to 'achieve the paramount object of preventing the disintegration of the Customs Administration'. However, the only compensation that Fukumoto received for his pains was 'to be discharged' in the most 'ignominious manner possible' because he could not 'sacrifice his conscience and convictions, but, as a Japanese in Japanese territory, his personal safety and freedom of association with his nationals'. The British consular-general was upset by this and stated that 'no man with such a long record [27 years], and with such a brief period of duty ahead of him [three years], is likely to sacrifice it all for frivolous reasons'.[16] This feeling was also shared by most of the Japanese employees at Dairen, so they sent the resignation telegram to 'sever all relation with the Chinese Customs Service'.[17]

Among all the Japanese employees, Yoshida Goro (吉田五郎) was an exception. He received his BA in Law from Tokyo University in 1914[18] and joined the

[11] SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Ting and Fukumoto (Dairen) to Maze, 23 March 1932.

[12] Semi-Official Circular No. 95, 244, 20 April 1933, in *Chinese Customs Publications*, VI. Inspectorate Series: No. 10, Inspector General's Semi-Official Circulars, vol. I (Nos. 1 to 100), 1911 to 1933, p. 244.

[13] SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Ting (Dairen) to Maze, 26 March 1932.

[14] SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Ting (Dairen) to Chang Fu-yun, 24 March 1932.

[15] SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram No. 13, Fukumoto (Dairen) to Maze, 22 June 1932.

[16] British Foreign Office (FO) 262/1800, British Consulate, Dairen, 25 June 1932, No. 78, Copies to Peking No. 65, Mukden, Harbin, and Commercial Secretary, Newchwang and Shanghai.

[17] SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Japanese Staff (Dairen) to Maze, 26 June 1932.

[18] *Service List*, 68th issue, 1940, p. 132.

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CMCS in 1915.[19] Maze immediately appointed him Dairen assistant-in-charge after Fukumoto's resignation but Yoshida's Japanese nationality meant that he too was faced with Fukumoto's dilemma. Maze then appointed J. V. Porter instead, as the Manchukuo and Kwantung authorities would hesitate to force a British citizen to act against his perceived duty.[20] Everyone was given an opportunity to choose between the CMCS and the Manchukuo Customs Service. Yoshida refused to join the Manchukuo Customs Service and returned instead to the Shanghai Inspectorate General of Customs, reporting for duty in 1933.[21] Yoshida also had Maze's full trust as shown by Maze's instruction to him to keep the 'Customs code' for deciphering their confidential telegrams.[22]

After the succession of the Manchurian custom houses, another Japanese employee decided to leave the Manchukuo Customs Service and ask to be reinstated at the CMCS, but his reason was different from Yoshida's. On 29 June 1932, Assistant Examiner Yamaguchi Mansuke (山口萬助) was given the opportunity to choose either the CMCS or the Manchukuo Customs Service, and he chose the latter because of 'his patriotism and the passion to help my Japanese colleagues'. However, he soon regretted his decision and explained that 'right now, a lot of Japanese are unemployed, so it would not be a bad idea to have one more Japanese employee in the CMCS, because it can serve Japan for easing its unemployment and for extending its commercial sphere of influence in China'.[23]

His request for reinstatement was denied by Maze because 'prior to the seizure of the Lungchingtsun Customs', Yamaguchi had been 'suspended for duty for disobedience and disloyalty; at the time of the seizure he handed in his resignation together with other Japanese employees in the Customs'. Maze instructed Chief Secretary Kishimoto Hirokichi (岸本廣吉) to investigate this case. Kishimoto was certainly the right person to do so as his position was second only to the inspector-general and he functioned as his right arm. Kishimoto had been appointed chief secretary in 1925 and 1931.[24]

The key to this was that if Yamaguchi had not 'joined the Manchukuo Customs', it would appear that he was 'at least entitled to refund of contributions'. But Maze also emphasized that if Yamaguchi had 'joined the Manchukuo Customs, even for one day he will have to receive the same treatment as other disloyal employees'. Thus, Maze requested Kishimoto 'to ascertain whether Mr. Yamaguchi did join the Manchukuo'.[25] After Kishimoto was certain that Yamaguchi had not joined the Manchukuo Customs,

[19]*Service List*, 51st issue, 1925, p. 10.

[20]SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Japanese Staff (Dairen) to Maze, 26 June 1932.

[21]*Service List*, 1933.

[22]SHAC, 679(1) 32742, Confidential Telegram, Maze to Yoshida (Dairen), 26 June 1932.

[23]Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) Ref.B09040508600, Miscellanea about Chinese Maritime Customs/Local officials, Vol. 4 (E-3-4-0-3-2_004). About the former staff of the Chinese Maritime Customs Yamaguchi Mansuke's desire to work for the Manchukuo Maritime Customs, Hirota to Hishikari, 14 November, 1933.

[24]For Kishimoto's CMCS career, see Stanley Wright (ed.), *Documents illustrative of the origin, development, and activities of the Chinese Customs Service* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs, 1939), vol. IV, 609f.

[25]JACAR, Ref.B09040508600, Miscellanea about Chinese Maritime Customs/Local officials, Vol. 4 (E-3-4-0-3-2-004), Maze to Kishimoto, 13 December 1933.

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he sent him to the Customs Gold Unit (CGU) 388.42.[26] The difference between Yoshida and Yamaguchi was that while the former did not choose Manchukuo, the latter did, although both of them immediately wanted to rejoin the CMCS.

By this point, Fukumoto's solution for keeping the customs revenues sufficient had demonstrably failed. But during and after the negotiations, Fukumoto Yoshida and Yamaguchi had made their choices and they had ended up with three different results: Fukumoto joined the Manchukuo Customs, Yoshida returned to the CMCS, and Yamaguchi became unemployed. In this process, they had all demonstrated a sense of aloofness from Japan and Manchukuo and a sense of loyalty towards the CMCS and, to a certain degree, to China.

Northern China

After the signing of the Tanggu Truce in 1933, the Nanjing government and Japan ceased military engagements along the Great Wall. This ended the hostility that had existed since the Mukden Incident. The Truce then left space for the CMCS to resolve the second financial issue—that of the anti-smuggling policies across the Great Wall. However, this again placed the CMCS in a dilemma. On the one hand, if the Nanjing government could levy tariff tax on trade with Manchukuo, China's customs revenues would increase and secure the payments necessary for its foreign loans and indemnity. This was particularly important, especially as it already had lost the revenues from all Manchurian custom houses. On the other hand, if the CMCS set up custom houses along the borderlines between China and Manchukuo, it would imply *de jure* recognition of Manchukuo.

Instructed by Nanjing, Maze sent Zhang Yongnian (張勇年, Chang Yung-nian) on a commission along the Great Wall, in order to ascertain the trade conditions and to find out the extent of the reported 'smuggling of foreign goods from Manchuria into China across the Wall', and then 'the question of establishing Customs barriers at certain passes in the Wall will be considered'.[27] Maze instructed Zhang to 'investigate and report upon the measures which it is necessary for the Customs to enforce in order to protect the revenue on goods entering and leaving China Proper at various places along the Great Wall of China between Shanhaikwan [山海關] and Kalgan [張家口]'. However, Maze's focus was not just on import and export but also on 'clandestine importation' as he reminded Zhang:

> The occupation of Manchuria by Japanese armed forces and the establishment in that area of a government disclaiming allegiance to China, known as the State of 'Manchukuo', have resulted in a change of China's fiscal policy in regard to both native goods sent from China to Manchuria and to products of the latter

[26]JACAR, Ref.B09040508600, Miscellanea about Chinese Maritime Customs/Local officials, Vol. 4 (E-3-4-0-3-2-004), Kishimoto to Yamaguchi, 10 January 1934. The CGU's exchange rate was about CGU 100=US$ 40 in Shanghai in November 1932. Circular No. 4530, 25 November 1932. See Wright (ed.), *Documents illustrative*, vol. V, p. 88.

[27]Chang Yung-Nian, 'Report on trade conditions along the Great Wall between Shanhaikwan and Kalgan', *Chinese Customs Publications*, V. Office Series, No. 129, 'Copy of English translation of IG despatch to Kuan-wu Shu', p. vii.

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> imported into China, and the transformation of the Great Wall into a virtual land frontier, beyond which China is no longer free to operate, and along which the Customs are not yet established, providing merchants with means for passing such goods freely and, what is of even greater importance in so far as the revenue is concerned, offering opportunity for the clandestine importation of foreign goods into China.[28]

Zhang's trip was not easy because 'all the passes were still in the hands of either Japanese or bandits and … peace and order in the districts along the Great Wall had not yet been restored'. Thus, Zhang needed a 'pass issued by the Military Attaché of the Japanese Legation'. During the investigation at Shanhaikwan, Zhang discovered that 'different persons told different stories, and some, being afraid of getting into trouble with the Japanese authorities, dared not say even a single word'. After Zhang talked to 'Lieutenant T. Nanba, chief of the Japanese garrison corps stationed at Chinwangtao', Nanba guaranteed that the Japanese troops would not interfere in Zhang's investigation. Zhang did not encounter direct interference but he was 'followed and closely watched by detectives', so that some of the shopkeepers at Gubeikuo were reluctant to answer his questions.[29]

At Jielingkou, 'except for about 100 men of Manchukuo troops, there were neither Chinese police nor Japanese troops stationed'. Then the Manchukuo soldiers became a new problem as Zhang 'was travelling officially', so he needed to 'avoid, as far as possible, coming in direct contact with the Manchukuo officials'.[30] It was, however, noteworthy that Zhang received a pass from the Japanese Legation in Beiping but he was worried that having direct contact with Manchukuo would bring political trouble. This signified that for Nanjing, Japan, despite military engagements, was clearly a foreign nation that could still be dealt with through diplomatic procedures. Manchukuo was in a legal grey zone in terms of sovereignty and any contact with it would arouse suspicion.

However, Zhang's approach demonstrated inconsistency between his hardline policies towards Manchukuo and his flexibility regarding his trade investigation with Japan. But Zhang's proposal for setting up custom houses actually included a significant concession to Manchukuo. Because petty cases of robbery or kidnapping made peaceful conditions 'a moot question' and the Tanggu Truce bound 'China to despatch regular troops to the so-called demilitarised zone for suppression work',[31] Zhang proposed a pragmatic plan for placing potential custom houses along the Great Wall. He picked five locations, all to the south of the Great Wall as Figure 1 indicates.

Zhang stated that 'Manchukuo has already instituted control at Luan-ping [灤平], Ku-pei-kou [古北口], Ping-chuan [平泉], Ling-yuan [凌源], and Ch'ih-feng [赤峰]… we should have at least the same number of stations on this side at Ku-pei-kou [古北口],

[28]Ibid., 'Copy of Despatch from the Inspector General to Mr. Chang Yung-nian, Acting Deputy Commissioner', p. v.

[29]Ibid., 'Despatch from Zhang to Maze', 29 December 1933, p. viii.

[30]Ibid., 'Copy of despatch from the Inspector General to Mr. Chang Yung-nian, Acting Deputy Commissioner', p. xi

[31]Ibid., p. xii

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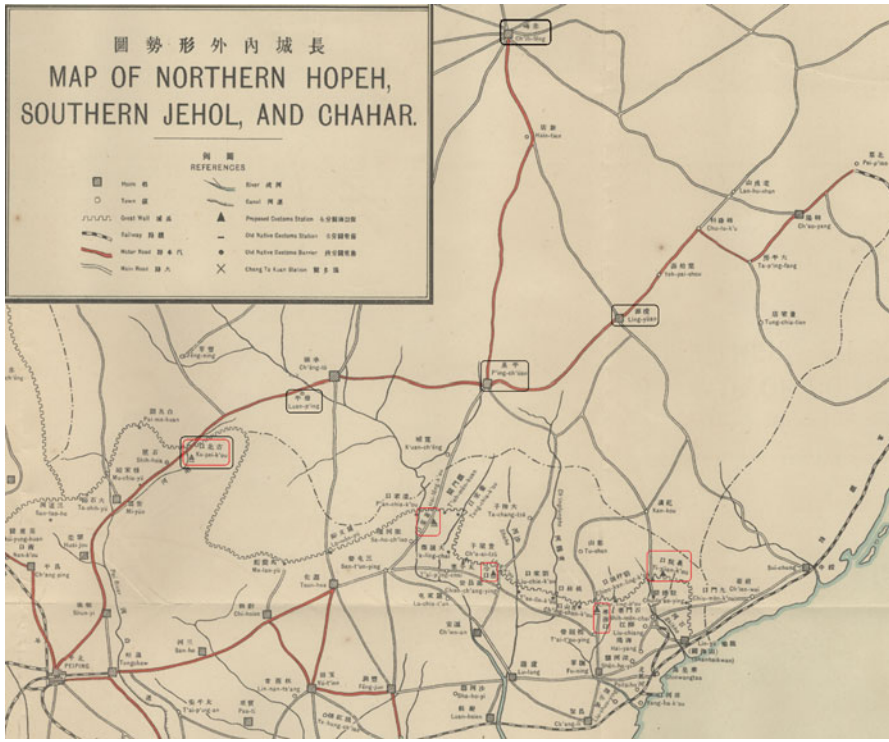

Figure 1. Zhang Yongnian's suggested locations for setting up custom houses. The black circles are the locations of Manchukuo's custom houses and the red circles are Zhang's suggested locations for Chinese custom houses. *Source:* Chang Yung-Nian, 'Report on trade conditions along the Great Wall between Shanhaikwan and Kalgan', *Chinese Customs Publications*, V. Office Series, No. 129, Copy of English translation of IG despatch to Kuan-wu Shu, pp. 32–33.

Hsi-feng-kou [喜峰口], Leng-kou [冷口], Chieh-ling-kou [界嶺口] and Yi-yuan-kou [義院口]'.[32]

The five locations for potential custom houses proposed by Zhang were more serious than any official recognition of a borderline between Nanjing and Manchukuo. The reason for this was that between the five locations of the Chinese custom houses and the five already existent Manchukuo custom houses, there was a large piece of 'unmilitarized' land. For the CMCS to set up the custom houses along the Great Wall would mean the Nanjing government automatically giving up the lands to the north of the Great Wall, which were not yet claimed by Manchukuo.

Apart from the sensitivity of borderlines with Manchukuo, Zhang also confronted another sensitive borderline issue with the Soviet Union. He proposed to establish the sixth custom house, as Figure 2 indicates, at Kalgan because 'Outer Mongolia has been under the protection of Soviet Russia', though 'under Chinese suzerainty'. He predicted

[32]Ibid., 'Copy of despatch from the Inspector General to Mr. Chang Yung-nian, Acting Deputy Commissioner', p. 27

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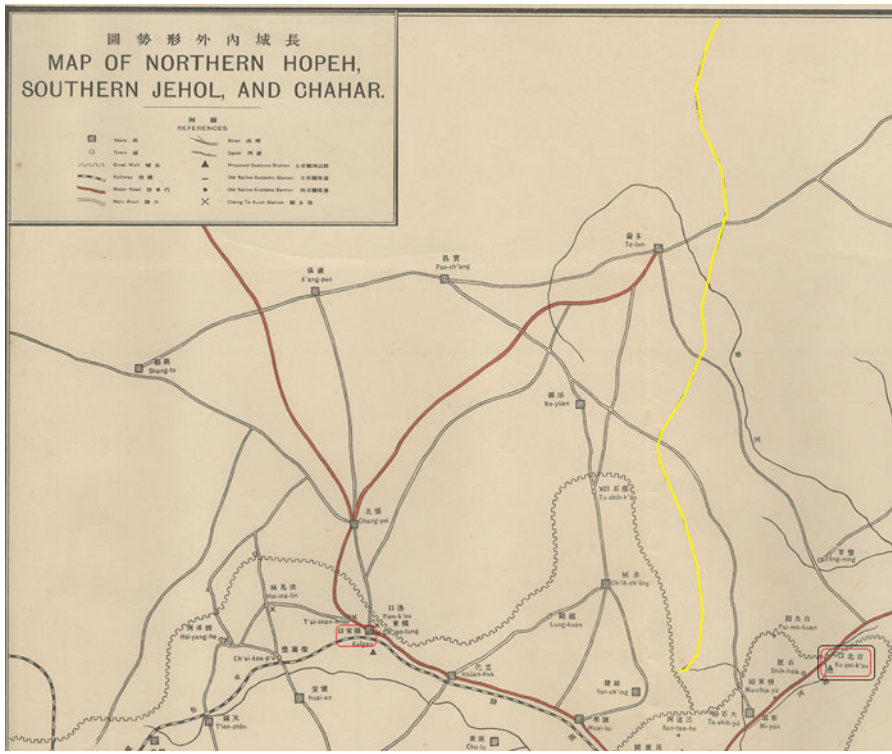

Figure 2. The custom house at Kalgan for goods from the Mongolian Republic. The yellow line is the borderline between Manchukuo and the Mongolian Republic. *Source:* Chang Yung-Nian, 'Report on trade conditions along the Great Wall between Shanhaikwan and Kalgan', *Chinese Customs Publications*, V. Office Series, No. 129, Copy of English translation of IG despatch to Kuan-wu Shu, p. 33.

that 'there must be every possibility of Russian goods slipping in or of Chinese goods moving out of the country without payment of Customs duty'.[33]

Again, the proposed location for the potential Kalgan Custom House was to the south of the Great Wall which meant making another concession to the Soviet Union and allowing another political body's independence. It is easy to understand why China had to give up Manchuria because China could not overcome the Kwantung Army. However, the Soviet Union had not taken any military action against China, so if China automatically made a concession, it would cause a more devastating political storm. Therefore, although Maze submitted Zhang's report to the Nanjing government, none of the six custom houses was established.

In the Manchukuo case, Chinese staff member Ding Guitang collaborated with the Japanese Fukumoto to formally acknowledge the CMCS's jurisdiction over the Dairen custom house, in order to protect its overall revenues. The Nanjing government had to weigh the financial profit of such an act vis-à-vis its political cost, and decided to

[33]Ibid., p. 28.

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acquiesce to it. In the northern China scenario, Zhang Yongnian worked directly with the Japanese in investigating smuggling and proposing to set up custom houses along the Great Wall. On the one hand, Zhang was uncompromising in his attitude towards the Manchukuo officials; on the other hand, he was pragmatic in proposing to set up the custom houses south of the Great Wall, even if it meant making territorial concessions to Manchukuo and the Soviet Union. He clearly realized that if the custom houses were set up south of the Great Wall, the CMCS could avoid unnecessary disputes with Japan and the Soviet Union, which would generate better 'international trade' and a bigger tariff income. In the eyes of the CMCS, sovereign and territorial claims sometimes gave way to political and financial pragmatism. But the Nanjing government certainly did not agree on this point. However, since 7 July 1937, the Nanjing government started to incline towards a more pragmatic solution.

Occupied China

Since 7 July 1937, the CMCS was in a more embarrassing situation because its acting head was Chief Secretary Kishimoto Hirokichi. As no one could have foreseen the war breaking out, Maze was still in Britain as a delegation member accompanying Financial Minister Kong Xiangxi's (孔祥熙, H. H. Kung) embassy to the coronation of George VI.[34] In other words, China's biggest revenue collecting agency was controlled by a Japanese and the revenues he collected continued to be channelled into China's war chest for the War of Resistance against Japan. Before the outbreak of the Battle of Shanghai, the CMCS was headed by Kishimoto and the Nanjing government did not change this. The reason for this can be explained by Kishimoto's preparations for the custom houses' evacuation from coastal cities.

After Maze resumed charge, the Battle of Shanghai broke out on 13 August 1937 and all government units in Nanjing were making preparation for evacuations. Maze, however, refused to evacuate to Chongqing, which he explained by circulating a personal letter from Kung, in which Kung told Maze that 'your service in the Customs is as valuable as it is long' and he asked that 'whatever you and your associates can do to help me maintain the integrity and reputation of our Customs Administration at this difficult time will be appreciated and remembered'.[35] Although it did not give a firm instruction for Maze to stay in Shanghai, this letter left flexibility to legitimize Maze's autonomy.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe, Western staff had not believed that a world war was coming, and felt that the War of Resistance would be another regional conflict. They generally felt that 'it would be disastrous in the circumstances to be 100% loyal' to the Chongqing government and it was, more than ever, necessary to emphasize the CMCS's 'freedom from politics'.[36] In their eyes, it was 'not a question of our "abandoning"' but the government 'abandoned' the Western staff in occupied China as it 'left' them in the 'lurch', 'retired to safer places'.[37] However, it was

[34]Circular No. 5477, 3 April 1937, in Wright (ed.), *Documents illustrative*, vol. V, p. 666.

[35]SHAC, 679(1) 28977, Maze Semi-Official Circular No. 172, 6 June 1938.

[36]SOAS, Privately, Confidential and Personal, Jordan to Maze, Tientsin-Shanghai, 31 December 1937–5 January 1938.

[37]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume III, Jordan to Maze, 11 January 1938.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press

different for the Japanese staff members as they had been dragged into the deteriorating relations between China and Japan since 1931; yet they had built up a strong bond with China and Chinese people as most of them had joined the CMCS before 1927.[38] The Japanese staff became 'a sort of unofficial intermediary' between the Chinese staff and the Japanese military.[39] The most effective unofficial intermediary was Kishimoto. As the second-in-command and a Japanese, he provided the CMCS with more leeway, but it could not last forever.

Before the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Japanese military had already occupied most of the Chinese coastal cities. Consequently, Kishimoto's interactions with these custom houses were inevitably disclosed by the Japanese military. For instance, when the Takashima troops (高嶋部隊) took over the Pakhoi Custom House in February 1941, Kishimoto's correspondence with Pakhoi was disclosed. The Japanese military's report claimed that Kishimoto was a 'two-faced personality' and listed his 'hostile acts': he (1) 'transferred the revenues from the 14 Custom Houses in Unoccupied China' to Chongqing, (2) 'requested 19 Custom Houses in Unoccupied China [Free China] to prevent tariff tax fraud issue in terms of the smuggling from Occupied China to Unoccupied [Free] China', (3) 'instructed the Pakhoi Commissioner for destroying all important documents and records before the Japanese military occupied the Custom House', (4) 'discussed with the IG how the collection of Customs revenues could be done without the help of the Yokohama Spice Bank, and Chongqing, Hongkong and Shanghai would be most convenient', and (5) 'instructed the Pakhoi Commissioner to open an account in the Hongkong branch of the Bank of China. This demonstrated his collaboration with the Chongqing government.'[40]

In effect, the Japanese military reached the following conclusions about Kishimoto and the CMCS:

1. Kishimoto's 'two-faced personality' between Occupied and Free China was demonstrated by the fact that he would transfer the order from the Chongqing government's Ministry of Finance or even instruct local custom houses to collaborate with the Chongqing government. It brought suspicion whether he had any sense of being a Japanese national.
2. The Japanese staff's hostility [towards the Japanese empire] was probably to consolidate their careers in the CMCS but this act was undoubtedly treasonous. The behaviour of the several hundred Japanese employees' should receive attention and guidance.
3. As a Japanese, it was not unfair to state that Kishimoto still helped the Chongqing government's military resistance against Japan. The Japanese authorities turned a blind eye to these acts because they did not understand

[38]At this point the CMCS stopped recruiting foreign staff. A. H. F. Edwardes, Semi-Official Circular, 24 February 1927, in Wright (ed.), *Documents illustrative*, vol. IV, p. 126.

[39]N. Clifford, 'Sir Frederick Maze and the Chinese Maritime Customs, 1937–1941', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1965, p. 29.

[40]JACAR Ref.C13031852300, Operation C2 intelligence materials No.11. About the antagonistic behaviour of the Japanese staff working in the Chinese Maritime Customs, 15 May 1941 (National Institute for Defense Studies).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> the nature of the CMCS. The utmost task was to reform the CMCS thoroughly and eliminate these Japanese employees.[41]

Although these accusations towards Kishimoto were serious, he was probably not aware of them and kept working with the Chongqing government. The Japanese military did not explain why they tolerated this 'two-faced' Japanese citizen. The only logical conclusion is that the military probably could not find a better person to replace him.

Two Nationalist governments, 1939–1941

During the War of Resistance, the two opposing camps were the Chongqing and Collaborationist governments, but they shared the same official name, constitution, national flag, anthems, governmental structure, etc. Their similarities led to a unique situation: 'the united CMCS within separated China'. While the CMCS fell under two governments, the Chongqing and Collaborationist governments both had Financial Ministries and Directorates-General of Customs from April 1940 to August 1945. Yet the CMCS's custom houses in free and occupied China were all under the authority of the Shanghai Inspectorate from April 1940 to December 1941. Therefore, the superintendents were the collaborationist Director-General Zhang Sumin (張素民, Sherman Su-min Chang) and the Chongqing Director-General Zheng Lai (鄭萊, Loy Chang). The two governments turned a blind eye to this unique situation for 20 months. In order to maintain this status quo, Maze, Kishimoto, and Ding worked together to convince them that only the CMCS could maintain China's international trade and uphold her obligations—and this served both Nationalist governments' best interests.

Collaborationist government

The year 1939 marks a new stage for the foreign and Chinese staff's collaborationism at the CMCS for two reasons. For the former, the reason was the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe and for the latter it was the inauguration of the Collaborationist government in Nanjing. Interestingly, Maze was more concerned about the latter. He felt 'many troublesome questions concerning the Customs position will come up for discussion, and it may prove impossible for me to coordinate the conflicting claims of both parties, unless the Powers intervene effectively'.[42]

In order to bring in the intervention by the 'Powers', Maze wrote to Non-Resident Secretary Cubbon, who was the inspector-general's liaison with the British government at the London office, to express his difficulties that 'for many months past I have, as the opportunity arose, endeavoured to create in the minds of the Japanese Authorities (here and in Tokyo) the impression that it would be a political error on the part of Wang Ching-wei's "Government" to raise at the start semi-foreign controversial issues likely to irritate the interested Powers—such as… the direct control of the Customs Administration'.[43]

[41] Ibid.
[42] SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 8, Maze to Wright, 17 February 1940.
[43] SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 8, IGS No. 75, Maze to Cubbon, 4 May 1940.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Maze actually told 'the local Japanese Embassy' that 'instead of appointing him IG', it might be 'expedient' for the Collaborationist government to 'proceed on the assumption that they are, as it were, the continuation of the former Nanking Government, and as such the inheritors of all Government Departments, including the Customs'.[44] Kishimoto then talked to the Western powers and 'stimulated the acceptance' of 'the general ideas'. Kishimoto's general ideas were that the Collaborationist government's fiscal policy 'could be set forth through the medium of local Superintendents, leaving local Commissioners to protest, and, where necessary and unavoidable, to give way (where non-essentials are concerned) to what may be regarded in the peculiar circumstances prevailing as *force majeure*'.[45]

After Maze and Kishimoto convinced the Western powers and Japan, the Collaborationist government had to accept this proposal so Maze received official recognition from Financial Minister Zhou Fohai (Chou Fo-hai). Zhou said that the CMCS was 'of great importance', and Maze had been 'rendering remarkably meritorious service'. Maze was 'instructed to order all the Commissioners of Customs to carry on as usual' so that both 'the Customs affairs and the National Treasury' would benefit.[46]

Other than the fact that the Collaborationist government could not deny the proposal, Zhou's order revealed another important reason for recognizing the CMCS, namely the trade and its taxation income. The newly inaugurated Collaborationist government's priority was to stabilize its own finances.[47] As Maze still controlled all custom houses throughout China, any sort of bold interference would jeopardize not only the 'Customs affairs' but also the imposition of a tobacco and sugar tax.[48]

Thus, the Anglo-Japanese team were able to ensure the CMCS's survival. However, at this critical moment, Kishimoto had already completed his 35-year service on 31 July 1940 and should have been subject to compulsory retirement. But Maze decided to exercise his 'discretionary powers as IG and to retain him [Kishimoto] in the capacity of Chief Secretary until further notice'. Kishimoto would 'in all other respects continue to be treated as an ordinary member of the Service but without pensions benefits'.[49]

For Kishimoto's personal standpoint, it would have been best to retrieve his pension and escape from this embarrassing situation, but he did not because a more pressing issue arose. The collaborationist Director-General Zhang Sumin started to approach the CMCS. At the first meeting, Zhang hoped that he and Maze would 'have closer personal contacts than has been the case heretofore'. Zhang reminded Maze of the fact that 'the existing *modus vivendi* referred to has been in force' from 1937–1940. Although the CMCS met with Japanese demands in an informal manner, it did so 'only after a great deal of discussion and delay'. This time, Zhang gently reminded Maze, the Japanese military felt that 'the IG enjoyed considerable independence *vis-a-vis* the

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]SHAC, 2085 865, Finance Minister Chou Fo-hai, Order No. 2, 3 April 1940.

[47]Zhou's diary on 2 April 1941, quoted in Cai Dejin (蔡德金) (ed.), *Zhou Fohai's diary* (周佛海日記) (Beijing: China Social Academy Press, 1986), vol. I, p. 489.

[48]Zhou's diary on 21 April 1941 and 4 May 1941, quoted in Cai, *Zhou Fohai's diary*, vol. I, pp. 500 and 507.

[49]SHAC, 679(1) 11381, IG Order No. 1331, 17 July 1940

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Japanese authorities, etc., [which] could not reasonably be expected to continue; and that it had not in the past proved wholly satisfactory'.[50]

On 30 November 1940, eight months after the Collaborationist government's inauguration, it concluded an official diplomatic relationship with Japan by signing the Sino-Japanese Fundamental Treaty (中日基本條約) and the Joint Declaration between China, Japan, and Manchukuo (中日滿共同宣言).[51] The Japanese empire and the Axis powers gave the Collaborationist government the *de jure* and de facto status of being the central government of China.

Zhang immediately arranged a follow-up meeting with Maze, who foresaw the sensitivity of this meeting and sent for a third player, namely the Chinese secretary Ding Guitang. This time, Zhang's approach was not soft. He directly brought up three demands: (1) Maze should be ordered to release the surplus to the Collaborationist government; (2) if the inspector-general was 'not in a position to do so for fear of being dismissed by the Chunking [Chongqing] Government', Kishimoto 'should be appointed as a Deputy IG who may be able to sign cheques on behalf of the IG'; and (3) the local commissioners should be 'ordered through the various Superintendents to release the surplus directly to the Collaborationist Government'.

Faced with Zhang's aggressive attitude, Ding was uncompromising in responding to Zhang's three proposals. First, if Maze was 'forced' to release the surplus, he would 'most probably leave' and consequently the CMCS would be dissolved. Ding even stated that he did not 'think even the German Government would like to see the break of the Chinese Customs Service'. Secondly, the deputy inspector-general appointment 'must be made by the government' but the Chongqing government would never appoint Kishimoto. If the Collaborationist government appointed him, it would 'affect the Customs integrity' just as a new inspector-general would have been appointed. Ding, moreover, explained that 'the Deputy IG cannot exercise authority by himself and he only acts under the authority of the Inspector General'. He then assured Zhang that Kishimoto's current post was the most important post in the Inspectorate, with the authority to sign any documents for the inspector-general. Thirdly, Ding predicted that the superintendents' direct dealings with the Collaborationist government 'might be done under *force majeure*', and judging from precedents from the various civil wars in China, Zhang and his [the Collaborationist] government should allow the present status quo to remain in place 'until the time when a general settlement has become necessary'.[52]

Ding wrote another report analysing his meeting with Zhang, in which he emphasized that 'it would be much better for the Chief Secretary [Kishimoto] to be kept informed of all matters going on' between the Inspectorate and the Collaborationist government.[53] Judging by this meeting with Zhang, Maze, Kishimoto, and Ding were decisively united against the Collaborationist government.

[50]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 9, Conference Memo, 16 September 1940.

[51]The Department of Propaganda, *The nature of the Sino-Japanese Fundamental Treaty* (中日基本條約及其意義) (Nanjing: New China Press, 1941), p. 1.

[52]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 9, Chang in Cathay Hotel Grillroom, 8 December 1940.

[53]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 9, Chinese Secretary Ting Kwei-tang Report to the IG, 27 December 1940.

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After settling the matter with Western powers, Japan, and the Collaborationist government in Shanghai, Maze was released from the anxiety generated by the inauguration of the Collaborationist government. He explained why Japan had to live with this arrangement: 'If Japan is foolish enough to take on the States her fate is sealed, the American air force can bomb every town in Japan from their Pacific base, and every town is vulnerable.'[54] Maze, obviously, was mistaken about the strength of the US air force and the ambition of Japan—and he also made another mistake. The fourth party involved—the Chongqing government—would also change its attitude.

Chongqing government

Maze was satisfied with his arrangements with the three parties in Shanghai but he still had to get the Chongqing government on the same page. The room left for the Chongqing government to continue tolerating Maze's tactics with the collaborationists had become smaller. Maze realized how sensitive the two meetings with the collaborationist Director-General Zhang were, so he wrote two long letters to Chongqing's Financial Minister Kong. Maze explained that the Chongqing government enjoyed 'a certain prestige' from the status quo because it continued to be 'the central and controlling authority of the Customs'. But having a nominal status of central government was not enough for Kong, so Maze emphasized the importance of international trade and finance after the war by stating that 'when the present hostilities cease', 'should China be obliged to enter the Money markets of the world',[55] the CMCS would be needed.

Thus, Maze had to 'bend occasionally rather than break entirely'. By doing so, 'the Japanese authorities have been prevented from appointing their own personnel and ousting the Inspectorate from Shanghai'. If the Inspectorate withdrew from Shanghai, Maze emphasized that this 'would be regarded generally as being equivalent to defeat; and, what is worse, would immediately open the door for a much stronger Japanese element in, and control over, the Customs Service'. This meant this withdrawal would be 'handing over the entire administration to Japanese control, with disastrous results for China's prestige and credit'.[56]

But this letter only explained the first meeting with Zhang Sumin. After the second meeting between Ding and Zhang, Maze immediately reported back to Kong about the pressure from the Collaborationist government, and he promised that he would neither 'accept any official appointment offered' by the Collaborationist government, nor 'execute their "instructions" regarding such matters as bending over to them the Customs revenue surplus, etc.'. However, he needed Kong's understanding regarding his occasional informal contact with local authorities in occupied ports, and he emphasized that 'it was wiser' to 'give way a little' in order to retain the 'partial control which happily still exists, with the backing of the interested Powers—England and the United States'.[57]

[54]SHAC, 679(1) 31482; IGs No. 181, Maze to Cubbon, 4 June 1941.
[55]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 9, Maze to Kung, 6 August 1940.
[56]Ibid.
[57]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 9, Maze to Kung, 30 December 1940.

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Such tactics, however, were not acceptable to Kong. He replied to Maze that 'if I were less acquainted with the way how the Japanese and their puppets act, I would have agreed with what you suggested. Unfortunately, they invariably mistake concession as a sign of weakness. Therefore, I can see no useful purpose will be served by trying to humor them. You will probably play the very game they desire and lose in the end the very thing you strive to preserve.'[58] The reason why Kong became less supportive of Maze was that America and Britain had retreated from their original 'Appeasement' policies to the Japanese empire, and the Chongqing government had accordingly changed to a hardline policy towards the CMCS 'owing to the backing of England and the States'. Maze complained that this did not 'help matters!':

> If the interested Powers expect the Inspector General to follow their lately adopted 'non-appeasement' attitude, they should in that case support him. But I do not advocate a 'non-appeasement' stand where *minor* or non-essential issues are concerned… I cannot effectively stand where major principles are involved, unless I give way here and there in the case of non-essentials, as I have repeatedly stated.[59]

Since the Chongqing government had toughened its stance towards Japan due to America and Britain's policy change outlined above, Maze had to seek an intermediary to talk to Britain and Chonqing. The candidate was Chinese Ambassador to Britain Gu Weijin (顧維鈞, Wellington Koo). Gu arrived in London in July 1941 to settle 'five major issues' with the British government: foreign loans, the Burma road, Hong Kong, India, and the Allies' military strategy.[60] Gu realized that Britain's priority in Asia was to maintain its privileges and thus was keen to make concessions to Japan at China's expense.[61] Thus, it was necessary for Gu to understand the CMCS's political and financial value to Chongqing.

Non-Resident Secretary Cubbon, the inspector-general's liaison to the British government at the London office, answered Gu. He told Maze that Gu had 'lent a willing ear to my account of your skill and diplomacy at holding on at Shanghai, showed great interest in my remark that you were the sole representative there of the Chungking Government'.[62] Then Maze wrote a letter to Gu, re-emphasizing that he was 'the sole representative of the Chinese Government operating officially in occupied China, without officially recognizing the *de facto* Government in Nanking'. But Maze wanted to share his difficulties with Gu:

> When I satisfy the Government, I may dissatisfy Tokyo and *vice versa*—I may succeed in avoiding Charybdis but there remains Scylla… I am still able to exercise in the face of violent opposition to prevent the division of the Administration into two sections—a large directly-controlled Japanese section and a small Chinese

[58]SOAS, PPMS2 IG Personal Correspondence, Volume 10, Kung to Maze, 15 January 1941.
[59]SOAS, Confidential Letters and Reports, Volume 15, Maze to Cubbon, 22 September 1941.
[60]Wellington Koo, *The memoir of Wellington Koo* (Beijing: The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2013), vol. 5, pp. 8–29.
[61]Ibid., p. 37.
[62]SOAS, Confidential Letters and Reports, Volume XV, IGS No. 84, Cubbon to Maze, 25 July 1941.

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> section; and thus sustain the Government's prestige as far as possible in the circumstance, and retain the usefulness of the Service as a possible future loan-security organ in London and New York.[63]

Although Maze now seriously consider this evacuation plan, it was too late: two months after this letter, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941.

Immediately after he was informed, Maze ordered the burning of all confidential documents.[64] On 9 December, the Chongqing government declared war on Japan. Because Chongqing and Britain had become Japan's official enemies. Maze, a British citizen sometimes taking orders from Chongqing, was dismissed on 10 December, one day before completing his '50-year service in the CMCS',[65] and replaced by Kishimoto.[66] On 13 December, 221 British and American employees were discharged.[67] Before he was dismissed, Maze drafted an unofficial letter and instructed Ding to read it to the staff to let them know that he would tell the Chongqing government that 'viewed merely from an administrative aspect, it would doubtless prove advantageous in the long run if they continued their routine work for the time being'.[68] Two weeks after Maze's letter, on Christmas Eve, Kishimoto also issued a circular which stated that the Collaborationist government had directed him to 'inform the Chinese and foreign staff [excluding the Americans and British] that their position and benefits due under the existing pension system are guaranteed' and he was 'confident that the Staff thus reassured will execute their duties with unabated efficiency, vigilance, and loyalty'.[69]

Ding's reply to Zhang Sumin; Maze's letters to Kong, to Gu, and to the staff; and Kishimoto's circular carried the same message as that given by Fukumoto to the British consular in 1932—that 'the Customs had stood between China and disaster before, and there was no knowing when it might have to do so again, so that it was essential to preserve the administration intact if possible, or to restore it at the earliest possible moment if it is damaged, for the benefit not only of China but of every other interested party'.[70] These statements, spanning eight years, narrate the story of how the CMCS staff muddled through a most difficult period because the necessity of international trade and obligations outranked periodic engagements and hostilities.

Yet there was one noticeable difference between the inauguration of Manchukuo and Pearl Harbor. The former happened in March 1932, giving staff time to arrange their and their families' evacuation. However, because of the abrupt nature of the outbreak of the Pacific War, the CMCS employees were unable to leave their posts immediately. This meant if they decided to leave they had to work through the

[63]SOAS, Confidential Letters and Reports, Volume XV, Maze to Koo, 1 October 1941.

[64]SHAC, 679(6) 652, Ting Kwei-tang's Written Confession, 4 January 1947; SHAC, 679(9) 1391, Maze to Kung, Chungking Confidential No. 4, 30 December 1942.

[65]SHAC, 679(9) 1391, Chungking Confidential No. 4, 30 December 1942.

[66]SHAC, 679(9) 5379, Financial Ministry Order Customs No. 378, 10 December 1941and Kishimoto Circular No. 5770, 11 December 1941.

[67]SHAC, 679(9) 5379, Kishimoto Circular No. 5771, 24 December 1941.

[68]SHAC, 679(9) 1391, Maze's Confidential Letter to all Chinese employees, 11 December 1941.

[69]SHAC, 679(9) 5379, Kishimoto Circular No. 5772, 24 December 1941.

[70]FO 262/1800, British Consulate, Dairen, 26 September, 1932, No. 130, Copies to Peking No.107, Mukden, Harbin, and Commercial Secretary, Newchwang and Shanghai.

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Japanese military's surveillance and leave their families in occupied China. Faced with such an impossible choice, only a few of them made it.

Conclusion

This article discusses a unique case—the CMCS and its staff's prewar and wartime choices and activities. The British, Chinese, and Japanese historical figures discussed in this article, including Frederick Maze, Kishimoto Hirokichi, Ding Guitang, Zhang Yongnian, and Yoshida Goro, all chose different courses after the war.

Yoshida, who had left the Manchukuo Customs Service immediately and returned to the CMCS in 1932, made the same decision in 1941. At that time he was the Additional Shanghai Amoy Commissioner,[71] but he insisted on handing in his application for retirement to Kishimoto and returned to Japan.[72] After the Second World War, he wrote to the Nationalist government requesting to be reinstated, claiming that he was 'always loyal to the CMCS and his Chinese superintendent'.[73]

On 6 March 1942, Maze, Ding, and Zhang were all 'unceremoniously seized in the middle of the night by Japanese gendarmes and escorted to the notorious Bridge House'.[74] They were finally released on 9 May,[75] after which they fled to Chongqing but chose different routes to get there.

After his release, Maze 'sailed to Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa, arriving on 27 August 1942'.[76] He then returned to Chongqing and 'resumed charge on 1 March 1943 but only on the understanding that he would simultaneously submit his resignation, effective from 31 May 1943.[77] On the last day of Maze's Customs career, he got his pension, appointed Chief Secretary Ding as officiating inspector-general and former Canton Commissioner Lester Little as acting inspector-general,[78] who, after his arrival in Chongqing, would automatically become inspector-general.[79]

[71] *Service List*, No. 68, p. 59.

[72] Harvard Houghton Library, L. K. Little Papers, BMS Am 1999.4, 'IG Little Personal correspondence', Little to Atcheson, 3 June 1946.

[73] Harvard Houghton Library, L. K. Little Papers, BMS Am 1999.16, II IGS Confidential correspondence with Foreign embassies, Naval and Military Authorities, 1946–1947, Yoshida to Little, 22 April 1947; cited from R. Bickers, 'Anglo-Japanese relations and treaty port China', in *The international history of East Asia, 1900–1968: Trade, ideology and the quest of order*, (ed.) Antony Best (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 50.

[74] SOAS, Confidential Letters and Reports, Volume XV, Preventive Secretary R. M. Talbot's Notes on the Situation of the Chinese Customs in the Occupied Areas as Affected by the War, 28 December 1942.

[75] SHAC, 679(9) 1391, Chungking Confidential No. 4, 30 December 1942

[76] SOAS, Confidential Letters and Reports, Volume XV, Preventive Secretary R. M. Talbot's Notes on the Situation of the Chinese Customs in the Occupied Areas as Affected by the War, 28 December 1942.

[77] Robert Bickers, 'The Chinese Maritime Customs at war, 1941–45', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2008, p. 303.

[78] SHAC, 679(1) 4202, IG Order No. 62, Chungking, 31 May 1943.

[79] From 3 December 1942 to 1 March 1943, the Finance Ministry and Maze seem to have had a dispute over the issue of his reinstatement of Maze. In December 1942, Maze visited Gu in Chongqing and complained that he was 'suddenly dismissed by the Financial Ministry', was utterly 'dissatisfied with the Financial Ministry's decision', and felt that his 'sacrifice and devotion were not appreciated'. Gu did not mention why the Financial Ministry finally reinstated Maze but he told Kong that the reinstatement of Maze was 'wise as he served the CMCS for over half century. It is just. He is almost seventy and he will be retired in the near future.' Then Gu met Song Ziwen (T. V. Soong) in Washington DC and both of them

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After Ding's release, Kishimoto asked him to fill the post of chief secretary but Ding refused.[80] Because Ding was under strict surveillance, he applied for long leave five times;[81] finally, on 29 December 1942, Kishimoto approved Ding's application because Ding had provided a medical proof that he had been suffering from 'neuroasthenia with repeated attacks of severe insomnia'.[82] It took him 40 days to reach Chongqing.[83] On 1 March 1943, Ding handed in his resignation to Kishimoto and was appointed Maze's chief secretary by the Chongqing government.[84] Ding then became the officiating inspector-general from 31 May to 16 August 1943.[85] His tenure was short but meaningful because this was the first time a Chinese had headed the CMCS.

Zhang Yongnian chose another way to flee. He was instructed to transfer from Tianjin to Shanghai.[86] Kishimoto waited for him for three months then dismissed him on grounds of dereliction of duty after he knew that Zhang was in Chongqing.[87]

Kishimoto became the Collaborationist inspector-general who ran the Collaborationist Customs Service until the end of the War of Resistance. Before he stepped down, he paid off all Japanese and foreign staff members. Four months after Japan's unconditional surrender, Deputy Inspector-General Ding Guitang sent a letter to Kishimoto stating that he had already granted Kishimoto's pension for the period from 1905–1940 in the amount of £6,439.[88]

Judging from their respective nationalities and the ongoing war, it would certainly have been legitimate for Ding to deny Kishimoto's request for his pension. Ding could also, with good reason, have deducted the years 1937–1940 from Kishimoto's pension as the two countries had already gone into a de facto wartime status for three years. However, Ding did neither. In other words, both Maze and Kishimoto received their pensions from the wartime Chongqing government and the postwar Nationalist government. How the Nationalist government viewed this Anglo-Japanese partnership was particularly interesting: in its view, Kishimoto's contributions from 1937–1940 deserved to be included his pension.

After reviewing their careers after December 1941, the following two fundamental questions about their prewar and wartime activities arise: first, if the collaboration of the Chinese employees, such as Ding and Zhang, with a Japan-sponsored regime in China could be seen as a necessary for the greater benefit of China from 1932–1939, why would their Chinese colleagues be treated and viewed differently for their activities from 1939–1941? Secondly, if the Chinese employees' acts would be viewed as wartime collaborationism that sabotaged the national interests of China, why would

agreed that the Maze case 'would lead Sino-British relations to disputes'. See Koo, *Memoir of Wellington Koo*, vol. 5, pp. 152, 227 and 240.

[80]SHAC, 679(6) 652, Ting Kwei-tang's Written Confession, 4 January 1947.

[81]SHAC, 679(1) 4202, IG Order No. 1296, 5 February 1940; IG Order No. 1339, 4 September 1940; IG Order No. 1369, 8 February 1941; IG Order No. 1400, 23 September 1941; IG Order No. 1444, 11 March 1942; and IG Order No. 1469, 15 July 1942.

[82]SHAC, 679(1) 4202, Ting to the IG Kishimoto, Shanghai, Special No. 1683, 25 December 1942.

[83]SHAC, 679(6) 652, Ting Kwei-tang's Written Confession, 4 January 1947.

[84]SHAC, 679(1) 4202, IG Order No. 48, 1 March 1943.

[85]SHAC, 679(1) 4202, IG Order No. 71, Chungking, 16 August 1943.

[86]SHAC, 679(1) 7271, IG Order No. 1602, 21 September 1943.

[87]SHAC, 679(1) 7271, Tianjin No. 12744, Customs No. 188512.

[88]SHAC, 679(1) 11381, DIG Ding Guitang's General Letter to Kishimoto, 5 December 1945.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Japanese staff members, such as Kishimoto, Fukumoto, Yoshida, Yamaguchi, etc., not be seen as sabotaging the national interests of Japan? In other words, do we only consider choices around collaborationism and conduct of working with respect to the Axis powers?

These questions are difficult to answer because of the ambiguity of collaborationism. Every person was doing exactly the same thing as they had done before 1939. What turned them into collaborators was the outbreak of war. To answer the first question, one can argue that the War of Resistance's outbreak drew the line between cosmopolitan collaboration and wartime collaborationism. Before the outbreak of war, their acts could be seen as cosmopolitan collaboration but after it, those became wartime collaborationism. But the truth was that it was difficult to define when the War of Resistance broke out, as the Chongqing government did not declare war on Japan until after Pearl Harbor. In other words, the situation during 1939–1941 was, theoretically, no different from 1932–1939. There was no clear timeline for defining when the war broke out, and thus no clear starting point for collaborationism.

To answer the second question, the 1965 statement of Furu'umi Tadayuki (古海忠之), undersecretary of the Management and Coordination Board (總務廳次長) of Manchukuo, should be borne in mind. Furu'umi stated that 'the invasive action Kwantung Army had done was a contradiction on ideals between Japanese parochialism and ideal of Manchukuo, but under the effort of Manchukuo officers, it could be coordinated in certain degree'.[89] Furu'umi served Manchukuo, and Kishimoto, Fukumoto, Yoshida, and Yamaguchi served the CMCS and the Nanjing, Chongqing, and Collaborationist governments, but they all referred to the fact that, as Japanese, the employer they served was not Japan. This necessarily would lead them to a political dilemma: in serving their employers well, they would become collaborators in the eyes of either China and Japan. Whether the employers' best interests could fit in with China's best interests in the long run could hardly have been foreseen. In the case of the CMCS, they believed that it did fit well.

The above two observations—that the War of Resistance has no clear starting point and the Japanese worked for third-party employers—together point to ambiguousness inherent in wartime collaborationism. Thus, this article argues that prewar cosmopolitan collaboration, wartime collaborationism, and the postwar cosmopolitan collaboration were similar in terms of the activities involved and were conducted by the same group of people who believed that the necessity of maintaining international trade and implementing international obligations outranked everything before, during, and after any war. What distinguished wartime collaborationism was the retrospectively imposed moral framework that dichotomized 'resistance' and 'collaboration', which postwar nation-states employed to buttress their political legitimacy.

This article explains that, in the eyes of both the Chinese and Japanese employees, international trade and obligations on the global, national, and intuitional levels had to be prioritized. At the global level, international trade either in peace or wartime still required collaboration between different nations, especially in China's case, for its international trade and obligations had been regulated by a series of 'unequal treaties'

[89]The Association of Recollection of Manchuria (ed.), *Aa Manshu: Kokutsukuri Sangyo Kaihatsusha no Shuki* (あゝ満洲: 国つくり産業開発者の手記) (Tokyo: The Association of Recollection of Manchuria, 1965), p. 32.

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and Japan was one of the treaty powers. Neither China nor Japan could change this treaty system. At the national level, every regime in China had to share its international obligations. Even during a severe military engagement, such as the Mukden Incident or the battles of Shanghai in 1932 and 1937, China still paid its Boxer indemnity instalments to Japan. Collaboration, for the staff and institution put in charge of international trade, was almost destined to happen. At the institutional level, it was understood that the War of Resistance would end one day and either the Chongqing or the Collaborationist governments would need the CMCS and its customs revenues to overcome financial difficulties and for postwar reconstruction.

From the Japanese perspective, the above three reasons were equally convincing. At the global level, not only did Japan work with China or Manchukuo, it also worked with all its major enemies during the Second World War. Japan relied heavily on the natural resources provided by America before Pearl Harbor and worked with Britain to store the customs revenues in the Yokohama Specie Bank. At the national level, the interreliability of Sino-Japanese trade was so high that any obstacle, such as corruption or smuggling, would cause damage to Japan. Besides, Japan was a major beneficiary of the Boxer Indemnity, so it continued to rely on sufficient revenue from the CMCS and to collect this sum from China. At the institutional level, the last inspector-general of the CMCS, Lester Little, was put in charge of postwar rehabilitation for China's lighthouse service.[90] Even after his retirement from the CMCS, Little was hired to rehabilitate Japan's Customs Service in February 1950. Little, as the head of China's Customs Service and an American, was a most sensitive candidate as both China and America were Japan's two most vital enemies during the Second World War. But the need for Japan to rehabilitate its broken economy was so urgent that a Japanese customs officer and a former Japanese staff member at the CMCS all worked with Little towards this goal.[91]

Neither China nor America and Britain could foresee the outbreak of the Pacific War, and this stopped the Chongqing and Collaborationist governments from making more concessions to the CMCS. Had Pearl Harbor not happened, such collaboration and concession would most likely have continued. The case study of China reveals that its moral and political dilemmas were similar to those experienced in Denmark, France, Holland, Belgium, etc. For these countries, the Second World War was a humiliating process of occupation, a worrying time of neutrality, and a shameful period of concession. They also struggled for a long time for prewar coexistence, wartime survival, and postwar rehabilitation. Out of a deep concern with such struggle, the authors present the unique cases in China and its CMCS's unique wartime ambiguousness. It is hoped that there will be more studies on collaborationism to shed further light on these countries' wartime experiences.

[90]Jiayi Tao, '"Winning the peace": The Chinese Maritime Customs Service, foreign technocrats, and planning the rehabilitation of post-war China, 1943–1945', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 56, no. 6, 2022, pp. 1930–1950.

[91]See Chihyun Chang, 'Empires and continuity: The Chinese Maritime Customs Service in East Asia, 1950–1955', in *Overcoming empire: The retreat of the Japanese empire*, (eds) Barak Kushner and Sherzod Muminov (London: Bloombury Academic Publishing, 2019).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Funding statement. The authors would like to extend their gratitude to the Yonyou Foundation's support (Ref. 2021–Y09) for this research project.

Competing interests. The authors declare none.

Cite this article: Chang, Chihyun and Chiu-Ya Kao. 2024. 'Cosmopolitan collaboration and wartime collaborationism: The Chinese Maritime Customs Service and its staff, 1932–1941'. *Modern Asian Studies*, pp. 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000458 Published online by Cambridge University Press