Loyalty, Secrecy and Revolutionary Work: Female Underground Operatives and Narratives about Chinese Female Spies before and after 1949

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Abstract

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This thesis is a study of civilian women mobilised by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and their wartime activities prior to the 1949 Communist takeover of China. Specifically, it investigates the kind of clandestine activities civilian women were mobilised to do – such as the gathering of intelligence and enemy sabotage, how civilian women came to be involved in the first place, and the reasons behind their mobilisation, especially according to CCP Woman-Work officials. It also considers whether civilian women acted or were expected by officials to act in ways similar to the "seductress-spy" stereotype which pervaded popular culture in China at that time. To do so, this thesis first explores popular Chinese ideas of female spies in the first half of the 20th century. It then looks at how civilian women were actually mobilised to engage in clandestine activities during the civil wars between the Nationalists and the Communists and the Sino-Japanese War. Lastly, it explores what happened when the demand for civilian women to engage in these activities decreased in the latter half of the 1940s, and how such women remembered their activities in the 1980s. It uses Republican Chinese periodicals, newspapers, rare published sources in both Chinese and Japanese, compiled volumes of CCP documents and declassified Nationalist and Communist archival materials from Chinese archives. It finds that civilian women did not and were not expected to act exactly like "seductress-spies," but there were some similarities. Civilian women were expected to utilise perceptions that women were ignorant and apolitical to their advantage. They were also expected to capitalise on their femininity to appear innocent and approach enemy men in order to ferret out intelligence and to get these men to do things they otherwise would not have done. Moreover, in the 1930s and early 1940s some officials found that civilian women who had been deemed promiscuous locally or were prostitutes made good recruits because they thought that having already rejected Confucian values they would be relatively tolerant of the risks and more willing to be seen in public. Ultimately, this thesis argues that while CCP Woman-Work efforts in the first half of the 20th century sought, on paper at least, to reject and eradicate what they saw as detrimental stereotypes about women, in practice civilian women were sometimes mobilised to engage in clandestine activities during wartime based on aspects of these stereotypes and perceptions. As such, this thesis contributes to the study of female espionage in China by examining those who were attached to the peripheries of CCP intelligence operations. It also contributes to the study of how some of the traditional values and gender norms regarding Chinese women continued to exist in the 20th century despite the CCP's official pledge to change them.

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Abbreviations

ACWDF	All China Women's Democratic Federation (*Quanguo minzhu funü lianhehui* 全国民主妇女联合会)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party (*Zhongguo Gongchandang* 中国共产党)
DCCPC	Database of Contemporary Chinese Political Campaigns (*Dangdai Zhongguo yundong lishi shujuku* 当代中国运动历史数据库)
DSYJS	Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Party History Research Office (*Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi* 中共中央党史研究室)
EYBQ	Editorial Office of the Revolutionary History of Hubei-Henan Border Region (*E-Yu bianqu gemingshi bianjibu* 鄂豫边区革命史编辑部)
FFFYJS	Fujian Province Women's Federation and Women's Movement Research Office (*Fujian-sheng fulian fuyunshi yanjiushi* 福建省妇联妇运研究室)
FGBXY	The Chinese Women's College of Management Cadres (*Zhongguo funü guanli ganbu xueyuan* 中国妇女管理干部学院)
FJSDAG	Fujian Provincial Archives (*Fujian-sheng dang'anguan* 福建省档案馆)
FYLYJS	Research Office of the History of the Women's Movement (*Funü yundong lishi yanjiushi* 妇女运动历史研究室)
GASZL	Documents on the Public Security History (*Gongan shi ziliao* 公安史资料)
GDFNBZ	The Compilation Committee of Documents on the Women's Movement History of Guangdong Province (*Guangdong-sheng funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui* 广东省妇女运动历史资料编纂委员会)
GDFYD	The Compilation Committee of Documents on the Women's Movement History of Guangdong (*Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui* 广东妇女运动历史资料编纂委员会)
GSDAG	Guangdong Provincial Archives (*Guangdong-sheng dang'anguan* 广东省档案馆)
GSFLH	Women's Federation of Guangdong (*Guangdong-sheng funü lianhehui* 广东省妇女联合会)
GXZFL	Women's Federation of the Zhuang Autonomous Region of Guangxi (*Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu funü lianhehui* 广西壮族自治区妇女联合会)

HBSFL	Women's Federation of Hubei Province (*Hubei-sheng funü lianhehui* 湖北省妇女联合会)
HPA	Hebei Provincial Archives (*Hebei-sheng dang'anguan* 河北省档案馆)
JDYL	Collection of Important Documents Since the Founding of the Party (*Jiandang yilai zhongyao wenjian xuanbian* 建党以来重要文件选编)
JSDAG	Jiangsu Provincial Archives (*Jiangsu-sheng dang'anguan* 江苏省档案馆)
JSFL	Women's Federation of Jiangsu Province (*Jiangsu-sheng funü lianhehui* 江苏省妇女联合会)
JXDA	Jiangxi Provincial Archives (*Jiangxi-sheng dang'anguan* 江西省档案馆)
JXDS	Chinese Communist Party Jiangxi Province Party History Documents Solicitation Committee (*Zhonggong Jiangxi shengwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui* 中共江西省委党史资料征集委员会)
JXDSDAG	Chinese Communist Party Jiangxi Province Party History Research Office (*Zhonggong Jiangxi shengwei dangshi yanjiushi* 中共江西省党史研究室)
JXSFL	Women's Federation of Jiangxi Province (*Jiangxi-sheng funü lianhehui* 江西省妇女联合会)
PLA	People's Liberation Army (*Renmin jiefangjun* 人民解放军)
PRC	People's Republic of China (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo* 中华人民共和国)
PRCWF	People's Republic of China Women's Federation (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo funü lianhehui* 中华人民共和国妇女联合会)
SAD	Social Affairs Department (*Shehuibu* 社会部)
SDSFL	Propaganda Department of the Women's Federation of Shandong Province (*Shandong-sheng fulian xuanchuanbu* 山东省妇联宣传部)
SJZMA	Shijiazhuang Municipal Archives (*Shijiazhuang-shi dang'anguan* 石家庄市档案馆)
SMA	Shanghai Municipal Archives (*Shanghai-shi dang'anguan* 上海市档案馆)
TJSDS	Chinese Communist Party Tianjin Municipal Party Committee Party History Documents Solicitation Committee (*Zhonggong Tianjin shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui* 中共天津市委党史资料征集委员会)
TJSFL	Tianjin Municipal Women's Federation (*Tianjianshi funü lianhehui* 天津市妇

女联合会)

ZHQGFL All China Women's Federation Research Office on the History of the Women's Movement (*Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui funü yundong lishi yanjiushi* 中华全国妇女联合会妇女历史研究室)

ZYDAG Central Archives (*Zhongyang dang'anguan* 中央档案馆)

ZYWX Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Documents Research Office (*Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi* 中共中央文献研究室)

ZZB Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Organisation Department (*Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu* 中共中央组织部)

Notes on Names and Terms

Chinese names, locations, administrative departments, and other characters, except for well-known names such as Chiang Kaishek and Jehol, have been romanised in standard *pinyin* transliteration system throughout this thesis. Japanese long vowels are indicated by a macron mark over the vowel, except for well-known names such as Osaka.

Introduction:

At 5:00pm on 21 October 1947, at the height of the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists, the minister of the Tianjin Municipal Social Affairs Bureau of the Nationalist Government (*Tianjin-shi zhengfu shehuiju* 天津市政府社會局) issued a secret directive to his subordinates at the Social Services Group (*shehui fuwuchu* 社会服务处). It warned its readers, Nationalist officials from the Social Services Group, about the threat of senior female spies (*gaoji nü diebaoyuan* 高级女谍报员) belonging to the Communists, a warning that the minister himself had recently received from the Special Office of the Nationalist Government in Beiping (current-day Beijing 北京) (*Beiping Xingyuan* 北平行辕). "Not only were these women gathering intelligence (*diebao gongzuo* 谍报工作)" but they were also "in charge of recruiting new party members and offering them short-term training, providing cover for senior members to stay undercover on our side."[1] According to this directive, women who could potentially be female spies were those who might have access to senior Nationalist officials, including female government staffers, primary school teachers, dance hostesses, actresses, and telephone receptionists. Other women worthy of suspicion included female street vendors, peasant seamstresses, maids, prostitutes, or the wives or concubines of mid-level military or police officers. Furthermore, the directive warned of the possibility that these female spies might pretend to form family units with male Communists as a means to stay cover while they gathered intelligence.[2]

The secret directive further warned its Social Services Group readers that this was not only a potential threat but something that was happening in real time. The names of two female Communist spy leaders active in the area of Beiping and Tianjin 天津 were given, though it was made clear that these names were likely to be fakes. One was Wu Yahua 吴亚华, a 27- or 28-year old woman originally from southern Shaanxi 陕西 who was presently an active member in the Political Department of the Central Hebei Military Area (*Ji-Zhong junqu zhengzhibu* 冀中军区政治部). Another was the 30-something-year-old Dong Jiazhen 董家珍 from Beiping, previously a university student there. Moreover, there were apparently already 330 to 340 active female spies in the area, most of whom had successfully gotten themselves

[1] Tianjin Municipal Archives, J0025-2-002831-017, '*Wei yanfang nüdie zhanhou diebaodeng huodong shi gei shehuifuwuchu de miling* 为严防女谍战后谍报等活动事给社会服务处的密令 (Secret Directive to the Social Services Group Regarding Taking Strict Precautions Against Post-War Spying, Intelligence-Gathering and Other Activities By Female Spies)'.
[2] Ibid.

married to Nationalist military commanders. For the rest of these women, half of them were engaged in relaying and transporting messages, while the other half intercepted radio communications.[3]

Secret directives of a similar nature that warned of Communist female spies were issued to Nationalist government administrative branches in Shanghai 上海.[4] It was clear from these instructions and directives that while the Communists employed many men as what the Nationalist labelled "spies," no small number of women were also involved. In October 1946, the Economic Bureau's Textile Business Management Committee (*Jingjibu fangzhi shiye guanli weiyuanhui* 经济部纺织事业管理委员会) issued a directive to other companies, warning about an influx of female spies, especially female university students from the Communist Counter-Japanese Military and Political University (*Zhongguo renmin kangri Junshi zhengzhi daxue* 中国人民抗日军事政治大学) who might be spies.[5] In the same year, the Executive Yuan (*Xingzheng yuan* 行政院, the executive branch of the Nationalist Government) forwarded a directive from the Qingdao police to the Textile Business Management Committee which noted that, according to Nationalist intelligence, 270 young beautiful women had been selected by Harbin 哈尔滨 Communists to infiltrate the Nationalist military and administration as "spies".[6] But who were these women? It is now difficult to know

[3] Ibid. It was noted that besides being vigilant, one way to counter this active and real threat was for officials and the police to diligently vet the marriage approvals of their officials and military men, ensuring that these women were not successful in approaching and seducing them for the treacherous purposes.

[4] See, for example: Shanghai Municipal Archives, (hereafter SMA) Q6-14-679-23, '*Shanghai shizhengfu guanyu jiangli jianju jianfei banfa ji jiguan baomi fangdie shishi banfa* 上海市政府关于奖励检举奸匪办法及机关保密防谍实施办法 (Shanghai Municipal Government's Methods to Rewarding the Reporting of Evil Bandits and Methods Regarding the Maintenance of Confidentiality and Anti-Espionage Within Government Offices)'.

[5] SMA, Q192-15-3, '*Zhongguo fangzhi jianshe gongsi Shanghai di 18 fangzhichang 35 nian 10 yue zhaokai lijianshi mingdan gongsi zhuanfa Guomindang canzheng guanyu chengzhi tanwu guanqie fazhi yiji Guofangbu ling zhuyi Gongchandang tegong renyuan huodong dui "jianfei" gaicheng "gongfei" laihan* 中国纺织建设公司上海第 18 纺织厂 35 年 10 月召开理监事名单公司转发国民党参政会关于惩治贪污贯彻法治以及国防部令注意共产党特工人员活动和对"奸匪" 改称"共匪"来函 (No. 18 Shanghai Textiles Factory of the China Textiles and Construction Company's Supervisor List and Circulation of Letters by the People's Political Council of the Chinese Nationalist Party Regarding the Punishment of Corruption to Fully Implement the Rule of Law and Orders by the Ministry of Defense Regarding to Beware of the Activities of Chinese Communist Party Agents and to Change the Names from "Evil Bandits" to "Communist Bandits)'.

[6] SMA, Q192-21-40, '*Shanghai di 6 yinran chang, Shanghai di 7 yinranchang, Zhongguo fangzhi gongsi guanyu beibu (Yang Donglin, iang Wangjun, Feng Huixiang) yidang huodong, shiju dongdang wenti de laihan* 上海第 6 印染厂，上海第 7 印染厂，中国纺织公司关于被捕（杨东林，梁王俊，冯瑞详）异党活动，时局动荡问题的来往函 (Letters From Shanghai No. 6 Dyeing Mill, Shanghai No. 7 Dyeing Mill, Chan Textile Company Regarding Those Who were Arrested (Yang Donglin, Liang Wangjun, Feng Huixiang) and Alien Party Activities, and the Issue of Uncertain Times)'. Spy is an English language term and espionage itself is part of a Western historical and cultural formation that does not entirely overlap with historical Chinese practices. Here I am primarily using the English term 'spy' to translate the Chinese term *jiandie* 间谍. There are other terms but according to a Communist guide on intelligence work published in the 1940s by the Intelligence Department of the East Hebei Region Party Committee (*Ji-dong-qu dangwei qingbaochu* 冀东区党委情报处), the nature of these other terms – such as *diebaoyuan* 谍报员, *mitan* 密探 *qingbaoyuan* 情报员 are very similar to *jiandie*: HPA, 46-1-75-9, "*Junshi diebao* 军事谍报 (Military Intelligence)'. As such here I am sometimes also using the term "spy" as a translation for these other terms.

for sure who these Nationalist sources are referring to. While it is very likely the case that the women blanketly labelled as "spies" by the Nationalists were actually professional spies despatched by the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter CCP) Social Affairs Department (*Shehuibu* 社会部, hereafter SAD), but it is also likely that at least some these women involved were not professional female spies employed by the SAD but merely civilian women mobilised by the CCP to approach Nationalist men, in order to ferret information out of them or to persuade them to join the Communists instead.

This thesis investigates civilian women who were used by the CCP in this capacity. Specifically it primarily explores how civilian women were mobilised to engage in some Woman-Work (*funü gongzuo* 妇女工作) activities of the CCP. In the process, it reveals the role stereotypes and popular perceptions regarding women and spying played in the mobilisation process. Many women were initially drawn to the CCP through its official commitment to women's liberation, which included the abolition of detrimental and restrictive gender stereotypes that stipulated, for example, the traditional and Confucian view that women must be secluded, chaste, and modest. But the research shows that these very women who later worked for the CCP were mobilised *because* of these stereotypes as they were seen as useful for Secret Work and other clandestine activities, and that the women themselves often played on these stereotypes or particular aspects of it during their missions in order to succeed in their endeavours.

Secret Work (*mimi gongzuo* 秘密工作), a term used by the CCP, refers to a general operational strategy by the CCP where officials stay underground and operate in secret.[7] I use the term and investigate the concept of Secret Work here in this thesis because at the heart of the thesis is the broader issue of women's participation in war, spying and sabotage related activities, and the question of how civilian women were mobilised by the CCP to engage in these activities. Some of what was done by civilian women came through being mobilised to undertake Secret Work as Woman-Work officials rather than direct employment by CCP intelligence and public security institutions. After 1927 the issue of security came to the fore when the Nationalists and the Communist fell out in April of that year following Chiang Kai-shek's successful

The term *jiandie*, its origins, other terms related to *jiandie* and how popular sources presented *jiandie* will be discussed further in Chapter 1. Despite its difficulties, here I engage in transcultural translation by continue to speak of "spies," civilian women engaging in clandestine activities and spying because I hope that my work will contribute to the comparative study of this subject.

[7] According to the *Guide to Secret Work* (*Mimi Gongzuo Xuzhi* 秘密工作须知) published by the Central Committee Organisation Department of the CCP, Secret Work was an offensive strategy and also a potent "weapon of self-defence" See: Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu 中共中央组织部 (hereafter ZZB), *Mimi gongzuo xuzhi* (Zhongyang Zuzhibu, n.d), 1

Northern Expedition. As political scientist Xuezhi Guo has illustrated, it was after the 1927 split between the CCP and the Nationalists that the CCP created security and intelligence apparatuses.[8] The party also adopted a policy and strategy of Secret Work, where, instead of operating publicly, its officials were now going underground. The particular Secret Worker (*mimi gongzuo zhe* 秘密工作者) – in this case a female Woman-Work official who had to conceal her identity – would first secretly infiltrate or approach a targeted community, usually using seemingly apolitical means to do so. Then the Secret Worker would attempt to pit members of the targeted infiltrated community (such as soldiers, factory workers, etc) against their superiors and authority figures, usually through some form of persuasion that highlighted how exploitative the authority was. Lastly, the Secret Worker would incite members of the targeted community to rebel against the authority figure, either openly, such as initiating labour strikes, or in a less confrontational manner, such as getting them to leave the Nationalist army or join the Communist Army instead. Throughout the process, the Secret Worker would seek to convert members of the masses who demonstrated the most potential into becoming CCP members. Specifically, those who demonstrated an acute political awareness, and/or those who were particularly enthusiastic and organised. This strategy theoretically allowed the party to operate efficiently since, unlike larger-scale military activities, it required less man-power and was relatively effective. It would also minimise security risks to the party because individual officials or operatives were often hidden among a group of people which made detection difficult.[9]

Moreover, the research will show that civilian women were also mobilised to engage in activities that were conducted in a clandestine manner, such as the gathering and relaying intelligence and sabotage, although I often use the shorthands "secret activities," "spy work" or "clandestine activities" in the following pages. These activities very rarely involved physical combat. There were some overlaps between Secret Work and these secret activities. For example, those who had to infiltrate a targeted community often also gathered some form of intelligence and had the intelligence relayed it back to other officials. The nature of Woman-Work officials working undercover and engaging in Secret Work, and civilian women

[8] Xuezhi Guo, *China's Security State: Philosophy, Evolution, and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5.
[9] ZZB, *Mimi gongzuo xuzhi*, 1. No date is shown on this booklet but as it makes references to China's conflict with the Japanese it is likely that this was published sometime during the 1930s and 1940s. On the other hand, as Patricia Stranahan demonstrates, during the late 1920s and 1930s, top party directives were often confusing in the immediate period after 1927 and on-the-ground Communists often behaved pragmatically in order to survive. See: Patricia Stranahan, *Underground: The Shanghai Communist Party and the Politics of Survival, 1927-1937* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 4 - 5.

engaging in secret activities, are similar in the sense that they are both understood here as examples of sabotage. More importantly, those who did Secret Work and those who did other forms of clandestine activities for the party were likely blanketly labelled and seen by the Nationalist Party as Communist spies. As such, while Secret Work and Secret Work are generally different things, I make references to both terms and analyse them together in this thesis because of these overlaps, but also because both Secret Work and clandestine activities refer to activities that both men and women did while having to conceal their identity and allegiance to the CCP.

Meanwhile, Woman-Work is the term used both by the CCP at the time and by subsequent scholars, such as Delia Davin in the title of her book, to refer to activities that came under the remit of the specific CCP institutions that were focused on the issue of the liberation of women.[10] Specifically, there were different kinds of CCP institutions that dealt with the liberation of women. The ones that are central to this thesis include the Women's Department (*Funübu* 妇女部) of the Central Committee of the CCP, party-led masses institutions such as the Women's National Salvation League , (*Fujiuhui* 妇救会, short for *Funü jiuguo lianhehui* 妇女救国联合会) and Women's Federation (*Fulian* 妇联, short for *Funü lianhehui* 妇女联合会), and Women's institutions in the Soviet bases during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Women's Department (also at times called the Woman-Work Committee (*funü yundong weiyuanhui* 妇女运动委员会), a work department belonging to the Central Committee apparatus established in 1922, had a continuous presence but for around a year in 1935 it ceased its operations until 1936 when it was re-established.[11] In July 1937 the Department of Organisation (*Zhongyang Zuzhibu* 中央组织部) established Women's Section to replace the Women's Department but in 1938 the Woman-Work Committee was re-established and took over the operations of the Women's Section.[12] The Women's Department eventually ceased

[10] This is in line with how many CCP officials understood Woman-Work at the time. According to a meeting record of the Shijiazhuang Women's Federation in 1948, for example, Woman-Work is defined as "the work achieved by the CCP amongst female masses" and "all kinds of work" the CCP does "that are aimed at achieving women's liberation." According to the meeting record this definition was first devised by high ranking CCP official Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇. See: Shijiazhuang Municipal Archives (hereafter SJZMA), 19-1-2, 'Regarding the Founding of the Municipal Women's Federation and Investigations, Summaries and Opinions Related to Woman-Work (*Guanyu Fuweihui de chengli qingkuang he funü gongzuo de diaocha, zongjie, yijian* 关于妇委会的成立情况和妇女工作的调查、总结、意见),' 71. See Also: Delia Davin, *Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

[11] The Women's Department was named multiple times throughout the first half of the 20th century, for example it also took names such as Woman-Work Committee (*Funü yundong weiyuanhui* 妇女运动委员会).

[12] There is a Women's Department in different levels of party apparatus. During the Sino-Japanese War this Women's Department structure underwent several organisational reforms. In 1939 it was decided by the Central Secretariat of the CCP

operations altogether in 1956. During the 1930s the Soviet bases and later the Chinese Soviet Republic also had different kinds of Woman-Work institutions, such as the Women's Association (*Funühui* 妇女会), the Representative Congress of Working Women (*Laodong funü daibiaohui* 劳动妇女代表会, later renamed the Representative Congress of Women Workers and Peasants (*Nügong nongfu daibiao huiyi* 女工农夫代表会议), and the Committee to Improve Women's Lives (*Funü shenghuo gaishan weiyuanhui* 妇女生活改善委员会), all of which are discussed in Chapter 3. Other important CCP Woman-Work institutions, discussed in chapters 4 and 5, are the party-led masses institutions – such as the Women's National Salvation League and Women's Federation – which became more relevant after 1937 and 1945 respectively. These two masses institutions were established as an attempt for the party to reach and mobilise women from different classes and backgrounds.[13] After 1949, the All China Women's Democratic Federation (*Zhonghua quangguo minzhu funü lianehui* 中华全国民主妇女联合会, hereafter ACWDF) was established which united the operations of individual Women's Federations. This was renamed the People's Republic of China Women's Federation (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo funü lianhehui* 中华人民共和国妇女联合会, hereafter PRCWF) later in 1957.

Harriet Evans argues that in CCP thinking from the 1920s and onwards, the liberation of women was entwined with national liberation and CCP victory. [14] As such, their mobilisation

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that all bureaus, provinces, county and region party committees must have a Women's Department. In 1942 the existing organisational structure was further reformed as it was decided by the Central Committee that Women-Movement Committees were to be established in the Central Bureau (*Zhongyangju* 中央局), Central Sub-bureaus of the CCP (*Zhongyang fenju* 中央分局), and all levels of Provincial Party Committees. Local Committees were not to establish Woman-Work Committees unless necessary. See: Geng Huamin 耿化敏, *Zhongguo Gongchandang funü gongzuo shi* 中国共产党妇女工作史 (The History of Chinese Communist Party Woman-Work) (1921 - 1949) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2015), 160 - 272.

[13] During the period between 1927 – 1937 the party focused almost exclusively on peasant and working-class women. When the Sino-Japaense War commenced in 1937, the party recognised that including as many women as possible and maintaining a United Front with the Nationalists was now the priority and of great importance. See: Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui funü yundong lishi yanjiushi 中华全国妇女联合会 (hereafter ZHQGFL), and Funü yundong lishi yanjiushi 妇女运动历史研究室 (hereafter FYLYJS), eds *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1937 - 1945* 中国妇女运动历史资料 1937 – 1945 (Historical Materials Related to the Chinese Women's Movement 1937 - 1945) (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991), 5.

[14] As Harriet Evans shows, the CCP discourse on "liberation" (*jiefang* 解放) and Women's Liberation (*Funü jiefang* 妇女解放) consistently denied women agency and favoured class over gender: Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, ed., *Twentieth-Century China: New Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2003), 193 – 220. For a discussion of what feminism meant to the Chinese throughout the 20th century, see Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). For a discussion of early CCP efforts in women's liberation, see Christina K. Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). While Gilmartin argues that although the party was initially committed to women's work, the hitherto practices of male and female party cadres perpetuated patriarchy: Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 1 – 11, David Goodman however shows that there was much local diversity in women's liberation activities and women's involvement in politics: David S. Goodman, "Revolutionary Women and Women in the Revolution: The Chinese Communist Party and Women in the War of Resistance to Japan, 1937–1945," *The China Quarterly* 164 (2000): 915 – 942.

to engage in activities that contributed to national liberation were deemed by officials as crucial. What the liberation of women meant, and thus how women should be mobilised, changed throughout the 20th century which has been much discussed by scholars. During the period of struggle between the Communists and Nationalists (and later the Japanese) from 1927 to 1945, which is covered in the first part of this thesis, civilian women were mobilised to engage in Secret Work, which included spying and sabotage, because the liberation of women was seen as being contingent on the victory of the CCP and the destruction of their feudal and imperialist enemies. When the period of struggle had somewhat stabilised in some Communist-occupied areas and gradually the whole of mainland China after the late 1940s, local Woman-Work became increasingly focused on mobilising women to participate in production, such as the industrial production of textiles or farming in order to contribute to state-building efforts led by the party.[15]

The opening-up of previously restricted archives and declassification of 20th century wartime documents around the world has brought the history of espionage and secret warfare to the fore in recent years, especially regarding pre-1949 Nationalist intelligence.[16] This thesis, however, is not a systematic study of professional female spies trained and utilised by CCP security and intelligence apparatuses, such as the Special Services Section, the SAD, and later the Ministry of Public Security, even though brief discussions of these professional women are mentioned

[15] For example, see Hebei Provincial Archives (hereafter HPA), 205-1-27-6, '*Zhongyang fuwei huibao Zhongyang* 中央妇委会报中央 (Report by the Women's Movement Committee of the Central Committee to the Central Committee)' for the argument and decision to mobilise civilian women to engage in more production work.

[16] For example: Evgeny Sergeev, *Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904-05: Secret Operations on Land and at Sea* (London: Routledge, 2007); Neville Wylie, *The Politics and Strategy of Clandestine War: Special Operations Executive, 1940-1946* (London: Routledge, 2006); R. G. Hughes, Peter Jackson, and Len Scott, eds., Exploring Intelligence Archives: Enquiries into the Secret State (London: Routledge, 2008). In Chinese studies, the secret warfare in China during the Sino-Japanese war, the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and Communists, and the early years of the PRC have sparked intense interest among scholars. Many have focused their attention on prominent figures from official Nationalist and Communist intelligence gathering, public security agencies, or intelligence gathering apparatuses. Frederick Wakeman's pioneering book *Spymaster* gives us an insight into the history of espionage in modern China by focusing on Dai Li 戴笠, the head of the National Bureau of Investigation and Statistics (*Guomin Zhengfu Junshi Weiyuanhui Diaocha Tongjiju* 国民政府军事委员会调查统计局), and the work of the bureau. Wakeman's book illustrates the importance of intelligence in Chinese political history as he argues that Dai Li's intelligence activities altered the balance of power within the CCP bureaucracy, leading to the rise of Mao Zedong within the party: Frederic Wakeman, *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). In 2001, Hans van der Ven edited a special issue of *Intelligence and National Security*, in which he and other scholars such as Brian G Martin, Robert Bickers, Joseph Yick, Yu Shen, and Maochun Yu focused on the collaborative efforts between the Nationalist government and the British and Americans. The collection of articles showed that the Nationalist secret service played an important role in the Sino-Japanese war and in the making of modern Chinese history. In Hans van der Ven's words, the articles "lift the veil of secrecy that has long obscured the role of secret services during World War II in China" and he argues that the Chinese intelligence apparatus of the Nationalists was not as completely incompetent as previously thought: Hans van de Ven, "Introduction," *Intelligence and National Security* 16, no. 4 (2001): 4, 8.

throughout the thesis when sources allow.[17] With a lack of access to CCP public security and intelligence materials, it is currently very difficult to write a full-length thesis on professional CCP female spies alone. When these professional women are mentioned in the thesis (as they are to some extent in Chapter 5, for example) the research is based on the available materials and accounts from *Documents on Public Security History* (*Gongan shi ziliao* 公安史资料), a series of compiled volumes published during the 80s and 90s by the Ministry of Public Security, some volumes of which are available from the University of Hong Kong, the Hebei Provincial Archives (*Hebei-sheng dang'anguan* 河北省档案馆), and documents kindly provided by Michael Schoenhals. Sources from the Shanghai Municipal Archives (*Shanghai-shi dang'anguan* 上海市档案馆) and the Tianjin Municipal Archives (*Tianjin-shi dang'anguan* 天津市档案馆) about the Communists' use of women to spy by the Nationalists, who they label *jiandie* (间谍, spies) or *feidie (*匪谍, bandit spies), provide some additional context and an alternative perspective.

Instead, this thesis is primarily a study of civilian women, some of whom became Woman-Work officials while others remained civilians, who were mobilised to engage in clandestine activities by the CCP. Michael Schoenhals shows how civilians were employed and used as domestic agents in the early People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC), arguing that the relationship between the state and its people was closer than previously demonstrated or assumed in existing scholarship.[18] Here this thesis will also show that there are significant intersections between the work civilian women did and CCP institutions, especially Woman-Work institutions. For example, while the civilian women discussed in this thesis were rarely officially part of the CCP intelligence organisation, and hence were not professional spies, they were mobilised by officials (especially Woman-Work officials) to engage in some form of Secret Work, or they were mobilised to become Woman-Work officials and ended up doing Secret Work as a result.[19] References to these overlaps can also be found in *Documents on*

[17] As Michael Schoenhals notes, there were definitely uses of professional female agents by the CCP before 1949: Michael Schoenhals, *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 102 – 103. For an account about the historical evolution of CCP Public Security institutions before 1949, see: Guo, *China's Security State*, 25 – 63.

[18] Specifically, Michael Schoenhals notes that Public Security officials considered those who were "backward masses" most useful agents: Schoenhals, *Spying*, 86.

[19] In some cases, however, civilian women deemed as particularly outstanding from women's groups could be and were selected and trained by the Political and Security Bureau (*Zhengzhi baoweiju* 政治保卫局) in order to conduct clandestine activities as it was the case in the Soviet base of West Anhui 安徽: Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu 公安部办公厅公安史研究处, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo "*二战"时期根据地的群众保卫工作 (Security Work Done by the Masses in Bases During "The Second Chinese Civil War")," *GASZL* 3 (February 1987): 132.

Public Security History.[20] Moreover, although there are a few specific references to women operatives in *Documents on Public Security History*,[21] many references of women carrying out some form of security work (such as spying) in *Documents on Public Security History* are accounts of successful civilian women contributing to the maintenance of the security of the particular region discussed by doing some kind of clandestine activity, and not professional female spies despatched by the security apparatuses of the CCP.[22]

As Louise Edwards notes, feminist scholars such as herself, Tammy Proctor and others have been critical of "the manner in which governments use female spies and the subsequent presentation of women spies in popular media and official propaganda."[23] Quoting Proctor's work, Edwards suggests that real intelligence work is often quite tedious and that many actual "women working in intelligence were not involved in any form of sexual entrapment of men."[24]

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[20] For example, accounts from a passage about the Revolutionary Base Areas in Zuojiang and Youjiang (*Zuoyoujiang geming genjudi* 左右江革命根据地) in the Guangxi 广西 area during the 1920s and 1930s from volume 1 of *Documents on Public Security History* points out that members of the masses had to be involved to help out with security related activities. The Research Office of Guangxi Public Security Bureau notes that that during the 1920s and 1930s, officials were told that "the masses must be mobilised to participate in all work" regarding the suppression of counterrevolutionaries (*sufan* 肃反) and security (*baowei gonguzo* 保卫工作) in this area, and that the officials "must absolutely avoid [having] a simple militaristic perspective" by deploying only military profesisonals and not having members of the masses involved. See: Guangxi gonganting yanjiushi 广西公安厅研究室, "*Zuoyoujiang geming genjudi Sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian* 左右江革命根据地肃反保卫工作资料长编 (Extended Chronology on the Work Regarding the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security in the Revolutionary Base Areas of Zuojiang and Youjiang," *Gonganshi ziliao* 公安史资料 (Documents on Public Security History) (hereafter GASZL) 1 (December 1985): 95.

[21] Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132. See also a reference to a female agent (*nü zhenchayuan* 女侦察员) named Li Chongzhen 李崇珍 who successfully infiltrated a bandit's house and gathered intelligence: Sichuan-sheng gonganting yanjiushi 四川省公安厅研究室, "*Chuan-Shaan gemming genjudi Sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian* 川陕革命根据地肃反保卫工作资料长编 (Extended Chronology on Information Regarding the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work in Sichuan and Shaanxi Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 2 (July 1986): 75.

[22] Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132 – 133; Guangdong-sheng gonganting gonganshi ziliao zhengji bangongshi 广东省公安厅公安史资料征集办公室, "*Qiongya geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian* 琼崖革命根据地保卫工作资料长编 (Long Edition of Information on the Security Work in Qiongya Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 2, July 1986, 103 – 104; Hubei-sheng gonganting 湖北省公安厅, Henan-sheng gonganting 河南省公安厅, and Anhui-sheng gonganting 安徽省公安厅, "*E-Yu-Wan Suqu sufan baowei gongzuo changbian* 鄂豫皖苏区肃反保卫工作长编 (Long Edition on the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work in Hubei-Henan-Anhui Soviet Base)," *GASZL* 21 (May 1991): 34；Hunan, Hebei, Sichuan, Guizhou gonganting yanjiushi 湖南、河北、四川、贵州公安厅研究室 and Xiang-xi tujiazu, miaozu, zizhizhou gonganju 湘西土家族、苗族自治州公安局, "*Xiang-E-Chuan-Qian geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian* 湘鄂川黔革命根据地肃反保卫工作资料长编 (Long Edition on the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work Conducted in the Hunan-Hebei-Sichuan-Guizhou Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 1 (December 1985): 56; Jiangxi-sheng gonganting zhengce falü yanjiushi 江西省公安厅政策法律研究室 and Fujian-sheng gonanting zhengce falü yanjiushi 福建省公安厅政策法律研究室, "*Zhongyang geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian* 中央革命根据地肃反包围工作资料长编 (Long Edition on the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Anti-Encirclement Work of the Central Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 16 (May 1989): 83; Gansu-sheng Qingyang diqu xingshu gonganchu 甘肃省庆阳地区行署公安处, "*Longdong geming genjudi gongan shi ziliao changbian* 陇东革命根据地公安史资料长编," *GASZL* 19 (January 1991): 30. For more general references of the masses' role (which includes women) and their involvement in various security and clandestine work, see: Ibid., 41. It was made clear that both civilian men and women were wanted for these activities: Sichuansheng gonganting yanjiushi, "*Chuan-Shaan*," 74.

[23] Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 138.

[24] Ibid., 139. See also: Tammy Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 149;

Part of this thesis seeks to investigate if Chinese women were utilised as seductress-spies[25] and, if there were any similarities (or differences) between what civilian women and seductress-spies were expected to do during an operation. As such this thesis will first look at popular understandings and perceptions of female spies during the first half of the 20th century. According to Frank Dikötter, after the 1911 Revolution, prescribed gender hierarchy gave way to the emergence of a plurality of ideas related to Chinese women and the notion of "womanhood."[26] Indeed, scholars have long since studied female archetypes such as the Modern Woman (*modeng nülang* 摩登女郎) and the New Woman (*xin nüxing* 新女性) that developed and evolved during the 20th century.[27] As chapter 1 will show, in urban, metropolitan areas, at least, there were widely circulated popular narratives about women and spying that derived and originated from different films, literary sources, periodicals, and newspapers. The Chinese seductress-spy archetype is apparent from these popular sources.

I have identified a few main characteristics regarding the seductress-spy. Firstly, that women are particularly effective when they use sexual or romantic activity as a way to do espionage or sabotage, because women can utilise their sexuality and intimate romantic behaviour to make their targets—enemy men—become attached and submit to them. Secondly, that women can fulfil espionage and sabotage related tasks, including and especially those tasks that involved approaching enemy men, without garnering too much attention or suspicion. This second characteristic in particular is preconditioned upon the assumption that the traditional understandings and stereotypes of women (that Chinese women are seclusive, apolitical, and thus rather ignorant) continued to be held by at least enemy men but also some members of the public because women often had to operate and travel in public spaces.

The notion that beautiful young women who were sexually active were deemed untrustworthy if not downright evil, was shown by reactions to the phenomenon of the Modern Woman.[28] According to Madeline Dong, the attractiveness of the woman with bobbed hair who wore

[25] Another, perhaps more popular, name of the seductress-spy is "sex spy" as used by Louise Edwards in her work: Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 158. Here I chose to borrow the term "seductress-spy" which was first used and analysed by Tammy Proctor. Proctor used this term in her study to refer to what she called as "Mata Haridian" female spies: Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 131.
[26] Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period* (London: Hurst & Co, 1995), 14.
[27] For example, see: Bryna Goodman, "The New Woman Commits Suicide: The Press, Cultural Memory, and the New Republic," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 1 (February 2005): 67 – 101; Sarah E. Stevens, "Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China," *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2003): 82 – 103.
[28] Stevens, "Figuring Modernity," 82 – 103.

tight-fitting dresses and red lipstick, combined with the inability of men to resist her, was feared particularly by men because she was thought to undermine the patriarchal household system.[29] During tense, volatile, and hostile wartime conditions, the seductress-spy, a stereotype that encompassed the Modern Woman, was likely considered just as if not even more threatening.[30] Not only was her overt sexuality evil and dangerous, but the possession of masculine qualities such as authority and assertiveness threatened the masculinity of Chinese men. Most importantly, as a spy, she was also a danger to national survival. Thus, spy narratives that explored ideas related to women, their sexuality, and their loyalty to the nation represented a further development away from the traditional constructs of womanhood and passivity.

During times of a national crisis, such as the Sino-Japanese War (also known as the "War of Resistance against Japan"), Louise Edwards has pointed out that "there was clearly a significant assumption that women would be called upon to use their sexuality for espionage work in China".[31] Here, Edwards is specifically referring to popular writers and newspaper editors and the assumptions they had about women. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, throughout the period of the 1930s, popular writers made their contribution to the national war effort by publishing gripping tales of espionage with the hopes of fostering Nationalistic sentiments and raising general wartime awareness amongst the public.[32] The subject of espionage became an increasingly relevant issue for the people of the republic, and newspapers and magazines often featured such matters in their publications.[33] Central to the narrative was the seductress-spy with unclear political allegiances, who was overtly sexual, and, ultimately, morally questionable. Often contrasted with other male or female characters, the seductress-spy and others together embodied and perpetuated the competing ideals of good versus evil, and the patriot versus the traitor. Scholars such as Lo Jiu-Jung and Yun Xia go further in arguing that

[29] Alys Eve Weinbaum et al., eds., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalisation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 216.
[30] For example, as Louise Edawrds shows in her work, Yoshiko Kawashima, widely considered as China's Mata Hari and a seductress-spy, was presented in the media as a threatening figure. Specifically, she was, according to Edwards, a "figure to fear and revile – a dangerous spy capable of remarkable disguises and fluent in multiple languages, she was irresistible to men, devoid of any moral senses and completely unscrupulous." See: Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 93.
[31] Ibid., 139.
[32] For example, see the foreword of Zhang Henshui's 张恨水 collection of short stories: Zhang Henshui 张恨水, *Wangongji* 弯弓集 Bent Bow Collection) (Beiping: Beiping Yuanheng shushe, 1932), 1 – 6.
[33] For example, see: *Shenbao* 申报 (The Shun Pao Chinese Daily News), 12 May 1938, 2; 22 February 1935, 6; 6 October 1937, 8.

nationalism, loyalty, and treachery are gendered concepts in the modern and contemporary context.[34] These arguments apply to the Chinese seductress-spy archetype studied in this thesis.

Besides popular writers as referred to by Edwards in the previous paragraph, however, CCP officials also expected professional female spies to engage in these sorts of tasks in times of conflict, as discussed in Chapter 5. But for civilian women, how officials thought about their possible wartime contributions was slightly different. While existing scholarship on China tends to focus predominantly on production work as civilian woman's key wartime contribution, Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 will show how civilian women were also enthusiastically mobilised by Woman-Work officials to engage in Secret Work, which included the gathering of enemy intelligence, the relaying of intelligence, and sabotage.[35] These chapters will show that the thinking of officials and the reasons behind official decisions to mobilise women in certain ways had aspects that were similar to the characteristics of popular understandings and stereotypes regarding women and espionage.

Using Judith Butler's theory regarding the "performance of gender,"[36] Juliette Pattinson's work on female British Special Operations Executive agents in particular highlights how gender and the need to perform it in specific, feminine ways, was crucial for female SOE agents to succeed in their activities that involved dealing with enemy men.[37] Civilian Chinese women,

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[34] Lo Jiu-Jung 罗久蓉, *Ta de shenpan jindai Zhongguo guozu yu xingbie yiyi xia de zhongjian zhi bian* 她的审判近代中国国族与性别与意义下的忠奸之辩 (Her Trials: Contextualizing Loyalty and Disloyalty in Modern China from the Gendered Nationalist Perspective) (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2013), xiv; Yun Xia, "Engendering Contempt for Collaborators: Anti-Hanjian Discourse Following the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 1 (2013): 111 - 134.

[35] Davin, *Woman-Work*, 25; Gail Hershatter briefly mentions that women did security work but looks in more detail at women in economic production: Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019), 171, 197 – 199; Kay A. Johnson, *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 52 – 53; Marilyn B. Young, *Women in China: Studies in Social Change and Feminism* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1973), 77 – 84.

[36] In *Gender Troubles*, Butler argues against feminist theorists who in their work hold heterosexual assumptions about gender which inherently limits them to received notions of masculinity and femininity. Instead, Butler introduces "the performativity of gender" theory, which argues that gender is a public, ongoing, and unconscious performative act. See: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2011), 179. Butler contends that gender is a performative act that is "always a doing" – it cannot and does not end: Ibid., 33. Inscribed in daily practices, it is learned and performed based on various cultural norms of femininity and masculinity that have been internalised by individuals. Thus, it is the ongoing performance that is neither natural nor optional that produces the individual, instead of the individual who produces the performance. In short, Butler contends that gender is a socially constructive performative act that is a "doing" – it cannot and does not end. Butler also suggests that men and women can "perform" gender, which in contrast to "performativity", is a one-off event in which men and women intentionally mimic conventional norms of femininity and masculinity. Men in drag, for example, mimic and perform feminine behaviour, while actresses imitate various types of feminine behaviour when they perform in their roles: Ibid., 174 - 175.

[37] Pattinson highlights how individual female agents emphasised in their testimonies their need to act, describing how women remembered manipulating their national and gender identities. See: Juliette Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operation Executive in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 16 - 17. These women recollected changing their appearance and taking on various disguises, personalities and mannerisms in order

too, remembered performing their gender in order to succeed, and part of that performance included dressing up in particular ways such as wearing *qipao* dresses, and behaving like wealthy housewives in order to stay under cover. In other words, performing gender was a prominent feature in the work of these women, many of them claiming that they actively chose to perform in various ways while carrying out their work.

Likewise, CCP officials expected women to act in gendered ways that would allow them to approach enemy men efficiently and effectively. But officials did not expect women to only mimic cultural or national norms of femininity when performing gender. Instead, decisions of officials who mobilised women that women's performances of gender, or capacity to perform, were also rooted in their understanding of women's biological sex. Tani Barlow's argument about how a belief in women's biological and social difference as opposed to men's lies at the heart of Chinese progressive feminism is thus particularly relevant here as this is a key premise that underlies the reasoning of officials on how they wanted to mobilise civilian women in general and why civilian women were mobilised to engage in Secret Work during wartime.[38] As we will see in chapters 2, 3, and 4, while they were mostly not expected by these officials to engage in romantic or sexual activity with men in order to complete their tasks (as opposed to the expectations on professional female spies, explored in chapter 5), when deciding to mobilise civilian women, however, officials did have in mind ideas about biological sex and some aspects and characteristics of the seductress-spy stereotype as mentioned above.

This thesis is also in conversation with global debates about women's wartime contributions. Many scholars investigating the two World Wars have long argued that women not only contributed to production work while men were in the frontlines, but that many of these women contributed to clandestine activities as well.[39] Just like the French and British women studied

to perform their clandestine work: Ibid., 17. Men and women experimented with different masculine and feminine features and women remembered deliberately undertaking gendered performances during their undercover work. In some cases, women found it crucial to their heterosexual performances to flirt with German soldiers and appear frail which helped them in their missions. For example, the appearance, physique, and demeanour of some of the female agents encouraged German soldiers to help them carry suitcases which contained material the women were instructed to transport: Ibid., 147 - 148.

[38] Barlow, *The Question of Women*, 66.

[39] In Nazi-occupied France, for example, Margaret Collins Weitz's pioneering work on French women's contribution in Nazi-occupied France describes how women played an indispensable but little-known part in the French resistance. Weitz argues that women's contributions consisted of mundane and repetitive everyday tasks which took on a new meaning, such as resisting Nazi rule, and thus implied new dangers for women during the Second World War. Some of the activities described by the women interviewed by Weitz included cleaning and housework, sheltering the persecuted, and carrying letters across countries. Weitz suggests that although women's contributions to the war were meaningful, and women contributed to clandestine activities as men did, it did not necessarily destabilise gender norms because the women continued with the kind of work they usually did: Margaret C. Weitz, *Sisters in the Resistance: How Women Fought to Free France, 1940-1945* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 20. For women's contribution in World War I, see: Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 29 - 98. For Women's contribution in World War 2, see Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, 136 - 177.

in Margaret Collins Weitz and Juliette Pattinson's works respectively, Chinese women also contributed during World War II and participated directly in clandestine activities.[40] Chinese women infiltrated the Nationalist government and military institutions, schools, factories, and trade unions, with the aim of promoting communism, gathering intelligence, and organising social movements that could contribute to the toppling of Nationalist rule. Women and girls in rural China were also mobilised to gather and relay messages and approach enemy soldiers in an attempt to get them to rebel and abandon their posts.

When attempting to mobilise women, however, Woman-Work officials, especially in rural areas, ran into the problem of not being able to approach or recruit women in the first place, because traditional Confucian values were still societal norms in some of these areas during the 1930s and 1940s. In an interview conducted by CCP party history scholar Geng Huamin 耿华敏 with former Women's National Salvation League official Li Baoguang 李宝光 who was active in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region (*Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu* 晋察冀边区) during the Sino-Japanese War, Li recalled that officials from the League were mainly people who were somewhat cultured, good orators, and, most importantly, willing to show their faces in public. As such, a lot of women from upstanding families were hesitant to join the League because they did not want to be frequently seen in public. Those who were recruited and mobilised were mostly women labelled Worn-Out Shoes (*poxie* 破鞋).[41] Worn-Out Shoes was and still is a colloquial term commonly used in North and Northwest China that referred to those perceived locally as loose women who often has sexual relations with people who were not their spouses for some form of remuneration. In some instances, they were directly referred to as prostitutes or, more specifically, clandestine prostitutes (*anchang* 暗娼)[42] because their

[40] As the works of Barack Kushner and Rana Mitter demonstrate, the Sino-Japanese War was part of the global World War II, as such the experiences of Chinese women during the Sino-Japanese war were similar to those of women around the world during that period: Barak Kushner, *Men to Devils, Devils to Men: Japanese War Crimes and Chinese Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 11; Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 35.

[41] Geng, *Zhongguo Gongchandang funüshi*, 185 – 186. The term *poxie* 破鞋 has previously been translated as "Boken Shoes" by scholars such as Wei Zhang and Xingkui Zhang: Wei Zhang, *Chinese Adaptations of Brecht: Appropriation and Intertextuality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 60; Anna G. Jónasdóttir, Valerie Bryson, and Kathleen B. Jones, eds., *Sexuality, Gender and Power: Intersectional and Transnational Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 149. Nevertheless I have chose to translate *poxie* as "Worn-Out Shoes" instead of "Broken Shoes" since shoes are rarely broken and are mostly worn out. Furthermore, "Worn-Out Shoes" better reflects the metaphor entailed by the original Chinese term.

[42] The term "clandestine" prostitution was used and defined by Linda Grove to describe prostitutes who secretly engaged in prostitution and went unregulated by local authorities. Worn-Out Shoes were of the same nature to the "clandestine prostitutes" Grove describes, and it was explicitly recognised in the Repblican period that Worn-Out Shoes were a kind of clandestine prostitute. See: Linda Grove, "Prostitution in a Small North China Town in the 1930s," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in China* 20, no. 2 (2019): 291 - 292. For references to Worn-Out Shoes as clandestine prostitutes by republican writers, see: ""*Poxie" yu "huokeng"* "破鞋"与"火坑" ("Worn-Out Shoes" and "Fire Pits")," *Nanjing Wanbao* 南京晚报

business was small-scale and independently or family-run.[43] Moreover, their operations were mostly unregulated by local government, as opposed to bigger, more organised brothels that often paid taxes.[44] Geng has also noted that in 1939, women officials in Shanxi performed dramas as way to propagate CCP Woman-Work, but only Worn-Out Shoes with the suggestive names of "Fragrance that Lasts a Thousand Miles" (*Qianlixiang* 千里香), "Sugary Sweets" (*Tangdianxin* 糖点心) and "Aeroplane" (*Feiji* 飞机) were remotely interested.[45] Meanwhile, "women of good families were too afraid to leave home to watch these dramas."[46]

Zhang Zhiyong 张志永 have characterised and emphasised how CCP officials saw the existence of Worn-Out Shoes more as a problem of licentiousness and sexual immorality in those local communities.[47] As such, how CCP officials sought to approach and rectify this issue was seen and described Zhang as a successful example by the CCP transforming local communities for the better. This thesis agrees with Zhang's findings but also takes a more critical (if not cynical) perspective, showing how officials initially approached these women actively and pragmatically. Specifically, Chapters 4 and 5 investigate how and why CCP officials utilised prostitutes in North China and what happened after they were no longer perceived as useful.

Aminda Smith has primarily written about how officials both practically and idealistically reformed those deemed to be vagrants, which included prostitutes after 1949, via a process that sought to stamp out undesirable and often non-conforming characteristics attributed to them.[48] But, as Chapter 4 demonstrates, some of these undesirable characteristics of Worn-Out Shoes were once seen in a different light and were highly valuable and useful to the party during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Chapter 5 will show and discuss how CCP attitudes towards these women changed because from the mid-1940s onwards, these women were no longer deemed

(Nanjing Evening News), December 27, 1947, 2; Shi Lianhua 石莲华, "*Poxie* 破鞋 (Worn-out Shoes)," *Xinmin bao Banyuekan* 新民报半月刊 (New People Daily Bi-Monthly Magazine) 2, no. 8 (1940), 25 – 26.

[43] Zhou Shushan 周曙山, "*Shanxi shehui gaiguan* 山西社会概观 (A General Survey of Shanxi Societal Views)," *Huabei ribao* 华北日报 (North China Daily), January 1, 1930, 15.

[44] Shi, "*Poxie," Xinmin bao banyuekan,* 25 - 26.

[45] Geng, *Zhongguo Gongchandang funüshi*, 230.

[46] Ibid. See also: Ibid. 185 – 186.

[47] Zhang Zhiyong 张志永, "*Cong bianyuan dao zhuliu: Kangzhan shiqi Huabei nongcun funü teshu yaqundi de yanhna* 从边缘到主流：抗战时期华北农村妇女特殊亚群体的演化 (From Margin to Mainstream: the Evolution of the Special Sub-group of Women in Rural Areas of Northern China during the Anti-Japanese War Period)," *Shilin* 史林 (Historical Review) no. 1 (2010): 125 - 133.

[48] Aminda M. Smith, *Thought Reform and China's Dangerous Classes: Reeducation, Resistance, and the People* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 2 – 3.

useful and officials decided that the backlash the party received for having these women around now outweighed the benefits. Indeed, during this period, the Communists were successfully taking over mainland China and the demand for civilian women to engage in Secret Work gradually decreased. Prostitutes, especially those deemed lazy and unwilling to do production work, were thus sent to re-education centres (*jiaoyangyuan* 教养院).

Scholars interested in women's history, with the notable exception of John M. Belohlavek, have generally argued that narratives about female spies have done more harm than good when it comes to the woman question.[49] Tammy Proctor argues that while women did serious clandestine activities during the First World War, gender relations did not change because narratives about European seductress-spies such as Mata Hari trivialised the contributions of women who actually worked in intelligence in the first World War.[50] In the Chinese context, Wang Guojie 王国杰 argues that Republican plays about espionage did not raise greater gender awareness but merely exploited national salvation as an excuse to express traditional ideas related to patriarchy and in turn oppress notions of female individuality and integrity.[51] Louise Edwards, too, alerts us to how narratives that perpetuate certain stereotypical and even negative images of military women and female spies were used, sometimes by the state, to justify war and make war look exciting to the public.[52] I agree with Proctor, Wang and Edwards, that popular narratives about female spies, which present stereotypical, sensationalised and, at times, inaccurate images of women who do some form of intelligence work have a greater societal impact. Indeed as arguments advanced by Jacob Eyferth,[53] Gail Hershatter,[54] Elisabeth Croll,[55] and Kay Ann Johnson show,[56] traditional gender norms and values continued to have an influence over the lives of socialist Chinese women, and gender hierarchies, according to Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, were "very much alive in 1980's China".[57] Chapter 6 of this thesis, however, finds that women themselves also affirmed some aspects of these stereotypes in the

[49] Belohlavek argues that the war itself and the narratives that surrounded it, which included accounts of Mexican and American female spies, were an incremental step in raising greater gender awareness. See: John M. Belohlavek, *Patriots, Prostitutes, and Spies: Women and the Mexican-American War (*Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 1-19.
[50] Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 130 - 131
[51] Wang Guojie 王国杰, "*Kangzhan shiqi jiandieju zonglun* 抗战时期间谍剧综论 (On the Spy Dramas During the Period of the Sino-Japanese War)," *Dezhou Xueyuan Xuebao* 德州学院学报 (Journal of Dezhou University) 31, no. 3 (June 2015): 29.
[52] Edwards, *Women*, 16.
[53] Jacob Eyferth, "Women's Work and the Politics of Homespun in Socialist China, 1949–1980," *International Review of Social History* 55, no. 4 (December 2012): 1-27.
[54] Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 287.
[55] Elisabeth Croll, *The Politics of Marriage in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1 - 13
[56] Johnson, *Women,* 214.
[57] Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980's* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 44.

1980s when they composed various self-narratives in the forms of memoirs, autobiographies, or interviews. Specifically, they claimed to defy community and family expectations, but they also expressed their conformity to some of these stereotypes about being apolitical and appropriately feminine during their work.

There are a few possible reasons why this might have happened. One explanation is that women conformed to some of these gender stereotypes. Scholars have found that stereotypes in at least some scenarios do have an impact on individuals, according to empirical studies in stereotype threats, one of "the most widely studied social psychology concepts" of the late 20th and early 21st century.[58] Specifically, stereotype threat is defined in Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson's classic 1995 study as "being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype of one's group," which generally arises in certain situations but especially when the individual is undergoing a test, competition, or is under pressure.[59] Gail Hershatter, too, has highlighted how women can internalise certain images and characterisations of women by arguing that rural women who were deemed to be and exemplified as labour models (men or women who were officially recognised by the party as exemplary socialist workers) were so characterised as the state-promoted ideal kind of woman that they assimilated themselves into the project of state-building using official language.[60] While the process of civilian women composing their self-narratives and memoirs to a publisher or interviewer is by no means a direct parallel to the controlled social psychology experiments conducted by experts, it could still be implied and suggested that civilian women generally internalised and conformed to at least some aspects of popular stereotypes about women who spy and thus narrated their experiences in ways that affirmed them.

Another explanation for this situation is that it was what happened, and these women were merely remembering and reiterating what they went through in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, those who did various clandestine activities or Secret Work in the 1930s were instructed, for example, that they must wear clothes that were consistent with their public identity and local environment.[61] They were told they must also "absolutely behave as if one did not have any

[58] Michael Inzlicht and Toni Schmader, eds., *Stereotype Threat: Theory, Process, and Application* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.
[59] Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 797. Meanwhile stereotype boost describes situations where individuals perform better because they conformed to positive stereotypes of their group. See: Inzlicht and Schmader, *Stereotype Threat*, 141 - 156.
[60] Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory*, 234.
[61] ZZB, *Mimi*, 25.

views on nationalism," have "habits that are decadent and romantic" and to "go with the flow so as to not be suspected by others."[62] For women, this meant behaving in certain ways, such as wearing clothes that made them look more feminine. Regarding the mobilisation of civilian women into doing secret activities, officials highlighted the usefulness of these stereotypes and women were mobilised accordingly. Women were also praised at that time for utilising these stereotypes as a tool to their advantage.[63]

While British female SOE agents' war time contributions had, according to Juliette Pattinson, destabilised gender relations because they engaged in actual combat situations, the same cannot be said for the Chinese women who engaged in Secret Work and other clandestine activities[64] During the process of their work women also had to recreate and perpetuate various traditional gender norms in order to survive, and indeed much of their success relied on the continued existence of these stereotypes. Lastly, as we shall see, for some of those who, in the 1930s and 1940s, were willing to engage in these activities because they were non-conforming women in their local community, they were later conformed by the CCP anyway when they ceased to be useful.

A Note on Sources

This thesis takes advantage of digitized materials and databases, including rare published books from Chinese Academic Digital Associative Library (CADAL). For Chapter 1, which looks at the popular understanding of female spies, I used primarily periodical and newspaper sources from online databases such as Dacheng Old Journal Full-Text Database (*Dacheng lao jiukan quanwen shujuku* 大成老旧刊全文数据库) and the Republican Periodicals Full Text Database (1911 – 1949) (*Minguo shiqi qikan quanwen shujuku* 民国时期期刊全文数据库(1911-1949)). Databases that provide Communist sources, used here, include the Red History Sources Database 红色历史文献数据库 and Chinese University of Hong Kong's Database for the History of Contemporary Chinese Political Movements (*Zhongguo dangdai zhengzhi yundong shujuku* 中国当代政治运动史数据库).

[62] Ibid., 24.
[63] For example, see: "*Huabei dihou de jige muqin* 华北敌后的几个母亲 (A Few Mothers Behind Enemy Lines in North China)," *Zhongguo funü* 中国妇女 (Women of China) 1, no. 12 (1939): 16.
[64] Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, 12.

The Communist perspective is where a lot of the discussion in this thesis is coming from. As such, many of the sources used in this thesis are from compiled volumes and anthologies of Communist sources such as *Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of the Party*（*Jiandang yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* 建党以来重要文献选编）1921 – 1949, the aforementioned *Documents on Public Security History*, and more area-focused materials such as *Documents Regarding the Party History of Jiangxi (Jiangxi dangshi ziliao* 江西党史资料). National Woman-Work anthologies such as *A Compiled Volume of Documents and Materials Related to the Women's Movement of China* (*Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian* 中国妇女运动文献资料汇编*)* are used in most of Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5. Specific regional and local Woman-Work sources are featured in certain chapters that are more geographically focused on that area. For example, chapter 3 features Jiangxi 江西 sources because there were Soviet bases in that area during the 1930s. The declassified Japanese intelligence sources on the Sino-Japanese War featured and used in chapter 4 are from the compiled volume *Sino-Japanese War Historical Documents on the Intelligence War Against China* (*Nicchū sensō taichūgoku jōhōsen shiryō* 日中戦争対中国情報戦資料).

I have also consulted and used Chinese archival materials in this thesis. In particular, CCP Woman-Work materials from the Hebei Provincial Archives (*Hebei-sheng dang'anguan* 河北省档案馆) and Shijiazhuang Municipal Archives (*Shijiazhuang-shi dang'anguan* 石家庄市档案馆) are used and mostly featured in Chapters 5. In addition, I have also used Nationalist sources on Communist activities to provide more context and perspective throughout the chapters and these documents are from the Shanghai Municipal Archives (*Shanghai-shi dang'anguan* 上海市档案馆) and Tianjin Municipal Archives (*Tianjin-shi dang'anguan* 天津市档案馆).

Other sources, which includes published sources, that have been collected by myself or kindly shared by private collectors have also been used. This includes cadre notes taken during an expert talk regarding "How to use Female Special Informants" (*Ruhe shiyong nü teqing* 如何使用女特情) and a booklet on intelligence work entitled *A Guide to Intelligence Work* (*Jiandie gongzuo zhinan* 间谍工作指南), provided by Michael Schoenhals from his private collection. Phyllis Birnbaum has also shared with me her Chinese and Japanese sources on Manchu royalty and convicted female spy Yoshiko Kawashima, 川島 芳子, also known as Jin Bihui 金璧辉

and Aixin Jueluo Xianyu 爱新觉罗·显玗 used and featured in Chapter 1. For chapter 6, on women's self-narratives, I consulted a series of memoirs published from the 1980s and onwards, some of which are available in public libraries in China and Hong Kong while others were collected by me.

Outline of Chapters

This thesis starts off with popular narratives on female spies. How did popular Chinese consumers of visual and textual sources such as films, newspapers, and novels present women spies? Chapter 1 first takes us through how popular understandings of the Chinese female spy developed throughout the early 20th century. It takes a transcultural approach to studying perceptions about female spies, especially the seductress-spy, in Republican China and argues that the Chinese seductress-spy was a uniquely gendered nationalist construct that had roots in the Japanese, English, and Chinese understanding of the role of women and female spies during wartime situations. The seductress-spy archetype perpetuates the idea and stereotype that women are good at spying and sabotage because they could use their sexuality and femininity to do so, and were especially efficient and effective in approaching men, ferreting information from them and getting them to do things that they would not otherwise have done. But were real civilian Chinese women mobilised to engage in various secret activities because of these ideas? Were real women behaving in seductress-spy capacities?

To answer these questions, we then move our focus from narratives of female spies in textual and visual sources to real civilian women. The CCP was established in 1921 and on paper, at least, issues related to women and women's liberation were a part of the CCP agenda since its early years. Chapter 2 looks at the development of CCP Woman-Work during the 1920s, investigating how actual civilian girls and women eventually became involved with the CCP and its Woman-Work endeavours. In 1927 there was a fallout between the Nationalists and the Communists. Like other areas of party work, Woman-Work and was affected went underground after the fall-out in1927. As such, for many girls and women, CCP Woman-Work was a gateway to Secret Work.

Moreover, after the 1927 Nationalist and Communist fall-out, many Communists left major cities and some went and occupied territories, later called Soviet bases or revolutionary bases

in Southern China such as areas like Jiangxi and Fujian. Chapter 3 looks at how officials mobilised women and their Secret Work activities in these Soviet bases, finding that mobilising officials made their decisions based on what was efficient and effective, with their understanding of biological sex and gender as key premises in these decisions.

In 1937 the Sino-Japanese War officially broke out. A United Front between the Nationalists and the Communists was formed, once again, in order to fight the Japanese. Chapter 4 investigates women during the Sino-Japanese War with a geographical focus in North China. It finds that officials were confronted with the issue of shortages of female recruits because what women were mobilised to do was dangerous and involved public activity. Worn-Out Shoes were welcomed by the party because they were partial and receptive to CCP Woman-Work. It has also been found by officials that they were effective workers.

After the end of the Sino-Japanese War, a period of struggle between the Nationalists and Communists followed. Chapter 5 examines women in Communist-occupied zones (now renamed liberated zones) after the Sino-Japanese War during this period of struggle, from 1945 through the 1950s. While the demand for civilian women to engage in Secret Work gradually decreased, and women (especially former prostitutes and Worn-Out Shoes) conformed, stereotypes about women and spying continued to exist. This was because women continued to be used as spies by the party but also because female spies were now publicly seen in an overtly negative and treacherous light.

Economic reform was introduced to China in the late 1970s and early 1980s. From the 1980s and onwards, women published many remembrance texts and autobiographies about their life before 1949. So far, the previous chapters have mainly examined the perspective from Communist officials. But how did women remember their wartime experiences? Chapter 6, the final chapter of this thesis examines women's self-narratives created after the 1980s. While women claimed that they defied family expectations they continued to emphasise their conformity to certain traditional gender norms.

Chapter 1: Popular Representations of Female Spies in China, 1911 – 1950

Introduction: "Beauty is the Troubled Water That Brings Disasters"[65]

How did popular films, plays, novels, and magazines available to Chinese consumers in Republican China represent spies and especially female spies? As Louise Edwards has argued, the concept of the female spy plays an important role in popular narratives about war, especially during times of political conflict.[66] Today, the most common and stereotypical idea of a female spy is often linked to sex: as Tammy Proctor says, a Mata-Haridian seductress-spy.[67] International news reports and stories about honey traps and Chinese female spies courting and seducing politicians, company executives, and diplomats in order to gather crucial intelligence make their way to news headlines every now and then.[68] Domestically in China, this seductress-spy archetype is now regularly presented in popular entertainment, together with her nemesis, the virtuous and patriotic female agent who works for the Communist Party. The spy genre, for example, has been recently revived in China during the past decade or so, and the storyline of these Chinese films and television series almost always features a traitorous seductress-spy as one of the main antagonists, and a patriotic CCP female agent as a protagonist or love interest of the male lead.[69]

The Chinese seductress-spy archetype, however, is not a new phenomenon. Specifically, she is a figure with highly negative connotations, and is someone who uses her looks and sexuality in order to access confidential and important intelligence from men. Before the 1930s there were already popular narratives in China about Chinese women who would use their femininity to wreak havoc and influence men into doing their bidding. From the 1930s to the 1950s, visual

[65] Beauty is the Troubled Waterss (*Hongyan huoshui* 红颜祸水) is a popular Chinese idiom that refers to how a beautiful woman will cause disasters, particularly to her country.
[66] Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 16.
[67] Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 123 – 144.
[68] The most recent example that made the international headlines is American politician and Congressman Eric Swalwell's dealings with Chinese national Christine Fang, who is suspected of being a Chinese spy. Fang has apparently had dealings with other politicians in the US: Natalie Andrews and Warren P. Strobel, "House Leaders Clash Over Swalwell's Role in China Spy Probe," Wall Street Journal, last modified December 10, 2020, https://www.wsj.com/articles/house-leaders-clash-over-swalwells-role-in-china-spy-probe-11607630755. For other examples, see: David Chazan, "French Spy Facing Treason Charges 'was Snared by Chinese Honeytrap'," The Telegraph, accessed July 14, 2021, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/05/27/french-spy-snared-chinese-honeytrap-faces-treason-charges/; David Leppard and Claire Newell, "Gordon Brown Aide a Victim of Honeytrap Operation by Chinese Agents," The Times & The Sunday Times, last modified July 20, 2008, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/gordon-brown-aide-a-victim-of-honeytrap-operation-by-chinese-agents-38803lj6qxn.
[69] Shuyu Kong, *Popular Media, Social Emotion and Public Discourse in Contemporary China* (London: Routledge, 2014), 105 - 107.

and textual sources such as films, novels, and plays about women from labelled as spies or secret agents were produced, some in America and Europe, and made available to urban consumers in China.[70] As such from around the 1930s onwards the Chinese seductress-spy was often nicknamed "the Mata Hari of the Orient" "Eastern Mata Hari" (*Dongfang de Mata Hali* 东方的玛妲哈丽) or "the Chinese Mata Hari" (*Zhongguo de Mada Hali* 中国的玛妲哈丽) after Dutch dancer and convicted spy Margaretha Geertruida MacLeod, more commonly known as Mata Hari. It was said by The North-China Herald, for example, that the beauty of these Chinese seductress-spies allowed them to ferret out information and steal documents carried by Chinese or Japanese officials.[71] Yoshiko Kawashima, a Manchu royal and a cousin of Puyi, the last emperor of China, was probably the most notorious.[72] She was known as the "Chinese Mata Hari" and worked for the Japanese before and during the Sino-Japanese War.[73] Narratives about her and her trial after the Sino-Japanese War further developed the Chinese seductress-spy archetype which by the 1940s and onwards evoked treachery.

This chapter examines the development of the seductress-spy archetype represented in visual and textual sources in Republican China and the early PRC, and the reasons behind the portrayal of these characters to readers and audiences. Some of the women mentioned in this chapter such as Mata Hari and Yoshiko Kawashima, were real women who were convicted of being a spy. But instead of their real-life accounts, this chapter is more interested in how the seductress-spy archetype was developed and promoted in China by writers and filmmakers, some of whom based their writings on the lives of these real female spies. A key premise of this chapter is that popular visual and textual sources reflected the kind of ideas of the Chinese that were circulated in at least some urban areas of China, and that it tells us what some

[70] For example, see: *Shenbao*, 6 January 1939, 8; 17 February 1939, 10.
[71] *The North-China Herald*, 17 January 1940, 87. This newspaper report details a twenty-one-year-old sing-song girl by the name of Su who was labelled as a "Chinese Mata Hari". Su was arrested in Nanjing by the Japanese for being a Communist spy. See also: "*Dongfang Mada Hali: Chuandao Fangzi zai Beiping zhixing sixing* 东方玛妲哈丽：川岛芳子在北平执行死刑 (Mata Hari of the Orient Meets Death)," *Wenyi Huabao* 文艺画报 (The Graphic Pictorial), vol. 2, no. 7 (1948): 15 – 16; and "*Shejiban qian* 射击班前 (In front of the Firing Squad)," *Hua an* 华安 (China Peace), vol. 2 no. 1 (1933): 6 – 7, where the author of this article called for Chinese Mata Haris to put on lipstick and dress in their best clothes to fight for their country. See also: "*Zhongguo de Mada Hali* 中国的玛妲哈丽 (Chinese Mata Hari)," *Juesheng* 决胜 (Attainment of Victory), vol. 2 (1938): 13 for an article about an alleged Chinese female Chen 陈 also labelled as "Chinese Mata Hari". She was arrested by the Japanese for her clandestine operations. This story was reproduced in "*Zhongguo de Mada Hali* 中国的玛妲哈丽 (Chinese Mata Hari)," *Zazhi* 杂志 (Magazine), vol. 1, no. 4 (1938): 28; "*Zhongguo de Mada Hali* 中国的玛妲哈丽 (China's Mata Hari)," *Zhengyi* 正义 (Justice), vol. 1, no. 3 (1939): 13 – 16; and *Shibao* 时报 (Eastern Times), 18 June 1938, 2.
[72] Kawashima was also known as Jin Bihui 金璧辉 or Aisin Gioro Xianyu 爱新觉罗·显玗. For a comprehensive biography on Yoshiko Kawashima, see: Phyllis Birnbaum, *Manchu Princess, Japanese Spy: The Story of Kawashima Yoshiko, the Cross-Dressing Spy Who Commanded Her Own Army* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[73] "*Dongfang Mada Hali*," *Wenyi Huabao*, 15 – 16.

people—both writers or composers of these visual and textual sources (including both fiction and non-fiction ones), and its popular consumers—thought about female spies and women and spying. Moreover, these works not only constructed, but further developed ideas about women and spying which are still relevant in the present day. The Chinese seductress-spy was a female idea and Nationalist construct that had roots in the Japanese, English, and Chinese understanding of the role of women and female spies during wartime situations.

The premodern and late imperial view of women as dangerous, untrustworthy, and deceitful was reinvented and validated as relevant for a new era when fresh ideas entered China during the Republican period from abroad. Scholars have argued that popular female archetypes such as the Modern Girl[74] and the New Woman[75] grew out of people's admiration and fear of Shanghai's glittering modernity,[76] and that modern and beautiful women in China were regarded *prima facie* as untrustworthy because of their attractiveness.[77] These arguments are relevant to the seductress-spy and the female agent as archetypes apparent in Chinese popular narratives and texts. With the prospect of war between China and Japan looming in the 1930s, the Sino-Japanese War which took place in 1937 – 1945 and the civil war that followed after, the subject of espionage and seductress-spies became an increasingly relevant issue for the people of the republic, and newspapers and magazines often featured spies, especially women spies.[78]

Accounts about foreign female spies such as Mata Hari also existed in early twentieth-century China alongside narratives concerning Chinese female spies. In the Chinese context, Louise Edwards has alerted us to the fact that narratives about Chinese female spies and military women have evolved in line with China's shifting political and military values throughout the past century. She argues that narratives about women and war, especially ones constructed or endorsed by the state make war look exciting and are persuasive devices that justify the state's militarisation.[79] If, however, we look at popular Chinese narratives about Chinese female spies and consider them in relation to narratives regarding foreign female spies, we can see how the

[74] According to Sarah Stevens, the Modern Girl is "elusive, fragmented and cosmopolitan." She is either featured "as a femme fatale" or "appears as the primary voice in (female-authored) works that explore female subjectivity" and thus "expresses the struggle for women to find their voices in a new and changing world." See: Stevens, "Figuring Modernity," 83.
[75] According to Sarah Stevens, the New Woman is "often associated with leftist and progressive intellectuals" and "is equated with the positive aspects of modernity. As such, she is educated, political, and intensely nationalistic." See: Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 82 – 103.
[77] As Madeline Dong argues, these women were seen as threatening as they subvert established gender hierarchies: Weinbaum et al., *The Modern*, 195 – 219.
[78] For example, see: *Shenbao*, 12 May 1938, 2; 22 February 1935, 6; 6 October 1937, 8.
[79] Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 16.

development of the Chinese seductress-spy archetype had its roots not only in Chinese but also European, Japanese, and American ideas about gender and espionage. This further highlights the issue of using the English term "spy" as a direct and automatic translation especially when it came to spies who are women. It also tells us about the origins of the female archetypes that we still see in contemporary popular cultural works nowadays.

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part examines how the introduction of the Mata Haridian seductress-spy to Republican China generated a new female archetype – the Chinese seductress-spy. Previously text sources presented women who caused rifts amongst men, leading to disastrous results, as physically weak, feminine, beautiful, destructive, and inherently untrustworthy. On the contrary, the Mata-Haridian Chinese seductress-spy's overt sexuality and risk-taking behaviour became the very essence of what it meant to be a female spy. The second part looks at how the seductress-spy became associated with traitorous behaviour and treachery through the trial of Yoshiko Kawashima and news reports of Yoshiko Yamaguchi 山口淑子 (also known as Li Xianglan 李香兰) after the Sino-Japanese War.

Diaochan, Femininity and Havoc: Chinese Understandings of the Female Spy, pre-1911 to 1940

In English, "espionage" generally refers to the process whereby information is secretly, and often illegally, obtained via technological and/or human means.[80] Subsequently, the term "spy" refers to human agents whose chief purpose is to gather intelligence. The most obvious and frequently used Chinese translation of spy is *jiandie*.[81] It is also generally assumed in some scholarship that intelligence gathering in the Chinese context is entirely equivalent to its English counterpart. English-language books on intelligence collection and analysis, for example, often quote passages from Sun Tsz's 孙子('Master Sun') *The Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孙子兵法) and credit him as being one of the earliest writers on the use of spies in a political and military context.[82] If one takes a closer look at an example of a Chinese spy from

[80] MI5, "Espionage," MI5 - The Security Service, accessed March 19, 2020, https://www.mi5.gov.uk/espionage. The website has since been changed and an archived version of the aforementioned webpage can be found here: "Espionage," Wayback Machine, accessed July 14, 2021, https://web.archive.org/web/20190714042553/https://www.mi5.gov.uk/espionage.
[81] Another translation is *tewu* 特务 (special agent). As Michael Schoenhals notes, *tewu* 特务, although here translated as special agents, is a problematic term as it has highly negative connotations. In Schoenhals' words, the term *tewu* "does not have a good equivalent in the Englisn Language." While officially it refers to enemy intelligence operatives but often it is used by the general public and CCP media sources as "a term of abuse thrown indiscrimately at just about anyone suspected of maintain links with perceived external enemies of the PRC." See footnote 7 of Schoenhals, *Spying*, 2.
[82] Julian Richards, *The Art and Science of Intelligence Gathering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5 - 6.

popular sources, it seems apparent that the role of the Chinese spy from these sources goes beyond the mere gathering of information, in so far as he or she often plays an active role of sabotage.

The term *jiandie* refers to a plurality of concepts in Chinese. As a noun, *die* 谍 (spy) refers to an individual. According to the seventeenth century *Zhengzitong* 正字通 (Mastery of Orthodox Characters) dictionary, *jiandie,* and its synonyms such as *xizuo* 细作 and *youzhen* 游侦*,* refers to individuals who mainly collect intelligence from the enemy in secret.[83] The *Concise Dictionary of Chinese* (*Guoyu cidian* 国语辞典) compiled by the Republican Government and published by the Commercial Press (*Shangwu yinshuguan* 商务印书馆) in 1947 also defines *jiandie* as a military detective, an agent who uncovers information for military purposes.[84]

But according to Sun Tsz, who saw the use of *jiandie*, or "spies", as fundamentally central to statecraft and believed that their strategic use guaranteed the success of battles and wars, *jiandie* did much more than collect intelligence. Sun Tsz illustrated and explained five classes of spies in "The Art of War."[85] They were: local spy (*yinjian* 因间), inward spy (*neijian* 内间), converted spy (*fanjian* 反间), doomed spy (*sijian* 死间), and the surviving spy (*shengjian* 生间).[86] Specifically, local and inward spies referred to the use of local inhabitants of enemy territory as informants, and converted spies meant the practice of converting enemy spies. Both the doomed spy and the surviving spy related to the practice of placing one's own agents in enemy territory for the purposes of gathering intelligence and causing havoc by deception. Sun Tsz and his views on spies continued to be popular and widely known in the republican period. The Art of War was partly or fully reprinted in books and the popular press during the early 20th century.[87] Sun Tsz's ideas about spies—people who were employed for the military purposes of gathering intelligence, but also engaged in sedition, destruction, and conversion of

[83] Chinese Text Project, "*Zhengzitong sanshisan* 正字通三十三 (Mastery of Orthodox Characters Volume Thirty Three)," Chinese Text Project, accessed July 14, 2021, https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&file=144211&page=140&remap=gb.
[84] *Zhongguo dacidian bianmuchu* 中国大词典编募处, ed., *Guoyu cidian* 国语辞典 (Concise Dictionary of Chinese) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), 1905.
[85] Sun Tsz 孙子, *Shiyi jia zhu Sun Tsz* 十一家注孙子(Annotated "The Art of War" by Eleven Commentators) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1962), 226.
[86] Ibid., 226.
[87] For example, see: "*Cong Sunzi bingfa lun Riben bibai* 从孙子兵法论日本必败 (Japan is Bound to Fail According to Sun Tsz's The Art of War)", *Da Zhongguo* 大中国 (Great China), vol. 1, no. 2 (1932): 13 – 18. For books, see: Chen Jiuxue 陈玖学, *Pingzhu Sunzi Bingfa* 评注孙子兵法 (An Annotation of Sun Tsz's The Art of War) (Shanghai: Dadong shuju, 1939); Xu Tianyu 徐天誉, *Sun Tsz bingfa yu xiandai zhanzheng* 孙子兵法与现代战争 (Sun Tsz's The Art of War and Modern Warfare) (Guizhou: Xinan ribao she, 1942).

enemy spies—continued to be relevant even thousands of years after its conception.[88]

Like male spies, female Chinese spies apparent in popular sources engaged in collecting intelligence, causing havoc, and conducting sabotage, but their activities would also include a gendered element. During late imperial China, at least, female spies were understood and presented by writers to operate differently compared to men and were deemed to be good spy material because of their feminine qualities. Like the mostly male spies referred to in Sun Tsz's work, women could go on intelligence gathering and havoc-wreaking missions. Unlike men, however, they did so utilising their femininity and beauty to dazzle the opposite sex into allowing them to do things they wouldn't otherwise be allowed to do and were also considered less likely to be detected by the enemy due to their supposed weakness and fragility.

One of the most well-known fictional accounts of women causing havoc in late imperial China, also widely known as an fictional episode of espionage in the republican period, is the use of the beautiful woman named Diaochan 貂蝉 by Eastern Han (*Dong Han* 东汉) Dynasty official Wang Yun 王允. Diaochan is not a real woman and accounts of Diaochan existed mainly in the oral storytelling tradition (*shuoshu* 说书) but written accounts about her flourished after Luo Guanzhong 罗贯中 published *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三国演义) during the fifteenth century, immortalizing the character of Diaochan in text.[89] Later narratives of Diaochan are based largely on Luo's account, in which Diaochan, a resident sing-song girl in the Wang Household, attempts to pit military generals Dong Zhuo 董卓 and Lü Bu 吕布 against each other.

Dong is described as a powerful and tyrannical man whose foster son is the younger Lü Bu. Together, their strong military presence threatens the peace of Eastern Han. Wang Yun presents Diaochan to Dong Zhuo as a concubine, but simultaneously betrothes her to Lü Bu. One day, Lü meets Diaochan who is very upset. She tells him that Dong Zhuo has violated her, then attempts to jump into a pond in order to commit suicide because she is ashamed. Lü embraces and comforts her, telling her that he will protect her. Dong suddenly appears and sees their

[88] Late imperial Chinese scholars also wrote books largely modelled on Sun Tsz's works, thus perpetuating Sun Tsz's ideas at that time. See, for example, Zhu Fengjia's 朱逢甲 works on spies. His book was published in the Qing dynasty but it was reprinted and appeared in a Chinese magazine in 1944: "*Jianshu* 間書 (The Book of Spies)," *Zhonghe yuekan* 中和月刊 (Harmony Monthly), vol. 4, no. 2 (1943): 32 - 38.

[89] Luo Guanzhong 罗贯中, *Sanguo yanyi* 三国演义 (Romance of the Three Kingdoms), vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1972), 59 – 64.

close embrace. Infuriated, Dong throws a spear at Lü and chases him away. Dong interrogates Diaochan, who tells him that Lü had forced himself upon her. Diaochan then tries to commit suicide again, but this time it was to prove her chastity and love for Dong, who stops her and reconciles with her. It is, however, clear to the readers that Diaochan's antics were purposely put on to achieve the result of getting Lü jealous and to cause a rift between Lü and Dong. Her goal was not to actually commit suicide, even though she might have been prepared to die. In the meantime, the frustrated Lü Bu seeks advice from Wang Yun, who takes the opportunity to convince him to kill Dong. Dong eventually dies at the hands of Lü during a carefully planned banquet. Both Dong and Lü were unable to resist Diaochan, who used her beauty and assumed fragility to incite jealousy between the two men.[90]

Diaochan's story continued to be popular during the late Qing and Republican period, when she was explicitly regarded as a "spy."[91] Poems and short stories featured the Diaochan character as a central character, and her story as a spy was also remade and adapted into Cantonese and Yue opera, and later, stage plays.[92] It has been claimed by republican writers that her life story was so well known that even women and young children had heard of it.[93] These texts portrayed Diaochan as a heroine who sacrificed herself to save the people of her country.[94] This idea that Diaochan was a self-sacrificing heroine and spy on whom national survival depended was widely introduced to the urban public through an immensely popular and commercially successful 1938 film, which featured the eponymous heroine of the biopic *Diaochan*. Repeatedly referred to as the "first ever historical period film in China produced using large capital funds,"[95] the *Diaochan* film was widely publicised from the very beginning of its production.[96] The film follows a similar storyline to all other portrayals of Diaochan, in

[90] Ibid.
[91] "*Wei guzhuangpian "Diaochan" xie* 为古装片貂蝉写 (Writing for the Historical Drama Film "Diaochan")," *Dianxing* 电星 (Films Stars), vol. 1, no. 11 (1938): 6 – 7; "*Diaochan de jiandie shenghuo* 貂蝉的间谍生活 (Diaochan's Life as a Spy)," *Jingzheng daobao* 警政导报 (Security and Politics Guide Paper), no. 21 (1948), 18 – 20.
[92] For example, see: "*Wang Yun xian Diaochan* 王允献貂蝉 (Wang Yun Presents Diaochan)," *Yuequ* 粤曲 (Cantonese Opera Tunes), no. 2 (1936): 11 - 12; "*Yueju chang ci: Feng yi ting Lü Bu xi Diaochan* 粤剧唱词： 凤仪亭吕布戏貂蝉 (Lyrics to Yue Opera: The Feng Yi Pavilion Lü Bu Flirts with Diaochan)," *Haoyou wuxiandian* 好友无线电 (The Wireless Companion), no. 10 (1948): 14 – 15; "*Diaochan: shici* 貂蝉：诗词 (Diaochan: Poem)," *Wei wei ji* 娓娓集 (The Collection of Tireless Talks), no. 1 (1933): 15.
[93] "*Jieshao Diaochan* 介绍貂蝉 (Introducing Diaochan)," *Guoguang yingxun* 国光影讯 (Cathay-Grand Cinema News), no. 26 (1938): 3.
[94] "*You guo zhe* 忧国者 (The One Who is Concerned About the Country)," *Xin Dongfang zazhi* 新东方杂志 (New Eastern Miscellany), vol. 3, no. 4 (1941): 144 – 146.
[95] "*Jieshao Diaochan*," 3.
[96] For example, see: "*You zhao wei zheng: Diaochan quanbu yanyuan sanri paizhao* 有照为证: 貂蝉全部演员三日拍照 (With Photographic Evidence: All Diaochan Cast Members Will Take Photos on the Third)," *Xinghua* 星华 (Celebrity China), no. 4 (1937): 23; "*Diaochan zhi pai ri xi* 貂蝉只拍日戏 (Diaochan Film Only Shoots During the Day)," *Zhongguo dianying*

which she is presented to both Dong and Lü at the same time in order to incite conflict between the two, with the ultimate aim of having tyrannical and corrupt Dong killed. The film version, however, changed some details in order to introduce and reinforce the notion of nationalism and self-sacrifice on Diaochan's part.[97] In the film, Diaochan falls in love with the capable and handsome Lü, but chooses to sacrifice her happiness and true love for her country by seducing the much older and sinister Dong Zhuo, eventually becoming his concubine.[98] As in other pre-republican accounts of Diaochan, she gains the attention of both men by appearing weak, which was perceived as distinctively feminine, and then behaving in a manner that provoked their desire to protect and defend her. Unlike pre-republican narratives about Diaochan, however, the main focus of the film narrative was to highlight her sacrificial spirit, her loyalty to her country, and her determination in executing her mission, not so much the content of her actions.[99]

The film was immensely commercially successful. The first two days of the release alone raised a total of eight thousand yuan in revenue.[100] As one of the first major local film releases in Shanghai after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, it was claimed that the success of the film revived the relatively inactive Shanghai cinema scene.[101] Furthermore, *Diaochan* was so popular and commercially successful that it was even released in England and the United States of America in 1939.[102] As we shall see, however, the female spy archetype portrayed by

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中国电影 (Films of China), vol. 1, no. 1 (1937): 16; "*Diaochan yi dongshou kaipai* 貂蝉已动手开拍 (The Filming Process of Diaochan has Already Started)," *Nanjing texie* 南京特写 (Nanjing Feature), vol. 1, no. 6 (1937): 16; "*Diaochan diyi ge jingtou* 貂蝉第一个镜头 (Diaochan's First Shot)," *Chunse* 春色 (The Colour of Spring), vol. 1, no. 3 (1937): 14.

[97] This does not seem to be a problem for critics. One critic noted that film makers should select and emphasise certain elements or aspects of the historical narrative that are useful and relevant. Irrelevant or uninteresting parts should be toned down or disposed of. See: "*Diaochan ping* 貂蝉评 (A Commentary on Diaochan)," *Dianxing* 电星, vol. 1, no. 13 (1938): 10 – 11.

[98] "*Jieshao Diaochan*," 3.

[99] "*Diaochan ping*," 10 - 11.

[100] "*Wei le zheng yi kou qi: Diaochan shefa zushang Daguanming, kaiying liangtian Xinhua suode shihui fanduo* 为了争一口气: 貂蝉设法卒上大光明, 开映两天新华所得实惠反多 (To Strive for Vindication: Diaochan Goes for the Grand Cinema, Contradictorily New China Gains More for the First 2 Days of Film Release)," *Diansheng* 电声 (The Sound of Cinema), vol. 7, no. 11 (1938): 209.

[101] "*Pu Wancang: Youyu "Diaochan," "Mulan congjun," "Yujianü" de chenggong* 卜万苍: 由于"貂蝉," "木兰从军," "渔家女"的成功 (Pu Wancang: Owing to the Success of "Diaochan," "Mulan Joins the Army, "The Fisherman's Daughter)," *Yingju* 影剧 (Film and Drama), no. 12 (1944): 293.

[102] "*Diaochan chu yang daijia baqian wubai* 貂蝉出洋代价八千五百 (Taking Diaochan Overseas Costs 8 Thousand 5 Hundred)," *Diansheng*, vol. 7, no. 19 (1938): 368; "*Diaochan dao Meiguo qu: Maizhu touzi bawan yuan, yubei zhuan liushi wan* 貂蝉到美国去: 买主投资八万元, 预备赚六十万 (Diaochan is Going to the United States: Buyer Invests 80,000 Dollars and is Prepared to Earn 600,000)," *Diansheng*, vol. 7, no. 11 (1938): 209; ""*Diaochan" zai Meiguo gongying* "貂蝉"在美国公映 ("Diaochan" Released in the United States)," *Xinhua Huabao* 新华画报 (The New China Pictorial), vol. 4, no. 1 (1939): 8; "*Mixiegen daxue xianying "Diaochan" juanzhu Zhongguo yiyao* 密歇根大学献影"貂蝉"捐助中国医药 (University of Michigan Plays "Diaochan" to Benefit Chinese Medicine)," *Diansheng*, vol. 8, no. 26 (1939): 1082; *""Tianlun" "Diaochan" "Wang Baochuan" zai Yingguo"* "天伦" "貂蝉" "王宝钏" 在英国 ("The Link" "Diaochan" "Wang Baochuan" in England)," *Qingchun dianying* 青春电影 (Youth Cinema), vol. 4, no. 40 (1940): 19.

Diaochan which was made available to many urban Chinese through textual and visual sources, was not the only female spy archetype available during the early Republican period. In particular, the Mata Haridian Seductress-Spy archetype, introduced to Chinese audiences and readers around the 1930s was equally if not even more popular among popular consumers.

Mata Hari and Popular Culture in Urban China During the 1930s

In a response to the release of the 1938 *Diaochan* film, one film critic took the liberty of comparing the fictional character Diaochan to Mata Hari, a real Dutch woman executed for being a spy, whose story was adapted into a 1932 biopic that starred Greta Garbo. "Reviewing this story (of Diaochan) from a modern perspective," the critic wrote, "Diaochan must have been a devilishly beautiful spy who was far superior to Mata Hari."[103] This is because the lustful spy Mata Hari was overly consumed by her own sexual desires to the point where she was no longer able to execute her missions, so that her downfall was caused by her own sexuality. In contrast, Diaochan, who was not the same type of seductress-spy like Mata Hari, was not lustful and thus remained focused on her work, ultimately sacrificing herself for the "holy task" of saving the nation.[104] In other words, while both used their femininity, the key difference was that Diaochan used chaste feminine wiles while the other actively used sex.

The persona and image of "Mata Hari" as a seductress-spy was originally carefully constructed by Mata Hari herself to suit the tastes of her audiences in Europe. By 1906, Mata Hari, born as Margaretha Geertruida Zelle, had become a successful exotic dancer allegedly from the East. In 1905, she adopted the Javanese name "Mata Hari," and gave her most popular performances at the Musée Guimet, the French Museum of Oriental Arts situated in Paris.[105] In addition to her successful career as a dancer, she was also known for her high-profile affairs with important military men and politicians, and she travelled widely with her lovers of different nationalities despite volatile political conditions in Europe.[106] The oriental persona of "Mata Hari," which represented an oriental view of the East, was scrupulously maintained even after her death. In China, Mata Hari also became a familiar name to sections of the Chinese public. Films were made about her and writings about her appeared in books, magazines, and newspapers. These

[103] "*Wei guzhuangpian "Diaochan" xie*," 6 – 7.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Toni Bentley, *Sisters of Salome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 85 – 128.
[106] Ibid.

sources are not always factually accurate but they contributed significantly to the creation and perpetuation of the popular seductress-spy archetype. Even though news about Mata Hari's death appeared briefly in a few Chinese newspapers after she was executed, her posthumous fame in China owes its roots to feature films about her life. The first full-length feature film on her life was Leo Birinski's 1927 *Mata Hari: The Red Dancer* which starred the Austrian actress Magda Sonja.[107] It was first released in China at the Shanghai Paris Theatre (*Bali da xiyuan* 巴黎大戏院), a cinema located in the French Concession, in 1931.[108]

While Birinski's *Mata Hari* did not enjoy much commercial success in Shanghai, the 1931 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film *Mata Hari* directed by George Fitzmaurice with Hollywood film stars Greta Garbo and Ramon Novarro proved more popular. This Hollywood production opened at the Cathay Theatre (*Guotai da xiyuan* 国泰大戏院), an art-deco style cinema also located in the French Concession, in June 1932.[109] The film was only loosely based on Mata Hari's life, yet descriptions of it when it was first released suggested that the film was much more accurate than it actually was.[110] *The China Press*, for example, claimed that "much of the story was based on the actual life of the famous Javanese dancer and World War spy for the German government."[111] Furthermore, reviews described Mata Hari as a seductive spy with many lovers during her life, but who was also responsible for the death of many Allied officers during the First World War. This particular film was said to be based "on the one real love who came into her life."[112]

The film begins with a glamourous Greta Garbo in sequined clothing as Mata Hari. This exotic and glamourous spy falls in love with a Russian soldier from the Imperial Russian Air Force while simultaneously being the lover of other military men. To protect her Russian lover, however, Mata Hari kills an important official and goes into hiding, but exposes herself when she looks for her lover. She is then arrested, tried, and executed. Similar to Birinski's Mata Hari, this version also focuses on Mata Hari's romantic nature as a prominent feature of her character. Although she was a seductress who manipulated men and had many lovers, her downfall was the result of her sincere love for one young man.

[107] *The China Press (hereafter CP)*, 15 January 1931, 5.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 25 May 1932, 5.
[110] Ibid., 10 November 1932, 9.
[111] Ibid.
[112] *CP*, 15 June 1932, 5.

Fitzmaurice's film was not only popular among the British and Americans, but also with the Chinese. Unlike Birinski's film, which took four years to be released in China, the Hollywood version was released in China only six months after it was shown in the United States in December 1931. Thus, the timeliness of this screening in China, as well as the fame of Garbo and Novarro, contributed to its commercial success and overall appeal. When the film was first released in Shanghai, the Cathay Theatre was said to have attracted large crowds.[113] The film was so popular that in November 1932, the screening returned to Shanghai for a rerun at the Ritz Cinema House located in the Hongkew district.[114] The film continued to be screened until 1935, and was consistently played in cinemas such as the Paris Theatre,[115] Hongkew Cinema,[116] and Lafayette Cinema.[117] *Mata Hari* also came fourth in the best film category in a vote conducted among the Chinese readers of the *Pictorial Weekly*, *Linglong,* and *Radio and Movie Daily News*.[118] It received 13,258 votes, just a few hundred votes behind *Love Me Tonight* which came first.[119] The film has also been said to reach "older residents of Nanking" who were learning to appreciate Greta Garbo's appearance as Mata Hari.[120] These films, particularly the Hollywood production, were successful in introducing the image of the Mata-Haridian seductress-spy to the people in China.[121]

Against a backdrop of the growing tension and hostilities between the Japanese and the Chinese, gripping tales about espionage captivated anxious Chinese readers. Thus, a market for publications on modern warfare and the use of espionage and intelligence grew rapidly during this period. *Female Spies* 女间谍 by Liang Ren 梁仁 in 1938 was one of these many purportedly non-fiction publications.[122] The outward purpose of the book was to educate and inform its readers on how espionage, intelligence gathering, male and female spies played an indispensable role in modern warfare.[123] The book is divided into six chapters, consisting of

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid., 10 November 1932, 9.
[115] Ibid., 16 February 1933, 8, 9 April 1935, 4.
[116] Ibid., 31 October 1934, 4.
[117] Ibid., 12 December 1934, 3.
[118] *The North China Herald*, 8 February 1933, 217.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.,18 October 1933, 111.
[121] Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 131 – 137.
[122] Liang Ren 梁仁, *Nü Jiandie* 女间谍((Female Spies) (Shanghai: Xiaoxing chubanshe, 1938). There were many other publications, see: Mu Chao 穆超, trans., *Oumei jiandie zhanshu shishi* 欧美间谍战术史实 (The True History of Espionage Strategies in Europe and America) (Chungqing: Junxue bianyishe, 1942); Liu Weishi 刘唯实, *Guoji jiandie huodong shiyi* 国际间谍活动实疑 (Truth and Rumours on International Spy Activities) (Shanghai: Rirao she, 1938).
[123] Liang, *Nü Jiandie*, 1 – 3.

one introductory chapter and five separate chapters on European female spies of some significance. The cover of this book shows a single picture of Mata Hari and her voluptuous body, accentuated by her pose with her arm slung over her head, and by her bejewelled bralette. She was the only female spy introduced in the book to have a visual representation included, and she was also the first spy to be introduced to the readers. The chapter on Mata Hari attempts to reconstruct a coherent story of her life, and gives detailed accounts of her luxurious lifestyle and downfall, and argues that Mata Hari became a spy because she needed to maintain her luxurious lifestyle.[124] Such text reinforces her importance and notoriety as a woman known for her spy work and seduction of men. It also shows that Mata Hari is becoming a prominent representation of a non-Chinese female spy.

The success of the films and surrounding writings about Mata Hari helped disseminate the constructed image of the glamourous Western seductress-spy and *femme fatale* which Mata Hari posthumously symbolised. The name "Mata Hari" was adopted by Chinese writers of periodicals and books to describe female spies in China and it was most famously used for Manchu royal Yoshiko Kawashima, convicted by the Nationalist judicial system as a Chinese spy who worked for the Japanese.[125] Like Mata Hari, Kawashima was also noted for her beauty and love affairs with important military personnel and politicians.[126] Popular texts that appeared in newspapers and magazines described Yoshiko Kawashima as "Mata Hari of the Orient" and constructed a sexualised image of her as a "Chinese" seductress-spy who was working for the Japanese.[127] Writings about her focused on her beauty and how she used her body to obtain intelligence. In 1934, *Linglong* 玲珑 magazine introduced her to its readers as the "Chinese Mata Hari", and described her as an intelligent beauty who worked as a spy for the Japanese government.[128] When the Japanese invaded Shanghai in 1932, Kawashima was claimed to have been particularly active in gathering intelligence for the Japanese by, for

[124] While Mata Hari's success as a dancer brought her great wealth and fame, the chapter illustrates how this led to her ultimate downfall as a spy who collected intelligence for money. According to the chapter, by the time that Mata Hari was no longer satisfied with her luxurious life, she had long lost her rationality. She could not care less about what was happening around her, and only sought pleasure of the body and adrenaline-pumping thrills. She accepted the offers made by the Germans, and agreed to become a spy regardless of all consequences. Consumed by a dangerous force that was her sexual desire, the reckless Mata Hari lost control of her life. See: Liang, *Nü Jiandie*, 8 – 21.

[125] For example, see: "*Zhongguo de Mada Hali*," *Zazhi*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1940): 41; *Asahi Shimbun* 朝日新聞 (Asahi News), 4 October 1937, 2.

[126] "*Chuandao Fangzi de guaiyin* 川岛芳子的怪癮 (Kawashima Yoshiko's Strange Addictions)," *Haixing* 海星 (Shanghai Star), no. 20 (1946): 4.

[127] Magazine feature had both Chinese and English titles. See: "*Dongfang Mada Hali*," 15 - 16.

[128] "*Chuandao Fangzi: Rizhengfu de zhuming nü mitan* 川岛芳子: 日政府的著名女密探 (Kawashima Yoshiko: Famous Female Spy for the Japanese Government)," *Linglong* 玲珑 (Lin Loon Ladies' Magazine), vol. 4, no. 9 (1934): 526 – 527.

example, disguising herself as a Shanghai dance hostess at a dance hall.[129]

While European and American audiences likely saw Mata Hari as a spy with exotic, Eastern origins, the Chinese saw Mata Hari differently. Indeed the use of the name "Mata Hari" for Chinese or Asian female spies was unusual because it was originally an oriental name created by a Dutch woman and her entourage with a European audience in mind. The overtly sexual seductress-spy became a key figure in the imagination of the people of the republic before and during the Sino-Japanese war. "Mata Hari" was selected because of its seemingly exotic, oriental qualities.[130] When this name appeared in Chinese, however, the name Mata Hari no longer had the original exotic appeal aimed at a European audience, but became just another transliteration of a non-Han Chinese word. Indeed, one cannot be the Eastern equivalent of what is already purported to be Eastern. Moreover, Mata Hari's exotic and glamourous appeal did not register well with the Chinese. Kawashima was not an exotic dancer, nor did she use her Eastern identity to gain attention or to seduce others. Instead of being a seemingly fragile and weak woman who supposedly needed protection and was thus considered trustworthy, she was an overtly deviant seductress and outwardly dangerous. Both Mata Hari and Kawashima were considered by the Chinese as sexually active, aggressive, and beautiful spies highly capable of gathering intelligence. Furthermore, like Mata Hari, Kawashima was not only attractive and dangerous, but also attractive *because* she was dangerous. It also seems that the Chinese seductress-spy would go beyond the mere gathering of intelligence using her beauty and sexuality, but to further and purposefully cause havoc and sabotage within enemy lines. As we shall see, while this was not initially frowned upon, writers and the public eventually saw the Chinese seductress-spy as inherently treacherous.

Yoshiko Yamaguchi and Yoshiko Kawashima: The Chinese Seductress-Spy Archeype in the 1940s

Despite being perceived as dangerous and aggressive, the Chinese, Mata-Haridian, seductress-spy was not always seen as inherently traitorous. In the 1930s, for example, there were reports on a patriotic "Chinese Mata Hari," a Chinese woman who was caught by the Japanese for espionage.[131] In 1938, one Chinese newspaper columnist, a patriot writing on the topic of the

[129] Ibid.
[130] Bentley, *Sisters*, 85 – 128.
[131] "*Zhongguo de Mada Hali*," 13, reproduced in *Shibao* 时报 (Eastern Times), 18 June 1938, 2.

Sino-Japanese War, called for Chinese women to put on their best clothes and to powder their cheeks with the most alluring cosmetics in order to engage in seductress-spy activities for the sake of their country. He dedicated his magazine article to the "Mata Haris" of China and claimed that he found his previous calls for women to remove their perfume and to take off their high-heeled shoes and silk clothing in order to become nurses just one year ago a laughable effort. Instead, he argued that patriotic women would be much more useful as seductress-spies, like the female spies employed by the Japanese and Russians.[132] But after the Sino-Japanese War, prominent seductress-spies that appeared in popular texts were imputed with mostly traitorous associations. This is particularly reflected in writings about Yoshiko Kawashima and Yoshiko Yamaguchi, two of the most well-known seductress-spies in the news and popular culture.

The aforementioned story of Yoshiko Kawashima disguising herself as a dance hostess while working as a spy originated from a popular novel published in 1933 entitled *Danso no reijin* 男装の麗人 (Crossed-Dressed Beauty), written by a well-known Japanese writer named Muramatsu Shōfu 村松梢風. Chapters from this novel first appeared serialised in a Japanese magazine but were later compiled into a novel, which was subsequently made into a Japanese film entitled *Manmo kenkoku no reimi* 満蒙建国の黎明 (Dawn of a Bright Morning), starring Japanese actors.[133] The author of the novel specifically stated that the protagonist was modelled on Kawashima, and while the protagonist was named Mariko 満理子, not Yoshiko, other characters and events in the film were based on actual political figures and events that occurred in China.[134] Moreover, the basic circumstances of the protagonist's life were so similar to Kawashima's that Muramatsu's novel was understood to be biographical. Mariko's birth father in the novel, for example, was explicitly stated to be Prince Su (*Su qinwang* 肅亲王), who was Kawashima's birth father.[135]

Kawashima's personal "patriotic" ambition and motivation in restoring the Manchu-ruled Qing state was picked up and amplified by the Japanese who, encouraged by Pan-Asianism, supported and orchestrated the restoration of the Qing monarchy in the form of the founding

[132] "*Shejiban qian*," 6 – 7.
[133] Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 108.
[134] Muramatsu specifically said Mariko is modelled after Kawashima in the novel's epilogue: Muramatsu Shōfu 村松梢風, *Danso no reijin* 男装の麗人 (Crossed-Dress Beauty) (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1998), 341.
[135] Prince Su (*Su qinwang* 肅亲王) was the tenth heir to the Prince Su peerage in the Qing dynasty, which was also the case for Mariko in Muramatsu's novel. See: Ibid., 40.

of Manchukuo. The *Danso no reijin* novel and the subsequent Japanese film which labelled Kawashima as a spy and associated her with "Pan Asianism" served as a reference point to many following Chinese narratives. Snippets of the novel and details of the film were circulated in China when they were incorporated into Chinese narratives about Kawashima. The writers of these narratives, after the publication of *Danso no reijin,* also added more details about the alleged spy activities and the collaboration efforts Kawashima had allegedly been involved in, and they rarely dwelled on family or marriage-related matters unlike earlier accounts made in the 1920s to early1930s.[136]

Muramatsu's novel presented the protagonist Mariko (Yoshiko Kawashima) as a seductress-spy who was loyal to the Qing dynasty and committed to reviving Manchu rule. It was made clear in the novel that Mariko considered herself a a *supai* スパイ(spy), and she was also explicitly acknowledged to be a spy by others.[137] She was described as having danced with important men disguised as a dance hostess, using seduction as a way to gain intelligence.[138] The 1933 the *Danso no reijin* novel, which labelled Kawashima as a spy, served as a reference point to many successive Chinese narratives, including the article in *Linglong* magazine. The story about Kawashima disguised as a dance hostess is repeated in many articles, such as "Three Rebellious Women" in *Public Opinion of the North*, in which Yoshiko was described as a manipulative and cunning temptress.[139]

In 1933, a Chinese writer wrote about Kawashima's life based mostly on Muramatsu's novel and had his story published in Mass Pictorial (*Dazhong huabao* 大众画报), a Chinese magazine published in Shanghai.[140] The story, entitled "Female Spy (*Nüjiandie)*", purported to be a work of non-fiction that described in detail the ongoing conflicts between the Chinese and the Japanese military, with Kawashima referred to directly as the main protagonist. This story

[136] Descriptions of Kawashima being a seductress-spy and close to Japanese military men became a lot more apparent after 1933. See: *Shenbao*, 29 June 1934, 9; 29 March 1934, 17; 3 April 1934; 18 April 1934, 17. This is to be contrasted with accounts made earlier. These accounts did not depict her as a spy but instead as a glamourous budding member of high society. See: *Jingangzuan* 金刚钻 (Diamond), 1 January 1926, 2; *Shenbao*, 9 September 1926, 17; 25 November 1927, 6; 19 October 1932, 3; 29 October 1932, 3; *Yishibao* 益世报 (Social Welfare Newspaper), 25 February 1927, 7; 26 November 1927, 4; *Chenbao* 晨报 (Morning News), 14 March 1927, 3; 17 November 1927, 7.
[137] Muramatsu, *Danso*, 10.
[138] Ibid., 93, 103, 121.
[139] "*Sange panni de nüxing* 三个叛逆的女性 (Three Rebellious Women)," *Beifang gonglun* 北方公论 (Public Opinion of the North), no. 76 (1934): 37.
[140] "*Shishi xiaoshuo: Nüjiandie Zhongri zhanshi shihua shaonü shidai zhi Chuandao Fangzi* 实事小说： 女间谍 中日战事实话 少女时代之川岛芳子 (Non-Fiction: Female Spy True Story from the War between China and Japan Yoshiko Kawashima's Years as a Teenage Girl),"*Dazhong Huabao* 大众画报 (Mass Pictorial), no. 1 (1933) 31 – 32.

also downplayed Muramatsu's portrayal of Mariko/Kawashima's patriotic motivation in collaborating with the Japanese and the themes of Pan-Asianism evident in the novel, but instead described her as a romantic but naive woman in a man's suit who was used as a pawn by the Japanese.[141] As in Muramatsu's account, Kawashima was depicted, in this and many other Chinese articles, as a seductress-spy who used her beauty and seductive qualities to gather intelligence from men.[142] One account called her a slut and criticised her for being so promiscuous that she lost her ability to conceive because she had contracted some kind of venereal disease.[143] Another account described her as a devilish woman and claimed that she was spotted taxi dancing in a dance hall while wearing glamourous clothing.[144] These writers saw Kawashima's actions, even though these and other Chinese accounts did not emphasise her patriotic mission and motivation to restore Manchu rule, as acts of loyalty to the Manchus and to the Pan-Asianism ideal. This sentiment was not shared or understood by many members of the Chinese public, who instead believed in loyalty to the Nationalist party-state or to China in general.[145] Thus, Kawashima's actions as a seductress-spy were viewed as traitorous and malicious.

In Kawashima's own writings, she presented an image of herself as both loyal to China and supportive of Japan and Japan's political and military endeavours in the region. From her writings, readers get the idea that she was consciously supporting the idea of Pan-Asianism and having Japan as a regional leader. Her first attempt at self-narration was a Japanese memoir entitled *In the Shadow of Chaos: The Story of the First Half of my Life* (*Dōran no kage ni: Watakushi no hanseiki* 乱の陰に：私の半生) which was published in Japan in 1940. What the Japanese reader really discovers from the memoir is her belief in Pan-Asianism, and her contributions to China and Japan that respect. She writes in detail about how she played a role

[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid. Other accounts also referred to Kawashima as a famous and typical "Monstrous Woman" 魔女 (*monü*): *Shenbao*, 29 March 1934, 17. See also: *Xinwenbao* 新闻报 *(News Daily)*, 2 September 1933, 4; 31 August 1934, 4; "*Guofang zhenwen: Chuandao Fangzi jiandie gongzuo manglu* 国防珍闻： 川岛芳子间谍工作忙碌 (Precious News from National Defence: Yoshiko Kawashima Busy Doing Spy Work)," *Guofang luntan* 国防论坛 (National Defence Forum), vol. 2, no. 7 (1934): 25; "*Chuandao Fangzi, Riben zhuming mitan* 川岛芳子： 日本著名密探 (Yoshiko Kawashima, a Famous Spy for Japan)," *Dashi jiyao* 大事纪要 (Important Events), no. 9 (1934): 26 – 28; "*Weiman nüjiandie Chuandao Fangzi zuijin zhi huodong* 伪满女间谍川岛芳子最近之活动 (Puppet State of Manchuria Female Spy Yoshiko Kawashima's Recent Activities)," *Bianjiang* 边疆 (Borders), vol. 1, no. 8 (1936): 29; "*Taose jiandie Chuandao Fangzi* 桃色间谍川岛芳子 (Sexual Female Spy Yoshiko Kawashima)," *Bianjiang*, vol. 1, no. 5 (1936): 91.
[143] *Xinwenbao*, 26 December 1934, 10.
[144] *Renbao* 人报 (People's Tribune), 29 October 1934, 2.
[145] "*Tantan Chuandao Fangzi* 谈谈川岛芳子 (Let's Talk about Yoshiko Kawashima)," *Fulao* 服劳 (Service), vol. 1, no. 3 (1937): 12.

in the founding of Manchukuo and her attachment towards both Japan and China.[146] The last chapter, entitled "To the people of Japan" (*Nihon no minasama e* 日本の皆様え), describes her opinions on Japan. Kawashima's approach to Japan was that it should play a dominant role in the Asian political arena as the doctor-in-charge.[147] In her view, China was an ill patient who needed Japan's attentive care and professional analysis before China could fully recover from her illness.[148] This picture Kawashima paints of the relationship between China and Japan—as one of responsibility and dependency—was not regarded as wrong, immoral, or necessarily traitorous in Japan or even to some Chinese people during wartime China.[149] Similar to the portrayal of Mariko in *Danso no reijin*, she claimed in particular that she believed in Pan-Asianism precisely because she was patriotic and wanted what she believed was the best for China.[150] As such, she represented herself in her memoir as someone who personified both the Pan-Asianism ideal and loyalty to China, an image familiar to and even accepted by some of the people in Japan and China during the Sino-Japanese War.

What Kawashima presented and personified in the early 1940s became unacceptable to the Chinese audience when the Sino-Japanese War came to an end. Post-war texts in newspapers and books emphasised Japan as an aggressor who had ruthlessly killed innocent Chinese for the selfish motives of their leaders.[151] As such, Pan-Asianism was unacceptable and those who supported it, regardless of their motivation, were deemed to be traitors and collaborators. In 1945, Kawashima's home in Beiping was suddenly raided by the Nationalist police. A petition 陈情书 written by Kawashima while she was detained describes what had happened. She was taking a nap after breakfast when she was abruptly woken up by a man who jumped onto her. A blanket was wrapped over her head and body while she was dragged out of her bed and was made to walk barefooted. Kawashima said she was ill and asked if she could put on proper clothes and shoes first, but this request was promptly rejected. Her rooms were subsequently

[146] Kawashima Yoshiko 川島芳子, *Doran no kage ni: Watakushi no hanseiki; Kawashima Yoshiko gokuchuki* 動乱の陰に：私の半生記；川島芳子獄中記 *(In the Shadow of Chaos: The Story of the First Half of my Life; Yoshiko Kawashima's Prison Story)*, ed. Hayashi Mokube 林杢兵衛 (Tokyo: Ozorasha, 1997), 87 - 148.
[147] Ibid., 275.
[148]Ibid.
[149] See newspaper articles where some Chinese, including high-ranking Nationalist and later collaborator with the Japanese, Wang Jingwei 汪精卫, have been reported to have expressed their support towards Pan-Asianism: *Shenbao*, 27 December 1942, 3; 28 June 1943, 2;
[150] Kawashima, *Doran*, 278 – 281.
[151] For example: *Shenbao*, 19 September 1947, 9.

searched and documents were seized by the police.[152] She was later detained in prison and put on trial for being an alleged spy and collaborator.[153] Kawashima was also widely condemned in the media, largely because of the "Pan-Asianist" sentiments she expressed or embodied that became problematic after the war, combined with stories about her ethnic ambiguity and sexual promiscuity.[154]

Most importantly, however, *Danso no reijin* became incriminating evidence used in Kawashima's trial and was quoted in the judgment that ruled her guilty of being a traitor.[155] This judgment turned what had previously been considered ambiguous, including Yoshiko's identity and beliefs, into "facts" authoritatively established by the court. Under the "facts" (*shishi* 事实) section of the judgment, the opinion that she had led a romantic, unrestrained social life, was well-acquainted with the Japanese and was thus a seductress-spy, became seen as factual.[156] The judgment also found that she had dressed up as a dance hostess in order to gather crucial military intelligence. The reasoning and evidence behind Yoshiko's sentence was also made clear in the next section, entitled "reasons" (*liyou* 理由).[157] Firstly, Kawashima was determined to be Chinese because her birth father was considered Chinese, and thus it was fitting for her to stand trial in a treason case. Moreover, the court found *Danso no reijin* to be

[152] Niu Shanzeng 牛山僧, ed., *Chuandao Fangzi de jingren miwen* 川岛芳子的惊人秘闻 (Yoshiko Kawashima's Shocking Secrets), v. 1 (Hong Kong: Jingji zixun (jituan) youxian gongsi chuban, 1994), 1- 6. Archival materials, housed in the Beijing Municipal Archives, on Yoshiko Kawashima's trial are not available for public viewing. This book, however, contains those archival materials on Yoshiko Kawashima's trial, such as her statements, court judgements, etc. The materials were photocopied and smuggled out of the Beijing Municipal Archives in the early 1990s and later published in Hong Kong. The Beijing Municipal Archives has since taken legal action against the book publisher and prohibited the printing and distribution of the book.

[153] Niu, *Chuandao Fangzi de jingren miwen,* v. 1, 1 – 6.

[154] During her custody, Kawashima was required to make a statement confirming her version of events. Specifically, she had to make clear what her involvement with the Japanese had been, defend herself, and present her version of events as part of the judicial process. Despite her attempts to clarify her position, however, nearly everything about her unforced contradictions, including her beliefs in Pan-Asianism, challenged rigid social structures and defied the expectations. As these issues became more apparent in the context of post-war China, the court (and the public) began to seek explanations to counter the contradictions uttered by her. Correspondingly, her mysterious allure became an obvious and potentially best-selling topic for popular writers and the press. See: Niu Shanzeng 牛山僧, ed., *Chuandao Fangzi de jingren miwen* 川岛芳子的惊人秘闻 (Yoshiko Kawashima's Shocking Secrets), vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Jingji zixun (jituan) youxian gongsi chuban, 1994), 26 - 44. Archival materials, housed in the Beijing Municipal Archives, on Yoshiko Kawashima trial is not available for public viewing. This book, however, contains those archival materials on Yoshiko Kawashima's trial, such as her statements, court judgements, and etc. The materials were photocopied and smuggled out of the Beijing Municipal Archives in the early 1990s, later published in Hong Kong. The Beijing Municipal Archives has since then taken legal action against the book publisher and prohibited the printing and distribution of the book. The statement was reported in "*Chuandao Fangzi de zibaishu* 川岛芳子的自白书 (Yoshiko Kawashima's Confession)," *Xin Shanghai* 新上海 (New Shanghai), no. 51 (1947): 4; *Heping Ribao* 和平日报 (Peace Daily), 26 January 1947, 2; "*Chuandao Fangzi zicao zibaishu* 川岛芳子自草自白书 (Yoshiko Kawashima Writers her Own Confession)," *Zhongwai Chunqiu* 中外春秋 (The Spring and Autumns of China and Foreign Countries), no. 13 (1947): 4; *Hubao* 沪报 (Shanghai News), 27 September 1946, 2. See also: Niu, *dang'an*, v. 1, 46 – 65.

[155] Niu Shanzeng 牛山僧, ed., *Chuandao Fangzi de jingren miwen* 川岛芳子的惊人秘闻 (Yoshiko Kawashima's Shocking Secrets), vol. 2 (Hong Kong: Jingji zixun (jituan) youxian gongsi chuban, 1994), 421 – 425. This was also reported in the news: *Shenbao*, 7 November 1947, 2.

[156] Niu, *dang'an*, vol. 2, 423.

[157] Ibid.

convincing evidence, despite her protests that the judgment was based on a novel which was fictional. The judges quoted Kawashima, who herself said in trial that Muramatsu's character Mariko was modelled on her, the court ruled that the book was convincingly based on her life. Since the circumstances that surround Mariko overlapped significantly with her own, it was convincing evidence that suggested that Kawashima did indeed engage in traitorous activities.[158]

After being convicted as an evil Chinese traitor, Yoshiko Kawashima was executed by a firing squad in 1946. This event gave rise to many posthumous newspaper reports and magazine articles on both her life and death. Media outlets such as *Wenyi huabao* considered Kawashima's execution to be a newsworthy event, and this illustrated magazine in particular dedicated a two-page spread to the occasion entitled "Mata Hari of the Orient Meets Death".[159] These articles highlighted Kawashima's role as a seductress-spy and her traitorous behaviour. They claimed, with the backing of the treason trials, that she was a manipulative and dominating cross-dressing beauty who gathered intelligence for the Japanese by seducing men and helped the Japanese justify their invasion and control of China by orchestrating disruptive events. By this time, Kawashima's persona as a "Mata Haridian" seductress-spy was apparent in many popular newspaper and journal reports due to widespread media attention on her treason trial.

Kawashima was not the only one who was presented in popular sources as a traitorous seductress-spy after 1945. A similar treatment was received by Yoshiko Yamaguchi, a well-known actress in China who was suggested to be Kawashima's partner-in-crime, and other traitorous seductress-spies who betrayed China.[160] Yamaguchi was then almost exclusively known in the public by her Chinese name, Li Xianglan.[161]

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[158] Ibid., 424 - 425.

[159] "*Dongfang Mada Hali: Chuandao Fangzi zai Beiping zhixing sixing*," 15 - 16.

[160] *"Li Xianglan bingwei luowang?* 李香兰并未落网? (Li Xianglan Has Not Been Caught?)" *Lianhe yingxun* 联合影讯 (Lianhe Film News), vol. 1, no. 2 (1945): 2; *"Li Xianglan de jiandie xianyi* 李香兰的间谍嫌疑 (Suspicion of Li Xianglan's as a Spy)," *Xin Shanghai*, vol. 16 (1946): 7.

[161] Years after the war she recalled that after listening to the Jewel Voice Broadcast 玉音放送 (*Gyokuon-hoso*) made by the Japanese Emperor Hirohito to announce the surrender of Japan, she was summoned to the residence of the Chief of Shanghai's Army Press Division. She had a serious conversation with the Chief, discussing how she would proceed and deal with her dual identity as a Chinese and Japanese citizen as the war was now over. She claimed that at that moment she expressed her determination to be "reinstated" as a Japanese citizen. Yoshiko Yamaguchi and Fujiwara Sakuya, *Fragrant Orchid: The Story of My Early Life*, trans. Chia-Ning Chang (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), 228.

During the 1930s to 1940s, however, Yamaguchi and her management company deliberately chose to conceal her Japanese connections and presented her as a Chinese woman during the Sino-Japanese War.[162] She played Chinese characters and performed Nationalistic acts in seemingly patriotic films that were also part of the Pan-Asianism discourse. As such, when Yamaguchi was arrested for being a traitorous spy, news about her contested nationality later surfaced in magazines and newspapers. While this was a material issue in determining whether she could stand trial in a treason case, many writers and reporters did not consider this an issue of great importance that was worthy of lengthy analysis.[163] What cemented her reputation as a traitorous seductress-spy was, first and foremost, her pan-Asian beliefs and sentiments expressed via artistic projects she was involved in before 1945, and, later, this was further 'proven' by her sexual promiscuity and ethnic ambiguity.

Because of this change, the pan-Asian films Yamaguchi starred in, as well as what she represented, were deemed problematic, inappropriate and traitorous. After 1945, she was arrested and charged with being a spy for the Japanese. Her disappearance from the public eye and arrest was reported, meanwhile journalists made speculations about the possible reasons as to why she was arrested.[164] Yamaguchi later revealed in court that she was actually a Japanese national, as both her parents were Japanese and thus by legal definition she could not be a Chinese traitor. Since she was able to prove her Japanese nationality by presenting her birth certificate, she was deported instead of being prosecuted in 1946.[165] Yamaguchi's Japanese nationality was only revealed to the public after her arrest, and there was much confusion surrounding this new revelation.[166] Many continued to consider her a traitorous Chinese spy and collaborator. Issues regarding her nationality were thought to be a mere legal technicality or an excuse to avoid punishment.[167] Furthermore, Yamaguchi's previous

[162] Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War 1931-1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 131-133.
[163] "*Li Xianglan shi Zhongguoren* 李香兰是中国人 (Li Xianglan is Chinese)," *Shifei* 是非 (Gossip), no. 1 (1946): 7; "*Li Xianglan zhi benming* 李香兰之本命 (Li Xianglan's Original Name)," *Zhongwai yingxun* 中外影讯 (Chinese and Foreign Film News), vol. 6, no. 3 (1945): 1; "*Li Xianglan de yuanming* 李香兰的原名 (Li Xianglan's Original Name)," *Dongnanfeng* 东南风 (Southeast Wind), no. 7 (1946): 2.
[164] See, for example: *Libao* 立报 (Li Pao), 14 February 1946, 4.
[165] *Shenbao*, 3 April 1946, 3; *Libao*, 17 February 1947, 4. See also: Yamaguchi, *Fragrant Orchid*, 239 – 256.
[166] Some even argued that she returned to Japan because she refused to be Chinese. See: *Heping Ribao*, 3 April 1946, 2; *Shijie Chenbao* 世界晨报 (World Morning Post), 3 April 1946, 1. Moreover, news reports continued to consider her as Chinese, some saying that she was actually a Manchu but was adopted by a Japanese woman. See, for example: *"Yingxing yu yingmi* 影星与影迷 (Film Stars and Film Fans)," *Dianying Huabao* 电影画报 (Film Pictorial), vol. 7, no. 3 (1943): 58.
[167] *"Li Xianglan bushi Ribenren* 李香兰不是日本人 (Li Xianglan is not Japanese)," *Daguangming* 大光明 (Great Light), vol. 8 (1946): 2. Yamaguchi has also discussed how the Chinese public continued to regard her as Chinese and a traitor to her own Chinese lineage in her autobiographical work. See: Yamaguchi, *Fragrant Orchid*, 239 – 240.

contributions and involvement in pan-Asianist films resulted in intense scrutiny over how she had previously behaved in public and in private.

Indeed, Yamaguchi starred in films during a period when Pan-Asianism and nationalism were not necessarily deemed mutually exclusive. Thus, it was acceptable for Yamaguchi to have worked for a Japanese-owned film company, and played parts in films where she collaborated with and actively supported the Japanese.[168] Some of the films Yamaguchi starred in were accepted and even embraced by the Chinese public on release for being highly Nationalistic. These films depicted important historical events in China, and showed characters who were understood by the public to be brave, patriotic, and loyal to China.[169] One of Yamaguchi's most prominent works was the 1943 film *Eternity* (*Wanshi liufang* 万事流芳), originally entitled the *Opium War* (*Yapian zhanzheng* 鸦片战争).[170] *Eternity* presented the story of the First Opium War and the life of Qing official Lin Zexu 林则徐. Yamaguchi played the role of a patriotic and beautiful young woman who sold confectionery. In particular, Yamaguchi sang a song entitled *The Song of Selling Sweets* (*Mai tang ge* 卖糖歌) in the middle of the film where she was visiting an opium den and actively encouraging smokers to give up opium. Referring to opium as a "suicidal gun" and the "light that seduces the soul", Yamaguchi's character suggested that the smokers try sweets instead, as opium had the power to change people's looks, and bring an end to happiness and contentment in people's lives. *The Song of Selling Sweets* soon became another classic which was played on repeat in dance halls.[171]

It was only when Yamaguchi was detained in 1945 that the media began to label her as a possible spy for the Japanese. After the war, a few news sources eventually confirmed that she

[168] One role Yamaguchi played, however, was controversial even before the end of the Sino-Japanese War, as she played a woman who hates the Japanese but eventually falls in love with a Japanese man after he slaps her in the face and tells her to get over her hatred. See: Hotta, *Pan-Asianism*, 133; Yamaguchi, *Fragrant Orchid*, 99-100. However, the main song from the film continued to be popular; in fact so popular that it was frequently played in venues such as dance halls. Thus, it can be suggested that the film was not poorly received, and elements of the film such as its music were accepted by the Chinese public. See: *Haibao* 海报 (Poster), 28 May 1943, 2; 23 February 1943, 4.

[169] For example, see: "*Wanshi liufang* 万世流芳 (*Eternity*)" *Xinyingtan* 新影坛 (New Filmdom), vol. 5 (1943): 7；"*Jinnian zui de renxin de yibu lishi aiguo jupian: Wanshi liufang!* 今年最得人心的一部历史爱国巨片：万世流芳 (The Patriotic Film that has Reached the Most People's Hearts: *Eternity*!)," *Yitan chunqiu* 艺坛春秋 (Springs and Autumns of the Art Circle), Double Ten Special Edition (1943): 8; *Dongfang Ribao* 东方日报 (Eastern Daily), 4 May 1943, 4.

[170] "*Yapian zhi zhan: "Wanshi liufang" kaipai huaxu* 鸦片之战: 万世流芳开拍花絮 (*The Opium War: Highlights from the Opening Shoot of Eternity*)," *Xinyingtan*, vol. 1 (1942), 35-36; "*Li Xianglan laiqu congcong* 李香兰来去匆匆 万世流芳 下月完成 (Li Xianglang Comes and Goes Hurriedly Eternity will be Completed Next Month)," *Liyan Huakan* 立言画刊 (Liyan Pictorial), no. 220 (1942): 29; "*Wanshi liufang gongzuo jinzhang* 万世流芳 工作紧张 (*Eternity Work Stressful*)," *Zhonglian yingxun* 中联影讯 (Zhonglian Film News), no. 27 (1942): 3.

[171] "*Wanshi liufang*," 7.

had been detained in Shanghai on accusations of espionage, although it was unclear whom she was working for, and she was still perceived as Chinese. One outlet concluded that she was no doubt a spy working for an unnamed country, and that she had already been detained by Allied forces while investigations continued.[172] In later years, Yamaguchi remembered being detained and brought to a relocation camp for enemy aliens in Shanghai during this period.[173] Her presence in the detainment camp after the war was picked up on by some sources which concluded that she was a spy working for the Japanese, and was going to face trials as a collaborator and traitor.[174]

Instead of focusing on issues regarding her nationality, which was material to her trial, discussions by writers and journalists about Yamaguchi assumed her identity to be solely Chinese. Her previous direct or indirect commitment to promoting Pan-Asianism through participation in films was seen as a traitorous attempt to collaborate with the Japanese and a form of "cultural crime."[175] One article criticised her role as an East Asian film star and her activity in the Chinese, Japanese, and Manchurian film arena, and claimed that she contaminated minds with her acting and lies by "scattering cheap poison" to "obedient people" (*shunmin* 顺民) in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Gongrongquan* 共荣圈).[176] Moreover, some reports provided relatively more concrete examples of how she might have provided intelligence, suggesting, for example, that she had formed a partnership with Yoshiko Kawashima.[177] Most accusations against Yamaguchi were personal attacks or allegations based on rumours and hearsay. One article suggested that, although she was in fact Chinese, Yamaguchi, had chosen not to be Chinese in public because she did not want to be. This article further quoted someone who overheard her complain that she had to be Chinese when Japan was a strong country, but now that Japan was a weak country she had to be Japanese. The

[172] "*Li Xianglan zao kouya "Donya yingxing" yuanlai shi tewu* 李香兰遭扣押 "东亚影星" 原来是特务（Li Xianglang is Detained "East Asian Film Star is Actually a Special Agent)," *Qingchun dianying* 青春电影 (Youth Films), resumed publication, no. 4 (1947): 1.
[173] Yamaguchi, *Fragrant Orchid*, 229 - 234. Reports generally differed from Yamaguchi's own account that she published later in life, see, for example: *Libao*, 9 October 1945, 2.
[174] *"Li Xianglan de jiandie xianyi*," 7.
[175] "*Li Xianglan tuobian guoji zhi mimi* 李香兰脱变国籍之秘密 (The Secret of Li Xianglan's Changing Nationality)," *Daguanyuan Zhoubao* 大观园周报 (Daguanyuan Weekly News), vol. 14 (1946): 9. "Cultural Crime", a term used by some Chinese at the time who were nationalistic and anti-Japanese, refers to the act by Chinese individuals (actors and actresses, artists, producers, writers, filmmakers, etc) of collaborating with the Japanese (or receiving Japanese funds) to make or take part in the making of artistic works (such as films and plays) that presents a pro-Japanese message to a predominantly Chinese audience.
[176] "*Li Xianglan de wuchi* 李香兰的无耻 (Li Xianglan's Shamelessness)," *Jipu* 吉普 (Jeep), no. 2 (1945): 15.
[177] *"Li Xianglan bingwei luowang?*" 2; *"Li Xianglan de jiandie xianyi*," 7.

article concluded that this indeed sounded similar to what a spy for the Japanese would have said, suggesting that spy allegations against Yamaguchi were true.[178]

As such, newspapers writers also looked into her personal life and ethnicity, and questioned whether she performed Nationalistic acts or demonstrated her loyalty to China through her private and public actions as ways to determine whether she was capable of being a traitorous spy. Yamaguchi was criticised for not looking "Chinese" enough, although what constituted a "Chinese" or "Japanese" look was often not addressed and was left ambiguous. One article condemned her for having a "Japanese face," which attracted a variety of traitorous men to be acquainted with her.[179] Furthermore, another article determined Yamaguchi to be capable of betraying China because she looked biracial, and thus her blood was not "pure enough," and was a "product of inferior miscellany" (*zapaihuo* 杂牌货).[180] Evidence of her being biracial stemmed not only from her facial features, but also from her allegedly terrible armpit odour.[181] This apparently made her smell like "dogs and pigs," which repelled many of her co-workers.[182] In other words, Yamaguchi's facial and physical features were used as evidence to argue that she was a traitorous spy who supported "Pan Asianism", and "Pan-Asianism" was then considered by the Chinese to be a justification for Japanese militarisation. Furthermore, Yamaguchi's alleged spy activities were purported on the basis of her personal life and sexual promiscuity, which were considered traits that proved treachery. She was deemed to have frequented social events attended by Japanese military officials and Chinese collaborators, and to have had social and personal ties with these people.[183] Many rumours about her sexual relationships with a range of men also contributed to the public discussion about why and how she was a traitorous spy.[184] Few articles divulged the specific details of Yamaguchi's alleged spy activities, but almost all used examples of her personal life as a way to demonstrate and prove that she was traitorous.

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[178] "*Li Xianglan de yuanming*," 2.
[179] "*Li Xianglan de zuizhuang* 李香兰的罪状 (Li Xianglan's Crimes)," *Lianhe yingxun*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1945): 1.
[180] "*Li Xianglan de wuchi*," 15.
[181] "*Li Xianglan xiang zai nali* 李香兰香在哪里 (What is so fragrant about Li Xianglan," *Jinghua Zhoubao* 京华周报 (Beijing Weekly), no. 1 (1946): 3; "*Li Xianglan dadan fangpi* 李香兰大胆放屁 (Li Xianglan Dared to Fart)," *Zhilan Huabao* 芝兰画报 (Noble Pictorial), no. 4 (1946): 1.
[182] "*Li Xianglan de zuizhuang*," 1.
[183] *"Li Xianglan de jiandie xianyi*," 7.
[184] "*Li Xianglan guoji zhi mi Riben* 李香兰国籍之秘密 (The Mystery of Li Xianglan's Nationality)," *Xinguang* 新光 (New Light), no. 7 (1947): 7. See also: *"Li Xianglan de jiandie xianyi*," *Xin Shanghai*, vol. 16 (1946): 7. This article claimed that her crimes were no less than Yoshiko Kawashima's crimes as a spy. See also: "*Li Xianglan beibu jing'guo* 李香兰被捕经过 (Details about Li Xianglan's Arrest)," *Hanjian choushi* 汉奸丑史 (The Dirty History of Evil Chinese People), no. 3 – 4 (1945): 14.

Currently, we do not know for sure whether Yoshiko Kawashima or Yoshiko Yamaguchi were actually employed by Japanese intelligence agencies to engage in intelligence-gathering activities, making them professional spies for Japan. It is likely that they at some point gave their acquaintances from the Japanese Imperial Army information about China and the Chinese.[185] More relevant to this chapter, however, is that the examples of Yoshiko Kawashima and Yoshiko Yamaguchi suggest that the idea that Chinese seductress-spies were inherently treacherous was definitely available after 1945. At the minimum, these ideas were circulated in urban areas such as Shanghai where the aforementioned newspapers and periodicals were published and circulated.

Conclusion:

This chapter has examined what the perceptions of female spies were during the first half of the 20th century. Specifically, it has shown and argued that the concept of the Chinese seductress-spy archetype developed gradually in China. Unlike the character Diaochan, an example of a female spy archetype, who used her traditionally feminine qualities of gentleness and assumed weakness to complete her missions of espionage and sabotage, the Mata Haridian seductress-spy type of spy was perceived as lustful, dominant, and authoritative. In this sense, this chapter has found that the Chinese writers of popular texts often filled in knowledge lacunas with familiar ideas of their own. It is also likely that the urban Republican Chinese audience and readership recognised the dangerous beauty who brought trouble and chaos from Chinese classics and literature written in premodern times; now a woman with a purportedly Javanese and Eastern-sounding name but having a persona partially created in Europe and the United States.

So far, we have seen how writers and filmmakers presented women who spy, largely for entertainment purposes to an urban audience and readership, but how did real civilian woman engage in spying or sabotage? How and why were they mobilized by the Chinese Communist Party, and why were they chosen to engage in these activities in the first place? Did seductress-

[185] Erza Vogel suggests that it was fairly common for officials from the Japanese Military to get their intelligence about China from Japanese Sinophiles and travellers in China, of whom may or may not have been formally employed by the Japanese to engage in these tasks. The example Vogel gives in his book is Sone Toshitora 曽根俊虎, a Japanese traveller who made reports about his trips to China that were passed on to the Japanese military: Ezra F. Vogel, *China and Japan: Facing History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 133.

spies or women who behave in the capacity of one exist? These are some of the issues that will be discussed in the next chapters.

Chapter 2: Activism, Woman-Work and Secret Work Before and After 1927

Introduction:

The previous chapter looked at how popular sources presented spying women, but how did real, civilian women engage clandestine activities, and how did they become involved in the first place? This chapter is about how the CCP attracted and recruited women into the party during the 1920s, and the women who would later go on to do what was described in official documents as Secret Work. Since the 1920s, women and young girls had been drawn into CCP Woman-Work endeavours and approached by officials via the schools and societies that were run by CCP members. As such many of them were attracted to the CCP due to the Party's radical feminist agenda that, above all, advocated a rejection of traditional stereotypes and values about women that, as Kay Ann Johnson suggests, are based on Chinese cosmology and Confucian ideology, which generally stipulates that women should be secluded, domestic and obedient to their father, husband and son.[186] To do so, Woman-Work officials sought to educate women, foster activism and political awareness, and to bring civilian women out of their domestic realm. But the CCP quickly went underground in 1927 following the fall-out between the Communists and the Nationalists. Thus, CCP Woman-Work became a gateway for women to engage in secret activities, especially when the nature of Woman-Work changed after 1927 to include direct forms of Secret Work aimed at subverting Nationalist rule.

Arguments made by existing contemporary scholars about CCP's Woman-Work point towards the peripheral nature of Woman-Work, despite strong CCP rhetoric about women's rights. Christina Gilmartin's pioneering work about Woman-Work and mass movements in the 1920s reveals that, although the party was committed to Woman-Work, the practices of male and female party cadres undermined these efforts and perpetuated the patriarchy.[187] Likewise, questioning the nature of the Woman-Work for the CCP and its effectiveness, Louise Edwards arrives at a similar conclusion to Gilmartin and argues that feminist actions were curtailed

[186] Johnson, *Women*, the *Family*, 1. Other scholars have examined what conservative values related to womanhood or what the "traditional" woman was perceived or presented as in Republican China: Joshua A. Hubbard, "Queering the New Woman: Ideals of Modern Femininity in The Ladies' Journal, 1915–1931," *Nan Nü: Men, Women and Gender in China* 16, no. 2 (2014): 341 – 362; Kristine Harris, "The New Woman Incident," in *Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, ed. Sheldon H. Lu (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 277 – 302.
[187] Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 1 - 11.

within the otherwise authorised "Woman-Work" of the CCP, whose main task was to politicise and mobilise women to participate in other CCP activities.[188] While it is indeed the case that CCP Woman-Work had a limited effect in the realm of actualising women's rights, it was important to other aspects of the party's work. Specifically, in recruiting other women and maintaining Secret Work that aimed to sabotage the Nationalists.

So how did Woman-Work come to include aspects of Secret Work, an operational policy that dictate that officials must stay undercover and underground? In April 1927, Chiang Kai-shek decided to purge the Communists from his party, killing many and forcing the rest to go into hiding. Hans van der Ven argues that the CCP bureaucracy became much more structured and organised after 1927.[189] Patricia Stranahan describes how the Communist party abruptly went underground and on-the-ground party members in Shanghai dealt with their situation pragmatically.[190] Moreover, due to the threat of security issues, Zhigao Xue notes that the CCP also established formal spy and intelligence agencies after 1927.[191] These pioneering works all point towards the argument that 1927 was a key turning point for the CCP. Indeed, the events in 1927 also changed the direction of CCP Woman-Work. Prior to 1927, aspects of CCP's Woman-Work were kept low profile. As we shall see in this chapter, there were several reasons for this, ranging from the utility and convenience that can be gained from officials keeping a low-profile, and the protection of individuals and party organs (*jiguan* 机关, also known as party offices) from local anti-Communist forces. After the fall-out in 1927, Woman-Work initially halted, mostly due to a lack of personnel, no clear directions from the top officials of the party, and its low priority status among on-the-ground Communists as there were other, more important, party matters. The Communists were also pitted against the Nationalists, and the Nationalists were now seen as the enemy of women and women's liberation. After April 1927, much of CCP's Woman-Work moved away from general feminist activism and focused more on mobilising women to engage in activities that were really aimed at sabotaging the Nationalists. These activities were meant to be subversive and were seen as such by the Nationalists.[192]

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[188] Anne E. McLaren, ed., *Chinese Women - Living and Working* (London: Routledge, 2006), 107.
[189] Hans van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, 1920-1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 1.
[190] Top-down directions were not always straightforward, and often Shanghai Communists favoured other approaches instead of or in addition to ideology in order to survive: Stranahan, *Underground*, 4.
[191] Guo, *China's Security State*, 5.
[192] See, for example: SMA, Q6-14-679-23; Q6-8-381, '*Shanghai Dianhua Gongsi, chanye gonghui deng weiyu Shanghaishi Shehuiju guanyu gongzi, jiegu,ewaigongzuo geichou deng jiufen yiji Dixiadangyuan mingdan laiwang zhi wensh* 上海电话

The argument of this chapter is developed in two sections. The first section looks at the context and background of CCP Woman-Work in the early 1920s. Woman-Work endeavours sought to fight back against what officials saw as detrimental traditional values and stereotypes related to women. As demonstrated by the example of *Nüxingshe*, a women's rights organisation in Tianjin that was partly run by the Communists, Woman-Work officials attempted to educate women, take them out of their homes, introduce them to politics and foster activism. The second section investigates Woman-Work after 1927. After the April 1927 purge, the CCP went underground and security became one of the top priorities. Secret Work was properly introduced and implemented by the party. It is in this context that Woman-Work operated and women were increasingly drawn into Secret Work.

Rejecting destiny: Context and Background of CCP Woman-Work and Pre-1927 Activism

The CCP recognised early on that it was important to get women involved in the party, and understood that there was a practical need to recruit women.[193] One reason for having women involved was that women made up half of the country's total population, thus the recruitment

公司，产业工会等位于上海市社会局关于工资解雇额外工作给酬等纠纷以及地下党员名单来往之文书 (Letters and documents between the Social Affairs Bureau and Shanghai Telecom, industry unions, etc, that are situated in Shanghai regarding wages, termination of job, pay from extra work, etc, and name list of Underground Communists);' Q130-6-8-4, "*Guomindang ge sheng (shi) minzhong ziweidui guanyu cedong minzhong suqing gongfei yundong jihua* 国民党各省(市)民众自卫队关于策动民众肃清共匪运动计画 (Plan by the People's Self Defense Forces of the Nationalist Party Regarding the Mobilisation Movement Purge Communist Bandits by the Masses in Every Province (City))'. Many of the Communists were arrested for their subversive activities. Wu Guozhen 吴国桢, the former mayor of Shanghai from 1945 to 1949, for example, later claimed that more than 600 underground operatives were arrested during his governance: K. C. Wu, *Ye lailin: Wu Guozhen jianzheng de Guogong zhengdou* 夜来临：吴国桢见证的国共争斗 (The Arrival of the Night: The Chinese Civil War as Witnessed by K. C. Wu) (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2009), 211.

[193] The condition of women plays a big part in the official party discourse about modern China and the need for radical change in the status quo. As discussed by Christina Gilmartin, the Communists' rejection of "paternalism and patriarchal models of society," allowed feminists and feminist Woman-Work programs to become a part of the party: Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 16. According to Gilmartin, individual Communists, especially men, had both a personal and pragmatic reason to embrace feminism and to reproduce feminist propaganda as a means to reach as many women as possible: Ibid., 37 – 38. Furthermore, theoretically, the Communists believed that traditional, feudal, then imperialist and capitalist practices perpetuated a patriarchy, where women are the oppressed victims. From this point of view, the condition of women had deteriorated even further in the late Qing and Republican era, owing to the mass industrialisation of China where women, especially proletariat women, had been passively driven into factories, becoming "production slaves" (*shengchan nuli* 生产奴隶): Guangdong-sheng dang'anguan 广东省档案馆 (hereafter GSDAG) and Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui 广东妇女运动历史资料编纂委员会 (hereafter GDFYD), eds., *Guangdong funü yundong shiliao* 广东妇女运动史料 (Historical Materials Regarding the Women's Movement in Guangdong (1924 - 1927) (Guangzhou 1983), 69 - 70. At the same time, it was believed that all women of China continued to "live lives akin to prostitutes", enslaved in feudal traditions and Confucius beliefs. As such, the "CCP not only works hard to protect and fight for the rights of female labourers, such as urging for equal wages, making laws to protect female and child workers, but the party also fights for the rights of all oppressed women." See: *Guangdong-sheng funü lianhehui* 广东省妇女联合会 (hereafter GSFLH) and GSDAG, eds., *Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao* 广东妇女运动历史资料 (Historical Documents Regarding the Women's Movement in Guangdong) (Guangzhou: Guangdong-sheng gongxiao xuexiao yinshuachang, 1991), 41.

of women would allow the Communist party to expand their support base, [194] and for the party to capitalise on the otherwise idle manpower of women.[195] Moreover, it was understood by officials that women often connected better with other women and preferred dealing and being with them, instead of men, and thus getting women involved meant that it was easier to recruit even more women. Indeed, officials felt that frequent interactions between men and women were still seen by society at large as inappropriate and cause for suspicion. [196] As such, it was decided that local Communists should "establish a Women's Department within their local party structure to focus exclusively on Woman-Work" and that on-the-ground Communists must "pay particular attention to the training of their women party members regarding theories of the women's movement".[197]

Some officials also felt convinced that certain stereotypes about women (particularly those related to motherhood and domesticity that stemmed from what was identified by officials as Confucian thought[198]) burdened women and resulted in undesirable outcomes such as the objectification of women as the playthings of men and inequality between the sexes.[199] Tan Zhushan 谭竹山, an early CCP member and a feminist activist summarised the effects of these traditional Confucian stereotypes and ideas about womanhood a Communist publication circulated in Guangdong. According to Tan one of these ideas was the doctrine of the *Three Obediences and Four Virtues* (*sancong side* 三从四德) which stipulates that women must obey their fathers, husband and sons, and follow the four feminine virtues in actions and speech by being chaste, well-mannered, and modest. Tan contended that it was these values and stereotypes that confine women to the ninth level of hell, leaving them unaware of their status as human beings and allowing them to descend even further as the playthings of men while daydreaming about becoming middle or upper-class married women (*taitai* 太太).[200] Likewise, Deng Yingchao 邓颖超, a feminist activist who later became a prominent CCP official and

[194] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 71.
[195] ZZB, Zhonggong zhongyang dangshi yanjiushi 中共中央党史研究室 (hereafter DSYJS), and Zhongyang dang'anguan 中央档案馆 (ZYDAG), eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 (Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 26.
[196] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 72. This was implied in the Women's Movement Draft Resolution of the fourth National Congress passed in 1925, which reiterated the need for local, on-the-ground Communists to recruit women as party members, because there continued to be a complex social relationship between men and women which mean that it was more convenient for women party members to do Woman-Work. As a matter of experience according to officials, locations that did not have women party members often found it difficult to even commence, let alone sustain, any form of Woman-Work.
[197] Ibid., 73 – 74.
[198] Ibid., 41.
[199] Ibid., 58 – 60.
[200] Ibid., 41.

wife of high-ranking Communist politician Zhou Enlai 周恩来, also made it clear that it was her intention to reject Confucian values and "reform China's family system" by, for example, persuading women to reject their arranged marriages and to leave what Deng saw as oppressive families.[201] It was in her opinion that "in the past few thousand years, all of Chinese culture, history, systems, the personal habits of people, law… have denied regarding women as an individual "human."[202] Women has been perceived as a plaything and a slave. They were their parent's private property before their marriage, and then the private plaything of their husband after marriage." [203]

Besides an ideological stance against these traditional values and stereotypes, it was also pragmatically recognised by officials that the existence of these understandings sometimes hindered party mobilisation efforts. In 1922 - 1923, for example, men and women workers often had heated arguments, which resulted in serious conflicts between the two groups in labour unions. Feeling offended and oppressed, due to what was described as condescending, sexist practices and stereotyping behaviour committed and perpetuated by male workers, women workers threatened to create their own women-only labour unions. This was seen by Communist officials at the time as a potential disaster as it could lead to the "fragmentation of the working class". [204] In response, officials promptly pledged that the "party must … advocate for not only the tight-knitted unity of male and female workers, but also to eradicate contemptuous practices and stereotyping by men."[205]

On paper at least, the CCP was committed to doing what they saw as the necessary work that could eventually liberate women from its earliest years.[206] It became an item on the party agenda in 1921, as demonstrated in a party-wide communication issued by then General Secretary of the Central Bureau (*Zhongyangju* 中央局) Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 in November 1921.[207] As women consisted of half of the population, it was thus argued, in the Draft Resolution about the Women's Movement passed by the third National Congress of the CCP (*Zhongguo Gongchandang di sanci Quangguo daibiao dahui guanyu funü yundong jueyian* 中

[201] Ibid., 73.
[202] Ibid., 73- 74.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., 71
[205] Ibid., 71
[206] See: Ibid. 69 – 74. See also: Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 1 - 11.
[207] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 中国妇女运动历史资料 (Historical Materials Related to the Chinese Women's Movement) 1921 - 1927 (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1986), 1.

国共产党第三次全国代表大会关于妇女运动决议案) in June 1923, that women should also be mobilised to participate in revolutionary activities like men were.[208] Similar sentiments were echoed in the 1923 Draft Resolutions Relating to the Youth and Women's Movement of the Second National Congress of the Socialist Youth Corps (*Zhongguo Shehui zhuyi Qingniantuan di er ci quangguo daibiao dahui guanyu qingnian funü yundong jueyian* 中国社会主义青年团第二次全国代表大会关于青年妇女运动决议案), which declared that the Socialist Youth Corps (*Zhongguo Shehui zhuyi Qingniantuan* 中国社会主义青年团) members should mobilise women workers to join existing labour unions and establish a division within these labour unions for teenage girls and young women.[209] Women, albeit relatively few in numbers, were also appointed to lead Woman-Work endeavours within the party. In June to July 1924, for example, the CCP put forward feminist, activist and CCP official Liu Qingyang 刘清扬 to attend the Woman-Work committee meetings of the fifth national congress of the Communist International (*Gongchan guoji di wuci daibiao daihui* 共产国际第五次代表大会).[210]

Woman-Work, however, often took a back seat in the agendas of local, on-the-ground Communists despite various top-down orders, declarations, and draft resolutions. Furthermore, not all areas which had some form of organised Communist presence necessarily engaged in Woman-Work. According to one report made by the Dalian 大连 Special Branch (*tezhi* 特支) on March 15 1925, it was hard for on-the-ground members to expand their Woman-Work operations because there were only a few women who could be mobilised to become involved. While they did try to distribute leaflets about women's rights to various bodies of women and girls, it was difficult to organise them and to establish some form of women's organisation in

[208] Ibid., 68.
[209] Ibid., 71.
[210] Woman-Work and the feminist agenda was further institutionalised in January 1925 owing to the intervention by the Comintern, compelling the CCP to make various adjustments in order to expand their base andthereby granting Woman-Work an official status. See: ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 1, 26. See also Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 17. During the party's fourth congres, the Central Bureau soon added pioneer Communist feminist Xiang Jingyu 向警予 as a Central Committee member (*Zhongyang weiyuan* 中央委员) from May 1925, simultaneously appointing her as a Central Bureau Committee member (*Zhongyangju weiyuan*). Along with these appointments, Xiang was also appointed as the director (*zhuren* 主任) of the Women's Bureau, a work organisation of the Central Executive Committee established in May 1925. In around September to October 1926, the Woman-Work bureau changed its name to Women's Movement Committee. See: ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 1, 28. A few months later, however the Women's Movement committee reverted to its old name, Women's Bureau (*Funübu* 妇女部), in May 1927. Regional CCP branches which reported to the Central Committee of the CCP also gradually institutionalised Woman-Work throughout the 20s. In May 1925, for example, the Beijing District Executive Committee (*Beijing-qu zhixing weiyuanhui* 北京區執行委員會) and Beijing District Executive Committee (*Beijing difang zhixing weiyuanhui* 北京地方執行委員會) reorganised into the Northern District Executive Committee (*Beifang-qu zhixing weiyuanhui* 北方區執行委員會) which included a Women's Movement Committee (*funü yundong weiyuanhui*) co-led by Liu Qingyang and Xia Zhixiang 夏之栩 whose leadership lasted until May 1927. See: ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 1, 99.

Dalian, perhaps because many civilian women weren't at all interested. The only slightly more successful Woman-Work-related event worth mentioning in the report was an organised talk given on Women's Day on March 8 1925, which took place at a local school. It was noted that the talk addressed issues such as the relationship between the women's movement, the labour movement, and socialism, as well as women's liberation, the proletariat revolution, the Chinese women's movement, the Nationalist revolution, and aspirations regarding the women's movement in Dalian. But even with invitations sent to various girls' schools beforehand, inviting both female students and teachers to attend the talk, only 20 of the 100 attendees were actually female. [211]

Recruitment of Women: Operational Issues and Solutions

As illustrated above, key to CCP Woman's Work was the party's mobilisation of women to become involved. But actual mobilisation efforts were not always straightforward and easy, partly because women were not always interested but also because officials found the political environment different to operate in. On-the-ground officials faced several important operational issues specific to Woman-Work and the mobilisation of women. Firstly, how should on-the-ground officials attract women to the CCP's feminist cause in the first place? Secondly, how could officials conduct Woman-Work without being the targets of overt reactionary backlash, from right-wingers of the Nationalist party, warlords, and anyone else who opposed the kind of Woman-Work and feminist ideology that was conducted and promoted? These were real concerns that had to be addressed by both on-the-ground officials and those in the top levels of the Communist party.

One of the problems that have been pointed out, for example, is that ordinary women and young girls did not want to be publicly associated with a partisan organisation and thought these organisations were intimidating. [212] Furthermore, despite being in a united front with the Nationalists since 1924, members of the CCP faced hostility and backlash from warlords and other individual or organisations who sought to eradicate the Communist threat. Officials who were doing Woman-Work faced the double backlash from not just anti-Communist forces but

[211] Zhonggong Dalian shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengbian weiyuanhui 中共大连市委党史资料征编委员会, ed., *Dalian dixiadang shiliao xuanbian* 大连地下党史料选编 (An Edited Collection of Historical Documents Regarding the Underground Communist Party in Dalian) (Dalian 1986), 9 – 11.
[212] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927*, 280 – 281.

also those who opposed the women's movement as promoted by the CCP. Thus even though Woman-Work officials operated relatively freely and publicly, in 1926, the CCP Women Department itself remained a "secret" institution (*mimi zuzhi* 秘密组织) because of the existing "political environment in China" where there was reactionary backlash from "feudalists and warlords."[213] The solution to these two issues was adopting an operational strategy of keeping the party agenda low profile, and cooperating with other parties or organisations in order to mask the identity and agenda of individual Woman-Work officials. In other words, a better plan of action was to have CCP members occupy prominent and decision-making positions in their respective Woman-Work organisations, be it Nationalist, bi-partisan, or non-partisan.[214]

Practical details and instructions regarding how to actually reinforce Secret Work for all aspects of party activity in real life situations can be found in an article "Common Knowledge Regarding Secret Work" (*Mimi gongzuo changshi* 秘密工作常识), published by the party mouthpiece *Xiaokan* 校刊, which illustrated what on-the-ground Communists should do to avoid persecution by imperialists, warlords, and rightists of the Nationalist party.[215] This included instructions such as having matches on hand to burn party documents whenever there was imminent danger.[216] The Chinese Socialist Youth Corps (later renamed the Communist Youth League) also took Secret Work seriously, even publishing a booklet entitled "What Must Be Known Regarding Secret Work" (*Mimi gongzuo sushi* 秘密工作须知) in 1926 which was distributed to every branch.[217] It clarified the purpose of Secret Work, which was not "to limit the scope of work, to halt the progress of the Corps' work" or to "decrease the opportunities of public work (*gongkai huodong* 公开活动)."[218] But, the purpose was to broaden their scope of work as much as possible, staying close to the masses and increase their ability to mobilise them by staying underground and as far away from the military police and spies as possible.[219]

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[213] Ibid., 280 – 281; GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 74.
[214] Joining the Nationalist Party, and staying underground was by no means a strategy adopted solely by the those involved in Woman-Work. Instead, this was an official, party-wide policy. Following need to better organise and expand the CCP base, the party's fourth congress in 1925 reformed the party structure and established the Department of Organisation, a work organisation of the Central Executive Committee. In 1926 it also issued a circular (*tongzhi* 通知) regarding the "Reinforcement of the party's Secret Work" (加强党的秘密工作). For more on Secret Work during this period, see: Yang Shibao 杨世保 and Wang Jisheng 王吉胜, *Zhongguo Gongchandang baomi gongzuoshi* 中国共产党保密工作史 (The History of Secrecy Work of the Chinese Communist Party), 1921 - 1949 (Beijing: Jincheng chubanshe, 2018), 12 – 87.
[215] Ibid., 58.
[216] Ibid., 59.
[217] Ibid., 67.
[218] Ibid.
[219] However, this exact Secret Work booklet landed in the hands of the Nationalists in 1929 and was widely distributed within the Nationalist Party which suggests that how individuals actually handled Secret Work were by no means perfect. A full copy

Besides the theoretical emphasis on Secret Work as demonstrated in these documents, the practical need for it has also been acknowledged in local areas such as Dalian where the local political situation was particularly hostile towards Communists.[220]

Furthermore, this strategy, in which Communists were encouraged to join Nationalists and other non-partisan organisations as a way to stay low-profile, keep cover, and increase the Communists' ability to participate in public activities was seen as an appropriate strategy for Woman-Work.[221] The Communists were not the only party interested in women and the women's movement and the Nationalists were also initiating programs that targeted women with the aim of forwarding women's rights.[222] Furthermore, it was believed that by joining the Nationalists, tapping into their resources and networks, CCP members could potentially reach more women and, at the same time, change these Nationalist institutions from the inside by converting Nationalists to their cause.[223]

As such, one out of two methods of on-the-ground activity, as instructed in the 1925 Draft Resolution on the Women's Movement passed during the party's fourth congress, was to fully utilise Nationalist women's movement institutions. On-the-ground CCP Woman-Work officials were actively encouraged to join these Nationalist institutions, because the party "must find ways to have female party members to work in their [Nationalists] party's Woman-Work bureau, in order to implement our Woman-Work plans... and for our party to command their bureau."[224] This does not mean that the Communists completely agreed with the Nationalists on their Woman-Work agenda. Some seriously disagreed with what the Nationalists were advocating, which was apparently more focused on the rights of women from the upper classes, and regarded their women's rights advocacy as destined to fail because "the warlords who are in power would never cede to the Nationalists' demands."[225] But this could also work to the Communist's advantage, as the failure of Nationalist's Woman-Work policies might be a good

of this booket was published in a Nationalist publication: "*Fulu: nidang mimi gongzuo xuzhi (xu)* 附录：逆党秘密工作须知（续）(Appendix: What Must Be Known Regarding Secret Work by the Treacherous Party (Continued))," *Shandong Jjiaoyu xingzheng zhoubao* 山东教育行政周报 (Shandong Education Administration Weekly), no. 39 (1929): 20 – 25.

[220] Zhonggong Dalian shiwei, *Dalian,* 15.

[221] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927*, 475.

[222] Ibid., 188 - 189.

[223] Ibid.

[224] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 74.

[225] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927*, 188 -189.

opportunity for the Communists to convert the Nationalists and the masses, eventually bringing China closer to "a social revolution."[226]

The other method of operation made clear in the 1925 Draft Resolution is for Communists to fully utilise non-partisan organisations. This was perceived as useful because workplaces with no public party affiliations were thought to be more approachable and less intimidating in the eyes of the general public, and that the Communists could not rely solely on Nationalist Woman-Work activities.[227] In short, top officials actively encouraged on-the-ground officials to "utilise" official Nationalist institutions or non-partisan organisations from schools to women's rights societies.[228] To carry this out, on-the-ground Communists were reminded not to feel contempt for the women's rights efforts organised by rich, upper class women and female politicians – some of which were affiliated to the Nationalist party. Nor should on-the-ground Communists emphasise too much about class in their activities, which often intimidated the women they are trying to recruit.[229]

On an operational level, this strategy of bi-partisan and non-partisan cooperation had benefits and pitfalls. A 1926 report on Woman-Work declared that on-the-ground Communists were successful in establishing some publicly non-partisan Woman-Work organisations which had attracted many women's rights groups and recruited quite a few individual activists.[230] But then higher-ranking officials also found that on-the-ground officials were also taking up positions within the Nationalist Party just for the sake of personal gain, instead of really engaging with the masses which was originally intended when the party sought to get its officials to join the Nationalist Party in the first place.[231] This is interesting because it demonstrates some of the similarities and differences between what was on paper and practice, which is discussed further in the next section.

Bi-Partisan and Non-Partisan Efforts: Mobilisation and Fostering Political Activism in *Nüxingshe*

[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid., 280 – 281. See also: GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 74.
[228] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 280 – 281, 475.
[229] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 72.
[230] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 280 – 281.
[231] Ibid., 475.

Despite these theoretical frameworks and strategies, on-the-ground actualities of CCP Woman-Work ran less smoothly. In some cases, actual realisation of Woman-Work was often an ad hoc combination of strategy, cooperation, and individual Communist activity. This section will use the activities of *Nüxingshe* 女星社 (Guiding Star for Women Society) as an example of how women were organised and perhaps a more successful case of CCP Woman-Work endeavours at the time. *Nüxingshe*, a women's rights organisation, was established in 1923 in Tianjin by feminist pioneers Deng Yingchao and Li Zhishan 李峙山, which focused primarily on educating women and girls, advocacy work and feminist activism. Members of the society, such as Deng and Li sought to beat traditional stereotypes and change values, especially regarding a woman's domesticity by, as explained later in this section, mobilising women out of their homes, educating them and, most importantly, fostering activism. This society was opened to both male and female members, as long as they were passionate about women's rights, and lasted until mid-1925. This was because, according to Deng Yingchao's own retelling of the history of the society, there was a crackdown on more progressive, organised marches and talks in Tianjin after the death of Chinese statesman Sun Yatsen 孙中山 in March 1925 by Beiyang warlords.[232] Deng herself left Tianjin in July 1925, heading south and temporarily relocated to the Guangdong area.[233] Although some of its members and founders were affiliated with the Communists, *Nüxingshe* was run in a way that appeared, at least in public, to be a non-partisan organisation and it was primarily interested in mobilising women to engage in political activism and fostering feminist activists.

Both Deng Yingchao and Li Zhishan were in ways affiliated with the Chinese Socialist Youth Corps (which was later renamed as Communist Youth League of China in 1925) before and after the establishment of *Nüxingshe*. Li Zhishan was the deputy director of the Local Tianjin Executive Committee of the Chinese Socialist Youth Corps (*Zhongguo shehui zhuyi qingniantuan Tianjin diefang zhixing weiyuanhui* 中国社会主义青年团天津地方执行委员会) from March to June 1922, and later joined and remained affiliated with the Nationalist Party from 1925 onwards. Meanwhile, Deng Yingchaa joined the Socialist Youth Corps in 1924 and was an alternate committee member (*houbu weiyuan* 候补委员) of the Tianjin

[232] Zhonggong Tianjinshi shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui 中共天津市委党史资料征集委员会 (hereafter TJSDS) and Tianjianshi funü lianhehui 天津市妇女联合会 (TJSFL), eds., *Tianjing Nüxingshe funü yundong shi ziliao xuanbian* 天津女星社妇女运动史资料选编 (A Compiled Volume of Historical Materials Related to the Women's Movement of the Society of Female Star in Tianjin) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao chubanshe, 1985), 4.
[233] Ibid.

Executive Committee of the Corps. Although she is now known and remembered as a prominent CCP member, in 1925 Deng joined the Nationalist Party and, until the end of the First United Front, publicly promoted the party while doing work for its Women's Department, with the knowledge and the encouragement of the CCP due to reasons described in the previous section. In January 1926, for example, she was sent to Shantou 汕头 to promote the Nationalist Party and help form local women's organisations. In the same month she was also sent by the Nationalists to Chao'an county 潮安县 (present day Chao'an district 潮安区) in Guangdong to investigate the suicide of a principal of a girl's school.[234]

According to Deng Yingchao, the *Nüxingshe* in the early years of its conception was not an operation completely controlled by the CCP, but its operations was still in ways influenced by the party and the party's ideology. In 1984, Deng told an interviewer from the Party History Information Committee of the Tianjin Municipal Party Committee (*Tianjin shiwei dangshi ziliao weiyuanhui* 天津市委党史资料委员会) that *Nüxingshe* was as a special branch (*tezhi* 特支) of the party. There was no organised CCP activity in the area in 1923 when *Nüxingshe* started, and the society was not officially under any CCP structure. Nor were they, Deng claimed, acting under specific party orders, as it was mainly a few party and league members, including herself, who were running the show.[235] But despite this lack of formal organisational relationship between *Nüxingshe* and the CCP, Deng claimed that she and others in *Nüxingshe,* were already ideologically influenced by the party. This included being aware of what was argued in the 1922 and 1923 party's Draft Resolutions regarding the importance of women's rights and the party's commitment to women's liberation. Deng also remembered that she and others were already Socialist Youth Corps members who frequently read party and league publications like *Chinese Youth* (*Zhongguo qingnian* 中国青年).[236]

To the 1920s Tianjin public, *Nüxingshe* was actively presented as a non-partisan organisation, even though there were speculations made by the public and politicians about its true affiliations and allegiance. In 1924, after being accused of being affiliated with the Communist Youth League, *Nüxingshe* publicly reassured its existing and potential members that they were not a partisan group via a declaration in their in-house publication *Nüxing* 女星 (Female Star).

[234] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 132.
[235] TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 1.
[236] Ibid., 5.

The declaration emphasised that it was a non-partisan organization, specialising in advancement of the rights of women and girls across the country.[237] In 1984, Deng claimed that it was necessary for *Nüxingshe* to refute these rumours because otherwise *Nüxingshe* would have been banned by those in power.[238] Nevertheless, the CCP was aware of the existence of *Nüxingshe* in 1924, as Deng was mentioned as a very enthusiastic person-in-charge of *Nüxingshe* in the June 1924 Report on China's Women's Movement by the Women's Bureau of the CCP. [239]

Initially, the society expanded in an undesirably slow fashion, as acknowledged by Li Zhishan in a speech made to members of the *Nüxingshe* in a celebratory party held on the 10th of October– the National Day – in 1923. [240] According to Li, this was because not all of the society's members were able to dedicate much of their time and effort to the society's work in advocacy and in hosting activities aimed at increasing women's rights. At that time, the society gained members by advertising in their printed materials, requesting interested people to write to their society through mail. A membership card was then returned through the mail.[241] Existing members also recommended the society to their friends, some of whom later joined. Around half of these new members were from local Tianjin, while the rest came from locations such as Beijing, Shanghai, Taiyuan 太原, Changsha 长沙, and Baoding 保定.[242]

Practical steps were taken to expand their outreach and membership base because getting women to leave their domestic realm and participate or take charge in the society's activism work was perceived by the society as a key way to fight against traditional values and stereotypes, but also to grow *Nüxingshe*. The society produced two in-house feminist periodicals, entitled the *Nüxing* 女星 (Female Star) and *Funü ribao* 妇女日报 (Women's Daily), which targeted mainly female readers in promoting the society, advocating for women's rights and aiming to raise awareness of women's rights issues among ordinary men and women.[243] In 1923 and 1924 respectively, *Nüxingshe* established two tutorial colleges which recruited girls and women as members who were then mobilised to participate in protests and

[237] Ibid., 51, 513.
[238] Ibid., 5.
[239] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 174.
[240] TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 17.
[241] Ibid., 14.
[242] Ibid., 17.
[243] Ibid., 51.

strikes against what they deemed as female oppression and imperialism.[244] Leadership of the society was motivated to do so as they had a personal mission to create something that functioned as a school and a shelter in order to take in vulnerable women, such as those who has been abandoned or abused by their husbands, or underprivileged women who were deprived of a chance to receive schooling.[245] Moreover, as pointed out by Liu Qingyang in 1925, then a member of *Nüxingshe*, not having enough women involved was a big issue. She argued that the lack of talents (*rencai* 人才) – men but especially women who could become useful members and leaders within the women's movement, has been a consistent problem to *Nüxingshe*, other women's organisations across China and the feminist cause.[246] As such, Liu suggested that establishing schools for ordinary people was an important way to train and nurture talents to join the women's movement as activists.[247]

Indeed, opening schools in order to attract, and thus recruit, girls and women was a strategy employed by individuals, and one that was approved by the party, since it was considered part of the strategy of utilising non-partisan organisations.[248] This strategy of using and opening schools was specifically mentioned in the women's movement draft resolutions passed by the People's Congress as early as 1923, which suggested that learning institutions such as evening schools and tutorial colleges or nurseries for the children of women workers could be used to generate opportunities to approach women.[249] Accordingly, once approached and tactfully mobilised, these women would then develop class consciousness and eventually fight alongside leading men and women officials.[250] Likewise, the 1925 Draft resolution of the party's fourth Congress stated "it is indeed suitable for us (the Communists) to pay attention to organised movements in schools for females."[251] Although top Communist officials recognised that Woman-Work should expand beyond establishing schools, due to limitations in manpower and for financial reasons, establishing schools for girls and female labourers was the only practical and realistic way forward for CCP Woman-Work endeavours.[252] While it is likely not the case

[244]ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 365 – 366.
[245] TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 365 – 368, 370.
[246] Ibid., 127.
[247] Ibid.
[248] One of the earlier CCP experiments with schools for girls and women is Pingmin Girl's School (*Pingmin nüxiao* 平民女校, literally School for Ordinary Girls) a school specifically for female students run by prominent early leaders of the CCP. It was established in 1922. For an introduction to the school by one of its founders, early CCP leader and founder of the party, Li Da 李达: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 20.
[249] Ibid., 68, 71.
[250] Ibid., 71.
[251] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 74.
[252] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 189.

that *Nüxingshe* was acting under direct party orders to establish the tutorial colleges, it is safe to assume that individuals such as Deng Yingchao and Li Zhishan were either aware of this strategy as encouraged by the CCP, or that they too recognised the usefulness of using schools to attract and recruit women.

According to their writings, *Nüxingshe* members saw the *Nüxing* No. 1 tutorial college as a great success and women of different ages was interested in attending. For example, the school welcomed a 46-year-old middle-aged housewife and a young breastfeeding mother who wished to bring her child and servant to the tutorial college while she attended classes.[253] It was also possible for those who were poor to be exempted from paying tuition fees.[254] Most students who enrolled were around the 20-30 year old range.[255] The school was so successful that women apparently continued to enrol in the school even after the new academic year had started. The classrooms were no longer big enough for all the women. On one occasion, it was said by a *Nüxingshe* member that a woman insisted on attending classes even after being told that there was no longer room to accommodate her and that she should wait for the new academic year. She refused and persisted for over an hour, and even stated that she was willing to stand if there were not enough chairs. Li Zhishan, the school principal, claimed that every day, she wished that one of the students would take a day off, otherwise students would have to share the limited number of chairs.[256] The school eventually expanded the size of the rooms to fit around 30 people, and increased the number of desks and chairs in preparation of the second academic year. 38 students attended the first day of classes in the second academic year. The success of the No. 1 Tutorial College in 1923 was followed by the establishment of *Nüxing* Voluntary Weekly Tutorial College 星期妇女义务补习学校 in 1923. Unlike No.1 Tutorial College, this second tutorial college aimed to teach skills for lower class working women on a weekly basis.[257] Adult women, regardless of marital status, age, or literacy skills could enrol.

What was deemed as practical knowledge such as basic arithmetic and vernacular Chinese were taught at these tutorial colleges as opposed to the Chinese classics that was usually taught at more traditional schools. As emphasised by Li Zhishan in an article published in *Nüxing* 女星,

[253] TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 368.
[254] Ibid., 375.
[255] This was derived from the list of those who graduated in the graduation ceremony. 7 students attended this event. This included, Wei Shimei 魏士玫 (27), Shi Yanling 施延龄 (27), Zhou Jiaying 周嘉瑛(25), Yang Yuying 杨毓英 (23), Song Wenhao 宋文豪 (22), Li Huichun 李慧莼 (17), Liu Qingzhen 刘清贞 (16). See: Ibid., 390.
[256] Ibid., 384.
[257] Ibid., 397

teaching these practical knowledge was necessary for women's liberation – so that women could learn to be independent and have the ability to reject Confucian principles that oppressed them.[258] For the more comprehensive, *Nüxing* No. 1 Tutorial College, students were placed into A and B streams, with A stream students being more advanced. They were expected to be able to become teachers of the tutorial college or sales assistants in shops after their graduation in 1.5 years. Upon entry, these women were required to have graduated from the B stream courses, or received former education at other institutions. They were also required to be over 15 and under 35 years of age.[259] These students took basic classes such as Chinese language and composition and writing, mathematics, music, and handicraft skills such as sewing, as well as more advanced classes such as geography, history, general science, commercial skills, teaching skills, and musical instrument classes. B Stream students, on the other hand, were expected to read vernacular text, compose vernacular letters and to have enough writing skills to make little notes for their households after 1 year of classes, and were only required to take basic classes. These students received 17 hours of classes per week. Classes were arranged to take place in the afternoon, so older women could finish their home chores and prepare lunch before going to classes.[260] For the Weekly Tutorial College, students were taught Chinese, Chinese conversation, abacus calculation skills, handicraft skills, and music. A full course took 1.5 years, after which they were able to recognise around 1000 words, read vernacular newspapers, write simple letters, and have a basic understanding of general knowledge. Students did 2 hours of Chinese language classes per week, as it was considered the most important subject. The final hour consisted of a combination of two subjects such as abacus calculation and general knowledge, with each subject taking up half an hour.[261] The school successfully took in 20 students for the first academic year.[262]

Besides teaching women actual skills, however, members of *Nüxingshe* made clear that a more important goal of the schools, and the *Nüxingshe* in general, was to recruit and mobilise female revolutionaries from a range of backgrounds through these tutorial colleges. As stated in a 1923 communication published on their in-house magazine *Nüxing* regarding the establishment of the *Nüxing* No. 1 Tutorial college, *Nüxingshe* "also hope that many front-runners in the women's movement will be produced within this school… (and) more easily reach the goal of

[258] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 19, 22, 26.
[259]TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 371.
[260] Ibid., 379.
[261] Ibid., 398.
[262] Ibid., 400.

giving help to those oppressed women." In other words, to produce women who not only understood the oppressed condition of women but who actively sought change, through advocacy and activism.[263] One reader was quick to pick this up, writing to Li Zhishan that the quoted statement above "clearly says revolution."[264]

Nüxingshe's agenda was also repeatedly communicated to its students via words and actions. At the graduation ceremony for the first batch of students, an administrator for the school made a speech to the graduating class, stating that the school was not for the sole purpose of improving literacy rates among women, nor was it for women to learn a few words over the course of a year, only to return to their homes and continue to be a *taitai*. The purpose of the school was to allow students to work together with existing members of the women's movement and save others who were being oppressed.[265] Another teacher stated that the purpose of the tutorial college was to create a group of women who would sacrifice for society at large. She continued to say that if one comes across a good cause which benefits the society, they must bravely embrace their mission to contribute to the cause, regardless of what kind of personal sacrifice that they had to make.[266] After school, students participated in school-organised student demonstrations against issues such as foreign imperialism in China during important holidays, and went on school field trips to shops which sold China-made goods, factories, and other girls' schools to learn more about Nationalism, the conditions of workers and women's rights.[267]

The example of *Nüxingshe*, run by some who were affiliated with the CCP, and its Woman-Work endeavours gives us a glimpse into what Woman-Work and women's organisations were like in the early 1920s. *Nüxingshe* in particular was primarily interested in fostering and producing women's rights activists who could and would campaign for women's rights. *Nüxingshe* first targeted middle and upper class women who could afford to be full-time students through the establishment of the *Nüxing* No. 1 Tutorial College, later expanding their efforts to appeal to lower- and middle-class women through the establishment of the Weekly Tutorial College.[268] But while Confucian principles and individuals or institutions who upheld them were then generally seen as the oppressive enemy of women and feminism, the

[263] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1921 – 1927,* 369.
[264] TJSDS and TJSFL, *Tianjing Nüxingshe*, 374.
[265] Ibid., 387.
[266] Ibid., 388.
[267] Ibid., 497 – 500.
[268] Ibid., 375.

Nationalist Party as an institution was not necessarily understood in this light. Moreover, these politically and socially active female "revolutionaries" who were recruited via the society were not yet being mobilised to sabotage the Nationalists. As we shall see, this more neutral, if not even positive perception of the Nationalist Party did not age well among the Communist feminists, especially after April 1927.

April 12 Purge of 1927, Going Underground and its Aftermath

The Nationalist Party and the Communist Party were in an alliance but on April 12, 1927 the political situation in China changed dramatically when a violent military suppression of the Communists in Shanghai took place under the orders of Nationalist politician and military leader Chiang Kai-shek. CCP members and supporters were rounded up by Nationalist troops and executed or imprisoned. Those who had not been killed or arrested went underground for the sake of their own survival and many fled Shanghai.[269] Negotiations and attempts by the Communists to regain control and power failed. Other areas also suffered major blowbacks in the following months with immediate and medium-term consequences. The party organ in the Kwantung Leased Territory, for example, was raided in July 1927 and the Communist activities there halted. It also became extremely difficult in the following months for active officials in that area to track down their colleagues, and to motivate those in touch to continue their work as they "became obsessed with fear," and perceived "revolution as danger".[270]

For the Communists who stayed behind in Nationalist-controlled cities, they tried to keep their political affiliations and involvement with activist work a secret from the public. Furthermore, as the Communists and the Nationalists were pitted against each other and became enemies, previously bi-partisan and collaborative efforts, including those on advancing the women's movement, collapsed. After a pause in the progress of Woman-Work due to the party's dire situation, Woman-Work eventually resumed and the emphasis on the secret aspect of it intensified. But the purpose of maintaining secrecy and keeping a low profile had changed. As illustrated in the previous sections, while pre-1927 Secret Work was done mostly for convenience, it was not always done, or intended to be done, at the total expense of the Nationalist Party since the existence of both parties was not considered mutually exclusive.

[269] Stranahan, *Underground*, 4.
[270] Zhonggong Dalian shiwei, *Dalian,* 67.

After the fall-out in 1927, issues regarding security were of high priority to the party and besides having its officials going underground, within the CCP institutional structure, central security and intelligence institutions were created.[271] Moreover, the Communists no longer saw Secret Work as merely a way for survival while co-existing with the Nationalists, which they did before the fall-out in 1927. It also became a vehicle for the party to eliminate the Nationalists as their survival and political gain now depended on it. It is in this context that Woman-Work after 1927 operated. CCP Woman-Work was no longer just about mobilising women to engage in general feminist activism and political involvement, but it was also about sabotaging their reactionary opponents—the Nationalists—who, after 1927, were seen by the Communists as oppressors of women because they opposed the true fighters for women – the Communists.[272] As such while the methods of recruiting women by individual on-the-ground officials remained similar to pre-1927 Woman-Work efforts, such as through the establishment of schools for women. Other than schools the Communists also sought to use sisterhood societies, literacy classes, study groups, reading groups, social clubs, and choirs to recruit women. Female recruits especially in urban areas were expected to engage in Secret Work and join secret Communist-led organisations that directly targeted the Nationalists.[273]

The Aftermath: Reorganisation of Secret Work

On August 7, 1927, an urgent meeting was held in Hankou 汉口 to determine the CCP's policy direction in the following years. Chen Duxiu, CCP leader and the first General Secretary of the CCP, was criticised and removed as General Secretary for being a right-leaning capitulationist, and it was now recognised within the party that the party has wrongly foregone ideology over appeasing and cooperating with the Nationalists in the past few years. As such, it was decided that the party "had no other alternatives but to go underground because the anti-revolutionaries want to destroy us completely… and they are militarised against the working class."[274] It was also determined at the Hankou meeting and passed via the Draft Resolution on Issues Related

[271] Guo, *China's Security State*, 5.
[272] In actuality the Nationalists did a lot of work that was also, according to the Nationalist Party, aimed at liberating Chinese women. See: Hong Yi 洪宜, *Zhongguo Guomindang funü gongzuo zhi yanjiu* 中国国民党妇女工作之研究 (A Study on the Woman-Work of the Nationalist Party of China) (1924-1949) (Taipei: Academia Histórica, 2010).
[273] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937*, 6. Zhongguo funü guanli ganbu xueyuan 中国妇女管理干部学院 (hereafter FGBXY), ed., *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian* 中国妇女运动文献资料汇编 (A Compiled Volume of Documents and Materials Related to the Women's Movement of China), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1988), 239.
[274] ZYDAG, ed., Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji 中共中央文件选集 (Collection of Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee), vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1989), 250.

to the Party's Organisation (*Dang de zuzhi wenti jueyian* 党的组织问题决议案) that the party had to be organised as a secret one which could resist and fight the Nationalists while utilising all public opportunities and legal means. Moreover, all levels of the bureaucracy and party branches should engage in at least some Secret Work for survival and resistance purposes.[275] This was apparent to not only top officials but also on-the-ground Communists. Those in Dalian, for example, agreed that Secret Work was "a supremely important work regarding organisational matters, because the failure of past work was mostly due to the poor execution of Secret Work."[276] Thus, as CCP politician and then leader Zhai Qiubai 翟秋白 discussed in his political report given during the party's sixth congress that took place in June 1928, while it was previously necessary for the CCP to join the Nationalists in order to bid for leadership, the fall-out that took place in 1927 meant that new strategies had to be employed for the CCP to succeed and survive.[277]

During this period, one of the most urgent questions faced by the Communists was how to achieve the goal of changing its organisational structure so that it had "deep and secure barriers" (壁垒深严) against the Nationalists, while also being on the offensive.[278] As high-ranking official and Communist military leader Ren Bishi 仁弼时 highlighted in 1928 via the no. 47 Central Committee circular (*Zhongyang tonggao*) which he drafted, there was a need to better institutionalise Secret Work, and a corresponding need to improve actual strategies and the manner in which on-the-ground Secret Work operations were conducted. He argued that because of the lack of changes, party organisations were still "unable to adapt to the environment and make progress" as they "mostly relied on old ways used during the First United Front to deal with new work."[279] Thus, as Ren Bishi suggested in 1928, the party must now "use appropriate forms of organisation to maintain the party's structure and [its] officials," as a lack of this resulted in either the departure of the party from the masses or an annihilation of party structures and enemy sabotage.[280] In 1927, the Draft Resolution passed in Hankou made clear how Secret Work could be reorganised and better institutionalised. Specifically, every party bureau would form an executive committee of 3-8 people to lead the branch's work.

[275] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü*, vol. 1, 203 – 204.
[276] Zhonggong Dalian shiwei, *Dalian,* 68.
[277] Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室 (hereafter ZYWX) and ZYDAG, *Jiandang yilai zhongyao wenjian xuanbian* 建党以来重要文件选编 (Collection of Important Documents Since the Founding of the Party) (hereafter JDYL) (1921 - 1949), vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 258.
[278] ZYDAG, ed., *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian*, 290.
[279] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 200.
[280] Ibid.

Party branches would be reformed and reorganised into a multitude of groups with a group leader who would be responsible for basic work. In their actual work, officials were expected to engage in Secret Work to ensure the safety of the party. Moreover, since the party had gone underground, party institutions, party membership, and league members had to be kept an absolute secret.[281]

The party also needed to address how on-the-ground Communists should actually engage in Secret Work and the changes that should be made to existing strategies. According to Ren Bishi, this included the need for on-the-ground Communists to be more independent in their work and to be better trained.[282] For example, Ren contended that branch-level (*zhibu* 支部, grassroots level of the party), Communists had to change the practice of only having meetings when their superiors were present, and for individual Communists to change their incriminating habits of boasting about their official positions to others.[283] Moreover, Ren and other top officials emphasised that utilising Secret Work as an operational strategy did not mean that the party should detach and isolate itself, but instead the party should better engage with the masses. To achieve this goal, on-the-ground Communists were instructed to make full use of all legal forms of organised gatherings, also known as public and semi-public opportunities. These opportunities included reading groups, sisterhood meetings, and school events to attract and gather peasants and workers, then uniting and mobilising them through Secret Work.[284]

Furthermore, the CCP became increasingly aware of the role that women could play in order to contribute to the success of Secret Work. Specifically, it was thought that traditional values stereotypes that deemed women as secluded, and politically-ignorant could be used to the advantage of the party because women could work for the party and avoid detection by the enemy who likely held those values and stereotypes. According to the "Common Knowledge of Secret Work" (*Mimi gongzuo changshi* 秘密工作常识) revised and published by party mouthpiece *Xiaokan* in 1928, locations which housed party organs should be stationed by not only men but especially by women and even children in order to appear to be a normal family

[281] Yang and Wang, *Zhongguo Gongchandang,* 103. On February 6 of 1929, the Politburo of the Central Committee established the Secret Work Committee (*Mimi gongzuo weiyuanhui* 工作委员会), headed by Zhou Enlai with members Xiang Zhongfa 向忠发 and Yu Zeming 余泽鸣. This committee gave instructions and guidance to local branches, supervised the actualisation of Secret Work policies and appointed Secret Work committee members in party organs. See: Ibid., 119. See also: ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史史料 (Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP), vol. 2, First Part (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 32.
[282] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5, 202.
[283] Ibid., 203.
[284] Ibid., 204.

home. While some of these men and women were instructed to fake married life, it was also noted that some of these couples should be real husbands and wives, perhaps just to play it safe in case someone was to check. Furthermore, besides stationing married couples in these locations, it was also useful to have other women around acting as the nannies or servants in order to make the whole set up look even more convincing to the outsider.[285] By implication, this instruction suggests that women could provide good covers for themselves and either their work or actual domestic partners, just by the virtue of their sex. Moreover, female stereotypes, such as perceived physical weakness, reclusiveness, and domesticity made women and the people associated with them seem less suspicious. The Communists described this strategy as the "domestication" (*Jiatinghua* 家庭化) of party organs, which was featured in the Regulations on Secret Work of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (*Zhonggong zhongyang mimi gongzuo tiaoli* 中共中央秘密工作条例) promulgated in 1929 December 4.[286]

Woman-Work after 1927: Secret Work and Sabotage

It was in this context that Woman-Work operated after the Nationalist and Communist fall-out 1927. Indeed, Woman-Work, too, came to a halt in mid-1927 and there were both short- and long-term effects. During this period, the party had lost many on the-ground female officials who previously did Woman-Work.[287] In areas such as Hubei, which according to officials, had the most reactionary backlash, many female officials had abandoned their original posts.[288] Besides those who were killed, the remaining women either returned home, lost contact with the party, or went into hiding. Those who had the capacity to work also switched from Woman-Work to temporarily doing other kinds of work such as liaison work or random managerial tasks, presumably due to a shortage of personnel across the party.[289] It was observed and noted by some officials that some surviving women's officials even became increasingly unmotivated and less courageous by the day.[290] In areas such as Dalian where Woman-Work had never really taken off in the first place, Woman-Work continued to be at a stalemate despite

[285] Yang and Wang, *Zhongguo Gongchandang,* 111.
[286] Ibid.*,* 117.
[287] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 中国妇女运动历史资料 (Historical Materials Related to the Chinese Women's Movement) *1927 - 1937* (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991), 3. Shortage of female personnel was a persistent problem, especially in cities: Ibid., 70.
[288] Ibid., 1 - 2.
[289] Ibid., 3.
[290] Ibid.

being in the local work agenda of on-the-ground officials. A November 1930 Dalian Municipal Party Committee work plan devised by the Manchuria Provincial Party Committee of the CCP pointed out that organised Woman-Work has yet to be properly started, and that in the immediate future on-the-ground Communists should especially focus on organising and mobilising the many women factory workers working in Dalian factories.[291] But it seems that the implementation of any meaningful Woman-Work endeavours continued to be somewhat delayed, as evident from the 15 April, 1931 work plan produced by the Dalian municipal committee, which mentioned the need for its on-the-ground members to "also restart Woman-Work."[292]

It was thus decided, in accordance with general party lines, that Woman-Work efforts should from now on be more focused on peasant and women worker communities, and for on-the-ground Communists to infiltrate these communities in order to re-establish party ties with the masses.[293] The 1928 Draft Resolution on Women's Movement that had previously summarised Woman-Work as "reformist" (*gailiang zhuyi* 改良主义), was too focused on women of the upper classes and ignored women of the proletariat class because the Communists were appeasing and cooperating with the Nationalists.[294] According to the Communists, while the Nationalists seemed to have conferred equality between men and women through legal changes, these changes in actuality benefited only few women of the upper classes and had little effect on the rest.[295] Furthermore, now that the Nationalists has, according to the Communists, betrayed the united front, existing Woman-Work efforts and the Nationalist's few achievements has correspondingly disintegrated.[296]

[291] Zhonggong Dalian shiwei, *Dalian,* 109
[292] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 13. It was argued by officials that on an institutional level, the issue of Woman-Work was not adequately addressed immediately after the purge in 1927. Even though restarting Woman-Work was prioritised in the August 1927 Draft Resolution the Recent Women's Movement (*Zuijin funü yundong de jueyian* 最近妇女运动的决议案), the July 10 1928 Draft Resolution of the Women's Movement passed by the sixth National Congress of the CCP (*Zhongguo gongchandang di liu ci quanguo daibiao dahui*) implies that little progress has been made since 1927, and that more work needs to be done. See: Ibid., 1 – 2, and 11 – 18. As pointed out by the 1928 Draft Resolution, while the 1927 Hankou meeting passed directions on the party's future work policies, there were no practical work policy directions regarding Woman-Work. Nor did it fully discuss party organs that focused on recruiting women into the party. Moreover, the party in general made few plans regarding the mobilisation of proletariat women, and few women workers or peasant women were ever promoted or trained to take part in the work of party organs. Some officials even leaned towards abolishing efforts regarding the women's movement altogether. See: ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5, 498.
[293] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 1 - 2. See also: FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong*, vol. 1, 203 – 204.
[294] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5, 497, 499.
[295] Ibid., 499.
[296] Ibid., 498 - 499.

As such, although previously perceived as a partner in the area of Woman-Work, now the Nationalists were seen by the Communists as being in cahoots with the capitalists, imperialists, and feudal warlords. Thus, they were now "without any mitigation, a loathed enemy of the working masses of whom are gradually united around the CCP".[297] They were, however, not only an opponent of the CCP in a general sense, but they were also presented as the main obstacle of women's liberation, an oppressor of all women, and especially an enemy of peasant and women workers. Thus, the post-1927 women's movement was not just about, as Zhai Qiubai puts it, "creating some women's organisations and making a couple of phone calls."[298] Nor was it, according to the 1929 Women's Movement Draft Resolution Draft of the CCP Second Congress of Jiangsu Province (*Zhonggong Jiangsu-sheng dierci daibiao dahui* 中共江苏省第二次代表大会) "solely about the liberation of women."[299] But it was about the "mobilisation of the female masses to participate in a total revolutionary struggle" against the Nationalists, and "only through this total revolutionary struggle can women be truly liberated."[300] Moreover, only the CCP could lead and organise this revolution resulting in the liberation of women, as stated in the 1928 Draft Resolution on the Women's Movement passed on the sixth National Congress, since "only the CCP, only with the total victory of the proletariat's socialism, can women be completely liberated."[301] As the Communist perception of the Nationalists changed, so changed the goals of Woman-Work.

The strategies regarding Woman-Work had also changed accordingly. Besides urging its on-the-ground members to gather and regroup estranged party members, existing Woman-Work officials were also instructed via the 1927 Draft Resolution on the Women's Movement of the No. 5 Central Committee Circular to engage in some form of Secret Work that aimed to sabotage the Nationalists. This included the recruitment female workers and peasant women, who should then be trained to become well-versed in the methods and skills of Secret Work by existing officials. Specifically, these new recruits should be taught the correct mentality necessary for conducting Secret Work, and tactical skills such as how to act and behave during their work.[302] Besides bringing in fresh blood, officials were also asked to send on-the-ground

[297] Ibid., 498.
[298] Ibid., 298.
[299] Jiangsu-sheng funü lianhehui 江苏省妇女联合会 (hereafter JSFL) and Jiangsu-sheng dang'anguan 江苏省档案馆 (hereafter JSDAG), eds., *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong shiliao xuan* 江苏省妇女运动史料选编 (Selected Historical Documents Regarding the Women's Movement in Jiangsu Province) (1984), 50.
[300] Ibid.
[301] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5, 498.
[302] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong*, vol. 1, 204.

Communists to engage in Secret Work within locations such as factories, and to select a few capable officials to work undercover in enemy, reactionary institutions. Furthermore, officials were instructed to secretly propagate Communists policies, and to utilise seemingly independent, non-partisan women's organisations such as charities and student associations while staying undercover to publicly advocate for policies that were favourable to the CCP.[303] In other words, the infiltration of women was secret and then these secret Communist women within Nationalist institutions stirred up dissent.

On-the-ground officials in Jiangsu province, for example, were instructed "to expose the lies of Nationalist reformism and especially use female masses to oppose the Nationalists and imperialism" by infiltrating institutions, "be it Nationalist or Christian… in order to advocate rights for the masses, expose their conspiracies and take control of the lower-class masses."[304] Indeed on-the-ground Secret Work had to be meticulously executed. The CCP's Women's Department of Jiangsu Province, for example, criticised its on-the-ground officials in 1931 for being careless and uncreative in their Secret Work strategies and practices, claiming that in some past instances the enemy were able to see through their secret plans without the knowledge of on-the-ground operatives, many of whom didn't have a clue as to what was supposed to happen and knew nothing about the plans themselves.[305] Unlike the pre-1927 efforts of infiltrating Nationalist institutions which mostly stemmed from convenience of doing Woman-Work because the Nationalists had better resources and outreach, the purpose of post-1927 infiltration of Nationalist institutions was explicitly to sabotage the Nationalists who were now perceived as a mortal enemy of the CCP and all women.

Using their physicality and playing on female stereotypes continued to be useful for women engaged in Secret Work, and in the political context of the late 1920s and early 1930s, much more important as it related directly to issues such as individual and party survival. Due to the need to recruit more women, there continued to be a sex-based preference for using female officials in Woman-Work, even though there were some male officials who were enlisted anyway, mostly due to a lack of female personnel.[306] Party circulars and instructions urged on-the-ground officials to recruit and train peasant women and women workers.[307] Special

[303] Ibid.
[304] JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 50.
[305] Ibid., 102.
[306] Ibid., 50.
[307] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 5, 501.

attention should also be given to the training and inclusion of existing female officials. The 1928 Draft Resolution, for example, instructed officials that leading party organs (*zhidao jiguan* 指导机关) must include female officials, pay particular attention to the allocation of work to women in order to train them, and give them adequate exposure to different levels of party work.[308]

On-the-ground officials in Woman-Work were instructed to approach women using specific techniques and methods that appealed to women. Firstly, to blend into the community, female operatives were told to live in the areas where women workers lived, and try to establish themselves as reliable and reputable individuals in the communities they had infiltrated without seeming to be affiliated with the Communists as it was off-putting the women they were trying to recruit and could incriminate them.[309] Female operatives were then instructed to approach women workers initially by talking to them about topics such as family life, instead of going straight into details about making revolution, participating in protests or riots, or the CCP.[310] Women operatives also did various favours and chores for these workers, from writing to reading letters, helping them solve their family issues and conflicts, cleaning, and taking care of the children of these women so as to be on good terms with them.[311] Furthermore, the maintenance of one's physical appearances that conform to certain gendered stereotypes was crucial to conducting Woman-Work in secret and became an even more urgent and important matter than before. There was some fuss over women's hair, for example, because by now having short hair was a tell-tale sign that a woman was progressive in their politics and would thus be more likely to raise suspicion of, and unwanted attention for, the female Secret Worker.[312] In 1927 the Central Committee urged its on-the-ground female officials, through the No. 14 Circular (*Zhongyang tonggao di 14 hao* 中央通告第 14 号), not to cut their hair, or, for those whose hair was already short, to grow their hair out because it was determined that those who did Woman-Work "really needed their hair".[313] Likewise, the hair issue was mentioned in the Draft Resolution on West Min Women's Issues (*Min-xi funü wenti jueyian*

[308] Ibid.
[309] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 280; JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 102.
[310] JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 112.
[311] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 121; JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 70.
[312] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 4. For the importance of hair in early 1927, see: Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 192 – 193. Specifically, Gilmartin notes that having bobbed hair "was said to embody the essence of "modern civilisation" and became known as the "civilised hairstyle": Ibid., 193. Regarding hair being an identifier of a woman who might be a Communist after the 1927 fall-out, see: Ibid., 212.
[313] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 4

闽西妇女问题决议案) of the West Min First People's Congress (*Minxi diyici daibiao dahui jueyian* 闽西第一次代表大会决议案), which deemed previous mandatory requirements for female officials and operatives to have their hair cut and cut regularly a mistake.[314]

Labour Activities and Woman-Work in Factories

As the party's Woman-Work policy turned to focus more on women workers and peasant women, a place where secret Communist Woman-Work frequently took place, often under the cover of "legal" activities, was in factories. On-the-ground Communists recruited and mobilised women workers to engage in activities that challenged not only those who were running the factories but also the Nationalists who often had power over the labour unions.[315] To counter the threat of the Nationalists, female supporters of the CCP were urged by the party to secretly infiltrate women worker communities and peasant groups in factories.[316] These women officials did several things to undermine the Nationalists. They recruited women, stirred up anger and dissatisfaction towards the Nationalists, and mobilised women to participate in organised activities such as strikes. Unlike pre-1927 efforts to utilise Nationalist institutions to promote Communist ideology and to perform Woman-Work more efficiently and effectively, underground operations after 1927 were directed towards sabotaging Nationalist rule.[317]

Key to these secret activities was the full utilisation of what the Communists deemed as different kinds of labour unions. In some cases, secret Communist-led "red" labour unions to which peasant women and female labourers could be affiliated were established, especially in industrialised cities where it was believed that Nationalist and capitalist "oppression" was most prominent. These "red" labour unions within factories and workplaces, which was deemed a necessary step towards connecting with and broadening their support base, especially when it came to women.[318] The goal was to get women work officials, who kept their identity a secret, to approach, unite, then rally the women to make demands strikes and other contentious activities, and to recruit even more women.[319]

[314] Ibid., 35.
[315] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong*, vol. 1, 203 – 204.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid, 223.
[319] Ibid.

At the same time, the CCP also encouraged its female members to infiltrate "reactionary" Nationalist institutions or non-partisan organisations that had ties to the Nationalists such as clubs, women's charities and student groups, and so called "yellow" labour unions. The Communists were particularly concerned with "yellow" labour unions, which were defined by the Communists as fake unions that were not really established to address worker's and women's rights, but were created and then controlled by the capitalists and Nationalists in order to contain, manipulate and control the sentiments of the masses.[320] Although establishing and maintaining secret and illegal "red" labour unions run by the Communists was considered necessary, the Communists recognised that their actions would be severely limited if they relied on them because "red" labour unions could be easily cracked down by the Nationalists. As a result, the 1928 Draft Resolution on the Women's Movement urged on-the-ground Communists to infiltrate "yellow" labour unions for the sake of expanding the CCP and its influence from within Nationalist institutions. It directed its members to unite female labourers and to form sisterhood groups within the union which would adhere to CCP orders and engage in protests and strikes.[321] Through secret female underground operatives who were working with "red" labour unions and secret party organisations, it was hoped that women workers would be incited and encouraged to resist the authority and leadership of "yellow" labour unions and considered this an effective way to subvert Nationalist rule.[322]

An important aim of infiltrating Nationalist-controlled workplaces and organisations such as "yellow" labour unions, and a useful strategy for on-the-ground Communists, was to create and stir up emotions against those in positions of power.[323] During union meetings, for example, when right-wing pro-Nationalist forces promoted reactionary ideas or tried to pass reactionary motions in general meetings, on-the-ground Communists were instructed to encourage the masses to oppose these "rightists" and vote against "reactionary" motions. Furthermore, when individuals who were either considered pro-Nationalist, or belonged to actual Nationalist Woman-Work organisations made certain promises to the masses, CCP underground operatives were obliged to take the lead in insisting on the fulfilment of these promises, even if they knew full well that these promises would not be fulfilled. This was so that the underground operatives could then demonstrate to the masses that the pro-Nationalist

[320] Ibid., 230.
[321] Ibid., 211.
[322] Ibid., 227.
[323] Ibid., 217.

individuals were in fact "fake revolutionaries", or that the Nationalists were only making promises to appease the masses temporarily but had no intention of actually fulfilling them.[324] It was hoped that these actions would, in turn, cause a rift in the relationship between the masses and the pro-Nationalist individuals.[325] In some cases, the CCP suggested that this could potentially lead to the masses initiating protests or other actions on their own.[326]

It was not practical for individuals to promote the CCP in public because they would almost immediately get arrested by the Nationalists, and the CCP resorted to making full use of what they termed "grey organisations" (*huise zuzhi* 灰色组织) – organisations not made explicitly illegal such as sisterhood societies and clubs.[327] Female underground operatives were despatched in groups to different women workers' communities such as factories, refugee camps with an abundance of unemployed women, and schools. Operatives then used "grey organisations", either by establishing their own or infiltrating existing ones, to gather and organise women workers. Individual women workers who were particularly brave were later introduced to the secret "red" labour unions.[328]

As such, after 1927, engaging in Secret Work entailed much more than just concealing one's identity or political affiliations when in public. This was especially the case in "red" labour unions where the goal of these organisations was to secretly pit and incite the masses against the Nationalists or individuals affiliated with them. While as in the early 20s, on-the-ground the officials continued to infiltrate Nationalist institutions, their motivations and the intended effect of their actions were very different from pre-1927 endeavours.

Conclusion

In 1922, the Communists stated that a change in existing power structures and government was key to women's liberation, as "the CCP believes that … only when the proletariat obtain political power can women be truly liberated."[329] On paper, at least, this belief was held by top officials and on-the-ground Communists throughout the 1920s and beyond, but the answer to

[324] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 6.
[325] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong*, vol. 1, 203 – 204.
[326] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 6.
[327] Ibid., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 166; Jiangsusheng funü lianhehui and Jiangsusheng dang'anguan, eds., *Jiangsusheng funü yundongshi xuanliao*, 51, 110.
[328] JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 79.
[329] GSDAG and GDFYD, *Guangdong*, 69- 70.

how political power could, in fact, be obtained changed dramatically in the span of a few years. Regarding Woman-Work in the early 1920s, the Communists were encouraged to work with the Nationalists and other non-partisan groups. On-the-ground Communists also occupied positions in Nationalist institutions, cooperated with individual Nationalists, and formed publicly non-partisan and bi-partisan organisations. With the Nationalists, the Communists recruited women and aimed to foster and train these women into political activists who could advance the feminist cause. After the April 1927 Purge and the subsequent fall-out between Nationalists and Communists, however, the Nationalists were perceived as the mortal enemy of the party. It was understood by top officials and on-the-ground Communists that power could only be obtained if the Nationalists were removed from power.

Post-1927 CCP Woman-Work operated within a hostile political environment, where Secret Work and sabotage were key party-wide operational strategies used for their practicality and flexibility. Women were thus increasingly drawn into secret activities by their work for the party, especially after 1927. In official CCP narratives and in the texts composed by individual CCP members and officials, the Nationalists were now perceived as an oppressor of women, especially peasant women and women workers. In light of this, civilian women were mobilised to secretly engage in Woman-Work, the aim of which was to directly or indirectly sabotage Nationalist rule. Women recruited and trained as not just political activists for women's rights, but they were mobilised to engage in activities that were aimed directly at undermining and sabotaging the Nationalists. As we shall see in the next chapter, these methods of operation based on perceived views on sex and gender were also prevalent in the CCP's mobilisation of peasant women in the Soviet bases, to do Woman-Work with the aim of sabotaging the Nationalists.

Chapter 3: Mobilising Women to Spy and Conduct Soldier-Work in the Soviet bases, 1928 – 1935

Introduction:

While there was an underground Communist presence in cities after 1927, the remaining Communists, and those who were driven out of cities, managed to occupy parts of rural areas. They formed Communist-occupied territories in these rural areas, then spent the next few years securing and defending these territories from the Nationalists. These Communist-controlled territories, also known as bases or Soviet bases, were in and around Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangxi provinces. The Communists declared these bases as the Chinese Soviet Republic in 1931, with its capital in Ruijin 瑞金, Jiangxi province.

During the late 1920 and early 1930s, the Soviet bases frequently faced real, continuous, and prominent threats from the Nationalists. These threats were slightly different to the threats faced by Communists who remained underground in Nationalist-occupied territories. Instead, there were continuous Nationalist military campaigns, while individual Nationalist spies were, according to Communist sources, also deployed to the Soviet bases. For example, Communist authorities have found that Nationalist spies where able to infiltrate the Red Army.[330] In the Northwest, officials who worked for the Northwest Security Bureau (*Xibei Baoweiju* 西北保卫局) found some suspicious non-local barbers and knife sharpeners who were later determined to be enemy military spies.[331] On another occasion, an arrest was made of an enemy female spy who managed to slip into one of the Soviet bases in Jiangxi during the fifth Nationalist encirclement campaign.[332] To counter these threats, specialist public security institutions, namely local Peace Preservation Department (*Baoanchu* 保安处) or Public Security Bureau (*Gonganju* 公安局) were established within some of the Soviet bases which trained and used both male and female operatives. But besides professional men and women spies, civilian men and women were also mobilised to contribute to the ongoing conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists. Civilian women in particular were mobilised,

[330] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 9 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 277.
[331] Shaanxi-sheng gonganting 陕西省公安厅, "*Xibei gemming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo lishi changpian* 西北革命根据地肃反保卫工作历史长篇 (Long Edition on the History of Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work of the Northwest Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 8 (June 2988): 65.
[332] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 307.

often via Woman-Work, to engage in various clandestine activities against the Nationalists. A key premise to the decisions made by officials regarding how to mobilise women, is their belief that the female sex is biologically and socially different to men and thus women should be mobilised to do some kinds of activities but not others. This led them to view women as suitable to engage in Secret Work and other clandestine activities such as gathering and transporting intelligence, and sabotaging the Nationalist Army.

This chapter will discuss Woman-Work in the Soviet bases and the two kinds of clandestine activities in which women were especially encouraged to participate by local and top officials. While the CCP attempted to maintain underground activity in Nationalist-occupied cities such as Shanghai, focusing on organising rural areas of China eventually took priority and became one of the main aims of CCP strategy.[333] These changes also meant a corresponding change in Woman-Work policies in the Soviet bases and women were mobilised via Woman-Work to contribute to the bases.[334] The division, allocation, and mobilisation of work by officials was often based on perceived notions of biological sex and gender stereotypes. Women were mobilised and encouraged to do activities such as singing motivational songs, cooking, and laundering for men whereas men were encouraged to join the Red Army and fight. This is because officials understood men to be physically stronger than women, and it was not thought to be suitable, efficient, or effective for women to engage in direct combat. In light of this principle of work allocation, women were deemed fit and suitable to engage in forms of clandestine activity such as the gathering of intelligence. These kinds of work were done at the same time as Red Army military combats, and were aimed at securing local territory, defending local territory against enemy attacks, and destabilising and weakening enemy troops. This included the gathering and relaying of intelligence, spying (*zhentan* 偵探 or *zhencha* 偵查) and sabotage (*pohuai* 破坏, *wajie diren* 瓦解敌人, disintegrate the enemy) via Soldier-Work (*Shibing gongzuo* 士兵工作) – the sabotage of enemy troops through engagement with enemy soldiers, which did not involve any form of combat. Specifically, these activities generally required less physical strength and stamina, and were therefore deemed appropriate for women. Moreover, in the opinions of officials, women were great candidates for these jobs primarily because they were less likely to be detected due to their gender.

[333] Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions*, 166.
[334] As Christina Gilmartin puts it, what happened in 1927 has "also reshaped the CCP women's program as this beleaguered party regrouped its forces in isolated rural areas in order to mount yet another attempt at gaining state power." See: Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 119.

While local security institutions, such as the Political and Security Bureau (*Zhengzhi baoweiju* 政治保卫局) who trained, used, and deployed spies, some of the women who were mobilised to engage in aspects of secret activities were often amateur civilians, who were mobilised via Woman-Work initiatives and other masses institutions.[335] Public security institutions in these Soviet bases, which in some cases employed female officials, had their own training, and agents were despatched to deal with various external and internal threats. [336] The Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Provincial Political and Security Bureau (*Xiang-E-Gan-Sheng Zhengzhi baoweiju* 湘鄂赣省政治保卫局*)*, for example, was concerned with enemy intelligence – both within and outside of the Soviet bases. They gathered intelligence via the deployment of spies, creating spy networks, and exchanging intelligence. But besides using their own agents, however, the bureau declared that "all levels of government and military organs, or revolutionary committee must deploy spies, and mobilise the masses to collect all aspects of enemy intelligence."[337] Indeed, mobilised civilian activity in some cases complemented or was done in lieu of specialised security work.[338]

In existing scholarship, women were often described as peripheral figures when it came to political or revolutionary actions, but in reality, a group of women played key roles in intelligence gathering and sabotage.[339] Moreover, existing scholarship on women and the Chinese Soviet Republic tends to focus mostly on labour and production, and to view what women did during this period as mostly, if not solely, of an auxiliary nature while making arguments about women being effectively side-lined during this period.[340] From washing and mending soldiers' clothes, to cooking, encouraging their male relatives to enlist in the Red Army, singing motivational songs, providing entertainment for soldiers, and engaging in production work, women's contributions to the Soviet bases mostly consisted work that

[335] For example, see: Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132 – 133; Guangdong-sheng gonganting gonganshi ziliao zhengji bangongshi, "*Qiongya geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo ziliao changbian*," 103 – 104; Hubei-sheng gonganting, Henan-sheng gonganting, and Anhui-sheng gonganting, "*E-Yu-Wan*," 34.
[336] Gonganbu gongan shi ziliao zhengji yanjiu lingdao xiaozu bangongshi, "*Min-Zhe-Gan*," 75.
[337] Hunan-sheng gonganting 湖南省公安厅, Hubei-sheng gonganting 湖北省公安厅, and Jiangxi-sheng gonganting 江西省公安厅, "*Xiang-E-Gan geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo lishi ziliao changbian* 湘鄂赣革命根据地肃反保卫工作历史资料长编 (Long Edition of the Historical Information on Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work in Hunan-Hubei-Jiangxi Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 22 (July 1991): 71.
[338] Ibid., 74. It was noted here that local officials relied on mobilised civilians at the beginning when specialised security institutions were just being established. It was also noted that in some cases such security work relied heavily on the masses.
[339] McLaren, *Chinese Women - Living and Working*, 107.
[340] Hershatter, Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions,* 171; Davin, *Woman-Work*, 21-52.

complemented and supported the efforts and services of military men. As such, due to the actual work that women were most commonly mobilised to do, it seemed quite obvious to regard what women did in the Soviet bases as auxiliary.[341]

While this is true, this chapter also demonstrates that there was diversity in what women did as the nature of different clandestine activities and especially Soldier-Work were different to activities such as cooking, farming and production. This was especially the case when there was an impending military attack by the Nationalists, and the organisation of women's Spy Teams (*Zhentan dui* 偵探隊), for example, was one of the preparatory actions that local officials in rural areas were instructed to take by the Central Committee in November 1930.[342] Furthermore, as this chapter will illustrate, although these women often did not engage in direct physical combat with enemy men, they did have to directly deal with or even confront them in some cases when they were gathering intelligence, and often when they are doing Soldier-Work activities. Furthermore, spying and Soldier-Work were not extensions of women's work in the domestic realm.

As such, it is apparent that spy work and Soldier-Work, which women were also mobilised to do, were not the same as the other kinds of work that women did, such as laundering, cooking, or makings shoes. Firstly, this work was considered a strategy that went hand-in-hand with Red Army military operations. Moreover, the allocation of this type of work to women was not wholly due to the availability of women, or the need to free up men. Nor were women in this case, as suggested by Edwards and Nicola Spakowski, used solely for symbolic purposes in order to encourage men to join the CCP and its military wing.[343] Nor was this allocation of work completely based on convenience or patriarchal values held by male officials, with the full intention on side-lining women. It was, for example, not thought that women should be sheltered or protected due to their sex or gender, because they were mobilised to risk their lives and to engage in extremely dangerous activities. But the process of mobilising women was conducted in a pragmatic fashion, with officials considering different factors in order to arrive

[341] See, for example, how Delia Davin has mentioned that the different programmes and plans related to Woman-Work had a "common characteristic" which "is the overwhelming importance which they give to organizing women for the war effort: Davin, *Woman-Work*, 22. The CCP was not only motivated by feminist causes, but they were also motivated by the fact that women could actually do work that was useful and much needed during dire times when resources, expertise and manpower were scarce. As Louise Edwards puts it, "women peasants could be mobilised to support the military campaigns by relieving their husbands of farm work and facilitating the menfolk enlisting in the army." See: McLaren, *Chinese Women - Living and Working*, 109.
[342] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 704.
[343]McLaren, *Chinese Women - Living and Working*, 109.

at a viable mobilising strategy that was both efficient and effective. Officials particularly considered the issue of how the party should optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of using an available but limited source of manpower—women— thus they considered women's strengths and weaknesses from a physical perspective, and how existing gendered stereotypes could help or hinder these women in their endeavours. As we shall see, women were perceived as good candidates for these two kinds of jobs *because* they were female, that their physical condition would not be inconvenienced by doing these jobs, and that they could take full advantage of gendered stereotypes in order to approach the enemy while garnering less suspicion.

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section focuses on Woman-Work policies in the Chinese Soviet republic, and argues that women were mobilised and allocated work based on perceived notions held by higher-ranking officials about biological sex and gender. As such, women were not encouraged or deemed appropriate to participate in violence and combat. The second section looks specifically at two examples of Secret Work – spy work and Soldier-Work that women could and were especially encouraged to do. This section will also explore the rationale behind this decision. Lastly, although many of the sources used in this chapter seem to paint a rosy picture of women's involvement with the party, the end of this section will also shed light on some of the realities and dangers women faced.

Woman-Work in the Soviet bases

A complex series of events, which included top leadership power struggles, Comintern interferences, counter-Nationalist encirclement campaigns, and party operational successes and failures defined the period of the late 1920s and early 1930s for the CCP. It was determined, on paper, that the main party operational policy after the party's sixth congress, should not be an offensive one with random armed attacks and uprisings that were destined to fail. Instead, it should be one that required a long-term investment in building and fostering a close relationship between the party and the masses, to engage in a combination of public and Secret Work, and to develop institutions that focused on peasants and workers.[344] Meanwhile, the

[344]ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史史料 (Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP), vol. 2, First Part (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 6.

revolutionary bases[345] and the Red Army continued to grow and expand throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s.[346] Specifically, in 1930 – 1931, the bases were relatively successful in countering Nationalist Encirclement campaigns, and in November 1931 the Chinese Soviet Republic was established after the third counter-encirclement campaign. According to the No. 1 Circular of the Central Executive Committee of the CSR, (*Zhonghua Suweiai gongheguo Zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui bugao* 中华苏维埃共和国中央执行委员会) the republic was described as a country for the "mass oppressed workers, peasants and soldiers" whose aim was to "beat imperialism, destroy the landlord class, overthrow the Nationalist Warlord Government and establish the Soviet Government in China."[347] Steps were taken within these Soviet bases that aimed at transforming and improving local life for both men and women, including land and marriage reforms.[348] In short, during this period in the Soviet bases, there were many military confrontations, frequent border fluctuations, and ongoing political projects, often taking place at similar times.

In this context, Woman-Work institutions were designed and organised in ways that prioritised the mobilisation of women above all else, and it was understood that the Soviet bases were the safeguards to women's rights. Therefore officials thought that any kind of work women were mobilised to do that contributed to the work of the Soviet bases technically fell into the orbit of Woman-Work.[349] As the Communists perceived the "Nationalist warlords" were the main enemy of the Communists and a threat to the Soviet bases, the Nationalists continued to be viewed and described in Communist sources during the late 1920s and 1930s as traitors to all women, especially working and peasant women. Consequently, the Nationalists continued to be a prime target against which women were mobilised. This was explained in the Central Committee's Woman-Work Plan in Soviet Areas (*Zhonggong Zhongyang guanyu Suqu funü gongzuo jihua* 中共中央关于妇女苏区妇女工作计画) which explained that the core work of

[345] After the failed 1927 Nanchang Uprising, the Red Army headed southward. Subsequently defeated, Zhu De and others eventually settled in Jinggangshan. The Communists eventually retreated this mountainous region in 1929, occupying and establishing a new base in the area that is in the Border Regions of Jiangxi, Fujian 福建 and Guangdong 广东, which later became the Central Chinese Soviet.
[346] ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 2, First Part, 134.
[347] Ibid.
[348] In an eastern Guangdong village of Wuhua County 五華縣, for example, a village meeting held around May 1930 by the local peasant union passed a resolution to allow widows to have illegitimate children because, as the report noted, both women and men in the village wanted the freedom to engage in sexual intercourse: GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 399.
[349] Fujian-sheng fulian fuyunshi yanjiushi 福建省妇联妇运研究室 (hereafter FFFYJS) and Fujian-sheng dang'anguan 福建省档案馆 (FJSDAG), eds., *Fujian-sheng funü yundong shiliao huibian* 福建省妇女运动史料汇编 (Selected Historical Documents regarding the Women's Movement in Fujian Province) (Fuzhou: Fujian-sheng fulian fuyunshi yanjiushi, 1982), 76.

the party in Soviet areas was to "overthrow the anti-revolutionary Nationalist regime."[350] Thus, the core task regarding working women was to mobilise these them to "participate in the revolution in order to cooperate with this main task" since "only the Soviet regime can fully eliminate feudal forces and pave a path for the liberation of women."[351] Harriet Evans argues that CCP rhetoric linked women's liberation together with national liberation and the success of the CCP.[352] This was indeed the case here where women's liberation was being framed in a way that was contingent upon the success of the CCP and the Soviets, and this was made explicit in different kinds of party texts. The 1930 Guangdong Provincial Party Committee's (*Guangdong shengwei* 广东省委) Propaganda Outline for International Working Women's Day (*Guoji laodong funüri xuanchuan dagang* 国际劳动妇女日宣传大纲), for example, stated that "the only way out for working women is to join the workers and peasant revolution under the leadership of the CCP."[353] As we shall see, what women were mobilised to do was largely based on principles of perceived fit, efficiency and effectiveness, and that underlying these decisions made by officials were their understandings of the biological and social differences between men and women.

Woman-Work in the Bases: Mobilisation as Priority

In the Soviet bases, there were different institutions that dealt with women-related issues, but the end goal of these institutions was the same – to mobilise women so that they could contribute to the ongoing war and the security of the bases. Even though there was local

[350] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 699.
[351] Ibid., 699. Likewise, according to a 1930 letter from the CCP to labouring women of China (*Zhongguo Gongchandang gao quanguo laodong funü shu* 中国共产党告全国劳动妇女), "all factions of the Nationalist warlords are flirting with imperialism and selling out China… killing workers and peasants en masse, destroying the revolution." It wasn't just the military men who were a threat, but "all factions of the Nationalist Party are similarly the mortal enemy of worker and peasant masses and women labourers, and similarly the executer killing the masses" See: GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 371. Besides instigating "white terror," they are also fooling the masses with "reformist" lies, targeting the weaknesses of women in order to exploit them and creating division among the unity of workers and peasants: Ibid. For Women's Day in 1932, the March 8th Women's Day Work Resolution of 1932 (*Zhongyang guanyu "sanba" funüjie gongzuo de jueyi* 中央关于"三八"妇女节工作的决议案) decided that officials should propagate, through folksongs, leaflets and posters, the success of women's life in the CSR under Communist rule, contrasted with the evils of the Nationalists, capitalism and land-owning classes. The purpose of which was for its recipients to "enthusiastically join anti-imperialism, anti-Nationalism, anti-famine (movements), and to support the CSR's courageous struggles. See: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 224.
[352] Wasserstrom, *Twentieth-Century China*, 193 – 220.
[353] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 390. During the first Representative Congress of Women Workers and Peasants (*Nügong nongfu daibiao huiyi* 女工农妇代表会议) on 29 November 1933, Deng Yingchao, then active in Ruijin, explained that the first core work regarding Woman-Work to her fellow colleagues was the political mobilisation of women. Deng argued that the female masses must be made aware of the relationship between the Nationalist encirclement campaigns and their own rights. The Communists were fighting for an independent and free China and stopping the colonialization of China, thus those in Woman-Work must "make these women realise that only Soviet can liberate them and save China." See: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 305.

resistance to doing Woman-Work, due to the difficulty of implementation,[354] the opportunity cost of time and manpower,[355] and views held by some male officials that women are not that important,[356] it was recognised by top and local officials, including those in the Soviet bases, that the involvement and mobilisation of women was crucial because of the sheer number of them.[357] The mobilisation of women to contribute to the bases took priority while solving actual problems and issues related to women's everyday life was only a means to mobilisation.

Different Woman-Work institutions were created and organised to complement each other, and to ensure that women were effectively mobilised. Theoretically the Women's Association (*Funühui* 妇女会), was responsible for designing and implementing strategies to mobilise women by actualising the resolutions made by the party and league regarding Woman-Work.[358] Officials who belonged to the Representative Congress of Working Women (*Laodong funü daibiaohui* 劳动妇女代表会), and later the Representative Congress of Women Workers and Peasants (*Nügong nongfu daibiao huiyi* 女工农妇代表会议)[359] had more frequent and direct access to local women. The purpose of this Representative Congress was to "frequently unite mass working women to join all kinds of revolutionary bodies… and to join enthusiastically all struggles."[360] Officials were explicitly expected to hold multiple meetings a month and, during these meetings, to discuss "women's urgent issues and work related to supporting the Red Army."[361] Meanwhile, issues that fall into the category of direct mobilisation, and those that had a more personal, everyday impact on women in the CSR were dealt with by the

[354] Ibid., 196.
[355] Ibid., 262.
[356] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 399.
[357] It was noted that some officials in certain locations wanted to cancel Woman-Work: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 64. During this period Woman-Work continued to be featured as a work institution under the Central Committee. The Women's Department, later the Woman-Work committee from 1931 onwards, then reinstated as the Women's Department again in 1936 – 1937 continued to deal with primarily how to mobilise women. Like previous calls for the inclusion of women in CCP's work, the vast number of women and their potential contributions to the party and the Soviet bases were significant. Officials argued that "women consist of half of the working masses," and that "it is very useful for the revolution when working women enthusiastically join revolutionary work." Inadequate notice and weak efforts towards "protecting the rights deserved by women will weaken the enthusiasm of women towards revolutionary struggle, resulting in a loss for the revolution." See: Ibid., 232.
[358] According to the No. 3 circular regarding the powers and relationships of different women's organisations issued by the CCP Provincial Party Committee Women's Department (*Zhonggong shengwei funübu* 中共省委妇女部), it is supposed to initiate "mass working women and masses to stand around the CCP, to receive party leadership, to enthusiastically participate in the revolutionary war… and to fight for the security and development of the Soviet Regime" Ibid., 239.
[359] Likewise, it aimed to lead and mobilise women peasants and workers to engage in struggles, in order to improve their work, educate them, recruit more women to build for a stronger Soviet, and "to especially attract them as much as possible to join the revolutionary war." A representative if elected by 10-20 women, while out of these representatives 5 – 7 to them were further elected to form a Presidium (*zhuxituan* 主席团). Among the representatives of a District or Town Representative Congress there must be one instructor who is a CCP member who could also be an official: Ibid., 303.
[360] Ibid., 240.
[361] Ibid.

Committee to Improve Women's Lives (*Funü shenghuo gaishan weiyuanhui* 妇女生活改善委员会), which was established in 1932 via the Central Committee Executive Committee and was under the direct control of the CSR government.[362] The Organisation Outline published on April 28 1932 makes clear that they were not involved with directly mobilising women but their task was to investigate the condition of women, to make detailed daily work plans on how to improve their lives, which they would then recommend to the People's Committee (*Renmin weiyuanhui* 人民委员会) or levels of government. The plans might or might not be adopted.[363] This included coming up with plans to protect the rights of women workers, especially for pregnant and post-partum women,[364] and deciding upon whether to open schools and factories for women.[365] Despite its more hands-on approach regarding issues that affected a woman's everyday life, the purpose of all of this work was to make it easier for women to be mobilised.[366]

Mobilising Women: Division and Allocation of Work

What exactly were women mobilised to do and how were these decisions made? When planning and allocating work for women, officials considered efficiency and effectiveness. The official's understandings of a woman's biological sex and gender – such as their view of woman's physical strength compared to men, and their understanding of a woman's social role as opposed to men's, played crucial roles in the decision-making process. Indeed some, if not most, of the jobs that women were mobilised to do were auxiliary and supportive tasks that complemented the more combat-oriented positions occupied by men. This included some types of farming and production work that was done, partly because women were deemed as having the physical ability to do so and partly because, as Louise Edwards notes, it was thought that women could relieve men from this kind of work, allowing the men to join the Red Army.[367] Furthermore, another obvious and common kind of support work that women were deemed fit, and were indeed mobilised to do was Red Army Support and Consolation work (*Weilao yonghu Hongjun gongzuo* 慰劳拥护红军工作), where women provided entertainment, food, clothing

[362] Ibid., 239.
[363] Ibid., 230 – 231, 239.
[364] Ibid., 235 – 236.
[365] Ibid., 240.
[366] Officials makes it explicit that the purpose of these committees was to improve women's lives so that they are more enthusiastic in participating in all struggles of the Soviet bases: Ibid., 236.
[367] McLaren, *Chinese Women - Living and Working*, 109.

and shoes for Red Army men. In other words, they kept men company and cared or nursed for them. This kind of work done almost explicitly by women was considered important, according to the CCP Provincial Committee of Hunan , Hubei and Jiangxi (*Zhonggong Xiang-E-Gan shengwei* 中共湘鄂贛省委) because it boosted the morale of male Red Army soldiers and helped them win battles. Furthermore, the Draft Resolution of the Women's Movement, passed in February 1932, which was written by this Provincial Committee used the support and consolation activities in Eastern Hubei as an example for other areas to follow. Apparently, the male Red Army soldiers in Eastern Hubei had "increased courage" because "they received support and warm welcomes" from local women, who were regularly mobilised by local party officials to cook and launder for these men.[368] It has also been noted that such activities were able to encourage other men to join the Red Army.[369]

General Support Roles

As Delia Davin observes, in the Soviet bases, "so much of the contribution that women were being asked to make to the war effort was a mere extension of their domestic role."[370] Indeed, the party adhered to traditional gender stereotypes in the allocation of tasks to women to support the war effort.[371] The focus on traditional female roles when mobilising women for the sake of contributing to the Soviet bases, was considered by the party as in line, if not necessary for women's liberation, because ultimate CCP victory was deemed as a pre-requisite to women's liberation.[372] Specifically, Red Army support activities designated to mobilised women ranged from facilitating the enlisting of men[373] into the Red Army, to doing laundry, cooking, dancing, singing, and hosting because it was perceived by officials that women were experts at, and well-accustomed to, these activities.[374] Some local women in North-eastern Jiangxi, for example, became entertainers and gained a reputation among locals and officials for having dancing skills that were on par with those of Shanghai dance hostesses – urban professional women who were paid to taxi-dance, host and socialise with male guests at dance

[368] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 256.
[369] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 9, 276.
[370] Davin, *Woman Work*, 25.
[371] The reason for this, as Tani Barlow states, is because CCP feminists and officials believed women were socially and biologically different than men: Barlow, *The Question of Women*, 66.
[372] Wasserstrom, *Twentieth-Century China*, 193 – 220.
[373] This included getting women to either abandon the practice of forbidding their husbands or sons to join the Red Army or to get them to encourage their male relatives as mothers and wives to join the Red Army.
[374] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 312.

halls which played a lot of jazz music.[375] Some civilian women were also mobilised to persuade their husbands, who were enlisted in the Nationalist Army, to abandon their role there and join the Red Army instead.[376]

A report made by the Northeast Jiangxi Provincial Committee Women's Bureau to the Women's Movement Committee of the Central Committee (*Gan dongbei shengwei funübu guanyu funü gongzuo wenti gei Zhongyang fuwei de huibao* 赣东北省委妇女部关于妇女工作问题给中央妇委的回报) positively described that "every time there was a battle, women delivered rice and vegetables one load at a time… not a word was uttered about the cumbersomeness, even if there was pouring rain. Whenever the Red Army was stationed somewhere, local women delivered pigs, side dishes of food and vegetables."[377] Whenever needed, an organised group of women consolators were available to nurse soldiers, wash or sew their clothes, made shoes out of straw and fabric that was given to these men, and feed them with cooked food, snacks, and tea. When soldiers passed by, women prepared tea for them. Women also sang for and chatted with them at welcoming events that were hosted specifically for these Red Army soldiers at their stations.[378] The report praised local women for being sincere, enthusiastic, courageous, and serious.[379] The women in the Hunan Jiangxi Soviet base apparently made so many pairs of shoes (approximately 110 thousand pairs within 3 months), that soldiers didn't have to buy them but were given free shoes by these women.[380]

Besides the understanding that women had the expertise to do work such as cooking and sewing, and were available to do them while men were in the battlefields, officials such as Zeng Shan, the president of the Jiangxi Province Soviet Government also suggested and implied that women were much better at pleasing and taking care of men, especially when they were injured and vulnerable, due to their gender. In around March 1931, the Southwest Jiangxi Red General Hospital (*Gan Xi Nan Hongse zong yiyuan* 赣西南红色总医院) opened a nursing school for the purposes of, according to Zeng Shan, "having someone to nurse and comfort average injured revolutionary comrades, and to get them to take medical treatments in a calm and

[375] Jiangxi-sheng funü lianhehui 江西省妇女联合会 (hereafter JXSFL) and Jiangxi-sheng dang'anguan 江西省档案馆 (hereafter JXDA), eds., *Jiangxi suqu funü yundong shiliao xuanbian* 江西苏区妇女运动史料选编 (Selected Historical Documents Regarding the Women's Movement in the Jiangxi Soviet Base) (Nanchang: Jiangxi renminchubanshe, 1982), 418.
[376] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 – 1937, 319.
[377] Ibid., 251.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid., 253.
[380] Ibid., 313.

collected manner."[381] According to Zeng, during these hostile political times there were many injured men because these "courageous soldiers put aside their personal wellbeing and physically fight a bloody battle against the enemy." As such "there was no other choice but to open a female nursing school [where women could] focus on learning nursing techniques, in order to engage in nursing jobs in the future."[382] There were 100 spaces, specifically for "loyal, energetic and reliable" girls and young women aged 15 to 22, with those who were "slightly literate" being preferred.[383] Zeng was thus suggesting that women have the expertise to take care of people, but he was also proposing that gendered stereotypes related to women were useful because the presence of women and stereotypical behaviour by these women could boost the morale of injured male soldiers.[384] This particular example is interesting because it shows how the party touted the idea of women's rights and equality to men but then individual (and often high-ranking) officials relegated women to stereotypical roles when it actually came down to it.

Combat Roles

Some policies and public propaganda sources also explicitly encouraged women to engage in combat and women were, at least on paper, welcomed in these situations.[385] In the 1930 CCP Letter to Working Women of the Country (*Zhongguo Gongchandang gao quan'guo laodong funü shu* 中国共产党告全国劳动妇女书), for example, peasant women were encouraged to unite with male peasants, and to engage in activist and even violent behaviour in order to fight for the Soviet bases. This included participating in rallies against landlords and the gentry class regarding taxes, debts, and rent, becoming armed, joining the peasant unions, and participating in insurgencies and local riots.[386] More detailed instructions can be found in some documents

[381] Zhonggong Jiangxi shengwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui 中共江西省党史资料征集委员会 (hereafter JXDS) and Zhoggong jiangxi shengwei dangshi yanjiushi 中共江西省党史研究室 (JXDSDAG), eds., *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao* 江西党史资料 (Documents Regarding the Party History of Jiangxi), vol. 18 (1991), 32.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Despite positive remarks about volunteering women in these reports and documents, there were hints that suggests otherwise. For example, the April 1932 Women's Movement report produced by the Eastern Hunan and Hubei Provincial Party Committee (*Xiang E Xi Shengwei fuyun baogao* 湘鄂西省委婦運報告) to the Women's Movement Committee of the Central Committee described and criticised this common phenomena of commandism (*mingling zhuyi* 命令主義) among some local officials. Apparently, there was one instance when women representatives who had just experienced a devastating flood say that they were unable to deliver food and resources to or fight for the Red Army because of personal hardships and difficult circumstances. Yet on-the-ground officials ignored these pleas outright and demanded compliance. See: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 265. By implication, this points towards elements of coercion likely exercised by local officials throughout the mobilisation process in at least some of these Soviet bases.
[385] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 407.
[386] Ibid., 372.

that specify the need for local officials to mobilise women into joining armed combat. The 1932 Draft Resolution written by the Provincial Committee of Hunan, Hubei, and Jiangxi, for example, specifies that young women between 16 – 23 should be organised into the Young Pioneers (*Xianfengdui* 先锋队), while those aged 23 and above should be organised into the Scarlet Guards, both reserve forces of the Red Army.[387] According to official materials and propaganda sources, some women actually did join these organisations and perhaps engaged in combat. Official Zhu Changxie's 朱昌谐 October 1930 report about Woman-Work in Southwest Jiangxi noted that there were at least a few gun-toting women in the Red Army in the region.[388] In another October 1930 Woman-Work report on the same area, it was noted that during a few recent battles, many women went to the frontlines to fight the enemy. In particular, a few of these women even went into actual physical combat with enemy soldiers and charged through barbed wire.[389] Similarly, the 1932 Draft Resolution on Current Political Tasks and General Work regarding the Dongjiang Special Committee stated recent Woman-Work had received "unprecedented success" as "hundreds and thousands of women [had] broken through feudal constraints" to join the protest movement, and participate in the work of the Scarlet Guards."[390] It was even noted that some armed women were apparently so intimidating that "there was no wonder why the enemy shuddered" when they came across these fierce women.[391]

Other sources, however, notes that women on the whole did not actually engage in much combat and related activities at all, which suggests that while in some places women perhaps did engage in combat, in most other places they did not. This was a main criticism in the 1932 opinion piece about Woman-Work in Dongjiang that was published on the *Red Star of Dongjiang* (*Dongjiang hongqi* 东江红旗). The author complained that because local Woman-Work was developed in a peaceful environment instead of a politically hostile one, unlike other bases, many women in Dongjiang did not join organisations such as the local Scarlet Guards, which remained largely male organisations. As such, during actual combat situations, women were often rendered useless.[392] In 1933, it was noted by another commentator that women in the Hunan Jiangxi Soviet base who joined the Scarlet Vanguard ended up doing support and

[387] Young Pioneers is supervised by the Youth League and the Party. The Scarlet Guards is supervised by the government, Red Army and Youth League: Ibid., 256. See also: ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 728.
[388] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü,* 13.
[389] Ibid., 15.
[390] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 422.
[391] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 377.
[392] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 429.

consolation work such as offering food to soldiers and making shoes anyway.[393] Furthermore, while it seems that a number of women were eager to join the Red Army and to engage in serious physical combat, they were not wanted there and were mostly funnelled or redirected to other organisations such as the Scarlet Guards or the Young Pioneers. In 1930, the Central Committee instructed that "it was inappropriate to officially organise women into the Red Army en masse," as it was more suitable to get women into the Scarlet Guards or the Young Pioneers and give them appropriate military training there in order to "satisfy women's desire to become armed."[394] In 1930 Guangdong, the Provincial Party Committee of Guangdong (*Zhonggong Guangdong shengwei* 中共广东省委) also gave instructions to the Haifeng 海丰 Lufeng 陆丰 Huiyang 惠阳 and Zijin 紫金 Special Committee (*Hai-Lu-Hui-Zi tewei* 海陆惠紫特委) regarding the 10 or more women who wanted to join the Red Army and declared that the Special Committee's job regarding this situation is not to "officially organise [these women] into the Red Army and [let them] live lives, be deployed or fight just like [male] Red Army soldiers.[395] Instead, "the main task is to mobilise them to transport goods, spy, nurse and rescue, and [do] other work like propaganda."[396] Likewise, the Provincial Work Plan Regarding the Charging Season of the Women's Movement (*Quansheng fuyun chongfeng ji gongzuo jihua* 全省妇运冲锋季工作计画) regarding Hunan province, passed on 3 July 1932 states that the women who insist on joining the Red Army can be mobilised to join the Red Women's Self Defence Force instead (*chise nüzi ziweidui* 赤色女子自卫队). The Red Women's Self Defense Force had minimal combat responsibilities, and was mainly responsible for security and liaison work at the rear.[397]

Reasons given by officials as to why it was inappropriate for women to join combat roles points towards the perceived physical and biological difference between men and women. The Female Youth Bureau of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League in Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet base (*Xiang-Gan Suqu tuan shengwei Qingfubu* 湘赣苏区省委青妇部), for example, recorded that in early 1932, more than 1000 women applied to join the Red Army, and all of them were eager to be sent to the front lines. But most of these women were not actually taken in due to "issues related to physical strength."[398] Only one of them managed to stay on as she

[393] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 313.
[394] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 704.
[395] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 404.
[396] Ibid.
[397] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong* 1927 - 1937, 242.
[398] Ibid., 318.

was working at the Political Department in one of the red armies and did not engage in combat. A few others worked in security.[399] Sometimes it was made clear in official documents that traditional practices placed women at a disadvantage to engage in combat. According to a report to the Central Committee by a local official in Southwest Jiangxi, while there were some women recruits who were able to engage in armed combat, many others were unable to do so because of their bound feet and thus were less mobile.[400] Moreover, it has been pointed out by officials that getting some women, especially those who were clearly physically unfit to engage in military training to do so was very bad optics for the masses. In 1930 Fujian's Shanghang county 上坑县, for example, there had been incidences where heavily pregnant women were coerced into participating in military parades by local officials as a part of the overall effort to militarise women. This subsequently backfired as the incident alarmed locals and was considered highly off-putting.[401]

These understandings of women's biological and social differences compared to men were also held at lower levels and this view that it wasn't appropriate for women to join more armed combat roles was not only held by men but was also recognised, albeit in a somewhat vague fashion, by female officials themselves. Specifically, women officials thought it was impossible for women to do exactly what men did in the Red Army did because of reasons related to a "woman's physiology" *(shengli* 生理*).* This reasoning is vague because it was not clear if they were referring to pregnant women or those with bound feet, or whether they were just making generalisations about women, although it is likely that officials were referring to a combination of all of these factors. In an outline of Woman-Work written to women by the Soviet Women's Committee (苏妇女委员会) of Shanghang County, the committee, which very likely consisted mostly of women, called upon fellow women to do support work for the Red Army even if they "cannot stand next to men on the battle line to kill the enemy."[402] This is, as the committee puts it, "due to the inconvenience brought upon by our physiology, [our] weak fighting capabilities, and other reasons."[403] Here women officials are referring to the fact and understanding that women, on average, were physically weaker and of a smaller build. But on the other hand, they were also alluding to the perceived issue that women could menstruate and could get pregnant which made them less convenient to deploy in combat situations when

[399] Ibid.
[400] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü,* 3.
[401] FFFYJS and FJSDAG, *Fujian-sheng funü*, 59.
[402] Ibid., 35.
[403] Ibid.

compared to men, although it seems apparent that just because women can get pregnant doesn't mean that they will if they choose not to, and women can still fight even while menstruating.

Secret Activities against the Nationalists

From the previous section, we see how officials allocate work and mobilise women according to their understandings, some concerns and prejudices related to of biological sex and gender, as well as practical issues of efficiency and effectiveness. As such, although officials deemed women generally unfit for the Red Army and for engaging in more serious combat activities due to their understanding of biological sex and gender, these same understandings and stereotypes were seen as strengths in other areas of work women were mobilised to engage in with the aim of fighting the Nationalists. Specifically, they were seen as assets when it came to gathering intelligence and doing Soldier-Work – a form of sabotage where individuals whose true identity is concealed, approaches enemy soldiers in order to persuade them to rebel against their superiors. In addition to the aforementioned kind of support and consolation work, such as cooking and laundering, the November 1930 Central Committee Work Plan on Woman-Work in the Soviet bases argued specifically for the organisation for "Women's Spy Teams" (*funü zhentandui* 妇女侦探队) and corresponding training as "special work for women" under the secret and serious leadership of the Military Affairs Commission (*Junwei* 军委) or the Scarlett Guards (*Chiweidui* 赤卫队).[404] The Work Plan described this task as one of the "most important core work at the present" regarding Woman-Work.[405] Indeed, while in some base areas there were local public security institutions, which had women personnel,[406] these institutions also used and relied on civilians and various masses organisations such as the Scarlet Guards, the Youth Team (*Shaoxian dui* 少先队), or Woman-Work organisations to do spying and other general security work.[407] Officials, for example, were instructed to teach these women knowledge and skills related to spying, and to "establish absolutely secret spy organisations in every rural area under the serious and secret leadership of the Military Affairs

[404] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 704.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Gonganbu gongan shi ziliao zhengji yanjiu lingdao xiaozu bangongshi 公安部公安史资料征集研究领导小组办公室, "*Min-Zhe-Gan gemini genjudi baowei gongzuo lishi changbian* 闽浙赣革命根据地保卫工作历史长编 (Long Edition on the Security Work Done in the Guangxi-Zhejiang-Jiangxi Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 22 (July 1991): 21.
[407] Hubei-sheng gonganting, Henan-sheng gonganting, and Anhui-sheng gonganting, "*E-Yu-Wan Suqu*,"13. Likewise, it has been noted that members of the masses were able to report to the Red Army with any news or intelligence about enemy activity in the Min-Zhe-Gan Revolutionary base. See: Gonganbu gongan shi ziliao zhengji yanjiu lingdao xiaozu bangongshi, "*Min-Zhe-Gan*," 16.

Committee or the Scarlet Guards."[408] As women were attracted to the party through Woman-Work initiatives, they were then also mobilised to do Secret Work which included spying and sabotage because they were deemed suitable to do these kind of jobs due to their biological condition, and because it was recognised by officials that they could fully utilise gendered prejudices and stereotypes to their advantage.

Gathering Intelligence

Gathering intelligence formed a crucial part of preparing the Communists for Nationalist attacks and military campaigns. As mentioned previously, public security institutions were created to deal with internal and external threats, [409] and civilians were also mobilised via other institutions to complement the work done by the specialists.[410] During the first Counter-Encirclement Campaign against the Nationalists, the Military Commission of Jiangxi Province of the Soviet Government (*Jiangxi-sheng Suweiai zhengfu junshi weiyuanhui* 江西省苏维埃政府军事委员会) ordered the formation Spy Teams (*zhentan dui* 侦探队) "responsible for spy missions and to make daily reports about the intelligence that was gathered."[411] Likewise, in March 1931 the Jiangxi Province Soviet Government passed an urgent circular (*Jiangxi sheng Suzhengfu jinji tonggao*) related to preparation work during the second Counter-Encirclement Campaign which similarly argued that gathering intelligence was "an important work in order to strive for the victory of the second revolutionary war," and stated that only with extra care regarding intelligence work could one achieve good results from it.[412] The Independent 21st Division of the Scarlet Guards (*Chiweijun duli di 21 shi* 赤卫军独立第 21 师) also passed a resolution in their first Military Commander Meeting (*diyici junguan huiyi* 第一次军官会议) that ordered the organisation of spy work in order to prepare for the military campaigns. This included organising spy teams in order to "frequently investigate enemy intelligence" and report back to the headquarters.[413] There is no doubt that knowing details about the enemy in advance was useful for all battles.

[408] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 699.
[409] Hunan-sheng gonganting, Hubei-sheng gonganting, and Jiangxi-sheng gonganting "*Xiang-E-Gan*," 71.
[410] Ibid., 74.
[411] JXDS and JXDSDAG, eds., *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao* 江西党史资料 (Documents Regarding the Party History of Jiangxi), vol. 17 (1990), 49.
[412] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18*,* 67.
[413] Ibid.*,* 51.

Unlike being a soldier in the Red Army, being a spy or being mobilised to do clandestine activities was not something deemed only fit for men. As Zeng Shan instructed through the No. 2 urgent circular of the Jiangxi Province Soviet Government (*Jiangxi sheng Su zhengfu jinji tonggao di er hao* 江西省苏政府紧急通告第二号) in March 1931, it did not matter if the person doing spy work was "a man or a woman, old or young" as long as he or she "was smart, good at cunning tricks, had sharp eyes and ears, was quick in action, unafraid of death, not scared or flustered, able to endure hardships, loyal and reliable."[414] Meanwhile, it was paramount that "dumb people cannot be taken in" as a spy,[415] or those who are not trusted or deemed loyal because using hearsay or wrong intelligence as the basis of military action and strategy was extremely risky and prone to catastrophic results.[416] As it was considered crucial for those who engage in spy work to be not particularly remarkable, and unnoticeable by the enemy, ordinary women were generally understood to be able to fulfil this requirement more than ordinary men, perhaps because of the widely held stereotype that women are far less politically-active, generally quite secluded and rather ignorant.[417] Stipulated ways to engage in spy work according to Zeng Shan included "masquerading as someone doing business, begging for food, utilising social relationships such as any friends and relatives in order to infiltrate into enemy military bases."[418] Other ways also included disguising as refugees,[419] spying while farming,[420] and civilian women using "visiting relatives" in Nationalist-occupied areas as an excuse to travel while gathering intelligence.[421]

Suggested intelligence to be gathered and things to note by the spy included both straightforward objective facts and more nuanced observations related to the character and atmosphere of the targeted enemy military unit. Here, straightforward factual details included things such as the name of the person-in-charge, the nature of the military unit and the number of soldiers it had, when they were on the move, where they were going to and where they would pass through, the purpose of their actions, whether they had enough food, the number of injured

[414] Ibid., 68. This is a rather typical list of requirements. For example, other lists for professional spies include requirements as follows: "1) be deeply familiar with the revolution, 2) loyal, brave, reliable, 3) flexible, lively, with plans, 4) can keep secrets, 5) not particularly remarkable, unnoticeable by the enemy…": Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132. See also: Shaanxi-sheng gonganting, "*Xibei gemming*," 65 – 67.
[415] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18*,* 68.
[416] Ibid.*,* vol. 17*,* 71.
[417] Shaanxi-sheng gonganting, "*Xibei gemming*," 5. See also: Jiangxi-sheng gonganting zhengce falü yanjiushi and Fujian-sheng gonanting zhengce falü yanjiushi, "*Zhongyang geming genjudi*," 83 – where women and children were mobilised to engage in the relaying of intelligence because they were less likely to be noticed by the enemy.
[418] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18, 68.
[419] Gonganbu gongan shi ziliao zhengji yanjiu lingdao xiaozu bangongshi, "*Min-Zhe-Gan,*" 75.
[420] Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132.
[421] Ibid.

soldiers that were tagging along, and the surroundings of the military base. Furthermore, those gathering enemy intelligence were asked to take note of other things such as which province most of the enemy soldiers came from, their daily lifestyle, their relationship with their superiors, the kind of "tricks and policies" used by the commanders to woo their subordinates, and how enemy troops treated local people.[422] Knowing this more nuanced information made it easier for the Communists to do sabotage work—also known as Soldier-Work—within these Nationalist military which will be discussed in the next section, and for them to rally and mobilise the masses against these enemy soldiers. Men and women were also asked to spy on locals to ensure that that there weren't reactionaries or enemy spies among the local population. In December 1930, the You River Soviet Government (*Youjiang Suweiai zhengfu* 友江苏维埃政府), for example, declared that it was the task of women from various Woman-Work organisations to collect information and spy on "bad people" on behalf of the government and to help with purging political dissidents.[423]

Like the mobilisation of women to do farming and production work, women were mobilised to engage in gathering intelligence partly because there was a shortage of men, and also partly because the party wanted to increase the number of people mobilised. Moreover, spy work, unlike actual combat, demanded less physical fitness and even women who were ill or elder women were considered fit for such tasks. According to the No. 11 November 1930 Circular issued by the Provincial Administrative Committee of Jiangxi (*Jiangxi-sheng xingwei* 江西省行委), men were not available because "the final war on class is soon here to come, [and] all men will have to participate in this class war."[424] Thus, there were fewer men who were left and available to do things such as spy work. Indeed, able-bodied men at that time were more often encouraged or even peer pressured into joining the Red Army instead of being asked to do spy work.[425] The mobilisation of women to do spy work was also a strategy which maximised the efficiency and effectiveness of existing but limited manpower. As such, old or weak women who were otherwise idle were mobilised to spy. The Qiongya Special Party Committee (*Qiongya tewei* 琼崖特委) in Guangdong decided in 1930 that, while local women who were physically strong should be mobilised into joining an armed worker and peasant

[422] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18, 68.
[423] Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu funü lianhehui 广西壮族自治区妇女联合会编印 (hereafter GXZFL), ed., *Guangxi funü yundongshi ziliao huibian* 广西妇女运动史资料汇编 (Selected Materials on the History of the Women's Movement in Guangxi), vol. 2 (Nanning: Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu funü lianhehui, 1983), 108.
[424] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 17.
[425] Ibid.

organisation, those who were old or weak were also expected to be mobilised into relaying messages or doing spy work.[426] In the Hailufeng 海陆丰 Soviet base in Guangdong and the Soviet bases in Jiangxi, some of the young women or girls or very old peasant women were mobilised to infiltrate enemy lines to do spy work.[427]

Officials, however, also recognised that women had the capacity to be far less suspicious in the eyes of the enemy compared to their male counterparts. The Provincial Administrative Committee of Jiangxi, for example, realised that while there was indeed a shortage of men, "at the same time having women to do spy work… is better."[428] Similarly, officials in Southwestern Jiangxi noted that "women are more effective doing spy work and other work."[429] While lively children were deployed and considered as possible candidates for this role because they could go to places that adults could not, they were not always the most reliable demographic to be entrusted with such serious work even if they received some kind of briefing beforehand on how to gather intelligence.[430] Using women to do this job, however, found the best balance. In particular, Zeng Shan was a huge proponent of mobilising women into doing different forms of clandestine activities and suggests that understandings and perceptions about womanhood made women less noticeable and thus exceptional in the area of clandestine activities.[431] Similar sentiments and observation regarding women were shared by others.[432] Because of this understanding, officials sought to give civilian women training on spy work. In February 1931, for example, the Central Committee of the Youth League (*C.Y. Zhongyangju* C.Y. 中央局) passed a resolution that pointed towards the need to offer and organise "spy training classes" (*Zhentan xunlianban* 侦探训练班) for young civilian women. This was deemed necessary as part of the overall effort to "mobilise and organise proletariat female youths and young female peasants to enthusiastically help the Red Army and the Soviet movement."[433]

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[426] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 415.
[427] Ibid., 356. See also: JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 72.
[428] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 17.
[429] Ibid., 15.
[430] Ibid., 73.
[431] Ibid., 21.
[432] For example, the Central Committee stated in a directive in 1929 that "activities of youths and women are often unnoticed by the enemy." See: ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 6 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 68. In 1931, one official from Tonghai 通海, a non-Soviet base area in Yunnan, wrote and published a reflective piece in the magazine *Women's Life* (*Funü shenghuo* 婦女生活*)* saying that he had realised that women, many of whom engaged in spy work and sentry duties, were less likely to be arrested by the Nationalists. While many male CCP supporters were arrested and killed, or forced to go into exile, relatively fewer women went into exile and most avoided incarceration merely by staying at home during difficult times. For this reason, he lamented the fact that the party in Tonghai has previously side-lined Woman-Work, and affirmed that women were an inherently valuable demographic to the party. See: JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 116.
[433] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong*, vol. 1, 257.

Using women to engage in clandestine work was a relatively common strategy and occurrence across these different Soviet bases, and local areas that used them included bases in Guangdong,[434] Guangxi,[435] Fujian,[436] Jiangxi and Hunan,[437] and the Border Region between Hunan and Hubei.[438] Due to its effectiveness, the Central Committee in February 1934 urged local officials to deploy women "to engage in work such as spy work… in war zones and the Nationalist army."[439] In Hubei-Henan-Anhui (*E-Yu-Wan* 鄂豫皖) Soviet base, for example, some security work was done by the masses and masses organisations. In particular, both men and women of these masses organisations used various excuses as cover to gather intelligence in guerrilla areas or Nationalist-occupied areas. Women from North-eastern Hubei (*E-Dongbei* 鄂東北) would disguise themselves as beggars while gathering intelligence from the neighbouring Nationalist-occupied areas. On one occasion these women successfully found out that the Nationalists were planning to invade the Soviet bases and, due to this crucial piece of intelligence, the Communists were able to prepare for the invasion.[440]

Besides the continued use of this policy that encouraged the mobilisation of women as spies, some local reports also explicitly noted the effectiveness of using mobilised women as spies. In October 1930, in Southwest Jiangxi, it was reported by local officials that "women being spies and doing similar work" had proven to be effective.[441] The report states that this strategy was so successful that the local party had sent more women to do spy work and other kinds of clandestine activities in cities such as Ji'an city and Ganzhou city.[442] During other counter-Nationalist Encirclement Campaigns, other women were also mobilised to enter Nationalist territories or battle zones in order to gather intelligence in these areas for the Communists.[443] In January 1933, a woman was noted in a Hunan Jiangxi Soviet Base Provincial Communist Youth League Committee (*Xiang Gan Suqu tuan shengwei* 湘贛苏区团省委) report for

[434] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 404.
[435] GXZFL, *Guangxi,* vol. 2, 109.
[436] FFFYJS and FJSDAG, *Fujian-sheng funü*, 76.
[437] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1927 - 1937, 242; Hunan, Hebei, Sichuan, Guizhou gonganting yanjiushi and Xiang-xi tujiazu, miaozu, zizhizhou gonganju, "*Xiang-E-Chuan*," 56.
[438] Hubei-sheng gonganting yanjiushi 湖北省公安厅研究室, "*Xiang-E-xi geming genjudi sufan baowei gongzuo lishi changbian* 湘鄂西革命根据地肃反保卫工作历史长编 (Long Edition of the History of Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and Security Work of West Hunan-Hubei Revolutionary Base)," *GASZL* 3 (February 1987): 96.
[439] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937,* 360.
[440] Hubei-sheng gonganting, Henan-sheng gonganting, and Anhui-sheng gonganting, "*E-Yu-Wan*," 34 – 35.
[441] JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 15.
[442] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 15.
[443] Zhongguo funü guanli ganbu xueyuan, *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 293; ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 360.

helping the Red Army by gathering enemy intelligence. After finding out that the Nationalists were planning to invade the Soviet bases, she travelled overnight to tell Soviet base officials that there was an impending attack.[444] Apparently officials were also able to mobilise non-Han women. In 1934, for example, approximately 30 *Tujia* 土家 civilian women from Sangzhi County 桑植县 in Hunan formed a women's spy team which regularly entered enemy-occupied territory in order to gather intelligence.[445]

Soldier-Work

What went hand-in-hand with clandestine and more combative military activities conducted by the Red Army was Soldier Work (*shibing yundong* 士兵运动, also known as *bingyun gongzuo* 兵运工作).[446] This refers to "all kinds of propaganda and encouragement methods that influences enemy soldier masses, encourages them to organise soldier uprisings and come to the Red Army."[447] Besides getting men and women to physically approach men, it also refers to activities such as the distribution of leaflets, banners and posters. For example, the April 1931 Central Committee described "propaganda and encouragement work within Nationalist soldiers (*baijun shibing zhongjiang de xuanchuan gudong gongzuo* 白军士兵中间的宣传工作)"[448] as having banners with slogans such as "Don't Fight Your Own Brothers (*Bu da ziji xiongdi* 不打自己兄弟)" on paths that were visited by the Nationalist Army, getting men to join socialising events (*lianhuanhui* 联欢会) hosted by local workers or peasants, or getting their relatives to propagate the benefits of the CCP to them.[449] What was perhaps a lot more effective then handing out leaflets was fostering soldier uprisings (*bingbao* 兵爆), whereby men and also women were mobilised to secretly incite soldiers from the Nationalist army to revolt against their superiors.[450] In particular, women were deemed good candidates for this kind of activity because it was thought that they could approach men effectively, were less likely to be detected compared to men, and were not restricted or disadvantaged by their natural physical weakness.

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[444] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1927 - 1937, 319 - 320.
[445] Gonganbu bangongting gongan shi yanjiuchu, ""*Er-zhan" shiqi genjudi de qunzhong baowei gongzuo*," 132 – 133; Hunan, Hebei, Sichuan, Guizhou gonganting yanjiushi and Xiang-xi tujiazu, miaozu, zizhizhou gonganju, "*Xiang-E-Chuan-Qian,*" 56.
[446] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL,* vol. 9, 258.
[447] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 82.
[448] ZYWX and ZYDAG, eds., *JDYL*, vol. 8 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 338.
[449] Ibid.
[450] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 19.

Soldier Work, especially organising and inciting soldier uprisings, was said to be "indeed a main way to destroy the enemy" by officials because it was cost-effective, had the result of weakening enemy military forces by causing panic and distrust, and was also inherently linked to the expansion of the Red Army.[451] While officials such as Zeng Shan claimed that, theoretically, the Red Army could confront the Nationalists head on in the front lines, "organising Nationalist soldier uprisings is the best method to destroy the enemy."[452] The Communists considered soldier uprisings, which were part of Soldier-Work, as "one of the main strategies of expanding the Red Army,"[453] and in 1931 the Central Committee hoped that those who left the Nationalist Army due to Soldier-Work could join the Communists instead of becoming local bandits, which was a fairly common outcome for many of these men.[454] Moreover, Soldier-Work also complimented other kinds of organised activities that the CCP was doing at the time. According to the Resolution on Current Political Tasks (*Muqian zhengzhi renwu de jueyi* 目前政治任务的决议) passed by the Politburo of the Central Committee in November 1930, under China's current objective political and economic situation, mere proletariat struggle wasn't enough. There needed to be an active and balanced cooperation between all revolutionary forces together with peasant uprisings, soldier uprisings, and effective military campaigns by the Red Army.[455] Because it was also part of an overall defensive strategy, men and women who lived in the Border Regions of the soviets were mobilised to engage in these activities.[456]

On-the-ground Soldier-Work was not often done by meticulously-trained specialists but was conducted by both men and women, including a lot of civilians, who were utilised for different reasons. The mass-participatory nature of Soldier-Work was declared by the Central Committee in 1930, which stipulated that "Soldier-Work is an activity of the masses" because "if it is not participated by the whole party and by the workers and peasant masses, it will be ineffective."[457] Furthermore, the Central Committee declared that "every Communist Party member, Communist Youth League member, every worker, peasant, should all know the

[451] Ibid., 72.
[452] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü,* 19.
[453] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 138.
[454] Ibid., vol. 8, 99.
[455] Ibid., vol. 7, 264.
[456] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 - 1937*, 171.
[457] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 138.

importance of struggles for the sake of taking over the Nationalist Army, and must use all means to divide and revolutionise them (enemy men)."[458]

Men who were involved were, for example, individual enemy men who were captured then rehabilitated. Indeed, perhaps the "most reliable way" to do Soldier-Work, according to the Central Committee, was to send captured male enemy soldiers back to their military unit so they could engage in sabotage work from within the Nationalist army.[459] Specifically, captured male enemy soldiers were rehabilitated by undergoing "planned training"[460] and being exposed to "extensive propaganda work"[461] that would "allow them to feel inspired by the Red Army"[462] and "become enthusiastic about working for the Soviet [bases] and the Red Army."[463] Some of them were then sent back to do "sabotage work within the enemy army (*wajie diren jundui de gongzuo* 瓦解敌人军队的工作)," [464] which "very quickly achieved effective and practical results."[465] Besides captive Nationalist soldiers, other kinds of men were very likely used too. For example, in April 1930 the Central Committee instructed the Hubei Provincial Party Committee that men who were "unemployed workers or Red Army soldiers" should be trained so "they could be used specifically to incite soldier uprisings and infiltrate enemy armies."[466]

In some cases, whole groups, such as groups of women, were mobilised. As the Hunan-Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee put it in July 1932, "all working women should be mobilised to do Soldier-Work, and to sabotage enemy troops when the enemy enters the Soviet areas."[467] Furthermore, civilian demographics, especially women, deemed too physically weak to engage in combat were approved and encouraged to engage in this area of activity by officials. Indeed, Soldier-Work was not exclusively conducted by younger, able-bodied men and women, but men and women from a range of ages and physical conditions were deployed. This also meant that women, especially those of certain age groups that were considered to be physically weaker, could engage in it. Jiangxi's Lianhua County Party Committee (*Lianhua xianwei* 蓮花縣委),

[458] Ibid., vol. 8, 99.
[459] Ibid., 338.
[460] Ibid., vol. 7, 8.
[461] Ibid., vol. 8, 338.
[462] Ibid., vol. 7, 82.
[463] Ibid., vol. 8, 338.
[464] Ibid.
[465] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 7, 82.
[466] Ibid. 138.
[467] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937,* 244.

for example, instructed local officials in March 1931 to mobilise old men and old women to do different kinds of Soldier-Work since there was an impending Nationalist attack. They stipulated work "such as going deep [into soldier communities] when the enemy arrives in order to propagate" the Red Army as a way to cause rifts between enemy soldiers and weaken their overall morale.[468] Officials were instructed that they "must give intensive training to old men and old women beforehand."[469] Likewise, in April 1931, County Party Committees of the Fujian, Jiangxi, and Guangdong Soviet bases, the Twelfth Army Military Department (*Shier-jun Jubu* 十二军军部), and the Joint session of the Special Region Military Commission (*Tequ Junwei lianxihui* 特区军委联席会) passed a draft resolution that stated "old grannies and women" should not be evacuated and instead asked to remain when the "Nationalists are here," in order for them to do Soldier-Work, ultimately getting these enemy men "to become Red Army soldiers".[470] In some cases, even "lively young boys and girls", together with "old, weak and handicapped geezers and grannies" should be mobilised to approach Nationalist soldiers in different ways, taking all opportunities to propagate the Red Army as well as gather intelligence at the same time.[471] In some instances it was instructed that very young boys and girls should be mobilised and deployed after being briefed on the basics of conducting Soldier-Work, because "the enemy (especially soldiers) liked being approached by children" who sang them revolutionary songs, sold them knick-knacks and chatted with them.[472]

While women could not infiltrate the Nationalist infantry like captured soldiers-turned-saboteurs or recruited men, as the infantry consisted almost exclusively of men, they could do Soldier-Work in a different way and were mobilised to do so. In an urgent circular regarding what kind of "Work Women Should do in the Decisive Battle of Class" (*Zai jieji juezhan zhong funü yingzuo de gongzuo* 在阶级决战中妇女应做的工作) issued by Zeng Shan in December 1930 in light of an impending Nationalist attack on the Jiangxi Soviet bases, Zeng illustrated how via his request for women to engage in Soldier-Work on behalf of the Soviet government of Jiangxi province.[473] Zeng urged "Woman-Work Committees of all levels of the Soviet government" to immediately organise Soldier-Work committees (*Shibing gongzuo weiyuanhui* 士兵工作委員會), which each consisted of seven committee members and one committee

[468] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18*,* 82.
[469] Ibid.
[470] Ibid., 98.
[471] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 17*,* 72.
[472] Ibid., 72 – 73.
[473] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 19.

head.[474] The purpose of the committee was to "have specific meetings to meticulously discuss methods on how to do Soldier-Work" and these committees "should make plans on how to approach enemy soldiers" and "how to talk to enemy soldiers."[475] Committee members were also expected to "report in the meetings the meaning of doing Soldier-Work" in order to "resolutely destroy the fear [held by women] of approaching enemy soldiers."[476] The use of women in Soldier-Work was, like the use of women as spies, partly due to the lack of men available to engage in these kinds of activities. As noted by the Jiangxi Provincial Administrative Committee (*Jiangxi-sheng xingwei* 江西省行委) in their November 1930 circular, local men often fled their homes whenever the enemy were nearby, and only "women can hide at home or live their life openly" while the enemy is around.[477] But it was also thought the case that women, by being women and by behaving according to gendered stereotypes, which often worked in their favour, allowed them to be available to do and be successful in sabotage work. As the Administrative Committee put it, "women have more methods and chances to engage in this kind of work."[478] In some locations, women, especially "agile and lively" ones, were even sent to cities to engage in clandestine activities.[479]

Women were expected by officials to utilise various gender stereotypes to their advantage while they were doing Soldier-Work. Firstly, women were expected to approach enemy men by doing some form of activity, sometimes gendered ones, that allowed them to appear harmless and innocent. For example, women were instructed to launder for Nationalist soldiers, or to sell them food like vegetables and fruits, and other knick-knacks.[480] Much of what women did at this stage was ad hoc, and individual women were given discretion to determine what was the best way forward given the circumstances.[481] After successfully approaching men, women then proceeded to ask them questions in order to get these men to think and talk about the hardships they encountered and were enduring. As noted by some officials, lower-ranked Nationalist soldiers were often quite unsure about their purpose and what they were doing, as many were not particularly motivated by ideology or politics in the first place. It was thus likely that some of them could or were already partially swayed by the Communist propaganda that

[474] Ibid.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Ibid.
[477] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 17*,* 76.
[478] Ibid.
[479] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937,* 244.
[480] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 17*,* 76. See also: JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü,* 28.
[481] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*,19.

they encountered.[482] As such, the purpose of these women at this stage was to gently tease out these negative sentiments related to the "personal pain" of these men, and to solidify and intensify any ill feelings they had towards the Nationalists.[483] According to Zeng Shan, women could ask men questions such as "have you gotten a wife yet? Do you have money to send home for your family's use while being away as a soldier? Did your salary get deducted or confiscated by your commander?"[484]

If the Nationalist soldier responded well to these questions and went into detail about his hardships, then the women could proceed to the third stage of their work. That is, to propagate the Red Army, the Communists, and life at the Soviet bases, and to convince them to leave the Nationalist Army and to join the Red Army instead.[485] As Zeng Shan described in his instruction to women, "we follow up by saying," for example, "what, after all, are the benefits of being a soldier in the Nationalist Army when your commanders are making you fight in front of them while deducting and confiscating your salaries? Aren't you dying for their sake? What is so interesting about this? Why doesn't everyone join the Red Army to revolt and destroy the warlords, as only after this can your parents and wife live good lives".[486] According to Zeng, this is an example of what could be said by women doing Soldier-Work but the actual things that were said could be determined on the spot.[487]

The precise details of what was said to a Nationalist soldier by a woman doing Soldier-Work is now difficult to reconstruct, because, as mentioned previously, a lot of the things that were actually said were likely made up on the spot instead of rehearsed, in order to make the whole process appear natural.[488] But it can be assumed that at least some of the sentiments, slogans, and arguments communicated were very similar to not only what Zeng Shan instructed, but also to what was written on the leaflets secretly distributed to the Nationalists. One of such leaflets, written by someone from the Party Committee of the Ninth District of Xingguo (*Zhongguo Gongchandang Xingguo Jiuqu weiyuanhui* 中国共产党兴国九区委员会) in 25

[482] See, for example: JXDS and JXDSDAG, eds., *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao* 江西党史资料 (Documents Regarding the Party History of Jiangxi), vol. 19 (1991), 97.
[483] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 19.
[484] Ibid.
[485] Ibid., 19 – 20.
[486] Ibid., 20.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Ibid.

March 1931 focuses on the benevolence of the Red Army, and the corruption and incompetence of the Nationalists:

Dear Nationalist Soldiers,

All of you do know that the Red Army is the army for workers and peasants? You do know that the Red Army is an army that seeks to advance the rights for the proletariat? White Soldiers, you do know that after Zhang Huizan's troop was completely destroyed by us, and after Tan Daoyuan's troop was mostly destroyed by us in East Shao, their soldiers who surrendered were all given three foreign dollars by us? Those soldiers who want to go home can go home, those who don't can be a soldier in our Red Army just like us. You do know that being a soldier in the Red Army means that commanders and soldiers are paid, clothed and fed the same way, hey! the Red Army calls for the actualisation of the abolishment of rent and food debts, the equal distribution of farm land, the absolute freedom to marry, the dictatorship of the proletariat and so on. Soldiers from the White Army, as a soldier in the White army, didn't you help a lot of officials get promoted and become rich? And help the gentry and landlords increase their benefits? Every day you fight battles for the sake of the territorial expansion of your commanders. Isn't this the case if you think about it? After being a soldier for a few years, what benefits did you get? Only the endurance of various kinds of oppression and exploitation, or for the fact that the young and old in your household cannot survive? I see that all of you can no longer endure such pain, thus we are here to lead you to our Red Army for a revolution, of only which can remove all of your pain and advance your rights. White soldiers, hey, let's go! Hey, hurry and wake up![489]

Responses to Women's Engagement in Clandestine Work and Sabotage

In official sources women were actively praised for their efforts in spying and sabotage, their dedication and loyalty, and their willingness to sacrifice their lives.[490] The CCP Special Committee in Xiangnan[491] (*Xiangnan tewei* 湘南特委) in 1932 praised women who spied and relayed messages for the party, claiming that it was mostly women who did these kinds of work,

[489] JXDS and JXDSDAG, *Jiangxi dangshi ziliao,* vol. 18, 80.
[490] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 231 – 232.
[491]This refers to the Southern Hunan area.

and that they made a great contribution to the overall revolutionary effort.[492] In some instances, women were even praised for being just as, if not even more, courageous then men.[493] In particular, a report written in 1928 detailed how women in Hailufeng soviet base actively and voluntarily engaged in Secret Work and gathered intelligence in enemy communities, working in areas where men couldn't go.[494] The report praised these women's efforts and sacrifices, claiming that while women in Hailufeng endured the most hardship in the whole of China and were the least educated, their perseverance and ability to endure suffering was a rare positive trait among Chinese women. [495]

Mobilising women to do spy work and sabotage, however, was not a fool-proof strategy and it was not always fun and games for these women. Women were caught and punished. According to the Communists, some Nationalists realised that local women were helping the Red Army by spying and relaying messages for them, and when they realised that, they were not particularly merciful towards these women.[496] In the Hailufeng Soviet base, a few hundred women had been caught in 1928, and while many were eventually released, a minority of them were executed. Rape was an unavoidable fate for many of these women, and a few peasant women who had spied on the enemy and gathered intelligence in Hekou 河口, Gongping 公平, and Meilong 梅陇 were not only stabbed to death, but their killers also inserted knives into their genitalia and sliced open their breasts. [497] Similarly, it was noted on *Masses Daily* (*Qunzhong ribao* 群眾日報) in March 1931 that women who worked for the Communists in the Western Anhui soviet base were not always killed outright but were instead raped, humiliated, then sold to another part of the country.[498] Moreover, gendered stereotypes did not always work in women's favour when they were trying to engage in these secret activities. It was recognised, for example, that although it was difficult for men in Southern Hunan to be out and about without garnering suspicion or being targeted, some women encountered the same resistance for similar but slightly different reasons. This is because local women in Southern Hunan were expected to stay home, and if one was too active and seen too often in

[492] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 424.
[493] Ibid., 434. See also: JSFL and JSDAG, *Jiangsu-sheng funü yundong*, 87.
[494] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 356.
[495] Ibid.
[496] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937,* 181.
[497] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 357.
[498] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong 1927 – 1937,* 181.

public spaces, then she might look suspicious and her actions would be scrutinised. These stereotypes made it difficult for some women to do what the party has instructed them to do.[499]

But there was also a lot of local diversity regarding these stereotypes about women's roles and responsibility in the domestic realm and beyond, because women had different ways of life across different Soviet bases. It was noted by officials in Dongjiang, for example, that the women from North-Western Dongjiang were quite easy to mobilise because they were not previously confined to domestic spaces. Most of these women had to work long hours in the fields, just like the men. Whereas in parts of southern Dongjiang, it was much harder for on-the-ground officials to mobilise women because most of these women stayed at home and did housework.[500] As such, it is likely the case that women in north-western Dongjiang had fewer issues being caught or garnering suspicion because they had always been out and about, whereas the problem that occurred in Southern Hunan might have been more apparent in Southern Dongjiang. What this illustrates is that, although in general, from the perspective of officials, the strategy of using women to do clandestine activities was likely effective and efficient (also evidenced by the fact that the strategy continued to be attempted and used in the different Soviet bases throughout the late 1920s until the Long March), it was also the case that some, if not many, civilian women resisted being mobilised as the work that they were required to do by officials was considered to be too dangerous, too risky, and would likely damage their reputation or standing within the local community. As we shall see in the next chapter, getting women to engage in these activities that took them out of the domestic realm, required a high degree of mobility and dealings with male strangers was indeed difficult for officials, and some types of women, such as prostitutes, made better recruits than others in the eyes of officials.

Conclusion

This chapter has found that alongside other duties such as singing songs, laundering, nursing, and cooking, women gathered intelligence and engaged in Soldier-Work in the Soviet bases.[501] Women spied on enemy men, and were despatched to contested border areas and Nationalist

[499] GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 434.
[500] Ibid., 399
[501] Ibid., 359; GXZFL, *Guangxi funü yundongshi ziliao huibian*, vol. 2, 109; ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1927 - 1937*, 239; FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 34; Jiangsusheng funü lianhehui and Jiangsusheng dang'anguan, eds., *Jiangsusheng funü yundongshi xuanliao*, 115.

occupied territories.[502] They were also mobilised to conduct Soldier-Work – to approach enemy men, foster rifts between the men and their commanders, and to get the soldiers to leave the Nationalist army or start uprisings. Officials made these decisions based on their views and understandings of women's social and biological difference compared to men. Officials were well-aware that women garnered less suspicion because there were widely-held gender stereotypes (likely also held by the enemy) that stipulates women as being secluded, apolitical and rather ignorant. As this chapter has shown, Zeng Shan, for example, argued that women were more suited to these activities because, based on previous experiences, women were less likely to be targeted, often went unnoticed by the enemy, and thus were better at these tasks.[503] Moreover, officials thought that women were suitable to these tasks because they were not disadvantaged by their biology. Instead, these attributes of such as being physically and being able to get pregnant helped these women fully utilise gendered stereotypes about women being weak and delicate to their advantage, and made them appear less suspicious in the eyes of the enemy.

[502] FGBXY, *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 293.
[503] JXSFL and JXDA, *Jiangxi suqu funü*, 20 – 21, 17.

Chapter 4: Women during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937 – 1945

Introduction

Recently declassified military intelligence reports written by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War (1937 – 1945) on both Nationalist and Communist activity now tell us that the Japanese were well-aware that not only Chinese men, but Chinese women were involved in various anti-Japanese activities. These documents show that the Japanese knew Chinese women were engaged in different forms of clandestine activities, such as the gathering and transporting of intelligence,[504] and that Japanese officials were instructed to beware of those who appeared to be vulnerable and innocent, including the ill, but also the elderly, children, and women.[505] In some cases, local Japanese units were also aware of various Communist Woman-Work organisations in operation that had an explicit anti-Japanese agenda, such as the Women's National Salvation League, and they even had lists of the local women involved, with notes that included their name, age, position within the organisation, and marital status.[506]

This chapter investigates these Chinese women mobilised by the CCP and the clandestine activities they engaged in against the Japanese. The Japanese intelligence reports were not the only sources that suggest Chinese women did indeed engage in secret anti-Japanese activities, especially in Japanese-occupied areas that went beyond production work. Surviving Communist sources also note that women, particularly civilian women, were mobilised to engage in these activities. By this time period, the Communist strategies when it came to women had evolved. But similar to before women were deemed especially suitable to engage

[504] Awaya Kentarö 粟屋 憲太郎 and Chatani Seiichi 粟屋 誠一, eds., *Nicchū sensō taichūgoku jōhōsen shiryō* 日中戦争対中国情報戦資料 *(Sino-Japanese War Historical Documents on the Intelligence War Against China),* vol. 6, (Gendai shiryö shuppan, 2000), 444. The Headquarters of Military Police Brigade for Central China (*Naka Shina haken kenpei shirei-bu* 中支那派遣憲兵司令部) warned its own officials through their intelligence report that Chinese women, like Chinese men, could transport intelligence, and one of the common ways for women to do so was to carry well-circulated newspapers which in fact contained secret messages written in special ink.

[505] Ibid., 444- 445. Officials were also instructed to search women when necessary, using female officers to do the search if she was present: Ibid., 450.

[506] Awaya Kentarö and Chatani Seiichi, eds., *Nicchū sensō taichūgoku jōhōsen shiryō* 日中戦争対中国情報戦資料 *(Sino-Japanese War Historical Documents on the Intelligence War Against China),* vol. 5, (Gendai shiryö shuppan, 2000), 601. The Japanese, too, held a biological view towards sex and like the Chinese had similar understandings regarding men and women. They believed that women in general were capable of gathering intelligence, as they, too, recruited female spies, formed female spy teams and thought that women made good candidates for spy work because of "a woman's nature": Kentarö and Chatani Seiichi, *Nicchū sensō,* vol. 6, 311. It is thus likely that at least some members of the female sex, which included Chinese women, were not just seen by the Japanese as purely victims, contrary to how existing scholarship and contemporary narratives conceptualise the relationship between Chinese women and Japanese men, as women were clearly thought by the Japanese as having the capacity to cause damage.

in forms of sabotage such as Enemy and Puppet Army Work (*Diweijun gongzuo* 敌伪军工作),[507] conducted in a way similar to Soldier-Work from the Soviet base era discussed in the previous chapter, and gathering and transporting intelligence. While it seems apparent that these civilian women were not exactly used as seductress-spies that were discussed in Chapter 1, as we have seen in the previous chapters and will see in this chapter, there were some overlaps regarding the attributes of seductress-spies and how officials mobilised civilian women. Namely, that civilian women were expected to be able to approach men without garnering suspicion, purely by the nature of their biological and social attributes.

As discussed briefly in previous chapters, not all local women were receptive to recruitment and mobilisation efforts. Similar problems persisted and this chapter will illustrate how certain types of women were thought to be superior recruits in some areas during the Sino-Japanese War because these women were willing to be travel and work in public, engage with men, and were risk-tolerant. Specifically, in the North during this period, local prostitutes or loose women colloquially referred to as "Worn-Out Shoes" were allowed and even encouraged to be mobilised. Aminda Smith has written about how officials tried to conform and reform prostitutes and noted how idealism and practical realities were contradictory parts of the re-education process of those who were categorised as vagrants.[508] In this earlier period, however, something different was going on despite the fact that officials also saw the need to reform (*gaizao* 改造)[509] prostitutes. This is because Worn-Out Shoes were believed to have certain characteristics which made them more effective recruits. For example, these women were thought to be more risk tolerant, more willing to leave their own domestic realm and venture into public spaces, and were more receptible to new ideology. As such, officials also found that it was easier to mobilise them due to these characteristics.

The argument of this chapter will be advanced in three parts. The first part examines how Secret Work, related policies, and Woman-Work continued to be relevant during the Sino-Japanese War. In 1937, a united front was formed between the Nationalists and the Communists when war officially broke out between the Japanese and the Chinese, but Secret Work and clandestine

[507] Puppet Army here refers to the army that the Japanese has formed via the recruitment of Chinese people from the territory that they have occupied. Enemy and Puppet Army Work thus refers to activities that were aimed at getting individuals from the Enenmy Army or the Puppet Army to rebel against their superiors, perform poorly their duties or abandon their postings.
[508] Smith, *Thought Reform*, 2.
[509] Reform, also known in this context as reeducation, thought reform or ideological reform, refers to CCP efforts (and campaigns) to transform and change individuals into accepting and embracing CCP rule.

activities and its policies continued. Civilian women were actively involved in these activities. Indeed Woman-Work done in enemy-occupied areas were often conducted secretly with the aim of mobilising women to resist and subvert the Japanese, while women based in Communist-occupied areas and territory behind enemy lines were secretly sent to enemy-occupied territories to start anti-Japanese resistance work there. The second part examines more specifically two forms of secret activities that women participated in in not just enemy-occupied territories but also in battle zones and territory behind enemy lines. It looks at the gathering and transporting of intelligence, and a form of sabotage called Enemy Puppet Army work (also known as Enemy-Work). Like in previous years, these kinds of work, instead of more physically demanding work, were deemed more suitable for women, and it was also believed that women could utilise various gender stereotypes to their advantage. On the other hand, however, this section also shows that work such as the gathering of intelligence required a high degree of mobility and public activity. These types of work thus also demanded that women not be subjected to the same stereotypes that they were utilising to deceive others. The last part illustrates the difficulty for the party to recruit women despite relatively clear and straightforward guidelines on paper, and examines their efforts and success in recruiting those who were labelled as "Worn-Out Shoes." It was recognised that these kinds of women made superior recruits.

Secret Work and Woman-Work during the Sino-Japanese War

In July 1937 the Central Committee drafted and issued an official declaration of cooperation with the Nationalists in order to jointly resist the Japanese, an agreement based on months of negotiations that took place beforehand.[510] The Communists declared that they had "already come to an understanding with the Chinese Nationalist Party, and will go into the national crisis together."[511] The CCP's primary goal was to "fight for the independence, freedom and liberation of the Chinese nation."[512] On paper, at least, the Communists were willing to dramatically change their previous policies and tactics that targeted the Nationalist Party because, according to a May 1937 report by Zhu De 朱德 in Yan'an 延安, "the enemy are the Japanese invading army" whereas the "previous opposition has now become a friendly army

[510] ZYWX and ZYDAG, eds., *JDYL*, vol. 14 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 369 – 371. Zhou Enlai engaged in talks with the Nationalists since earlier the year. He drafted several reports on the negeotiation process. For example, see: Ibid., 137 – 142.
[511] Ibid., 369.
[512] Ibid. This declaration was published by the Nationalists in September 1937.

who is resisting the Japanese."[513] The United Front, however, was a rather uneasy alliance for the Communists, and party-wide Secret Work policies remained and were adapted in this context to protect the Communists from both the Nationalists and the Japanese.[514] According to the Central Committee's August 1937 directive on principles of work regarding different geographical areas involved in the war, for example, officials had to "use all methods to fight for the party to go public and semi-public, but at the same time secret organisations of the party must be reinforced and expanded" and that it "should be adapted to the wartime situation" in order to "reinforce the local party's ability to work independently."[515] It is in this context that men and women continued to be mobilised during wartime.

Secret Work was conducted differently depending on the area of operation and whether it was a battle zone (*zhanqu* 战区) or guerrilla area (*youjiqu* 游击区), enemy-occupied area (*diqu* 敌区 or *dizhanqu* 敌占区) or territory behind enemy lines (*dihoufang* 敌后方). The differentiation of the kind of area in which the Communists were active is important because, as Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 argued, "in some places," such as enemy-occupied areas, what could be done legally "might become our main work, while in others," such as territory behind enemy lines or contested battle zones, "we might be operating semi-publicly" or there might be "relatively fewer public work [in that area] because Secret Work is still our main work."[516] In locations occupied by the Japanese, collaborators, or pro-Japanese forces, it was obvious, according to Liu, that Secret Work continued to be the dominant kind of work for on-the-

[513] Ibid., 190.
[514] While the Party prioritised cooperation with the Nationalists and transitioning the party and its work according to the new alliance as evidenced by orders to transition various aspects of the party, high-ranking officials were well aware of what happened in 1927 and the civil war period afterwards. The 1 November 1939 Central Committee decision on workregarding the masses stated that the party must "seriously avoid repeating past mistakes regarding work in Nationalist areas during the civil war period" and pay special attention to the party's Secret Work. See: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao dangshi jiaoyanshi 中共中央党校党史教研室, ed., *Zhonggong dangshi cankao ziliao* 中共党史参考资料 (Reference Materials on the Party History of the Chinese Communist Party), vol. 4, First Part (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1979), 124.
[515] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 14, 469. Explicit regulations were in place as a way to forbid Communists members from directly or indirectly endangering the party. The Regulations Regarding the Keeping of Party Secrets (*Baoshou dangnei mimi tiaoli* 保守党内秘密条例) issued by the Organisation Department of the Central Committee in 1937, for example, is one of these regulations. Officials were instructed that, for example, "no matter how close you are with someone who is not from the CCP, you should not leak party secrets to him," "you should not discuss anything regarding the party with any new person from a Nationalist-occupied territory, whether he was or is a CCP member," and "it is absolutely forbidden to discuss anything regarding the Red Army in Soviet bases and issues related to the party via letters that will go through the Nationalist post." See: ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 14, 260. Similarly, according to Central Committee's directive regarding work in guerrilla territory in the South (*Zhongzhong Zhongyang guanyu Nanfang ge youji quyu gongzuo de zhishi* 中共中央关于南方各游击区域工作的指示), "officials who do not need to publicly reveal themselves should not appear in front of the masses as a CCP member." See: Ibid., 418. While those who had infiltrated Nationalist political or bureaucratic institutions, were forbidden to participate in mass work, since they should "only provide cover for mass work, and do the work that he can do from his own position" in order to minimise the chances that the party will be compromised: Ibid.
[516] Ibid., 239.

ground Communists.[517] Although, according to high-ranking CCP official Zhang Wentian 张闻天, when available the party should be open to using public means to engage in their work for the sake of convenience, while also being prepared for any sudden changes and attacks by the enemy.[518] Meanwhile, in territories behind enemy lines (*dahoufang* 大后方), Secret Work was often preferred over armed Communist activities because this was more consistent with the Central Committee's general policy of "laying low for the long term, collecting power and waiting for a good opportunity," but also because local Communists often did not have the ability to "establish an independent and large military region, to be armed" or "have the slogans to mobilise the masses."[519] According to a 1941 letter written by Zhou Enlai to Mao regarding the party's operations in the South, Zhou suggested that Secret Work and armed military activities were "conflicting policies" in these territories because "if both go on at the same time, one line of work," specifically, Secret Work, "will definitely be sacrificed."[520] Moreover, Zhou pointed out that armed struggles were "easily detrimental to the policy of the United Front" and that the Nationalist Party would be able to find ways to infiltrate these militarised groups and wreak havoc from within.[521] To sum up, in "enemy-occupied areas, our work policy is sabotage… in territories behind enemy lines, our work is to construct" according to Liu Shaoqi in a speech he gave to the Women's Committee of the Central Committee in April 1945.[522]

The mobilisation of the masses, which included both men and women, continued to be a key part of Secret Work policies as individual officials, too, relied on blending in to the masses in order to stay undercover.[523] Woman-Work thus fell under the ambit of general Secret Work policies of the party during this period. Deng Yingchao, for example, argued on *Xinhua Daily* (*Xinhua Ribao* 新华日报) that Woman-Work aimed at mobilising women to participate in "helping the army to resist the Japanese" must be prepared for advances by the Japanese, and

[517] Ibid.
[518] Ibid., 293.
[519] Zhonggong Wuzhou diwei dangshi bangongshi 中共梧州地委党史办公室, *Kangri zhanzheng shiqi Zhonggong Guidong dixiadang* 抗日战争时期中共桂东地下党(The Underground Guidong Party of the Chinese Communist Party during the War of Resisting the Japanese) (Wuzhou: Wuzhou diqu yinshuachang, 1992), 25.
[520] Ibid.
[521] Ibid.
[522] Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu Beiyue-qu funü kangri douzheng shiliao bianjizu 晋察冀边区北岳区妇女抗日斗争史料编辑组, ed., *Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu funü kangri douzheng shiliao* 晋察冀边区妇女抗日斗争史料 (Historical Documents on Women's Struggles and Anti-Japanese Resistance Activities in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region) (Zhongguo Laonian lishi yanjiuhui, 1985), 37.
[523] According to Zhang Wentian, the army relied on the masses because "as long as our army becomes responsible for the tasks of mobilising the masses, organising the masses and arming the masses" then "our army …. is invincible." See: ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 14, 516.

willing to go underground to do Secret Work when necessary.[524] Indeed, following the change in the relationship between the CCP and the Nationalists, on paper the goal of Woman-Work also changed from mobilising women to fight the Nationalists to working with the Nationalists in order to resist the Japanese. This is because, as officials in the Women's Department of Guangdong Province thought at the time, that there is "only true liberation for women if there is liberation for the nation". [525] Likewise, the Outline of Woman-Work issued by the Organisation Department of the Central Committee (*Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu* 中共中央组织部) in September 1937, for example, declared the "basic task" of Woman-Work as "the mobilisation of women forces to join the War of Resistance, and to fight for the victory of the War of Resistance."[526]

Local women in Anti-Japanese bases were mobilised via party-led masses institutions such as Women's National Salvation League. [527] Within these masses-led institutions are Party Fractions (*dangtuan* 党团) whose main tasks were to provide a platform for party officials to educate non-party members, and to lead or help out with any of the on-the-ground work of institutions, and to report back to the Party Committee regarding any opinions or feedback that they have gathered from the masses. In other words, organisations such as the Women's National Salvation League worked closely with the CCP. Some high-ranking officials even

[524] Hebei-sheng funü lianhehui 河北省妇女联合会, *Hebei funü yundongshi ziliao xuanbian* 河北妇女运动史资料选辑 (Selected Documents on the History of the Women's Movement in Hebei), vol. 4 (Hebei-sheng funü lianhehui, 1986), 26. Likewise, in a 1941 directive regarding Woman-Work on Women's Day committees, the Central Committee made clear that it was important for the officials to "keep their heads down and work hard, while concealing party secrets seriously," in order to avoid the "obliteration of female revolutionary officials by anti-revolutionary forces." See: Ibid., 3.

[525] Guangdong-sheng funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui 广东省妇女运动历史资料编纂委员会 (hereafter GDFNBZ), *Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao huibian* 广东妇女运动历史资料汇编 (Selected Documents on the Women's Movement in Guangdong), 1937 - 1945 (Guangdong-sheng funü yundong lishi ziliao bianzuan weiyuanhui, 1988), 3.

[526] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1937 - 1945, 1. This sentiment is echoed throughout the Sino-Japanese War. In March 1939, the Women's Movement Committee of the Central Committee (*Zhonggong Zhongyang Fuwei* 中共中央妇委) issued an instruction letter regarding policies and tasks of the current women's movement (*Guanyu muqian funü yundong de fangzhen he renwu de zhishixin* 关于目前妇女运动的方针和任务的指示信), which stated that the present task of the women's movement is "to mobilise and organise a wider range of women to participate in all areas of work regarding the War of Resistance and nation-building." See: Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu Beiyue-qu, *Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu funü*, 11. This understanding was shared by Communist Woman-Work officials, apparent from their opinion pieces published in Communist periodicals. As Deng Yingchao, who wrote for *Women's Life* (*funü shenghuo* 妇女生活) argued in December 1938, the unity of all women despite of class difference is acceptable and should even be enthusiastically supported because "the Women's movement of China progresses and develops with the movement to liberate the Chinese nation, and is also an indispensable part of it." See: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1937 - 1945*, 8. Deng further calls for the unity of all women despite their class and declares her agreement and support for "the cooperation between the Nationalist and Communists and the cooperation between all parties," and "to work hard for the sake of the unity among all Chinese people and women." See: Ibid.,9.

[527] Some of these party-led masses institutions were called the Association of Women of All Sections of Society (*Gejie funü lianhehui* 各界妇女会) in the Anti-Japanese bases.

saw Party Groups within the masses institutions and the CCP's Women's Committees as one system instead of two separate systems.[528]

Woman-Work in Enemy-Occupied Areas

In this context, the mobilisation of women, especially in enemy-occupied areas and territories behind enemy lines, was often done secretly with the main aim of supporting the CCP and overthrowing or resisting the Japanese. A vivid, but likely exaggerated, account published in the Communist-managed and edited periodical *Women of China* (*Zhongguo Funü* 中国妇女) can perhaps give us a glimpse into what it was like to conduct Woman-Work in an enemy-occupied zone, and the possible consequences these women faced when exposed. The article describes the horrific death of a group of peasant women and members of the local Women's National Salvation League in the north of Shanxi 山西. As their work was conducted in secret, they held their meetings during the day in an underground coal mine in order to stay out of their enemy's sight. They would sleep there at night, only coming out of the mine disguised as the wives of miners for meals. Eventually, collaborators discovered their identity and led the Japanese to the entrance of the coal mine. It was claimed in the article that the Japanese were fearful of attacking these patriotic peasant women, and decided to release poisonous gas into the mine instead of physically confronting them.[529] Three women died instantly, while the others struggled out of the mine with their comrades' help. The article noted that three of the thirteen women were heavily pregnant, and described how one of the gassed women said "Long live the Chinese nation and long live women's emancipation", before she died.[530] Another one told female onlookers to fight on their behalf for the betterment of China and Chinese women. These women were praised as martyrs who died for the nation and for women. The article further described the reaction of onlookers, who were said to have wept roundly when they saw the bodies, many of them remembering what the Japanese had done to the onlookers and their families.[531]

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[528] Geng, *Zhongguo Gongchandang funü gongzuo shi*, 175.
[529] Coal mines in Shanxi were frequently subjected to poisonous gas, so whether the Japanese did in fact release gas into a coal mine is questionable. But it is likely that even if the women weren't killed by the Japanese the peasants and other locals would have thought that the Japanese did it.
[530] "*Li guifang tongzhi beinan jingguo* 李桂芳同志被难经过 (How Comrade Li Guifang Was Killed)," *Zhongguo funü* 2, no. 1 (1940): 8.
[531] Ibid.

Another text from *Women of China* illustrates how women who were recruited in Communist-occupied areas were often sent to enemy-occupied areas to start Woman-Work there. It was noted in one *Women of China* article that women relied on enhancing their outer appearance by looking more feminine in order to conceal their identity while travelling. This article in particular praised women who worked for the Women's National Salvation League, describing how they disguised themselves. It was reported that these Woman-Work officials from West Hebei (*Ji-Xi* 冀西) sneaked into enemy-occupied territories in order to expand Woman-Work there. They did so by pretending to be married women who were visiting their parents. The article noted how these women wore beautiful clothing, describing them literally as "shaking branches of blossoming flowers" (*huazhi zhaozhan* 花枝招展) in order to cross enemy lines in secret and avoid detection.[532] This article suggests that looking feminine and beautiful does not make these women more memorable in the eyes of the enemy. On the contrary, the article suggests that dressing and appearing in this way further evokes traditional gendered ideas and stereotypes about women being apolitical, domestic and ignorant in the minds of enemy men who might come across these women. As we shall see in the next section, similar techniques were used in other activities such as the gathering and relaying of intelligence.

It is now difficult to verify if specific details of these articles were true or largely exaggerated for propaganda purposes. The more possible conclusions we can get from these texts, however, is that conducting Woman-Work, especially in enemy-occupied areas, often required work to be conducted in secret and those who were involved dressed and acted in ways that emphasised their femininity so as not to look suspicious in the eyes of the enemy. Such work was also dangerous, entailed risks, and required women to travel outside their family home. Moreover, it consumed time and ate into their capacity to do other things, most commonly home chores and attending other family matters. As such, this section has shown that owing to the risks and opportunity costs, the women involved were likely to have had personal convictions on the matter of national salvation and were receptive to nationalism and Communist ideology.

Gendered Activities: Sabotage and the Gathering and Relaying of Intelligence

[532] "*Zouxiang jiefang de Ji-xi funü* 走向解放的冀西妇女 (The East Hebei Women Who Are Walking Towards Liberation)," *Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 3 (1939): 12.

Security continued to be an important issue and both men and women were used either as spies professionally by public security institutions or as civilians that were mobilised to engage in some form of spying or sabotage activity by other institutions. For example, public security institutions despatched personnel that gathered enemy intelligence while military units, such as the Eighth Route Army, had its own personnel from their Enemy-Work Departments (*Digongbu* 敌工部). In the Huainan Anti-Japanese Base, for example, the local Public Security Bureau (*Gonganju* 公安局) gathered enemy intelligence on the Japanese and collaborators, military intelligence, and political intelligence by establishing intelligence networks and deploying spies.[533] But, as we will see, civilian men and women were also mobilised to engage in some of these activities by officials, such as those in charge of Woman-Work. Once again, women continued to be deemed excellent candidates to engage in these due to the reasons discussed in previous chapters, which will be revisited in the coming sections. Similar to Woman-Work in enemy-occupied territories, such activities often required extensive travelling and being out in public spaces. In some cases, it also required women to be in close proximity with the enemy.

Principle Regarding the Allocation of Work

As discussed in previous chapters officials saw men and women as physically and mentally different and argued that they must be treated differently and mobilised to do different kinds of work. This continued to be the case during the Sino-Japanese War. As one Woman-Work official in Shandong says, "women are different from men."[534] Besides apparent physical characteristics, it was argued, for example, that women "have indeed less time and poorer memory" compared to men, and thus should be given shorter and simpler lessons.[535] It was also claimed that they were much more emotional, emotionally fragile, petty, reliant, and indifferent to politics due to "thousands of years of oppression."[536] Some considered women to be so emotional that even "losing a pen or breaking something can have an impact on their

[533] Anhui-sheng gonganting shizhiban 安徽省公安厅史志办 and Chu-xian xingshu gonganchu shizhiban 滁县行署公安处史志办, "*Huainan kang-Ri genjudi gonganshi changbian* 淮南抗日根据地公安史长编 (Long Edition of the Public Security History of the Huainan Anti-Japanese Base)," *GASZL* 14 (July 1989): 44 – 45.
[534] Shandong-sheng fulian xuanchuanbu 山东省妇联宣传部 (hereafter SDSFL), *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan* 山东妇运资料选 (Selected Documents on the Women's Movement in Shandong) (Shandong-sheng fulian xuanchuanbu, 1983),84.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu funü lianhehui 广西壮族自治区妇女联合会编印, ed., *Guangxi funü yundongshi ziliao huibian* 广西妇女运动史资料汇编 (Selected Materials on the History of the Women's Movement in Guangxi), vol. 4 (Nanning: Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu funü lianhehui, 1985), 193 – 194.

mood" since "they are narrow-minded and have relatively large mood swings."[537] Because of "the huge impact these qualities have on their reception of training and the methods of training," it was argued that women should be dealt with differently, and also allocated different kinds of work and responsibilities.[538]

As such, like accounts before the Sino-Japanese War described in previous chapters, even though there were mentions of women fighting in the frontlines, most official and non-official accounts describe how women were or should be mobilised to engage in non-combat activities. Political figure Song Qingling 宋庆龄,[539] for example, made clear that getting women, which consists of half of the population, to join the War of Resistance was not the equivalent of "telling all women to become a soldier and charge into battle" because Song and others held the view that activities which were heavily reliant on one's physical capabilities were unsuitable for women.[540] Similarly, according to a 1939 account by Yang Huanzhi 楊煥芝, a political instructor (*jiaodaoyuan* 教导员) of the New Fourth Army, local girls from *Jiulonggang* 九龙岗 were actively dissuaded from joining frontline activities due to their physical condition (as some girls had bound-feet) and were encouraged to "arm their brains" instead of being physically armed.[541] Apparently one of these girls approached an official and asked sincerely whether she could "become a soldier and save the nation."[542] While there is no way for us to verify the accuracy of Yang's account, it is indicative of the attitudes that officials in the party generally had. Like what was shown in previous chapters, it seems apparent that officials allocated tasks based on women's physical condition, abilities, and perceptions about their capabilities. While it was clear to CCP officials that women, especially those with bound feet, should not be mobilised to engage in actual combat, it was thought that the mobilisation of women in activities such as sabotage, spying, relaying, and gathering intelligence was more appropriate.

Sabotage

[537] Ibid., 195.
[538] Ibid., 194.
[539] Name is also Romanised as Soong Ching-ling. Also known as Madame Sun Yatsen.
[540] Song Qingling 宋庆龄, *Funü yu kangzhan* 妇女与抗战 (Women and the War of Resistance) (Zhanshi chubanshe, 1938), 11.
[541] Guangxi Zhuangzu, *Guangxi funü yundongshi ziliao huibian,* vol. 4, 17.
[542] Ibid., 16

One of the things civilian women were mobilised to do was "Enemy Puppet Army Work" (*diwejun gongzuo* 敌伪军工作), sometimes shortened to "Enemy-Work" (*digong* 敌工) whose aim was to "disintegrate the enemy army" (*wajie didren jundui* 瓦解敌人军队). Specifically, Enemy-Work refers to a series of strategic activities implemented by the Communists that are aimed at getting targeted individuals (enemy men) to abandon their duties, rebel, flee their posts or to convert to the Communists' side. Such activities include active persuasion by civilian men and women, putting up banners or posters and handing out leaflets which might be seen or read by enemy men. Enemy-Work was not just aimed at Japanese soldiers, who were called "Japanese Bandits", but it was also aimed at ethnically Chinese soldiers who worked for the Japanese and those from Taiwan (of whom were part of what was called "Puppet Troops" (*Weijun* 伪军) and Chosen Korea, then colonies of Japan during the war.

Enemy-Work fell into the ambit of specific institutions. The General Political Department (*Zong zhengzhi bu* 总政治部) of the Central Revolutionary Military Commission (*Zhonyang geming Junshi weiyuanhui* 中央革命军事委员会) established an Enemy-Work Branch in 1940. In many cases the implementation of such work was the responsibility of the military. The Eighth Route Army, for example, had an Enemy-Work Department which was in charge of setting up committees and mobilising the masses to engage in such work. In some enemy-occupied areas, for example, secret committees with the aim of sabotaging the enemy were established under the instruction of local Enemy-Work units.[543] The New Fourth Army also had a similar structure. Women were mobilised too, sometimes by the military but also through Woman-Work initiatives. Such work required extensive public activity and women (and men) to approach enemy men.

The Importance and Basic Functions of Enemy-Work

According to the then Minister (*buzhang* 部长) for Enemy-Work Department of the Eighth Route Army, Cai Xiaoqian 蔡孝乾,[544] Enemy-Work was important because it was a cost-

[543] Specifically, there were three dimensions regarding Enemy-Work. One dimension was propaganda work within one's own military unit where individuals were taught skills such as basic Japanese vocabulary and phrases, and how to interact with enemy army soldiers. Another dimension was on the dealings with prisoners of war. The third dimension was on the activity of approaching enemy army soldiers and officials and getting them to surrender, abandon their posts, or help the Communists.
[544] He later betrayed the Communists after 1949 and became a Nationalist official in Taiwan. During the Sino-Japaense War, the Japanese military were able to get hold of some of Cai's Chinese writings on strategies against the Japanese, which were translated into Japanese by the Japanese military. Thus, it might also be possible that they were aware of his other works: Kentarö and Seiichi, *Nicchū sensō,* vol.5, 371.

effective way for the Chinese to deal with a technologically much more advanced military which had better machines and equipment. In the handbook Cai wrote in 1938 *How to Conduct Disintegrating Enemy Army Work* under the name Cai Qian 蔡前, he argued that even though the Japanese had better planes, canons, and tanks then the Chinese, these machines are controlled by humans. Yet, "if these people don't want to sacrifice their lives for the Japanese warlords, then these war machines are the equivalent of useless junk."[545] Thus, Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Chosen Korean soldiers were approached and encouraged not to fight for the Japanese Imperial Army. The Japanese were told that "the Chinese people of the Chinese nation are not the enemies of the Japanese soldiers, and that the people of China and Japan should unite and fight the warlords and plutocrats of Japan."[546] They were also told "the strategy of invasion and war of warlords is not beneficial to the country of Japan and its people" and "Japanese soldiers should turn this war of invasion into a war of anti-fascism."[547] Chinese soldiers from Puppet Troops, on the other hand, were encouraged to abandon their positions, while Taiwanese or Chosen soldiers should be "encouraged to fight for their own liberation" and that "the Japanese invasion of China is only increasing their burden."[548]

Civilian men and women were mobilised to engage in Enemy-Work, especially regarding the approaching of enemy soldiers and officials and getting them to stop fighting the Chinese. Similar to what was previously called Soldier-Work, Enemy Puppet Work was deemed something that the masses could and should be mobilised to do.[549] This is because, according to Cai in a published version of his speech on Enemy Army Work in 1939, even though "the army itself should be engaged in sabotaging enemy army work" it is insufficient to rely purely on the army to do this kind of work "because it does not have as wide-ranging access as the masses".[550] Moreover, "soldiers are not as widely dispersed as ordinary people, and there are less chances for them to approach enemy soldiers with the exception of actual combat situations."[551] Yet, this was not the same for civilians who often had contact with the enemy and live around enemy bases, and thus "it is easy for them to approach enemy soldiers."[552]

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[545] Cai Qian 蔡前, *Zenyang zuo wajie dijun de gongzuo* 怎样做瓦解敌军的工作 (How to do Work that Disintegrates the Enemy Army) (Hankou: Shenghuo shudian, 1938), 1.
[546] *Jiefang* 解放 (Liberation), no. 110, July 19, 1940, 32.
[547] *Xin Zhonghua bao* 新中华报 (New China Daily), April 28, 1939, 2.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Ibid. See also: Cai Qian, "*Dijun gongzuo jianghua* 敌军工作讲话 (Speech on Enemy Army Work)," *Balujun junzheng zazhi* 八路军军政杂志 (Magazine of the Eighth Route Army) 1, no. 12 (1939): 82. See also: Cai Qian, "*Dijun gongzuo jianghua* 敌军工作讲话 (Speech on Enemy Army Work)," *Balujun junzheng zazhi* 1, no. 10 (1939): 80.
[550] Cai, "*Dijun gongzuo*," no. 12: 82.
[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid.

Women's Role

Civilian women were encouraged to engage in these activities by officials from the military and were also mobilised via Woman-Work, as it was recognised that women were once again useful in the task of approaching individual members of the enemy and engaging in activities that sabotaged their military. It was reported by Yan'an newspaper *Liberation* (*Jiefang* 解放), for example, that in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region women formed self-defence teams (*Ziweidui* 自卫队), in which the physically strongest women were given basic training on the techniques used in Enemy and Puppet Work, likely to include teachings on things such as what women should say to enemy men.[553] Similarly, in Chen Ruoke's report about Woman-Work in Shandong, she put forward the case that there must be "plans to train officials to engage in enemy and puppet work" and "plans to establish women work teams regarding enemy puppet work" according to the local situation in enemy-occupied territories.[554] Those engaged in this area of work should, according to Chen, be "loyal and reliable, as well as able to keep secrets." In terms of personality, these women could not be "exaggerative or short-tempered." They should also be efficient and effective in their work – someone who "can fight for or actually sabotage and divide Chinese soldiers from Puppet Troops and Puppet Organisations (organisations deemed created and controlled by Japanese militarists but were run by Chinese) without alerting the enemy or having their own work sabotaged."[555]

Exactly how women could engage in this area of work and why they should be mobilised can be found in a comprehensive guide entitled "How women should engage in sabotage and enemy puppet army work," published in *Masses Daily* on August 10, 1940, likely written by a Communist with the pen name Ping Quan 平权. He described Enemy-Work as "a new and immediate task" that "women should also be partly responsible for" together with men.[556] Not only "because there are many tasks that women can do alongside men," such as "composing propaganda leaflets, comics, slogans and other propaganda work" but "at the same time,

[553] *Jiefang,* no. 66, March 8, 1939, 14. While Enemy-Work does not include combat activities, it is unclear in this context why physically-strong women were given training and mobilised. Perhaps this is because many women in that area had bound feet and were thus relatively immobile, whereas those physically strong could travel greater distances. It was also possible that that these women were required to wait or stand around at certain places for a long period of time, which could be a physically taxing activity.
[554] SDSFL, *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan*, 99.
[555] Ibid., 100.
[556] Ibid., 119.

women can also use specific methods" when engaging in this task that men cannot use.[557] To support this argument the writer listed four methods, which, according to him, had been tried and tested but were not yet widespread practices. Firstly, "women can use all old relationships to approach Enemy Puppet Soldiers, such as through friendships or family relations.[558] In particular, elderly women can use their "motherly kindness" to approach Enemy Puppet Soldiers in order to influence and persuade him."[559] Secondly, the writer described how officials could mobilise female relatives of enemy soldiers, and "once they are persuaded" to "get them to think of ways to influence her son or husband and to get them to leave the enemy fake army."[560] According to this official, this tactic could also have an impact on other soldiers.[561] Thirdly, female relatives could "persuade the relatives of the enemy soldier," in order to get them mobilised to join in persuading their sons and husbands to leave the enemy army.[562] Lastly, Chinese women, especially "women who are related to those engaged in the War of Resistance or to those who have sacrificed" can "under suitable environments… use various methods to unite with Japanese women, and let them understand the sins of Japanese warlords together with our attitudes" which can "indirectly sabotage the enemy."[563] These direct and indirect methods are all premised upon the view that women were less likely than men to garner suspicion, and that their appearance and temperament could better connect with other men and women and be more persuasive.

Gathering and Transporting Intelligence

As briefly mentioned, gathering intelligence was an important activity that was initiated by mainly public security institutions as it was recognised that this was crucial to maintaining the security of Communist-controlled areas.[564] The Central Committee SAD was established in February 1939 by the Central Committee Secretariat (*zhongyang shujichu* 中央书记处) which was mainly involved with tasks such as espionage and counter-espionage.[565] Local security institutions also trained and despatched their own agents. For example, agents in Huainan base,

[557] Ibid.
[558] Ibid.
[559] Ibid.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Ibid.
[562] Ibid.
[563] Ibid., 120.
[564] Anhui-sheng gonganting shizhiban and Chu-xian xingshu gonganchu shizhiban, "*Huainan*," 42.
[565] ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史史料 (Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP), vol. 3, First Part (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 49.

especially those who were particularly talented, deemed effective and politically reliable were trained and then sent to infiltrate puppet organisations or enemy institutions. [566] In Baoding 保定, training and courses such as "Reconnaissance Work" (*Zhencha gongzuo* 侦查工作) and "Intelligence Work" (*Qingbao gongzuo* 情报工作) were taught to security cadres.[567] Those deemed good spy material included converted enemy spies and individuals who were trained and instructed to provide intelligence to the Communists.[568] Other possible spy candidates, according to instructions issued by the Hebei-Shandong-Henan Region Party Committee (*Ji-Lu-Yu Qu Dangwei* 冀鲁豫区党委), included local party members who ordinarily resided or worked in the area; secret, unexposed party members; or sympathisers who were loyal to the party, whose allegiance wasn't obvious to members of the public.[569]

Meanwhile, civilian men and women were also mobilised, sometimes by institutions that were not public security institutions, to engage in some aspects of these activities. This is because officials recognised that civilian women should be mobilised to engage in different areas of spy work[570] since, according to officials such as Deng Yingchao, "spying on the enemy and gathering enemy intelligence are also a part of Woman-Work during wartime."[571] In Shandong, for example, it was contended that "alert rural and village women and minors should be organised into the spy team in order to spy on collaborators in nearby areas,"[572] and getting women to spy and gather enemy intelligence was an item in the Shandong Federation of Woman-Work Outline issued and published in August 1940.[573] It was also proposed by officials like Deng Yingchao that women's aid groups should be despatched to enemy-occupied territories to "established work in battle zones and enemy-occupied territory."[574] These members, along with those who could be mobilised locally, did various kinds of aid work akin to the support work that women did in the Soviet bases, but also "gathering enemy intelligence" and sabotage work such as "help[ing] sabotage the relaying of intelligence by the

[566] Anhui-sheng gonganting shizhiban and Chu-xian xingshu gonganchu shizhiban, "*Huainan*," 43.
[567] Baoding diqu xingshu gonganchu 保定地区行署公安处, "*Zhanzheng niandai de Ji-zhong gongan baowei ganbu xunlianban* 战争年代的冀中公安保卫干部训练班 (Training Classes Given to Security Cadres in Central Hebei During Wartime)," *GASZL* 19 (January 1991): 67.
[568] Anhui-sheng gonganting shizhiban and Chu-xian xingshu gonganchu shizhiban, "*Huainan*," 43.
[569] Henan-sheng gonganting lishizhi bangongshi 河南省公安厅史志办公室 and Shandong-sheng gonganting zhengce falü yanjiushi 山东省公安厅政策法律研究室, "Ji-Lu-Yu-qu gongan shi ziliao changbian 冀鲁豫区公安史资料长编 (Long Edition of the Public Security History of Hebei-Shandong-Henan Region)," *GASZL* 20 (March 1991): 28 – 29.
[570] GDFNBZ, *Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao huibian* 1937 - 1945, 198.
[571] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1937 - 1945, 47.
[572] Ibid., 64.
[573] SDSFL, *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan*, 112.
[574] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1937 - 1945, 14. See also: Ibid., 51.

enemy, and when necessary help[ing] … [our] army disrupt the enemy."[575] Indeed, civilian men and women both engaged in these kinds of activities. Women, in particular, were expected to travel and venture into dangerous areas, and be good at such tasks, because their sex and gender provided them advantages to doing such activities.

The gathering and relaying of intelligence were applicable and relevant endeavours for women regardless of the area of activity. The 1937 September outline by the Organisation Department of the Central Committee on Woman-Work emphasised the importance of training and mobilising women in light of the War of Resistance.[576] As the Outline illustrates, there was a need to "educate the masses under various Women's National Salvation organisations," and to provide classes for women on not only politics, singing, and nursing, but also on spying and military affairs.[577] In enemy-occupied territories, women were asked to gather enemy intelligence and engage in sabotage, such as initiating "the joining and helping of the guerrilla army, establish[ing] and reinforc[ing] anti-Japanese regimes, overturn[ing] false collaborator organisations, gather[ing] enemy intelligence… sabotag[ing] poisonous and enslaving policies, and be[ing] prepared to engage with our army's retaliation" and even the very violent task of", beat[ing] and kill[ing] collaborators."[578] For battle zones, women were asked to "focus on supporting the battle of the army, encourage soldiers to kill the enemy, gather intelligence, act as local guides, cook, sew, make shoes and socks, deliver tea and water, nurse injured soldiers, take care of refugees, produce food stock, transporting goods, etc."[579]

Intelligence gathered and provided by organised civilians was important because what was gathered also had an impact on resistance activities organised by other institutions. It was, for example, crucial "for the guerrilla forces to win battles against the enemy," because, as Zhu De put it, "besides the adoption of correct battle strategies and battle techniques, there must be… adequate, organised support received from the masses," such as the gathering of intelligence, in order for the guerrilla forces to "hide their own activities, get hold of enemy intelligence, and receive nutrients and supplies from the people, otherwise, not only will the guerrilla forces not be able to be victorious, but they won't even be able to survive."[580] Gathering enemy intelligence was also important for Enemy-Work because, as Cai Qian has

[575] Ibid., 46.
[576] Ibid., 6.
[577] Ibid., 7.
[578] SDSFL, *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan*, 30.
[579] Ibid., 31.
[580] ZYWX and ZYDAG, *JDYL*, vol. 14, 576.

argued, without such activity "then we cannot know the internal conditions of the enemy army," which is necessary for the "accurate exposure of the political lies made by the enemy" and for the Communists to "achieve the goal of sabotaging the enemy."[581] Moreover, this kind of job was not exclusive to those directly affiliated with the Eighth Route Army, according to Cai, but was also open to the civilian men and women from masses organisations, as well as refugees who are "passionately patriotic, brave, willing to sacrifice for the country, and those who are determined and wise" because they have more chances to encounter the enemy.[582]

Women's Role in the Gathering and Relaying of Intelligence

As in the early 1930s, the organisation of civilian women to contribute to the war was largely contingent upon perceived physical and biological conditions of the two sexes.[583] But besides being perceived as merely physically suitable to gather and transport intelligence, it was also recognised that, similar to accounts mentioned in previous chapters, women were particularly good at these kinds of work and their efforts yielded excellent results. As Yu Yu has argued in Masses Daily (*Dazhong ribao* 大众日报) in May 1939, "women and men can similarly be responsible for all kinds of difficult work regarding the persistent War of Resistance. Furthermore, in some kinds of work" such as gathering enemy intelligence and spying on collaborators, "women are much more effective at it then men."[584] Women were, for example, mobilised to spy on both male and female collaborators. It was also considered useful for women to spy on other women during the course of their everyday life. As the propaganda outlet of the Women's National Salvation League puts it, "Collaborators do not consist of only male collaborators, but there are also women who are collaborators! They dress very well and hide amongst ordinary people. Collaborators are not only arrested by the military but [their arrest] mostly still relies on the masses. Thus, when aunties and sisters are visiting homes of

[581] Cai, "*Dijun gongzuo*," no. 12: 80.
[582] Ibid.
[583] The gathering of intelligence was deemed suitable for both men and women despite the perceived physical and biological differences. According to Zeng Shan, for example, some of the things that men and women should be taught and mobilised to do were different. While men should be taught skills such as how to destroy roads, bridges, and railway tracks, and how to make and place mines, women and young children, on the other hand, should be taught less physically taxing tasks such as how to take care of injured soldiers. Both men and women, however, should be taught how to gather intelligence. By implication, Zeng is suggesting that women and children were generally physically disadvantaged in doing work that required a large degree of physicality and strength. On the contrary, the gathering and relaying of intelligence were perceived and understood as fine for women because it did not require heavy labour: Zeng Shan 曾山, *Zeng Shan wenji* 曾山文集 (Works by Zeng Shan), ed. Zhonggong Jiangxi shengwei dangshi yanjiushi 中共江西省委党史研究室 (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2019), 195.
[584] SDSFL, *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan*, 33.

relatives and neighbours, they must always pay attention to this issue."[585] It was also noted that women could also engage in acts of seduction when apprehending suspected members of the opposite sex. One article on *Women of China* lauded the work done by a young married woman who was standing guard at the entrance of the village when she spotted a man who was carrying a suspicious-looking bag. It was noted that the woman smiled seductively in order to engage with him and found out from their conversation that he was heading towards enemy-occupied territory. She flirted with him, flattering the man, and took him home with her. She then instructed members of the Self-Defence Army (*Ziweidui* 自卫队) to arrest him and he was later found to be a collaborator.[586]

Accordingly, women involved with the gathering and relaying of intelligence would acquire outer appearances and personas that were the most natural and convincing. Like what was described in previous chapters, this often meant acquiring more feminine appearances, or what was perceived to be more feminine at that location and time, and using excuses to travel that stemmed from existing gender stereotypes. An example that emphasises this is discussed in *Women of China*, which praises two women for their work. This gives us an insight into how individual women could have practically applied these principles in gendered ways while in action. In particular, it was noted that women would dress in certain ways that accentuate their femininity and would use props that complemented their appearance as a harmless peasant woman. As such they actively use the perception that women are informed, brave or interested enough to engage in politically-related activities to their advantage, with the knowledge that their lies were likely believed more than men's. Specifically, in this article two women were featured. One was Aunt Meng 孟嫂子, who was described as a barely literate, married peasant woman in her thirties. According to the article, Meng regularly provided cover for other CCP members and liaison officers (*jiaotongyuan*) who were officials dedicated to the task of relaying and transporting intelligence. The other woman featured in this anecdote was a female liaison officer. On one occasion, Meng and the liaison officer had to cross highways and railway tracks at night, which were guarded by the Japanese, in order to relay some important intelligence. To accomplish this task, Meng and the female liaison officer pretended to be a mother and daughter who had to visit a relative's home. Meng was described as having dressed up as an old woman by wearing her mother-in-law's loose clothing. Perhaps to appear more

[585] Ibid., 24. See also: Ibid., 27.
[586] "*Kangzhan liangnian lai de funü gongzuo* 抗战两年来的妇女工作 (Woman-Work during these Two Years of the War of Resistance)," *Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 4 (1939): 5.

feminine and elderly, thus appearing more harmless, she sported a fake hair bun with flowers and a silver hair clasp. The female liaison officer was a younger woman who disguised herself as Meng's daughter. She carried a woven basket filled with eggs and noodles wrapped in paper, with important documents hidden underneath. When asked what she and the younger woman were doing in the dark, Meng answered that she and her younger daughter were visiting her elder daughter who had just given birth and needed extra help.[587]

While the aforementioned article from *Women of China* likely contains details that are exaggerated for propaganda purposes, similar situations and tactics were also recorded and described in official reports, which illustrate situations where civilian women, fully utilising stereotypes about women, were able to venture into dangerous territory and gather intelligence, even in situations where better trained and proper Communists spies are unable to do so. Like Aunt Meng, women would dress up and Chen Ruoke 陳若克, an Executive Committee member of the Women's Federation of Shandong Province during the war, stated explicitly that women from "all areas [in Shandong] relayed quite a bit of intelligence," and "women will take on this task" especially "during the worst situations where even ordinary people (men) are not able to engage in this activity."[588] In particular, civilian "women who take on intelligence work… has her advantages."[589] Accordingly, civilian women were good at their intelligence tasks because these women were able to use common stereotypes about a women's perceived weakness and political indifference. Women also utilised some of their physical attributes to help them in this work. As Chen reported, women "put letters into their hair buns, pretended to be visiting relatives, and delivered it [the letter]."[590] Motherhood, while often considered a burden for women to engage in production or physical combat, also helped, or at least did not hinder, a woman from this work. As Chen has stated, some women in Shandong "relayed intelligence while carrying a baby" in order to appear less suspicious, and perhaps out of necessity since there might not be other people available for childcare.[591]

Chen also mentioned other examples to support her argument that "we need to make it more common" for women to engage in gathering intelligence because of their effectiveness.[592]

[587] "*Huabei dihou de jige muqin*," *Zhongguo funü*, 16.
[588] SDSFL, *Shandong fuyun ziliao xuan*, 65.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Ibid.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Ibid.

Chen described how an elderly woman was despatched to gather intelligence because the area was occupied by the Japanese in a way that even professional (and very likely male) spies could not get through. This elderly woman took some incense paper and pretended to be going on a trip to burn incense at a temple in the occupied area. Apparently, the enemy did not hurt her, and even took her around for a quick tour while telling her to tell others that the "Imperial Japanese Army is very very good."[593] According to Chen, this elderly woman managed to count the number of weapons the enemy had, and this piece of intelligence was vital in the army's subsequent destruction of the Japanese. On another occasion, as recounted by Chen, a woman who sold fried dough was able "to tell the army the intelligence she gathered every day in the county town."[594] This was useful for the military because "her report" could "also establish whether the reports from [our] spies are correct or not."[595] In Hebei, too, it was noted by Kang Keqing that, mobilised by Woman-Work officials, "many women used a variety of different ways to spy for the army or deliver messages."[596]As such, while civilian women were sometimes differentiated and labelled differently from those who were officially called spies in these texts, it is apparent that the women involved did engage in forms of spy work, by either gathering and relaying information, and that it was recognised that they were and could be successful in this endeavour.

Worn-Out Shoes: Tensions that Arose from their Recruitment

Although it seems clear that civilian women should have been mobilised to engage in activities that required a high degree of public activity and occasional, if not frequent, interactions with strangers and enemy men, actual mobilisation efforts were met with resistance and general scepticism by local men and women. In 1939, members of the public protested against the Women's National Salvation League branch located in the suburbs of west Beiping. During one of the meetings, rocks were thrown from outside, breaking windows and threatening the safety of those inside. While these incidents were brushed off by officials as the actions of reactionary forces who opposed women's liberation, they were still acts of protests against the activities of these organisations.[597] A lot of women had no desire to attend CCP activities, or

[593] Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid.
[596] Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu Beiyue-qu, *Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu funü*, 73.
[597] Sun Pujin 孙普金, "*Beiping xijiao di funü* 北平西郊底妇女 (Women in the East Subburbs of Beiping)," *Zhongguo funü* 2, no. 4 (1940): 21.

reacted negatively to their mobilisation and recruitment efforts. Many of these women, continued to be deeply influenced by Confucian ideals, and to leave their family home for long periods of time was frowned upon by family elders and others in the local community. Moreover, older women who had a higher status within the family and community were often more conservative and disapproving of younger women abandoning their home chores and familial duties for revolutionary work. As such, while the Communists were theoretically open to recruiting all kinds of women, in practice certain types of women made easier and more practical recruits. Specifically, Worn-Out Shoes – prostitutes, including those who were considered as loose women, were pragmatically recruited and mobilised even though officials recognised that the recruitment of these women carried other baggage.[598] It was determined, however, that specific sets of gender norms and attributes related to these types of women made it more suitable for them to be recruited and mobilised to engage in resistance work.

Recruitment: Possibilities and Ideals

Theoretically, during this period, all kinds of women could be recruited as officials were not restricted to recruiting mostly female workers and peasants like the late 1920s and early 1930s. This was because nationalism and the maintenance of the united front now trumped class warfare in the face of an external invader. In short, the mobilising of all kinds of women was to be prioritised during war time. In September of 1937, for example, the Woman-Work outline by the Organisation Department stated that Woman-Work must "unite all classes and women masses around the party through activities and organisation of a united front."[599] The outline further stated that the party should now fight for different demographics of women, instead of focusing on the needs and rights of female workers and peasants. Specifically, the needs of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoise women, which included inheritance rights and education rights, should also be advocated for by officials on behalf of these women, and were subsequently listed alongside the needs of women peasants and women workers.[600] When officials, for example, found themselves in an organisation (such as Federation for All Women (*Gejie funü lianhehui* 各界妇女联合会), Federation for Women to Resist the Enemy (*Funü kangdi houyuanhui* 妇女抗敌联合会), Women's Consolation Society (*Funü weilaohui* 妇女

[598] It is not a surprise that the party saw prostitutes as useful to mobilise. In Guangdong, the CCP attempted to mobilise prostitutes as early as the 1920s as local officails recongised that they were a useful social constituent to the party. See: GSFLH and GSDAG, *Guangdong*, 403.
[599] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 1937 - 1945, 1.
[600] Ibid., 1 – 2.

慰劳会) that included other women of different classes, officials were instructed to set an agenda where women of all classes could resist the enemy together.[601]

This also meant that the target of women's mobilisation has expanded to those who were in the past deemed as a class enemy or were previously narrated in official party discourse as highly undesirable and morally questionable groups of individuals. According to the 1937 Woman-Work outline, the main targets of Woman-Work were not only those in the past deemed more vulnerable and victimised, such as the usual "workers, peasants, poor urban women, female students" but also other types of working women "including female teachers, doctors, artists, lawyers" and even "dance hostesses and housewives."[602] High ranking officials such as Deng Yingchao also specifically called for the unity of those in "politics, arts, professional world" and "students, those who believe in Jesus, God and other religions, workers and peasant women, homemakers. Because women of all sectors, due to their different environment, different economic situation, different social status, will have different functions and power."[603] This marked a shift from earlier ideology where the party prioritised the recruitment of women workers and peasants women during late 1920s and early 1930s.

Practical Difficulties

Despite the expansion regarding the kinds of women who could theoretically be recruited, in practice, the recruitment and the mobilisation of women continued to be difficult for on-the-ground officials and the widening of the categories of women available to be mobilised by the party meant that party officials were no longer bound by mobilising only certain types of women. This has been briefly examined in earlier chapters but, as we shall see in this section, the problem persisted during the Sino-Japanese War. In some base areas, for example, on-the-ground Woman-Work officials observed that while most active women had already joined the CCP, the rest of the female population who were not already affiliated with the party often lived in seclusion and were "impossible to win over."[604] They rarely left their homes and had little contact with those who were not from their immediate family households.[605] It was also noted that some rural peasant women in Hebei were reluctant to work for the CCP, because

[601] Ibid., 4.
[602] Ibid., 5.
[603] Ibid., 11.
[604] Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu Beiyue-qu, *Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu funü*, 60.
[605] Ibid.

they were very shy and saw the public nature of such work to be inappropriate, as it was considered indecent for a woman to be frequently seen in public.[606] Yet as we previously established, being able to travel and be seen in public spaces was crucial to many activities that women were mobilised to do during wartime.

The West Shanxi Women's Federation (*Jin-Xi Fulian* 晋西妇联), for example, was short of people to do Woman-Work in the area and faced severe operational difficulties in 1940. It was claimed that some of the officials previously in charge of Woman-Work had been arrested and killed by the Japanese, and their affiliated organisation severely sabotaged by enemy forces. Officials who survived were relocated elsewhere, so there was a shortage of new talent and recruits who could take over existing duties and work undercover in the area. These obstacles severely hindered the progress of their work and the Federation decided that it was a matter of urgency for local Communists to re-establish Woman-Work organisations in their area, and to recruit women who could engage in Woman-Work.[607]

Additionally, from the instructions and advice given to on-the-ground officials on how to avoid common pitfalls, we are given more insight regarding the problems that local on-the-ground officials likely encountered. Woman-Work official Kang Keqing's 康克清 report "Women's Movement in the Past Three Years" (*Sannian lai de funü yundong* 三年来的妇女运动*)* published on *Women of China* is one of these texts that shows that civilian women encountered by officials were generally stubborn and sceptical:

According to our experience regarding the propaganda and education work directed to peasant women, one should pay attention to [the following]: one must understand the everyday habits and attributes of peasant women, and learn habits that are deemed appropriate to them. Do not let them become fearful and thus reluctant to approach you because they think that you are strange. To approach and organise peasant women, one can start from developing emotional ties. One can utilise local customs by first organising sisterhood, [and] motherhood groups, before expanding these groups into women's salvation leagues. The process of education should start with solving their personal issues first, [therefore] do not start with

[606] Hebeisheng funü lianhehui 河北省妇女联合会, ed., *Hebei funü yundongshi ziliao xuanji* 河北妇女运动史资料选辑 Compiled Volume of Materials Related to the History of the Women's Movement in Hebei, vol. 4 (Shijiazhuang: Hebeisheng funül ianhehui, 1986), 94.
[607] "*Jin-Xi fulian diyici daibiao dahui* 晋西妇联第一次代表大会 (The First Congress of the Women's Federation in West Shanxi)," *Zhongguo funü* 2, no. 3 (1940): 23- 24.

lectures about resisting the Japanese and national salvation. Often Woman-Work can achieve very good results by having women from respected families in the villages or intellectuals to push for [women's rights]."[608]

Similar advice was given to officials regarding peasant Woman-Work in the Chaozhou and Shantou area:

... [One must] become adapted to the [local] environment. Try not to "start something new in order to be different." In their conservative views, this is a very evil and a very bad thing. It will result in them being too afraid to approach you, and [they will] gossip about you... Be patient, thorough and calm to anyone [you deal with]. Do not take sides. Due to their selfishness and short-sightedness, they can get significant mood swings. Thus when they are in a bad mood, you will have to find ways to cheer them up, and when they are excited, you must be able to exert an appropriate amount of control over them...[609]

These texts that offer some tried and tested solutions to possible problems reveal that it was common for officials to meet conservative women who were highly risk-tolerant. It was also likely the case that many of these women were, at least initially, unreceptive to progressive thought and ideology, and that it would take a considerable amount of time and effort to recruit and mobilise them.

The Recruitment of Worn-Out Shoes

As such, some local officials found the recruitment and mobilisation of women who had a reputation for being sexually promiscuous and/or were in fact clandestine prostitutes, colloquially known in the north of China as Worn-Out Shoes (*poxie* 破鞋), easier and more effective. Many of these women were recruited and mobilised even though their recruitment also entailed some other inconveniences, which will be explained later in this chapter. Indeed, due to what officials considered these women's gendered characteristics as Worn-Out Shoes, officials knew from quite early onwards that these women were both useful in the short term for the party, and detrimental in the long-run.

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[608] Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu Beiyue-qu, *Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu funü*, 70.
[609] GDFNBZ, *Guangdong funü yundong lishi ziliao huibian* 1937 - 1945, 229 – 230.

The most obvious reason for their mobilisation was the observation that they were vast in number in some areas of northern China, such as Shanxi and Hebei, which meant that many of them were available to be recruited and mobilised.[610] Because of this, the West Shanxi Women's Federation, for example, made an official decision to recruit more Worn-Out Shoes into their organisation, which officials thought was one important way for them to expand their base and reach their goal of recruiting one hundred thousand members.[611] In Ding County 定县, around 600 Worn-Out Shoes were encouraged to work for the Women's National Salvation League, then newly established in the local area. They were paid to attend training and functions organised by the League, some of them even becoming women's representatives (*funü zhuren* 妇女主任) later on.[612] It was rather optimistically noted how many of them were so capable and popular that members of the public often did not realise that they had been prostitutes previously until much later on.[613] In Jin-Xi-Bei 晋西北, Worn-Out Shoes were found to be more hard working and capable than women from higher status families because they were able to bear hardships[614] and tolerate demanding though tedious work, so were less likely to quit their jobs.[615]

But Worn-Out Shoes were popular recruits not only because they were considered to be good at their jobs and were plentiful in number, but also because officials believed that they possessed certain characteristics that made them more receptive to new ideas and they were less hidebound by Confucian codes of conduct that otherwise restricted ordinary peasant women. Specifically, compared to women who were confined at home, Worn-Out Shoes had relatively more life experience and were directly exposed to the harshness and reality of life. Thus, it was believed that they were generally more receptive to "enlightened" ideas advocated by the CCP that rejected the Confucian claim that women should be chaste, secluded, apolitical and modest.[616] Moreover, these women had greater exposure to different kinds of people due to the nature of their sex work and were less likely to be bound by "feudal traditions" and

[610] "*Zailun poxie wenti* 再论破鞋问题 (Revisiting the Issue of Worn-Out Shoes)," *Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 5/6 (1940): 14.
[611] "*Jin-xi fulian*," *Zhongguo funü*, 23- 24.
[612] *"Ding-xian de funü* yundong 定县的妇女运动 (The Women's Movement in Ding County)*," Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 4 (1939): 12.
[613] "*Zailun poxie wenti*," *Zhongguo funü*, 15 – 17.
[614] Shanxi daxue Jin-Ji-Lu-Yu bianqu shi yanjiuzu 山西大学晋冀鲁豫边区史研究组, ed., *Jinjiluyu bianqu shiliao xuanpian* 晋冀鲁豫边区史料选编 (Compiled Volume of Historical Materials Related to the Shanxi-Hebei-Shandong-Henan Border Region), vol. 2 (Taiyuan: Shanxi daxue Jin Ji Lu Yu bianqu shi yanjiuzu, n.d), 189.
[615] "*Zailun poxie wenti*," *Zhongguo funü*, 15 – 17.
[616] Ibid., 14.

values that required younger women to stay confined within the home.[617] As these women were likely already known in the local community for having loose morals, their presence in public (which would have been deemed indecent for non-prostitutes), were probably less likely to create even more gossip or garner much suspicion.

According to a report on the development of the Women's Movement in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region, for example, women who had a bad reputation were tactfully used by officials at the beginning of local Woman-Work endeavours specifically because they were more outspoken, bold in their actions, and willing to be seen in public because they were unafraid of being laughed at or condemned by locals for causing trouble. This strategy allowed Woman-Work at the initial stage to be established and conducted smoothly.[618] Likewise, similar benefits regarding the usage of these women are apparent from a report that summarises and evaluates Woman-Work in north China written by Woman-Work official and Peng Dehuai's wife at the time, Pu Anxiu 浦安修:

… "Worn-Out Shoes," a kind of very romantic (here used as a euphemism for promiscuous) woman who is perceived as having a bad reputation by people in society, are bold in action and words within the villages, and are relatively [more] susceptible to new thought. We have fought for their right to [be able to] help do work at the Women's National Salvation League. Through them we have also spread messages such as "equality among men and women," [and] "women's liberation" in the villages, which has influenced ordinary women…

Officials publicly justified the recruitment of these women by describing them as similar to other kinds of ordinary and working women worthy of recruitment to the party. Published articles on *Women of China* emphasised that prostitution was an undesirable and inevitable by-product of capitalism, semi-colonialism, and war, and that rural prostitutes were victims of the allegedly unfair social, political, and economic systems at the time which left them no choice but to engage in prostitution.[619] Communist writers firmly rejected the claim that these women turned to prostitution because they were not strong enough to resist the temptation to do so, but instead argued that they were coerced by external circumstances such as war and poverty to engage in such activities. Many of these women, for example, could not participate in politics

[617] Ibid., 15 – 17.
[618] Hebei-sheng funü lianhehui, *Hebei funü yundongshi ziliao xuanji*, vol. 4, 94.
[619] "*Guanyu poxie wenti* 关于破鞋问题 (Regarding the Issue of Worn-Out Shoes)," *Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 2 (1939): 5.

or find a suitable job, and could only turn to prostitution in order to help pay the debts their husbands owed, pay rent, and buy food to feed their children.[620] In contrast to prostitution in metropolitan areas, such as Shanghai, Communist writers argued that Worn-Out Shoes did not have extravagant lifestyles, unlike prostitutes from big urban areas such as Shanghai. Instead, these "Worn-Out Shoes" had lives quite similar to civilian peasant women because they were often poor, frugal and hardworking when they were not taking on clients. Besides, a lot of the "Worn-Out Shoes" worked in the fields in the spring and autumn, and at home they fulfilled their duties as daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers by taking care of their families. Furthermore, these women were considered as some of the most dedicated supporters of their local communities. That was, texts argued, because the women did not separate themselves from the workers but were instead considered to be prominent members of the labour force. [621] For this reason, it was argued that the public and the CCP ought to have embraced rural prostitutes and welcomed them to the CCP, arguing that they too had the right to participate in saving the country and be treated with the greatest degree of sympathy and respect. [622]

It was clearly recognised that the use of Worn-Out Shoes was by no means ideal for the party. While the use of these women benefited the party in some scenarios, officials acknowledged, internally, several practical problems. Firstly, the Worn-Out Shoes recruits were not always effective in their work. Although the fact that they were prostitutes helped them in their work, officials noted that not all Worn-Out Shoes were able to abandon some aspects of their old way of life despite undergoing rehabilitation and training provided by the Communists.[623] It was also sometimes difficult for prostitutes to recruit other ordinary women, particularly in small communities where everyone knew each other and personal reputation was important. Peasant women in areas such as Shanxi, Northwest Shanxi and West Beiping were known to find it awkward and difficult to approach or be approached by the prostitute recruits. [624] As Pu Anxiu puts it, "the romantic action and hooliganism of these women has obstructed the participation of the Women's National Salvation League's work by a lot of women, and has resulted in people having misconceptions about the Women's National Salvation League."[625] It was the same in Ding County, where the local branch of the League had to elect new representatives to

[620] "*Zailun poxie wenti*," *Zhongguo funü*, 14.
[621] "*Guanyu poxie wenti*," *Zhongguo funü*, 5.
[622] Ibid.
[623] *"Ding-xian de funü* yundong*," Zhongguo funü* 1, no. 4 (1939):12.
[624] Ibid.; Sun Pujin, "*Beiping xijiao di funü*," 21.
[625] Shanxi daxue Jin Ji Lu Yu bianqu shi yanjiuzu, *Jinjiluyu bianqu shiliao xuanpian*, 189.

replace old ones that consisted of former prostitutes in order to approach and recruit more women locally. [626]

Furthermore, it was known that having former prostitutes work alongside non-prostitute officials created internal divisions, discrimination, and petty conflicts that likely arose from personal grudges and the prejudice some officials held against prostitute recruits, and vice versa. Indeed, non-prostitute recruits found it difficult to work with those who were prostitutes. In the North China and Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia (*Shaan-Gan-Ning* 陕甘宁) areas, for example, some non-prostitute officials complained that prostitute recruits were difficult to work and communicate with, apparently because they were not "enlightened" enough and had different values. Northwest, some non-prostitute female officials were said to abuse their positions by issuing disproportionate punishments for petty issues. One prostitute recruit, for example, disobeying her seniors by refusing to make shoes as she had been ordered to, was paraded while wearing a dunce's cap, and forced to make five extra pairs of shoes as punishment for being "unenlightened."[627] Higher ranking officials had to intervene by condemning the issuing of disproportionate punishments, but it is clear that there were significant tensions which negatively affected the day-to-day operations of these Woman-Work organisations. [628]

As such it was understood and clear to officials that using Worn-Out Shoes to engage in Woman-Work and clandestine activities during wartime was a necessary evil. According to Pu Anxiu, "it cannot be denied that Worn-Out Shoes were somewhat effective at the beginning of the War of Resistance. In our work [we must] pay attention to reform them, otherwise they will soon become ill-suited to fulfil requirements of their work, and will be eliminated."[629] Pu's writing tells us that officials understood that this practice of using prostitutes, in the long run, should be changed or avoided as much as possible, even though in the short run it was useful and necessary. Furthermore, that regardless of various ideological justifications in mobilising and using Worn-Out Shoes, when considering the medium to long term effects of using these women, their influence over other areas party work, rather than their short-term effectiveness, were more important factors considered by officials who were mobilising them.

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[626] *"Ding-xian de funü* yundong*," Zhongguo funü*, 12.
[627] "*Gaibian gongzuo zuofeng* 改变工作作风 (Change the Work Style)," *Zhongguo funü* 2, no. 4 (1940): 4.
[628] Ibid.
[629] Shanxi daxue Jin Ji Lu Yu bianqu shi yanjiuzu, *Jinjiluyu bianqu shiliao xuanpian*, 189.

Conclusion

More recent scholars of women's history and World War II argue that the wartime contributions of women in Europe did more than just production work at the rear. This chapter of the thesis about activities of Chinese women also shows how civilian Chinese women did various dangerous activities such as the gathering of intelligence besides production work. Some of these women were required to travel in public and be in close proximity to the enemy. Furthermore, these activities required women who were willing to be more active, risk-tolerant, and progressive in thought so as not to be that bound by Confucian ideals which stipulated that women should be domestic and secluded.

Furthermore, different kinds of women were theoretically targeted for mobilisation during the Sino-Japanese war as class ideology was temporarily down-played in favour of a sustained united front with the Nationalists. Indeed, official documents illustrate this change and officials were instructed to try and recruit all kinds of women, including those from the upper classes. But the down-playing of ideology due to wartime nationalism was not the only reason for recruiting women, such as prostitutes, who were previously labelled and seen as undesirable. Instead, officials pragmatically and actively utilised Worn-Out Shoes and the characteristics of these women as prostitutes. While Worn-Out Shoes were described as victims in articles published in Communist periodicals such as *Women of China*, internal reports take a more realistic, and balanced view regarding the usage of these kinds of women, ultimately prioritising practicality in the short-term. Officials, however, also recognised that such a policy was not sustainable in the long run and mobilised prostitutes must be appropriately reformed, throughout the process of mobilisation, or otherwise weeded out.

Chapter 5: Woman-Work and Female Spy Stereotypes after the end of the Sino-Japanese War 1945 – 1957

Introduction:

After the Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalists took over and remained in control of major Chinese cities such as Shanghai. The CCP made clear via a public declaration ten days after the official Japanese surrender that having peace talks with the Nationalists was the way forward in the aftermath of the war.[630] But behind the scenes, high-ranking officials such as Peng Zheng had, even before the official surrender, contemplated and discussed among themselves about what to do with the Nationalists, Nationalist-controlled areas, as well as the Communist operatives sent by the party to do Secret Work during the Sino-Japanese War.[631] A deal was not reached between both parties during the talks, and civil war erupted between the Nationalists and the Communists. By 1949 the Communists managed to successfully take over mainland China while the Nationalists fled to Taiwan. Although the threat from the Nationalists continued to be active and real, the Communists maintained control of the mainland and engaged in various state-building endeavors.

As the Communists became more successful in their military endeavors during the period of struggle with the Nationalist Party, and their eventual takeover of mainland China in 1949, local officials became increasingly more focused on state-building efforts and mobilizing women to engage in related activities. Indeed, as Louise Edwards suggests regarding women and the state, "once the fighting ceases, the women sex spy's utility ends."[632] Here Edwards is referring to the situation where women in war were encouraged to use sex, often via means such as prostitution, to get information. But after the war, such acts of using sex and prostitution were no longer needed and would go back to being unseemly and inappropriate. As we saw in previous chapters, most civilian women, were not quite mobilised as sex spies, but civilian

[630] Zhonggong Shanghai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui 中共上海市委党史资料征集委员会, ed., *Jiefang zhanzheng shiqi de Zhonggong zhongyang Shanghaiju* 解放战争时期的中共中央上海局 (Shanghai Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party During the War of Liberation Period) (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1989), 358 - 359. During this time officials, also known as underground operatives, were secretly sent to nationalist-controlled cities. See: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao 中共中央党校, ed., *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* 中共中央文件选集 (Collection of Works by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party), vol. 15 (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao chubanshe, 1991), 256.

[631] The debate generally came down to how should the Communists come to occupy Nationalist-controlled urban areas: ZYWX and ZYDAG, eds., *JDYL*, vol. 22 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 350 – 372.

[632] Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 158.

women who were prostitutes such as Worn-Out Shoes were considered useful and perhaps even superior recruits. Yet, as Edwards suggests, after the Sino-Japanese War, the demand for civilian women, and especially prostitutes, to engage in general spy work and sabotage decreased. In the liberated zones (*jiefangqu* 解放区) especially (and mainland China after the 1949 takeover), Woman-Work efforts became overwhelmingly focused on mobilising women to engage in production work.

Moreover, Woman-Work efforts also looked into and actualised attempts to make women conform to party ideals of women – especially those who enthusiastically engaged in production work such as making shoes and clothes. Woman-Work officials sought to conform them through reeducation efforts. Aminda Smith alerts us that in 1949 CCP reeducators and officials believed that everyone, both men and women, was affected by undesirable and poisonous Feudal thought and ideology from the "Old Society" (*jiu shehui* 旧社会) – a reference to the past which according to Smith was then used by the CCP "as another shorthand… for a claim that justified the revolution and created the broadest possible revolutionary base."[633] In 1948 Shijiazhuang, for example, attempts to reeducate prostitutes, orphans, and general non-conforming civilian women was seen in the same light. Specifically, prostitutes needed to be re-educated so that they could abandon their old ways of life and become what the party saw as more productive members of society.[634] Records of the Shijiazhuang Women's Federation, which will be discussed later in this chapter, show how officers sought to purge what they saw us undesirable Nationalist influence from prostitutes and civilian women in Social Relief Centres (*jiujiyuan* 救济院) later renamed the Reeducation Centre (*jiaoyangyuan* 教养院).[635] Moreover, as briefly mentioned in the previous Chapter, the Communists received severe backlash from their previous use of Worn-Out Shoes. Because of this, officials were now keen to show their commitment in reeducating women like Worn-Out Shoes and prostitutes to a distance themselves from these unpopular members of society, and to reassure skeptics and the opposition. The characteristics that previously made Worn-Out Shoes particularly useful were now seen as especially undesirable, and their affiliation with the party was more of burden then a benefit.

[633] Smith, *Thought Reform*, 55.
[634] SJZMA, 19-1-2, 48.
[635] Ibid., 30.

Furthermore, although civilian women were not used to engage in clandestine activities as much as before, the usefulness of stereotypes regarding women and their capacity as spies or saboteurs, however, continued to be believed by officials throughout the 1940s to 1950s. As this chapter will show, in, for example, CCP spy manuals produced and circulated within relevant party officials during this period, women continued to be thought of as good as spies because they could use their sex and accompanying gender stereotypes to their advantage. For one, they were deemed particularly good at getting enemy men to spy for the CCP because these women could easily get men to fall in love with them and thus become complicit to their demands.

Moreover, in public situations, how these stereotypes were used by officials, and perhaps civilians as well, also shifted.[636] Civilian men and women were encouraged to report people who acted suspiciously and were non-conforming. Referring to post-1949 narratives about women spies, Edwards argues that "discussion about her (the woman sex spy/seductress-spy) work for 'us' becomes problematic. The post-war rewriting of history routinely depicts 'our side' as clean fighters and 'their side' as the source of 'dirty tricks'" including "sex spying".[637] In other words, in public discourse after the Sino-Japanese War, representations of women seductress-spy in newspapers and periodicals were mainly enemy spies but not CCP spies.

This chapter suggests that while the demand for civilian women, especially prostitutes, to spy or engage in sabotage decreased, stereotypes about women and spying continued to play a part in the utilisation of professional female spies employed by the party and in wider societal discourse regarding enemy female spies. The first section discusses the context and development of Woman-Work during this period, and demonstrates how women were mobilised by the party during this period of struggle between the Nationalists and the Communists. It notes how the actual use of civilian women to engage in Secret Work such as spying had declined compared to before. The second section explores the notion that despite the fact that civilian women were no longer much needed to engage in these activities, professional female spies continued to be deployed. It discusses how female spies were

[636] Scholars have shown how gender norms do not necessarily change in particular ways or change as quickly as desired by policy-makers. For example, Jacob Eyferth examined at home cloth-spinning by women after 1949 and questions why women continued to spend a huge amount of time on this activity despite their heavy workload, the existence of state monopolies on cotton and policies that were implemented to counter the activity of homespun cloth. Together with reasons such as resource scarcity, Eyferth illustrates how traditional gender norms and the significance of homespun cloth remained despite policy changes: Eyferth, "Women's Work," 1-27.
[637] Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 158.

described in materials that circulated within official party circles. The third section looks at how men and women were mobilised and encouraged to report on counterrevolutionaries, with a focus on descriptions about enemy (especially Nationalist) female spies. These two sections illustrate how stereotypes about women and spying continued to exist.

Woman-Work and the Mobilisation of Civilian Women

In 1949, the Woman-Work Handbook (*Funü gongzuo shouce* 妇女工作手册) was published by the North China Women's Representative Congress (*Huabei Funü daibiaohui* 华北妇女代表会*)* in 1949 which contained a speech made by Liu Shaoqi regarding Woman-Work in April 1945, suggesting that the speech was still relevant in 1949. In this speech, Liu contended that "in Nationalist areas, enemy occupied areas, our work policy direction is sabotage (during the Nationalist and resisting the Japanese era the enemy has said that we are a bunch of saboteurs). But in the Shan-Gan-Ning Border Region and in bases behind enemy occupied territory [that are controlled by us], the direction of our Woman-Work policy is to build. These two work policy directions have fundamental differences and there is no room for muddling them up."[638] Likewise, from 1945 onwards, in Communist occupied areas, the main task was to construct, and to get everyone, both men and women, to contribute and participate via production work.[639]

While some civilian women continued to be used to engage in sabotage and spy work during the Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists, the demand for this area of work from women slowly decreased as the Communists successfully took over more parts of

[638] Huabei funü daibiao huiyi 华北妇女代表会议, ed., *Funü gongzuo shouce* 妇女工作手册 (Woman-Work Handbook) (Huabei funü daibiao huiyi, 1949), 19.

[639] It was recognised before the official surrender that mobilising women to do production work should now become the priority of Woman-Work endeavours. It was discussed in February 1945 among Woman-Work officials of the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region, for example, that although on-the-ground Woman-Work should be different depending on the what type of area is in question, on the whole, however, there should be a movement in all of these areas to mobilise women to do production work. Specifically, three areas were identified: the area that had already undergone mobilisation (*yi fadong diqu* 已发动地区), the area that had just began mobilisation efforts (*chu fadong diqu* 出发动地区), and guerrilla territories (*youji qu* 游击区). In areas that had already undergone mobilisation, it was decided that Woman-Work efforts should also be directed at educating women about culture and hygiene, and in reforming the family structure in order to destroy the remnants of feudal oppression. In areas that had just begun mobilisation efforts, on-the-ground Woman-Work officials should first focus on implementing Communist policies in order for women to be better mobilised into doing production work. But it was also recognised that these two tasks could, and indeed should, be run at the same time because "some [policies] can only be established and followed-through via [the mobilisation of women into] production." Lastly, in guerrilla territories, local women should be mobilised to support the guerrilla efforts in order for there to be an implementation of Communist policies before women could be mobilised to engage in production work. See: HPA, 108-1-102-1, '*Yijiusiwu nian jinribushenru kaizhan funü gongzuo de jige wenti* 一九四五年进一步深入开展妇女工作的几个问题 (A Few Issues Regarding the in-depth development of Woman-Work in 1945)'.

China.[640] But while security was always important, the biggest Woman-Work priority now was to mobilise women to engage in production.[641] Those such as Worn-Out Shoes who had specific characteristics that were previously perceived as useful by the party for spying were thus no longer seen in this light and officials sought to re-educate and conform these women.

Woman-Work: Background and Context

After the official Japanese surrender, anti-Japanese Communist bases gradually became known as "liberated zones." Branches of the wartime party-led masses organisations, the Women's National Salvation League, in these bases also slowly ceased operations whilst being replaced by the Women's Federation.[642] Branches of the Women's Federation were established in liberated zones such as Shijiazhuang. In 1949, the ACWDF, later renamed the PRCWF in 1957, was established for the sake of uniting national women's movement efforts. The ACWDF, and became responsible for local district and regional Women's Federation chapters.[643] Meanwhile, under the Central Committee, Cai Chang became the Secretary (*shuji* 书记) of the Central Committee's Women's Movement Committee (*Zhongyang funü yundong weiyuanhui* 中央妇女委员会) in August 1945, and a 10-person committee was established in September 1945. In 1949 the CC Women's Movement's Committee was renamed the Woman-Work Committee of the Central Committee (continued to be headed by Cai), which was abolished in September 1956. Cai was also the Party Group Secretary for the ACDWF party group from 1944 – 1966, which represented the Woman-Work Committee.[644]

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[640] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, eds., *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao* 中国妇女运动历史资料 (Historical Materials Related to the Chinese Women's Movement) 1945 - 1949 (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1991), 136 – 137, 347.

[641] Huabei funü daibiao huiyi, *Funü gongzuo shouce*, 3. In May 1948 Central Committee issued "Central Committee's Directive on Woman-Work at Present" (*Zhonggong zhongyang dui muqian funü gongzuo zhishi* 中共中央对目前妇女工作指示).

[642] Fulian was aimed at maintaining a United Front. The decision to establish Women's Federation in liberated zones was made by the the Central Committee in April 5 1945. See: Geng, *Zhongguo Gongchandang*, 303.

[643] For more on its early years, see; Wang Zheng, Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964 (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 29 - 53. See also: ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, eds., Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao 中国共产党组织史史料 (Materials on the Organizational History of the CCP), vol. 4, First Part (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 62 - 64.

[644] According to the Central Committee, "Women's Federation Party Group Committee is the Central Committee Woman-Work Committee": ZZB, DSYJS and ZYDAG, *Zhongguo Gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 4, First Part, 62. Wang Zheng gives agency to what she called Socialist State Feminists, who were relatively high-ranking female officials. She illustrates how they operated in male-dominated, patriarchal party and government systems and argued that these women, often covertly, fought for women's rights, attempted and found ways to concretely transform a patriarchal society. Wang noted how these Feminists used cultural means such as film and the media to disseminate Feminist ideas, and, in Wang's words, "to acknowledge rural women's contribution to socialist construction and to promote women's entrance into traditionally male spaces and occupation." See: Wang, *Finding*, 224. But many of these women's efforts received both individual and institutional pushback, particularly from male officials who had little interest in women's liberation. It is in this context where serious politicking occurred among Woman-Work officials that both national and local Woman-Work endeavours were implemented and operated.

While security was important, much of the focus of Woman-Work was now on getting women involved in production, especially in industrial occupations. In previous years, high-ranking Woman-Work officials such as Deng Yingchao had suggested that women should be mobilised to engage in activities that included not only production but also various security endeavours, such as gathering enemy intelligence. But after 1945 there was noticeable difference in the recommendations. According to the Woman-Work report in September 1947, written by Woman-Work officials such as Yang Zhihua, Kang Keqing, and Deng Yingchao, "the core work [of Woman-Work] is the agrarian revolution, to support the frontlines,[645] production, and an effort to replace men as much as possible in all areas [of production work]."[646] Likewise, the contrast between the what women were supposed to do during and after the War of Resistance is also illustrated in a March 8 1946 article in *Liberation Daily (Jiefang ribao* 解放日报*)*, which was circulated within the liberated zones. The article praised Chinese women for courageously and enthusiastically engaging in wartime activities such as production, consolation work, and reporting on collaborators and spies, and also noted that these women engaged in highly dangerous activities such as dealing with explosives. The article also noted how women worked hard to fight for peace, democracy, and unity because women's liberation counted on these things. But now that "democratic politics (*minzhu zhenghzi* 民主政治) has already been established in liberated zones, and that women have already achieved equality of a political level," the task at hand was no longer for women to fight but "to enthusiastically participate in all kinds of democratic construction work (*Minzhu jianshe gongzuo* 民主建设工作)" which included participating in some form of industrial production but not domestic labour.[647]

In some cases, women's participation in military activities was temporarily halted after 1945. It was recognized in Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region, for example, that "it is still necessary for the masses to be armed during peaceful times, but it doesn't have to be in the organizational form of women's self-defense teams (*funü ziweidui* 妇女自卫队)." Moreover,

[645] Deng Yingchao describes supporting the frontline activities as "making shoes, sewing clothes, grinding flour, grinding rice, transporting people and objects in short distance, nursing…": ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 212.
[646] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 208. This was also an instruction that was received in local party committess. See also: HPA, 205-1-27-6, '*Zhongyang fuwei guanyu funü gongzuo de taolun celüe* 中央妇委关于妇女工作的讨论策略 (Discussions by the Women's Movement Committee of the Central Committee on Woman-Work Strategies)'.
[647] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 27.

their "tasks will also not be exactly the same as those during the times of the War of Resistance."[648] As discussed in previous chapters, the women's self-defense team was often responsible for complementary enemy intelligence gathering and sabotage work that was done by civilian women who were organized into these teams. In the case of the women's self-defense team in the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region, it was decided that the activities of general women's self-defense teams should be halted, that local Armed Forces Committees should no longer include officials in charge of women's issues, and that it was no longer necessary for the Women's Federation to deal officially with the issue of arming women.[649]

The turn towards focusing largely on production is partly because women's liberation was now framed in a way that was contingent upon women's participation in production work, and officials felt that joining production efforts provides for the economic basis in which women's final liberation can be achieved.[650] Likewise, Woman-Work officials in the North Yue Region Party Committee, for example, contemplated in 1948 that the pre-requisite for "economic independence… is to participate in production, learning about knowledge regarding production, which makes it possible [for one] to manage and control assets and thus increases [one's position] in family and society."[651] Officials considered this as important because, according to them, "without being economically independent, one cannot speak of liberation and freedom."[652]

This focus on production continued after the 1949 takeover.[653] According to the Shijiazhuang Woman-Work Winter and Spring Work Plan of 1952 - 1953, for example, it was decided that "the basic task of Woman-Work" at hand "is to mobilise women and the masses [to participate in] all kinds social construction [endeavours], to organise women yet to be organised into production."[654] ACDWF meetings regarding the Woman-Work goals for 1951 and 1953 was to mobilise women to engage in production.[655] As we will see in the next section, since there

[648] Ibid., 20.
[649] Ibid.
[650] Ibid., 108.
[651] HPA, 69-1-28-1, '*Funü gongzuo zongjie* 妇女工作总结 (Concluding Remarks on Woman-Work)'.
[652] Ibid.
[653] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 28;
[654] SJZMA, 19-1-5, '*Ben hui niandu gongzuo, sanjie fudai dahui kangmei yuanchao xuanchuan gongzuo de zongjie, piping* 本会年度工作"三届妇代大会抗美援朝宣传工作的总结、批判 (Summaries and Criticisms of this Federation's Yearly Work, the Third Women's Congress and Propaganda Work on the War to Resist America and aid Korea)', 4.
[655] FGBXY, ed., *Zhongguo funü yundong wenxian ziliao huibian* 中国妇女运动文献资料汇编 (A Compiled Volume of Documents and Materials Related to the Women's Movement of China), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1988), 79, 179.

was no longer a huge demand for civilian women to engage in clandestine activities, correspondingly Worn-Out Shoes were no longer seen by officials as particularly useful compared to other kinds of women.

The Problem of Worn-Out Shoes and Prostitutes

In 1948, 3 months after Shijiazhuang was "liberated" by the Communists, Woman-Work officials suggested in "A Summary of Materials Regarding Research into Woman-Work During the First Three Months of Shijiazhuang Municipal's Liberation" (*Shijiazhuang shi jiefang chuqi sangeyue funü gngzuo diaocha liaojie cailiao zongjie* 石家庄市解放初期三个月妇女工作调查了解材料总结) that women's re-education and the mobilisation of them into production work was crucial. This text is interesting because it partly suggests that officials felt that the improvement of women's lives was contingent upon their education (or re-education) and these women being mobilised to engage in production work:

Policy Direction and Mission Regarding Shijiazhuang Woman-Work from Now Onwards …

In light of the task to build Shijiazhuang … uniting women workers and poor civilians is the core mission [of the party] … Using production, education and thought reform… and [getting women to] participate in production …. [in order] to improve [their] lives. [We must thus] increase education aimed at propagating policy … [and] unveil Nationalist lies and slanders. [We must also] purge the political influence of the Nationalists. [Woman-Work,] regarding different classes of women should have different emphasis. [Efforts regarding] labouring women should be mainly on education and organising them to participate in production. [Efforts regarding] intellectuals such as female students, female staff, female teachers, female nurses, etc, [should focus on] enhancing their political and cultural thought reform…[656]

As it was no longer very necessary to utilise civilian women, particularly Worn-Out Shoes and their characteristics, the party sought to conform them. While the characteristics of being "thick-skinned" and more receptive to new ideas were previously seen as major strengths of prostitutes, these qualities were now seen in an increasingly more negative light.[657] As described by officials during this period, although these women has suffered a lot, they still

[656] SJZMA, 19-1-2, 55.
[657] Ibid., 29 – 30.

had plenty of undesirable characteristics, which included "having no stance, bending with the wind, easily swayed, dispassionate, easily adapted to their environment, pragmatic, superficial, and the tendency to spend their money if they have any."[658] But similar to what Aminda Smith demonstrates in her work regarding officials in reeducation, Woman-Work officials here also showed a degree of sympathy towards these women and arguments that supported the reeducation of them were inscribed with idealism and optimism.[659] It was argued that not all of these Worn-Out Shoes or prostitutes should be viewed through "the perspective of a feudal landlord" and solely understood by officials as "cheap goods."[660] Furthermore, officials argued that it was not these women's fault for being who they were, as they "lack of a cultured life," and the areas they lived in had complicated male-female relationships "mostly due to livelihood issues and being influenced by the licentious atmosphere [perpetuated] by the enemy and puppet [army]."[661] As such, officials "should organize" these women's "economic and cultural life, encourage [them to engage in] production, and enhance [their] education" via reeducation efforts instead of "shutting the door in people's faces," or even worse, "attack or [hold] struggles" against Worn-Out Shoes and other prostitutes.[662]

In Woman-Work officials' reports, it is apparent that they were receiving backlash from civilians on their use of Worn-Out Shoes and prostitutes so it was important to reeducate these women and not rely on or use them for official work. As discussed in the previous chapter, the use of these women was a double-edged sword. While they were mobile and able to engage in public activity, the party also became increasingly tainted with negativity in the public eye due to the party's association with these women, which hindered their efforts to mobilise men and especially women. Such backlash included views held by civilians such as: "the Women's Federation is a team of Worn-Out Shoes," "when one becomes a part of the Women's Federation, they will sleep with members of the Eighth Route Army too," and "the organisers of the Women's Federation will get women to take their trousers off while doing the Yangko dance (*niu yangge* 扭秧歌). Daughter-in-laws will dance with their father-in-laws, while fathers will dance with their daughters"[663] Such backlash, skepticism, and negativity were

[658] Ibid.
[659] Aminda Smith makes similar observations about officials, noting that there was a romanticised and idealised discourse regarding the re-education of those deemed as vagrants. She argues that these discourses "gave rise to a powerful narrative about the nature of resistance, which justified the turn to much harsher and more explicitly punitive treatment of vagrants in the years to come": Smith, *Thought Reform*, 53.
[660] ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 18.
[661] Ibid.
[662] Ibid.
[663] SJZMA, 19-1-2, 31 – 32.

described by the Woman-Work officials as the product of malicious "Nationalist propaganda" consisting off "rumours, threats, slander and deception" aimed at discrediting the CCP.[664] As such, according to Shijiazhuang Woman-Work officials in 1948, the effect of these propaganda was "a situation full of panic and confusion at the beginning of the liberation [because] all classes of the masses misunderstood us due to the slander and lies of the Nationalist Party."[665]

According to their reports, immediately after the takeover, local girls and women in Shijiazhuang continued to perceive any association with the CCP as highly detrimental to their marriage prospects, perhaps because these girls and women still considered the CCP as the party full of Worn-Out Shoes. It was noted that girls and women expressed doubts such as "I don't want to be a member of these women's groups, because [I'd be] neither a person nor a ghost (an idiom – here this refers to how joining a CCP women's group would make the woman look awkward or bad in front of others due to the perception that the CCP has low moral standards). How would I be able to find in-laws?"[666] In other words, they felt they would be so out of place within their own communities and be seen as having low moral standards like other CCP officials if they joined the CCP. It was also mentioned that the Communist takeover of Shijiazhuang triggered the hasty marriage of some 12 – 13 years old girls to male workers because of their belief that "after getting married, even if [I ended up being] mobilised by these women's groups, I would have already belonged to [my husband's] family."[667] Their makeshift weddings were so hurriedly conducted and casual that no bridal sedan chair were even used to collect the brides, as these 12 – 13 year old brides walked over to their husband's place themselves. In other words, officials found that the girls (and their family) thought that even if these girls were to be considered as unchaste or promiscuous by their community, they would have already gotten married to their husbands and thus there were fewer actual consequences of being seen as such, as opposed to being single and not being able to find a husband because of these perceptions.

It was thus in the interest of officials in general to distance the Women's Federation from Worn-Out Shoes. Specifically, according to Woman-Work officials in Shijiazhuang in Summary of Materials Regarding Research into "Woman-Work During the First Three Months of Shijiazhuang Municipal's Liberation," to "use practical steps to expose the lies and slander

[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid.
[666] Ibid., 35.
[667] Ibid., 34.

of the Nationalist Party … to reeducate [these women, including Worn-Out Shoes and other prostitutes] and make them feel moved via actual real-life experiences."[668] This often meant that different women were categorised and reeducated differently. According to the Resolution of the First Women's Congress in the Liberated Zone of Central China (*Huazhong jiefangqu diyici funü daibiaoda hui* 华中解放区第一次妇女代表大会), for example, ordinary civilian women should be reeducated separately from other women who were prostitutes and "loafers" (*erliuzi* 二流子). This was to "to avoid the mixing of black and white," and to maximise the effectiveness of these re-education endeavours.[669]

Worn-Out Shoes and prostitutes were also divided into groups and their treatments differed depending what group they belonged to. In February 1946, Woman-Work officials from the Women's Federation of the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region sorted Worn-Out Shoes into three general groups according to a resolution that outlined what the goals for Woman-Work should be in "the new era"[670]:

Those who only have a complicated relationship with the opposite sex but have a tough life, do participate in labour, have performed well in struggles, can be [re]educated so that they mend their ways. They should be recruited to join Women's Federation or the Peasant unions, but those who have a negative impact on the masses don't have to become an official.

"Loafer" (erliuzi) Worn-Out Shoes [who] don't do anything and don't perform well in struggles should endure long-term [re]education. There is no need to recruit her at the beginning.

The masses should be mobilised to struggle against the Worn-Out Shoes who are in cahoots with the enemy and puppets [personnel] and who do all kinds of evil.[671]

What were the effects of these efforts? In their reports, Communist Woman-Work Officials in Shijiazhuang expressed optimism and described their efforts as successful. Communist officials noted that civilian women felt relieved, because they previously thought, and were

[668] Ibid., 36.
[669] This is metaphor for good and bad: ZHQGFL and FYLYJS, *Zhongguo funü yundong lishi ziliao 1945 – 1959*, 34.
[670] Ibid., 12.
[671] Ibid., 18.

told by the Nationalists, that reeducation centres were like prisons. Meanwhile, prostitutes "felt as if someone cared about them" because "when the Nationalists were here no one treated us like humans. Now the Eighth Route Army is here they even allow us to join election[672] meetings."[673] As noted by Woman-Work officials in Shijiazhuang, women such as prostitutes as well as orphans in re-education centres were mobilised to make ropes and yarn as part of their re-education process.[674] This suggests that from the official's point of view, re-education efforts were generally accepted or complied with by civilian women, although at present no accounts from the women being reformed in 1948 Shijiazhuang are available to us to either corroborate what was said in official reports or to provide a different perspective.

CCP and The Use of Female Spies

While the demand for civilian women to engage in gathering intelligence and sabotage gradually decreased, the use and deployment of actual spies by the CCP had by no means ceased during this period. For example, although the Communists vehemently denied this in their own documents and correspondences, Nationalist intelligence during this period has noted the Communists' use of women spies to engage in espionage and sabotage. One 1947[675] Nationalist intelligence report noted that officials had started a three-week "young women training class" (*Shaofu xunlinan ban*), where 31 beautiful and articulate women aged 20 – 25 were recruited and trained near Zhangjiazhuang 张家庄,[676] to spy for the CCP. The Communists who, in 1947 intercepted this intelligence report, claimed that no such training activity had happened.[677] Currently, it is not possible to determine from existing, available primary sources whether this precise training activity did take place. But it can be determined from official sources that the Communists did at least contemplate the use of female spies in the 1940s and 1950s. More importantly, the stereotypes related to women and spying persisted and are apparent in CCP documents.

[672] Original term is unclear from materials. See: SJZMA, 19-1-2, 43.
[673] Ibid.
[674] Ibid., 48.
[675] No date is given on the report but judging from the events mentioned on the document (such as the death of official Su Linyan 苏林彦), it can be determined that the report was composed around 1947.
[676] (near present day Qinhuangdao, Hebei)
[677] HPA, 49-1-40-2, '*Jiang fei de qingbao zuzhi ji fenbu qingkuang* 蒋匪的情报组织及分布情况 (The Situation Regarding Bandit Chiang's Intelligence Organisation and Distribution)'.

During the 1940s and 1950s there was intense warfare between the Communists and Nationalists and even when the Nationalists relocated to Taiwan there were still active Nationalist threats that were cause for alarm for the Communists.[678] In the 1950s, there were country-wide campaigns to deal with counterrevolutionaries, bandits, spies, local bullies (*eba*), and folk religious sect *(Huidaomen* 会道门*)* leaders. The reason and justification for these activities was that "vast remnants of counterrevolutionary power were leftover by the Nationalists" after they left for Taiwan in 1949,[679] and that within these groups "there are a lot of people who have a long history of evilness and who did a lot of terrible things." In particular, some of these people were found by the Communists to have been deliberately placed in parts of mainland China for espionage and sabotage purposes by the Nationalists.[680] Since security concerns continued to be real and pressing issues before and after 1949, professional spies continued to be used by the CCP's SAD.[681]

How Professional Female Spies were Utilised

As such active steps were taken by the Communists to counter these very potent Nationalist threats. In the late 1940s, for example, officials urgently wanted either male or female spies to be sent to Nationalist-Occupied areas via the SAD.[682] As such, a highly classified directive was

[678] See, for example: HPA, 95-1-130-11, '*Su jiang tiegui mairu dixia de mingling* 速将铁轨埋入地下的命令 (Order on the Quick Burial of Train Tracks)', where spies were caught poisoning water sources. Similarly, Nationalist female spies were discovered in southern Hebei, where the local Public Security Bureau captured at least one suspicious woman who later confessed to be one out of 150 female spies sent by the Nationalists. Apparently in her possession was a lethal weapon – a knife which electrocuted the victim. Another suspicious woman was soon found nearby who claimed to be from Beiping and in the area to look for her husband. Upon interrogation it was found that she had one of these electric knives strapped to her legs. The Public Security Bureau called its colleagues to stay alert: Ibid., 106-1-117-4, 'Notice Regarding the Finding of Female Special Agents (*faxian nü tewu zhi tongbao* 发现妇女特务之通报)'.

[679] Wuhan-shi gonganju shizhi bangongshi 武汉市公安局史志办公室, "*Wuhan-shi de zhenya fan gemming yundong* 武汉市的镇压反革命运动 (The Suppressing Counterrevolutionaries Campaign in the Municipal of Wuhan)," *GASZL* 1 (December 1985): 130.

[680] Ibid., 134. In Wuhan, for example, the Communists found that counterrevolutionaries gathered Communist military intelligence which was relayed back to Chiang Kaishek, they also conducted robbery, arson, and assassinations on behalf of the Nationalists.

[681] During the 1940s, spies were mainly despatched by the SAD which was originally established in 1939 and was responsible for intelligence and counter-intelligence.

[682] HPA, 211-1-11-1, '*Ji-Re-Liao qu dangwei guanyu paiqian dixia gongzuo renyuan tongzhi* 冀热辽区党委关于派遣地下工作人员通知 (Notice from Hebei-Jehol-Liaoning to Party Committee Regarding the Despatching of Underground Workers)'. Men and women were either sent directly to engage in this activity, while others who fit the criteria were gathered by officials and sent to the Party Region Committee to stand by for any other future tasks.

sent to the Hebei-Jehol[683]-Liaoning Region Party Committee (*Ji-Re-Liao bianqu dangwei* 冀热辽区党委)[684] on November 7th, 1945[685] which stated the reasons for this urgent call:

In order for us to protect the victorious fruit of the War of Resistance, in order to confront the persistent [enemy] army, to sabotage its organisation, [we] should take this opportunity and strategically utilise all opportunities to infiltrate [the Nationalist] army, military, and party organisations. Utilising, as much as possible, [any] social relations, as well as necessary indirect relations in order to infiltrate the upper and lower internal divisions of the remaining army. We especially need to infiltrate its spy agency, party department, and critical military divisions, so that the devil's power is deeply infused in every corner of their [organisation]. [We] must progress secretly [in order] to sabotage the enemy when necessary, and to do so from within in order to be the most effective. The infiltration process must be kept an absolute secret. There cannot be any horizontal connection [among our personnel].[686] [Our personnel] must disguise themselves as reactionaries when infiltrating their spy agencies, and [Nationalist] party organs and be at the disposal of the SAD. They do not engage in general revolutionary activities, and their only task is to gain the trust of their [Nationalist] supervisor in order to gain important intelligence.[687]

It was also made clear that both men and women could be used as spies as long as they were reliable and experienced:

[Officials] must educate the infiltrators to be good at staying disguised and being adapted at their specific environments [in order to] work effectively. [Officials] must select those with abundant social experience who are also extremely reliable politically-speaking (preferably a party member) to engage in this task. Both men and women are acceptable.[688]

Manuals and talks written or given by experts during the 1940s and 1950s gives us an insight into how officials were instructed on (and thus likely understood) the use of sex and gender in

[683] Jehol 热河 (also romanised as Rehe) was a former province. After 1955, the area that was Jehol became parts of Hebei, Liaoning, Tianjin and inner Mongolia.
[684] Later in December 1945 renamed as the East Hebei Region Party Committee (*Ji-dong qu dangwei* 冀东区党委).
[685] The year is not shown in the original document but judging from the document it is likely that the document was produced in 1945: HPA, 211-1-11-1.
[686] This means that personnel from the same level cannot be in contact with each other.
[687] HPA, 211-1-11-1.
[688] Ibid.

espionage. The suggestions for how these female spies and women were to be used shows that the composer of these texts relied on gender norms and stereotypes regarding women's ability to engage with men in specific capacities. According to a guide on military intelligence written by the Intelligence Division (*Qingbaochu* 情报处) of the East Hebei Region Party Committee written sometime after December 1945[689], a way to recruit male spies was to "utilize women recruiters (*nü zhengwuyuan* 女征募员)," a kind of female agent, who would "use various social skills in order to engage with those who were targeted, and to get these men to be psychologically and materially tied to, [and thus] submissive to, these women, so much so that they will eventually agree to engage in intelligence work." Another way was to "use female spies to disguise as ladies from high society, or to use highly talented sing-song prostitutes or hostesses to engage with high-ranking officials of foreign governments or military officials, and to entice them to leak classified intelligence or to succumb to becoming a spy."[690] It was also noted that spies could gather intelligence via cinemas, theatre houses, and dance halls, because enemy men often frequent these places, and that it was useful for CCP spies to "sometimes set foot in brothels, cafes, and other places and utilise prostitutes, and hostesses to spy on behalf of [actual spies]."[691]

The understanding of women and their usefulness for engaging in activities such as spying, based on official's perceived understandings of women, and perhaps on the actual results of using women spies, continued to be held by officials during the 1950s. This is apparent from notes of a cadre who worked in security, taken at an expert talk in July 1955 entitled "How to Use Female Special Informants" (*Ruhe shiyong nü teqing* 如何使用女特情). The goal of using female special informants in the first place, was, according to the talk, to spy on "foreigners such as ambassadors, sojourners, sailors… youth organisations such as student communities, bourgeoise student organisations… people in the religious community, which have female

[689] The exact date when this text was written is unknown, but because the Jidong Region Party Committee only got its name after December 1945 it is likely that this piece of text was composed after this date. The HPA has noted that this was published in 1946: HPA, 46-1-75-9.

[690] Using women to seduce men is also found in other documents. In one guide on espionage, writer Li Lishan 李立山 claimed that female spies must be able to "seduce others and let men fall into the web of romance." And while "in the past dance hostesses and prostitutes were mostly chosen to become female spies, now [the choice of woman] is determined by the task at hand. Sometimes it is necessary to choose [a woman] from a noble origin." It was also claimed by Li that female spies required more monetary reward because they were vain and are more easily swayed, and that it was preferable for the women to become infertile because their ability to conceive got into the way of their work. Who Li Lishan is, is now hard to concretely determine, but it is likely that Li Lishan is affiliated with the CCP because this booklet was initially archived as a piece of Communist material. See: Li Lishan 李立山, *Jiandie gongzuo zhinan* 间谍工作指南 (A guide to Intelligence Work) (n.d), 32 – 33. Document from Michael Schoenhal's private archive.

[691] HPA, 46-1-75-9.

religious followers."[692] According to the notes, the expert made clear that female special informants have not only "wide social contacts" but also "specialties" (*tedian* 特点), and that officials should "use the female special informant's specialties when getting them to approach their spying targets" who were presumably male.[693] These "specialties," as discussed, were clearly gendered. It was noted, for example, that female special informants were most useful in spying on foreigners as it was "easy for them to approach foreigners of the bourgeoisie class" because they could do so by simply "being young and dressing up nicely." Single women or married women with fewer children were favoured, likely because they had more time on their hands, whereas officials were advised "not to recruit women who have a lot of children because they need to take care of them and thus do not have time to work and won't be effective" as spies.[694] The expert also mentioned specific types of women that were good for the job which included "socialites, dance hostesses, female hooligans, and women who, in the past, were deemed frivolous," as well as "clandestine prostitutes," which was a term commonly used as a more formal reference to Worn-Out Shoes. Specifically, these women were understood by the expert and perhaps the notetaker (as well as whoever listened to the talk, if there were other people) to be particularly effective in approaching "anti-revolutionaries from old society, reactionary military officials, opium dealers, thieves, and criminals." Moreover, "because these reactionaries are likely to sleep over at their [the prostitute's] lodgings… it is easier for us to uncover their [operations]."[695] The existence of these notes allows us to make a reasonable speculation that the idea that women could use seduction in order to approach or ferret information from men was something that circulated and perhaps even considered amongst cadres.[696]

Similar to how Worn-Out Shoes were previously used during the Sino-Japanese War, it was also recognised here that there were clear caveats when using female special informants. While these women were useful, officials would have to exercise much caution when handling and instructing them during the course of their deployment. The expert suggested that officials handling these female special informants must "give out clear instructions regarding how to complete missions when assigning them" and they must "give them [special informants] strict

[692] Li, *Jiandie*, 32 – 33. Document from Michael Schoenhal's private archive.
[693] "*Ruhe shiyong nü teqing* 如何使用女特情 (How to Use Female Special Informants)" (lecture, July 1957). Document from Michael Schoenhal's private archive.
[694] Ibid.
[695] "*Ruhe shiyong nü teqing.*"
[696] It was likely considered, but not all officials approved of it. Michael Schoenhals notes how Luo Ruiqing in 1957 voiced his objections towards the use of female agents and sexual entrapments: Schoenhals, *Spying for the People*, 108.

supervision."[697] This especially applied to "female special informants used in spying on foreigners" because "foreigners have a bad influence" on them and these women would succumb to enemy special agents who were deeply "corrupt."[698] So much so that these enemy special agents would "bribe [these women] using little favours or develop an ambiguous relationship with them" in order to win these women over.[699] Thus, unless they had received adequate "education" from their handling officials, these women would easily defect to the other side. The expert warned that officials from "our side must establish a proper relationship with female special informants," and only a professional relationship was allowed in order to "prevent the development of an ambiguous relationship" since "it would be detrimental [to our] work if romance develops."[700] Officials were also told not to act too prejudicially towards these women or to "tell them off too harshly or despise them for their past behaviour" because this would lead to these women being mentally resistant to the officials. Instead, officials should educate them "so as to get them to work effectively for us."[701] Underlying this advice is the assumption these women do not have strong morals and cannot be fully trusted due to their highly pragmatic and materialistic nature. However, once correctly handled it was believed that these women could achieve excellent results precisely due to their ability to seduce men and coerce men, using their sexuality, into doing things that these men would otherwise have not done.

Reporting on Counterrevolutionaries and Enemy Female Spies

Perceptions of women and spying were also apparent in materials related to the mobilisation of the masses to report on counter-revolutionaries and spies.[702] These sources, such as official work reports, propaganda booklets, and newspaper articles from the very early years of the PRC tell us that both civilian men and women reported to authorities on various suspicious activities in their own neighbourhood or in their workplaces. Although, due to the nature of the sources, it seems very likely that some of the details, particularly those about how civilians

[697] "*Ruhe shiyong nü teqing.*"
[698] Ibid.
[699] Ibid.
[700] Ibid.
[701] Ibid.
[702] In the 1950s especially both men and women were mobilised to report on counterrevolutionaries and reactionaries. These campaigns include the 1950–1953 Campaign to Supress the Counter-revolutionaries (*Zhenya fangeming* 镇压反革命) and the 1955 *Sufan* movement (*Suqing ancang de geming fenzi* 肃清暗藏的反革命分子). They were explicitly related to the exposing and purging of alleged spies, political oppositions and individuals. For an account of the campaign in Wuhan, see: Wuhan-shi gonganju shizhi bangongshi, "*Wuhan-shi*," 130 – 169. It is in this context that both men and women were mobilised to report on suspicious people.

went about to reporting on counterrevolutionaries, are likely exaggerated and it is hard for us to now verify the details of these claims. But what we can determine from these sources is that stereotypes about spying women also existed here and that in this context women with these stereotypical attributes were deemed suspicious and undesirable by the writers of these sources, some of whom were officials. It is also likely that at least some of these understandings were shared by the readers of these texts.

Women Who Reported and Those Who Were Reported

The mobilisation of women to report on suspicious activities and counter-revolutionaries was also a task for Woman-Work officials.[703] The kind of people who were reported as Nationalist spies or a counterrevolutionary mainly consisted of those who looked suspicious and didn't fit in. According to the Shijiazhuang Women's Federation Third Quarterly Work Summary Report (*Di san jidu gongzuo zongjie* 第三季度工作总结) made in 1955, for example, this included "people from unknown origins, who act abnormally, say one thing and then do another" as well as those who spread "reactionary slander."[704] In some situations, suspicious actions might also refer to people who, for some reason, sought to change their first names or given

[703] SJZMA, 19-2-3, '*Shi fulian: Ben hui jidu chuanda quangguo sheng chengshi funü gongzuo huiyi jingsheng ji fadong funü canjia shengchan, yuer zhishi deng gongzuo zongjie, yijian he baogao* 市妇联：本会季度传达全国省城市妇女工作会议精神及发动妇女参加生产，育儿知识等工作总结、意见和报告 (Municipal Women's Federation: Summary, Opinions and Reports on This Federation's Quarterly Work Regarding the Conference on Conveying the Woman-Work Spirit to the National, Provincial and Municipal [Level] and Mobilising Women to Participate in Production, [Disseminating] Childcare Knowledge and Other Work)', 12 – 16. In 1955, for example, Shijiazhuang Women's Federation composed a report on "mobilising women to participate in [activities regarding the] purging of all counter-revolutionaries" as well as "educating women to be mobilised" for the sake of "the building of socialism, a happy life in the present and the future, and to protect women and children from harm." Woman-Work officials identified several pushbacks, however, and such mobilisation work was not always successful. It was found that some women, especially housewives were hard to mobilise because they were not convinced that struggles against counter-revolutionaries were really their business. According to officials, these women were generally unresponsive to invitations to join meetings and had been found to "put up a catty attitude" when being visited too often by Woman-Work officials. Moreover, some women were more passionate about certain issues than others, and while they were extremely responsive to dealing with criminals who harmed women and children, they were not very responsive to counterrevolutionaries who engaged in "other kinds of sabotage activities." It has also been found that there were women who were afraid of retribution, or were unhappy about food distribution and thus used this as an excuse not to become more involved in reporting others. See: Ibid., 15. Using the masses to be involved in removing enemy spies and reactionaries was seen and understood to be a good strategy. According to a guide entitled "The Correct Way of Developing Struggles to Remove Treacherous Individuals and Resist Spies" written or at least circulated by officials of the Jinzhou-Shenze-Wuji County Country Party Committee Propaganda Department (*Jin-Shen-Ji-xian xianwei xuanchuanbu* 晋深极县县委宣传部), on-the-ground officials were unable to yield satisfactory results from the practices of careless arrests and the killing of bad people, as well as the use of forced confessions which in turn caused widespread terror and panic amongst civilians. These tactics, as discussed in the guide, instead unified the enemy, and also allows people with bad intentions to frame good people by falsifying evidence. As such, using the masses was one of the ways to counter these issues. Mobilising the masses in engaging in these activities was not only more efficient and effective, but officials could also educate the masses about the purpose of the activity in the first place. Mobilising civilians to persuade their relatives, friends, spouses, and sons or daughters who were spies was also understood as a much more effective way in getting the actual spies to come clean, become reformed, and ultimately to join the Communists voluntarily: HPA, 520-1-555-1, '*Zhengque de zhankai chujian fante douzheng* 正确地展开除奸反特斗争 (The Correct Way of Developing Struggles to Remove Treacherous Individuals and Resist Spies)'.

[704] SJZMA, 19-2-3, 14.

names.[705] The kind of people who were reported included "relatives and friends who are counter-revolutionaries" because "exposing and reporting [these people] takes no account of any private relations."[706]

Newspaper and other popular sources give us a peek into how men and women came or were encouraged to report on suspicious people, and, in our case, suspicious women.[707] While these sources are very likely exaggerated, especially those published in party outlet *People's Daily* (*Renmin Ribao* 人民日报), they do offer us examples of the types of men and women that writers presented as suspicions and were worthy of reporting. Moreover, they also allow us to understand the type of men and women that at least some readers of these accounts might come to understand as suspicious, undesirable, and very likely counter-revolutionary. From these sources, it also becomes clear that certain women who possessed what were now deemed as the negative stereotypical characteristics of prostitutes and Worn-Out Shoes, were presented as suspicious, and that they would garner a lot of suspicion from their community, neighbours, colleagues, and even family members. In other words, those who were seen as sexually promiscuous and lived in a certain degree of luxury as well as those deemed lazy or unwilling to engage in production. A housewife, for example, named Zheng Saihua 郑赛花, and her family were commemorated by *People's Daily* for successfully reporting on their relative, a

[705] Ibid.
[706] Ibid.
[707] In 1955, for example, a publisher in Tianjin published a small book entitled *Raise Awareness, Purge All Counter-Revolutionaries (Tigao jingti, suing yiqie fangeming fenzi tongsu jianghua* 提高警惕，肃清一切反革命分子 通俗讲话) in light of the commencement of the *Sufan* movement. It featured several stories about counter-revolutionaries and dutiful men and women who caught and reported on these enemies. One of the published stories showcased female local official Sun Guizhen 孙桂珍, a middle-aged woman who was a low ranking official from the local Subdistrict Office (*jiedaoban* 街道办) of Tianjin. Sun was credited with exposing and reporting the whereabouts of a man who had apparently been in hiding for a few years. After a lot of cleaning, which was an excuse for prying around, Sun finally found incriminating evidence that her neighbour was in fact a fugitive murderer wanted in his hometown. See: Tianjin gongren ribao she 天津工人日报社 and Tianjin tongsu chubanshe 天津通俗出版社, eds., *Tigao jingti, suing yiqie fangeming fenzi tongsu jianghua* 提高警惕，肃清一切反革命分子 通俗讲话 (Raise Awareness, Purge All Counter-Revolutionaries Colloquial Talk) (Tianjin: Tianjin tongsu chubanshe, 1955), 20. Beijing Daily (*Beijing ribao* 北京日报) also reported on an exemplary female official named Wang Jinfeng 王金凤 who actively spied on people such as her neighbours and reported them. Beijing Daily claimed that even though Wang was only in her early twenties, she had already spied and reported on around 300 counter-revolutionaries over the course of five years. One of the people Wang caught in 1950 was her new neighbour, who was a female leader of a counter-revolutionary religious sect. Wang became suspicious when she realised that her neighbour frequently received many guests, all of whom, despite their own age, called her neighbour "elder sister" (*dajie* 大姐). Wang checked out and eavesdropped on her neighbour enthusiastically, finding many excuses to approach her and to figure out what her neighbour was really up to. In 1952, Wang Jingfeng caught another important counter-revolutionary who was also a murderer and a fugitive named Wang Fuchen 王福臣. Wang Fuchen claimed that he was a peasant, but Wang Jinfeng became very suspicious because Wang Fuchen had pale skin, was quite fat, and did not look like someone who did years of labour. Wang Jinfeng spied and gathered more information on Wang Fuchen by befriending Wang Fuchen's wife, who she approached through chatting, doing childcare, and learning how to knit. She eventually reported to the authorities on Wang Fuchen after gathering sufficient information on him from his wife. See: Qingniantuan Beijing shiwei xuanchuanbu 青年团北京市委宣传部, ed., *Jianjue*、*chedi*、 *ganjing*、 *quanbudi suqing yiqie fangeming fenzi* 坚决、彻底、干净、全部地肃清一切反革命分子 (Purging All Counterrevolutionaries in a Determined, Thorough, Clean and Absolute Way) (Beijing: Beijing dazhong chubanshe, 1955), 68 – 71.

woman named Chen Aizhen 陈爱珍, who was determined to be a Nationalist spy disguised as a seamstress who had returned to mainland China in 1957 from Singapore. It was noted in the article that she possessed various suspicious attributes, including that she did not work but lived a lavish life and was financially very comfortable. According to *People's Daily*, housewife Zheng apparently claimed that she first became suspicious one evening when she saw Chen ironing letters in her room. After Chen was reported, the Public Security Bureau claimed that Zheng was a spy who had been in contact with Nationalist intelligence agencies and had even recruited other spies.[708]

Similarly, another 1953 news report from *People's Daily* described how a housewife named Chen Lihua 陈丽华 from Xiamen successfully reported on two enemy spies, her male neighbour Wang 王, and his mistress Xue 薛. Chen sensed that something fishy was going on when Wang, who had left for Hong Kong right before the 1949 takeover, abruptly returned to Xiamen in 1953 with a woman whom he referred to as his cousin. Chen was suspicious, however, because Wang, despite already having children and a wife who he had not divorced, slept in the same room as Xue. Moreover, both Wang and Xue did not have proper jobs but lived a good life and were sent cash every month from an unknown source. The newspaper report revealed that Wang and Xue were both spies who were working for the Nationalists. Xue was a female spy who became Wang's mistress in Hong Kong. According to the *People's Daily*, together Xue and Wang collected intelligence about the PRC's military, politics and economy for an intelligence agency in Hong Kong, and developed a counter-revolutionary organisation in Xiamen.[709]

It must be noted here, however, that these stereotypes do have roots in what actually happened. In 1951 it has been found by officials in Chongqing, for example, that counter-revolutionaries and some prostitutes had formed organisations such as "Women's Spy Group" (*funü jiandiedui* 妇女间谍队). Members of these groups apparently had secret ways to identify themselves in

[708] Gong Zhan 公展, "*Jiating hui kanchu polun nü tewu luo ru fwang* 家庭会看出破绽 女特务落入法网 (Seeing the Flaws During a Family Meeting, Female Special Agent Falls into the Net of the Law)," *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 (People's Daily), August 30, 1958, 6.

[709] "*Xiamen-shi jiating funü Chen Lihua jianju tewu* 厦门市家庭妇女陈丽华检举特务 (Chen Lihua from Xiamen Reports Special Agent)," *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 (People's Daily), November 11, 1954, 3.

public and held secret meetings every week.[710] During the second national Public Security Meeting (*Di er ci quanguo gongan huiyi* 第二次全国公安会议) in October 1950, Minister of the Security Bureau Luo Ruiqing 罗瑞卿 addressed the issue of male and female spies who had apparently been gathering intelligence and engaging in seditious activities, such as spreading rumours and inciting unrests. While male spies were described mainly as those who were relaying and secretly obtaining intelligence, Luo contended that female spies were those who got unsuspecting men to do traitorous things for them, which often had drastic consequences for not only the CCP but for the individual men involved. One of these women, for example, seduced different men and got them to work for her. She ordered one of her victims to kill official Zeng Shan. Upon being ordered to do this, the male official became very conflicted, and while he did not want to assassinate Zeng, who was his superior, neither did he dare to report on her treachery. In the end, he chose to commit suicide.[711]

Other reports by CCP officials similarly detailed how some Communist men became so infatuated with enemy female spies that they had completely forgotten about their political duties and moral obligations. A 1951 report discussed how some officials had completely forgotten their political obligations because they became involved in complicated sexual relationships, thus hindering the progress of their work. One male official in Guizhou 贵州 was so infatuated with an enemy female spy who was already found guilty and sentenced to death that he still sent blankets to her while she was incarcerated, bought her a coffin when she died, paid to have her body buried and personally burnt joss paper at her grave.[712] Another 1956 commentary on the corruption of officials claimed how many male officials attempted to please politically-unclear and likely treacherous women with whom they were having illicit extra-marital affairs by findings ways to introduce them into the party and recommending them to work governmental jobs. Moreover, it was found that these men would use “free love” and the freedom to marry and divorce as excuses to engage in illicit relationships with these

[710] See female spies mentioned in: Yu Jiangzheng 于江震, "*Yu Jiangzheng zai dang de xinanqu jilü jiancha gongzuo ganbu huiyi shang de chuanda baogao* 于江震在党的西南区纪律检查工作干部会议上的传达报告 (Report by Yu Jiangzheng Given During the Party's South West District Discipline Inspection Work Cadre Meeting)," Database of Contemporary Chinese Political Campaigns (*Dangdai Zhongguo yundong lishi shujuku* 当代中国运动历史数据库) (hereafter DCCPC), accessed July 23, 2021, http://ccrd.usc.cuhk.edu.hk; Fengdu-xian Renmin fayuan 丰都县人民法院, "*Fengdu-xian Renmin fayuan guanyu chuli feite eba Wang Haiquan deng 35 ming zuifan zongjie baogao* 丰都县人民法院关于处理匪特恶霸汪海铨等 35 名罪犯总结报告 (Summary Report by the People’s Courts of Fengdu Province People Regarding the Treatment of Bandit Spies and Bullies such as Wang Haiquan and 35 Others)," DCCPC, accessed July 23, 2021, http://ccrd.usc.cuhk.edu.hk..

[711] Luo Ruiqing 罗端卿, "*Luo Ruiqing tongzhi zai dierci quanguo gongan huiyi shang de baogao* 罗端卿同志在第二次全国公安会议上的报告 (Report by Comrade Luo Ruiqing Presented at the Second National Public Security Meeting)," DCCPC, accessed July 23, 2021, http://ccrd.usc.cuhk.edu.hk.

[712] Yu Jiangzheng, "*Yu Jiangzheng*."

traitorous women. This commentary also described how traitorous counter-revolutionary groups were successfully using women to gather intelligence and engage in sabotage. Apparently an "evil" landlord, who had been in contact with operatives from the United States, sent two of his daughters (who were spies) to marry high-ranking party officials. The daughters were successful in appearing unsuspecting, seducing men, and gathering intelligence. As such not only was the landlord able to avoid judicial punishments by being a family member of revolutionary cadres, but he was also able to get hold of confidential party documents that were secretly hand-copied by his two daughters.[713]

Conclusion:

This chapter investigated the development of attitudes towards stereotypes associated with women and their ability spy during the post-Sino-Japanese War and early PRC period. While civilian women, especially Worn-Out Shoes and prostitutes were previous seen by officials, as exceptional candidates to engage in secret activities that included the gathering of intelligence and sabotage due to particular perceived attributes. But increasingly after 1945 the demand for these women and their perceived attributes were no longer much needed by the party and thus many went through some form of re-education process. Moreover, the usage of these women became more of a liability for Woman-Work officials during this time as they attracted criticism and scepticism from the public, which gravely inconvenienced the process of mobilising civilian women in liberated areas. Despite this, however, this chapter has also found that much of these stereotypes continue to exist but were understood and utilised both similarly and differently. Professional female spies, for example, continued to be used by Public Security and intelligence apparatuses precisely because of their sex and gender. But in public discourse women who were seen to have characteristics akin to a female spy were likely presented and seen and understood by other civilians as an enemy female spy. As this chapter demonstrates, gender stereotypes themselves and aspects of these stereotypes do not change easily even though they could be used in different ways. As we shall see in the next chapter, women often reinforce aspects of these stereotypes themselves as well.

[713] "*Yangge jiandu he zhizhi dangyuan geren shenghuo zhong de fuhua fangdang 、 daode duoluo he weifa luanji de xingwei* 严格监督和制止党员个人生活中的腐化放荡、道德堕落和违法乱纪的行为 (Strictly Supervise and Stop the Corruption and Dissoluteness of the Personal Life, the Moral Corruption and the Illegal Activities of Party Members)," DCCPC, accessed July 23, 2021, http://ccrd.usc.cuhk.edu.hk.

Chapter 6: Remembering Wartime Work Experiences, 1980 – Present

Introduction: Self-Narratives and Memories of Women

When Wei Xiurong 魏秀荣 was 10 years old, she witnessed another woman from her village in Hebei being tortured and stabbed to death by the Japanese. According to her account, published in 2015 by Hebei Fine Arts Publishing House, some Japanese soldiers had forced this unnamed woman whom Wei witnessed to admit to being a member of the Eighth Route Army. The unnamed woman refused to give in because she realised that whether one resisted or not made no material difference, as death was inevitable, and thus she defied the Japanese and died an honourable death. Wei recounted in 2015 that she was personally motivated by this scene to participate in the war effort. While she initially wanted to engage in combat and become a soldier of the Eighth Route, she eventually, however, became a representative of the Women's National Salvation League instead, and operated in secret so as not to be caught by the Japanese.[714] Similarly, Wang Xiuzhen's 王秀珍 willingness and determination to contribute to the war effort, according to her account in 2015, was solidified after seeing her father being tortured by the Japanese. Wang remembered witnessing her father being burnt and run over repeatedly by a heavy cart. Wang was quite young when this happened, but it caused her to become a lot more determined about her secret endeavours for the party.[715] Wei and Wang, two civilian women who were supporters of the CCP and later became relatively-low ranking officials were active in Hebei, were some of the many women who participated in and contributed to the war efforts against the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War. Since the 1980s, the publication of relatively outspoken remembrances and commemorative texts like these about civilian women and civilian women turned officials flourished. This chapter examines these accounts which were written by women who gave first-hand accounts of pre-1949 experiences. It argues that women actively reaffirmed and reproduced some of the wartime stereotypes regarding women and spying in their memoirs and writings.

As Wang Zheng notes, the late 1970s and 1980s saw an end to the Maoist Socialist revolution, but also a shift in the national public discourse regarding women's liberation.[716] Wang in

[714] Zhao Weichun 赵维椿 and Zhang Shujian 张书俭, eds., *Hongse jiyi zhengrong suiyue zhi geming muqin* 红色记忆 峥嵘岁月之革命母亲 (Red Memories Revolutionary Mothers During Extraordinary Times) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2015), 2.
[715] Ibid., 30.
[716] Wang, *Finding*, 228 – 299.

particular has demonstrated how women in labour and production—the *Iron Girls*—were no longer the ideal kind of women praised by those who now took charge in the 1980s: the urban male elites who promoted and actualised economic reforms for China.[717] Furthermore, Louise Edwards alerted us to how post-Mao CCP narratives on martyr women and their contribution to wartime revolutionary efforts often present portraits of extreme sacrifice, similar to ones mentioned above, by these patriotic women, and that "marriage and motherhood have become central to the quantification of the glory" of the martyr woman.[718] Edward suggests that ideas about motherhood and marriage were once again promoted by the state in the 1980s because the CCP's propaganda system aimed to penetrate the family units of every citizen through these images of women and their sacrifice, teaching the Chinese public about loyalty and patriotism.[719] The portrayal of extreme sacrifice which involved mental and physical suffering is also apparent in first-hand recollections of women who were involved in Secret Work and other clandestine activities. They, like the CCP propaganda materials primarily examined in Edwards's work, are heavily gendered and include detailed accounts of hardships endured because of their gender. Yet it would seem that many of these narrating women, while they were indeed primarily interviewed (sometimes by current-day CCP officials) to publicise their loyalty and hard work, were not entirely part of what Edwards has called the "CCP's propaganda system."[720] They had at least some agency to narrate their own experience. As we will see from this chapter, unlike the narratives Edwards has studied, the women studied in this chapter produced a different picture of their experience and sacrifice which included descriptions of their work and accounts about abandoning their family and community expectations to pursue Secret Work.

The accounts by the women featured in this chapter also differ slightly from the accounts produced by those featured in Gail Hershatter's *Gender of Memory*. Hershatter illustrates and argues that women labour models and men were more likely to use political movements as signposts of their life, but most women who were not particularly politically active narrated their life using personal events such as marriage and childbirth to mark the passage of time in their narratives.[721] The stories told by the women featured in this chapter fall somewhat in between the accounts that were produced by the female labour model and the ones by non-

[717] Ibid.
[718] Edwards, *Women warriors*, 118.
[719] Ibid., 119.
[720] Ibid.
[721] Hershatter, Gender of memory, 62 – 64.

politically active rural women featured in Hershatter's book. Their accounts refer to their own political activities, general politics and campaigns, but, as this chapter will show, also include references to personal issues from family to clothing because these were, in fact, integral aspects to their work for the party.

This chapter will focus on two recurring themes that are related to the stereotype of women and spying which were mentioned in these women's self-narratives and remembrance texts. The first section looks at how women who were mobilised also defied family or community expectations and duties. In the 1930s and 1940s it was understood especially by officials that many women who were mobilised by the party were likely "loose women" thought to have a disregard for traditional moral standards and Confucian codes of conduct. Women in these self-narratives and memoirs do remember defying certain traditional ways of life and values that were widely held by their family and community. The second section looks at how women described using their identity as a girl or a woman and how they reinforced these identities through their disguises. It shows that some of these women actively performed femininities in order to survive and succeed, similar to how the SOE agents discussed in Juliette Pattinsons work described their own experiences. The chapter is based on memoirs and commemorative texts on women of different ranks and backgrounds who were active during the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War. This not only includes women-work officials who had done Secret Work or other clandestine activities during this period but also students, housewives, and peasant women. In some cases, they were both peasant women or students and women-work officials, while some were not officials but were merely mobilised to contribute or help out.

Defying Family and Community Expectations

In the 1930s and 1940s, officials held the view that women who were politicly active and likely to respond to Communists efforts in mobilising women were women who rejected, or were at least ambivalent about, Confucian principles and traditional ideas about womanhood. Memoirs of women reinforce this idea that those who participated in Communist activities were likely outliers in their community and family at that time. Contemporary accounts illustrate how female underground operatives had to actively disobey the wishes of their parents or senior family members, endure family pressures, and thus abandon their duties as daughters.

Contemporary narratives frame this as another form of hardship endured by women and young girls, as they had to actively reject their traditional social and familial duties because they were loyal and committed to the CCP. One account described how some Shanghai families would even lock up their daughters in order to stop them from leaving the house as going out at night would, they thought, be bad for their daughters' reputations.[722] Despite such fervent opposition, however, it was claimed that these female students persistently carried out their work during the Civil War because they were loyal.[723]

This was similarly the case in rural areas during the Sino-Japanese War. Women claimed they defied their own families and rebelled against constraints imposed by people in their villages when they initially engaged in operations. They disregarded their family concerns and emphasised how they abandoned their duties as daughters in order to work for the CCP. Du Daling 杜大苓 joined the resistance and worked for the Women's National Salvation League against her family's wishes when she was seventeen. She said her parents were very concerned about her constantly being out and about on the streets, and were afraid that other people in the village might perceive Du as a "crazy girl" (*feng yatou* 疯丫头).[724] Likewise, Zhao Hemei 赵鹤梅 claimed that during the war, most women mostly stayed home because they were especially afraid of the Japanese, or that they were married off at a very young age because their families did not want them to be seen in public spaces. Zhao, however, defied these traditional expectations by proudly joining the Women's Self-Defence Group. She also worked with men, did sentry duties, and dealt with the Japanese. She said that she forgot she was a woman while doing these things that were punishable by death if her work was found out by the Japanese.[725]

Besides the descriptions of physical pain,[726] accounts of female hardship often included the personal sacrifices regarding a woman's fertility that a woman had to make in order to maintain

[722] Zhonggong Shanghai shiwei dangshi ziliao zhengji weiyuanhui 中国党史资料征集委员会, ed., *Zhandou dao liming* 战斗到黎明 (Fight till Dawn) (Shanghai: Shanghai fanyi chuban gongsi, 1989), 2.
[723] Ibid., 82 – 83.
[724] Zhao and Zhang, *Hongse jiyi zhengrong*, 76.
[725] Ibid., 101.
[726] Anecdotes about how some female underground operatives had to endure physical suffering and persistent, even permanent, health problems because of their underground operations feature prominently in many commemorative texts about these women. Those who were active in rural areas recalled dealing with harsh elements, especially cold winters. One remembered being followed by the Japanese while she was relaying messages and jumping into a frozen river while she was trying to escape. She wrote about how the frozen water was so cold that it pierced through her skin and her bones, causing her immense pain. See: Ibid., 55. For example, another woman, Zhao Xiuzhen 赵秀珍, said she got lost in the snow once when she had to

her cover and carry out her work. Contemporary narratives about pre-1949 underground operations suggest that these women actively defied community and family expectations by engaging in underground activities and Secret Work. In particular, women with first-hand experiences reconstructed, recounted, and remembered the pre-1949 female undercover experiences, they made it apparent that female underground operatives actively avoided and rejected motherhood in order to do Secret Work.

A recurring subject in commemorative accounts is the issue of terminating pregnancies and the active rejection of childbearing altogether. These texts highlighted how female underground operatives avoided, terminated, or attempted to terminate their pregnancies for the sake of their underground operations. Such examples of termination and rejecting childcare were cited as examples to demonstrate a woman's loyalty, and these women were praised for their actions and choices. Liang Dazhang 梁大掌 who was active with the Women's National Salvation League, and her husband, also a Communist official, decided not to have children because she claimed it would affect their operations for the CCP. This decision apparently received a lot of criticism and complaints from their family and from members of her village, but she and her husband persisted with their decision.[727] Similarly, Lan Jing 蓝静 who was an official at the Administrative office of the Central Plains (*Zhongyan xingzheng ongshu* 中原行政公署), was evacuating in disguise and travelling from Hubei to the north of China in May 1946, recalled how she accidentally tripped and fell, which led to a miscarriage. Although many of her colleagues were worried about her, when she remembered this episode of her life in the 1990s she claimed that she felt immensely relieved because she could contribute to the Campaign of the North China Plain Pocket (*Zhongyuan tuwei* 中原突围) instead of having to evacuate because of her health conditions and pregnancy.[728]

Wang Jinwen, who relayed messages in Shanghai and managed a Communist meeting point in Shanghai, claimed that she had to have an abortion to maintain cover and do underground operations.[729] In the middle of her secret underground operations, Wang became pregnant. She

return home late at night after delivering a letter. She eventually found her way, but also noted that her clothes were completely soaked and that her teeth were chattering from the cold: Ibid., 117.

[727] Ibid., 81.

[728] E-Yu bianqu gemingshi bianjibu 鄂豫边区革命史编辑部 (hereafter EYBQ) and 湖北省妇女联合会 Hubei-sheng funü lianhehui (hereafter HBSFL), eds., *Zhongyuan nüzhanshi* 中原女战士 (Women Warriors of the Central China Plains), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongguo funü chubanshe, 1992), 337.

[729] Shi Menqi 师孟奇, ed., *Yi Qian Ying* 忆钱瑛（Remembering Qian Ying) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1985), 81.

claimed that she knew that it was difficult to conduct underground operations while being pregnant, and having a new-born child in the midst of the Civil War was dangerous, as she would be preoccupied with taking care of the child and it would be difficult for her to leave Shanghai if anything went wrong. Furthermore, she claimed she did not want to increase her responsibilities while working in such a tense environment. Wang knew that she would have to give up her unborn child or have an abortion in order to continue her underground operations. It was, however, difficult to have an abortion in Shanghai, as it was then illegal. Regular hospitals did not provide this service, and although small clinics could perform abortions, they charged extortionate fees and the procedure was often carried out by unqualified medical practitioners, resulting in infection, infertility, or even death. Wang also feared that the two maids who lived with her family would find out about the abortion and suspect that Wang had had an adulterous affair and was trying to conceal it.[730] Thus, it was paramount that the procedure, if it were to be done, was done in secret. Fortunately, Wang got in touch with a party member who was able to perform the abortion. She solicited the help of Qian Ying who raised funds for the purchase of necessary equipment.[731]

Not all rejection of motherhood was voluntary, and narratives about those who became infertile as a result of their underground operations appear to be an even more persuasive example of how a woman was loyal to the CCP. Liu Sulan 刘素兰, a Women's National Salvation League official in Hebei, claimed that she became infertile because she was once tortured by the Japanese. On that occasion, the Japanese tried to get her to give up the names and identities of underground operatives because she looked young and easy to be intimidated. She was having her period that day and remembered that her whole lower body was drenched in her menstrual blood while she was being interrogated. From that time onwards, claims Liu, she routinely suffered from chronic gynaecological problems, resulting in her being unable to conceive.[732]

Besides pregnancies, abortions, and infertility, these accounts revealed how women gave up domestic and family duties such as childcare and house work for underground operations. Like pregnancy, childcare and family life were described in these commemorative narratives as obstacles to maintaining cover and doing underground operations. The act of giving up one's children and being away from one's husband in order to do underground operations was

[730] Ibid., 81 – 82.
[731] Ibid.
[732] Zhao and Zhang, *Hongse jiyi*, 103.

presented as a sacrifice one made for the party. These women were praised for sacrificing their familial duties in these texts, as these sacrifices were deemed significant. The occurrence of these anecdotes in contemporary narratives indirectly reaffirms long-standing ideas related to a woman's familial duties.

An example of this is found in how Fang Ruojun 方若筠, official based in the Hubei-Henan Border Region (*E-Yu bianqu* 鄂豫边区) remembered her fellow inmate and Communist supporter Xie Qingying 谢清英 during the Sino-Japanese War , where Fang expresses Xie's loyalty by explaining how Xie's abandoned her child-caring duties. Xie was the wife of the secretary of Jingshan County Party Committee (*Jingshsan xianwei* 京山县委). Fang remembered that Xie's family bribed Nationalist officials and arranged bail for her on the condition that she consent to submitting a fake confession that was written by her family on her behalf. This arrangement was made so that Xie, who had just given birth, could return home to take care of her baby. Yet Fang recalled that Xie, despite her poor health and childcare duties, refused to leave prison as this would imply consenting to the "fake confession". Fang remembered how Xie, who was already slowly dying from her injuries, told her personally that she would never betray the Communist Party and this had all been arranged by her family without her consent. Fang wrote that it was heart-breaking for her to hear, and that Xie, who was already fatally ill, kept murmuring the names of her child and her husband despite having rejected the opportunity to be released on bail. She murmured the names continuously for two days and two nights until she eventually died.[733]

Separation between couples and children was also described by writers during the 1980s and onwards as a necessary sacrifice many of the female underground operatives made. Yan Yuzhen 阎玉珍, who worked for the Red Army Liaison Division (*Hongjun lianluochu* 红军联络处) and later became a military doctor during the Sino-Japanese War, remembered giving her children away because she claimed that having children during wartime was something that was particularly worrying for a mother. Yan claimed she decided to leave her second child with locals in rural north-western Hubei in 1946 because she had to work and the travelling conditions were harsh.[734] In the 1990s she wrote about how having children was a difficult

[733] EYBQ and HBSFL, *Zhongyuan nüzhanshi*, vol. 2, 255.
[734] Ibid., 296.

problem for women and that it was a problem that needed to be solved, generally by the sacrifice of the woman and her child for the sake of the woman's work.

Former female underground operatives themselves also wrote about how and why it was normal for them to actively abandon their roles as wives. This included having to lie to one's husband. Zhao Yulan 赵玉兰 said she had to lie to her spouse in order to keep her identity a secret during the Sino-Japanese War. After she got married, Zhao relayed messages and held meetings for the Women's National Salvation League, using farming as an excuse to carry out operations, and claimed that no knew about her true identity, not even her immediately family.[735] Similarly, Liang Dazhang recalled how she kept her work a secret from her husband by going to meetings and doing her work at night when everyone was asleep. Her husband became very suspicious, thinking that she was involved in an affair, and even followed her one evening.[736]

Perhaps the biggest abandonment of one's duties as a wife was, as stated in these accounts, not being with and taking care of their husbands. Jin Ming 靳明 who has worked as a leader of a women's team (*funüdui* 妇女队) in Anhui reflected that during wartime, married women were rarely together with their husbands, as both the wife and the husband contributed to the war via their posts and had their own commitments. "Revolutionary couples", wrote Jin, "thus have to prioritise work for the Communist Party above their marriage and personal relationships, and couples must understand and give their blessings to each other. If and when difficulties arise, the couple should rely on the power of the Party and the collective, as well as themselves, in order to fight the enemy and overcome difficulties."[737] Wang Cheng 汪诚, who worked at the Political Department's Propaganda Office of the 13th Brigade, 2nd Column of the Field Army of the Central Plain (Zhongyuan yezhanjun 中原野战军) also wrote that separation from one's partner during wartime was very common, and she too was separated from her newly-wed husband in 1946.[738]

Appearance, Dress, and Identity

[735] Zhao and Zhang, *Hongse jiyi zhengrong*, 5.
[736] Ibid., 81.
[737] EYBQ and HBSFL, *Zhongyuan nüzhanshi*, vol. 2, 307.
[738] Ibid., 326.

Texts by and about women reiterate the idea that women often avoided suspicion while doing Secret Work due to their sex and gender. In particular, maintaining a public identity in order to conceal their real affiliations with the Communists was paramount but accounts imply that the task of maintaining their public identity was not difficult for women because women were perceived by the enemy (and by other civilians) to be apolitical and were thus less suspicious to the enemy.[739] Specifically, women remember performing gender, fully utilising these stereotypes to their advantage. One text, for example, narrates the Secret Work done in Shanghai during the civil war and praises official Wang Xiaobao 王筱宝, underground operative for the Shanghai Underground Municipal Party Committee (*Shanghai dixia shiwei* 上海地下市委), for maintaining a public identity that was less likely to garner suspicion while doing Secret Work. According to this text, Wang, who had previously worked in the silk weaving industry, managed to infiltrate a textiles factory to do underground work. She used her excellent weaving skills, which she had perfected in her previous workplace, to blend in. Since she had the skills and appearance of an ordinary female factory worker, she avoided being pestered or suspected by the foreman and was thus able to promote revolutionary work among her other female co-workers.[740]

Some women recalled that their natural appearance, physique, and age were advantageous disguises that helped them conceal their identity and conduct underground work. As such, they recall being assigned tasks such as transporting and relaying messages because of their gender and age. Specifically, women remembered how being in their teens helped them significantly with being undercover. Xiang Liuliu 向刘骝, who often relayed messages for her father, an official in Changsha , recalled avoiding arrest because of her physical appearance as a teenage girl during times when she was working undercover, acting as a courier for Communist publications and relayed messages. She described herself as the best kind of "little messenger" for the party when she was carrying her backpack, and that her looks and age fooled many of her enemies. This was the case even at times when she was caught red-handed, and she described how it was relatively easy for her to dupe her Nationalist captors because they were

[739] For example, having a suitable identity included having the correct papers and forms of identification, which was important when dealing with the police, whether during routine checks, interrogations or even arrests. It was recalled, for example, that those engaged in Secret Work often had two different identification cards, each with a different home address. One of the cards was kept at home, the other carried on the person. See: Shi Menqi, *Yi Qian Ying*, 81.

[740] Zhonggong Shanghaishi Changning quwei dangshi yanjiushi 中共上海市长宁区委党史研究室, ed., *Zhongguo Gongchandang zai Changningqu dixia douzheng shiliao* 中国共产党在长宁区地下斗争史料 (Historical Materials on the Chinese Communist party's Underground Fights in Changning District) (Shanghai: Zhonggong Shanghaishi Changning quwei dangshi yanjiushi, 1992), 106.

less suspicious of the lies she made. Xiang, who was 15 years old, distinctly remembered being stopped at two checkpoints on the evening of 23 April 1949, when she was trying to pass on an important letter, which she had sewn into her dress, for her father who was also an underground worker. When asked for a passcode at the check point, Xiang began to cry and begged the officer to let her through, claiming that her mother was about to die from illness, and that she was on her way to the doctors. The officers believed her and allowed her to pass through, and she was eventually successful in relaying the message.[741]

Xiang also recalled having to transport a stack of Communist propaganda leaflets. The stack of leaflets was too heavy to carry by hand, and thus she dragged them on the ground as she walked, but did not realise that the rope securing the leaflets had come undone. She recalled how a sudden gust of wind caused the leaflets to scatter on the street, thus attracting the unwanted attention of the police. The police noticed the content printed on the leaflets, and quickly caught Xiang. Xiang claimed that she had to think on her feet, and told the police that these materials were given to her by a man nearby, and she was able to hurry out of the scene as the police turned their attention away from her. Thus, Xiang argued in her recollection of Secret Work that her young age and gender made it easier for the Nationalists to assume she was just an ordinary girl who was not a Communist and thus loyal to the Nationalists. Xiang further described how sometimes her clothing, together with her age and gender, helped her with her disguise. Xiang recalled avoiding being interrogated by the armed Nationalist military police at a check point because of her age and gender, but also because she was wearing a school uniform. Once, she pretended that she had a stomach ache at the checkpoint and requested to go to the toilet. The request was granted because she claimed that the officers were unsuspecting of a school girl like her. When in the toilet, Xiang took off her school uniform and sneaked out, jumping into a pile of mud to look more like a peasant girl in order to leave the area.[742]

Being able to use one's physical appearance, age, and physique as a way to avoid suspicion was also the case for Chen Fu 陈馥, the civilian mother of high ranking underground operative Chen Xiuliang 陈修良, then secretary of the Nanjing Underground Municipal Party Committee

[741] Hainan Sheng Wenhua Jiaoliu Cujinhui 海南省文化交流促进会, *Hongse jiyi: Buai hongzhuang ai wuzhuang* 红色记忆 不爱红妆爱武装 (The Red Memory: They Love Their Battle Array, Not Make Up) (Hainan: Nanhai chubanshe, 2013., 2013), 51- 53.
[742] Ibid.

(*Nanjing dixia shiwei* 南京地下市委). Chen was described by her daughter as a clever and wise woman and had a natural flair for maintaining secrecy. The Shanghai Communists had a couple of meeting points in the city, and Chen Fu managed one. The outbreak of the civil war meant that communications between Chen Xiuliang and other officials were difficult. Thus, Chen Xiuliang had to travel to Shanghai to meet with other Communist leaders at her mother's home. Chen Fu, then a tiny, blind, old lady, had previously managed her home as a meeting house for the Jiangsu Communists. By 1946, Chen Fu began relaying messages between Chen and the Shanghai Communists, as Nanjing underground work had to be reported directly to Shanghai. Regular weekly, and even daily meetings between Chen's husband Sha Wenhan and high-ranking Shanghai and Nanjing Communist officials took place at Chen's mother's home. Occasionally, Chen Fu took care of Communists who had been exposed and were wanted by the police. Her home was a safe and secure place for them because it was claimed in these texts that its inhabitants were women who appeared to be harmless and docile. It was inhabited not only by Chen Fu, but also Chen's young daughter whom Chen Fu began taking care of when both Chen Xiuliang and her husband Sha Wenhan were sent elsewhere to do underground work during the Sino-Japanese war, and an illiterate peasant maid who helped out around the house.[743] Together, the three inhabitants created a strong cover for their home as a Communist meeting place during the civil war. In particular, it was remembered that Chen's mother was able to fend off Nationalist guards and policemen from time to time due to her quick-wittedness and appearance as a harmless-looking woman, and their home was able to pass spontaneous checks partly because she and those who lived there didn't look suspicious.

Outer appearance, which included clothing and apparel, was also important discussed in these narratives about how these women did Secret Work. Maintaining one's cover was crucial. Self-narratives, in particular, discussed how these women adopted particular types of clothing that suited their acquired public identities. Women who were active in urban Nationalist-controlled areas during the Civil War, for example, remembered wearing glamorous and fancy clothing that reinforced one's public appearance as an apolitical member of the upper classes.[744] The manager of one of the meeting points in Shanghai's Jiangsu Road was Wang Jinwen.[745] In Shanghai she took on various positions, including the secretary of the Women-Work

[743] Chen Xiuliang 陈修良, *Chen Xiuliang Wenji* 陈修良文集 (Collection of Chen Xiuliang's Works) (Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1999), 142 – 150.
[744] Moreover, narratives emphasise how these women actually preferred more modest, simple clothing themselves but adopted these "bourgeoisie" styles. See for example: Hainan sheng, *Hongse jiyi*, 102.
[745] Also known as Wang Xi 王曦.

Committee there. She said that in order to "confuse the enemy, we have no choice but to dress up." She took on the identity and the appearance of a well-off *taitai* while her husband, who came to Shanghai in 1946 with her to do underground work, pretended to be a merchant.[746] When having to travel undercover within enemy territory in 1946, Jin Ming recalled abandoning her modest clothes and dressing up like the wife of a Nationalist official in order to avoid garnering suspicion:

[My female colleague] Xiang Yingyun 向云英 *has always been straightforward. She suddenly laughed out loud, saying: "Look at yourself, once we get to enemy territories, everyone can tell that you are an old hag of the Communist bandits. [You are] so old fashioned, not an inch of you has the appearance of the wife of a Nationalist official. Even civilians do not look like you." I looked at myself. Of course, I was wearing a dirt grey coloured cotton mian'ao* 棉袄 *(cotton-stuffed jacket) with a white undershirt. A pair of flat-headed "death to a cow with a single kick" (ti si niu* 踢死牛*) fabric shoes (shoes with a very thick sole). Everyone is used to looking like this in the army, but we become especially obvious once we venture out. I said: "I don't have any choice, I don't have other clothes, where can we change our outfits now?" Xiang Yunying replied: "I have two qipao dresses, I am wearing one." She opened her bag, and took out another dress. "Here, try this on." I put it on and surprisingly it fit me. Someone else also gave me a pair of "towered" fabric shoes. This quick dress up has kind of transformed me into having the appearance of "wife of a petty [Nationalist] official."*[747]

The disguises a woman adopted also changed depending on the location. In more rural settings away from metropolises such as Shanghai, women remembered dressing up in less fashionable clothing. For example, Wang Xinghua 王馨华, who relayed intelligence for the Hebei-Shandong-Henan Party during the Civil War, would travel great distances carrying classified documents while taking the disguise of a rural female teacher.[748] Specifically, according to the account of Wang Mulan 王木兰 who was involved with the Women's National Salvation League that operated in the Hebei-Shandong Border Region (*Ji-Lu bianqu* 冀鲁边区) in the

[746] Shi, *Yi Qian Yi*ng, 81 – 82. By implication this meant that Wang wore dresses such as the qipao, and likely did her hair in certain ways that were up to date with the fashion trends in Shanghai during that period. She remembered that together their disguises worked well and they were not suspected by the Nationalists. This is in accordance with how Wang described another woman who worked undercover with her in Shanghai.
[747] EYBQ and HBSFL, *Zhongyuan*, vol. 2, 308.
[748] Shandong-sheng funü lianhehui 山东省妇女联合会, *Shandong nü lieshi zhuanji* 山东女烈士传记 (*Sories of Shandong's Female Martyrs)* (1982), 63.

late 1930s, clothing, hairstyle, and make up would made a big difference during the course of one's work. This was especially the case for Wang herself who had short hair, and had to wear a fake hair bun in order to look like a peasant woman:

Hebei-Shandong Border Region is a continuous flat plain with no hiding places… When we come face to face with the enemy during our work, it is difficult not to confront them. Thus Comrade Cui Lanxian 崔兰仙[749] *persuaded us to take off our "student uniform" and change into the clothing of peasants, in order to blend in with the masses. At first, she (comrade Cui) would put up her hair into a bun and wear a loose-fitting robe. She would adapt to local customs wherever she went. When she was in Leling County* 乐陵县*, she would put up a hair bun using a hair net. In Ningjin* 宁津*, Nanpi county* 南皮县*, she would not use a hair net when putting up her hair into a bun. During this time, we were all young girls around twenty years old who were students having just left school. We felt very embarrassed with these ways of dress. When we put on our disguise and looked at ourselves in the mirror, we thought it was very funny and felt too embarrassed to leave the house. With the encouragement from Comrade Lanxian we got used to it very quickly. The female officials of the Border Region relied on these ways of dress to commence and develop women's national salvation activities with the masses as our cover. We would use fake hair buns, and when we were confronted by the enemy [the fake hair buns] would come off when we run away. This kind of disguise was later exposed by the enemy. Lanxian came up with another idea and got us to mobilise women in the villages to cut their hair, so that the enemy could not detect who were officials and who were the masses.*[750]

Wang Mulan's account and the other accounts presented in this section are interesting because they confirm what has been written or said in earlier accounts by officials who made the decision to use women and suggested that women must dress or act in particular ways in order to survive. These accounts also show that their clothing, costume, and disguise were an integral part of their work which relied on performing femininity in order to remain unsuspected by others. While previously women claimed that they had to defy expectations in order to do party related work in the first place, while in the course of their work the accounts illustrated how they continued having to conform to local gender norms in order to survive and succeed.

[749] Cui Lanxian was a women-work official who was the superior of Wang Mulan.
[750]Shandong, *Shandong nü lieshi*, 71.

Conclusion

This chapter examined memoirs and remembrance accounts written by women about their pre-1949 experiences working with the CCP during the Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War. They remembered being successful while working undercover because of their sex and gender. Due to the generally-held assumptions and stereotypes, women survived because they were thought of as apolitical. Moreover, in order to do the work, accounts described how these women dressed in ways that allowed them to blend in among local women, fully utilising these assumptions and stereotypes to their advantage. These accounts illustrate that utilising these stereotypes were necessary for survival and women relied on recreating these gender stereotypes to succeed in their Secret Work. Moreover, this chapter shows that the view held by officials that women who were mobilised in the 1940s were more likely to defy traditional values, family, and community expectations was also remembered and affirmed by these women many years later. In their accounts of Secret Work, accounts about their political activities and more personal matters often intertwined. In many ways, these post-1980s accounts and self-narratives also confirm the need for individuals to perform gender and perpetuate stereotypes in order to succeed and survive.

Conclusion:

This thesis primarily asked how and why women, in particular civilian women, were mobilised to engage in Secret Work and various clandestine activities by the CCP before 1949. It also investigated the role of certain perceptions of women played in the process. To do so, it first explored perceptions and understandings about women and spying in the first half of the 20th century. It then looked at how some aspects of these stereotypes shaped and influenced decisions, especially by CCP Woman-Work officials, to mobilise women in doing Secret Work or other clandestine activities. Lastly, it demonstrated how aspects of these stereotypes continued to be reiterated and confirmed by the women themselves in the 1980s and onwards. Many women joined the party because officials promised to abolish gendered stereotypes, especially traditional and Confucian ones about women being chaste, secluded, and apolitical. But women were expected to perpetuate these stereotypes in order to survive and succeed. Moreover, many women themselves also reaffirmed the use of these stereotypes later in their lives.

This thesis has found that, during the first half of the 20th century, popular understandings of Chinese female spies settled on the seductress-spy which had roots in not only what Tammy Proctor has termed the Mata-Haridian seductress-spy from Europe and America, but also in Chinese understandings of beautiful women and their propensity to cause disasters, conflicts between men, and war. As outlined by the introduction and Chapter 1, the popular understanding of the Chinese seductress-spy is someone who ferrets out intelligence and secretly causes havoc, while using her beauty and sexuality as a means to corrupt otherwise upright and logical men who eventually becomes submissive to her demands. During the 1920s and 1930s, books and films from Europe, the US, and Japan were imported to China and translated into Chinese, captivating at least the urban Chinese who had access to these textual and visual sources. This demonstrates that ideas related to Mata Hari and the kind of spy she represented were not only circulated in Europe and the US as discussed in some existing scholarship, but they were also available in China. Furthermore, as the examples of Yoshiko Kawashima and Yoshiko Yamaguchi show, the Chinese seductress-spy eventually invoked connotations of treachery, evident after the Sino-Japanese War.

What is interesting is that the Chinese seductress-spy still invokes connotations of treachery. The stories of notorious seductress-spies, such as Yoshiko Kawashima, continue to be featured in present-day Chinese espionage entertainment such as films and TV series. Indeed, most of these portrayals continue to feature a dangerous, even cruel, seductress-spy who works for the Japanese.[751] For example, the 2016 TV series "Eastern Battlefront" 东方战场 on the Sino-Japanese War features Yoshiko Kawashima, played by former Olympic champion turned actress Ye Xuan 叶璇, as one of the main characters. The official character description available on Chinese websites describes Kawashima as the "Mata Hari of the East", and throughout the series Kawashima is presented as a major figure in the war, and a talented but cunning and traitorous intelligence gatherer who worked for the Japanese.[752] The character makes her debut in the fourth episode of the series, where she first appears on screen with permed hair and wearing a sequined ball gown, very much like the dress Greta Garbo wore when she was in the 1931 Hollywood production of *Mata Hari*. In her debut scene for the TV series, the character Yoshiko Kawashima dances and flirts with various men at the Paramount Ballroom, including Ryūkichi Tanaka 田中隆吉, an intelligence officer and senior member of the Imperial Japanese Army. Kawashima's power over naïve and love-struck men is also emphasised, and, in this scene, she is able to convince a nationalist pilot to take her to Tianjin for one of her sabotage missions after she offered to spend private time with him. From this seductress-spy portrayal of Yoshiko Kawashima, it seems apparent that the stereotype that regards promiscuous, assertive, and beautiful women as untrustworthy and even traitorous continues to prevail in present-day discourse. Furthermore, the Chinese seductress-spy has several characteristics which rest on and are connected to other gendered stereotypes about women. In particular, there is an understanding that women have the unique ability to approach and engage with men using their sex and gender. Moreover, that they can do so without garnering much suspicion by the men they have targeted or by others they encounter while working undercover.

The next chapters of the thesis then moved on to what real women did as civilians mobilised by the CCP as opposed to what was thought about spying women. Existing scholars have

[751] For more about the reincarnation of Yoshiko Kawashima portrayals, see Edwards, *Women Warriors*, 91 - 116. There are plenty of recent TV series which feature Yoshiko Kawashima, such as the 2011 TV series *Vanilla Beauty* (*Xiangcao meiren* 香草美人).

[752] "*Dongfang zhanchang* 东方战场 (Eastern Battlefront)," Baidu Baike 百度百科 Baidu Encyclopedia, accessed March 27, 2020, https://baike.baidu.com/item/东方战场#3_1.

identified 1927 as a key turning point for the CCP, and this thesis also showed what political events that took place that year meant for women and Woman-Work. During the early 1920s, CCP Woman-Work officials and those affiliated with the CCP sought to do certain in order for women to break away from what was traditionally demanded of them— such as chastity seclusion, absolute obedience to their husbands and family, as well as ignorance. Early CCP Woman-Work efforts thus sought to bring women out from their domestic realm, educate them, politicise them, and foster activists who could then be mobilised. CCP officials also cooperated with the Nationalists, attempting to utilise if not take over their institutions as a way to further the CCP's Woman-Work agenda. Civilian girls and women were attracted by what CCP Women-Work officials had to say and responded by joining their endeavours. But when the party fell-out with the Nationalists, Woman-Work went completely underground, operating only via the policy of Secret Work where officials were kept underground. The meaning of women's liberation, too, was now contingent upon the elimination of the Nationalist party, and women were now mobilised to engage in spying and sabotage against them. In other words, after 1927, these women were not just political activists or bureaucratic actors as understood by and analysed in existing scholarship. Chapter 2 has found that CCP Woman-Work was a gateway to Secret Work following the party's decision to go underground after the fallout between the Nationalists and the Communists in 1927. As the CCP went underground after 1927, so did these women whose roles transitioned (in some cases abruptly) from political activism to Secret Work.

Tani Barlow has pointed out that progressive Chinese feminists saw men and women as inherently different because of their biological sex and this thesis shows how this was indeed a key premise of the decisions made by Women-Work officials when mobilising civilian women to engage in spying and sabotage.[753] This was especially apparent in the Soviet bases described in Chapter 3 and during the Sino-Japanese War described in Chapter 4. Because it was believed by officials that women and men were inherently different due to their difference in biological sex, it was thus inappropriate and inefficient to mobilise women to engage in direct combat and officials were instructed not to put women in the Red Army. Men, instead, were drafted or instructed to do more physically demanding activities. But officials did not want to miss out on the opportunity to mobilise women to contribute, despite them being deemed less physically capable than men. As such, officials decided to mobilise women to

[753] Barlow, *The Question of Women*, 66.

engage in activities such as spying and sabotage where women approached enemy men as a way to convert them. These activities were deemed relatively less physically taxing that even a small, elderly, or ill man or woman could succeed in them. Furthermore, it was also recognised by officials that women could approach men easily without garnering suspicion, and utilise the stereotype about women being apolitical and ignorant to their advantage. This is interesting because it tells us that, while civilian women did not exactly do what the female seductress-spy was thought to have done, there were some overlaps between aspects of the female-seductress-spy stereotype, and the stereotypical beliefs used by officials in real-life situations, namely that women have the uniquely ability to approach men unsuspectingly and are able to persuade or influence them to do various things. It was also clear that the Communists understood that the Nationalists held some of these stereotypes and used them to their advantage. More importantly, it also demonstrates how traditional gender stereotypes continued to be useful to CCP officials, and that they continued to be perpetuated, especially (and perhaps paradoxically), by those who were mobilised by the party and likely believed in the party's rhetoric regarding women's liberation and non-conformity to traditional gender norms.

Furthermore, this thesis is in contrast with previous studies of wartime Chinese women which mostly saw production and other auxiliary activities as women's key contribution.[754] It was demonstrated in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 that civilian women made other meaningful wartime contributions that went beyond making shoes, laundering, and cooking. Similar to women in Europe during World War II, as explored by scholars such as Juliette Pattinson, they relayed messages and gathered enemy intelligence, approached enemy men and attempted to convince and convert them.[755] They also engaged in subversive activities against the Japanese and the Nationalists. This is significant, because existing scholarship and political narratives describe and argues that the wartime experience of Chinese women was often a sombre one of death, suffering, and the endurance of gendered violence and sexual abuse, or that women were mostly mobilised to do production work while men were out in the battlefields.[756] Yet the case of mobilised civilian women shows us that women's experiences of the war were much more varied, and that many women, like men, risked their lives for their beliefs. As such, this study

[754] Hershatter, Gail Hershatter, *Women and China's Revolutions,* 171; Davin, *Woman-Work*, 21-52.
[755] Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines*, 136 - 177.
[756] See, for example: Peipei Qiu, Su Zhiliang, and Chen Lifei, eds., *Chinese Comfort Women: Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2014); Danke Li, Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

does in ways echo the works of scholars such as Dorothy Ko or Margery Wolf which offer a view that differs from the "woman-as-victims" approach in scholarship.[757]

Some, if not many, of the women who were mobilised, especially in Northern China during the 1930s and early 1940s, were what was colloquially called Worn-Out Shoes, that is to say prostitutes which included those deemed to be loose women. The analysis in this thesis departs from existing studies, most notably by Zhang Zhiyong, on CCP interactions with Worn-Out Shoes which mostly looked at how the CCP positively rectified issues related to local morality.[758] Instead, Chapters 4 and 5 show how the CCP pragmatically approached and utilised these women in the early 1940s and examined what they did with them later and the reasons for the changes in treatment. It was clear to officials that the nature of what women were mobilised to do required the individual woman to have certain characteristics that were nearly always non-conforming to local gender norms, such as being receptive to new (and non-Confucian) ideas, boldness, risk-tolerance, willingness to be and be seen in public spaces, and willingness to interact with unknown men. Many ordinary civilian women did not have these characteristics and on-the-ground officials found it hard to engage with them. While Aminda Smith illustrates how the CCP sought to conform prostitutes after 1949, Chapter 4 of this thesis shows how the CCP actively relied on the characteristics of these women during the 1930s and 1940s because they fit what was required and necessary for Secret Work and other clandestine activities.[759] It was only after the demand for these women decreased that the realities of the dilemma really kicked in, ultimately resulting in many woman-work officials' decision to conform and reform them.

Known in the West as the beginning of the "reform period" or "China's opening-up period," the late 1970s and 1980s saw various economic reforms take place which also transformed China socially. During this period, many women began publicly to tell their stories and gave first-hand accounts of their pre-1949 work and remembered their own wartime experiences in the post-Mao period. Chapter 6 illuminated how they narrated their experiences and investigated the anecdotes they used in their remembrances and testimonies. Women were motivated to prove and showcase their own, or their female colleagues', loyalty and hard work. Self-narratives discussed in detail their work for the party that was interlaced with personal

[757] Dorothy Ko, Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1; Margery Wolf, Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 31.
[758] Zhang Zhiyong, "*Cong bianyuan dao zhuliu*," 125 - 133.
[759] Smith, *Thought Reform*, 51 – 74.

matters and details. Specifically, how they or other women rejected and defied community and family expectations of being a mother, wife, or daughter, together with their accompanying values and social duties, such as obedience, in order for them to work of the party. But they also remembered conforming and perpetuating gender norms through their way of dress and behaviour. Their accounts confirm what was said earlier by officials and highlight how performing gender, a term first coined by Judith Butler, and specifically performing femininities was crucial to the survival and success of these women back in the 1930s and 1940s.[760] From these accounts, we also learn that, to some of these women, physical hardships and even torture was part of the job, even though officials believed that these kinds of jobs were more suitable for women because it was less physically taxing.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates the paradoxical nature of women's involvement with the CCP and CCP Woman-Work before 1949, which has implications for our broader understanding of feminism and the woman question in modern and contemporary China. This thesis agrees with David Goodman that there was diversity as to how some women participated in, and contributed to, politics and to the CCP, at least during the 1930s and 1940s.[761] While CCP Woman-Work required women (often non-conforming ones) to engage in dangerous activities, participate in politics and in what these women genuinely saw as feminist action, it also required them to perpetuate traditional gender norms that they had previously sought to reject throughout their work. But when they were no longer perceived as useful, these types of women were deemed to be too non-conforming by Women-Work officials, many of whom were women themselves. As such, feminist action and women officials were indeed curtailed and side-lined, according to Christina Gilmartin and Louise Edwards, but this was especially the case after the 1940s, when non-conforming women were subjected to party efforts in re-education.[762]

Furthermore, the findings of this thesis have implications for our broader understanding of the relationship between the CCP and women's rights in China. What many of the civilian women went through could be understood as a betrayal by the party's initial promises. While they were attracted to CCP Woman-Work efforts initially due to their commitment to women's rights and the opportunity to fight against what they saw as detrimental and oppressive gender stereotypes,

[760] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 174 - 175.
[761] David S. Goodman, "Revolutionary Women," 915 – 942.
[762] McLaren, *Chinese Women*, 107; Gilmartin, *Engendering*, 1 – 11.

they were subsequently mobilised based on some of the same stereotypes and understandings about women.

Lastly, the findings of the thesis also have broader implications for the study of feminism in China. In many ways, this thesis agrees with what is frequently argued by scholars such as Kay Ann Johnson, Gail Hershatter, and Elisabeth Croll: that traditional values and understandings of women and womanhood continue to have a prevailing influence over the lives of Chinese women.[763] What we are now learning, however, is that traditional values were always needed and actively perpetuated throughout the 1920s to 1940s as it was crucial to survival and success. What we have also learned from this thesis is that women were not always passive victims of the patriarchy or oppressed by CCP men. The experience of women in the women's liberation movement was nuanced. Women were mobilised by mostly women officials and many perpetuated the same stereotypes that they sought to reject. While they contributed throughout the war, they were also eventually deemed un-useful by women and thus forced to conform by Women-Work officials who were mostly women. As such, the reality of feminism in modern and contemporary China is even more complex than it already seemed.

[763] Honig and Hershatter, *Personal Voices*, 44. See also: Johnson, *Women, the Family*, 214; Croll, *The Politics of Marriage*, 1 - 13.

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