Consumption as Resistance: The National Products Movement and Anti-Japanese Boycotts in Modern China

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> Always remember and never forget May Ninth [1915].
>
> A 1915 poster written in its author's blood

> Commercial Warfare can defeat Military Warfare.
> By remembering May Ninth and May Thirtieth [1925], [Chinese-made] Sanjiao Brand towels will bring down [Japanese-made] Tiemiao Brand towels.
>
> Advertisement in a Shanghai newspaper in June, 1925

Boycotts figure prominently in the history of Sino-Japanese relations in the first third of the twentieth century, and with good reason. During this period, such boycotts precipitated or accompanied major turning points in relations between the two countries—with significant boycotts directed against the Japanese in 1908, 1909, 1915, 1919, 1925, 1928, and then nearly continuously into the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45). Indeed, a recent book on the origins of the war asserts that the policies underpinning Chinese boycotts provoked the war with Japan.[1]

Despite the frequency and centrality of boycotts, studies usually focus on individual incidents, ignoring any continuity with previous ones.[2] Even the few books that cover multiple boycotts fail to adequately problematize the continuity between them.[3] As such, the historiography of boycotts interprets these events as isolated manifestations of a cycle that

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[1] Donald A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs: The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy," 1931–32* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

[2] Two examples of studies that examine individual boycotts include: Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts* and Joseph T. Chen, *The May Fourth Movement in Shanghai: The Making of a Social Movement in Modern China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971). Among several recent studies on the Anti-American boycott of 1905, Wong Sin-kiong is helpful in suggesting how this boycott develops protest tropes. See Wong, "The Genesis of Popular Movements in Modern China," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1995.

[3] The most important studies covering multiple boycotts are: Charles F. Remer, *A Study of Chinese Boycotts: With Special Reference to Their Economic Effectiveness* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933) and Kikuchi Takaharu,

intensified over time. The sequence of events within each cycle can be summarized as follows: A foreign "humiliation" prompts a popular response in the form of a boycott, and the Japanese respond by pressuring the Chinese government to suppress it. The Chinese government then attempts to suppress the boycott with varying degrees of intensity until gradually the boycott dissolves as government suppression from above, inertia from below, and the profit motive among merchants undermine the commitment of participants. A few years later, another round begins.[4]

My concern here is the inactivity that is assumed to exist between these "cycles." In the first part of the paper, I introduce a Shanghai-based commercial and industrial organization with ties throughout the region, and examine how it tried to mediate the economic impact of political and social changes on its businesses and industries. I argue that this organization continually promoted an ethic of nationalistic consumption as part of its strategy to compete against foreign companies in Chinese markets. Combining elements of anti-imperialism, nationalism, and Chinese identity, this ethic made the consumption of "national products" (*guohuo*) patriotic and the use of foreign products akin to treason. The ethic increasingly came to shape aspects of Chinese life by legitimizing government policies, sanctioning social activity, influencing clothing fashions, and more. Throughout this paper, I refer to the growing number of diverse organizations, activities and agendas supporting this ethic of nationalistic consumption as the "National Products Movement" (*Guohuo yundong*, or NPM).

In the second half of this paper, I examine the relationship between the National Products Movement and the boycotts by looking at the 1915 boycott. I focus on the agenda and activities of a single organization that embodied a particular ethic of nationalistic consumption to see how this ethic spread and influenced the interpretation of objects and events beyond its original scope. At the heart of this paper is a reinterpretation of boy-

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[4] *Chūgoku minzoku undō no kihon kōzō: Taigai boikotto no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Daian, 1966 [expanded and revised edition, 1974]). While periodically mentioning some of the long-term effects of boycotts, such as the replacement of Japanese products with new Chinese ones, Remer's focus is "economic effectiveness" from the perspective of trade statistics, not institutions, activities, or symbols. Kikuchi does a superior job of connecting boycotts by analyzing them alongside the growth of domestic Chinese industry. He also acknowledges the appearance of the National Products Movement (NPM) organizations, but only examines them within the narrow context of individual boycotts and does not trace their activities across boycotts. In other cases, multiple boycotts are subsumed under other subjects.

[4] This interpretation of boycotts is reinforced by the common practice of numbering boycotts in contemporary coverage, especially Japanese. See, for instance, *Shina ni okeru hainichi undō* (Ōsaka: Ōsaka Shōgyō Kaigisho, 1928), 1–6.

cotts, specifically the anti-Japanese boycott of 1915, through their re-contextualization. I propose that the NPM links and redefines these events, shifting the interpretative paradigm away from boycotts as sporadic and usually temporarily successful events to boycotts as a highly visible manifestation of growing commitment to and extension of an ethic of nationalistic consumption.[5] Examining events such as boycotts from the perspective of a movement that promoted a refusal to buy foreign products in general, and increasingly Japanese products in particular, will reveal that popular resistance to Japanese and other foreign activity in China is underestimated and misunderstood.[6] Indeed, the misinterpretation of these events as isolated incidents leads to a devaluing of important dimensions of Chinese nationalism and forms of anti-imperialism that Japanese encountered throughout China.[7]

Domesticating Consumption Prior to 1915

This section examines the development of an ethic of nationalistic consumption through the early history of a key organization in the National Products Movement, the National Products Preservation Association (Zhonghua Guohuo Weichi Hui, which I hereafter refer to as the NPPA).[8] The section illuminates the development of the NPM as a coherent move-

[5] The groundbreaking work of Shanghai economic historian Pan Junxiang includes boycotts as a manifestation of the NPM but does not explore the links between the two. See Pan, "Guohuo yundong pingjia de ruogan wenti," in Pan Junxiang, ed., *Zhongguo jindai guohuo yundong* (Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi Chubanshe, 1996), 577–78.

[6] In contrast with these studies that concentrate on the economic dimension of the Sino-foreign rivalries, I focus on the broader context of organizations, activities, and symbols that shape these rivalries. The growth of Chinese domestic industry and its implications for Sino-Japanese economic rivalry are surveyed in Marie-Claire Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 63–98; Kikuchi, *Chūgoku minzoku undō*, and many other places. Specific rivalries between Chinese and foreign businesses are examined in industry studies, such as Sherman Cochran *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890–1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980) and Takamura Naosuke, *Kindai Nihon mengyō to Chūgoku* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), especially 140–156.

[7] The Japanese also encountered these forms of nationalism within boycotts and the NPM in overseas Chinese communities, especially in Southeast Asia. See, for example, Akashi Yoji, "The Boycott and Anti-Japanese National Salvation Movement of the Nanyang Chinese, 1908–1941." Ph.D. diss., Georgetown University, 1963.

[8] Translating the Chinese name for the NPPA poses problems. I chose the middle course between two extremes—one stressing the purpose of the organization and

ment with the means to shape and promote this ethic. It demonstrates that the movement as a whole was indeed a sustained effort, rather than a series of unconnected or loosely connected events subordinated to boycotts. Neither the movement nor the NPPA was, as one scholar stated and many others implied, merely "camouflage for boycotts."[9] In fact, this paper argues that the reverse may be the case. The second half of the paper uses the anti-Japanese boycott of 1915 and its legacy to show how the NPM, through such organizations as the NPPA, came to define the social, ideological, and economic bases of boycotts.

Advocating Nationalistic Consumption

The formation of an ethic of nationalistic consumption was closely linked to other changes in China. The political revolution of 1911 that led to the downfall of China's last dynasty further destabilized, or completely overturned, state-sponsored symbols, institutions, and ideologies. Moreover, there was more than one contender to make replacements, as mounting internal problems caused the Qing dynasty to collapse at least as much as it was overthrown by strong revolutionary forces in control of competing weapons, soldiers, and ideologies. The contenders were anxious to consolidate power, and at the local level these struggles were often expressed in battles over symbols, such as anti-foot binding campaigns, the cutting of queues, the modification of clothing, the reorganization of time through holidays and the introduction of the solar calendar, among others.[10] When examined, these conflicts over rival state-building agendas are usually seen as battlegrounds for political, military, and intellectual elites at one

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the other one a more literal translation. I elected to translate *weichi* as "preservation" to contrast it with its implied antonym, which often appeared in the phrase, "national annihilation" (*wangguo*). "Preservation" implies not only preserving the industries involved in the NPPA, but also the Chinese nation through the "preservation" of its industries. A NPPA document from 1925 translates its name as "China Products Improvement Association" (Suzhou Municipal Archives Suzhou zong shanghui quanzong 2.1 [all materials come from this collection referred to hereafter as SZMA]: File 397). Although improving Chinese products was an explicit and central part of the agendas of NPM groups, such as NPPA, the term does not adequately invoke the foreign threat that promoting Chinese products implied. Other translations for NPPA are "Chinese Product Protection Society" and "Society to Encourage Use of National Goods." Linda Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang (1842–1922): Reform and Modernization in Modern Chinese History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1992), 235.

[9] See for example, Matsumoto Shigeharu, *The Historical Development of Chinese Boycott, Book 1, 1834–1925* (Tōkyō: Japanese Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1933).

[10] Li Shaobing, *Minguo shiqi de xishi fengsu wenua* (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994).

end of the social hierarchy and students, secret societies, and other mass movements of resistance at the other end.[11] However, powerful economic interests also mobilized resources to redefine the new symbols of state to reinforce and extend competing narratives of the nation, its people, and its route to "national salvation" (*jiuguo*).[12]

The NPPA had pressing reasons for linking consumption with burgeoning Chinese nationalism. In the conflict over how the Chinese should look, the new republican government made relentless efforts to eradicate queues and introduce Western-style dress for men. Because of the close association between queues and Chinese-style clothing, the NPPA had a legitimate concern that the domestic silk industry was in grave danger. The immediate goal of the NPPA, then, was to prevent political leaders throughout China from sanctioning the clothing changes that were accompanying queue cutting. Moreover, they were successful in lobbying to mandate that Chinese clothing be made of domestically produced materials, especially silk. In the process, the organization managed to sever the old link between hair and clothes, and to attach distinct meanings to each. For instance, the NPPA helped redefine the Chinese-style long gown (*changpao*) as a patriotic style. Such reinterpretations helped ensure the survival of Chinese clothing, but also had a more subtle long-term significance in building an ethic of nationalistic consumption that would define other products as national interests.[13]

To defend itself against this immediate threat posed by clothing change, the powerful interests represented in the NPPA quickly built a sophisticated organization. This organization immediately sought to take advantage of many opportunities created by the fall of dynastic rule, which allowed economic interests to form new, even more specific interest groups than the chambers of commerce that only recently had been allowed to form. Indeed, organizations of Chinese sojourning in Shanghai,

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[11] Prasenjit Duara makes important contributions to scholarship at both ends of the spectrum, analyzing the resistance to state-building agendas both among national elites and within local movements. See Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[12] Indeed, I would argue that this ethic of nationalistic consumption was very competitive, contributing largely to the emerging dominant narrative of history, rather than to "alternative" ones. For a lucid discussion of the concepts of nationalism and narrative as they relate to modern Chinese history, see Duara, *Rescuing History*, Part 1.

[13] My discussion throughout the first half of this paper of the role of the NPPA and the NPM in the battles over defining a new orthodox appearance draws on "Empires of Appearance and Disappearance: The Politics of Hair and Wear in Modern China, 1880–1930," a paper written for the Annual Association for Asian Studies Conference, Washington, D.C., 27 March 1998.

or native-place associations, that eventually formed the NPPA began organizational activities shortly after the outbreak of the revolution. After two months of organizational meetings, the association was formally established in Shanghai on December 12, 1911, at the main hall of the Hangzhou Qianjiang native-place association.[14]

Although the NPPA became a large organization with hundreds of members representing native-place associations, industries, students, and many other groups, it was inaugurated by a small and narrow group of only four representatives from each of eight native-place associations, a total of thirty-two.[15] Moreover, these associations represented only three industries—silk/satin, hat, and pawn shops—all in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang area. The initial agenda of the NPPA not only reflected the immediate concern over the survival of Chinese-style hats and clothing, but it also articulated widely held notions that quickly attracted new members, branch organizations, and similar groups throughout China and in overseas Chinese communities.

[14] For more information on the preparatory meetings, see Zhonghua Guohuo Weichi Hui, *Zhonghua guohuo weichi hui ershi zhounian jinian kan* (Shanghai, 1932) [hereafter, NPPA, *Jinian kan*], Huiyi jilu section.
The NPPA is regularly labeled the oldest NPM organization. See, for instance, Pan Junxiang, "Guohuo yundong zhong de shanghai minzu zichanjieji," in *Dang'an yu lishi* (1989), 55; and Xin Ping et al., *Minguo shehui dagang* (Fuzhou: Fuzhou Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), 348. However, a reporter attending the inaugural meeting of the NPPA informed the gathered that there were already three other smaller organizations in Shanghai. See Li Zhuoyun's short speech in Zhonghua Guohuo Weichi Hui, *Zhonghua Guohuo Weichi hui zhangcheng wendu huilu* (Shanghai, 1912) [hereafter NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*,], 9a. Because I discuss native-place associations only in Shanghai and Jiangnan, I follow Goodman and use "native-place association" to denote both *huiguan* (meeting hall) and *gongsuo* (public office), the institutions established by sojourning merchants. Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identity in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 39.

[15] There is much confusion in the secondary, and indeed, primary, literature concerning the establishment of the NPPA. The above scholars (as does the NPPA, *Jinian kan*: Huishi section, 1) all incorrectly list the founding number of native-place associations as ten, with an initial representation of forty members. In actuality, thirty-two persons, or four representatives from each of eight native-place associations, made up the founding group. See NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 4b–5a. Others get the founding date wrong. For example, Zheng Qing [Chen Zhengqing], "Shanghai Zhongguo Guohuo gongsi zai zhanshi de houfang," *Dang'an yu lishi* 1987.3, 64–71, lists the founding of the NPPA as 1915, and Pomerantz-Zhang, *Wu Tingfang*, 235, seems to say that Wu organized the group in 1914.

Hierarchies of Dissemination

From the start, the NPPA faced three major obstacles in gaining support for its agenda. First, it had to win over Chinese military and political leaders, many of whom were already endorsing policies the NPPA opposed, such as clothing reform. Naturally, it focused on cultivating support in and around the Shanghai base of operations, where its influence was strongest. Second, it had to disseminate its agenda and build support outside of Shanghai. Lastly, it had to make its agenda appealing beyond a narrow group of political and economic elites. With the collapse of imperial power and the growth of regional power centers, members understood that they would not be able to rely exclusively on state and elite patronage.

Cultivating Patronage. The NPPA prized powerful patronage, and worked hard to gain early support from influential politicians. At its inaugural meeting, the NPPA developed these contacts by inviting and giving prominent roles to Shanghai leaders, county and provincial officials, and representatives of other groups as well as individuals from the military, political, commercial, and academic circles. In the months following the inaugural meeting, the NPPA continued to lobby these political and military elites by writing letters, sending telegrams, and encouraging their attendance at other organization functions. These efforts yielded public letters of support from such prominent Chinese as Sun Yatsen, Shanghai military governor Chen Qimei, and noted diplomat Wu Tingfang. Shortly after its establishment, the NPPA received a letter from Wu Tingfang endorsing its formation and inquiring about membership. The NPPA immediately asked him to join and in less than a year elected him president.[16] Support such as this helped establish the legitimacy and prominence of the NPPA.

Building a National Network. From its inception, the NPPA hoped to provide an organizational template to facilitate the establishment of similar groups throughout China. It immediately began cultivating ties to chambers of commerce and local governments in other provinces by "sending

[16] Sun Yatsen's letter to the NPPA was published in Nanjing's *Lanshi zhengfu gongbao* 7 (4 February 1912); for Chen Qimei's assurances to the NPPA that clothing would be regulated, see his letter to the NPPA reprinted in the newspaper *Shen bao*, 20 December 1911, and republished in the collection Shanghai Shehui Kexue Yuan, ed., *Xinhai geming zai Shanghai shiliao xuanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), 423–24. On Wu Tingfang, see NPPA, *Jinian kan*, Huiwu jilu section, 3; I deal extensively with Wu's involvement in the NPPA in "Empires of Appearance and Disappearance." The NPPA also received early letters of support from lower ranking officials, including one from the Shanghai Shangwu Chairman Wang, see NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 2.

telegrams to far places and writing letters to nearby ones."[17] The correspondence aimed not only to secure support for the NPPA agenda, but to urge other cities and towns to set up similar groups, propagate common economic goals locally, and lobby local, regional, and national authorities. To assist in the formation of sister organizations, it circulated materials on all aspects of its organization. The earliest and most comprehensive of these was a 1912 booklet that detailed all aspects of the organization, including its initial membership, bylaws, and copies of speeches from its inaugural meeting. It also provided form letters, and it urged other groups to use them as a basis for lobbying local, regional, and national authorities. These NPPA templates became the basis for letters from other groups and the model for the establishment of similar organizations.[18]

The NPPA's appeal found immediate success in provinces and cities across China, including Tianjin, Fuzhou, Changsha, Tonghai, Anqing, Beijing, Nanjing, Jiaxing, Zhenjiang, Hankou, Jinan, and many more.[19] The Shanghai-based NPPA had varying degrees of contact with these other organizations. It was directly involved in setting up some organizations, while with others it only exchanged correspondence and passed along copies of its literature. Its relationship with Suzhou was particularly close. In July of 1912, Suzhou became among the earliest cities to follow the NPPA lead in establishing an organization to promote the NPM agenda. With a third of its population working in the silk industry, Suzhou had a lot to lose if the silk industry continued its downward slide.[20] Already, an influential Suzhou silk native-place association, the Yunjin Gongsuo, was involved in the establishment of the NPPA in Shanghai. Now, this native-

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[17] Nearly every speaker addresses the importance of helping to establish similar organizations in other cities. See, for instance, the speech by Li Zhuoyun, NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 9a. There was a large pool of potential contacts as, by the end of 1911, there were nearly 800 local-, county-, and provincial-level chambers of commerce in China. Bergère, *The Golden Age*, 57.

[18] Indeed, it became common practice for later NPM organizations to send each other copies of bylaws and other organizational literature. The NPM organizations active in the spring of 1925 are surveyed and categorized in Jiang Weiguo, "Jindai Zhongguo guohuo tuanti chuxi," in *Min'guo dang'an* 1995.1, 75–83, who classifies the NPPA as a "producer/marketer" NPM organization, 76–77.

[19] Conveniently summarized in Huang Yiping and Yu Baotang, eds., *Beiyang zhengfu shiqi jingji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexue Yuan Chubanshe, 1995), 182. The NPPA, *Jinian kan* log lists the establishment of these branches as well as contact with others. Pan, *Guohuo yundong*, 19–20, compiles a list to demonstrate the breadth of the NPPA correspondence with other NPM organizations throughout China and with overseas Chinese.

[20] The establishment of the Suzhou NPPA branch in the context of the local silk industry is covered in Wang Xiang, "Jindai sichou shengchan fazhan yu Jiangnan shehui bianqian," *Jindaishi yanjiu* (1992.4), 1–20.

place association, working through the Suzhou General Chamber of Commerce, oversaw the establishment of a local branch.[21]

Popularizing the National Products Movement Agenda. From its beginnings, the NPPA used diverse channels to disseminate its agenda, including formal (letters and petitions) and informal (word of mouth within native-place associations), new (telegraph, newspapers, periodicals) and old (meetings at teahouses, restaurants, and native-place association halls). To provide an idea of this range, the following paragraphs introduce some of these initial channels that formed the basis of boycotts and the backbone of the NPM.[22]

From its inception, the NPPA was concerned with conveying its message to as many Chinese as possible. For instance, it printed a synopsis of what might be termed its "mission statement" in colloquial Chinese (*baihua*), and included it with the initial booklet of informational templates.[23] It also used other forms of dissemination intended to broaden its reach. Each year, the NPPA printed and distributed handbills, leaflets, newspaper advertisements nationally and overseas as well as other materials designed to boost membership, advertise NPPA activities, increase awareness of the NPM, promote specific national products, and so on. Print runs varied by subject and year, ranging from several thousand to several tens of thousands. And the total for all categories of propaganda literature ranged from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands of pieces each year.[24] By the early 1930s, the NPPA would claim that these efforts to publicize "national products" (*guohuo*) were so widely successful that even "all women and children knew" about the importance of buying Chinese products.[25]

Locally, the NPPA also organized lectures and other forums to disseminate its message more widely. At the inaugural meeting in December, 1911, members decided to hold a "Promote National Products Dissemi-

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[21] SZMA 2.1: File 840, 8–12, 27. In writing to the office of the Jiangsu governor and city authorities, eight members of the new Suzhou branch of the NPPA association explained their purpose and requested official recognition of the group in a petition with lines drawn from the 1912 NPPA template.

[22] The NPPA also continually developed new channels, including parades, expositions, periodicals, and others. For a brief introduction to the channels not discussed here, see Pan, "Guohuo yundong zhong," 55–59.

[23] NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 24a–25b.

[24] NPPA, *Jinian kan*, Huishi section, 16–18. The NPPA, *Jinian kan*, Huiwu jilu section records hundreds of instances of printing handbills, circulars, special-product catalogs (*yangben*) on silk and other products, and so on. For instance, in its first year (12 December 1911 to 12 December 1912) the NPPA circulated over 5,000 copies of a handbill encouraging the use of nationally produced silk.

[25] NPPA, *Jinian kan*, Huishi section, 2.

nation Rally," which drew over 3,800 people. Following the success of this event, NPPA members agreed to organize regular Saturday evening lectures to teach Chinese that it was their responsibility to buy national products. The meetings started out slowly; only four persons attended the first of these rallies. Gradually, organizers learned to be more flexible, varying time and inviting social figures to make speeches as well. The number of onlookers grew into the thousands.[26] Eventually, these rallies culminated with the inauguration of annual "National Products Salvation Rallies."

The NPPA actively sought to publicize its agenda through the media, which it considered an effective tool for quickly getting messages out and shaping public opinion. They attempted to enlist the newspapers in reversing earlier trends and encouraging Chinese to consider the economic consequences for "the nation" of their individual purchasing decisions. Beginning with its inaugural meeting, during which several reporters even gave speeches supporting the formation of the organization, the NPPA invited reporters to attend its meetings. Moreover, NPPA members were urged to write newspaper articles and place ads in periodicals.[27]

As the National Products Movement developed, the NPPA used many other tactics. They created a certification process for goods claiming to be national products, established stores that sold only these products, assisted area manufacturers in marketing products in other places, participated in organizing national expositions for Chinese products, and much more. Some of these other tactics will be examined below within the context of the 1915 boycott. As the above suggests and the second part will demonstrate, prior to the 1915 boycott an entrenched organizational network was in place to quickly interpret and expand such events as boycotts.

Elements of an Ethic

These numerous channels of dissemination left a significant document trail, enabling the reconstruction of the NPPA's ethic of nationalistic consumption, which brought together many ideological trends that mutually

[26] NPPA, *Jinian kan*, Kaihui section, 13: Meetings were held at both the Qianjiang Huiguan and Ningbo native-place association. From 1912 to 1924, the NPPA held fifty-nine such meetings. The first rally was held in July of 1912, and the second two months later in September, when three were held. From then until January of 1914, rallies were held nearly every week; the NPPA kept a log of these talks, which includes speaker and a brief summary. The influential Shanghai-based paper *Shen bao*, for instance, gives a good overview of one such rally, 4 November 1912.

[27] NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 15a–16b.

reinforced its central message. Above all, the early documents of the NPPA and the group's early activities demonstrate how the NPPA sought to separate the issue of abolishing the queue from the issue of reforming Chinese dress, supporting the elimination of the queue while arguing for the preservation of Chinese-style dress. The NPPA aimed to save the silk industry by establishing a link between silk interests and those of the entire country. To do this, they sought to persuade people that clothing was an issue of national survival, not merely the health of a few industries. To strengthen this link, the NPPA advanced arguments that blended economic, political, symbolic, and nationalistic reasoning, arguments that would appeal to a broad spectrum of Chinese. Collectively these strands formed an ethic of consumption that quickly came to apply to other products, inform discussions on economic relations, shape interpretations of events that would lead to boycotts, and so on.

The Economy and the Ethic. Linking the health of the economy and the well-being of the nation was fundamental to the discourse animating this new ethic of nationalistic consumption. The economic consequences of changing clothing, for example, were more important than "appearing modern to foreigners" by wearing Western-style clothing, the number one consideration of many politicians, intellectuals, and other Chinese.[28] This was most clearly evident in the economic rationale offered for opposing clothing change. As documents and speakers frequently warned, switching to wool suits from cotton and silk gowns would have a devastating effect on the Chinese economy. Silk played a central role in Chinese economy; the process of switching to wool would destroy a key industry without creating one in its place because China produced almost no wool products. As a result, these materials would have to be imported, at least until China could develop a wool industry. In the meantime, NPPA literature warned, the displacement of the silk industry would throw millions out of work, effecting the entire economy.

The economic rationale also included an immediate and practical consideration, namely a financial argument against dress conversion. If men were forced to change clothing, Chinese would be forced to spend a fortune. Such concern seems ludicrous, but as the rise of a Republican interpretation of appearance suggests, and indeed Sun Yatsen's own initial preference for suits indicates, the possibility of shift, at least among the upper classes, must have seemed quite real.

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[28] Chinese diplomat Wu Tingfang, an early advocate of removing queues, was the most famous proponent of this position. His collected writings contain numerous discussions of the subject. See, for example, *Wu Tingfang ji*, ed. Ding Lanjun and Yu Zuofeng (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), 358–360.

Commercial Warfare. NPPA literature also frequently argued that international trade was even more serious than a zero-sum game because buying foreign products not only hurt the Chinese, but also helped its enemies. To reinforce this claim, the organization regularly invoked the concept of "commercial war" (*shangzhan*).[29] One popularizer of this concept in the late nineteenth century was the compradore-scholar Zheng Guanying (1842–1921), who in *Warnings to a Prosperous Age* (c. 1893) (*Shengshi weiyan*), argued that international commercial relations represented even more of a threat to China than the territorial ambitions of imperialist powers. To survive this war, China needed to "stimulate commerce" (*zhenxing shiye*). As with Zheng several decades earlier, invoking this phrase during the NPM enhanced the social position of economic elites and pressured governments to adopt mercantilist policies. Now there were newer, more democratic implications as well. Whereas Zheng aimed his recommendations at Chinese elites, modern mass communication brought the message to others, encouraging them to enlist in the "war" by not buying what would increasingly come to be known as "enemy products" (*chouhuo*) after 1915.

The spread of the notion of "commercial war" accompanied a growing obsession with China's balance of payments. By the beginning of the twentieth century, this concern over trade imbalances crystallized into what economic historian Chi-ming Hou described as the widely popular notion of a "drain effect": Any profits made by foreigners in China came at the expense of the Chinese.[30] During this time, Chinese trade statistics became enshrined as the single most important measure of how the "war" was going. And during the NPM, they were frequently published and republished in tables, charts, graphs, and essays.[31] This preoccupation with the "loss of economic control to foreigners" and the "leakage of profits" (*liquan waiyi* and *louzhi*), as "commercial warfare" was commonly described, is typified in the inaugural meeting speech of a key figure

[29] Guo Xianglin et al., *Zhongguo jindai zhenxing jingji zhi dao de bijiao* (Shanghai: Caijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1995), 65–83.

[30] In 1877, China began running a trade deficient that quickly ballooned, see Hazama Naoki et al., *Deeta de miru Chūgoku kindai shi* (Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 1996), 21. Chi-ming Hou, *Foreign Investment and Economic Development in China, 1840–1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 93–94. Historian Paul Cohen summarizes late-nineteenth century economic nationalism in his biography of a well-known proponent of "commercial warfare," Wang Tao (b. 1828); Paul A. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 185–208.

[31] A typical example of trade statistics as scorecard for the NPM is Guangdong Jianshe Ting, *Guohuo diaocha baogao* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Jianshe Ting, 1930).

throughout the history of the NPPA, Wang Jiean. A member from a Suzhou native-place association with a long history of representing the interests of the silk industry, he took early responsibility for communicating with outside groups and raising public awareness of issues the NPPA supported. Wang's speech is worth quoting:

> Today we convene this organization to preserve national products (*guohuo*). As China is an expansive land, rich in natural resources, with more than enough to meet its own needs, why, then, is commerce and the economy in dire straits? It's all due to the fact that China doesn't understand the "Way of Commercial Warfare" (*shangzhan zhi dao*). Foreigners say that "military warfare makes [a state] powerful and commercial warfare makes [a state] wealthy" (*bingzhan qiang shangzhan fu*). But, China doesn't understand commercial warfare. It continually exports raw materials and reimports finished products, thus allowing the profits to flow into foreign hands … When profits are drained in this way, China is losing in commercial warfare. Consequently, the economy faces hard times. Compatriots should research how to improve semi-finished products and sell finished ones. Everyone should make preserving national products a main objective, and not simply blithely follow fashion trends. In this way preservation of national products will be great … Although the scope of this group is small now, it is my hope that it reaches all provinces and gets them to preserve national products.[32]

Formulating and disseminating an ethic of nationalistic consumption was a creative response to imperialism. NPPA leaders such as Wang Jiean also understood that the key to success lay in making Chinese industry more competitive; and NPPA members made frequent mention of the need to make improvements.[33] In the interim, however, members, in a proto-import substitution argument, sought to prevent imports from destroying their industries. Because the "unequal treaties" denied China tariff autonomy until the very end of the 1920s and because these treaties set tariffs at a paltry 5–7.5% ad valorem, Chinese leaders could not wield the traditional tool of protective tariffs.[34] Moreover, the lack of a strong, stable govern-

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[32] Wang Jiean's speech in NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 8b.

[33] Outlining the importance of finding new uses for silk, the first NPPA president Zhang Ziyin went so far as to say that finding uses for Chinese silk materials should be considered akin to cherishing the "essence of the Chinese nation" (*huangzu guocui*)! NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 7b.

[34] On China's protracted negotiations to recover tariff autonomy, see Stanley F. Wright, *China's Struggle for Tariff Autonomy: 1843–1938* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., 1938).

ment with the financial means to support economic development left a vacuum. The result was that Chinese commercial and industrial interests such as those in the NPPA sought to erect non-tariff barriers to trade, such as mandating clothing styles that made use of nationally produced fabrics.

Peace and Political Stability. The NPPA also warned that widespread economic destruction would accompany any clothing switch and would have immediate political reverberations. According to this line of reasoning, a chain reaction begun by massive dislocations in the silk industry would destabilize China as millions went hungry and began to wander the country in search of food. Moreover, allowing foreigners to benefit at the expense of the Chinese economy would delegitimize the government. It warned the new government that in reestablishing political order after the Revolution of 1911 it ought not allow the masses to navigate on their own such cultural changes as those in appearance.

One Ethnic, One Ethic. Through the ethic of nationalistic consumption, such NPM organizations as the NPPA also sought to create a bounded Chinese ethnic market in which membership was predicated on consumption of the products of one's compatriots (*tongbao*). From the first NPPA president onward, leaders of NPM organizations stressed continually that "all 400 million Chinese have this responsibility" to promote the NPPA agenda.[35] In addition to the economic well-being of the nation, Chinese independence was at stake because switching to wool clothing not only benefited foreign economies, it also encouraged foreign imperial powers to sink their teeth deeper into China. As the second half of this paper will demonstrate, this theme would grow in importance after the Japanese presented the notorious Twenty-One Demands in early 1915.

"National Humiliation" and Consumption in 1915

Humiliating experiences at the hands of foreigners are so common in Chinese modern history that enumerating them could, and indeed has, filled thick encyclopedias. They include every imaginable variety, such as "unequal treaties," foreign wars fought on Chinese lands, and countless acts of violence against individual Chinese. Reviewing the sheer number is a sobering experience; and the next half of this paper in no way attempts to deny their numbers and the very real harm they caused. Nevertheless, similar to other historical events, their meanings are neither immediately self-evident nor fixed for all time. They, too, are sites of contention, often

[35] NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 5b.

defined by those with the power to get a definition to stick. This half of my paper examines how one set of humiliations fed the growing NPM.

The Politics of Defining Events

Opportunism, ultimatums, demands, threats—by any reckoning 1915 contained an abundance of Sino-Japanese friction, generating the raw materials for the creation of powerful anti-Japanese symbols. Keeping in mind the activities of the NPPA and the ethic of nationalistic consumption within the NPM, the events of 1915 take on new, more powerful significance. The boycotts of that year do not appear simply as ephemeral events, "five minutes of enthusiasm," as foreigners and many Chinese often derided such events, but overt manifestations of and fuel for a growing movement. Long after the boycotts dissipated, the student organizations disbanded, and more regular Sino-Japanese economic intercourse resumed, the NPPA and a growing number of similar organizations within the NPM went about disseminating interpretations of 1915 that linked consumption of Chinese products with anti-imperialism.

Although the politics behind the imposition and acceptance of the Twenty-One Demands are complex, the basic elements are simple. On January 18, 1915, Japan secretly presented Chinese President Yuan Shikai with a list of demands, divided into five groups. The first four groups included: the formal recognition of the transfer of German rights in Shandong province to Japan, the extension of leases and rights which Japan had won from Russia in 1905, the joint control over the Hanyeping Iron Works, and a Chinese commitment not to cede any territory to a third country. The final group of demands immediately triggered the most Chinese opposition, because it required the virtual transfer of Chinese sovereignty by placing Japanese advisors in all branches of government, joint policing of troublesome areas, contracting the Japanese to build railways, and establishing special economic rights in Fujian province. Negotiations dragged out for the next five months. Under pressure, Japan withdrew this fifth set of demands and presented the remaining ones as an ultimatum on May Seventh, which the Chinese were forced to accept on May Ninth.

May Seventh and May Ninth quickly became days of "national humiliation" (*guochi*), worthy of yearly commemoration.[36] Organizations and individuals across China quickly spread this definition, denouncing Ja-

[36] Symptomatic of the fragmented political state of China, this humiliation was commemorated on two different days. May Seventh was the focus of commemoration in North China, and May Ninth was the commemoration day in the

pan's "latest, most serious humiliation." In a manifesto sent to chambers of commerce and newspapers across China, the Beijing Chamber of Commerce voiced a popular Chinese response to the events that the NPPA helped disseminate in the Shanghai area:

> Japan is taking advantage of war in Europe to have its way in East Asia. The ultimatum of May Seventh is the best manifestation of this opportunism. If Chinese wish to live as human beings, we must never forget the humiliation of May Seventh … The memory should be passed on to our children and grandchildren, from one generation to the next, for all eternity. From this May Seventh onward, we 400 million Chinese must struggle wholeheartedly to help our country. Although our bodies may perish, our will cannot die, and we must forever remember this humiliation.[37]

In addition to fixing these days as "humiliations," public statements such as this one also came to implicitly or explicitly signify how to remember and redress the outrage.

From Humiliation to Resistance

Sustaining such outrage and channeling it into the NPM was a complex process. The lengthy negotiations over the Demands gave Chinese plenty of time to grow impatient; it also gave them time to organize opposition and create new, and appropriate old, ways of expressing dissent. They expressed dissent through activities ranging from violent boycotts to avoiding popular Japanese hairstyles. Although these forms of protest expressed varying levels of commitment to the ethic of nationalist consumption, they all contributed to the NPM. This section begins to trace how these events, once defined, become signals to not consume Japanese products.

South. Sun Fanjun et al., eds., *Minguo shi da cidian* (Beijing: Zhongguo Guangbo Dianshi Chubanshe, 1991), 57. The difference in days provides a way of evaluating the types of sources and focus of readings. In his useful survey of the politics surrounding the Twenty-One Demands, Jansen, for example, only mentions the commemoration of May Seventh. Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894–1972* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1975), 209–23.

[37] Reprinted in Zhichi Hui [Society to Inform of the Humiliation], ed., *Guochi*, June 1915, 2 vols., no pagination. Similar sentiments were expressed in a widely distributed Beijing Education Ministry telegram, reprinted in *Shen bao*, 14 June 1915. On the NPPA role in spreading the former, see *Shen bao*, 20 May 1915; the same issue says that the Jiangsu Provincial Education Association vowed to hold yearly commemoration days to remind students and staff at all schools of the meaning of this "humiliation."

Local political environments shaped forms of dissent, with much of it feeding into the NPM. The massively unpopular Twenty-One Demands put these governments in a difficult position. On the one hand, local and provincial leaders received a constant stream of pressure and orders from the top to keep a lid on demonstrations and agitation that might further provoke Japan or further delegitimize the Beijing central government. On the other hand, local governments were often sympathetic to the outpouring of anti-Japanese sentiment and were reluctant to try to suppress all manifestations of dissent; others merely wanted to further erode the dwindling credibility of Yuan Shikai because of his unwillingness to confront Japan. The national government was well aware of growing resentment, and officials continually tried to reassure an anxious populace with pronouncements that the negotiations were proceeding successfully.[38]

Local governments negotiated the tension between maintaining order and yielding to popular pressure by cracking down on primarily overt manifestations of dissent. They prohibited and disbanded public gatherings, confiscated inflammatory circulars, prevented the removal of Japanese product ads, and heightened police visibility near Japanese businesses.[39] Meanwhile, more subtle forms of dissent flourished.

Japanese targets certainly got the message. In March of 1915, a Japanese shopkeeper in Shanghai frustrated over Chinese boycotts posted the following verse poster outside his shop:

> We are among the strongest of nations.
> Why should we fear you bastards?
> The current boycott of Japanese goods
> Is just empty talk.
> If you continue to protest in this way
> We will order your President to suppress it.
> Qingdao, Taiwan, and Korea.
> No, we are not jesting.
> Soon you will be an extinct nation.
> And assuredly you will become slaves.[40]

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[38] For a summary of the role of domestic politics in negotiations over the Twenty-One Demands, see Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 186–92. On the eve of the settlement, these reassurances become more frequent and insistent. See, for instance, *Xinwen bao*, 1915.5.7. Meanwhile, these same papers printed editorials denouncing leaked versions of what they derided as a sham "peace" settlement. See especially *Shen bao*.

[39] *Xinwen bao*, 27, 29, 31 March 1915 and 1 April 1915.

[40] *Shi bao*, 29 March 1915.

The poster expressed a lot more than the anger and bravado of a Japanese shopkeeper. It unintentionally articulated the frustration of a growing number of Chinese. Reprinted in a Chinese newspaper, it cleverly used a Japanese text to disseminate growing Chinese suspicions about Japan and its intentions in China. Here, the poster affirmed, was proof positive that Japan, flush with its startling success over Russia a decade earlier, now considered itself a first-rate world power with the arrogance necessary to push its own agenda in Asia; it was merely looking for an excuse to further humiliate China. The references to three recent acquisitions of an expanding Japanese empire was an unambiguous statement of China's fate, "national extinction" (*wangguo*).[41] Moreover, the poster emphasized the powerlessness of the Chinese, whose boycotts and politicians were considered mere short-term obstacles to the inevitable.

By reprinting the inflammatory poster, the Chinese paper also implied an appropriate response, a challenge to redouble resistance to Japanese imperialism, and prove the Japanese wrong. It was a call to action. The events of May confirmed that the Chinese could not depend on their politicians to preserve China's immediate interests, much less the integrity of the nation. Despite growing government pressure, organizations such as the NPPA found ways to signal this threat as well as relate it to a desired Chinese response in the form of an ethic of nationalistic consumption.

"A Certain Empire:" Invoking Japan to Signify Nationalistic Consumption

Under increasing pressure, organizations and individuals created subtle signs that signified "Japan" without specifying it. Even after the formal boycotts and government pressure subsided, these signs continued to exist. The NPM's invocation of Japan reminded the Chinese of Japanese "humiliations" and the need for the rejection of Japanese products and services. The dates of these and later humiliations were vivid and common symbols. For instance, the numbers "5–9" unambiguously represented May Ninth. On one level, then, simply writing "5–9" signified "humiliation at the hands of the Japanese." These numbers were widely used as symbols in posters, illustrations, and handbills throughout China. Naturally, they often signified more than one message. Within the NPM, for example, "5–9" also came to signify a response to humiliation: Do not buy

[41] Chinese intellectuals immediately added acceptance of the Twenty-One Demands to a rapidly expanding narrative of "humiliations" (*guochi*) climaxing with "national extinction." By June, one group, which included Liang Qichao, had already compiled a set of essays on "extinct nations," such as Poland and India, and detailed how China was headed for the same fate: Yan Ruli, ed., *Wangguo jian fu guochi lu* (Shanghai: Taidong Tushuju, 1915 [1919 reprint]).

Japanese products. Often, such signs were explicitly linked, especially in advertisements and product names. Within months after the May humiliations of 1915, companies co-opted the "5–9" symbol into product names, including cigarettes and silk products.[42]

With Japanese pressure on the Chinese government to crack down on boycotts, there were many other less explicit, but equally comprehensible, ways of disseminating boycott messages. Because of the official pressure on explicit attacks on Japan, Japan was often referred to in not-so-subtle ways. A common way to refer to Japan at this time was "a certain empire" (*mou diguo*). For example, in Guangzhou, Chinese papers regularly received letters from readers offering money to support armed resistance to "unwarranted aggression of a certain empire."[43]

Occasionally, references to this "certain empire" were simply reminders of the humiliations perpetrated by Japan. Increasingly, however, these references signified an appropriate response, instructions on forms of resistance. For instance, one well-written but simple-to-read pamphlet was open to several interpretations. In the most straight-forward reading, the pamphlet discussed problems caused by the Japanese in China. Under closer scrutiny, it conveyed a more emotional statement: "Our country is becoming a second Korea!" The most inflammatory and central message of all required reading from right to left, rather than from top to bottom, as was ordinary: "Citizens, don't buy Japanese goods."[44] These signs of protest also took the form of poems, written in flowery prose, but delivering a stern message. As one poem put it: "Japan indeed oppresses us, and selfish are its claims. Yes, boycott all things Japanese—a duty evermore."[45]

The NPM "Camouflages" Boycotts, or Vice Versa?

As rumors spread and tensions mounted, Shanghai police became more aggressive, often searching the houses of returned students, especially those coming back from Japan, and other known activists.[46] In response, more strident groups and individuals advocating aggressive anti-Japanese activ-

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[42] See, for instance, the ad for "5–9 Brand Cigarettes" in *Guohuo diaocha lu*, ed. Wang Hanqiang, 3 ed. (Shanghai: The National Products Preservation Association, 1915), 64.

[43] *North-China Herald* (Shanghai weekly [hereafter *NCH*]), 27 March 1915, 895–96.

[44] *NCH*, 10 April 1915, 84.

[45] *Xinwen bao*, 1 April 1915; *NCH*, 24 April 1915, 241.

[46] *Xinwen bao*, 2, 3 April 1915. One case of police confiscating handbills from students returned from Japan received a lot of attention at the time. See *Xinwen bao*, 10, 19, 29 April 1915.

ities began expressing dissent by adopting the organizational forms, slogans, and techniques of the NPM. This has led contemporary observers and historians to misinterpret the NPM as a whole as simply an extension of the boycott, led by students and opportunistic businessmen. Matsumoto Shigeharu's interpretation of NPM activities during 1915 is typical:

> The movement for the "Encouragement of the Use of Native Products," which was still no more than a camouflaged boycott movement, came into existence first in Shanghai, where by March 16th an Association for the Encouragement of the Use of Native Products was formed under the auspices of the Chinese students who returned from Japan. Later in Hanyang, Hankow, Changsha, and in many other cities similar organizations were established. These associations carried on the boycott, carefully evading the law and authority.[47]

Clearly, the founding of the NPPA in 1911 and the subsequent development of the NPM demonstrate that the movement was much more than "camouflage" for a boycott. At the same time, Matsumoto and others are certainly correct about two things. First, the patriotic rhetoric and nonconfrontational techniques of the NPM insulated it from official censure. Second, the movement grew rapidly as a consequence of popular response to the Twenty-One Demands.

Organizing National Survival

Threats of government retaliation pushed public displays of anti-imperialist sentiments into activities, organizations, and vocabularies of the NPM.[48] At the same time, Chinese businessmen, students, intellectuals, and many others worked from below to form organizations to facilitate this transfer of sentiment and develop it within the context of the NPM. For instance, contributing to a National Salvation Fund (*Jiuguo chujin*) was a popular and less risky way of expressing the sentiments underlying the boycott. In April of 1915, the Awareness of the Humiliation Association (Zhichi Hui) set up a fund in Shanghai to solicit $50 million yuan to ensure national survival through the twin patriotic objectives of supporting the construction of arsenals, the raising of an army and the building of a navy, as well as financing the development of domestic industries. As the threat of immediate war

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[47] Matsumoto, *The Historical Development of Chinese Boycott*, 40.

[48] President Yuan Shikai repeatedly ordered provincial authorities to end boycotts, prohibit discussions of the negotiations, disband organizations, and censor telegrams. Madeleine Chi, *China Diplomacy, 1914–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 60.

with Japan receded, the economic elites in charge of the Fund gradually shifted the emphasis to the NPM objective of economic development.[49]

The Fund quickly became a socially and legally acceptable way to express what one observer called "practical nationalism." In only a few weeks in April, the fund campaign raised and deposited $250,000 in the Bank of China. As money poured in from all over China and overseas, the management of the Fund became more sophisticated, even organizing special committees to explain it to depositors. In allowing only Chinese to contribute and setting no limits on subscriptions, the Fund's regulations reflected the larger goals of the NPM. The appeal found broad support, as a large number of poor Chinese participated. It provided such a seemingly innocuous way to express nationalism that even government officials, civil servants, members of armed forces, and policemen all agreed to contribute one month's salary, which was expected to raise over $10 million.[50] Naturally, the Japanese understood the deeper meaning of these deposits, claiming donations to such funds by Chinese officials revealed these officials actually supported boycotts and their cover, the NPM.[51] Although initiated in Shanghai, by May there were 70 branches established throughout China.[52] Within a few months, Shanghai alone collected $640,000 and had promises for another $700,000; Beijing raised $1,940,000 and other provincial cities gathered $2,100,000. By June, $20 million of the $50 million target had been raised.[53]

This popular technique had the participation and support of many of the most powerful economic and political magnates who came to be openly associated with the Fund. Under the direction of such elites in Shanghai, deposits quickly expanded, as did new ways of finding participants. Moreover, the success of the Fund spawned more ambitious plans and organizations. A group of Shanghai businessmen, including NPPA leader Wu Tingfang, established a group modeled after the National Salvation Fund. The new group had a sharper focus, knowing that even with $50 million China could not build an army, a navy, and industry. Instead, the new group, the League of China, placed development of domestic industry at the top of its agenda.[54]

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[49] Zhichi Hui, *Guochi*, vol. 1. This volume also contains the bylaws of the group set up to administer the fund. See also, *NCH*, 24 April 1915, 255.
[50] *Xinwen bao*, 10 May 1915; *NCH*, 19 June 1915, 825–26.
[51] *NCH*, 26 June 1915, 944.
[52] For a partial list of these locations, see Kikuchi, *Chūgoku minzoku undō*, 164–65.
[53] *Xinwen bao*, 15 April 1915, 28.
[54] *NCH*, 19 June 1915, 825–26. The frequent coverage of these funds also underscores their popularity and innocuous appearance. See, for instance, the run of articles in the *Xinwen bao*, 7, 8, 10 April 1915.

NPM organizations also took more overtly pro-boycott positions. In March of 1915, for example, some one hundred representatives from twenty major native-place associations met in the International Settlement of Shanghai to form the Association to Encourage the Use of National Products (Zhuanyong Guohuo Hui). This group resolved not to accept consignments of Japanese goods or use Japanese ships to transport goods. It also resolved to cut off relations with Japanese merchants. Despite a Beijing government ban on the group, within a few months, the groups appeared in seventy cities and towns and counted politicians among its ranks, including China's future Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Zhengting.[55] Even a Japanese paper that called for the Japanese government to force China to end its boycott concluded that because of a lack of organizations explicitly calling for and organizing the boycott, there was not much more the Chinese government could do.[56]

The NPPA through 1915

The events of 1915 fueled tremendous growth within the NPPA, expanding the frequency and scope of its activities. Chinese resistance was increasingly pushed into NPM forms of expression because Japan could not be confronted directly by military and economic means.

Boycotts acted as a sort of membership drive. From slightly over a hundred members during its first year, the NPPA grew steadily during its first few years. During 1915, however, membership soared to 688, a 26 percent increase over the previous year, its highest single year increase.[57] Moreover, the structure of the membership changed, as the group continued soliciting women to join. By 1919, the only year for which there is a complete membership list, 41 of the 749 members were women.[58] However, this growth in membership largely accounted for by new types of members. The initial bylaws (*huizhang*) of the Association made joining difficult in that other potential native-place associations "with common interests" had to receive approval from representatives of all other asso-

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[55] Kikuchi, *Chūgoku minzoku undō*, 164; Cochran, *Big Business in China*, 68. NPPA also sent one of its leading members, Wang Wendian, to help establish the group and write its bylaws. Shanhai Nippon Shōgyō Kaigisho, *Hainikka nitsu to Nikka haiseki no eikyō* (June 1915): Vol. 1, 65; *Shen bao*, 17 May 1915 and 31 May.

[56] *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun* quoted in *NCH*, 10 July 1915, 87–88.

[57] NPPA, *Jinian kan*: Huishi section, 12.

[58] SZMA 2.1: File 454, 20–21. I address the role of women in the NPM extensively in other places; see especially, "Engendering Nationalistic Consumption: 'Women's National Products Year' in China, 1934," a paper written for the 43rd Annual International Conference of Eastern Studies, Tōkyō, 23 May 1998.

ciations.[59] During 1915, however, membership types expanded to include three types. In addition to native-place associations and individual members, enterprises (*gongshang chang*) also began sending representatives—49 in 1915, with more joining every year.

As indicated earlier, in its first three years of activities, the NPPA published and distributed over 100,000 pieces of literature per year, including membership information, circulars on and promotions of national products, verification of the status of products, group advertisements, and so on. During 1915, however, the total number of publications expanded to over 300,000. The reach of these publications is incalculable, as the NPPA instructed recipients to further disseminate them.

The new activities of the NPPA also reflected the interests of its expanded ranks. As local, regional, and national Chinese government officials began to advocate policies that promoted national goods, investigating and certifying the status of goods became an increasingly important function of organizations such as the NPPA. These "certifications" became especially important during boycotts, when such classifications could make or break a company. Before commercial or industrial enterprises could join the NPPA, it sent a team to investigate the applicant's products. There were many types of investigations including comprehensive examinations, trademark investigations, capital origins, material origins, nationality of employees, and a miscellaneous category. In its first year, 1912, NPPA conducted only eleven such investigations. As with its other activities, however, things took off in 1915, when it conducted 383 such investigations, a total only equaled or exceeded in two other years with widespread boycotts, 383 in 1925 and a high of 464 in 1928.[60]

The NPPA published the results of these investigations along with other propaganda in an increasing array of publications. Two of the more innovative were the *Records of National Products Investigations* (*Guohuo diaocha lu*) and a monthly magazine, *The National Products Monthly* (*Guohuo yuebao*). The purpose of the *Records* was to disseminate an approved list of domestically manufactured products, thereby giving domestic manufacturers a place to promote their wares and merchants a means of finding replacements for imported products.[61] As each new national product was added to the list, the concept of a national product defined implicitly in these books against those products, presumably "non-Chinese, unpatri-

[59] NPPA, *Zhangcheng wendu huilu*, 3b.
[60] NPPA, *Jinian kan*: Huishi section, 14–16.
[61] Wu Tingfang's forward to Wang Hanqiang, *Guohuo diaocha lu*. These *Records* were widely circulated. See the reprint in Nippon Shōgyō Kaigisho, *Hainikka nitsu to Nikka*, 77–127.

otic products," the benefits to domestic producers of attaching a national products label to their product became more compelling. Advertisements also made the distinction between the national and foreign products more apparent.

Continuity within Boycotts and the NPM

It is understandable that observers and historians have usually concluded that the National Products Movement and boycotts were the same thing. By late 1915, the political confrontation between Japan and China slipped from the front pages of Chinese and foreign newspapers, widespread anti-Japanese boycotts dissolved, and some of the more strident activism within the NPM disappeared. According to trade statistics, Sino-Japanese economic relations returned to their pre-1915 position.[62] From this perspective, the nationalistic sentiment and activity underlying the boycott was, perhaps, merely "five minutes of excitement" or a "cycle." However, by examining the history of the NPPA in this period, this paper has proposed an alternative interpretation of boycotts that places them in the context of a growing ethic of nationalistic consumption within the organizations, activities, and vocabularies of the NPM. To be sure, the events of 1915 provided fuel to the movement, but it was neither the first nor the last source. The NPPA continued to expand its hierarchies of dissemination, for example, helping to establish leading organizations during the turmoil of 1919 and 1923, and other years.[63] It also sought to amplify its ethic of nationalistic consumption, especially on the importance of having women and children consume goods with the nation in mind. While some measurable forms of NPM activism may have dropped from 1916 to 1918, the NPPA case suggests that forms of resistance through consumption persisted and spread—ready to generate, define, and absorb new expressions of nationalism.

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[62] Or, in Remer's words: "the trade statistics show that the effect of the boycott was temporary disturbance of the trade rather than any falling off." *A Study of Chinese Boycotts*, 53.

[63] These organizations include: Industrial and Commercial Study Society of China to Preserve International Peace (Zhonghua Gongshang Baocun Guoji Heping Yanjiu Hui), formed in early 1919, and the Shanghai Citizens Association on Sino-Japanese Relations (Shanghai Duiri Waijiao Shimin Dahui), established in 1923.