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Masuda Hajimu's fine study of Chinese public opinion of the Korean War begins with a puzzle: Why did the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) decide to cross the 38th parallel at the end of December 1950, when China could already have declared victory and when Marshal Peng Dehuai had proposed that his forces should rest until spring? Masuda's research uses new sources to focus on "ordinary people's voices and behaviors," suggesting that popular opinion was a significant factor in Beijing's foreign policy-making (5).

By doing so, Masuda challenges the conventional scholarship in Chinese diplomatic history, and contributes to both the literature in international history and in contemporary Chinese history. As Masuda points out in his introduction, scholars have viewed the puzzle in geopolitical and realist terms, arguing that the CPV crossed the 38th parallel because Beijing viewed the U.S. presence in Korea as a threat and responded accordingly. Yet, Masuda argues that the conventional definition of "security" does not take into account the social and political context of the home front; thus, his research attempts "to shed light on the broader meaning of 'security,' which includes not only physical defense of border and territory but also the morale of the population, which was a significant concern for Beijing in 1950" (6). Through Masuda's reading of letters, newspapers, internal reports, and policy correspondence, he contributes to the scholarship in international history that focuses on non-state actors, and to the burgeoning field of the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC) *as history*.

"The Korean War through the Prism of Chinese Society" begins with the chaos of the immediate post-1949 moment, showing that the first year of 'Liberation' actually witnessed discontent with the new state and opposition to the war. Using archival

materials and an internally circulated cadre periodical called *Neibu cankao* [Internal Reference News], Masuda relates how ordinary people criticized the war, how the war aroused suspicion towards the new state and its news organs, and how the proceedings of war itself sparked rumors that the new regime would be short-lived. The second section of the article describes a turn towards patriotism following battlefield success in December 1950, including student petitions on university campuses and letters volunteering to enlist. Next, Masuda examines the tightening of censorship in the Chinese media, arguing that it facilitated the patriotic upswell. Indeed, Masuda writes that “these measures were in many ways *embraced* as means of bringing order, unity, and meaning to society” (22). In addition to the media, memories of war also shaped the ‘reality’ of the Chinese public; in one of the most interesting sections of the paper Masuda shows that anti-imperialist patriotism was actually cultivated by memories of World War II. In one particularly skillful moment, Masuda traces the circulation of an American cartoon from *Collier’s* appearing first in a Tianjin newspaper and then ‘going viral,’ finally being incorporated into Premier Zhou Enlai’s characterization of American imperialism (26).

Despite this patriotic turn, however, the remainder of the article suggests that the population at large was still unsettled and that opposition to the war manifested itself in opposition to donations and comments that persisted in questioning the state’s legitimacy. These phenomena, Masuda concludes, were of great concern to China’s leadership and “from the framing of the issue to the implementation of the plan, Chinese leaders were concerned not just with military strategy but with the politics of impressions” (32). The last section of the article narrates Mao’s correspondence with Marshal Peng, showing how Mao rebuffed Peng’s calls for caution by stressing the symbolism of crossing the 38th parallel: “If we were to...stop north of the parallel, it would cause us serious political disadvantages,” ...“now the United States and Britain are taking advantage of the old impression of the 38th parallel in people’s minds for their political propaganda in order to force us to accept a ceasefire” (33-34). Masuda describes Mao’s strategy as the “politics of truthmaking,” explaining that military strategy was part and parcel of a political strategy that included “massive propaganda campaigns meant to solidify the identity of the newly established government among millions of people at home and abroad” (35).

Masuda’s meticulously researched and well-framed article convincingly shows how the Chinese population, both urban and rural, had a variety of responses to China’s role in the Korean War. Despite a patriotic turn that followed battlefield victories, the persistence of distrust and the questioning of legitimacy contributed to the politicization of Mao’s military strategy. By successfully “bridging social and diplomatic history,” Masuda’s work will be of great interest to scholars of international history and scholars studying the recent Chinese past (8). This chapter of the story of twentieth-century Chinese nationalism is not yet fully fleshed out, and this article can link the scholarship of student

protest and the development of nationalism in the Republican era with recent attention to the state's role in nationalistic protest today.¹

Some questions, however, remain unanswered. The richest part of this article's narrative is undoubtedly the careful re-voicing of ordinary people, which reflects Masuda's historical training as well as his previous career as a journalist. However, it is harder to determine *why* they felt the way that they did. In addition to analyzing the language of propaganda and explaining its appeal, Masuda might do well to see how oral history could deepen the analysis. An excellent example of this sort of work, which introduces how Chinese prisoners of war understood the same moment, is Cheng David Chang's 2011 dissertation on the choice of P.O.W.'s to return to the PRC or go to Taiwan.² Finally, if it is difficult to uncover why the Chinese man on the street felt the way he did, it is even harder to do so for Mao, and for this reason the telegram correspondence between Mao and Peng requires further elucidation. While Mao, as Masuda points out, expressed concern about the "political disadvantages" of stopping at the 38th parallel, it is unclear whether he was more concerned about the "people's mind," or about having a victory to "greatly impress the democratic front and the people of the capitalist countries, thereby striking a new blow at the imperialists and enhancing pessimism among them" (34). Another explanation is that Mao was himself adept at manufacturing realities and using ideology to do so; from the telegrams we cannot determine how much of the concern with public perception was a rhetorical device. But, by highlighting public reactions and the state's response, Masuda demonstrates the fragility of the new regime in the earliest moment of 'Liberation' and rightly reminds of us that the meanings of military strategy must be taken in their social and political contexts on the home front.

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¹ On the history of student protests, see for example Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997). For a recent study of contemporary mobilization of nationalist sentiment, see forthcoming work by Jessica Chen Weiss, *Powerful Patriots: Nationalist Protest in China's Foreign Relations*.

² Cheng David Chang, "To Return Home or 'Return to Taiwan': Conflicts and Survival in the 'Voluntary Repatriation' of Chinese POWs in the Korean War," Ph.D. diss., University of California at San Diego, 2011.

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