

From Censorship to Engagement: china's Regulation of Motion Picture during the Anti-Japanese War

MISAWA Mamie

Introduction

For China, and the other countries of East Asia for that matter, the first decade of the twentieth century marked the formation period of the promotion and production of motion pictures; and during the 1920s, China began in earnest attempts to develop its own indigenous motion picture industry. It was the 1923 hit film entitled *The Orphan Who Saved His Grandfather* (*Guer jiu zu ji*) that started the industry booming with the founding of over 100 production companies by the end of 1925,¹ releasing some 101 films by the following year, a 200% increase over the 1923 figure.² The number of movie theatres showing

¹ Data based on *Zhongghua yingye nianjian* [China movie industry yearbook], 1927 contained in Cheng Jihua, ed., *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi* [Historical development of Chinese film], 2 vols., Beijing: Zhongguo Dianying Chubanshe, 1963 (reprinted 1981), vol. 1: pp. 53–54. Zhang Xinmin also cites *The Orphan* as marking the birth of the Chinese film movement, which he characterizes as possessing two stages: a production studio building boom and a sudden jump in domestically produced films. (Zhang Xinmin, *Zhongguo dianying de shehui wenhua yundong: Jianshu zaoqi Zhongguo dianying de shehui wenhua diwei de jiangou ji qi guocheng* [The social and cultural roles of Chinese film: Early Stages in the process of establishing the social and cultural status of film in China], Doctoral Dissertation, Osaka Metropolitan University, 1998, p. 14.

² Five in 1923, 16 in 1924, 51 in 1925, 101 in 1926. Data based on *Zhongguo dianying zongmulu* [Complete catalog of Chinese motion pictures], vol. 1, 1960, contained in Hong Shi, “Wusheng de cunzai” [The silent essence], in China Film Archives, ed. *Zhongguo wusheng dianying* [Silent films of China], Beijing: Zhongguo Dianying Chubanshe, 1996, p. 5. According to Hong Shi, this catalog does not list films that were produced in China with foreign capital.

the films numbered 250 by 1930.³ It was China's golden age of silent movies.⁴ However, two years later with the occurrence of the first Shanghai Incident in January 1932, the industry, which was concentrated in that city, was dealt a heavy blow, as 30 production companies were forced out of business and 16 out of its 39 movie theatres were damaged in the fighting.⁵ On the other hand, in the midst of havoc being wrought by the Japanese Army, the movie-going public grew tired of the action-packed features and morality pieces they flocked to before the war,⁶ and began clamoring for movies with anti-Japanese resistance themes, judging from the over 600 fan letters received by the magazine *Movie Life* (*Yingxi shenghuo*) during that time.⁷

³ According to Zhai Min, there were 100 theaters in 1927, increasing to 250 by 1930. (“Guopian fuxing yundong zhong guonei yingyuan zhuangkuang zhi yiban” [Movie theatres in the midst of the domestic film revival movement], in *Yingxi zazhi* [Movie life], June-July, 1930, reprinted in China Film Archive, ed., *Zhongguo wusheng dianying*, *op. cit.*, p. 209.) Leo Ou-Fan Lee, who quotes figures of the US Department of Commerce, cites 106 theaters operating nationally in 1927 (seating capacity 68,000), 26 located in Shanghai alone. (*Shanghai modeng* [Shanghai modern: The flowering of a new urban culture in China, 1930–1945], Mao Jian, trans., Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 87.)

On the other hand, a 1934 investigation directed at film censorship by the GMD PR Section cites a total of 175 theaters and notes that there were also locales around the country (including some in Zhejiang and Guangdong Provinces) for which no data was available (Zhongyang xuanchuan weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao [Operations report] December 1934, printed, GMD Historical Archive 4.2–38). Finally, a survey done in June 1941, entitled *Zen Chūgoku chihōbetsu eigakan bunpu hyō* [Distribution of movies in China according to region], cites a total of 295 theaters, including Zhejiang and Guangdong. (The survey's province-by-province figures differ from the national totals. The figure cited here is the sum of the provincial data) (Ichikawa Sai, *Ajia eiga no sōzō oyobi kensetsu* [Origins and development of Asian film], Tokyo: Kokusai Eiga Tsūshinsha, 1941, pp. 206–207).

⁴ Hong Shi, “Wusheng de cunzai” [The silent essence], p. 4. Cheng Jihua calls it a period of “abnormal prosperity fueled by speculative film ventures.” (*Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, vol. 1, p. 53)

⁵ *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, pp. 181–182

⁶ Xia Yan, “Zuoyi shinian” [Ten years of the left], in State Radio, Film & Television Broadcasting Bureau Party, History Film Archives Collection Section, China Film Art Research Center ed., *Zhongguo zuoyi dianying yundong* [The left-wing film movement in China], Beijing: Zhongguo Dianying Chubanshe, 1993, p. 778.

⁷ *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, vol. 1, p. 180.

The production companies that were still in business took this change of heart seriously, as large enterprises like Star Motion Pictures (Mingxing gongsi) began courting leftist intellectuals of the “anti-imperialist, anti-feudalism” persuasion.⁸ Consequently, between 1932 and 1937, Chinese film entered another “golden age,” this time of the “*film gauche*,” which sprung from other influences beside those of the Communist Party.⁹ For example, the film *Two Sisters* (*Zimei hua*) involves two siblings who were split up at birth, one being raised by a wealthy urban father, the other by a poor rural peasant mother, turned into a super long run feature, seen many times over and over by its audience. However, the film was written and directed by Zheng Zhenqiu, a traditional literati without left-wing affiliations.¹⁰ The left-wing intellectuals who were sought after by the film industry welcomed the opportunity to exploit the political possibilities that lay in the art form. And as soon as it was assured that the public had been sold on these political movies, the Guomindang (hereafter GMD) Nationalist government immediately embarked on a program to regulate the industry.

The film genre, which formed a very important aspect of popular entertainment in urban China of the 1920s, escalated during the 1930s

⁸ It was apparently Hong Shen who advised Star Pictures to elicit the cooperation of Xia Yan and his colleagues. That is to say, Star, which at the time was facing litigation over filming rights and troubled by a scandal involving one of its actresses. Xia writes, “In the midst of patriotic anti-Japanese fervor which erupted among the masses after the October 18th and January 28th incidents, film goes lost interest in action features and morality dramas. So Hong Shen, one of (Star Executive) Zhang Shichuan’s personal pundits, proposed a change of direction to the three partners” (“Zuoyi shinian,” p. 778).

⁹ This perception is represented best by the chapter title in the Table of Contents of Cheng Jihua’s *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi* [Historical development of Chinese film], entitled *Dang lingdao de Zhongguo dianying wenhua yundong* [Political party-led film culture activities, 1931–1937].

¹⁰ Zheng Zengqiu was one film maker who called for motion pictures to be made into tools for social education by revising older dramatic forms, and was an important figure in the formation era of motion pictures as a scriptwriter-director; and while Cheng Jihua describes Zheng as “the leading proponent of old fashioned democratic ideas” (*Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, vol. 1, p. 236), during the time in question, he depicts Zheng as “an important intellectual progressive... under the Party’s formation and support of its Dianying Xiaozu [Motion picture team]” (*Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, vol. 1, p. 236).

into a very important vehicle for political indoctrination. The objective of the present article is to analyze the film regulation program that unfolded between 1937 and 1941, focusing on the movements of the GMD Central Committee's Public Relations Section.¹¹ In terms of source materials, the analysis will rely mainly on the archives of the GMD Party History Institute¹² and those of the Republic of China Academia Historica, supplemented by information held by the Japanese Foreign Affairs Ministry Diplomatic Record Office, the National Institute for Defense Studies, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration at College Park and contemporary newspapers and magazines.¹³ The reason for limiting the article's time frame to the early years of the Second Sino-Japanese War is because of a serious dearth

¹¹ This paper is based on the addition of a retouch and the corrections to the following three articles: 1) Misawa, Mamie, "Kenkyū nōto: Chūgoku Kokumintō eiga tōsei kara 'tō shakai' kankei o kangaeru: 1930 nendai o chūshin ni" [Research note: The relationship of the Guomintang to Chinese Society considered from the Party's motion picture regulation policy of the 1930s], in *Zaidan-hōjin Kōryū Kyōkai 2004 nendo purojekuto "Seitō-shakai kankei kara mita Chūgoku kingendai-shi no saikōchiku" hōkoku ronbun shū* [Report of research project ---- in 2004, Interchange Association, Japan] (January 29th, 2005), pp. 27–38; 2) *idem*, "Kōsen shoki Chūgoku no eiga tōsei: Chūgoku Kokumintō Senden-bu o chūshin ni" [Motion picture regulation in China during the early stages of anti-Japanese resistance: Activities of the Guomintang's PR Section], in *Nicchū sensō-ki ni okeru Chūgoku no shakai, bunka henyō ni kansuru sōgō teki kenkyū* [Synthetic research on Chinese social and cultural change during the Sino-Japanese War] (Report of Research Findings during 2003–2005 with Grant-in Aid for Scientific Research (B) (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), Project Leader: Hirano Ken'ichirō), pp. 72–91; 3) *idem*, "Kangzhanchuqi Zhongguo Guomintang dianyingtongzhi: Yi xuanchuanbu de dianying zhizuo wei zhongxin" [The Guomintang's motion picture regulation policy during the early stages of anti-Japanese resistance: Film production activities of the Party's PR Section], in *Dushi wenhua zhong de xiandai Zhongguo* [Popular culture of the modern metropolis], Zhan Jin ed., Shanghai: East China Normal University (Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe), July 2007.

¹² Since the Institute does not allow photocopying of its archives that have been poorly preserved, all citations related to them are based on the author's handwritten notes.

¹³ The GMD Historical Archives, from which the main sources for this paper have been selected, are very valuable primary sources recording the internal operations of the Guomintang; however, as such, they reflect Party biases in the interpretation of historical events. Therefore, they should be read along with sources from other organizations and individuals not affiliated with the Party.

of source materials related to the later years of that conflict. Nevertheless, the scarce information that is available strongly suggests that the role played by motion pictures in the task of national integration and state involvement in the industry during the early phase were merely strengthened as time went on, as will be discussed later on. Such a trend attests to the importance of clarifying the origins, which arose during the period in question. Regarding the film regulation program implemented by the Nanjing government, that topic and the research that has been done to date on it will be taken up on another occasion,¹⁴ in an effort to fill the wide gap that exists concerning the wartime era. On the other hand, there may be objections to focusing on the GMD's PR Section rather than the Nationalist government as the regulatory body during the era of the second GMD-CCP (Chinese Communist Party) coalition.¹⁵ The main problem here pertains mainly to the source materials and serious lack of them. Attention will be paid to other regulatory bodies whenever the source materials permit. However, in light of the fact that film regulation under the Nanjing government regime was led by the PR Section, focusing on that department in order to identify changes in regulatory policy after the outbreak of the War would seem to be significant in its own right.

(1) The Research to Date

The research already done on film in China exhibits a watershed

¹⁴On the subtractive aspects of the Nanjing government's film regulation policy, see Misawa Mamie, "Nankin seifu ki Kokumintō no eigatousei: Senden bu, senden iinkai no eiga senden jigyō wo chushin toshite" [The GMD's film regulation policy during its Nanjing regime era: Propaganda film projects], *Higashi-ajia Kindaishi* 7 (March 2004), pp. 67–87.

¹⁵For example, the largest number of propaganda films that were released during this time was produced by China Film Productions under the supervision of the Military Affairs Council's Political Bureau.

It was in February of 1938 that Zhou Enlai was appointed vice-chairman of the Council, followed by the appointments of Guo Moruo to head the Political Bureau agency in charge of China Film Productions and Yang Hansheng as his chief of staff in April, resulting in the studio becoming a center for left-wing filmmakers. Then even after the first wave of anti-Communist sentiment, it took two years for the leftist literati to be purged from the Political Bureau, in 1940, suggesting the existence of an ideological struggle between the Bureau and the GMD PR Section.

between trends prior to and after the 1980s. The pre-1980s work done in both the People's Republic and Taiwan was permitted only within the framework of official versions of the history of film, based on the respective ideas of "revolution" embraced by the CCP and GMD. The representative study, which remains widely influential even today,¹⁶ is Cheng Jihua's *Historical Development of Chinese Film*, which was based on the CCP's revolutionary historicism. This study and the research that depends on it will be dealt with here as "the pre-1980s view." Similarly, the authoritative study from the same period in Taiwan is the three volume history written by Du Yunzhi in 1972,¹⁷ which in its factual aspects differs little from Cheng's research.

Then, as China entered the 1980s and the attention of historians was drawn to such intellectual themes as cultural studies and post-colonialism, the film genre became a very popular topic for analysis, not only in Taiwan and the PRC, but also in the West. The research turned to the technical and artistic merit of the genre and specific films. Although the methodology employed by these new critics attempted to avoid the party ideology which permeated the pre-1980s, they continued to rely on the empirical data gathered by Cheng and Du. It was

¹⁶The research that supports Cheng's views includes the following comments: "The most widely read work on the history of Chinese film to date (Zuowei qijinweizhi yingxiang zui wei guangfan de zhongguo dianying shi zhu)" (Li Daoxin, *Chongqing dianying yu Zhongguo dianying de lishi* [The Chungking motion picture industry and Chinese film in historical perspective], in *Chongqing yu Zhongguo kangri dianying xueshu lunwenji* [Collected papers on the technical aspects of Chungking and Chinese anti-war films], Di 7 jie Zhongguo jinji baihua dianyingjie zhiweihui xueshu yantao bu, ed., Chungqing: Chongqing Chubanshe, p. 22).

"Although the work does have a few empirical weaknesses, it does succeed in pointing out that Party leadership in film production followed a red trail from start to finish" (Yang Hansheng, "Zuoyi dianying yundong de ruogan lishi jingyan" [Historical insights on the left-wing film movement], *Dianying Yishu* 139 (November 1983), p. 6).

¹⁷Du Yunzhi, *Zhongguo dianying shi* [History of Chinese motion pictures], 3 vols., Taipei: Zhonghuaminguo Dianying Tushuguan Chubanshu, 1972. The introductory remarks on the fly leaf reads, "Placed first in the 1975 Zhongzheng Literary Awards and placed on the Bureau of Culture's recommended reading lists from the time it was first published, Du's History is officially recognized as an authoritative work on the subject of Chinese film. (Zhongguo dianying shi ronghuo 64 nian Zhongzheng wenyi zhuzuo jiang di 1 ming, ji qian wenhua ju zhi jiajiang. Gong renwei Zhongguo dianying shi zhuzuo zhong zhongyao zuopin)"

only from the 1990s on that scholars and critics were given the full opportunity to relativize the party lines and involve themselves in true empirical research: Zhang Xinmin reexamining the conventional wisdom with a detailed investigation of the Nanjing regime's film reviews, Zhiwei Xiao analyzing censorship under that regime in the context of anti-imperialist ideas, and Wang Chaoguang offering an empirical account of the evolvement of censorship from the last years of the Qing Dynasty through the Nanjing regime era.¹⁸ While such research is indeed very informative, it focuses mainly on the censorship aspect of the subject and has little to say about the propaganda aspect.¹⁹ In con-

¹⁸ The research of these three scholars related to the present article is as follows: Zhang Xinmin, "Kōnichi kyūoku undō ni okeru Shanhai-jin no dōkō to sono igi" [The Significance of Trends Set by Shanghai Filmmakers in the Anti-Japanese, Save the Nation Movement], *Rekishi Kenkyū* 31, Osaka Prefectural University, 1994, pp. 31–70; *idem*, "Kokumin seihu no syoki eiga tōsei ni tsuite: 1930 nendai o chūshin ni" [The GMD government's early regulation of motion pictures], in *Rekishi Kenkyū* 33 (1996), pp. 269–293; *idem*, "Chūgoku kyōiku eiga kyōkai oyobi Shanhai ni okeru kyōiku eiga suishin undō ni tsuite: Kokumintō CC kei no katsudō o chūshi ni" [Education film promotion activities and the China educational film association in Shanghai], in *Gendai Chugoku Kenkyū* 7 (September 2000), pp. 34–53; *idem*, *Zhon guo dian ying de she hui wen hua yun dong*, a dissertation submitted to Osaka Prefectural University, 1998; *idem*, "Shanhai "Shin pō" huku-kan 'Mainichi denei' ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: 1932 nen 7 gatsu 8 nichi kara 1933nen 6 gatsu 18 nichi made" [On the 'Daily Movie Guide' Supplement to the Shanghai *Morning News*: 8 July 1932–18 June 1933], in *Chikaki ni Arite* 43 (August 2003), pp. 176–195; Zhiwei Xiao, "Anti-Imperialism and film censorship during the Nanjing decade, 1927–1937," in Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu, ed., *Transnational Chinese cinemas: Identity, nationhood, gender*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp. 35–57; *idem*, "Constructing a new national culture: Film, censorship and the issues of Cantonese dialect, superstition, and sex in the Nanjing decade," in Yingjing Zhang, ed., *Cinema and urban culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999, pp. 183–197; Wang Chaoguang, "30 nian-daichuqi de Guomintang dianying jiancha zhidu" [Film censorship by the GMD in the early 1930s], in *Dianying Yishu* 3 (1997), pp. 60–66; *idem*, "Minguo dianying jiancha zhidu zhi lanshang" [The origins of film censorship under the GMD], in *Jindaishi Yanjiu* 123 (March 2001), pp. 203–226; *idem*, "Guomintang dianying jiancha zhidu xia de Meiguo dianying – yi 30 niandai chuqi wei li" [American motion pictures under GMD film censorship: The case of the 1930s], in *Zhong-Mei wenhua jiaoliu lunji* [Collected papers on US-Chinese cultural exchange], Tao Wenzhao and Chen Yangxiang, ed., Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1999, pp. 244–254.

¹⁹ Concerning the topic of education via electronic media, see Kishi Toshihiko,

trast, here we will conceptualize censorship and propaganda as reverse sides of the same “film regulation” coin, and as such will examine the significance of each aspect over time, in order to come to a more holistic view of how the film genre was handled under wartime conditions. This is why we will be focusing on film as a medium tied to national integration and subject to state involvement (presence) in the form of propaganda and censorship.

(2) The Analytical Framework

Regulation is generally defined as “control and guidance conducted on the basis of a predetermined plan,”²⁰ and with regard to media regulation, censorship is regarded as negative regulation, or policing, while positive measures to channel or manipulate public opinion through media is defined as propaganda.²¹ The intention here is to re-define media regulation as having two aspects: measures taken by the powers that be to limit and control undesirable elements and those taken to disseminate the desirable aspects. Again, these additive and subtractive sides of media regulation will be dealt with as the inseparable parts of one whole. Moreover, in order to single out regulation of the film medium as different from regulating other media, it is necessary to incorporate two main characteristic features of the motion picture, domestic mass appeal and universal mass appeal, into the analytical framework.

The important influence that the capitalist publishing industry has

“Kokumin seifu niyoru denka kyōiku seisaku to Kounichi-nashonarizumu: ‘Minshu-kyouiku’ kara ‘Kousen-kyouiku’ he [GMD policy regarding electronic educational aids in relation to anti-Japanese nationalism],” in *Tōyōshi Kenkyū* 62-2 (September 2003), pp. 302–329. Concerning state-operated motion picture production (Guanying Yingye), see Yang yan, “Kangzhanshiqi Guominzhengfu de guanying yingye kaolüe” [GMD government-run motion pictures during the anti-Japanese resistance period], in *Dianying Yishu* 3 (2001), pp.117–120. The paper by Yang yan devotes a mere four pages to state-operated film productions in Nanjing, Wuhan and Chungking, based mainly on China Educational Film Association, *Dianying Nianjian*, 1934 yearbook.

²⁰ Shinmura Izuru, ed., *Kōjien*, 5th edition, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998.

²¹ See, for example, Uchikawa Yoshimi, *Mass-media hōseisaku shi kenkyū* [History of legislative policy related to Mass Media], Tokyo: Yūhikaku; *idem* ed., *Gendaishi shiryō 40 Mass-media tōsei I* [Contemporary source materials 40: Mass media regulation], Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1973.

exerted on the formation of the imagination of nation-states is widely acknowledged.²² However, the degree of dissemination that can be achieved by printed matter depends on the level of literacy of any given population, and is basically limited to the area where the print language has been circulated. The motion picture medium is a technological product of the times subject to neither of these limitations, in that the audio-visual effects it reproduces can be enjoyed by illiterate members of the population and even non-speakers of the production language.²³ On account of the motion picture's mass appeal,²⁴ from 1900 on, when censorship of the print and stage drama media became less and less aggressively pursued, film came to be seen as "yet more powerful, attractive and affordable... than print, drawings, songs or theater,"²⁵ as shown by censorship mechanisms being put in place by all the Western European nations by 1914.²⁶ As to the motion picture's universal mass appeal,²⁷ already during the first decade of the twenti-

²² See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities—Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition, Verso, 1991.

²³ Anderson states that nationalism was invented as a print media term (*Imagined Communities*, p. 211), and also mentioned the fresco paintings and stain glass images adorning the churches of medieval Europe as an example of the importance laid in creating visual images for the illiterate masses (*Imagined Communities*, p. 48). But on the whole, he doesn't treat the audio-visual media detailedly.

²⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Hukusei gijutsu no jidai ni okeru geijutsu sakuhin* (original title in Germany: *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, 1936), Takagi Hisao and Takahara Kōhei tr. into Japanese, Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 1999.

In 1936, Walter Benjamin, in a discussion of the kind of participation the movie elicits from its spectators, stated "...art will tackle the most difficult and most important [tasks] where it is able to mobilize the masses. Today it does so in the film." ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>)

²⁵ Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Censorship of the Arts and the Press in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (hereafter *Political Censorship*), Kido Tomoko and Murayama Keiichirō trans., Tokyo: Hōseidaigaku Shuppankyoku, 2003, p. 276; Robert Justin Goldstein, *The War for the Public Mind: Political Censorship in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Praeger, 2000, p. 128.

²⁶ *Political Censorship*, p. 73.

²⁷ The universal aspect was weakened appreciably after the transition from silent films to talkies; however, foreign films became firmly embedded in the world of mass entertainment thanks to movie-casters, subtitles and overdubbing. In either case, it is clear

eth century critics were warning about the possibilities of foreign films invading indigenous ethnic culture,²⁸ and in post-WWI Europe, measures to restrict the import of foreign films were initiated in response to the threat of American films monopolizing the world market,²⁹ while at the same time, a 1926 international motion picture conference³⁰ was held to search a new world order of film, because they regard film as “Esperanto via moving pictures”³¹ and the only global enterprise rival-

that the motion picture has retained its superior universal quality over the print, radio and stage media.

²⁸ See Miriam Hansen, “Early Cinema: Whose Public Sphere?,” in Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, ed., *Early Cinema: Space, Frame and Narrative*, London: BFI, 1990, pp. 228–246; Richard Abel, “The Perils of Pathe, or the Americanization of Early American Cinema,” in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, ed., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, University of California Press, 1995, pp.183–223. My own views on nationalism and film acceptance in a colonial setting, which differs from foreign films and their censorship in a nation-state setting may be found in Misawa Mamie, “Shokuminchi ki Taiwan no eiga fukyū ni okeru ‘bunsetsu teki keiro’ to ‘konsei teki dochaku ka’ [‘Segmented channelling’ and ‘hybridized indigenization’ in the popularization of motion pictures in colonial Taiwan],” in *Ritsumeikan Gengo-Bunka Kenkyū* 15-3 (February 2004), pp. 39–52.

²⁹ Tosaka Yuji, “Bunka yushutsu to kokusai kankei: 1920 nendai ni okeru Beikoku eiga sangyō no sekai senryaku” [Cultural exporting and international relations: The global strategy of the US motion picture industry during the 1920s],” in *Kokusai Seiji* 122, Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1999, pp. 39–53. For a discussion of the influence exerted by perceptions about international film on motion picture policy in colonial Taiwan during that same decade, see Misawa Mamie, “1920 nendai Taiwan eiga seisaku no kokusai teki bunmyaku to naizai teki youin: ‘Katsudō shashin film ken’etsu kisoku (1926 nen furei dai 59 gō)’ shikō o chūshin ni” [The international context and internal factors of film policy in colonial Taiwan during the 1920s], in *Nihon-Taiwan gakkai dai 4 kai gakujiyutsu taikai houkokusha ronbunshū* [Proceedings of the 4th conference of the Japan-Taiwan Scholarly Association], 8 June, 2002.

³⁰ The Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, which was set up by the Council of the League of Nations in 1922, in a meeting in July 1924 recognized the need to discuss issues related to motion pictures and decided to hold the International Motion Picture Congress in Paris in 1926 under the direction of the Committee’s French delegation. (Japanese Foreign Ministry Record B.10.12.0.28 contains a pamphlet of the Conference.)

³¹ The idea has been attributed to Abel Gance, the innovative French director and screenwriter known for his creation of Polyvision in the film *Napoleon* (1927) (Georges Sodoul, *Histoire Général du Cinéma*, Maruo Sadamu, Murayama Kyoichiro and Komatsu Hiroshi tr. in Japanese, Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, vol. 9 (1998), p. 215); but

ing the arms industry.³² In other words, as the importance of motion pictures for national integration and state intervention became more and more recognized, systems regulating the medium became more and more sophisticated. Actions ① through ④ in the following table which arise in response to domestic mass appeal and universal mass appeal are, in practice, not readily distinguishable from subtractive and additive regulatory systems. The framework therefore exists to identify how the four combinations overlap and interrelate in each concrete example.

Table 1 Motion Picture Regulatory Framework

	Domestic Mass Appeal	Universal Mass Appeal
Subtractive Regulation	① Keeping undesirable elements from the masses	② Controlling undesirable elements from/of outside influences
Additive Regulation	③ Dissemination of desirable elements among the masses	④ Dissemination of desirable elements from/of outside influences

1. Confusion Over Subtractive Regulation

The censorship imposed by the Nationalist government and the GMD on nationally produced motion pictures, which is described by Cheng Jihua and others as “persecution of the left-wing film movement,” was during its early phase of the late 1920s directed mainly at films depicting “mysticism, vigilantism, superstition, and sex;”³³ but

was predated by German filmmaker Fritz Lang and American poet Vachel Lindsay. (Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Motion Picture* (1915), cited in Stam, Robert, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Wiley Backwell, 2000, p. 31. “For Vachel Lindsay, film constituted a new language of picture-words and hieroglyphs, a kind of Esperanto.” Fritz Lang, “Kitsch---Sensation---Kultur und Film (1924),” quoted in Wagner, Richard, *Fritz Lang and the Nibelungen*, Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 132. “Film is the Esperanto of the entire world---and a great cultural tool. One needs no more than two open eyes in order to comprehend its language.”

³² Georges Sodoul, *Histoire Général du Cinéma*, vol. 7 (1997), p. 44.

³³ Du Yunzhi, *Zhongguo dianying shi*, vol. 1, p. 123.

still had not gotten around “to censoring and banning ‘red movies.’”³⁴ It was only after the Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents that the GMD began its censorship of leftist films “flooding the market with Communist propaganda”³⁵ by the Central Board of Motion Picture Censors (Zhongyang dianying jiancha weiyuanhui; hereafter CBMP), after that body was reorganized in March 1934.³⁶ The research done by Zhiwei Xiao and Wang Chaoguang argues that leftist products were not the only objects of censorship at the time, citing also superstition which refuted scientific rationalism, extreme violence, and the corruption of public morality; that is, any content threatening to encumber the building of a modern nation-state.³⁷ Therefore, in terms of Table 1, the GMD’s censorship of motion pictures considered offensive, including films with leftist political themes, constituted the intersection of negative regulation and mass appeal, meaning the prevention of undesirable elements from reaching the masses.

As to the Table’s intersection between negative regulation and universal appeal, the government’s censorship of foreign films that threatened China’s international presence and the problem of regaining the right to censorship in the foreign enclaves has been examined by Zhiwei Xiao from the aspects of protecting the national film industry and anti-imperialist ideology, showing that in these respects the government, film makers in the private sector and leftist intellectuals all cooperated in the regulatory effort.³⁸ I have also argued elsewhere not

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ On 18 March 1934, the government’s Ministries of Education and Internal Affairs transferred their censorship committees to the GMD’s Central Board of Motion Picture Censors, thus integrating control over film censorship. (Fang Zhi, “Zhongyang dianying shiye gaikuang” [The situation of central film projects], and Wu Yanyin, “Jiaonei liangbu dianjian weihui zuzhi gaiyao” [Overview of the educational and internal affairs censorship boards], in *Dianying Nianjian*. This integration of censorship has been interpreted as intervention by the CC Faction of the KMT in the film censorship system. (Wang Chaoguang, “30 nian dai chu de guo min dang dian ying jian cha zhi du,” *op. cit.*; Zhang Xinmin, “Chūgoku kyōiku eiga kyōkai oyobi Shanhai ni okeru kyōiku eiga suishin undō ni tsuite,” *op. cit.*

³⁷ See Zhang Xinmin, “Kokuminseifu no Shoki Eigatousei ni tsuite”; Wang Chaoguang, “30 nian dai chu de guo min dang dian ying jian cha zhi du.”

³⁸ Zhiwei Xiao, “Anti-Imperialism and film censorship during the Nanjing decade, 1927–1937.”

only that there was cooperation between the government and film-makers, but also that the sector in charge of film censorship within the Nanjing Nationalist regime and the GMD was conceptualized within the framework of foreign policy aiming at recovering national sovereignty and was actively involved in actual negotiations with foreign entities. However, this type of subtractive motion picture regulation, while incomplete, was under the executive power of a Nanjing regime equipped with the infrastructure of a nation-state and was implemented on a nationwide scale. Therefore, when that executive power in the important film markets in northern and central China was lost due to the Japanese invasion, censorship control, which made up China's subtractive regulatory policy, was heavily rolled back in comparison with prewar times. Here are two examples of how censorship was weakened and thrown into confusion.

(1) Refusals to Honor Censorship Declarations

Although the Chinese army retreated from Shanghai in November 1937, the CBMP continued operations there, which were marked by an incident in which censorship certificates issued by the Bureau's Shanghai Office were not recognized by its Guangdong Office.³⁹ The incident is related to a complaint filed in January 1938 by the American Embassy with the Foreign Section on behalf of the American motions picture distributors in Shanghai. The complaint requested confirmation as to whether or not the members of the Shanghai Office officially represented the CBMP; and then in April, after the Office's official status was confirmed, the Guangdong Office refused to honor the censorship declarations which Shanghai had issued and applied for funds to conduct its own inquest. Another confirmation was requested by the Foreign Section, to which the GMD's PR Section replied that the Shanghai Office's censorship declarations applied nationwide, including Guangdong. The problem stemmed from the fact that the Shanghai Office had been formally "requisitioned" by Japanese Army, resulting in "seizures" during December 1937, but in fact the Japanese

³⁹“Zhongyang dianying jiancha weiyuanhui Shanghai baishichu tianfa zhi yingpian xukezheng Guangzhou banshichu buchengren” (GMD Historical Archives 1432.10/1062.01-01 (22 January 1938)).

Army could not identify its address.⁴⁰ At the same time, the Japanese Army notified all film producers in Shanghai that it would now take charge of censorship in the city.⁴¹ Therefore, in the effort to control motion pictures that threatened national integration in line with GMD views, a breakdown occurred within the main implementation agency, the CBMP, which became unable to coordinate its regional offices, indicated a de facto end to its operations. It was at this juncture that films which had been banned by the Nanjing regime as “trumped up fairy tales” and “insulting to the Chinese nation” began to be covered again in the pages of Shanghai’s movie magazines⁴² without critical comment. What this incident shows is that due to the chaos that arose in the midst of the outbreak of hostilities, the Nationalist government-GMD film regulatory system was dealt a serious blow in implementing both subtractive types of regulation (①, ②) listed in Table 1.

(2) The Wartime Film Censorship Bureau

In order to combat such a chaotic wartime situation, the Administrative Agency (Xingzheng yuan) issued memoranda to all foreign consulates on 30 September 1938 announcing that the interim Wartime Film Censorship Bureau (Feichang shiqi dianying jianchasuo; IWFCB) would be established.⁴³ It was an attempt to inform all film

⁴⁰ A confidential report by the Japanese Army Correspondents Section dated 20 October 1939 states that “the censorship office set up by the GMD in the foreign enclave of Shanghai has been seized,” but gives no date of the seizure. (National Institute for Defense Studies Archive catalog entry Shina/Shinajihen/Zenpan 447). (see Ichikawa Sai, *Ajia eiga no sōzō oyobi kensetsu*, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–250.)

⁴¹ Ichikawa Sai, *Ajia eiga no sōzō oyobi kensetsu*, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–250; also states that in June 1939 the News Bureau of Japanese Army set up a film censorship board and began that August previewing movies distributed in the foreign enclaves and Japanese occupied territory. As to when such activities actually began, Tsuji Kyuichi, who was in charge of censorship, states that the work began in July (Tsuji Kyuichi, *Chūka den’ei shiwa: Ippeisotsu no nicchū eiga kaisou ki (1939–1945)* [On the history of Chinese film: The memoirs of one soldier about Sino-Japanese film], Tokyo: Gaifusha, 1987, p. 90.)

⁴² “Chong ying huo shao hong lian si” [Rerun of *Burning Red Lotus Temple*], in *Dianxing*, vol. 1, no. 6 (12 February 1938); “Yidu jinying zhi ruhuapian” [A slanderous film once banned?], in *Dianxing*, vol. 1, no. 11 (21 April 1938).

⁴³ GMD Historical Archive 1432.10/1062. 01-01

producers active in China that the now defunct regulatory system was being revived within the Administrative Agency's jurisdiction. The Bureau itself was located in Guangzhou, and a Bureau Office was set up in Chungking, while operations were shutdown at both the CBMP's Shanghai and Guangdong Offices. The censorship procedures and standards were determined under existing laws, but funding was cut in half in light of declining earnings caused by the War, and attention was now focused on all films that were seen to be "anti-war, abetting the enemy, adventurous, corrupting or reactionary to the war effort and threatening national integration."⁴⁴ However, it was not long before the Guangdong Office was shutdown by the Japanese army,⁴⁵ leaving the Chungking Office, which was far removed from the film production centers, to fend for itself. A report on operations submitted by the Central PR Section dated November 1939 suggests that regarding "harmful" films that were being produced for profit, "public discretion" was being advised through Party agencies and cultural organizations,⁴⁶ indicating that sanctions imposed by executive authority could no longer be enforced.

The 1940s then saw the appearance of producers who intentionally flaunted the censorship laws. The Administrative Agency responded with an explanation that acute inflation had caused the fine of "up to 300 *yuan*" to no longer deter producers now earning hundreds of thousands of *yuan* per movie, and proceeded to revise the statutes regarding penalties.⁴⁷ Despite such regulatory efforts, in the regions occupied by the Japanese army, films reflecting Japanese national strategy were being shown, and the private sector of the Chinese motion picture industry was experiencing a phase of speculation, resulting in such activity as competition to see who could produce the "sleaziest sex debacle yet,"⁴⁸ thus rendering subtractive regulatory activities (Table 1, ① and ②) dysfunctional. Later on in Chungking, during 1943, China Film Productions (*Zhongguo dianying zhipianchang*) under the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ GMD Historical Archive 5.2 -34.14

⁴⁶ GMD Historical Archive 5.2 -45.3

⁴⁷ GMD Historical Archive 0120.71/5050.06-01. Funding was increased at that time, then increased again in 1945 due to transportation difficulties and inflation (GMD Historical Archive 0120.71/ 5050.06-01).

⁴⁸ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-60.85-6.

National Military Council (Jun shi wei yuan hui) and Central Motion Picture Studios (Zhongyang dianying sheying chang, hereafter Central Studios) under the GMD PR Section would propose that “films depicting passionate love and superstition not be shown” and start censoring films that had been produced in the private sector,⁴⁹ but these measures only affected publically-owned producers and older films.

(3) Towards an Alternative Policy

As mentioned above, there is not always a clear distinction in reality between the mass and universal appeal of films or attempts to subtractively and additively regulate them. The first attempts by the GMD PR Section to show film producers how it wanted their movies to be made date back to the Nanjing regime era, during September 1933, when the then PR Committee (Xuanchuan weiyuanhui) was put in charge of film regulation and for that purpose set up the Motion Picture Direction and Guidance Sub-Committee (Dianying shiye zhidao weiyuanhui).

The duties of the Sub-Committee, as detailed in a December 1934 PR Section operations report, was to draw up a plan for film propaganda activities, serve as a consultant to the national motion picture industry, promote specific projects and train script editors. The consulting function continued after the outbreak of the War and included the convening of a confab of domestic film producers and a program of guidance involving 1) helping writers to improve the quality of their scripts, 2) informing production studios on how to make films conducive to public sentiment, 3) consulting the Film Script Review Board on standards, 4) consulting the Censorship Board on standards, and 5) publishing information about film propaganda and helping the press report on propaganda activities.⁵⁰

Activities 1) and 3) dealing with scripts were according to the report “to straighten out misunderstandings and propose possible directions” by reviewing scripts prior to production, thus “reducing incidents of film cutting and attaining accurate censorship in the interest of fairness.”⁵¹ In other words, what “guidance” meant for the Nanjing

⁴⁹ GMD Historical Archive 0900.06/ 4800.02-02.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

regime was 1) to warn film makers that their productions were liable to being cut (subtractive regulation) and 2) to assist them in responding correctly to public sentiment (additive regulation). However, with the loss of the effectiveness of censorship due to the outbreak of the War and Japanese occupation, the threat of subtractive regulation was eliminated. It was in April 1939 that the CBMP and its related agencies gathered together the film makers who had been dispatched to Chungking for a confab. The purpose of the meeting was to promote the government's film policy and lend an ear to any difficulties the film makers may have been encountering, in an attempt to "appeal to those sentiments in winning their acceptance."⁵²

As for film makers who chose to remain in Hong Kong, among whom there were those "who in search of a livelihood cannot help being exploited by traitors and greedy capitalists," CBMP tried to stop such exploitation. However, since Hong Kong was a British possession, such activity was abandoned due to the realization that "it is not the place for the Party or the government to be showing their faces."⁵³ Instead, the Ministry of Education (Jiaoyubu) decided to form a Hong Kong branch of the China Educational Film Association (*Zhongguo jiaoyu dianying xiehui*), which called for major Hong Kong film studios to stop making occult films and publish a magazine entitled *Zhenguang*, thus promoting a cultural movement emphasizing "a clean film industry stimulating healthy public opinion and condemning degenerates."⁵⁴

Also, after the outbreak of war, left-wing intellectuals began to take part in publicly-owned film companies, like China Film Productions (CFP), which was operated under the Political Section of the

⁵² GMD Historical Archive 5.2-45.3

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ The China Educational Film Association, which was organized in Nanjing during July 1932, was put in charge of educational films by the Ministry of Education and worked jointly with the International Educational Film Association in diplomatic and indoctrination activities (Zhang Junxu, Cheng Jihua, ed., *Zhongguo dianying dacidian* [Cinematic encyclopedia of China], Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1995, p. 1358). Concerning the Association under the Nanjing regime, see Zhang Xinmin, "Chūgoku kyōiku eiga kyōkai oyobi Shanhai ni okeru kyōiku eiga suishin undō ni tsuite," *op. cit.*

Zhenguang dianying dacidian also mentions that the movie magazine *Zhenguang* was published twice a week between January 1940 and some time during the last half of 1941 and included articles by Sun Mingjing, Shi Dongshan and Luo Mingyou.

National Military Council. In response, the GMD PR Section warned, “During the war of resistance many of those who have come inland (to Chungking) to engage in pictures since the start of the war of resistance are *ideological extremists with non-GMD party sentiments*” (author’s emphasis). Consequently, the PR Section and Social Section jointly went about reorganizing the National Anti-Japanese Film Association (Zhonghua quanguo dianying kangdi xiehui) of Wuhan, which had been joined by film makers old and new, left and right, onto the “right track” in line with GMD Party ideology.⁵⁵ And so, under wartime conditions in which subtractive regulation had counted on the “discretion of public opinion,” the PR Section resorted to such forms of “guidance” in efforts to bring private sector film makers in Chungking, producers in British-held Hong Kong and those with non-GMD affiliations into the fold. All of these measures, while taking on a “additive regulatory” appearance, were intended to supplement “subtractive regulatory” purposes. In other words, “guidance” in the form of subtractive threats employed by the Nanjing regime during peacetime evolved into an alternative additive regulatory policy during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

2. The Vagaries of Positive Regulation

It is clear that the roll back that occurred in subtractive regulation (censorship) of the film industry in China escalated in proportion to the shrinking sphere of authority and sovereignty enjoyed by the GMD’s Nationalist government in the midst of the Japanese invasion and occupation of its country. To its benefit, the GMD’s new positive attitude towards regulation was at least indirectly effective in eliminating any detrimental influence of motion pictures in terms of national integration or government interference. This section will discuss such aspects of additive regulation as the production of newsreels and international propaganda movies, distribution and screening, and the commissioning propaganda movies to the film makers in Hong Kong. In order to identify changes in film production during the early phases of the War, it would be beneficial to review briefly the situation that existed under the Nanjing regime.

⁵⁵ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-60.85-6.

To begin with, although the research to date tends to emphasize the aspects of censorship and cracking down that existed within the Nanjing government's film policy, in actuality, Nanjing was also active in the production of propaganda films, albeit newsreels and short dramas, rivaling private production studios in terms of output quantity.⁵⁶ Table 2 shows the results of a survey conducted among private production studios in Shanghai, and Table 3 summarizes the operations of the GMD PR Section's Central Studios between 1935 and 1937. Figure 1 is a photographic collage of Central Studio's movie lot built for talkies in 1935, which was hailed by contemporary movie magazines as "the top studio in China"⁵⁷ and "the nation's best equipped studio."⁵⁸ Due to lack of space, this paper will not go into further detail on film production under the Nanjing regime, except to conclude that given the data in Tables 2 and 3 and the impressive photograph, the GMD's involvement in motion picture production was by no means overshadowed by private companies.

Table 2 Prewar Shanghai Film Studio Overview

	Mingxing	Hua'an	Xinhua	Yihua	Tianyi	Minxin	Yueming	Total
No. films per year	8	6	8	10	3	3	2	40
Average cost (1000 yuan)	40	40	40	30	20	20	20	210
Yearly outlay (1000 yuan)	320	240	320	300	60	60	40	1340

Source: "Method for subsidizing the wartime film industry, addressed to the Secretariat of the Central Executive Committee by the PR Section," 9 Oct. 1937, GMD Historical Archives (5.3-57.11)

The following note was attached to this memo: "Covered herein are seven relatively well-organized studios in Shanghai, but the regular monetary outlay figures have been estimated from production output. Consequently, the average output for the whole city comes to 40 films per year at a rate of 3.5 per month, estimated at a total cost of 1,340,000 yuan, at 111,666 yuan per month."

⁵⁶ For more details see Misawa Mamie, "Nankin seifu ki Kokumintō no eigatousei," *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ "Zhongyang dianying sheyingchang yipie" [A glimpse at central studios], in *Liangy-ou huabao*, No. 113, January 1936, p. 36.

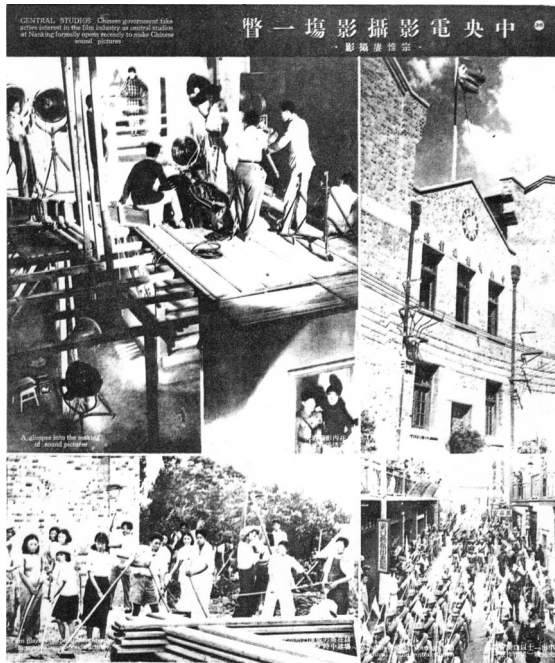
⁵⁸ "Guanyu Nanjing xianyou de dianying jiguan ji qi gaikuang" [On film studios in Nanjing and their current situation], in *Dianying zhoubao*, No. 4, 28 March 1936, 4th Edition.

Table 3 Central Studios Overview: 1935–1937

	1935	1936	1937
Operations (Months)	12	12	8
No. Films Produced	58	44	59
Monthly Average	4.6	3.6	7.4
Total Cost (<i>yuan</i>)	145163.51	192543.03	147778.02
Cost Per Film (<i>yuan</i>)	2236.67	2735.87	1758.54
Total Staff	148	124	104
Technical Staff	48	45	48
Clerical Staff	24	22	16

Source: “Central PR Section Operations Report,” copy, GMD Historical Archives 5.2-34.14.

Figure 1 A Glimpse of Central Studios



Source: *Liangyou huabao*, No. 113, January 1936, p. 36.

(1) Wartime Newsreel Production

After the Luguo Bridge Incident of 7 July 1937, which marked the opening of hostilities, Central Studios dispatched its first cameramen to the front on the 12th to begin filming “War of Resistance Newsreels.”⁵⁹ The first installment reached Nanjing on the 27th and was distributed throughout China and overseas.⁶⁰ One movie magazine reported that a cameraman became entrapped in the fighting and was slightly wounded.⁶¹ Table 4 shows the conditions under which cameramen were dispatched by Central Studios between August 1937 and January 1939.

Table 4 Areas Covered By Cameramen: August 1937–January 1939

The First Term: August 1937–May 1938		
Theatre of War	Cameramen	Area Covered
Eastern	Luo Jinghao, Yu Jianzhong	Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Hangfu RR, Jinghang RR, Sujia RR, Jingwu RR, Changjiang River
Western	Hong Weilie, Wang Yang, Wu Benli, Han Zhongliang	Pinghan RR, Pingsui RR, Tongpu RR, Yanhe RR
Northern	Tong Zhen, Ye Tong	Jinpu RR, Longhai RR, Liuyang RR
Huanan	Cheng Zelin, Huang Tianpeng	Canton-Hankou Road (Yue-Han lu), Canton-Kowloon Road (Guang-Jiulong lu), Fujian Province (Min sheng)
Kangding, Tibet	Li Xixun	Kangding, Tibet and Qinghai Province
The Second Term: June 1938–the end of 1938		
Anhui and Jiangxi Provinces	Lian Cheng	Changjiang River (Changjiang)
Nantao RR	Tong Zhen	Jiujiang ⇔ Nanchang
Pinghan RR	Zong Weigeng, Ye Tong	Zhengzhou ⇔ Xinyang, Longhai

⁵⁹“Zhongyang dianyingchang paiyuan chufa shezhi kangzhan xinwen dianying” [The dispatch of news cameramen by central studios], in *Diansheng zhoukan*, No. 959 (23 July 1937), p. 1236.

⁶⁰“Jugouqiao yingpian jiri fangying” [Upcoming film about Luguo Bridge], in *Diansheng zhoukan*, no. 960 (30 July 1937), p. 1279.

⁶¹“Shezhi luzhan yingpian sheyingshi xianzao buce” [Cameraman filming the Battle of Luguo Bridge encounters danger and confusion], in *Diansheng zhoukan*, no. 960 (30 July 1937), p. 1280.

Huanan	Huang Tianpeng	Canton (Guangdong), Guangxi and coastal areas
Shanxi, Henan and Shaanxi Provinces	Wang Yang	Xi'an, Luoyang, Liulin, Lishi
Kangding, Tibet	Li Xixun	Ganmu, Kangding
Aeronautical Commission	Cheng Zelin	Embedded with the Air Force
The Third Term: One Year of 1939		
Huan and Hubei Provinces	Tong Zhen, Lian Cheng	Northern Canton-Hankou, Changjiang River
Henan, Shanxi and Shaanxi Provinces	Zong Weigeng, Ye Tong	Ping-Han, Ping-Sui, Huanghe River
Canton and Guangxi Provinces	Cheng Zelin	Embedded with GMD Army counter-offensive in Guangzhou
Huabei	Wang Yang	Embedded with Chairman Lu undercover in northern China
Chengdu and Chungking	Chen Jiamo, Wang Letian, Li Xixun, Wang Yusheng	Sichuan Province

Source: GMD Historical Archives 5.2-34.14. The figures are probably understated, since no mention is made of the weekly *Diansheng zhoubao* (No. 959, 23 July 1937, p. 1236 and No. 960, 30 June 1937, p. 1280) reporting that cameramen Luo Jinghao, Zong Weigeng, Chen Jiamo, *et al.* were dispatched in July 1937 immediately after the Luguo Bridge Incident.

Later on, the PR Section would petition the Military Affairs Ministry to allow private studios to dispatch their cameramen into the war zones carrying official “press passes” (*huzhao*).⁶²

However, producers of motion pictures that depended heavily on imported raw film and other supplies became hard pressed in the midst of rising inflation, capital scarcity and transportation difficulties.⁶³ In response, from 1938 on, the Supreme Defense Council (Guofang zuigao weiyuanhui) continued to allow special funding for motion picture propaganda, and the PR Section took steps to produce its films more efficiently.⁶⁴ In 1941 camera crews in the field were reduced

⁶² GMD Historical Archive 5.2-34.14

⁶³ GMD Historical Archive 5.3-141.18. According to a table attached to this application for a subsidy and comparing prewar and wartime prices of supplies needed by the propaganda film project, storage batteries for voice recording increased by 16 times, acid for film developing 15 times and Western nails used in set construction 40 times.

⁶⁴ GMD Historical Archives 0141.80/ 5060.01-03

from six to three, and in their place, newsreels related to construction projects going on behind the lines were increased from one to two per month. Special feature newsreels were also added. Similarly, under efficiency measures, joint production of documentaries among several related agencies was encouraged instead of relying solely on the PR Section. Also, advice from foreign cameramen was sought in efforts to make both technical aspects and presentation more effective.⁶⁵ Public motion picture production during wartime became very diversified, relying on not only Central Studios, but also the Northwest Film Company (Xibei dianying gongsi) under the Second War Zone, the National Educational Film Studio (Zhonghua jiaoyu dianying zhipianchang) under the Ministry of Education, and the Chinese Rural Educational Film Company under the Ministry of Agriculture.⁶⁶ Despite scarcities in capital and supplies, according to Central Studios' lists of its releases, its activities steadily continued on through the War, although reductions in output were inevitable.

Evaluating the technical merit and content of the Central Studios wartime newsreels is no easy task, since after the War the company was first seized by the GMD in April 1947, privatized and renamed the Central Motion Picture Company, Ltd. (Zhongyang dianying qiye gufen youxian gongsi). Then the Communist Party took it over in 1949. One can rightfully assume that the company's inventory of motion pictures was also seized at those times, but their whereabouts remain unknown. Moreover, the China Film Archive, which was set up in 1958, still has not released a catalog of its holdings to the public. Also, at the time of the Communist Party takeover in 1949 and the GMD's retreat to Taiwan, the GMD took with it much of the equipment and motion pictures that had been part of not only Central Studios, but also the two educational film companies. Afterward two warehouse fires resulted in the loss of the films that were taken. To date, this author has managed to locate only one newsreel produced by Central Studios for domestic viewers in the U.S. National Archives

⁶⁵ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-45.3

⁶⁶ Du Yunzhi, *Wushi nianlai de Zhongguo dianying* [50 years of Chinese film], Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1965, pp. 46–50; *idem*, *History of Chinese Motion Pictures*, vol. 2, p. 27; Cheng Jihua, *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 129.

and Records Administration entitled *China News*⁶⁷ *Special Feature: Documentary of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance and Performance of the Air Corps* (silent film with Chinese captions).⁶⁸

While it is difficult to generalize about the quality and trends of the newsreels produced during the War from one single example, one technological aspect is the method of filming airplanes in flight from inside another plane. While there are airborne shots that are too small and out of focus, most of the filming is done at stable shooting angles. As to the editing, the film is a professional effort to describe the activities of the air corps unfolding in 8-pages of insert captions, not just a collage of random moving shots of planes in flight. The editors selected scenes featuring bombers on raids, military weaponry and Japanese prisoners of war, in order to demonstrate the air corps' contribution to the war effort, interlaced with shots of regiments marching in review before such personages as Jiang Jieshi. Such aspects suggest that the wartime newsreels produced by the GMD achieved a certain standard of craftsmanship, given the state of the art and equipment in use during that time. For the viewers whose lives and livelihoods were being threatened by ravages of war, squadrons of "our air force" lining runways and their crews at the controls dressed in leather jackets downing enemy planes and sinking enemy battleships must have heartened them to the hope of "ultimate victory" in the "national crusade of resistance." In terms of our analytical framework, these newsreels showing to the masses the stark reality of wartime China must have had been very effective in positively controlling and indoctrinating public opinion.

⁶⁷ A total of 193 episodes of *China News* (Zhong guo xin wen) were produced by Central Studios between 1934 and 1949 (*Cinematic Encyclopedia of China, op. cit.*, p. 1360).

⁶⁸ "WAR IN CHINA, CHINESE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 1942", NARA at College Park Archive #RG428.

Figure 2 Clips from “War in China”



The title frame



Airborne filming



Introducing spoils of war



Jiang Jieshi reviewing troops in the field

Source : "WAR IN CHINA, CHINESE GOVERNMENT, AUGUST 1942", NARA at College Park [RG428]

Table 5 Insert Captions

Main Title	Zhongguo xinwen tehao Zhongyang dianying sheyingchang shezhi [China News Special Feature, A Central Studios Production]
Subtitle	Dui ri kangzhan shilu Kongjun zhanji [The role of the Air Corps in our Anti-Japanese war of resistance]
Caption 1	Shensheng de minzu kangzhan kaizhan wo kongjun chudong yingzhan [As the national crusade of resistance unfolds, our Air Corps stands ready for action]
1.	Chuzhan xunri jianmie diji 60 yuji dijian 10 yusou [In just 10 days of maneuvers, Air Corps crews have managed to destroy 60 enemy planes and 10 enemy battleships.]
2.	Jiluo zhi diji [The downing of an enemy plane.]
3.	Zhanli pin [Spoils of war]
4.	Di kongjun fulu ji xishengzhe [Killed and captured enemy airmen]
5.	Yu dajizhe yi daji [Under attack, but fighting back]
6.	Jihui zhi dijian [Another enemy ship sunk]
7.	Jianli shugong zhi wo kongjun jiangshi zai zuigao lingxiu Jiang weiyuan zhang tongshuai zhi xia jiang huode zuihou shengli [Decorated Air Corps officers under our supreme commander Chairman Jiang determined to attain final victory.]

Ending	Wan Zhongyang dianying sheyingchang shezhi [THE END A Central Studios Production]
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(2) Propaganda Films for Foreign Audiences

Even prior to the formation of the Nanjing government, GMD-commissioned newsreels were being distributed for overseas Chinese audiences; however, it was the Nanjing regime which produced films with the predetermined intent to indoctrinate international film viewers. And this intent did not subside with the outbreak of hostilities with the Japanese; rather, it was strengthened in its resolve.

During the 17 months between August 1937 and the end of 1938, the Central Studios' film catalogs listed not only anti-Japanese resistance films and documentaries, but also four international propaganda films labeled in English "Sino-Japanese War."⁶⁹ Also, in 1940 the International Division of the Central PR Section took the initiative in producing motion pictures aimed at indoctrinating foreign audiences, prompted by a request from support groups in England and the United States for more short propaganda films.⁷⁰ The Central PR Section made a study of whether its films were suited to the interests of international audiences, and became particularly interested in filling the demand of average American households and public and private organizations, going as far as to seek the cooperation of American film experts in writing scripts. Documentary titles produced by the International Division include *Defending and Building a Nation* (Kangjian Zhongguo), *Intrepid Chungking* (Dawuwei zhi Chongqing), *Pilgrimage Along the Burma Road* (Dian-Mian lu xun li), *Burma Press Corps Visits China* (Mian-Dian jizhe fanghuatuan), *Military Mobilization* (Jianjun) and *Educating Children in Wartime* (Zhanshi ertong jiaoyu).⁷¹ Then in 1942, an American newsreel production company made a request to film a piece, which featured Jiang Jieshi welcoming dignitaries from

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ GMD Historical Archives 496-294.

⁷¹ 35mm filming was suppose to begin in April 1940 with the purchase of two cameras, but the plan was plagued by delays in other preparations, forcing a changeover to 16mm filming, which improved the situation in terms of capital, facilities, technology and transport. The production *Intrepid Chungking*, which documented the aerial bombardment, civil defense and rebuilding of that city, was sent to New York and later copied over 20 times. (*Ibid.*)

abroad and a group of American military leaders visiting Chungking.⁷²

The films produced by the PR Section were shown along with resistance dramas produced by the Military Affairs Council's China Film Productions at screenings to which foreign correspondents active in China were invited. Prints were first sent for viewing at Chinese embassies in England, the United States, France and the Soviet Union, and then were distributed to movie theaters in metropolitan areas to inform general audiences.⁷³ English subtitles were added to such films as *The Japanese Rape of Nanjing* (Nanjing Rijun baoxing) and *Activities of the Shanghai Boy Scouts* (Shanghai tongzijun huodong).⁷⁴ Other ploys included reprinting carefully selected films and selling them to MGM Productions, and concluding a contract with the Soviet Union's National Food Export and Trade Association to exchange the latest films produced in both countries, resulting in the building of an inexpensive international film distribution network.⁷⁵ Table 6 lists the film titles produced by Central Studios for foreign audiences between June 1940 and 15 February 1941 and where around the world they were shown, according to the purposes of propaganda and profit. It indicates that it was possible to show propaganda films for profit in the area where many overseas Chinese live.

Table 6 Central Studios' Foreign Films: January 1940–15 February 1941

Location	Title
For Propaganda and/or Exchange	
United States	<i>Shengli de qianzou</i> [The prelude to victory], <i>Women de Nanjing</i> [Our Nanjing], <i>Xin jieduan</i> [A new phase], <i>Zongli shishi 15 Zhounian jinian</i> [15th anniversary of chancellor Sun Zhongshan's death], <i>Jingshen zongdongyuan zhounian jinian</i> [Anniversary of the national mental preparedness movement], <i>Jingshen zongdongyuan kaishi dianli</i> [Opening ceremonies of the mental preparedness movement], <i>Xin shenghuo yundong 5 zhounian jinian</i> [5th anniversary of the new life movement], <i>Huoyue de xixian</i> [Lively activity on the western front], <i>Huang Zi jiaoshou gechang yizuoji</i> [Choral collection from the late Prof. Huang Zi], <i>Diji 2 ci hongzha Chongqing</i> [The second enemy bombardment of Chungking], <i>Kefu Taierzhuang</i> [Victory at Taierzhuang], <i>Kongjun zhanji (zhongguo xinwen 62, 65 hao)</i> [The role of the air force (China News Nos. 62, 65)], <i>Guo ge pian tou</i> [The national anthem]
Mexico	
Peru	
Cuba	
Germany	
France	
Turkey	
Australia	
Soviet Union	

⁷² GMD Historical Archives 5.2-103.8

⁷³ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-34.14

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6

For Sale	
Philippines	<i>Diji 2 ci hongzha Chongqing</i> [The second bombardment of Chungking], <i>Fengyi Chengjisihan lingchen</i> [The relocation of Genghis Khan's casket], <i>Qiancheng wanli</i> [A thousand more leagues to go], <i>Zhonghua ernü</i> [The men and women of China], <i>Zhongyuan fengguang</i> [On the great plain of the Yellow River basin], <i>Xin jieduan</i> [A new phase], <i>Zhongguo xinwen</i> 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72 hao] [China News, Nos. 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72], <i>Jingshen zongdongyuan zhounian jinian</i> [Anniversary of the national mental preparedness movement], <i>Zongli shishi 15 zhounian jinian</i> [15th anniversary of chancellor Sun Zhongsun's death]
Hong Kong	
Thailand	
Kuala Lumpur	
Singapore	
Kuala Terengganu	
Penang	
Sandakan	

Source: Central PR Section Operations Report, Mar 1941 (GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6)

Having experienced such ordeals as the distortion of the image of China and its people in Western motion pictures, as evidenced in *Welcome Danger* (1929),⁷⁶ set in San Francisco's Chinatown, and Japan's attempts to utilize the Manchurian Incident for its own propaganda purposes,⁷⁷ the GMD, finding itself in dire need of support from the United States and other non-Axis countries, attempted to utilize the

⁷⁶ During the February 1930 screening in a Shanghai theatre of the film *Welcome Danger*, produced by Clyde Bruckman and starring slapstick comedian Harold Lloyd in his first talkie, Hong Shen stood up and began a speech denouncing the piece, which had been given the Chinese title *Bu pa si* (Without Fear of Death), which would also be the name given to the incident by the media. The report, dated 15 March, of the incident in a Japanese movie magazine was entitled "*Welcome Danger Banned in Shanghai*" (Katō Shirō, *Kinema Shunpō*, No. 362, April 1930, pp. 55–56). The incident created an outcry in all the Shanghai papers to ban public screening and destroy the film. In response, the Shanghai metropolitan censorship board ordered the film banned due to its derogatory portrayal of Chinese people and fined the movie theatre that featured it 5000 *won*, and all of Lloyd's films were eventually banned from China. (Wang Chaoguang, "Guomintang dianying jiancha zhidu xia de Meiguo dianying," *op. cit.*, p. 245; Zhiwei Xiao, "Anti-Imperialism and Film Censorship," *op. cit.*, pp. 38–41).

⁷⁷ The Japanese film which shot the Lytton Commission, which was organized in 1931 to investigate the growing crisis between Japan and China, were being distributed throughout the world, mainly in the United States, through the League of Nations Japanese Delegation and that the League has been "utilized in spreading Japanese propaganda" between December 1932 and early spring of the following year. In response, the Chinese Embassy in Italy filed a formal complaint with the International Educational Film Association, which was a League affiliate group (Katō Atsuko, *Eiga kokusaku no tenkai to eiga sangyō: Senji kokumin dōin sōchi toshiteno eiga* [National

universal appeal of motion pictures to garner such support.⁷⁸ For example, *China Invaded, 1937?* [sic],⁷⁹ a silent film probably not produced by the PR Section with English subtitles held by the National Archives and Records Administration, seems to have been one such attempt to raise international public awareness about the necessities of imposing sanctions on the Japanese Empire and supporting China's war effort.

It is thought that the movie was shot on location during the Nanjing Massacre, but clearly differs from the previously mentioned *China News* newsreels in the amateurish shots taken out of focus, poor camera movement and irregular editing. On the other hand, the first half of the film contains a scene of Japanese troops arresting Chinese citizens shot through a bamboo framed window, while the second half contains a sequence showing brutally mutilated people (including women and children) admitted to a refugee hospital. It goes without saying that the film must have been extremely effective in appealing to international audiences of just how the Japanese Army was conducting itself on the streets of China.

However, not all the propaganda movies that Chinese film makers exported abroad dealt exclusively with the atrocities of war. For example, *GLIMPSES OF MODERN CHINA, 1937* (silent, English subtitles) held at NARA is, as expressed in the title, an introduction to China

film policy and the motion picture industry: Film as a tool for national mobilization], Doctoral Dissertation, Ochanomizu University, 2001, pp. 17–18). The GMD PR Committee Motion Picture Unit then produced a film entitled *The League of Nations Commission* (April–November 1932), which was shown in such places as Africa and large American cities. (GMD Historical Archives 4.2-38.13).

⁷⁸ Regarding the efforts aimed at the United States, Tsuchida Tetsuo has shown that the plan included films that advertized the violence being perpetrated by the Japanese Army in China, citing George A. Fitch, a progressive Shanghai-born Presbyterian minister, showing on his American lecture tour the footage of the Nanjing Massacre taken by John Magee. (Tsuchida Tetsuo, “Kōsenki Chūgoku no taibei ‘kokumin gaikō kou-saku’” [“GMD diplomatic operations’ in the US during the resistance era], in *Nicchū sensō-ki ni okeru Chūgoku no shakai, bunka henyō ni kansuru sōgō teki kenkyū* (Report of Research Findings during 2003–2005 with Grant-in Aid for Scientific Research (B) (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), *op. cit.*, pp. 130–151).

⁷⁹ NARA at College Park, Harmon Foundation Collection, 1922–1967. Incidentally, the film itself was originally untitled merely *China Invaded*. The *1937?* was added for cataloging purposes, thus the question mark. The part of this film was introduced by TV Program in Japan, as the film shot by John Magee.

as a modernized nation-state.⁸⁰ In stark contrast to *China Invaded*, *Glimpses* constitutes an exciting montage of a myriad of subjects shot from many different angles rivaling Hollywood producers of the day, except for the lack of sound. It consists of two parts, the first focusing on brand new factories and sports stadiums, as well a traditional architecture, to be found in China's urban areas. Part II introduces the populace, young people in the classroom and on the playing field, and the country's political leaders from intellectuals like Hu Shi to Jiang Jieshi himself. The inserts describing those leaders make sure to emphasize that they were educated in the United States whenever the opportunity arises, in line with the Central PR Section International Division's policy to take special care in catering to American demands.

Several of the films produced by that Division were distributed in the United States by the Chinese-American Cultural Association (Zhong-Mei wenhua xiehui),⁸¹ including *Glimpses*, and some were also used in the fund raising activities of the China Rescue Projects Commission.⁸² Both of the above-mentioned films held at NARA indicate by their title inserts that they were utilized as international propaganda tools rather than commercial products, despite the fact that they convey completely opposite images of China and its people: the former showing Chinese civilians as the victims of marauding invaders, the latter demonstrating that China is a strong, modernized nation. It is

⁸⁰“GLIMPSES OF MODERN CHINA, 1937” NARA at College Park, Harmon Foundation Collection, 1922–1967.

⁸¹The film *Kangjian Zhongguo* [China resists feudalism], a talkie with English subtitles, was being utilized in a New York fund raising campaign (GMD Historical Archives 496-294).

⁸²The insert subtitle reads, “From footage taken by Chih Meng, Director of China Institute in America during a visit to China in 1937, produced by the Division of Visual Experiment of the Harmon Foundation and China Institute in America.”

The China Institute in America was founded in 1926 by John Dewey and Hu Shih for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and scientific and cultural exchange between the two countries through education (See <http://www.chinainstitute.org> (operating as of 8 October 2006)). The “Harmon Foundation” was a non-profit private organization active between 1922 and 1967 involved mainly in education about African art (<http://www.archives.gov/research/african-art> (operating as of 8 October 2006)), but also was in possession of documentary films concerning China produced between 1932 and 1943.

such questions of style, taste and choice of subject that need to occupy researchers more in future studies.



Main Title



Map showing the sea and air time distances between China and the US.



Modern clad women demonstrate their Western archery skills.



A crowded department store escalator.

Source: *GLIMPSES OF MODERN CHINA, 1937*, NARA at College Park, Harmon Foundation Collection, 1922–1967.

(3) Films Commissioned to Studios in Hong Kong

The best known private motion picture studio in Hong Kong commissioned by the GMD from Chungking was Dadi (Mother Earth) Films (Dadi yingye gongsi), which was founded by left-wing film makers who chose to remain in Hong Kong after China Film Productions was moved to Chungking in 1938.⁸³ However, when Dadi was

⁸³ Cheng Jihua, *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, vol. 2, p. 80.

closed down by the GMD the following year, those same film makers formed Xinsheng (New Life) Films (Xinsheng yingpian gongsi),⁸⁴ which was, oddly enough, financed in part by the GMD.⁸⁵ While at first, the plan was to contribute HK\$50,000 in special funds from the central Party coffers to capitalize New Life,⁸⁶ the Party refused, so Central Studios contributed 10,000 *yuan* to the formation of a joint state-commercial run venture at New Life.⁸⁷ For this reason, on the Mainland, films like *Ten Thousand Leagues More to Go* (*Qiancheng wanli*) were billed as productions of “Central Studios Subsidiary” and abroad as New Life Films, “out of consideration that political conditions varied from region to region.”⁸⁸ Then, during the filming of *Spirit of Freedom* (*Ziyou hun*) and *Ultimate Patriotism* (*Xianshen zuguo*), the outbreak of the Pacific War and the concomitant Japanese occupation of Hong Kong brought operations to a halt.⁸⁹

Under a decision to concentrate on the production of newsreels and short educational films in light of a worsening economic situation facing the industry on the mainland, there is no doubt that both Dadi and New Life, which enjoyed better conditions in Hong Kong, making state-commercial enterprises possible, were important strategic points in the GMD’s pre-Pacific War film policy making.⁹⁰ The importance of commissioning film production to Hong Kong is evidenced by the PR Section’s budget records for 1939, indicating a sharp rise in commission expenses.⁹¹ Actually, Dadi’s production of *Paradise in No*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80–84

⁸⁵ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6

⁸⁶ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-45.3

⁸⁷ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6. Cheng’s *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, *op. cit.*, and later the *Zhongguo dianying dacidian*, *op. cit.*, and Du’s *Zhongguo dianying shi*, *op. cit.*, state that Dadi was a subsidiary of Central Studios, but New Life was the result of a merger with Central Studios.

⁸⁸ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6.

⁸⁹ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-103.8.

⁹⁰ While there were many left-wing filmmakers at China Film Productions during that time, the organization itself was under the supervision of the government’s Military Affairs Council’s Political Bureau. Nevertheless, Dadi and New Life did employ Cai Chusheng, although he was a well-known left-wing film director. Furthermore, while the existing historical research purports that New Life was founded by left-wing filmmakers, the truth about Central Studios affiliation remains indisputable.

⁹¹ GMD Historical Archive 5.3-127.23.

Man's Land (Gudao tiantang), a film about life in the foreign enclaves of Shanghai, became a smash hit in both Chungking and throughout Southeast Asia, especially the scene in which the cry goes out, "It's not over yet [for China]!", bringing applauding audiences to their feet.⁹² New Life's *Ten Thousand Leagues More to Go* also managed to set box office records both on the mainland and abroad.⁹³

Such examples amply demonstrate the power of dramatic feature films in stirring nationalist sentiment, which may explain the GMD's decision to invest larger sums in them and in their Hong Kong producers out of both propaganda and profit-making motives, compared to non-profit projects involving newsreel and educational films at home. Another reason for commissioning films to Hong Kong was to support film makers economically in order to prevent them from being preyed upon by the enemy.⁹⁴ In other words, here we can confirm the intention to employ additive regulation for the purpose of indirect subtractive regulation.

(4) Building Distribution and Screening Networks

It goes without saying that without controlling distribution and venues for propaganda films, no regulatory program will be successful. This maxim was realized early on by the Nanjing government, which in 1935 decided not to depend on existing distribution routes and movie theaters, but build its own full-blown system from scratch.⁹⁵ In the backdrop to this policy decision lay concern that movie theatres would show propaganda films only to those who could afford the price of admission and thus fail to get the message out to those who could not.⁹⁶ This is why "screening points" (Dianying fangyingzhan) were set up in both GMD civilian and military branches around the country and formed the web of national distribution and screening of the films produced by the then PR Section. Then, after the outbreak of the War, as the distribution and screening system in the private sector became unable to expand under disastrous wartime conditions, the GMD's

⁹² Du Yunzhi, *Zhongguo dianying shi*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 81.

⁹³ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6.

⁹⁴ GMD Historical Archive 5.3-127.23.

⁹⁵ GMD Historical Archive 4.2-44.10.

⁹⁶ GMD Historical Archive 4.2-33.10.

networks were further developed. In 1939, urban movie theatres were designated as “distribution points,” while schools and other public agencies were designated as national “screening points,” and in remoter locations films were distributed to and shown by local governments and military garrisons. In the vanguard of the system was the Mobile Screening Battalion (Liudong fangyingdui), first deployed in September 1938,⁹⁷ which became active nationwide in showing government films to urbanites at affordable admission prices and to rural residents free of charge.⁹⁸

Table 7 Venues and Audiences for Anti-War Films: 4-Month Terms, August 1937–December 1938

	Admission Charged		Free of Charge	
	Location	Attendance	Location	Attendance
1st Term	15 Provinces including Suzhou, Zhejiang, Anhui, Shandong, Shanxi, He'nan, Gansu, Hunan, Jiangxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou	547,724	8 provinces including Suzhou, Zhejiang, Anhui, Shandong, He'nan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Sichuan	1,073,568
2nd Term	11 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, He'nan, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Canton (Guangdong), Jiangxi, Shangxi	398,840	7 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, He'nan, Shandong, Anhui	879,037
3rd Term	11 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Gansu, Canton (Guangdong), Guangxi	567,329	13 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, He'nan, Shanxi, Henan, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Canton (Guangdong), Guangxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Kangxian	864,711

⁹⁷ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-34.14.

⁹⁸ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-45.3

4th Term	9 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Henan, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan (Yun), Yunnan (Dian), Guangxi	383,340	13 provinces including Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Gansu, Qinghai, Guangxi, Canton (Guangdong), Shanxi, Jiangxi, Shanxi, Kangxian	998,60
Total		1,897,233		3,815,916

Source: Table 2: Anti-War Movie Audience Statistics of Central PR Section Operations Report, Jan 1939, copy, GMD Historical Archives 5.2-34.14, p. 78.

Note: Paying customers reported by movie theaters; free customers reported by sponsoring organization.

Prior to the War, Central Studio productions were shown in double features with other films, but during wartime, an independent anti-war motion picture program was implemented involving the films of both Central Studios and China Film Productions.⁹⁹ In 1938 a resistance film festival was held in Chungking during the October 10 celebration of the birth of the Chinese Republic, displaying large posters copied from the newsreels which were to be shown.¹⁰⁰ Such activities were part of a diversified GMD fund raising program, which also included the print media and a new form of musical called *Huaju*, considering regional conditions regarding technology, business, demography and general livelihood.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, as indicated by Table 7, film screening evolved on a fairly large scale, as non-paying audiences exceeded paying ones,¹⁰² and the GMD's distribution and screening safety net provided the "starving masses," both in terms of living conditions and literacy, access to government information and propaganda through the film medium. The fact that by the end of the War film screening venues presented at no charge had greatly exceeded those charging admission is the result of the Screening Battalion's anticipation about the propaganda value of such activities.

Besides the Party's PR Section, the Ministry of Education set up the Department of Electrified Education Services, which sponsored film tours around the country; and the Military Affairs Council's

⁹⁹ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-60.85-6

¹⁰⁰ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-34.14.

¹⁰¹ GMD Historical Archive 5.2-45.3.

¹⁰² GMD Historical Archive 5.2-34.14.

Political Bureau organized a film screening team that also toured all the battle zones, including Burma. When the previously mentioned international distribution activities are included, we can conclude that the GMD's motion picture distribution and screening program was both extensive and diversified.

3. Proposal for a Unified Film Regulatory Agency

According to the research to date, after the outbreak of hostilities in 1937, such organizations as the Film Industry Association (Dianyingjie gongzuoren xiehui) and China Film Industry Rescue Association (Zhongguo dianying jie jiuwang xiehui) were formed in the midst of rising anti-Japanese fervor, but the GMD and its government decided to take a line of compromise and appeasement towards Japan, "adopting policies not supportive of the anti-war film movement promoted by patriotic film makers," and "responding passively to requests for the opening of anti-war operations from film companies and patriotic film makers."¹⁰³ However, according to the GMD Historical Archives, the Party's PR Section did respond with a blueprint proposing "Rules for Regulating the Film Industry in Wartime," put before the 50th Meeting of the 5th Term Central Executive Council's Standing Committee, resulting in small scale, decentralized efforts to subsidize failing private film studios and absorb talented technical personnel.¹⁰⁴

According to the blueprint, the above-mentioned "requests from patriotic film makers" involved a petition filed by the Shanghai Guild for centralized jurisdiction over film operations and a monthly allotment of 15,000 *yuan* for personnel and equipment.¹⁰⁵ In response to the petition, the PR Section put together a plan for a unified regulatory agency. Its reasoning was that although "motion pictures are superior to print propaganda in breadth of dissemination," Central Studios would not be able to handle a long war of resistance in terms of either staff or facilities, not to mention the fact that the Shanghai film industry could no longer lend any support while under attack and occupation.

¹⁰³ Cheng Jihua, *Zhongguo dianying fazhan shi*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ GMD Historical Archives 5.3-50.14.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

There were also reports that “the enemy is preparing to invest five million *yuan* to control the motion picture industry in Manchuria under its puppet government,” and “we cannot stand idly by and watch.”¹⁰⁶ The blueprint proposed that Central Studios and the precursor of China Film Productions form a joint agency by a merger of the Shanghai production companies to be funded and supervised by a specially organized executive committee, with daily operations put under a Motion Pictures Affairs Division (of the PR Section). However, due to the results of the battle for Shanghai, the merger plan was abandoned, and Supplementary Rules for Wartime Film Projects were adopted instead.¹⁰⁷

A survey of the situation in the Shanghai movie industry prior to the War led to a proposal that it be funded to produce on a monthly basis two feature length films at a cost of 8000 *yuan* a piece and five short subjects at 3000 *yuan* per film on “subjects pertaining to the war of resistance.” Chinese troops had already fled Shanghai in November, but the PR Section report of January 1939 indicates that the above funding was implemented to the tune of 10,000 *yuan* to Star Pictures and 4000 *yuan* each to Minxin (Minxin yingye gong si) and Hua’an (Hua’ an yingye gongsi) Film Companies over a one-year period.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the Film Industry Employees Relief Act provided employment at Central Studios for skilled technicians who had lost their jobs due to the War.

The actual existence of the plan to unify the film industry and its regulation on both additive and subtractive levels through an agreement between the private sector in Shanghai and the central PR Section is not only interesting in view of the research to date, but at the

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ GMD Historical Archives 5.3-57.11, 9 Oct. 1937.

¹⁰⁸ GMD Historical Archives 5.2-34.14. The GMD archives also state that in the case of Yihua Film Production, one of its managers, Yan Chuntang, was refused to be subsidized, because it was “aiding and abetting the enemy,” which implies some connection to the Chahuanü Incident, in which a Japanese army-financed, Chinese-produced film was shown in Japan under the guise of it being a domestic, private production. See Misawa Mamie, “Shokuminchi ki Taiwan jin niyuru eiga katsudō nokiseki: Kōshō to ekkyō no poritikusu” [Tracing Motion Picture Activities in Colonial Taiwan: International Politics and Diplomacy], Chap. 2, Sec. 6, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tokyo, January 2006.

same time, indicates that the plan was initiated by a petition from the film makers in Shanghai and then accepted by the GMD, which drafted a blueprint for implementation. Such circumstances reveals how the threat of all out war with Japan enabled efforts to go forward with national integration and strengthen state presence via an agreement between the GMD and private film makers that would have been impossible to negotiate under the prewar Nanjing regime. Moreover, as the motion picture genre lost its free market, competitive posture as a mass entertainment industry under wartime conditions, both individual filmmakers and major studios alike saw no other recourse than to approach the powers that be and offer them the huge amount of facilities, personnel and know-how needed to make anti-war, anti-Japanese resistance propaganda films.

Conclusion

The analytical framework of this paper has rested on two axes--one representing the domestic and universal (borderless) mass appeal of the motion picture, the other additive and subtractive efforts to regulate them in time of war--in an attempt to overcome the tendency in the conventional research to analytically separate subtractive regulation based on censorship and suppression from additive regulation through propaganda and indoctrination, by arguing that these methods form two sides of the same coin. As the analysis centered around Table 1 has pointed out, the censorship (subtractive) system implemented in China before the War was thrown into confusion due to the loss of northern and central China to the Japanese and such internal problems as the refusal to recognize orders issued by GMD censors, resulting in the system ceasing to function in practice. However, rather than totally abandoning negative methods, additive measures were put in place to function indirectly as censorship. In other words, the Nanjing government's efforts to "guide" the industry was backed up with threats to cut film if filmmakers refused to comply. Here we have a concrete example of how additive and subtractive motion picture regulation measures form both sides of one coin.

Upon the opening of all out hostilities, additive regulatory measures continued to be promoted, even during the early phase of the

War. Although the shipment and development of newsreels shot required a few days to complete, they were very speedily expedited to utilize movie theatre screens in positively indoctrinating the masses, both literate and not. Motion pictures implementing indoctrination from and of outsiders were utilized in seeking aid from potential foreign allies, mainly the United States. These distribution and screening activities were newly organized into a wartime network in response to the breakdown of the existing commercial network. Another aspect of additive regulation was the role played by New Life Films, a joint venture in British-owned Hong Kong financed in part by the GMD and commissioned to produce films for indoctrinating Chinese communities overseas unencumbered by GMD party ideology.

Despite the consolidated efforts by the GMD's intelligence, military and educational sectors to implement additive regulatory measures, there is the view that China's propaganda campaign "was tired, unenthusiastic and consequently ineffective... It is a severe indictment made by Chinese critics, and any attempt to compare propaganda to public attitudes will make that clear."¹⁰⁹ Evaluating the effectiveness of film regulation remains one issue for further study. Also uncovered here is a plan during the early phase of the War to consolidate all regulatory measures, both additive and subtractive, into a single system, which required cooperation between the GMD and private filmmakers. This proposal reflects not only wartime market conditions, involving the loss of free trade and competition in the film industry, but also the each intent of the GMD and the CCP, which was formed immediately after the War, to exercise unitary control over film production, distribution and screening.

To put it as simply as possible, film regulation in China during its second war with Japan went through a transition from dysfunctional subtractive censorship to additive efforts at guidance and direct production, in part as an indirect substitute to censorship, but also actively utilizing the mass and universal appeal of motion pictures in the anti-war propaganda effort.

¹⁰⁹ "Memorandum on China Nov.13, 1942," NARA at College Park Archive RG226, OSS Central File, Entry 92, Box159, Folder18.