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Traitors in Limbo: Chinese Trials of White Russian Spies, 1937–1948

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Abstract

Following the October Revolution, tens of thousands of White Russians sought refuge in China and became inevitably involved in the escalating Sino-Japanese War (1931–1945). The Japanese deployed measures of coercion, material incentives, and ideological indoctrination to recruit White Russians for Japan's military and political maneuvers in the China theater of WWII. With the conclusion of the war, the Chinese Nationalist government launched a legal campaign against all collaborators with Japan and labeled them *hanjian*, “traitors to the Han Chinese,” regardless of the race and nationality of the defendants. Based on archival materials in Chinese, English, Japanese, and Russian, this article examines the context and process of the incrimination of White Russians in China's postwar trials of traitors. With no consular support and little diplomatic significance, the White Russians became the ideal foreigners for the Chinese government to exercise its newly recovered judicial sovereignty and to claim its legitimacy in administering justice related to war crimes. Dozens of White Russians were convicted of the crime of *hanjian* and sentenced to prison terms of varied lengths.

Keywords: White Russians; Sino-Japanese War; collaborators; refugees; war crime trials

On March 23, 1947, a piece of breaking news, “White Russian Informant Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison,” captivated Shanghai's public (*Shenbao*, March 23, 1947). Behind the headline was a story of betrayal and revenge that unfolded during the Sino-Japanese War (1931–1945), what the Chinese bitterly remembered as the “War of Resistance against Japan.” The hero and victim of this story was a Chinese businessman and secret agent, Chen Sancai. With degrees from top universities in China and the United States, Chen was a trained electrical engineer, successful businessman, and Chair of the Qinghua University Alumni Association. In 1940, Chen made a plan to assassinate Wang Jingwei, China's primary “traitor,” who chaired the Japan-sponsored national collaborationist regime. Chen enlisted Serge L. Tautz, a White Russian, to facilitate him in his patriotic act. Serge demanded generous compensation for this extremely risky operation, and when rejected, sold Chen out to Wang Jingwei's intelligence. Chen was brutally tortured and executed. When China cheered for its hard-earned victory in 1945, the Qinghua alumni made a strong plea for avenging Chen Sancai. The subsequent investigation found Tautz guilty of treason and “collaboration with the enemy,” for which he was sentenced to imprisonment for fifteen years.

The case of Serge Tautz was but one of many treason cases involving White Russians handled by Chinese courts in the aftermath of the Second World War. Treason in wartime and postwar China was formulated as the crime of “*hanjian*”, the gravest criminal offense of the land since the outbreak of the war. All those who collaborated with the Japanese on various terms and occasions were labeled *hanjian*, literally “traitors to the Han Chinese” (Xia 2017). The term seemed to indicate ethnic-specific applicability of the crime, that one should be of Han, the majority ethnicity in China,

to be considered *hanjian*. In practice, however, foreign citizens and stateless persons, not to mention non-Han Chinese, were also put through legal and extralegal punishment if accused of the crime. Among these unfortunate souls, White Russians constituted the most conspicuous group, both for their frequent involvement in wartime intelligence and for their status as unrepresented, unprotected foreigners in China.

Based on archival materials in Chinese, English, Japanese, and Russian, this article examines the context and process of the incrimination of White Russians in China's postwar trials of war criminals and traitors. In the China theater of WWII, foreign nationals with diverse backgrounds and political allegiances entered into the dangerous waters of intelligence and espionage, seeking political capital, profit, fame, promotion, or simply a livelihood (Wasserstein 1999). Numerous White Russians, for ideological or materialistic incentives, worked for the Japanese or its allies in various positions. Those who survived till the end of the war were subject to vigorous investigation and punishment by Chinese judicial and military authorities. Many were found guilty and served time in Chinese detention facilities.

White Russians became the perfect foreigners for China to exercise its newly gained judicial sovereignty and to reinforce its legitimacy as a major Allied power. As the Allies held International Tribunals for principal war criminals, the Chinese government conducted national trials of collaborators and war criminals to consolidate its image as a resistance state, a sovereign country, and a nation among the world's powers on the side of justice. The inclusion of foreign nationals in this legal campaign was an important component, as for the first time since the Opium Wars (1840–42), Chinese courts could punish foreigners who violated Chinese laws with full authority.¹ The incrimination of foreigners, however, often had diplomatic and political consequences too great to make it worthwhile. The *hanjian* trial of M. George Emelianoff, a French citizen of Russian descent, triggered an endless exchange of incensed messages and negotiations between the French and Chinese.² By comparison, White Russians were the most trouble-free foreign defendants, as a people of no homeland and with no consular support. As long as they had not claimed Soviet citizenship before their arrest, the Chinese judiciary met with little foreign intervention in handling the cases of White Russians.

The stories of White Russians occupied little space in mainstream English or Chinese scholarship on the Second World War, for they seemed to matter little to major battles, turning points, or crucial incidents. In the China theater, Western newspapers and the Chinese public assumed the affinity of White Russians to the Japanese, but even the Japanese seldom entrusted them with positions higher than informants or foot soldiers. The work of Wasserstein (1999), Kitado (2015), and Ristaino (2001) has shaped our understanding of the White Russian communities in Shanghai and the work of a few exceptionally savvy and resourceful White Russians spies. The Chinese historian Wang Zhicheng (1993) and Russian scholar Kirill Chashchin (2014, 2017) have done extensive research on the history of Russian emigrants, Russian genealogy in China, and their participation in Shanghai's local and international society. Still, we know little about the wartime activities of average White Russians and what befell them once the war was over. For this group of stateless refugees, hardships continued and even worsened in postwar China, with the Nationalist government's differential treatment of foreigners with problematic wartime conduct. Some paid heavy prices for their active or circumstantial collaboration with the Japanese.

White Russians in China

The term "White Russian" is loaded with political and ideological implications. It primarily refers to Russians who escaped the Bolshevik rule following the October Revolution of 1917. Many of them belonged to the governing classes of the empire, the destined enemies of the "Reds," while others came from lower walks of life. Russians who were already residing in other countries were also deemed White Russians as long as they chose not to return and did not declare Soviet citizenship after the consolidation of the Soviet rule (Craw 1968, 3). In general, therefore, White Russians were

either against or non-sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, but they were not necessarily deeply attached to the Czarist past. In the case of Alexander A. Purin that will be discussed later, he was described as not definitively anti-Communist; rather, he pondered on which side to join when he later had the opportunities to choose (Pustovit 2013). Many White Russians shared such political undecidedness, which explained their wavering loyalty to either party engaged in the war.

Russians became a unique foreign presence in China following World War I, for their large numbers, their inherent division and their lack of privileges compared to other foreigners. Russians began to enter Manchuria in 1898 due to the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). Between 1917 and 1923, about 150,000 Russians emigrated to China, joining the 51,310 already there (Craw 1968). As a result of Japan's invasion of Manchuria and mistreatment of Russians there, many left Harbin for other Chinese cities or other countries (Moustafine 2013, 176). Still, in 1939, there were 95,000 Russians in the whole of China, among which 20,000 lived in Shanghai (Schaufuss 1939). Anatol M. Kotenev, a White Russian who became the British Colonial Service Officer, described his countrymen as playing a conspicuous role in every foreign administered municipality and every branch of commerce or industry in China. The French Concession in Shanghai, despite its name, "has virtually become a Russian town with Russian churches, schools, shops, restaurants, clubs and a powerful press" (Kotenev 1934, 563). The 2,342 French civilians there in 1936 was vastly outnumbered by the 11,628 Russians (Wasserstein 1999, 19). The same can be said about the International Settlement in Shanghai, another colonial enclave ruled by an elected body largely representing Anglo-American interest.

The relatively large population of the Russians, however, did not bring about a strong and collegial community. In major cities of China, Russian newspapers and organizations showed a clear ideological divide. In Shanghai, for instance, Soviet Russians joined the "Soviet Emigrants Association," whereas those unwilling to claim Soviet citizenship chose the "Russian Emigrants Committee" (*Shenbao*, August 19, 1946). In their detailed reports on Russians, the Japanese categorized Russians in every Chinese city into Whites and Reds (including Bolshevik Sympathizers), as they had separate churches, schools, leadership figures, propaganda organs and even living quarters.³ On the other hand, one should not consider political inclination a definite determining factor, as many compromised their original positions due to changing circumstances of war.

White Russians were the only stateless refugees until the arrival of European Jews following the Kristallnacht, yet socioeconomically they were worse off than the Jews. Jewish businessmen such as Victor Sassoon and the Kadooris were among the most wealthy and respected foreigners in Shanghai, and their leadership boosted the social standing of the Jewish community. White Russians, however, barely ranked any higher than skilled Chinese in the multi-racial colonial cities in China. Though a portion of the Russians émigré belonged to the educated elite of the former empire, their cultural capital did not translate into income and recognition in the commercial and industrial world of China that spoke mainly English and Chinese. More important, China denied White Russians' extraterritorial privileges accorded to other Europeans and Americans in China, which exposed them "to the whims of every warlord and petty official" (Stephan 1978, 9).

In Chinese and English reports alike, White Russians were often associated with prostitution, robbery, alcohol addiction, and later, espionage. The Chinese residents of Shanghai considered most White Russians "without a normal job," and some were "dressed like gentlemen" but "relied on theft for a living" (Ke Luo 1946). Indeed, low employment rates were reported among White Russians throughout their sojourning years in China. According to a survey by *Shenbao* in 1923, less than one third of the Russian residents of Shanghai had jobs, and those who were gainfully employed (lawyers, dentists, and company employees) were even fewer (*Shenbao*, Nov. 15, 1923). Driven by poverty and emotional isolation, quite a few White Russians chose to end their lives in the 1920s and 1930s (Wang 1993, 312–314).

For those who managed to find work, their jobs were most likely neither well-paid nor reputable. Russian men usually worked as doormen, waiters, musicians, brokers, and chefs, putting them at a

position of service and entertainment for other foreigners and well-to-do Chinese. Some served wealthy Chinese families as bodyguards, while others found employment in the armies of notorious Chinese warlords as mercenaries.⁴ A highly desirable option was to enter the White Russian Mercenary Volunteer Corps for the Shanghai Municipal Council. With British uniforms and a duty to “protect” the International Settlement from the Chinese, however, the Russian Volunteer Corps aroused much controversy among Chinese and liberal-minded foreigners (*CWR*, Sept. 15, 1928). There were also White Russians who “looked forward to the good fortune of a strike by Chinese workers,” as then they would be employed as strike-breakers by foreign-owned public utilities and businesses (Craw 1968, 38).

What was most disturbing for international observers was the fate of émigré women in the Far East. Reportedly 22.5% of Russian girls and women between the ages of sixteen and forty-five years were involved in prostitution (*CWR*, March 15, 1935). Russian women filled Shanghai’s dance clubs, bars, and cabarets, making a monthly salary between 15 to 100 yuan, which was hardly enough to support oneself. These women induced both pity and contempt for “sinking into a condition of moral degradation and economic misery which will disgrace Western Civilization” (Schaufuss 1939, 53). Some were not directly involved in prostitution but had a reputation for being “camp-followers of the armed forces” (Wasserstein 1999, 93), which easily aroused suspicion of collaboration. Tamara Kokoshkina came to Shanghai from Harbin in 1940, and soon moved in with an Italian sailor. With the sailor’s departure from Shanghai, Kokoshkina became a waitress at a Russian restaurant, Tetia Pasha. In September 1945, she became romantically involved with an American soldier, Tory F. Morato. She was arrested in November 1946 for providing intelligence information for Axis powers, primarily Japan but also Italy. The Shanghai High Court eventually acquitted her, but her past relationships and the fact that she lived in a hotel with a Japanese female spy next door led to speculations of espionage and a formal charge.⁵

White Russian Spies in the China Theater

The China theatre did not feature into serious strategic considerations of European or American leaders until the outbreak of the Pacific War, by which point the Chinese had been resisting Japan for almost a decade. Japan’s systematic encroachment on Chinese territories started with Manchuria, which had fallen under complete Japanese control by 1932. The subsequent plan of a quick conquest of China, however, stumbled on the hard resistance of the Chinese. The Battle of Shanghai in 1937 lasted for three bloody months and shocked the Japanese with greater casualties than it could bear in one battle. Though by 1938 the Japanese eventually occupied Shanghai (except for the International Settlement and the French Concession), Nanjing, and much of China’s East Coast, they were also increasingly overwhelmed by a total war with China and practical challenges of governing vast occupied territories. The Japanese turned a sizeable Chinese elite in occupied regions into collaborators and recruited whoever was in need of employment or pocket money to staff their gigantic war machine.

The Chinese resistance forces, organized by a United Front between the Nationalist Party and Communist Party, were thus faced with enemies from outside and within. To facilitate warfront efforts, the central government under Chiang Kai-shek responded with a nationwide campaign against *hanjian*, a term more condemning than the French equivalent, *collaborateur* (Sartre 1945, 14–17). The government issued *The Regulations on Punishing Hanjian* (1937, revised in 1938), which defined the crime by specific conduct ranging from plotting against the nation to signaling for Japanese bomber planes (Xia 2017, Appendix A). The Regulations became the legal basis for prosecuting *hanjian* suspects in the postwar period, White Russians included. In the heyday of the war, however, these laws gave sanction to Chinese armed forces to dispose of *hanjian* suspects in arbitrary and violent ways (Xia 2017, 187–189).

Due to lack of resources and manpower, the Nationalist state mobilized the common people into local surveillance units against infiltration of *hanjian* and spies. Resistance news venues released

chilling reports on the “exposure and elimination of *hanjian* spies” to warn other traitors or traitors-to-be, and to boost morale at a time when resistance forces were not gaining advantage in the warfront (Bing Ying 1938). Chinese guerilla forces were particularly active along rail lines to prevent activities of espionage and sabotage. The Nationalist government claimed in late 1937 that in the past several months, it had executed more than two hundred *hanjian* spies along the Beijing–Shanghai and Hangzhou–Ningbo railways alone, including quite a few White Russians. In a single operation, the local garrison forces arrested five White Russians carrying maps, telescopes, guns, and ammunition. They confessed that they were hired by the Japanese to spy on Chinese defense mechanisms. Following a brief interrogation, all five were shot to death on the ground (Bing Ying 8).

Similar incidents happened elsewhere, for “White Russians spies” frequently appeared on resistance propaganda and warfront news. In 1937, the Shantou police arrested three White Russians who drove around recording locations of government offices and local garrison forces. In the subsequent investigation, the police discovered that these Russians had driven to Shantou from Guangzhou and drawn maps of cities and towns they passed on the way (*Xianbing Zazhi*, 1937, 14). Incidents like this confirmed the long-held suspicion of Russians among the Chinese populace. As an editorial stated in *Su’e Pinglun* (Soviet Review), “White Russians do more harm to China than other stateless people,” and “we need to deal with them carefully as they were easily turned into pawns by imperialist powers” (Han Wen 1932).

White Russians, stuck in a political limbo and economic destitution, were indeed ideal targets for the Japanese to recruit as informants and foot soldiers. Actually, White Russians had been an integral part of Japan’s empire-building blueprint before they even arrived in China. The “Northern Expansion” faction within the Japanese military considered Manchuria and Siberia key to Japan’s national interest, and pushed for Japan’s systematic advancement in these areas. Japan saw opportunities in the political upheavals in Russia and participated in the Siberia Intervention in 1918 to contain the Red army (Samuels 2008, 17). In the defeated and stateless White generals and Cossacks, the Japanese found new uses. They provided for anti-Bolshevik military figures, including the notorious general Ataman Semenov, for assistance in mobilizing and indoctrinating Russians on exile. In exchange, the Japanese promised them leadership in a future “Baika-kuo” that would incorporate all of Siberia up to Lake Baikal under Japanese supervision if not direct control.⁶

The Japanese used a combination of coercion, indoctrination, and remuneration to turn White Russians to their side. In Manchuria, between 1932 and 1945 the Japanese military controlled all the activities of the whiteguard organization, the “Russian Fascist Union,” founded by K.V. Rodzaevsky. With Japanese support, the RFU branched out in major enclaves of Russian émigré for anti-Soviet and pro-Japanese causes. In north China, the Japanese also relied on the Russian Central Anti-Communist Committee to instill pro-Japanese ideologies in the Russian communities and to punish those who did not give in to Japanese demands. This organization had main offices in Tianjin, Qingdao, Yantai, and Zhangjiakou. In 1939 the Japanese established the Far Eastern Institute in Tianjin to train selected Russian youths to be Japanese interpreters and liaison men for the Anti-Communist Committee.⁷ In Qingdao, another center for White Russian émigré, the Japanese mobilized all White Russian males between the ages of seventeen and fifty into corps, indoctrinating them with weekly drills, lectures, and a promise to gain back the Russian homeland (CWR April 22, 1939).

White Russians from lower social strata were easily turned into foot soldiers for the Japanese. There were about one thousand White Russian idlers spread in the former German and Russian settlements of Tianjin, and only a fraction of them had part-time jobs as musicians and chefs. The rest struggled to live on stealing, begging, and burglary. The Tianjin Municipal government was particularly concerned with a theft gang of approximately three hundred White Russians and conducted an operation in March 1937 to force misbehaved stateless persons out of the city. The Soviet Consulate in Tianjin supported such a purge of White Russians, while the Japanese military stationed in Tianjin took these outcasts under their wing. With expedited training, the three hundred were sent off to the Beijing–Tianjin and Beijing–Wuhan railways for sabotage (*Shenbao*,

June 1937). Seen from multiple cases, the Japanese paid low-level informants and agents about 50–200 yuan a month, which was more than what a White Russian bodyguard made in Shanghai (50–100 yuan) (Wang 1993, 315–316).

While the White Russian communities in north China had largely fallen under Japanese control, Shanghai remained the last resort relatively free of intervention and coercion, at least until December 1941. The Russian population largely resided in foreign concessions, where the Japanese had little influence prior to the outbreak of Pacific War. The RFU was never successful in gaining much support in Shanghai, where “the Russian colony was more cosmopolitan and less obsessed with counterrevolution” than that in Harbin (Stephan 1978, 155). Japanese military in Shanghai thus attempted to control the Russian Emigrants Committee, which represented the collective interest as well as political leaning of the White Russians in the absence of a recognized consulate. The REC was established in 1926 by Viktor Fedorovich Grosse, the former Imperial Consul General in Shanghai. His successor, Charles E. Metzler, agreed to work with the Japanese but no to the extent they had expected. Metzler was murdered by assassins hired by Japanese authorities (Wasserstein 1999, 86). The next chairman, Nikolai A. Ivanoff, whose election was approved by the Japanese, did not fare any better. He too became a murder victim of wartime terrorism most possibly directed by the Japanese (Ristaino 2000, 196–200).

The Japanese military never succeeded in converting the whole White Russian community in any major Chinese city, not even in north China. Into the 1930s, English newspapers increasingly categorized Russians in China into anti-Japanese, pro-Soviet, and pro-Japanese, anti-Soviet, which essentially assumed all White Russians were pro-Japanese. Such a dichotomization overlooked the fact that for most White Russians, the intactness of their homeland still preceded its ideological character, and they did not expect the Japanese to have Russia’s best interest in mind. On the eve of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese mobilized all White Russians in north China with the purpose of forcing them to fight the Soviet Union. This caused wide opposition among the Russians, who did not want to see their motherland invaded by the Nazis despite their hatred of Stalin (*North China Herald*, Oct.1, 1941). Russians in Shanghai were more difficult to tame. In June 1939, the Japanese authorities forced all White Russian organizations to register for more convenient control. Many organizations, including the Union of Russian Military Veterans and White Russian Chamber of Commerce, terminated their activities as a silent protest (*China Press*, June 15, 1939).

As the rivalry among the Japanese, Western powers, and Chinese underground forces intensified, Shanghai evolved into a main intelligence marketplace (Wasserstein 1999, 25). Information brokers of different nationalities sold their sources to the highest bidder. Among them was the notorious Russian spy Evgeny Mihailovich Kojevnikoff, who was better known as “Captain” Eugene Pick, or Hovans, and several other aliases. A former Soviet advisor for the Nationalist Party, Hovans became an information broker around 1927 and selectively fed information to the intelligence services of Britain, China, the United States, and Japan. When the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Japan took control of the whole of Shanghai and paid to monopolize Hovans’ services and contacts. Hovans organized an extensive spy network for catching any clandestine activities against Japan. He became the only foreigner directly connected with the Japanese Naval Office and the most trusted Russian of the Japanese in Shanghai (Kitado 2015, 144). Judging from his colorful intelligence career, however, Hovans’ fidelity was not with a particular nation or ideology; rather, he capitalized on the war situation for personal gains.

Wartime Shanghai saw the absorption of the worst elements of the Russian community into intelligence organs and operations. Serge Tautz had been listed as a foreign criminal by the French Police in Shanghai.⁸ Vladimir Tatischeff, a former Imperial Officer of Russia and a self-claimed Count, had been imprisoned multiple times for fraud and illegal currency transactions before becoming an informant for the Japanese. He was known as the “No. 1 Con-Artist in Shanghai.”⁹ Several underlings of Hovans, including Tatischeff, brought to their new business the old habits of extortion, black-marketeering, kidnapping, and blackmailing. Some were hired by torture facilities affiliated with Japanese and puppet intelligence offices for interrogation. The wartime conduct of

the Russian riffraff reinforced negative stereotypes about White Russians, and solicited the worst assumption about the harms they were capable of doing to the Chinese nation and its people.

Punishment of White Russian Hanjian

The Chinese campaigns against traitors went through two phases. During wartime, given the high stakes of infiltration by the enemy and suspension of the justice system, the Chinese resistance forces disposed of collaborators and spies with summary interrogation and execution. With the conclusion of the war, *hanjian* and war criminals could no longer pose real threat to the nation and its people. The Chinese Nationalist government, having recently gained full judicial sovereignty, put traitors on trial in alignment with similar trials adjudged by other Allied nations (Zanasi 2008). Between the Japanese surrender in late 1945 and defeat of the Nationalists in mainland China in 1949, the Nationalist judiciary prosecuted more than 30,000 individuals for the *hanjian* crime. Among them were hundreds of foreign citizens and stateless persons. A Chinese reader of the *China Weekly Review* commented that this was “certainly the cruelest legal sanction every recorded in modern Chinese history,” and that this legal purge made “the greatest number of people involved in a single crime unprecedented since the establishment of the Chinese Republic” (CWR, Aug. 14, 1948).

This study focuses on White Russians charged with the *hanjian* crime in Shanghai, a location of intensive espionage activities during wartime and systematic campaigns against *hanjian* in the postwar era. The well-documented cases preserved at the Shanghai Municipal Archives, more than forty in number, shed important light on the choices and fates of White Russians. Moreover, the rich reservoir of Chinese and English newspapers based in Shanghai filled in important details for many cases, in addition to revealing their social reception. The prosecution of White Russians certainly took place elsewhere, with the Hebei Advanced Court in Tianjin handling most of such cases in north China. The White Russian merchant U.C. Sosnin, for instance, was found guilty of the *hanjian* crime in Tianjin and sentenced to five-year imprisonment (CWR, September 21, 1946).

The investigation and legal proceedings of *hanjian* cases failed to restore justice for a variety of factors. The Nationalist bureaucracy, judicial organs included, had hardly resumed full function in previously occupied areas while handling these cases. Due to the confidential nature of criminal facts and evidence involved, the courts usually relied on intelligence offices and the military for information and assistance. In Shanghai and surrounding areas, the Woosung-Shanghai Garrison Headquarters were responsible for arrests and initial interrogation of foreign *hanjian* suspects. If the Headquarters decided that the cases were worth pursuing, they then transferred the cases to the Procurator’s Office of the Shanghai High Court for further investigation and trial.

The administration of justice in these cases, therefore, involved both wartime military/intelligence organs and a much-impaired civil justice system. The Nationalist government had intended to transfer the judicial authority from the former to the latter, but a multiplicity of problems emerged in this process and severely affected the outcome. To begin with, the Garrison Headquarters made arrests based on their own brief investigation or information provided by another party, such as the Ministry of National Defense. In many cases, private parties sent letters of accusation to the Garrison Headquarters. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek called for the common people to expose *hanjian* that they knew of, so Chinese and foreign residents alike responded for varied motivations. Chiang also allowed anonymous accusations in order to prevent possible revenge by the accused. Some accusations had solid ground, but others were based on speculation and hearsay, or out of personal grudge. Some, even without malicious intention, might place the blame on the wrong person. Kokoshkina, who endured more than one year of interrogation and detention, was rehabilitated by the Shanghai High Court in a retrial. The local police discovered that Kokoshkina was mistaken for another White Russian woman who had lived with a Japanese and possibly worked for the Japanese intelligence. The said woman married an American in 1945 and left Shanghai soon after.

Secondly, the Garrison forces usually made arrests and searched houses of defendants without warrants. This happened to Frederic Mysberg, a Dutch citizen and employee of an American-owned company charged with the crime of disturbing the postwar financial market (*Shenbao*, March 4, 1947). Mysberg was further refused bail despite the intervention of the Netherland Consulate and intensive criticisms launched by English newspapers in China (*CWR*, April 5, 1947). Foreign powers had just given up extraterritorial rights in China partly as a reward for holding its ground against Japan, while the temporary mutual appreciation between China and the powers could easily be overshadowed by the old colonial hierarchy and conventions. At this juncture, the Mysberg incident refreshed Western powers' frustrations with Chinese legal system in the past, and cast doubt on China's capability of conducting serious legal reform (*CWR*, May 31, 1947). Stateless White Russians, without consular support and charged with the gravest crime in the nation, was way more vulnerable to abuse by arresting and interrogating authorities.

The way the Garrison forces treated those in custody brought back haunting memories of the war. Suspects were detained in the "Bridge House" on 478 North Sichuan Rd, the former interrogation center of the Japanese *kempeitai* (*CWR*, March 15, 1947). Like the Japanese, the Garrison Headquarters employed Caucasians for interrogation and physical intimidation. In the *hanjian* case of Carlos Jose da Silva, Laszlo Sebok, and Nakamura Remedios, all three, who were Portuguese citizens, received corporal punishment. Four Portuguese residents of Shanghai were called in to facilitate the investigation. At the Criminal Investigation Section of the Garrison Headquarters, they saw Silva being assaulted by four foreigners and one Chinese in service there:

... one foreigner, after confirming Silva's name, commenced immediately to strike and slap him in the face, then ordered Silva to remove his overcoat and jacket, and picking up a whip, struck him on the body and in the face until he was exhausted, then handed the whip to another foreigner, who whipped Silva until he was tired; Silva fell to the floor, crying for help. The two foreigners continued to whip him, and one kicked him on the chest. The Chinese whipped him and assaulted him as well. Then Silva was ordered to kneel in a corner of the room, then the witnesses left.¹⁰

Silva did not tell the High Court his torture experience until a year later in custody, fearing that he would receive the same treatment at the Procurator's Office. The procurators told him that the Court would never resort to torture, but for the defendants, the Chinese justice system might as well had lost all its credibility by that point. This was the most well documented use of torture in a foreign *hanjian* case, which resulted in the intervention of the Acting Consul-General for Portugal in Shanghai.¹¹ Torture appeared as an interrogation tactic in several cases of White Russian *hanjian*, who had no one behind their back.

The High Court, like the Garrison Headquarters, was either unable or unwilling to conduct thorough investigation. The High Court would repeatedly inquire the defendant and witnesses on both sides (if there were any) during court hearings, and rendered judgments based on testimonies, confessions and reports provided by the Garrison Headquarters. The Court did little actual investigation, and physical evidence in most cases were extremely limited. In this process, accuracy of translation became an important factor, yet insufficient language skills of interpreters often caused misunderstanding between the court and the defendants. Aware of the issue, some defendants used the language barrier as an excuse to overturn earlier confessions. Interpreters were also indispensable for evaluating physical evidence, especially if the defendant was involved in enemy propaganda. Alexander A. Purin, for instance, published numerous articles regarding the war and his home region, the strategically located Kamchatka. When he appealed for a retrial, a key point of dispute was whether or not his written work contained anything harmful to China. Testimony from the court's interpreter, Li Peikun, became vital in Purin's eventual acquittal.¹²

Beyond procedural and technical issues, the fundamental problem with the so-called foreign *hanjian* cases, as many defendants pointed out, was the applicability of the very crime

to non-Chinese citizens. Despite the ethnic connotations of the term *hanjian*, Chinese laws made the crime broad enough to incriminate anyone in China who had worked for the benefit of Japan or against the interest of China. The verdicts for all foreigners guilty of the crime cited Article 2.1 of the Regulations on Punishing *Hanjian*. Rather succinct in Chinese (“Tumou fankang benguo”), this article could be rendered as either “plotting against this country (China)” or “plotting against the home country.”¹³ The obscurity of the language made both Chinese citizens and non-citizens potential targets. Yoshiko Kawashima, the famous female spy, raised the issue of citizenship during her trial. A Manchu princess adopted into a Japanese family, she argued that she should be exempt from Chinese laws. The Chinese court rejected her argument on two accounts, that she could not prove her citizenship of a legitimate foreign nation, and that anyone who broke Chinese laws in China should be subject to the Chinese justice system. Kawashima was found guilty of the *hanjian* crime and executed in 1948 (*Shenbao*, March 8, 1947).

The citizenship status of individual White Russians was a constant variable in their own calculations and in their treatment by authorities under which they were placed. Back in the 1930s, many Russian émigré applied for Manchukuo citizenship to get jobs in the Japanese-controlled railways (*CWR*, March 23, 1935). Those who became citizens of Manchukuo, as Yoshiko Kawashima did, became stateless again after the collapse of the Japanese empire, since the Chinese government had never recognized Manchukuo-issued passports (“Ruyou Bai’eren Chi Manzhou-guo Suofa Huzhao” 1932, 50). Upon the conclusion of the war, Chinese authorities singled out several categories of foreigners who required special attention and careful handling: White Russians, Jews, German and Japanese civilians, Koreans, and Taiwanese. White Russians could regain Soviet citizenship, and if they did, they would be treated with greater discretion.¹⁴ In Shanghai, about 4000 White Russians took the opportunity to return to their homeland (*Shenbao*, August 19, 1946). A good number of White Russians had already left the country when the Chinese started to pursue *hanjian* suspects.

Among those whom the Chinese judiciary did catch, most were involved in enemy propaganda or intelligence. Core members of the Russian Emigrants Committee were vulnerable to the charge of collaboration because of the organization’s compliance with the Japanese. P. Vertoprakoff was in charge of passport issues for Russian emigrants from 1938 to 1945. He was arrested in 1946 primarily because he was sent by the Chair of the Committee, F. L. Gleboff, to visit the headquarters of Japanese military in Shanghai (778 Jing’ansi Road) several times. Vertoprakoff claimed that he was sent to listen to news broadcast regarding the ongoing war, as shortwave radios were not available elsewhere due to Japanese prohibition. The High Court found him guilty based on the premise that the Japanese military headquarters were heavily guarded and only their trusted ones were allowed entry. Vertoprakoff was sentenced to imprisonment for two and a half years, essentially for the assumption of affinity with the Japanese.¹⁵

Another member indicted was Vladimir I. Karpoff, an unsuccessful real estate broker who served as the private secretary for the Chair of the Russian Emigrants Committee, Nikolai A. Ivanoff, between October 1940 and July 1941. Karpoff claimed to be anti-Japanese as he once served in the army of Zhang Zuolin, a warlord of Manchuria whom the Japanese assassinated in order to control this region. Karpoff maintained that for his employment under Zhang, the Japanese ordered Ivanoff to fire him. The Chinese authorities found him working for Japanese intelligence and the puppet government in Nanjing. Karpoff was also suspected of helping the Japanese in the murders of Metzler and Ivanoff, accusations he found personally offensive. The Shanghai High Court charged him with violation of Article 2.1 of the Regulations on Punishing *Hanjian*, and he received three years imprisonment. At least for some activities of which he was found guilty, Karpoff was not innocent. Purin, during the investigation of his own case, confirmed that Karpoff was indeed working for Nanjing and even invited Purin to join his team. His testimonies were not cross-referenced in this case, either due to poor coordination among the Court’s staff or the confusion created by translation (Karpoff’s name had a different transliteration in Chinese in Purin’s case file).

The indictment of Karpoff and Vertoprakoff notwithstanding, membership in the Committee alone did not constitute the *hanjian* crime. M. Yakovkin, for instance, served as the secretary for the Committee during the tenure of Metzler, Ivanoff and Gleboff, and was active between 1941 and 1945 when the Committee was placed under tight Japanese control. He was summoned as a witness in several cases involving other members of the Committee but was never in trouble himself. In this regard, the Chinese authorities were more lenient towards White Russians, as many Chinese were prosecuted for membership in pro-Japanese organizations. Seen from all cases involving White Russians, the Chinese acted upon accusations launched by private persons, mostly by fellow White Russians, rather than a plan of systematic purge of the Committee's members or other White Russian groups for acquiescence of the Japanese rule.

In the case of Peter Unterberger, the issue of nationality became a key item of debate between the prosecution and the defense. In February 1946, Peter Unterberger, a Russian who became a naturalized German subject, was arrested by the Woosung-Shanghai Garrison headquarters. A month later, *Shenbao* revealed some key details about this case when it was still under investigation. Peter allegedly was a Nazi military commentator in the German Radio Station XGRS directly controlled by the Fifth Column. In addition, as a structural engineer, Peter was said to have advised the Japanese in constructing military defenses around Shanghai (*Shenbao*, March 16, 1946). In an appeal letter to the Shanghai High Court, Peter's wife acknowledged her husband's employment at XGRS as a means to provide for the family, but strongly rejected the accusation of him aiding the Japanese in any ways.¹⁶

Subsequent investigation by the Shanghai High Court and other sources painted a fuller picture of Unterberger's life, one that was highly fluid yet constantly circumscribed by financial restraints and his ideological inclinations. In 1916-1917, Peter fought in the ranks of the Russian Expeditionary Force during the first World War. Following the October Revolution, he joined the French Army, and then the anti-Communist forces of Admiral Kolchak. In 1922, he came to Shanghai and served in the Public Works Department of the Shanghai Municipal Council until he reached the age of retirement. Unterberger was an outstanding engineer. During the Shanghai Incident in 1932, the Japanese troops tried to encroach on the territory of the International Settlement and unexpectedly came across the powerful circular fortifications erected by Peter Unterberger ("Unterberger Peter Pavlovich" 2019). The Japanese were forced to retreat.

This encounter might have been the source of speculation that Unterberger helped the Japanese with their military fortifications, which the Chinese investigators never confirmed.¹⁷ After retiring from the Shanghai Municipal Council, Unterberger established an engineering firm but did not make enough money to support his family. He then accepted the job of translating and broadcasting for XGRS, where he worked between January 1944 and May 1945. The Shanghai High Court found him guilty of the *hanjian* crime after it first established Unterberger's Russian citizenship based on Chinese law:

"The defendant is Russian, which has been confirmed by the Russian Emigrants Committee in Shanghai. Though he claims to have become a naturalized subject of Germany, he admits that he never officially renounced his Russian citizenship. Since relevant laws of the residing country should apply when a dispute arises over one's citizenship, Chinese citizenship laws should apply in this case. Accordingly, his Russian citizenship should still be acknowledged."¹⁸

Based on the premise of Unterberger's Russian citizenship, he "should claim allegiance to his own nation and the Allies." Instead, "he throws himself into the service of the enemy, providing military commentaries for the enemy radio station and engaging in wanton attacks of the Allied nations." In September 1946, Unterberger was sentenced to two-and-a-half-year imprisonment.¹⁹

Seen from the Allies' perspective, Unterberger's wartime activities were indeed suspicious. When he served in Russian and French armies, he specialized in defense infrastructure. He had never lived

in Germany, but suddenly decided to obtain German citizenship after living in Shanghai for at least a decade. Moreover, Mr. and Mrs. Unterberger gave drastically different accounts regarding when the defendant became German. The wife claimed that Unterberger acquired German citizenship in 1932, but Unterberger himself said it was in 1943 when he started to work for XGRS. In any case, Unterberger went to Korea in 1934 and lived there for several years, but it was not clear what he did there (“Unterberger Peter Pavlovich” 2019). By 1941 he was back to Shanghai. He admitted having met the head of the Gestapo, SS Hauptsturmführer Franz Huber, in Huber’s office, in addition to acquainting himself with three other Nazi intelligence agents. The radio station he worked for was affiliated to the German Consulate and had a clear anti-Allies mission. Unterberger did not deny that “if he was given the order, he would broadcast anti-Chongqing contents.”²⁰ The Chinese reasoned that since Unterberger was working for the benefit of the Axis powers, he fundamentally harmed the interest of China.

Peter Unterberger’s family history, which his Chinese prosecutors failed to investigate at the time, could shed some light on his interest in China and his mysterious wartime activities. Peter’s father, Pavel Fedorovich Unterberger, was a military engineer, Colonel of Russian Imperial Army, Governor of Primorsky (1888–1897), Governor-General of Amur Region (1905–1910), and a major advocate of strengthening Russian statehood in the Far East (Khisamutdinov 2006). Between 1875 and 1876, Unterberger the senior surveyed major cities and strategic points from northern Mongolia to Japan, passing Shanghai and Hong Kong on the way. The Unterbergers were of German descent. After the Russian Revolution, Pavel, his wife, and his daughter all went back to their German homeland. Peter took his wife to Shanghai instead, either out of personal interest in the region or for a confidential assignment which remained unknown. If Unterberger had worked in intelligence, he certainly did not make much money. He could not afford bail, and his wife worked as a housekeeper during his imprisonment. When the Central Trust of China sent people to confiscate the “illegally acquired property” at the Unterbergers’, they could not find anything of value. Unterberger was one of the few Russians who served full term for the *hanjian* crime. His brief biography can be found on the official website of Tsarskoye Selo, but his trial in China was not mentioned. He died at the age of 79 in Germany (“Unterberger Peter Pavlovich” 2019).

Like Unterberger, Alexander Antonovich Purin carried his imperial past to China, to which his continued attachment aroused suspicion. But Purin’s life had more twists and turns as his experiences with the Chinese and Soviet legal institutions would attest. Born in 1885 into a poor peasant family, Purin graduated from St. Petersburg Electrotechnical Institute and became a trained meteorologist. As he later told the Chinese procurators, he was a valued member of political and cultural elite in Kamchatka. From 1915 to 1918, he was in charge of the Kamchatka seismic meteorological station, a regular contributor to the local newspaper *Kamchatsky Listok*, and editor of the newspaper *Kamchatsky Vestnik*. As a prominent Kamchatka administrator and public figure, Purin stood at the origins of local government after the fall of the monarchy. In 1917, he was elected a member of the Regional Committee, then became its chairman. He was deeply involved in the Provisional Amur government in the Okhotsk-Kamchatka region, until its occupation by the Soviets in late 1922.

He was then forced out of Russia in November 1922 and did not come back until 1952 when he was deported from China via request of the Soviet Union. His life during the thirty years in between was deeply enmeshed in the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese rivalry, and intricate wartime intelligence network. He spent the first ten years of emigration in Qingdao, a coastal city of China and former German colony, where he resumed businesses in publishing, scientific research, and Siberian regionalism. He was a member of the Chinese Society of Meteorologists, a representative of the Council of Authorized Organizations of Autonomous Siberia, and an active member of the Bureau for Russian Emigrants. He was again a respected member of the local society. Purin later recalled that “I spoke at congresses with reports that were made in 1924–1926, and my articles came out in the Society’s publications in Chinese” (Pustovit 2013). The head of the Chinese Observatory treated him well, allowing him to “use the facilities and sometimes watch the sky through a telescope

in the evenings” (Pustovit 2013, citing from Purin’s testimony to the Ministry of State Security in 1952). Yet Purin put an end to this good life by moving to Shanghai in 1932 for reasons never revealed.

This proved a turning point that transformed his world view and his life. In his own testimony to Soviet authorities in 1952, Purin recalled his unpleasant experiences in Shanghai:

When in 1922 I legally came to emigrate to China and settled in Qingdao, I soon realized that the Chinese people were in a much worse position than us, the Baltic people in Tsarist times. . . . This circumstance pushed me closer to innocent Chinese people. Upon arrival in Shanghai in 1932, I saw all the oppression of foreigners over a Chinese person and was deeply outraged. As a journalist, I published a number of articles against foreign imperialism and the foreign colonial rule. . . . As a result, I was evicted from the French Concession of Shanghai on December 31, 1937, and I was forbidden to appear there again. The same attitude was shown by the authorities of the International Settlement. Not a single foreign company was willing to employ me, not even as a low-ranking security guard. (Pustovit 2013)

Purin’s sympathy for the Chinese people might have been genuine. Notwithstanding, his connections with Japan went all the way back to the old days, which got him in trouble with Chinese and Soviet authorities. Purin had been listed as a spy and counter-revolutionary in the early 1930s by Soviet State Security officers, who deemed him a heavy supporter of Kamchatka separatist movement and “one of the most important and capable Japanese agents.” According to the indictment in the case “Autonomous Kamchatka,” which resulted in more than one hundred death penalties, Purin “laid the foundation for the counter-revolutionary, rebel, spy, sabotage organization ‘Autonomous Kamchatka’ by partially relying on the anti-Soviet intelligentsia and officers who came to Kamchatka, under the direct and indirect leadership of the Japanese Consul in Petropavlovsk and the Japanese military” (Pustovit 2013).

Even Purin himself never tried to hide or deny his close relationship with Japan. In a letter addressed to a certain Moravian, Purin admitted the organizational role of the Japanese in Autonomous Kamchatka: “They brought weapons to fight the Communists . . . and if I needed any information from the mainland, I got it through the [Japanese] consulate” (Pustovit 2013). When interrogated by Chinese authorities, Purin candidly confessed that he stayed in touch with Japanese acquaintances whom he had met in Kamchatka, several of whom were assigned to the Japanese Consulate in Shanghai. He insisted that his collaboration with the Japanese had been cultural in nature, though such collaboration bore fruits of strategic importance. For instance, a historical geographic study about North Kamchatka which Purin co-authored with the Japanese Consul General came out in Japan.²¹ In 1941 and 1942, the intelligence agency affiliated with the Japanese consulate in Shanghai hired the unemployed Purin to translate German books on politics and economics. This became another incriminating fact from the perspective of the Chinese state.

Based on investigation conducted by the Woosung-Shanghai Garrison Headquarters and the Shanghai High Court, A. A. Purin was charged with the *hanjian* crime for the following activities:

1. He had always maintained a pro-Japanese stand and began to work for the Japanese intelligence in 1939, operating a network of White Russian spies in major Chinese cities.
2. He contributed frequently to the anti-Allies Russian magazine *Parvs* and was the chief editor of the pro-Japanese newspaper *Russian Voice*. On both venues he published articles and comments that was against the Allied nations.

Purin was found guilty of offenses listed in Article 2.1 of the Regulations on Punishing *Hanjian* and was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.

The Woo-Sung Garrison Headquarters collected abundant information on A.A. Purin, which mixed hearsay and speculation with truths that few would be able to differentiate at the time. The

report claimed that Purin was close to Sadao Araki, a notorious Japanese general and a major advocate of the “Northern Expansion Doctrine.” Purin denied it, and no other source confirms this piece of information. Yet the paths of Purin and Araki could have crossed between 1918 and 1919, when Sadao served as a Staff Officer in Vladivostok during the Japanese Siberia Intervention. Purin was also said to maintain an extensive spy network of contacts in major Chinese cities, including Harbin, Qingdao, Beijing, Tianjin, and Vladivostok.²² Out of the twelve White Russian figures that the Chinese investigators singled out, Purin personally knew six and heard of one. Among his six acquaintances were Igna Tenkoboris, who worked for the Japanese Gendarmerie in Shanghai and joined *Russian Voice* after Purin, as well as Vladimir I. Karpoff, who visited Purin with a Japanese officer and invited him to join their league.²³

That Purin worked for the benefits of the Japanese was undeniable. Other than the evidence provided above, in November 1938, his newspaper *Russian Voice* conjured a meeting of “representatives of Russian emigrants from Shanghai.” The goal was to prepare for the establishment of a more compliant organization for Russian emigrants than the current committee under Metzler (Wang 1993, 581). Though the plan did not come through, Purin showed his stand on the matter as the man behind *Russian Voice*. In the ways the Chinese defined the crime of treason, Purin had done enough to warrant a verdict of guilty. Purin completed his full sentence in Chinese prison and remained in Shanghai after his release, when China had become a communist country. The USSR requested his extradition in 1952, so he was arrested again, this time by the Department of Public Security of Shanghai. Back in his homeland, Purin was charged with multiple offenses against the USSR, including espionage, hostile propaganda, and participation in a counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet organization. Years of prison life and hardship had put Purin in terrible conditions. On the recommendation of doctors, interrogations were conducted no more than four hours a day.

To the Soviet authorities, Purin made the unexpected revelation that he had worked for Soviet intelligence since 1933. Purin confessed that his worldview started to change rapidly towards the USSR from reading Soviet magazines, newspapers, and books in Qingdao. Upon arrival in Shanghai in 1932, he met with his “old pre-revolutionary friend,” V.A. Pavlov. Pavlov was later identified by the Chinese as one link of Purin’s spy network, but he was actually a Soviet official who introduced Purin to other Soviet colleagues and converted Purin to their cause. Purin started to work secretly for what he now called his “motherland” since the beginning of 1933. Purin explained his secret mission and his commitment to it as follows:

“It was my patriotic impulse to aid the Soviet regime in its most difficult times. I needed to know everything that the Japanese militarists intended to do, and I learned from unofficial sources. For 18 years I’ve been leading a double life. . . . I was forced to remain silent about my secret mission for the USSR. All my work was confidential, and this was the key to its success. (Pustovit 2013)

In 1956, Moscow confirmed Purin’s statement. The Operational Department of KGB under the USSR Council of Ministers verified that Purin indeed cooperated with Soviet intelligence until communication was lost with him in 1942. As it was established subsequently, A. A. Purin simultaneously collaborated with Japanese, English, and American intelligence.²⁴ By then, Purin had been dead for four years.

If Purin switched sides at least partially on an ideological impulse, more White Russians made similar decisions mainly based on their evaluation of the changing war situation and calculations of risks and gains. Serge Ivovich Tautz, who sold out Chen Sancai to Wang Jingwei, was an opportunist who tried to get himself established by working for whichever party that would accept him. Serge came to Shanghai with his brother, Boris Tautz, and the two started to work for Chinese secret service in June 1937, as conflicts escalated between China and Japan. In the meanwhile, Serge occasionally volunteered information to the French authorities in the city. The Serge brothers had such bad reputation that both were listed as questionable characters/criminals by the Russian

Emigrants Committee. In 1940, Serge revealed Chen's assassination plan to Wang Jingwei's intelligence in secret, causing Chen's death and severe organizational loss of Chinese secret service in Shanghai. Serge continued to serve on Chinese intelligence and in 1944, he even joined its guerrilla force, the "Loyal and Righteous National Salvation Army." No one would know about the treacherous conduct of Serge Tautz if not for Chen's nephew, the only insider alive, who persistently sought for Chen's revenge. Serge Tautz received the exceptionally harsh punishment for a foreigner, fifteen-year imprisonment.²⁵

Conclusion

At the time of his arrest by Chinese authorities, Alexander Antonovich Purin was a man of no party affiliation, no citizenship, and no set occupation—typical for White Russians who fell into the Chinese legal web for catching traitors. Many White Russians had acted according to the changing situations of the war, switching sides or serving as double, even triple agents. When the war was still ongoing, loyalty was fluid, and many invested in different camps to minimize personal risk. With the conclusion of the war, trials of collaborators worked to dichotomize individuals into loyal and traitorous, according to what they had done to or for the Allies. The big fish, such as Hovans and Semenov, were in demand by the more powerful Allies both for information and revenge. The Americans requested Hovans from the Chinese, and the Soviets executed Semenov in 1946 (*CWR*, September 7, 1946). Those who lacked the means to leave China quickly enough and the significance for other powers to bother intervening became prisoners of the Chinese state.

The cases of White Russians added an unusual dimension to the postwar retribution against *hanjian*. In China and in Europe, among other occupied regions during WWII, collaborators met with legal punishment and communal castigation when resistance forces returned to rule (Deák 2013). The purge of traitorous elements from a national or ethnic community reinforced a narrative of the resistant majority, with which postwar governments could restore the once shaken moral and political foundations of their nations. On the one hand, a sense of "popular excitement" championed the punishment of traitors. On the other hand, some, including highly influential jurists such as Zhang Shizhao and Xu Shiying, proposed a general pardon for those who had committed the *hanjian* crime, which to them was clearly a political offense (*CWR*, Aug. 14, 1948).

The incrimination of the White Russians in China was apparently for different reasons. As stateless sojourners, average White Russians became collateral damage of the Sino-Japanese conflicts. Some capitalized on the war for their own benefit or the benefit of their homeland. The so-called betrayal of White Russians, in general, did little harm to China's morale or the resistance narrative. The Chinese public, like the Nationalist government, did not trust the White Russians, nor did they consider unredeemable what the White Russians had done during wartime. In 1946, a fictionalized account featuring a White Russian spy appeared on a Shanghai newspaper. Stereotypical of White Russians, the protagonist never paid his rent on time, and he would "dance, cry, laugh and shout at others while drunk." He initially worked for the Japanese, but two Nationalist agents easily converted him with more money. In this novella, which voiced the prevailing Chinese opinion, the Russian spy stated that "I do not sympathize with the Japanese, nor do I sympathize with China. I have sympathy only for myself, and for Russia" ("Bai'e: Bulaimengsiji" 1946). Chinese residents in occupied cities like Shanghai understood and even empathized with White Russians. Except in the case of Serge Tautz, there was no public outcry for retribution against White Russians. In comparison, the Chinese showed much more discernable outrage towards the French for rescuing alleged "French *hanjian*," including using a warship to remove a defendant, Carcopino Tosoli, from Chinese jurisdiction (*CWR*, Jan 19, 1946).

The White Russian *hanjian* cases, therefore, carried more legal than political or moral significance. Stateless Russians were the only group of foreigners whom the Chinese could punish by their own laws without significant external or domestic repercussions. The Chinese judiciary pursued every case within their jurisdiction to the end and announced verdicts of guilty in most cases.

Meanwhile, it showed a great level of restraint in sentencing Russian convicts, considering Chinese with comparable charges received much harsher punishment. Serge Tautz was the only White Russian who received more than three years, primarily because his direct victim, Chen Sancai, was a well-connected social figure and a nationally recognized martyr. Moreover, when White Russian *hanjian* convicts appealed, and most did, they were usually granted a retrial and eventually acquitted. With the prosecution of the White Russians and their easy acquittals, the Nationalist government demonstrated both its legal authority and benevolence towards foreigners.

Without a government behind their back, the White Russians dealt with the Chinese justice system with political savviness and resilience. Aware of the Nationalist government's resentment towards Chinese communists, many asserted that their collaboration with Axis powers was mainly out of a personal or ideological opposition to communism. In every convicted *hanjian* case, the Russian defendant appealed repeatedly to the Supreme Court with help from their Russian and Chinese friends. In comparison, few Chinese convicts appealed, and no one was granted a revised verdict. Vladimir I. Karpoff frankly criticized the lack of due process in his initial conviction, pointing out a series of problems in the Court's handling of evidence, witness accounts, and interrogation. Ultimately, he protested against the application of the *Regulations on Punishing Hanjian* to him and other Russians, as "it (Article 2) should be applied to Chinese persons only".²⁶ He was the only Russian who challenged the legality of using the Regulations to punish non-Chinese citizens. Karpoff was quickly acquitted without further investigation to prove his innocence or guilt. Still, this was an episode in their lives which the Russian defendants wished to bury. Even in the exceptionally well-documented case of Alexander Purin, his experiences with the Chinese justice system were never mentioned in other languages.

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Notes

- 1 Since the first Opium War (1839–42), foreign powers had imposed extraterritoriality on China, which gave foreign consuls legal jurisdiction over their own subjects. This policy was successively adopted by Great Britain, the United States, France, Austria-Hungary, and fourteen other nations. China had made constant efforts to abolish extraterritoriality since 1902 but did not achieve this goal until 1943. The United States and Great Britain relinquished their extraterritorial rights in China, which was their important ally in the Far East against Japanese aggression. See the "Sino-American Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extraterritorial Rights in China" (1943) and the "Sino-British Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extraterritorial Rights in China" (1943).
- 2 SHA, 7(2)-120. Correspondence between the Chinese ambassador in France and the Minister of Justice regarding exchanging *hanjian*, October 1946.
- 3 JCAHR, B10070052500, "Circumstantial Investigation of Russians in China," 1928.
- 4 Zhang Zongchang and Zhang Zuolin, two of the most well-known Chinese warlords, hired White Russian mercenaries in their armies, a fact that contributed to the "discreditable" images of White Russians among Westerners in China. "Shanghai's White Russian Mercenary Army," *China Weekly Review*, Sept. 15, 1928.
- 5 SMA, Q187-2-330, The Hanjian Case of Tamara Kokoshkina.
- 6 JCAHR, B10074612100, "Maneuvers of White Russians," 1929–1934.
- 7 OSS China Theatre, X-2 Branch Report, November 13, 1945.
- 8 NARA, Record Group 263, Publication M1750, Roll 13-1855.
- 9 SMA, Q187-2-196, The Hanjian Case of Alexander A. Purin, 284.

- 10 SMA, Q187-2-33, The Hanjian cases of Laszlo Sebok, Remedios, and Silva, 1946, 445–446.
- 11 Ibid., 439.
- 12 SMA, Q187-2-196, The Hanjian Case of Alexander A. Purin, 377.
- 13 SMA, Q187-2-187, The *Hanjian* Case of Vladimir I. Karpoff, 114.
- 14 SMA, Q127-8-284, “Records of the Second Meeting regarding the handling of Japanese civilians, White Russians and Jews,” 1946, 4–10.
- 15 SMA, Q187-2-257, The *Hanjian* Case of P. Vertoprakoff.
- 16 SMA, Q187-2-171, The Hanjian Case of Peter Unterberger, 19–20.
- 17 SMA, Q187-2-171, 70–72.
- 18 SMA, Q187-2-171, 19–20.
- 19 SMA, Q187-2-171, 83–84.
- 20 SMA, Q187-2-171, 71–72.
- 21 SMA, Q187-2-196, The Hanjian Case of Alexander A. Purin, 192.
- 22 Ibid., 269–272.
- 23 Ibid., 269–283.
- 24 ADAKR, Letter No. 59-P, August 22, 1996.
- 25 NARA, Record Group 263, Publication M1750, Roll 13-1855.
- 26 SMA, Q187-2-187, 106.

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