Wide of the Mark: A Brief Study of Fund-raising Campaigns in Canton in the Early Phase of Sino-Japanese War, 1937-8

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Abstract
This paper studies how people, especially the business community, in Canton responded to the government’s fund-raising campaigns in the early phase of the War. It challenges the conventional views that Canton citizens had wholeheartedly united together in face of an imminent war, and that all walks of life displayed high degree of patriotism with their self-denying participation in the city’s war efforts. Despite the common concern about the threat of looming attack on Canton by the Japanese, this commonality, however, did not help cement the populace into a nationalistic whole with great solidarity, as the State and its publicists hoped.
In the eyes of both the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter as CCP) and the Kuomintang (hereafter as KMT), the War of Resistance (1937-45) has always been, and still is, a politically sensitive topic which defies any alternative way of construing, besides the official version of the event. The following excerpt from the preface of a randomly picked historical work on the subject provides us with a ‘good’ example of what the Chinese government and CCP historians demand their citizens and readers to learn from reading about this heroic “War of Resistance Against Japanese Imperialism”. The editor of this book, Zeng Sheng (曾生), a war veteran and also a senior CCP official during and after the War in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, writes in that preface:

The War of Resistance Against Japan in China was a war of resistance under the flag of national united front promoted and hoisted by CCP, participated widely by all the people, various democratic parties, different anti-Japan civilian associations and mass associations, different ethnic groups in the sectors of worker, peasant, businessman, school student, army, [and] patriots from all walks of life [in China] as well as Overseas Chinese. It was China’s first war of national liberation in the past one hundred and more years in which the Chinese people had totally defeated their foreign invaders...Everybody was responsible for resisting against [the invasion of] Japan in order to save the country. Soon after the War of Resistance had begun, the city of Canton, like all other [cities] in the country, witnessed an upsurge of glorious anti-Japan national-salvation mass movements. After the fall of Canton, people in the areas around Canton, under the leadership of CCP, launched different forms of resistance [and] struggle against the Japanese behind enemy lines.....This 8-year-long War of Resistance is a
historical proof that to resist against foreign invasion, patriotic and
great unity [of the people] is necessary. Today, the same kind of
patriotic great unison is needed in the construction of a prosperous,
rich, strong, [and] modernized socialist country….This book, A True
Record of War of Resistance in Guangzhou, is [a collection of] lively
historical facts which demonstrate that the people of Canton had
united together in fighting [against the enemies and] rescued the
endangered [country] from extinction…..¹

A history of the War, henceforth, is largely a record of the heroic deeds of the people
and particularly CCP, and also a recount of how patriotic, self-denying and united
that the people from all walks of life in Canton and its vicinity were when facing
Japanese invasion. Most of the writings about this War, published under such
ideological guidance of the Party, are predictable in many ways: highlighting the
heroic acts of resistance by local guerillas and volunteers (especially those under the
leadership of CCP), the commendable unity and spirit of self sacrifice shown in
citizens’ active and proactive participation in the war efforts against the enemy, the
random and indiscriminate acts of atrocity by the Japanese army against Chinese
soldiers and particularly civilians, and the unpreparedness of the Nationalist
government in defending against the enemy, which is taken as an act of betrayal
against the patriotic spirit and commitment of the people.²

It is in conflicts that human nature is put to real test and displayed more
clearly than in peacetime. Since the outbreak of military confrontation in Marco Polo
Bridge in early July 1937, people in Canton and Guangdong, like “people” in all
parts of China, were, and still are, described as highly charged with nationalistic
sentiments and henceforth taking an active part in the government’s war efforts. For
decades, we have been told by historians and nationalistic politicians that the
outbreak of the war and its gradual encroachment to southern China had greatly
evoked the patriotic feelings of all the people in Guangdong and, in particular,
urban centres such as Canton. Answering the government’s call for active

¹ Zeng Sheng, “Preface”, pp. 1-2, in He Bangtai ed., Guangzhou kang zhan ji shi (Guangzhou:
Guangdong ren min chu ban she, 1995).
² Publications which promote this positive images of the Chinese people, and Cantonese or
Guangdongese in particular, are too numerous to be cited in full here. The following items are
randomly selected samples: He Bangtai ed., Guangzhou kang chan ji shi (Guangzhou: Guangdong ren
min chu ban she, 1995), pp.4-15, 34-69; Guangzhou shi wen shi yan jiu guan ed., Guangzhou bai nian da
shi ji (Guangzhou: 1984), vol. 2, pp.486-98; Guangdong sheng jun qu zheng zhi bu, Hainan jun qu
zheng zhi bu eds., Feng huo nan tian (Guangzhou: Guangdong ren min chu ban she, 1974), pp.163-419;
Zhonggong Guangzhou shi wei dang shi zi liao zheng ji yan jiu wei yuan hui ban gong shi ed., Lun
xian shi chi Guangzhou ren min de kang Ri dou zhen (Guangzhou: N.p., 1985), Preface, pp.1-10; Zuo
Xuangwen, Hua Nan kang chan shi gao (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiao yu chu ban she, 2004), chapter 1.
participation in the War of Resistance, according to these patriotic texts, students joined in their thousands voluntary organizations serving the rear and the front, women enrolled into first-aid teams or publicity groups, young men (and sometimes women) enlisted enthusiastically into the army or registered into training camps which drilled them into militia, merchants and businessmen eagerly donated money to the government and buying national bonds to help paying the bills for stockpiled ammunitions and purchasing the urgently needed warplanes and anti-aircraft guns from the West, ordinary citizens took part ardently in fund raising and other mobilization campaigns. As a rule, “the people” were/are described as sharing one common goal: to be a responsible national, to serve, and even to die for their country. This is, however, a highly monotonous, simplistic and one-dimensional picture of a far more complicated (if ‘richer’ is too inappropriately positive an adjective) reality.

There is no shortage of story about heroic acts of soldiers and citizens in fighting against the invading enemies in this part of China. But how heroic and self-denying people were in this turbulent time? By studying what concerned the people most in Canton (and other parts of Guangdong) in the first year of the war, it is clear that people had responded quite differently to the war and to the call of the government for wartime mobilization efforts. There were common concerns though: fluctuating prices of foodstuff, threat of air raids, closure of schools and how to keep children at home all day, unsafe waterways and overland traffic, loss of jobs in the city, problems of theft and banditry, and so on. These commonalities, however, did not help cement the populace into a nationalistic whole, as the State and the publicists wished. People continued to be divided on so many issues and things, as ever. A closer look at the urban scene, through a meticulous reading of local newspapers published in Canton and Hong Kong, reveals a very different picture of the people and their ways of adapting to life at the time of mounting crisis.

“If you do not buy National Salvation Public Bonds, then you are slave of a fallen country.”

On the 70th anniversary of the “Victory of the War of Resistance” in 2015, a number of patriotic business groups in Hong Kong put up full-page advertisement in the city’s newspapers glorifying the bravery and perseverance of the Chinese people in this war, as much as displaying their loyal support to the Chinese Communist party-state. The sponsors of publicity like this are apparently trying to create and

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3 From one of the slogans promoting the National Salvation Public Bond in Canton. *Yue hua bao* (越華報) hereafter as YHB), 16/9/1937.
4 These advertisements, usually full page, came in different designs and formats. Nearly all of the time were published on, and around, 3 September, 2015, the date on which China launched its first V-Day military parade in Beijing, marking the 70th anniversary of “the triumph of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937-45)”.
highlight the impression of the supposedly indisputable strong bond between the Chinese State and the business community, as well as the unfailing acts of patriotism among Chinese businessmen and merchants in wartime China.

Contemporary newspapers reports contain a substantial amount of information about the roles played by the business community and individual merchants during the War. In the early months of the War, there were no shortage of news about business community leaders and individual businessmen in Canton who came forward to pledge their loyalty to their country and the party-state. Their patriotic acts came in various forms, but largely fell within the following patterns: making donations to the government, buying national bonds issued by the government, encouraging the young and able (those between 18 and 35 years old, as the government required) shop assistants to enroll in local militia who were drilled by formal military instructors the various war skills, and responding to the government’s call for participating in anti-war parade and other related public activities. It is doubtful, however, that these were how local businessmen (and citizens in other professions) generally responded to the government’s call for war efforts in Canton and Guangdong. The reality was apparently far more complicated than that.

On 1 September, 1937, the government of Guangdong had started a province-wide fund-raising campaign, in response to the urgent call of the Nanjing in late August to launch the sale of national bonds, entitled National Salvation Public Bond (Jiu guo gong zhai 救國公債). The plan, which was devised by Finance Minister T.V. Soong, was to raise 500 million yuan from all over China within three months, in order to meet the urgent need of cash to finance the war with Japan. Each province was assigned a target sum to meet, depending on a province’s financial strength and affordability. Guangdong, being one of the richest provinces in Nationalist China, was assigned a quota of 20-million-yuan worth of bonds to be sold by early December. The Canton authorities had organized city-wide publicity campaigns to promote the sale of the bonds, which were reported extensively in local newspapers, and publicity banners were hung in public areas urging people to save their country and their own families by buying National Salvation Public Bonds. The state-run Radio Canton had broadcast promotional talks by senior government officials about the importance of buying up National Salvation Bonds, and occasionally promotional songs, written specially for this purpose, were played to appeal to a wider audience. It is noticeable that some individuals and firms did respond to this

5 YHB, 4/8/1938.
7 YHB, 16/9/1937, 1/11/1937, 5/4/1938; official publicity for this bond was continued well up to August 1938.
8 For instance, YHB 5/9/1937.
call fairly enthusiastically. For instances, a company specialized in selling “old and assorted woods” (jiu za mu 舊雜木), called Tong Ji Tang, put up an announcement in a eye-catching place of a popular Canton daily about its decision on selling three of its premises in Canton city and to use the profits generated from it on buying up the bonds, in order to “fulfill the duty of a national”. Elsewhere in the Pearl River Delta, a lineage-village in the County of Shunte was reported to have sold some of its collectively owned properties in Canton and used that sum of income on purchasing the National Salvation Public Bonds. In a nearby county, Xinhui, the village head of a lineage-village was also reported to have sold his property in Canton and then spent the whole lot on the National Salvation Public Bonds; likewise, another local social notable had also sold his in Canton for the same purpose. Throughout the early months of the war, there were reports of villages in different parts of the province, but particularly in the more prosperous areas of the Pearl River Delta, that collective decisions had been made by lineages elders to suspend local religious festivals or temple fairs, at the government’s advice because congregation of big crowds and burning firecrackers could be conspicuous targets of Japanese air raid. The expenses saved were then used on purchasing government bonds as a way of supporting the war efforts. There were also no shortage of ordinary people who responded enthusiastically to this call for buying up National Salvation Public Bonds, and news about their deeds propped up in local newspapers from time to time. These donors were apparently from all walks of life, including prostitutes, peasants, students, journalists, spinsters, housewives, elderly, a 6-year-old child and so on. One relatively more noticeable case is a Zhao Ta Guang Drug Store in Canton which put up an advertisement in a popular local newspaper announcing that it had already purchased an eye-raising amount of 10,000-yuan worth of National Salvation Public Bond, and also pledged that the store would continue to buy another sum of 500-yuan worth of bonds every month until the end of the war. It is not known if this patriotic medicine store was able to survive the war and to deliver its promise, but it was certainly, in the eyes of the financially stringent government, a commendable example to the people in Canton and the province. 

It must be noted in passing that since the beginning of the war in early July 1937, the Guangdong government had issued not one, but two, public bonds in a span of six months. The first one was issued around September 1937, which was called the National Salvation Public Bond, with a target of raising 30 million yuan. On 1 March 1938, the government announced the issuance of another bonds, called the National Defence Public Bond (Guo fang gong zhai 國防公債), with a target of

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9 YHB, 3/12/1937.  
10 YHB, 3/10/1937.  
11 Hua zi ri bao (華字日報 hereafter as HZRB) 21/10/1937, 8/11/1937.  
14 YHB, 1/11/1937.
raising 15 million yuan in 3 months.\textsuperscript{15} For 15 months after the outbreak of the war, until shortly before the fall of Canton in late October 1938, local newspapers in Canton were eager to publish reports about how all walks of life in Canton and towns and villages in Pearl River Delta had been “enthusiastically buying up” these public bonds, seemingly under the “advice” of the authorities in Canton.\textsuperscript{16} To enable more “petite citizens” and ordinary people to participate in these campaigns of bonds buying, the government issued bonds in smaller units (lowered the smallest unit from five to one yuan)\textsuperscript{17} so that hopefully more people could afford to purchase at least a few shares. As a result, there were indeed more “petite citizens” who could afford to spend one yuan or so on this bond, and this provided the local newspapers with many stories about ordinary citizens or denizens who generously spent some of their pocket money or savings on bonds purchasing.\textsuperscript{18} Throughout the period of July 1937 to September 1938, a Nationalist Party-controlled newspaper Zhongshan ri bao (中山日報) had published regularly reports of how people in both rural and urban Guangdong bought up enthusiastically the National Salvation Public Bonds and, since March 1938, another newly introduced bond called the National Defence Public Bond. The phrase “buying bonds enthusiastically” (yon yue mai zhai 擁躍買債) appeared regularly in many reports, and both the state-controlled media as well as independent newspapers such as Yue hua bao published latest update on the sale of these bonds. It is clear that both the government and the patriotic Cantonese journalists would like to see the success of this public bond as an war effort. Individual contributions, though morale-boosting as well as symbolically important, was apparently not substantial enough to meet the government’s target. Moreover, behind this “buying bonds enthusiastically” façade, however, was a fairly different picture which was not as simple or straightforward as it appears to be.

First of all, not everyone who had purchased these bonds did so spontaneously, voluntarily or happily. In fact, many were apparently “requested”,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian (Guangzhou: N.p., 1938), pp. 1-2; YHB, 7/4/1938.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} At a press conference announcing the launching of the second bond, senior government officials pleaded local journalists for publicizing the campaign as much as possible. HZRB, 6/3/1938.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} HZR, 3/12/1937.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} Reports of this kind are too many to cite in full. Here are some randomly selected examples. A group of “beauties” working in opium parlours (yen hua 煙花) together with a group of sworn spinsters had initiated a campaign in Canton on buying public bonds. They would ask their customers and acquaintances to take part in it (YHB 11/4/1937). A group of prostitutes (number unspecified) in the Pearl River Delta towns of Jiangmen were reportedly engaging enthusiastically in promoting the sale of public bonds among themselves and their clients. Nearby in the large market town of Xinhui, it was reported that prostitutes working in floating brothels had purchased public bonds to show their support of the cause. Similar good deed of another group of prostitutes in Heyuan, a town in northern Guangdong, was noticed and commended (YHB 6/11/1937,11/4/1938, 20/5/1938). Individual peasants in various counties in different parts of Guangdong were also noticed of buying public bonds (YHB 3/11/1937).}
\end{itemize}
which was outright “forced”, to buy, no matter they liked it or not. For instances, civil servants in Guangdong were reportedly “donating [their] salaries” (juan xin 捐薪) for purchasing public bonds. “Donation” was apparently not always done voluntarily because the government had announced the scheme of deducting civil servants’ salary by 30 to 50% for one month, though it is not clear if this proposed massive reduction in salary had been eventually and successfully enforced.\(^{19}\) Shop assistants were also instructed to buy; their payment would be handled through their employers or shop-keepers who would deduct from these workers’ wage a sum prescribed by this fund-raising committee: those who earned a monthly wage of 20 yuan or under would be charged 10% of one-month salary, and the rate was incremental in accordance with the monthly wage of individual shop assistants, but was capped at 30% for those who earned over 100 yuan a month. The Canton Chamber of Commerce, who was the overseer of the scheme, announced disappointing ly in a statement to its member guilds that most of these guilds “have not acted in accordance with the instructions” and henceforth there was only one member guild which had, by late November, “enforced [this instruction] as required”.\(^{20}\) In February 1938, the Mayor of Canton, disappointed with the slow progress in the entire campaign, announced in an angry tone a plan to expand this patriotic bond-buying campaign, and one of the action items was to demand all civil servants in Canton to buy a minimum amount of 1-yuan worth of the bonds within the next 24 hours; failure in doing so would only show that “they do not have any good conscience and [for that they are to be] punished by heaven and eliminated by earth”.\(^{21}\)

Li Hongji, a senior office-bearer (with the title of Special Agent) in the Anti-Opium Bureau and also most likely a well-off opium tax farmer in the province, was reported to have bought an impressive sum of 110,000-yuan worth of National Salvation Public Bond to show his support of the war against Japanese invasion.\(^{22}\) It is highly doubtable that his acquisition of such a huge volume of this bonds was entirely out of his spontaneous patriotic sense of duty, but not “at the request” of the government whose continuous blessing was essential for his lucrative opium tax farming business. To those who refused this kind of “invitation” to exhibit their

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\(^{19}\) HZRB, 16/9/1937.

\(^{20}\) HZRB, 26/11/1937. It is interesting to note that all county towns in the whole province were also required to take part in this campaign by buying up a designated quota of the bond, and the amount of which was, oddly, based on the number of “able male” (zhuang ding 壮丁) “all villages in a county” had, but there was also a minimum amount that each county denizen was required to buy. For example, every man (ding kou 丁口) in Sansui County (west of Canton), according to a government source, was required to contribute a minimum of 30 cents to the county authorities for this purpose; village heads were charged with the duty of collecting this sum. In Sihui County, villages worked out subscriber lists in accordance with the size of land ownership of each household, and as a result of that 80,000 yuan was successfully raised and collected. HZRB, 27/11/1937.

\(^{21}\) HZRB, 7/3/1938.

\(^{22}\) YHB, 4/10/1937.
loyalty to their country, they were faced with retaliation in different guises. For instance, Deng Yanhua (鄧彥華), a senior government and Party official in Canton, had approached the owners of two big herbal medicine factories in the city, urging them to buy the bond, who, as a result of that “visit”, committed to purchase each of them 2,000-yuan worth of the bonds. But when Deng made a similar appeal to the Chinese herbal doctors in Canton, he was turned down. In retaliation, Deng initiated and eventually introduced the government’s scheme of examining Chinese herbal doctors (guo yi 國醫), to the great disappointment of that profession in Canton. Patriotic act of buying these public funds to finance the War of Resistance was, in the government’s view, an unquestionable duty of every citizen.

As early as December 1937, when the first public bond was still on the market and the second one not yet introduced, both the Canton Chamber of Commerce (Guangzhou shi shang hui 廣州市商會) and the government were publicising keenly in public media about the “enthusiastic response” of businessmen and merchants to the campaign of buying up this “patriotic bonds”. The commander-in-chief of the Nationalist Fourth Route Army in Guangdong, General Yu Hanmou (余漢謀), had even told a Hong Kong reporter in Canton that response from the business sector was “spontaneous and encouraging”. A closer study of newspaper reports on the progress in this matter, however, indicated that the situation was not as encouraging as it was professed. In early November, some guilds already started grieving at the difficulty in raising the designated sum imposed upon them by the Chamber because many of their members had left Canton for safety in face of Japanese air raids on the city. By the end of December, 1937, voices of dissatisfaction had already surfaced from the business community in Canton and other county towns in the province. Their concern is a justifiable one. In Canton, it was always the business community which bore the largest share of any forced loans imposed on them by the government. The Canton Chamber of Commerce was “requested to purchase” an amount of 3.3 million yuan of the National Defence Public Bonds, which was over one-fifth of the targeted 15 million yuan to be raised from the entire province. This was no easy task given the fact that not every member of that Chamber agreed with how the amount was further divided and distributed downward to individual members and member guilds—the diversity of companies in terms of size, capitals

24 For instance of such optimistic official update, see HZRB, 27/11/1937; HZRB, Nov. and Dec., 1937, passim.
25 HZRB 9/12/1937.
26 For instance, in an announcement put up on a local newspaper by a Jade Selling Stalls Guild in Canton, it pleaded for its members to return and to resume trading immediately so that they would pay for their shares of the burden. YHB, 1/11/1937.
and income was far too wide to defy any easy and fair distribution of acquisition quota.\(^{28}\) In December 1937, for instance, there were merchants in Canton who petitioned the Chamber of Commerce and the government for a reduction on the amount of bonds they were required to subscribe.\(^{29}\) Moreover, less than one month after the launching of this scheme of purchasing government bond, merchants and businessmen’s complaints about the unequal and hence unfair distribution of quota on each trade, and among the members within each trade and guild, appeared fairly regularly on a Hong Kong daily. This problem of “unfair distribution of quota” led to a substantial number of Canton merchants and businessmen decided to procrastinate in buying their required share of the bonds, or to delay payment for the bonds which they had conveniently “agreed” to buy.\(^{30}\) Predictably, similar dispute over the fairness of quota distribution also arose in the sale of the second bond. One month after the government’s announcement of the second bond, the Canton Chamber of Commerce was still receiving complaints from its member guilds criticizing the Chamber for classifying too few big shops or guilds as Grades A and B buyers (on them were imposed a bigger quota) to the disadvantage of the city’s many small businessmen and merchants.\(^{31}\)

About one month after the implementation of the involuntary scheme for the first bond, a Hong Kong daily published a number of reports covering the story about the problem of businessmen and merchants’ procrastination in meeting their required quota of the bond, as well as refusing to honour payment for what they had earlier agreed upon. The problem has become so serious that by mid November, 1937, the Canton Chamber of Commerce, seemingly tried to avoid further embarrassment from being criticized by a disgruntled government, announced that “dunning teams” (cui zh ai quan mu dui (催債勸募隊) were to be formed and sent to visit every shops and offices, which were members of the Chamber, to “persuade” them to buy their designated amount of the bonds.\(^{32}\) Towards late November, the Chamber announced that a total of 50 dunning teams were to be deployed in Canton, targeting 100 shops each, in the hope of “visiting” a total of 5,000 shops in the operation. Members of the Chamber would be assigned as teamsters. The main duty of a dunning team was to visit shops which were members of a guild that was affiliated with the Chamber, and to “remind” the shop-keepers of their obligation of buying up a certain amount of the bonds “distributed” to, or more appropriately imposed on them by the Chamber. To incentivize these dunning teams, a team would be “rewarded” when it succeed in meeting the quota assigned by the Chamber.\(^{33}\) Instead of warmly greeted by their supposedly patriotic members (an

\(^{28}\) YHB, 10/4/1938.

\(^{29}\) HZRB, 22/12/1937.

\(^{30}\) HZRB, 28/11/1937.

\(^{31}\) HZRB, 31/3/1938.

\(^{32}\) HZRB, 11-12/11/1937, 16/11/1937.

\(^{33}\) HZRB, 6/12/1937, 18/12/1937.
image that has been always upheld in the Chamber’s publicity), these dunning teams were apparently received coldly by the city’s merchants and shop-keepers, so much so that the Chamber started discussing with the police chief in Canton, exploring the possibility of requesting police assistance in dunning.\(^{34}\) This idea, though welcomed by the police, was eventually dropped at the advice of a concerned Department of Finance which apparently found the proposed use of policing force counter-productive to the much needed social harmony in time of war. In a statement to the public, the Department explicated that the city’s merchants and businessmen were largely patriotic and “very eager to purchase” this national bonds, and the current problem of sluggish subscription was attributed, firstly, to the temporary shortage of cash to many of them as a result of the war, and, secondly, to the failure of some guilds’ directors in completing the assessment of their member companies’ capital on time, so much so that the assigned quota for their members was not yet worked out.\(^{35}\) It is hard to know with certainty whether the guilds’ failure in completing the capital assessment on time was a genuine difficulty or just an excuse or a delay tactic employed by the reluctant merchants and businessmen to avoid this forced loan. To impress the authorities with its sincerity in this matter, and probably also to save face or exert its authority, the Chamber decided to levy a penalty fine on members who failed to purchase their assigned amount of bonds by a due date.\(^{36}\) This, however, still did not provide those reluctant members with much incentive to act. In less than one week after the dunning teams had been put into action, it was already clear that the situation did not improve much and that neither the Chamber nor the government succeeded in winning the support of merchants and businessmen over this matter, no matter how politically important and military urgent, or patriotically meaningful a smooth sale of the bonds was to the fate of the country. Senior officials admitted disappointedly to reporters that “the business sector” was not responding enthusiastically to this campaign of grave national importance.\(^{37}\) In spite of the Chamber’s initial optimism about the effectiveness of its dunning teams, reports appeared on a respectable Hong Kong newspaper pointing to the opposite direction: the actual amount of purchase was still far short of the target set by the government for the Canton Chamber of Commerce.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) HZRB, 26/11/1937.

\(^{35}\) HZRB, 2/12/1937, 9/12/1937.

\(^{36}\) HZRB, 3/12/1937.

\(^{37}\) HZRB, 6/12/1937.

\(^{38}\) HZRB, 20-21/12/1937, 30/12/1937. It should be added in passing that the partial failure of this “dunning tactic”, though also mentioned in local newspapers published in Canton, was always described discreetly, comparing with the more straightforward reporting by journalists in Hong Kong, probably as a result of the higher level of government’s scrutiny over the press in China. For example, when HZRB in Hong Kong was publishing reports about the difficulty faced by the Chamber in mobilising its member to “fulfil the assigned quota”, YHB in Canton published updates on the amount of money the Chamber had received from its members “who possess the thinking of loving their country” (ju ai guo si xiang jie 具愛國思想者). YHB, 4/12/1937.
Since these dunning teams were manned by volunteers from the Canton Chamber of Commerce and they were themselves full-time businessmen or merchants, they were not able to dedicate their time wholly to this demanding and tedious work of door-to-door dunning by persuasion. Dunning job, therefore, progressed fairly slowly. The provincial government had originally set mid December, 1937, as the deadline for the “business sector” to complete the targeted acquisition of its share of the public bonds and to submit the collected contributions of 5 million yuan to the government. By 4th December, however, the total amount of payment collected from its members totalled 1.02 million yuan, which was 4 million short of the target, though the Chamber told the press “optimistically”, perhaps to save face, that the outstanding sum would be ready in a fortnight. By late December, however, it has become clear that the Canton Chamber of Commerce would not be able to meet the target on time. When the Chamber asked the government for postponing the due date, it was effectively an open admittance of its members’ poor response to this campaign; and less than one month later, a similar request was supplianted to the government, in the middle of January 1938. When the operation office of this dunning campaign announced its closure in late January 1938, the Chamber told the general public in a statement that “satisfactory result” was achieved in this bonds-selling campaign among its members. This, however, was apparently more about face-saving than an honest description on the state of affairs because unfavourable news reports about the overall poor reception of this “patriotic bonds” are not hard to find. For example, a reader had written to the supplement of a respectable Hong Kong daily lamenting that his countrymen were shamelessly “numb” (ma mu 麻木) and indifferent to this mounting national crisis because it took so long and so much efforts for “each sector” (ge jie 各界) in Canton (and the province) to come anywhere near, if not exactly met, the assigned sale quota of this bonds. This contributor did not exaggerate. In early January, 1938, a news report indicated that at least 7,000 shops in the city of Canton alone had neither bought their assigned share of the bonds, nor paid for their shares which they had promised during the early phase of this fund-raising campaign, even though some of these “shops” were in fact fairly big and respectable establishments. Perhaps trying to rationalise their conspicuous failure, “tens of trade guilds” (shu shi hang ye gong hang 數十行業公行, including those in the business of coffin making, rice selling and trading, fresh fruits and salted foods selling and trading, and so on) petitioned the KMT-controlled Canton Chamber of Commerce Reform Committee (Guangzhou shi shang hui zheng li wei yuan hui 廣州市商會整理委員會) to punish those shops in Canton which refused to register as member of a trade guild in the city, as it was

39 YHB, 4/12/1937.  
40 HZRB, 12/1/1938.  
41 HZRB, 2 and 3/3/1938.  
42 HZRB, 26/12/1937.  
required earlier by the Mass Training Department of the Central KMT (Zhong yang dang bu min xun bu 中央黨部民訓部). The petition stated that since the central directive had reached Canton, these guilds had immediately alerted businessmen and merchants in the same trade, and to ask them to comply to the new regulation within 15 days. However, by the time the issue of involuntary subscription of the bond arose, a few months after the central directive had been released, the situation did not improve much. In the city of Canton, according to those disgruntled guilds, nearly half of the shops had ignored the government’s repeated pleas for registering as members of an officially recognised guild or commerce association, lest that they would be subjected to this form of involuntary contribution, and any other forms of surtaxes or levies required by a cash-hungry government to meet such noble and patriotic financial needs as medical care for the wounded soldiers, consolation teams for troops in the front, and so on. To those who had registered as members, they were not happy either because they felt strongly that they were unfairly charged to pay for those who were in the same trade just refused to register.\textsuperscript{44} The situation in other county townships was similarly disappointing. It was so unsatisfactory that the provincial government had even contemplated to punish those county governors whose constituencies had failed to meet the required quota of bond trade.\textsuperscript{45} When it was known that only 14 out of the targeted 20-million-yuan worth of bonds had been raised in six months after it was launched, the government of Canton found it necessary to introduce other measures in the hope of raising more funds in a short time. It had tried to put on auction lands and properties, but, to its dismay, there was no bidder to be found.\textsuperscript{46} The patriotic feeling of a substantial number of merchants and businessmen in Canton, in this regard, was apparently not as deep and self-denying as it was portrayed in official propaganda.

This tug-of-war between a desperate government in need of cash and a substantially large group of reluctant (perhaps patriotic too) merchants and businessmen continued throughout the winter of 1937 and the spring of 1938, though apparently the government was the loser in this tussle. In early February, 1938, the mayor of Canton (Zeng Yangpu 曾養莆), probably disappointed with the sluggish progress in the bonds selling campaign, proposed a weird and intrusive method of boosting the sale of the bonds. The method, which would be targeted at all government offices, mass organizations (min zhong tuan ti 民衆團體) and guilds, was as follows: 1) a self-declaration form would be sent to a selected group of office-bearers and staff in the abovementioned organizations; 2) within 24 hours upon receiving this declaration form, a recipient would be required to fill in his (or her) name, his employer’s name, and the amount of bonds he was going to buy, and

\textsuperscript{44} HZRB, 28/12/1937.
\textsuperscript{45} HZRB, 24/3/1938.
\textsuperscript{46} HZRB, 22/1/1938.
signed on it, beside the important phrase: “the recipient of this paper will lose no time in fulfilling his duty [of buying the public bonds], or he is a man with no conscience and subjected to divine punishment”; 3) the signee should then take the signed paper to one of the three designated banks in Canton where he would buy the amount of bonds he declared (minimum one yuan); 4) the signee would then write down on 9 copies of paper his name, address, and the amount of bonds he has bought; one copy of which would be submitted to the bank for record, and the remainders sent to his friends or “compatriots” as proof of his fulfilment of patriotic duty, and probably also as an invitation to the eight recipients to follow suit; 5) the bank would publish on newspapers the names of those signees every ten days. This was apparently a desperate attempt to push the reluctant citizens to comply. It is not clear if this proposed method had ever been put into effect. But this is not so important because this somewhat weird new method, whether it had ever existed or not, just failed to avert the problem of under subscription. By March, 1938, it became very clear that the Canton Chamber of Commerce had failed in mobilizing the local business community for this specific war efforts because news about payment default on buying the bonds, and failure of the Chamber and local guilds to fulfil the imposed quota of bonds acquisition, continued to appear on newspapers in Canton, ironically alongside optimistic statements released by the government boosting about the “great success” in this “patriotic” bonds-selling campaign. In early March, 1938, over 6 months after the National Salvation Public Bonds had been put on sale, the Guangdong Branch of National Salvation Public Bonds Promotion Committee (Jiu guo gong zai mo quan wei yuan hui Guangdong fen hui 救國公債募捐委員會廣東分會) submitted a formal report to the central government in which the original amounts assigned to different organizations and the situation of defaults were listed out. The overall picture was not as encouraging as it was officially described, though, to be fair to those patriotic organisers who had spent time and

47 HZR, 7/2/1938.
48 YHB, 12/4/1938. It must be noted in passing that lacklustre response to the involuntary subscription was not exclusive to Canton, but apparently to many other county towns in the province too. Merchants and businessmen in Yangchun County in south-western Guangdong disputed against the policy of involuntary subscription of the bonds and procrastinated in their payments (HZRB, 26/2/1938). In Swatow, it was reported that although the city’s Chamber of Commerce had agreed to raise a certain amount of capital, it failed to deliver the cash (“20 million yuan”, but most likely a typo in the cited source) to the authorities by the end of December. To raise that defaulted sum of money, the Chamber proposed to raise the city’s “business tax” (ying ye shui 營業稅) by ten percent, which would be imposed on the businessmen and merchants who refused to subscribe to the bonds (HZRB, 30/12/1937). In mid January, 1938, the Guangdong provincial government launched another funds raising campaign for strengthening its air force. As usual, on each city was imposed a quota of involuntary contribution, and Swatow was allotted 300,000 yuan. Swatow Chamber of Commerce immediately called for a meeting with its member guilds in which they expressed their concern about the already unusually heavy financial burden on the city’s merchants, in face of the government’s successive campaigns of funds raising, and reached at the meeting an unanimous decision on petitioning the provincial government to request for allowing them to make contribution voluntarily (instead involuntarily) and with a sum that they could afford (HZRB, 17/1/1938).
great efforts on running this campaign, progress had been made and funds were raised. First of all, of the 13.67-million-yuan worth of the bonds quota assigned to all the county towns in the province, a total of 10.47 million yuan was collected. Secondly, of the 5.25-million-yuan-worth of bonds expected to be traded to citizens and bankers through various banks in Canton, only 0.816-million-yuan worth of bonds were sold. Thirdly, of the designated 5-million-yuan quota imposed on the Canton Chamber of Commerce and its member guilds, only 1.64 million yuan had come forward. Fourthly, of the 2-million-yuan quota imposed on shops and piers, 0.807 million yuan was traded. Fifthly, every county town in the province of Guangdong was required to buy up a certain quota of the bonds with capital generated from a surtax imposed on all the taxes and surcharges collected in towns and cities. The quota was set at 1.047 million yuan, but only 0.237-million-yuan worth of the bonds was sold. Sixthly, a sum of 1.12 million yuan was intended to be raised, for buying the bonds, by imposing a deduction of wages on all Nationalist Party officials, staff in the Party offices, politicians, military men, and civil servants in education institutions; but only 0.82 million yuan was eventually collected. Last but not the least, a quota of 2.05 million yuan was also assigned to the Bonds Promotion Teams and other related bodies to meet, but at the end of the campaign only 1.36 million yuan was raised and spent on buying the bonds. In sum, of the 30.15 million yuan targeted to be raised, only 16.17 million was actually collected and was eventually used for acquiring the bonds.\(^{49}\) As late as April 1938, both the commander-in-chief of the Fourth Route Army and the chairman of Guangdong Provincial Government, concerned by the urgency of the situation and also probably out of disappointment at the result of the campaign, had issued an order urging all the defaulters to fill up the assigned quota immediately and to hand in the payment by the end of April.\(^{50}\) There is no evidence that this intimidating order had produced much effect on these determined defaulters who continued to defy the cash-hungry government and apparently did not mind to be ridiculed as unpatriotic or unconscientious. The campaign, though by no means a complete failure, was hardly a proud success either.

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\text{“Every man has a share of responsibility for the fate of his country”}^{51}\]

In early February, 1938, a rumour about the government would launch another 10-million-yuan worth of public bonds began to go viral in Canton. This was seemingly not a piece of good news to the already over-burdened business community and, perhaps because of that, the whole thing had been kept in secret. When reporters asked government offices for confirmation, the latter denied any knowledge of that. It was only around mid February that some government officials admitted to the

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\(^{49}\) HZRB, 3/3/1938.

\(^{50}\) YHB, 4/4/1938.

\(^{51}\) This much-cited phrase, “Tian xia xing wan, pi fu you ze 天下興亡，匹夫有責”, was used as the title of an newspaper advertisement by a medical ointment manufacturer. HZRB, 27/11/1937.
press that there was indeed such a plan, but detail was yet worked out. On February 26, official confirmation was released to the public, and that an Exhortation Committee (Quan mo wei yuan hui 勸募委員會), which was composed of all the senior officials in Guangdong, was formed to oversee the operation. On March 1, 1938, the Guangdong Provincial Government, despite a lacklustre performance in raising the National Salvation Public Bonds, officially launched the National Defence Public Bonds (Guo fang gong zhai 國防公債), and expected to raise 15-million yuan. Voluntary contribution was invited and some citizens and villagers were reportedly bought the bonds “enthusiastically”. Individuals’ voluntary contribution, however, played a small part in the overall targeted sale of 15-million-yuan worth of the bonds because individual buyers tended to purchase only the smallest denomination of the bonds, which cost 5 yuan each; although not a big sum of money, it was not small either, since one yuan at that time could buy 12 catties of good-quality white rice.

To raise 15-million yuan in such a short period of time (i.e. three months), depending entirely on public goodwill and spontaneous individual contributions, was a task next to impossible in wartime Canton and Guangdong, when people understandably spent or invested very cautiously. Forceful contribution, imposed from the top down, had always been an integral part of selling public bonds from the beginning. To assure that the targeted amount of funds could be effectively raised on time, the provincial and Canton authorities had devised various means to make sure that “the public” would be “enthusiastically engaged” in buying the bonds in shortest possible time. The authorities, for instance, set quotas for different professional groups and guilds in Canton so that the burden and the obligation of raising and collecting the funds fell simply onto these organizations. All civil servants working in the government or organizations affiliated with the sectors of military, education, police, Party, and government were required, regardless of their levels of wages, to “donate” half-a-month of their salary for the purpose of buying the bonds. Deduction of their wages would be done in April, and the purchase

52 HZRB, 10 and 11/2/1938.
53 “Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui tong gao”, in Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian (Guangzhou: N.p., 1938); HZRB, 24 and 26/2/1938.
54 Prostitutes in the township of Shilong in a county in the Pearl River delta were reportedly buying the bonds enthusiastically (YHB 12/4/1938). A contributor wrote in a Canton newspaper supplement that wives of senior officials, social notables, Cantonese opera actors and actresses, singsong girls, overseas Chinese had all purchased bonds “enthusiastically”. YHB 5/4/1938.
56 As an item of financial investment in time of war, the National Defence Public Bonds was apparently not so attractive in the eyes of those economically minded. First, the rate of interest was fixed at 4% per annum, which was not attractively high given the risk involved and escalating inflation and rising food prices. Secondly, repayment of principal and interest, which would be done yearly from 1939 until 1970, would not benefit every bonds-holders on a regular annual basis, because the beneficiaries was to be decided by drawing lot. For detail, see Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian, pp. 1 and 30.
would be made by early May.\textsuperscript{57} Tax farmers all over Guangdong were asked to buy an amount which was equivalent to half-a-month worth of the “tax quota” that they were expected to pay to the government; all these funds have to be raised within three months.\textsuperscript{58} Taxpayers of the city’s various taxes were also required to pay an additional surcharge, amounted to a certain percentage of the tax value, as a means, involuntarily, to support the campaign.\textsuperscript{59} Even foreign businessmen in the sector of shipping were required to buy up a certain amount of the bonds.\textsuperscript{60} Workers and staff in all different trades and professions in Canton, regardless of the scale of their factories, shops, offices, and also whether unionised or not, were all required to subscribe a fixed sum according to their levels of monthly wage. To those in the lowest income group, which was earning a monthly wage of under 20 yuan, they were required to a sum equivalent to 10% of their monthly salary; the scale would increase by 5% in proportion to higher level of salary but was capped at 30% for those who earned over 100 yuan a month.\textsuperscript{61} Each county towns in the province was designated a quota, which ranged from 700,000 yuan to 3,000 yuan,\textsuperscript{62} depending on the financial conditions of an individual county; county governments were given three months to sell the required amount of bonds and to submit the cash collected to Canton.\textsuperscript{63} By early April, sixteen counties had formed their bonds-subscription committees to oversee the campaign in their own county.\textsuperscript{64} In Maoming County in western Guangdong, the county government, to assure that its assigned share of subscription could be smoothly sold in time, instructed the police offices in each districts of the county to help sell a certain amount of bonds to its denizens. Should they fail to meet the quota, the officers-in-charge of that particular district would be penalized.\textsuperscript{65} County governors and city mayors in the province were not exempted from this thorny business too. They were charged with the duty of assuring the speedy sale of the bonds, and of collecting and remitting a designated sum to Canton before a due date, or they would face the penalty of either a reduction of their salary (ranging from one full month to 40% of salary, depending on the seriousness of individual cases) or, in case of serious default in his county, dismissal.\textsuperscript{66} It is clear that what has been generally described in the government-

\textsuperscript{57} Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{58} Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian, pp. 17.
\textsuperscript{59} YHB, 6/4/1938.
\textsuperscript{60} YHB, 7-8/4/1938.
\textsuperscript{61} YHB, 8/4/1938.
\textsuperscript{62} HZRB, 8/3/1938.
\textsuperscript{63} Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai quan mo wei yuan hui ed., Guangdong sheng guo fan gong zai tiao li ji mo ji ban fa hui bian, pp. 11-2,16-7.
\textsuperscript{64} YHB, 2/4/1938.
\textsuperscript{65} HZRB, 13/4/1938.
\textsuperscript{66} YHB, 7/3/1938.
controlled media as “people are enthusiastically buying up public bonds” is apparently not without exaggeration and hence problematic.

It is indisputable that there were indeed people in Canton and the province who were sincerely patriotic and hence volunteered to buy these public bonds as a means to express their nationalistic commitments to the defence of their country. From spring through summer in 1938, newspapers in Canton had published regularly reports about the progress of sale of this public bond. Among these reports is no shortage of favourable news of how enthusiastically some citizens or nationals were in buying this bond. The following examples are some of the randomly picked from a popular daily in Canton and another one published in Hong Kong; journalists in Yue hua bao, a popular daily in Canton, and some article contributors to the paper’s supplement, had donated a portion of their wages and income for the subscription of this bond; a China Electricals Company agreed to purchase 1,500-yuan worth of bond, after its management had been visited by a donation promotion team; a group of 30 “opium den ladies” (yan hua 煙花) in Canton’s suburb of Honan decided to raise 15 yuan each, either by asking from their clients or from their own pockets, to subscribe the bond; prostitutes in the township of Shilong in Dongguan County were reportedly responding “enthusiastically” to the call for buying the bond; the “banking sector” (i.e. all the major banks in Canton) was commended for raising a handsome amount of over 100,000 yuan; Native Tobacco Guild in Canton published a public announcement in a popular daily declaring that it would spend a certain proportion of its profit on buying the bond, but it is not clear if this was a marketing gimmick or for real; many villages had reportedly called off their annual dragon-boat races and festive celebration, and to spend the money saved on buying the bond; most amusing of all, perhaps, was from “a young and good-looking” school mistress in Hong Kong who announced her promise of marrying to any man who would spend 100,000 yuan on buying this bond, although it was not sure if any wealthy bachelor had eventually come forward to win her heart.

On the other hand, there were also abundant reports in local newspapers about the many problems with the sale and the collection of the funds raised. Expectedly, this top-down approach of selling bond met with resistance and also technical difficulty, despite its noble intention. Shopkeepers and shop assistants in

70 YHB, 12/4/1938.
71 YHB, 15/4/1938.
72 YHB, 16/5/1938.
73 For examples, see YHB, 22/5/1938, and 26/5/1938.
74 YHB, 9/5/1938.
Canton, for instance, had disputed with their employers over the unfairness in measure of “helping” them to buy the bond by imposing on them a cut of their wages, ranging between 10 and 30%. For this, shop assistants in Canton had staged a protest against this measure of compulsory subscription. Labour unions and merchant guilds were also involved, inevitably, in this dispute. After over one month of bickering, the Canton Chamber of Commerce decided to arbitrate and invited the two parties to sit down for negotiation. The Chamber took the side of the employers because it was government’s policy to require shop assistants to buy the bond through their employers. It is not known if the shop assistants had eventually yielded, but they did express their deep concern about their employers’ sinister intention of shifting the whole burden onto their shoulders. Meanwhile, Vegetable Wholesale Guild had levied a fee on its employed labour as a means to meet the extra cost incurred on them by the assigned bond sale. Workers in this trade resisted and invited the government’s interference and arbitration, but the Guild refused to be arbitrated and the dispute dragged on for months. The city’s numerous tax farmers were also reluctant to respond favourably to this involuntary subscription policy, but reportedly were finally “convinced” of the noble nature of this bond and the patriotic duty of resisting the invasion, after being summoned to a “meeting” with some prominent officials in the city’s Department of Finance.

Merchants and businessmen in Canton were, once again, drafted into this act of patriotism pretty much against their own will. As in the last few rounds of similar funds-raising campaigns, the merchant community in Canton was seemingly targeted by the Nationalist government as an easy source of loan. On the surface, the merchant and business community in Canton appeared to be exempted this time from the list of involuntary subscribers of the bond, because in the first few days after the launching of the bond, both local newspapers and official publicity about the campaign did not mention anything about what roles the merchants were expected to play in it, which is somewhat unusual comparing with the launching of the National Salvation Public Bond in 1937. Before long, however, the organizing body summoned reporters to a press conference and announced, among other things related to the campaign, that the merchant community in Canton was required to raise a minimum of 3.4-million-yuan worth of this particular bond. This figure was based on the amount that the Canton Chamber of Commerce had failed to raise in the National Salvation Public Bonds campaign; in the 1937 campaign, the Chamber was required to raise from its member guilds 5-million-yuan worth of bonds, but eventually merely 1.6-million-yuan of bonds was traded. In the authorities’ view, this was fair and lenient to the city’s merchant community. Upon the receipt of this

75 YHB 8/4/1938.
76 YHB, 10/5/1938.
instruction, the Chamber announced its plan of fulfilling the designated quota: to those merchant members who had not subscribed the earlier bonds, or had subscribed but did not settle the payment completely, they were to be required to subscribe their originally assigned shares this time, and to those who had done so, they would be asked to subscribe more, but on voluntary basis.79

The matter, however, was not settled yet. On March 13, the Canton Chamber of Commerce had met to discuss the ways to raise the assigned sum. At the meeting, all the attended members were worried with how to raise this millions of yuan from its members because the merchant community had not yet recovered from the drop in business as a result of frequent air raids, as well as from the financial exhaustion brought about by the involuntary subscription of the last bond. In trading for their support of the campaign, the meeting also discussed the option of asking for government’s approval on changing the nature of another sum of 1.7 million yuan, which was for the purpose of purchasing warplanes, from forced to voluntary contribution, as a means of relieving the burden on the sector.80 In terms of subscription, not much progress, however, had been made after that meeting. Even a senior official from the Department of Finance had admitted to a Hong Kong journalist that the merchant community had been under great financial stress since the levy of the last bond on them, and that he was sceptical if the assigned volume of the current bond could be absorbed easily by the community.81 To make the matter worse, members had never stopped complaining about their assigned quota. By early May, the Chamber had met for at least 13 times to listen to cases of appeal submitted by its many member guilds which believed that the quota they were assigned was either unfair or too heavy and should be reduced.82 All these had effectively hindered the progress in this matter.

Trying to boost the sale of the bond among its fellow members as well as citizens in Canton, the Chamber came up with two new ideas, one was simple and straightforward, the other more complicated. The first idea was conceived during a meeting of the Chamber’s board members on the last day of April. The idea can’t be more simpler: every office-bearer of the Chamber, as “role models” to the merchant community in Canton and the province, would be required to donate a designated sum of money for the purpose of buying the bond; a lump sum of 1,000 yuan for senior member, and 500 yuan for junior. This was intended to produce a “demonstration effect” on the merchant community who would therefore follow the good deeds of their business-sector leaders. This idea, which was not yet even a formal proposal, died in the womb, because only two senior members had indicated

79 HZRB, 5-6/3/1938.
80 HZRB, 12/3/1938.
81 YHB, 30/4/1938.
82 YHB, 9/5/1938.
willingness to contribute, whereas two prominent members had declined their support to the plan, an act which triggered many other key members to follow by excusing themselves from the meeting. There was no further sign of discussion over this proposal, however noble in its cause.\(^83\)

The second idea was to launch a big-scale parade on May 8 to promote the bond. All members of Canton Chamber of Commerce were “invited”, or more appropriately “required”, to take part in it, together with guests from government offices and the city’s many other patriotic associations. Interestingly, the necessity of forming picket teams was also discussed and eventually endorsed in a meeting of the Chamber. These picket teams were to be assigned with the important duty of stopping merchant participants from “leaving [the marchers] in the middle of the parade”.\(^84\) To demonstrate its determination in making the parade a success, and merchant community’s commitment to the noble cause of national salvation, the Chamber issued a set of rules to penalize any member who would not show up at the march; absentee would be fined 5 to 20 yuan, depending on his rank in the Chamber or the guild. Moreover, every member guild was required to assure two-third of its office-bearers would take part in the march, and each trade was responsible for making its own publicity materials and to form or invite drama or chorus group for the occasion.\(^85\) In an instruction issued to all the guilds and shopkeepers in Canton, the Chamber emphasized that all office-bearers of guild and other merchant associations have to take part in the march, no substitute was allowed except for those who were “old and weak”. Publicity flags would be produced and distributed to the marchers by the organizing committee, and marchers were required to dress decently, and preferably traditional Chinese-style long gown.\(^86\) The march was successfully launched, with 1,400 participants. Participants who were members of any guild were charged a sum of 10 to 20 yuan, depending on their rank or position in their guilds, for the purpose of buying the bond. Although it was hailed as a publicity success, the march was seemingly not well attended by citizens in general, and merchants in particular. The 1,400 participants, according to a newspaper report, were leaders of the city’s 123 trades and businesses.\(^87\) The number, though by no means insignificantly small, was unimpressive given the fact that Canton was the home of over 37,000 shops and offices (gong shang dian hu 工商店戶).\(^88\) From the photographs taken by reporter

\(^{83}\) YHB, 3/5/1938.
\(^{84}\) YHB, 30/4/1938.
\(^{85}\) YHB, 5/5/1938.
\(^{86}\) YHB, 7/5/1938.
\(^{87}\) YHB, 9/5/1938.
\(^{88}\) This figure is cited from a study in 1937. Zeng Tongchun, “Guangzhou shi er-shi-wu nian gong shang ye yi dong gai kuang”, in Guangdong sheng yin hang yue kan (Canton: Guangdong sheng yin hang jing ji yan jiu shi), vol. 1, no. 1 (1937), pp. 26-39. Although the number of shops and offices might
during the march, it clearly shows that the marchers are in orderly columns, but sparse and hardly crowded.\textsuperscript{89}

The march seemingly did not help generate further public interest in the bond, so much so that only ten days after the merchants’ march, the official body which monitored the selling of the bond announced the launching of another publicity campaign “to broaden” the public interest in the bond. Two hundred men would be recruited and deployed to public piers where they would plead passersby to purchase the bond as a means to fulfil their national obligation. Social notables were also to be invited to deliver promotional speeches about the bond through Radio Canton, the city’s official radio station, every evening at 8 o’clock.\textsuperscript{90} The Canton Chamber of Commerce, together with the same official body, announced the plan of “soliciting”, which was in fact a euphemism of imposition, all workers in every Canton’s shops, offices and factories to subscribe the bond. Owners or employers of these establishments, together with labour unions, were charged with the duty of assuring that a portion (amount not mentioned in the source) of a worker’s wages would be used for buying the bond; this plan would become policy only two days after it was publicly announced.\textsuperscript{91} Since May 20, the Chamber had once again formed and despatched dunning teams to “encourage” the business community to buy bond. Despite of all these aforementioned methods and campaigns, merely over a “hundred of thousand yuan” had been raised by the end of May. Seemingly out of desperation, two officers in the Chamber proposed two more methods to help boost the sale of the bond. First, office-bearers of the Chamber should set a “good example for the others” by purchasing, on a daily basis, 100-yuan to 1,000-yuan worth of the bond, depending on their ranks. This policy was endorsed in a meeting, but unable to be implemented due to the resistance from a handful of committee members, most likely prominent ones. Secondly, it was proposed that the Chamber should contact all three-hundred-plus guilds and business associations in Canton, to instruct them to write to each one of their own members, to “enlighten them with the important meaning [of national salvation]”, so that they would all buy their allotted share of the bond. This, according to the proposers, would stop guilds or shops from procrastinating on the ground that since other shops did not act, then why us.\textsuperscript{92} It is not known if these two methods had eventually been implemented or not. The second one, however, does bring up one important point about Canton merchants’ attitude towards this seemingly patriotic act of buying bonds. In a meeting with all its guild members, some officers of the Canton Chamber of Commerce gave their analytical view on the reason for weak response from its members to the bond

well have dropped after the beginning of Japanese air raids on Canton since early August, 1937, there were still over 30 thousands operating in Canton by mid 1938. YHB, 27/5/1938.

\textsuperscript{89} YHB, 9/5/1938 and 23/5/1938.

\textsuperscript{90} YHB, 20/5/1938.

\textsuperscript{91} YHB, 21/5/1938.

\textsuperscript{92} YHB, 27/5/1938.
trading, by saying that since the fairness in the distribution of assigned quota was seriously questioned by many member guilds, shop owners therefore decided not to buy hastily, but to wait and see how the Chamber would react to the guilds’ complaints. As a result, many shop owners simply refrained from buying. National urgency was apparently not their primary concern.

As the deadline of the movement was approaching, the overall picture of the campaign, in terms of performance, was apparently not as promising as some government officials would like to paint; a senior official told a concerned reporter, two weeks before the campaign’s due date, that only 3 million yuan was collected, though he anticipated more would arrive. Three million yuan was undoubtedly an impressive figure, but it was still 12 million yuan in short of the target. On week before the deadline, the Canton Chamber of Commerce was seemingly troubled by the unsatisfactory returns of all their efforts put into campaign, because they had received barely 100,000 yuan from member guilds and individual merchants, which was way far from the targeted (or assigned) sum of 3.4 million yuan. Senior members of the Chamber called for immediate remedial actions such as urging member guilds to press their own member merchants to buy the allotted amount of bond, and also sending out more dunning teams to persuade members to fulfil the duty of a nationalistic citizen of China. By the first week of June, it was clear that the Chamber had failed to submit to the government the “committed”, or more appropriately “required”, 3.4 million yuan; only slightly over 100,000 yuan was collected and forwarded to the Canton authorities. There were again more discussions on how to boost the sluggish sale of the bond, but nothing novel was proposed, besides those ineffective cliche, as stated in a passed resolution at a board meeting, such as to persuade member guilds and shop owners to honour their obligation, and merchant community leaders should act as role model for their business partners and followers, by purchasing enthusiastically the bond. By mid June, even the organizing body of this campaign had admitted that there was little hope in raising the targeted 15 million yuan; the Committee was looking into other ways of promoting the bond, and suggested that more effort should be spent on wooing the overseas Chinese community.

Meanwhile, bad news continued to flood in, albeit alongside encouraging news about individuals’ commendable act of subscription. For instance, a military officer had put up an advertisement on a popular daily in Canton, declaring his intention of selling his American-built private vehicle and to spend the money

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93 HZRB, 10/4/1938.
94 YHB, 18/5/1938.
95 THB, 24/5/1938.
96 YHB, 4/6/1938.
97 YHB, 13/6/1938.
earned on the bond. In a rural community south of Canton, an old man had been reported asking his children and grand children not to hoist any birthday feast for him, but to use this money for buying national bonds instead. On the other side of the coin, however, there was no shortage of negative reports. For example, a total of 201 mechanics shops in Canton, all of them members of the Mechanics Guild, refused to buy their assigned shares of the bond, as “requested” by their guild which eventually sought assistance from Canton Chamber of Commerce for arbitration. There was also a news report about 68 guilds in Canton, mainly in the business of copper and iron, had refused to buy any of their assigned bond; the matter was referred by the Chamber to the government’s Social Bureau for arbitration. The Bureau, however, could not do much except lent out an invitation to these reluctant guilds for talk. At the 25th meeting of the official body which oversaw the operation of this bond-selling campaign in Canton and beyond, its members were worried by the fact that many shops in Canton were asking for reducing their assigned quota. They justified their request with a list of reasons (excuses in the eye of this body) such as poor business, restructuring of trade, insufficient capital, and so on. In mid July, 1938, the campaign organizing body released the third interim report on the selling of the bond, in which the performance of Canton Chamber of Commerce ranked bottom of the league, with slightly over 100,000 yuan collected and submitted to the government, instead of the 3.4 million it was assigned. In fact, the overall performance of the campaign, though by no means poor, was quite far from what the government had originally anticipated: of the targeted amount of 15 million yuan, only about 8 million was eventually raised and reached the treasury. This lacklustre result led the authorities to decide that though the campaign was ended on the last day of June, its office would remain open so that defaulters were still expected to make their payment, and further or late submission of contributions would be received. As late as early August, 1938, the Chamber was still re-issuing an earlier demand to “all shop assistants in the city [of Canton]”, pleading them to allow their employers to cut a slice of their wages for the purpose of buying bond for them. The appeal of patriotism was apparently not unlimited.

“Give Money! Give Money! Give Money!”

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99 YHB, 24/6/1938.
100 YHB, 22/6/1938.
101 YHB, 7/7/1938.
102 YHB, 19/6/1938.
103 YHB, 21/7/1938.
104 YHB, 13/6/1938.
106 This was the headline used by ZSRB between August 14 and 21, 1938.
On August 13, 1938, the anniversary of the “heroic battle of resistance in Shanghai”, the Guangdong government launched a week-long public donation campaign, which was named “8.13 Give Money Campaign” (八一三獻金運動), in the city of Canton and some towns in major counties in the province. Comparing with the earlier large-scale fund raising campaigns in Canton and the province, this one had taken a somewhat different approach, with the hope of reaching the targeted amount not only technically more easily, but also within time.

First of all, the campaign organizer deliberately put up a competitive touch of provincialism to the event. In public mediums such as radio broadcast and the press, before and during the campaign, official publicists emphasized repeatedly that one of the main reasons for this operation was to show to China, Japan and the world that “the spirit of Great Guangdong” (大廣東精神), which had been expressed through its historical successes in bringing about the successful Republican revolution in China, in financing the Northern Expedition, and in championing against foreign imperialism in south China, was still very much alive in the current resistance against the Japanese invasion of China. Since the city of Wuhan in central China had launched a mass donation campaign in July, 1938, to help finance its defence against an imminent Japanese attack, and had successfully raised an impressive sum of 1 million yuan in a week’s time, the aim of this campaign in Canton and Guangdong was to “break the record held by Wuhan”. Secondly, this “Give [Your] Money Campaign”, as it was commonly known, adopted a bottom-up approach which distinguished it completely from the earlier top-down public-bonds-subscription campaigns in Canton. Although donation was voluntary, official and unofficial organizations, commercial and industrial establishments were “invited” to contribute. In the organizer’s eye, this could allow greater number of ordinary people to participate in this patriotic event, which was also a war mobilization effort, so that these participants would become even more nationalistic and prepared to make further sacrifice for the defence of Canton, which was hailed in official media at that time as the last bastion of China’s access to the coastline. The earlier top-down approach was, the organizer admitted, not ideal because it failed to meet the targeted sum, and also failed to mobilize a wider section of the local populace and hence the important message of national salvation failed to reach the greatest number of people in Canton and the province.

Throughout the week when this event was being held, there was heavy coverage of this campaign in the press, especially official newspapers such as Zhongshan ri bao which was published by the KMT in Canton. Full-multi-page reports on this campaign provide us with day-to-day details about various aspects of this operation and also the popular attitudes toward this week-long carnival-like fund raising event, just about two months before Canton fell into the Japanese hands.
For this event, six locations in Canton, all bustling hubs, were selected and on each one of them an elevated stage made of bamboo scaffolding was built. These “donation stages” (xian jin tai 献金台) were decorated with five-colour electric bulbs, a portrait of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, national flags, and some publicity pennants. These stages were also temporary offices for the officials, government staff, social notables (as invigilators), and voluntary helpers who assisted in managing the event.\textsuperscript{107} Every mornings in this week, “Morning Chanting Teams” (chen hu dui 晨呼隊), manned by the city’s various youth associations and patriotic societies, were dispatched to different parts of Canton in early morning hours, started shouting patriotic slogans and singing patriotic songs at 5 A.M., to plead citizens to “give money”.\textsuperscript{108} At the most busy spots, student and women associations were invited to provide patriotic entertainment, such as singing nationalistic songs, drama performance, or simply chanting patriotic slogans, to the passersby and donors, with the hope of arousing their awareness of their national duty in taking active part in the city’s war efforts.

Throughout the week of this campaign, the official daily Zhongshan ri bao published on each day at least a two-page reports about the event in all six different spots in Canton, and also, to a lesser extent, in other county towns; unofficial newspapers such as Yue hua bao also followed the whole event closely. Predictably, most of these new reports were focused on those patriotic citizens who were reportedly lining up in long queues, waiting for their turn of walking up to the stages to make donation. Once on the stage, they were asked to show to the staff the items of their donation (ranged from cash, gold nuggets, silver ingots, jewelry, precious stones, golden dentures, gold or silver- plated tournament trophies, etc), who would then make a record of the items in writing, and the donors would drop their donation into a big collection box, and made a short speech to the bystanders if they wish. These news reports unfailingly stressed the participation in this patriotic event by “all walks of life”, but in particular the city’s low-income group, particularly, as judged by the number of reportage, manual workers, coolies, rickshaw pullers, waitresses, hawkers, beggars, and shoe-shine boys. Also regularly featured in those reports were senior citizens or retirees, who were poor but still insisted on donating their lifetime savings, as well as young children who donated their petty cash in saving boxes, and child labour who made a living in shoe shinning or begging in the streets but donated their days of income to the cause of defending Canton. Each day during that particular week, local newspapers such as Zhongshan ri bao fed its readers with touching story after story of ordinary men and women in Canton (and other parts of the province) who sacrificed their meager income or savings for this noble purpose. Examples are abundant and the followings are a few randomly chosen. A shoe-polishing boy, named Wu Weiding, had made at

\textsuperscript{107} ZSRB, 14 and 18/8/1938.
\textsuperscript{108} ZSRB, 14/8/1938.
least 200 rounds of donation, each time a few copper coins which he had just earned from his sweaty job, and was estimated to have donated no less than 70 yuan. He also mobilized 4 other boys, also in shoe-polishing “business”, who made at least 40 rounds of donation. The maidservant of the wife of a military commander in Canton was so touched by the patriotic acts of many low-income donors, she came forward onto a stage, told the duty officers (her mistress was one of them) that she was penniless, and then removed her gold denture and dropped it into the collection box. Even a blind man, named Deng Xuanxiang, was escorted up to the stage and dropped 2 yuan into the box. In addition to these individuals, there were also representatives or staff from different organizations, official or unofficial, commercial or non-profiteering, most of them belonged to the category of “donation by appointment” (yu yue xian jin 預約獻金), marched to one of the six stages to present their collective donation to the duty officers. Opium guild, government offices, schools and universities, student and labour unions, business associations, charitable organizations, and many others in Canton, met their “appointment” and made their donation in pride and with joy.

As in the earlier two fund-raising campaigns in Canton, this one, albeit taken a different approach and undoubtedly won the participation of a much wider spectrum of the populace, was not without difficulty in winning the full support of the vast majority, and the merchant community in particular. It is beyond doubt that a substantial number of ordinary citizens did show up and donate something at one of the six collection points in the city, as a means to experience that I-have-done-my-patriotic-duty sense of satisfaction. It is, however, dubious that the hitting of the target of raising over one million yuan (to break the Wuhan’s record) was mainly the result of the people’s spontaneous and voluntary contributions. First of all, “voluntary donation” was only one of the tactics the organizing body adopted in this movement; the old method, and probably more convenient and efficient, of “involuntary contribution” was also employed. Before the official launching started, the campaign organizer had already made it clear that specific sectors of business or people were required to take part in this movement. Days before the event was launched, native banking sector and the merchant community, for examples, had been identified and “requested” to play a leading role in the forthcoming campaign; the former was “requested” to donate an amount equivalent to 5 percent of a bank’s

109 ZSRB, 16 and 17/8/1938.
110 ZSRB, 17/8/1938.
111 ZSRB, 14/8/1938.
112 YHB and ZSRB, 14-19/8/1938, passim.
113 Wu Tiecheng, Head of Guangdong Provincial Government, had stressed in a public radio broadcast that citizens should not consider making donation as fulfillment of the nationals’ duty of saving the country. Handing out pecuniary donation was merely one form of expression of one’s patriotic feeling which lasted only for one week, when the campaign was still underway. ZSRB, 16/8/1938.
“provident fund” (yin hang gong ji jin 銀行公積金), whereas the latter, represented by the Canton Chamber of Commerce, had reportedly “agreed to donate” (ren juan 認捐) 0.5 million yuan. All the staff in Kowloon-Canton Railway Company were required to contribute a sum equivalent to 1/6 or 1/3 of their wages, depending on his salary; and all shipping companies were levied a designated minimum sum, ranging from 60 to 10 yuan, based upon the nature of their business. Private motor vehicle owners in Canton were also required to pay 10 yuan for a small flag on which was written: “Give money to save [our] country”; all private-vehicle drivers were “expected” to mount this paper, which was effectively an official proof of “donation”, in a conspicuous place of their cars, and failure to comply would lead them running into the trouble of being stopped on the streets by pickets or enthusiasts from the city’s many patriotic youth leagues, who were roaming the city’s streets looking for private vehicles without this flag.

Civil servants, staff in government offices, and military units were all required to give donation. As a result, on each day in that particular week, this group of donors, usually represented by a small team of officers and staff, had unfailingly shown up at the donation stages to present their contributions. Were they all forced to donate against their will, or did they all contribute reluctantly? This is a question which cannot be answered with indisputable exactitude. There were, no doubt, civil servants and government officials who sincerely wanted to donate. Officials and staff in the six departments of Canton Municipal Government, for example, had amassed about 38,000 yuan on this occasion. However, there were also others who did not show the same level of enthusiasm, or perhaps even avoid from taking part in it. Zhu Xiuxia, a senior KMT member and also academics in Canton at that time, wrote that low-ranking civil servants were generally questioning the fairness of asking them to contribute, since they had already been subjected to various austerity measures such as salary cut and surcharges on wages in the past few months. Zhu disagreed with the grievances that he heard from these disgruntled low-ranking government employees because a certain level of self-denying financial sacrifice to the “sacred cause of national salvation”, was no comparison with those who sacrificed their lives on the frontlines fighting for the survival of China. Moreover, he added, many civil servants were leading a lifestyle which was hardly austere at all, such as spending on lavish feasts.

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115 ZSRB, 16/8/1938.
116 ZSRB, 10/8/1938. Many drivers, however, did not comply and in consequence were stopped by Youth League members in the streets and not allowed to leave, which was taken as a form of warning to other unrepentant drivers. ZSRB, 16/8/1938.
117 YHB and ZSRB, 13-21/8/1938, passim.
118 ZSRB, 17/8/1938.
119 ZSRB, 14/8/1938.
Three days after the launching of the campaign, the official organizing body announced the formation of a 60-men (and women)-strong Donation Inspection Team (Xian jin kao cha dui 献金考察队), with the aim of boosting donation by putting intimidating pressure on the city’s hundreds of official and unofficial associations. Team members were recruited from “enthusiasts” in various social and professional sectors, including peasant associations, worker unions, medical practitioner association, merchant guilds, student unions, youth leagues, women associations, and so on. They were subdivided into 20 “smaller teams”, each specializing in one profession or social sector, and deployed to scrutinize into, for four days, the city’s many official and unofficial associations, for assessing their level of commitment in this donation campaign: how well an association had performed, how much money its members had donated, to make record of the names, addresses, job titles of defaulters, and so on. Under-performers would be reprimanded; defaulters and those who did not contribute at all would be penalized by having their names published, and the associations would be ordered to stop working, their office-bearers and employees dismissed. These enthusiasts did their work diligently because within just 3 days after its formation, they had already audited over 600 associations in Canton, with membership of over 200,000. Their findings are scandalous: only about 20% of all the audited associations were considered as “having done their best in giving donation”; about 50% had made contributions, but merely a small sum; and 30% had made no contribution at all, some of them because their officer-in-charge were not in town and hence leaderless.\textsuperscript{120}

Throughout this week-long campaign, official newspaper reports reiterated one important message which had been keenly brought up by the organizing committee: the urban rich in Canton were largely uninterested in this movement of mass donation, and even though some of them might have taken part in it, they had not done enough. In a contributed article entitled “Shame on those who refused to contribute!” (Bu chu qian shi ke chi di 不出錢是可恥的) published on Zhongshan ri bao, for instance, its author pointed out in frustration that despite the popular slogan “To those who have money, give money” had been chanted repeatedly for months, our “wealthy compatriots” (fu you di tong bao men 富有的同胞們) were still hardly seen “contributing as much as they can” (chu jin qian 出盡錢), and very few of them had come forward voluntarily to give donation in response to national urgency. But no despair, the author reminded the readers, because this group of wealthy citizens were still “rescue-able” for they were after all also a part of our Chinese race.\textsuperscript{121} Another journalist wrote that it was not true that no man of means had ever come out to donate because he had witnessed many of them did come forward and dropped into the donation boxes hundreds and even thousands of yuan. He lamented, however, that they could have done far more than just a few thousands,

\textsuperscript{120} ZSRB, 17-18/8/1938.
\textsuperscript{121} ZSRB, 15/8/1938.
and that he had not seen any wealthy man who handed out ten thousand or more.\footnote{122} This, perhaps, was an exaggeration because in a contributed article to another daily in Canton, its author, who claimed to have observed at all six collection locations, wrote that most of the donors whom he saw were “toiling masses” (lao ku da zhong 勞苦大衆), and hardly anyone out of a few hundreds was spotted giving away over a thousand yuan.\footnote{123}

Not every critic, however, was so nice; some were critical and blunt. The leader on the 18 July issue of Zhongshan ri bao, entitled “Further advice to our compatriots in the business sector” (Dui shang jie tong bao zai jia quan mian 對商界同胞再加勸勉), was started with a round of heartfelt praise to those donors who came from the low-income group in Canton: beggars, shoe-polishing boys, elderly, crippled, blind men, refugees, rickshawmen, wounded soldiers, hawkers, coolie and menial labour. The sum they contributed, though usually small, was morally meaningful given their meager income. In contrast, the leader stressed, “what is imperfect about the campaign in the last five days is the absence of any phenomenon of enthusiastic participation by wealthy merchants and businessmen, native bankers, property owners and landlords, and those rich refugees who are seeking safety abroad”. To the disgust of this editor, many wealthy merchants and leading bankers in the city had donated not cash or precious metals, but “priced shares” (you jia gu piao 有價股票) and silver-plated trophies which did not worth much;\footnote{124} and the “collective donation from seven [local] banks amounts merely to an unnoticeable sum of 2,700 yuan!”. Many local businessmen, whose prosperous businesses were benefited from the war, such as shipping, hotels, restaurants, and military suppliers, “are seemingly unconvinced, indifferent and untouched” by what was going on.\footnote{125}

In another article entitled “Fleeing from calamity, and donating money” (Tao nan yu xian jin 逃難與獻金), its author presented a similar view, but from a more economic perspective and in sarcastic tone. First of all, Shen Qian, the author, described the phenomenon that whenever air raid sirens were on, usually in early mornings, the city’s rich people would mostly flock to the area around Shackle, which was commonly believed to be safe haven from Japanese bombardment given its proximity to the foreign settlement in Canton, Shameen. They all went there by taxi or rickshaw, and once there, they all, as a rule, sought refuge in mainly three “places”: 1) some would get a table in one of the many restaurants or tea houses in this district, where they enjoyed a good breakfast; 2) some would check-in one the many over-priced hotels or guesthouses in the area, preferably those concrete built

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\footnote{122}{Jian Ren, “Xian jin yun dong’ in Guangzhou”, in ZSRB, 16/8/1938.}
\footnote{123}{“Xian jin gui lai shu gan”, YHB, 19/8/1938.}
\footnote{124}{According to the leader of a local newspaper, stock or share was not an ideal form of donation because to convert it into cash took time and cost commission fees, and the prices of the donated shares were not necessarily good. Gold or silver plated trophies were also not so valuable and practically useless. YHB, 19/8/1938.}
\footnote{125}{ZSRB, 18/8/1938.}
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(some of these establishments were having so good business that the proprietors not only raised the room prices by more than 200%, but also introduced ingenious measures to maximize profits, such as installing temporary beds on corridors and lobby, bigger guest rooms partitioned into smaller cubicles, etc.);^{126} 3) some would simply take a boat, cross the river and headed south to the rural suburbs. All these, the author argued, needed money, and cost in total at least 10,000 yuan a day. This money should have been used on more meaningful purposes, and donation was one of them, and those who benefited from this wartime prosperity, especially hotel and restaurant owners, taxi and rickshaw owners, and so on, should give more in this donation campaign. He then went on analyzing how much capital had been shipped out from Canton to other safe havens such as Hong Kong and Macao, and came up with an estimate of a minimum 3.25 million yuan by far. Merchants and businessmen, he pleaded, should make a good role model for other wage earners to follow, by contributing more generously.^{127} In a radio broadcast promoting this campaign, the speaker, a social notable, criticized angrily those “many dishonest, disloyal, unmoved, and spineless people who take advantage of the currently unsettling situation to loot, and made huge fortune out of national crisis”. In the critical eye of this speaker, those wealthy men and women who refused to give substantial donation in this campaign were all “mischievous merchants”, “liars”, “crooks” and “hypocrites”. He ended his long speech by borrowing, he claimed, from Sun Yat-sen: that “one-hundred-thousand wealthy men in China is not even as [respectable] as one prostitute in Japan” because in Japan prostitutes could enjoy freedom under the protection of their strong country, whereas wealthy men in China were deprived of this freedom and national protection because their country was at the brink of extinction and those who had the means, like “those wealthy men in our Guangdong”, were reluctant to help.^{128}

On the last day of the campaign, Zhongshan ri bao published another leader which is just as critical at the wealthy as the last one. The leader started with reports from Hong Kong where a donation campaign of the same nature was underway. In a regular meeting of the Hong Kong Chinese Chamber of Commerce, after patriotic slogans had been chanted by the attending members, none of them came forward to give donation. After a few embarrassing moments, the chairman of another merchant association took out a one-hundred-dollar note and dropped it into the collection box. Still, nobody followed suit. Only after “a long long time of waiting”, another member, who was a medical practitioner, put another hundred-dollar note into the box, and as soon as this was done, the chairman announced the meeting was adjourned. The leader then moves on recounting what reporters had seen outside

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126 ZSRB, 19/8/1938.
128 Wu Kang, “Ba yi san xian jin yun dong di zhen yi yi”, in ZSRB, 18/8/1938. Registered prostitutes in Canton and other county cities did take part in this campaign, and their “commendable actions” were always reported in local daily. YHB, 14/8/1938; ZSRB, 17 and 20/8/1938.
luxurious department stores in Hong Kong. Business was said to be booming and therefore volunteers from the campaign stationed outside these stores, trying to solicit donation from those modern and well-dressed men and women exiting these exclusive places. These “modern men and women”, without exception, just ignored them and walked away. The riches in Canton, the leader added, were responding to the call for generous subscription in similarly disappointing manner. Two days before the official closure of the event, most likely after noticing the lackluster progress, the organizing body announced the extension of the campaign indefinitely, but rationalized the decision euphemistically by saying that donations continued to flood in, and the earnest demand from the city’s many patriotic associations (such as the KMT Youth League, and other official and semi-official anti-Japanese-invasion organizations) was overwhelming and hard to decline. In an open letter to citizens of Canton and beyond, the same message was reiterated: that only the city’s poor and low-income group had responded enthusiastically to the last “Give-money movement”, by generously giving away their savings and hard-earned cash to the government. In contrast, very few “wealthy gentlemen and prominent businessmen” had contributed, and among these very few rich men who did contribute, the amounts they gave were “too small indeed”. Most disappointingly, the amount of donation these “wealthy gentlemen and prominent businessmen” had made was less than half of that of the poor people. “If our country falls”, the letter asked, “then how possibly can you (i.e. the city’s very rich) face your own conscience, your own ancestors, and your own children and grandchildren?” Merchants and businessmen were begged not to make Guangdong losing its glory, and they have to come forward to donate, and those who had already done so should come out to give more. One day after the original campaign ended, Yue hua bao published a lengthy two-part leader about this campaign. The title of this leader tells it all: “The lower‐strata of society are the saviour of China!” (jiu Zhongguo jie xia ceng she hui ye救中國者下層社會也). “Public” concern and disappointment with the rich in Canton can not be clearer.

It is not fair to criticize all the tens of thousands merchants and businessmen in Canton as being indifferent to the imminent national crisis and did not respond positively to this, and the other earlier, campaign. Newspapers in Canton in that week published somewhat detailed records of donations given by a wide range of people from beggars to shopkeepers, and from these records it is clear that a number of shopkeepers, guilds, factory owners, congee or noodle shops operators, trading companies, and so on, did take part in this “patriotic event” by, not unusually, giving away a day’s income or profit to the cause. The popular daily Yue hua bao

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129 ZSRB, 19/8/1938.
130 ZSRB, 19 and 20/8/1938.
131 YHB, 22/8/1938.
133 For instance, see any issue of ZSRB between 14 and 21/8/1938, p.1.
also published name lists of donors and the amount of their donation which were released by the organizing body of the campaign. These lists recorded only those who had contributed 100 yuan or above. On these lists, names of business establishments (such as shops, commercial firms, factories, and guilds) can be easily spotted, and their proportion to the overall high-alms givers was by no means small or insignificant. For example, on a donor list released on 14/8/1938, at least 13 out of roughly 120 donors were business establishments, and over half of the remainders businessmen, entrepreneurs, merchants, social notables and government officials. On another donor list, which was for those “donating by appointment” (yu yue xian jin 預約獻金) and had donated 100 yuan or above (the majority of these donors had in fact given a lot more then one hundred), out of approximately a total of 108 donors, 42 of them were business establishments, and the remainders were businessmen, labour unions, government and military offices, and workers from various industries. The assessment report by the intimidating Donation Inspection Team, whose work has been elaborated in the above, also indicated that those “under-achievers” whom they had indentified were not just from the merchant community, but from all sorts of professional groups and citizens’ associations.

However, government officials, who were echoed by local journalists, put all the blame on the merchant community and “the rich” in Canton, and held them responsible for their difficulty (if not exactly failure) in raising the targeted sum of two-million yuan, and that not only tarnished the heavily publicized image of “Great Guangdong spirit”, but also brought embarrassment to the official organizer (which was in fact the Canton government) for its near failure in breaking the record of Wuhan. On 15 August, the official Zhongshan ri bao announced, somewhat hysterically, on the front page that the record of Wuhan would be certainly broken because 800,000 yuan had already been raised in just two days. Almost on the same day, articles about this campaign published on this daily no longer mentioned “one million” as target, but 2 million instead. On the third day of the campaign, however, it was apparent that the steam had already gone, with about 150,000 yuan raised. Then on the rest of the week, approximately 100,000 yuan was raised each day. The total sum, based on these figures, would be around 1.3 million yuan. However, the actual amount of cash received, according to more reliable figures provided by the organizing committee in late August, was even hardly 1 million, but just about 0.6 million yuan, without counting in it those donated items such as “precious metals”,

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134 YHB, 14/8/1938.
135 YHB, 18/8/1938.
136 ZSRB, 19/8/1938. This report did not specify which groups were under-achievers. Given the generally bias attitude of the government and the journalists toward rich merchants and businessmen in Canton at that time, this report would have highlighted this point if it was mainly the business community that had had not done well in the campaign.
137 ZSRB, 14 to 21/8/1938.
gold denture, golden rings, hair pins, and so on. It was very likely that from the third day of the campaign onward, the anxious organizers had already noticed the “danger” of wide of the heavily publicized 2-million-yuan mark. In order to save face and to boost donation from men with means, preferably from those wealthy individuals who were mostly businessmen or merchants, the organizing committee, consisted mainly of KMT officials and activists from the city’s various political associations, then all pointing their fingers at “the rich” in Canton, and these “rich men” had easily become a scapegoat for missing an impossible target in the public show of fund-raising patriotism.

Your/My Money, Your/My Country? Concluding Remarks

The concerns of these critical journalists and government officials about the lackluster participation of men with means in Canton remind us of the innate complexity of historical reality. Were the poor people in Canton generally more nationalistic than the merchants and “the rich”? All the journalists and the officials who were present at the “Give-money campaign” in that week in August, 1938, chose to believe that the urban poor and the low-income blue collars had sincerely fulfilled their patriotic duty by giving away all they had to their besieged country. In their reports, they always highlighted the stories of those commendable individuals such as beggars or rickshawmen who gave away their day’s wages, senior citizens of humble background who donated their life-time savings, penniless “petite urbanites” who surrendered whatever valuable such as golden dentures, iron bars and wrist watches, hawkers who sold foodstuff by donation stages and contributed all they earned in a day to the coffer, and so on; whereas the merchants and “the rich” were believed to have hidden themselves in their cozy houses and stayed away, as far as possible, from the campaign. This highly favourable perception of the “ordinary people” was clearly full of biases. First of all, those “ordinary people” or the “urban poor” who walked up onto the stages and presented their donations might have done so out of a motley of possible reasons, not just innocent self-denying patriotic sentiment. Some did it for the work units which they represented, probably voluntarily, but also possibly under peer pressure; some out of obligation (many children, for example, were ushered by their parents to give away their pocket money); many social notables did it out of patriotism, no doubt, but also probably to show the public and the authorities that they had done their part as “good citizens”; “patriotic prostitutes” from eight high-class brothels in Canton, escorted by high-ranking officers from a semi-official anti-Japan women’s association, marched to a donation point, ascended the stage, gave their donations, out of their wishes to take part in this movement, but also perhaps intended to display publicly their capacity of nationalistic sentiments was on the same par with

other citizens, as well as commanding public respect of them as patriotic nationals; \(^{139}\) some did it for nationalism and also probably for self-aggrandizement, such as the case of a “master traveller” (lu xing jia 旅行家), Zhang Shangren, who travelled around the world on foot from 1929 to 1937, donated ten pieces of commemorative medals which had been awarded to him by various Overseas associations in different parts of the world, and the official newspaper featured his story on two consecutive days, with a photograph of him smiling and holding his “gold and silver medals”. \(^{140}\) This week-long carnival-like event, with “entertainment” provided by schools’ brass bands, choirs, and drama performance by the city’s various youth associations, had certainly created a joyful and emotionally charged atmosphere so that ordinary denizens and passersby were easily touched and then joined in the crowds by giving away a few copper coins or yuan. They probably had experienced nationalism there, but their patriotic participation might have also ended there.

Secondly, although one ought not doubt the apparently true sincerity of these “poor” or “low-income” donors, it does not necessarily follow that they were then “the saviours of China” or their commitment to the defence of Canton have to be deep and thorough, because there are so many questions which remained unanswered, and important details which are unknown to us, such as how possibly could these enthusiastic journalists or concerned officials know in certainty that the money those elderly gave away, for instance, were indeed their lifetime savings, but not just a portion of their wealth? Giving away a day’s wage, or personal items such as golden dentures, a pair of silver earrings, wrist watches and so on, was certainly expressions of the donors’ nationalistic feeling, but there is no way to ascertain that these donors had engaged themselves any further in other patriotic activities related to the war effort. Without the support of this kind of evidence, it is unconvincing to argue that the extent and the depth of this “poor-men nationalistic sentiment”, so to speak, was indisputably wider and stronger than that of those men with means. Instead of enrolling themselves into the army or as volunteer militia, as the government had been so anxiously imploring them to do, there is no shortage of examples of denizens who fled from, or did whatever they could to avoid conscription. \(^{141}\) There were also numerous reports about workers who, instead of uniting together to face their common enemy, spent their time on a wide range of “things” which could hardly be deemed “patriotic”: illegal gambling, smuggling ‘enemy goods’ (i.e. Japanese products) into city and towns, factional fight with rival

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\(^{139}\) ZSRB, 20/8/1938.  
\(^{140}\) ZSRB, 18 and 19/8/1938.  
\(^{141}\) Examples are too many to cite in full here. The followings are just a few examples which provide us with a glimpse into the seriousness of the problem. HZRB, 5/11/1937, 16/12/1937, 10/3/38, 6/4/38. It must be added that this problem of avoiding conscription was also observed in other parts of China, as Lucien Bianco has described in his Peasants Without the Party (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), chapter 11.
unions, boycotting merchants and guilds because of pay dispute and went on strike despite government’s call for restraint for the sake of social stability in the time of war. There were, however, also people who were willing to and making a small fortune from selling provisions to Japanese navy who were constantly in search of food to sustain their operation of blocking the coast.\textsuperscript{142} Private life of denizens, in spite of the mounting nationalistic sentiments and government’s repeated calls for war mobilisation, remained “undisturbed”. For example, women were always on the news, not just because of participation in the war effort, which was not unusual especially among young students, but also for a motley of reasons which had little to do with patriotism: court cases of divorce initiated by disgruntled wives and concubines; women charged for murdering their abusive husbands; elopement of young couples; extra-marital affairs of women; and so on.\textsuperscript{143}

Merchant and business community, on the other hand, was no less diverse in its response to the government’s call for their active participation in the war efforts, ranging from sending shop assistants to join the city’s volunteer militia, to making financial contributions, both voluntary and involuntary, in successive fund-raising campaigns. As we have seen in the early part of this study, merchants and businessmen, quite contrary to their self-created public image as committed patriots who had always unreservedly supported the Nationalist government wholeheartedly in the war against Japan, they were clearly divided among themselves on the extent of giving away their personal wealth to the cause of nationalism. The Canton Chamber of Commerce, though basically a civilian organization but under heavy scrutiny of the State, would like its members to comply with the government’s call for involuntary subscription to the two public bonds and other projects, such as the one which aimed at raising funds from public donations for purchasing U.S.-made warplanes for the dated Chinese air force.\textsuperscript{144} The ensuing great difficulty that the Chamber had encountered in mobilizing its members (and non members too) tells us something meaningful about this sector and its relations with the State. First of all, it is not hard to see that not every merchant or businessman in Canton (and other parts of the province too) was willing to give up his wealth in exchange for official acclamation. Cantonese merchants and businessmen, like most of their fellow denizens in other sectors in

\textsuperscript{142} All these issues deserve to be elaborated in further details in another article. For our current purpose, it suffices to mention here that local newspapers are full of reports about these unlawful or undesirable behaviours, and they are just too abundant to be cited completely in this article. Some randomly selected examples, which provide glimpses of these problems in Canton and its vicinity, are as follows: HZRB, 24/11/1937, 19/1/1938, 17/1/1938, 19/2/1938; YHB, 14/4/1938, 1/5/1938, 13/5/1938, 6/6/1938, 25/6/1938.

\textsuperscript{143} For more details, see Virgil K.Y. Ho’s “‘Permanent Waves and Weird Clothes are not Allowed’: Women in Canton During the Early Phase of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1938, paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies in Asia Conference, Kyoto, Japan, June, 2016.

\textsuperscript{144} For detail, see Guangdong ge jie chou kuan gou ji qing zu Jiang wei yuan chang shou chen wei yuan hui bao gao (Guangzhou: N.p., 1937).
Canton, were independent enough not succumb easily to excessive control by the State. Making sacrifice to their country, in the view of many of them, was not without any limit, even though their country was under threat by an invading foreign army. The choice made by the majority of these so-called “men with means” was apparently easy: to take an affordable part in those official fund-raising campaigns, but not committing to the level demanded by the authorities. Nationalism might be important, but self-interest came first.

Secondly, the merchant community’s response to the compulsory acquisition of public bonds showed clearly that there is much exaggeration in those criticisms against them as being indifferent to the fate of the country or outright unpatriotic. In both the public-bonds campaigns and the donation movement, the merchant community did take noticeable part in all of them. Both the Chamber of Commerce and many individual members or guilds had tried to meet the assigned quota as closely as possible. Dunning teams were also deployed to give pressure on hesitant guilds’ members or shopkeepers to buy their allotted share of these bonds, and generous donations were given individually or collectively by these men with means at the six collection points, and their names, hundreds of them, were published on local newspapers as public recognition of their good deeds. It is, therefore, unfair to accuse the merchant community for passivity. However, it is also true that many others defaulted, and a substantial number of shopkeepers also refused to join any trade guild in order to escape from the “danger” of being drafted by the Chamber into these unpopular exercises of compulsory contribution. This tallies with what Marie-Claire Bergere’s apt description of bourgeoisie nationalism in the 1920s China, that the “Chinese bourgeoisie was very conscious of its own interests and that may have imposed some limitations upon its nationalistic fervour, [b]ut those limitations were also born of its sense of responsibility and its desire to be reasonable”.145 Pragmatism, in these cases, triumphed over patriotism. Pragmatism, however, did not altogether castrate nationalism too.

However, one complicated issue remains unresolved: Was this group of “reluctant merchants” unpatriotic? The straightforward answer seems to be a “yes”. One must, however, consider the possibility that although these reluctant businessmen had avoided compulsory contribution, some might have taken part in the campaign of voluntary donation since quite a number of merchants and businessmen, eminent or humble, were seen giving generous donations during this week-long event. Or, those who seemingly did not show up at the “give-money” campaign, such as Ho Tingzi (霍廷芝),146 one the most prominent businessmen in the province since the times of the late-Qing, was in fact the biggest donor (who handed

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146 His name was seemingly not on the donors lists, which contain a few thousands names, released by the organizing body and published on ZSRB and YHB each day on that week.
out a brow-raising sum of 200,000 yuan) in an earlier (1936-1937) fund-raising campaign for buying U.S.-made warplanes for China,\textsuperscript{147} and he was also elected as chief executive of Guangdong Provincial Chamber of Commerce and charged with the duty of promoting the National Salvation Public Bond to the business circles.\textsuperscript{148} To further complicate the issue, one must also ask whether the act of giving out donation alone was strong enough proof of a donor’s sustainable nationalistic commitment to the defence of Canton, not to mention Guangdong and even China. The coexistence of idealism with pragmatism was not easy, and the predicament of the merchant community reflected this uneasiness as well as the complexity of nationalism as a historical reality in the context of wartime Canton.

Thirdly, the defiance of a substantial number of merchants and businessmen against involuntary, and also to some extent voluntary, contributions indicated to the important fact that the party-state of Nationalist China, though tended to be authoritarian and even at times fascist in its governance, was not yet a mature and powerful totalitarian regime, as it is commonly portrayed in most history textbooks published in the People’s Republic of China.\textsuperscript{149} The Nationalist government, with the support of some of the Party activists and civilian associations, was demanding from Canton’s merchant community to contribute more to the coffers so that a large part of its military budget, which was estimated at 3 million yuan a day for the entire regime, could be covered as much as possible with their “donations”. This demand, though reiterated time and again during these months, had only been partially met by a reluctant, though still somewhat submissive, Chamber and many “wealthy gentlemen and prominent merchants” in Canton. The party-state, despite its reputation as a fascist totalitarian regime which had been eager to employ “white terror” to intimidate the disgruntled populace into submission,\textsuperscript{150} this time did not adopt excessive measures towards that end, besides employing those irritating tactics such as sending out teams of youth to stop private vehicles in public streets and demanded their owners to pay 10 yuan for a small flag for their cars which was a proof of fulfillment of “patriotic duty”, or punishing those senior officers in government departments who failed to meet the assigned quota of bonds.

\textsuperscript{147} see Guangdong ge jie chou kuan gou ji qing zhu Jiang wei yuan chang shou chen wei yuan hui bao gao (Guangzhou: N.p., 1937), p. 5; HZRB, 1/12/1937.

\textsuperscript{148} HZRB, 1/12/1937.

\textsuperscript{149} One of these texts writes that the Nanking government had “utilized high-handed terrorist measures to force national capitalists to buy public bonds [and] to pay ransoms”, so much so that these capitalists had run into big financial trouble. Guo jia jiao wei she ke si ed., Zhongguo ge ming shi (Beijing: Gao deng jiao yu chu ban she, 1996), p. 165.

\textsuperscript{150} Shanghai capitalists were forced, extorted and intimidated into subscription of government loans and bonds by the Nanking government, and the situation was described by the American consul as “a veritable reign of terror among the money classes”. This form of government “gangsterism” had passed its height since 1928, but ‘the basic attitude of the regime toward these groups, however, did not change”. Lloyd E. Eastman, The Abortive Revolution, pp. 226-235; also Park Coble, Jr., The Shanghai Capitalists, pp. 44-45.
subscription. There was no report of kidnapping or blackmail of defiant businessmen, or deployment of Blue Shirts or young fanatics to intimidate the merchant community in general, and defaulters in particular. Perhaps the use of violence might have saved the Canton government from its embarrassing failure in these efforts of social mobilization, as its Socialist successor had so readily and so successfully proven in the early years of “the Liberation”.

Human nature and complexity of a society and its people was best unveiled in a time of war and conflict. This humble paper helps broaden our knowledge of how the people in Canton had reacted to the approaching war, as well as reveals the problem with interpreting socio-political events in this turbulent times through the narrow lens of Chinese nationalism. Patriotism meant different things to different people who responded to nationalistic appeal in different manners. Although nationalism in Canton might be making a lot of noise, it was at best one faction of a much larger picture of Cantonese society and its one-million residents, because preoccupation with self-preservation and self-interest were apparently also common. Those who were patriotic and proactive, indifferent and passive, or the mixed of both, were all out there. The varieties of people’s experiences in wartime Canton and Guangdong were just too diverse to defy simple generalization. A few things, however, were clear amidst all this ambiguity: that the Cantonese bourgeoisie, though always the victims of government’s extortionate borrowing, were not always submitted themselves faithfully to such unfairness, and, perhaps even more importantly, that the appeal of nationalism to the urbanites and the business circles was not without limit. Patriotism, though by all means was there in Canton, was apparently not strong enough to arouse political consciousness and activism of the people to a higher level so that they would have responded more widely, positively and persistently to the war mobilization efforts. All this, in addition to the military tactic of “conserving the strength”, contributed to the easy fall of Canton into the hands of Japanese army on 21 October, 1938.