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China's Trial by Fire: The Shanghai War of 1932

Donald Allan Jordan

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*China's Trial by Fire*presents the balanced history of how, ten years before Pearl Harbor, Japan tested modern China in a thirty-three-day war, now known as the Shanghai War of1932. Often obscured by the larger World War II, this history details how the Chinese fought from trenches against Japan's modern bombers and navy, and formed a defense that brought the country together for the first time.
Unlike other histories' brief generalizations of the incident, this study traces the war from the initial January 28th Japanese marine raid on Chinese Shanghai. It also studies the roles played by the prevailing Japanese leaders, including the last prewar civilian Prime Minister, Emperor Hirohito, and Admiral Nomura, who was later assigned to pre-Pearl Harbor negotiations.
Not least, the work bridges scholarly boundaries by highlighting the economics of China's leading trade metropolis, Shanghai; the desperate attempts of Chinese politicians and press to manipulate anti-imperialist and anti-Japanese propaganda; and the ways in which the failure of positional trench warfare against Japanese mechanized mobility provided lessons to German observers and the Communists.
Donald Jordan has drawn from as complete a range of primary sources as are available. Both the Nanking and Taipei archives, as well as resources from Tokyo, Settlement Shanghai's police records, Washington, the League of Nations, and London were researched.
Knowing how greatly the Nationalist defense in 1932 influenced the Chinese Communists expands the relevance for scholars of this illustrated study. Others, especially those curious about the U. S. entanglement leading to Pearl Harbor, will find much more than the story of a regional skirmish.
Donald Jordan is Professor of East Asian History, Ohio University.

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