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Source: *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Jan., 2006), pp. 137-182

Published by: Society for Military History

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3396811>

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Historiographical Essay

The China-Japan War, 1931–1945



David M. Gordon

WAR, Sun Tzu tells us, “is of vital importance to the state, being the arena in which life or death is decided and the pathway to survival or ruination.” The Japanese invasion on 7 July 1937 put the Chinese Republic in mortal danger. In the end, the Republic prevailed. But China was devastated. The war also made possible a successful Communist revolution that destroyed traditional society. By 1945, Japan, too, was almost destroyed. Its empire lost and its political structure remade by its American conquerors, the country would eventually enter a new period of peaceful economic development. Both nations were fundamentally transformed by the conflict. The China-Japan war, the catalyst of these changes, is arguably the most important event in the history of East Asia in the twentieth century. This essay surveys much of the literature on that war, published since the 1970s, from its origins to its end.

The war began in 1937. However, the events leading to it started almost twenty years earlier. Marius Jansen describes how, until the end of the First World War in 1918, Japan had participated with other nations in the division of China into spheres of influence.¹ Unfortunately, the Japanese were unable to adjust to the postwar anti-imperialist policies of

1. Marius B. Jansen, “Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 61–79.

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the Soviet Union and the United States. Russia and the West were ultimately willing to accept a strong, united China in control of its own destiny. The Japanese, with a greater economic stake in the country, were not. Until 1945, the Japanese would not abandon their belief that China was a disunited collection of provinces that could be manipulated one against the other, and ultimately conquered piecemeal. This was one cause of the war.

William Kirby has described how intelligently the Chinese Republican leadership operated in the post-1918 world.² They used obduracy, legalism, and economic boycotts to reduce Western treaty rights, including foreign control of Chinese maritime customs. But, the methods that worked so well against the West would prove useless at best, and counterproductive at worst, against Japan.

Unlike the Western powers, Japan had little reason to change its relations with China. The rise of provincial warlordism after 1916 demonstrated the fundamental disunity of the country. Japan had not been weakened, like Britain and France, by the First World War. The Japanese had also been largely unaffected by Wilsonian ideals about the self-determination of nations. They therefore saw no reason to back down to the demands of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT), or Nationalist Party, for treaty revision in the 1920s. When the British, along with the Americans, suddenly adopted a more conciliatory attitude at the end of 1926, Japanese obduracy left the country diplomatically isolated. The Japanese leaders felt doubly betrayed: first, by their erstwhile Western imperialist partners who had formerly presented a united front against Chinese nationalism; and second, by the KMT leaders themselves, who refused to honor treaties imposed on China before 1912. Japanese political and military leaders never got over their bewilderment and their anger, which would inform Japanese diplomacy and military operations until the end of the Second World War.

Masataka Kosaka has described Japan's continued pursuit of economic and political advantages through the 1930s.³ Essays edited by Richard Burns and Edward Bennett examine these policies, and the Chinese and American reactions to them.⁴ The careers of thirteen key American, Chi-

2. William C. Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican Era," in *Reappraising Republican China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Richard Louis Edmonds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179–204.

3. Masataka Kosaka, "The Showa Era (1926–1989)," in *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito*, ed. Carol Gluck and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), 27–47.

4. Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett, eds., *Diplomats in Crisis: United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919–1941* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1974).

nese and Japanese diplomats and foreign ministers in the decades before the war reveal an American foreign policy establishment divided on East Asian policy, from the sympathy of W. Cameron Forbes and Joseph C. Grew with Japan's economic and security needs, to support of China by Nelson T. Johnson and Stanley K. Hornbeck.⁵ Indecision and division led to immobility until the end of the 1930s. Most Japanese diplomats, united in support of increased economic and political control of China, differed only as to the means.⁶ Editors Burns and Bennett are sympathetic to the arguments of Japanese Foreign Minister Koki Hirota and U.S. Ambassador Forbes, who believed "the laws of nature still functioned in international affairs—that energy and efficiency were more important than the rights of possession," and that "the historical fact remained that dynamic nations grew at the expense of weaker ones." Burns and Bennett are hardest on the Chinese. Chiding their diplomats for "pursuing the illusion of collective security" and making "no effort to come to terms with Japanese power and efficiency," they suggest that the Chinese desire for "nothing less than total victory for their cause," naively pursued through "a program of public relations," contributed to the instability of the region.⁷

W. G. Beasley is more critical of Tokyo.⁸ Referring to J. Gallagher and R. Robinson's 1953 seminal article on the stages of imperialism, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," Beasley suggests that having achieved free trade, the second stage of imperialism, through the treaty port system, the United States and the European nations became willing, because of smaller economic stakes in China, to surrender treaty rights in the face of growing Chinese nationalism.⁹ The Japanese, unable to do so, advanced to the third stage of imperialism, the search for monopoly markets and investment opportunities.

Manchuria

The Great Depression and the economic diplomacy of the period also contributed to Japanese aggression. Japanese exports had been hit

5. Gary Ross, "The Diplomacy of a Darwinist"; Edward M. Bennett, "The Diplomacy of Pacification"; Herbert J. Wood, "The Diplomacy of Benevolent Pragmatism"; and Richard Dean Burns, "The Diplomacy of the Open Door," in Burns and Bennett, *Diplomats in Crisis*, 7–117.

6. Lee Farnsworth, "The Diplomacy of Expansionism"; Alvin D. Coox, "The Diplomacy of Crisis"; and Barbara Teters, "The Diplomacy of Bluff and Gesture," in Burns and Bennett, *Diplomats in Crisis*, 227–96.

7. Burns and Bennett, *Diplomats in Crisis*, xiv, xi.

8. W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

9. J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 6 (1953): 1–15.

hard by the Depression. The American Hawley-Smoot tariff in 1930, followed the next year by British imperial preference, threatened to make that damage permanent. Akira Iriye describes how Japanese leaders began to feel encircled by hostile Western powers.¹⁰ A new sense of national danger informed both political life and military planning. China seemed one of the few foreign markets still available. To secure it, the Japanese would go to war.

In 1931–32 the Kwantung Army, originally stationed to protect the Japanese-controlled South Manchurian Railroad, overran Manchuria. Local commanders were certain the country would provide the markets, raw materials, and foodstuffs Japan needed. The army leadership believed it would also make possible the autarky necessary for the coming war with the West they believed would decide the future of the world.

Mark Peattie has examined the desire for autarky that was central to the planning of Kanji Ishiwara, one of the Kwantung Army's most influential theoreticians.¹¹ He also explores the assumption of an impending world conflict with the Soviet Union and the Western powers that inspired so much of Ishiwara's thinking. Michael Barnhart discusses the central importance of Manchuria in the planning of other Japanese leaders.¹² Ishiwara had been certain that Chinese disunity would allow the easy conquest of Manchuria. He had not been alone. Donald Jordan shows how residual warlordism through the early 1930s convinced army planners on the General Staff that not only Manchuria, but all of North China, could be digested in stages.¹³ James Weland demonstrates how influential army intelligence officers, both with the Kwantung Army and in Tokyo, played a primary role in supporting this aggression.¹⁴

Once firmly implanted in Manchuria, Japanese leaders disagreed about the economic future of the country. The South Manchurian Railroad (SMR) and the industrial cartels wanted raw materials exported to the Japanese home islands. Army planners, many of whom opposed capitalism, wanted state-run enterprises to build up heavy industry in Manchuria itself. Alvin Coox discusses army hostility to the SMR as well

10. Akira Iriye, "The Failure of Economic Expansionism, 1918–1931," in *Japan in Crisis*, ed. Bernard Silberman and Harry Harootunian (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 237–69.

11. Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

12. Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

13. Donald A. Jordan, "The Place of Chinese Disunity in Japanese Army Strategy During 1931," *China Quarterly* 109 (1987): 42–63.

14. James Weland, "Misguided Intelligence: Japanese Military Intelligence Officers in the Manchurian Incident, September 1931," *Journal of Military History* 58 (July 1994): 445–60.

as some officers' hopes for a better future for all the peoples in the region. "Is it too extravagant to say," one army supporter asked, "that these half-dozen different races of Orientals now gathering in Manchukuo [as the Japanese called their Manchurian puppet state] may be mixed and fused in due course and develop a freshly vigorous type of nation, as has been done on the North American continent?"¹⁵ De-min Tao explores the writings of Japanese Sinologists, who in this optimistic vein praised the benefits brought by China's earlier Mongol and Manchu conquerors. They suggested the Japanese might do the same.¹⁶ While there is much self-deception in all of this, there can be no question that the Manchurian adventure was widely popular in Japan, as Louise Young has demonstrated in several of her writings.¹⁷

Japan was the only colonial power in East Asia to build a heavy industrial base outside the mother country, a phenomenon discussed by several authors in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, edited by Peter Duus, Ramon Myers, and Mark Peattie.¹⁸ Sydney Giffard explores the role the Japanese army and state took in the development of Manchurian industry.¹⁹ While the SMR had previously led economic development in the region, both it and other Japanese firms soon learned to take their lead from the army. Y. Tak Matsusaka explores how the Japanese military, while hostile to the SMR in Manchuria, used it as a stalking horse for further expansion by encouraging operations south of the Great Wall.²⁰

Manchuria became so important that many economic and military planners linked its preservation to the survival of Japan itself. In order to protect this enormous territory, the army would eventually be drawn into an endless China war, as well as a catastrophic clash with Soviet forces to the north.

15. Alvin D. Coox, "The Kwantung Army Dimension," in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 395–428; quotation on 426.

16. De-min Tao, "Japan's War in China: Perspectives of Leading Japanese Sinologists," in *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937–1945*, ed. David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 31–43.

17. Louise Young, "Imagined Empire: The Cultural Construction of Manchukuo," in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 71–96; Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

18. Duus, Myers, and Peattie, *Japanese Wartime Empire*.

19. Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers, 1890–1990* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994).

20. Y. Tak Matsusaka, "Managing Occupied Manchuria, 1931–1934," Duus, Myers, and Peattie, *Japanese Wartime Empire*, 97–135.

After occupying Manchuria, the Kwantung Army set about creating additional puppet regimes to its south and west. The stated aim was to extend a *cordon sanitaire* along the Mongolian border to defend the entire northern region from Russian Communism. Japanese leaders claimed they could not ignore the threat of Soviet troops so close to both Manchuria and Mongolia. The seeming incapacity of Chinese governments at the beginning of the 1930s to deal effectively with a growing native Communist movement, let alone the Soviet army, made this argument plausible.

By the mid-1930s, Japanese planning had become increasingly illogical. In 1934 Chiang Kai-shek had annihilated most of the Communist forces in southern China, and driven the ragged remainder to desolate Yen-an. Yet that same year Japan announced that it alone would take responsibility for the maintenance of peace, as well as the destruction of Communism, in all of East Asia.

Three years later, Japan invaded the rest of China. One reason was the desire to seize the rich iron and coal mines of Shansi. Another was to force Chiang Kai-shek to recognize the independence of Manchukuo. The Kwantung Army leadership arrogantly believed the Chinese army was of no account. They also continued to dismiss the idea that China was united by patriotic feeling. The general Japanese belief was that they could secure control of Manchuria and North China with three divisions in three months, and at a cost of one hundred million yen.

The earlier Japanese conquest of Manchuria had been ruthless. It had violated national sovereignty and international law. It had also been rational and clear-sighted. The Kwantung Army had pursued, and achieved, limited gains. It had made brilliant use of its superior military force. Decisions made after 1932 were irrational. Japan got trapped in an unwinnable war. The decision to attack Pearl Harbor in December 1941 brought the nation into a conflict with the world's most powerful industrial nation. The result is well known.

Planning for the conquest of Manchuria had taken into account Japan's own military and industrial strengths, as well as those of its Manchurian opponent. After Manchuria, Japanese planners ceased to think in terms of the war-making capacity of Japan, or its enemies. Consideration of industrial production and the size of enemy populations became irrelevant. The planners looked instead to decisive battles to win wars. Edward Drea believes the example of the battles at Mukden and Tsushima in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) had a fatal influence on war planning.²¹ The result

21. Edward J. Drea, "Chasing a Decisive Victory: Emperor Hirohito and Japan's War with the West (1941–1945)," in *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 169–215.

was that the Japanese hoped for too much from the capture of Nanking, the Chinese capital, in 1937. They made the same mistake at Pearl Harbor. The Japanese need to believe in the superiority of “spiritual” values over material, Drea observes, while understandable considering Japan’s relatively modest industrial capacity, introduced another irrational element.²² Meirion and Susie Harries’s detailed study of the Japanese army is equally critical of its strategic planning.²³ Informed by a combination of contempt for the enemy and a curious fatalism, Japanese military planners launched the war against China (as they later would against the United States) as a leap in the dark, without any plan to bring these conflicts to an end. Combined with a disregard for military intelligence or logistics, the belief that “something will turn up” to solve military problems helped doom Japan’s efforts from the start.

Unfortunately for the Japanese, their enemies were not so fanciful. After 1937 Chiang Kai-shek knew exactly what he had to do: China had to hold out until the Western powers entered the war. Survival was Chiang’s clear and constant goal. The Americans realized after Pearl Harbor that they had to build a fleet powerful enough to cross the Pacific and seize the Japanese home islands. That would bring victory. The Allied aims were clear. Their goals were realizable. The Japanese goals were not. It was this, combined with the enormous industrial disparity between the two sides, that chiefly caused Japan’s defeat.

Uneasy Interlude, 1932 to 1937

One of the most remarkable elements of Japanese politics of the period was the seeming inability of both the government and General Staff to control the Kwantung Army. The decision to overrun Manchuria had largely been made on the spot. It was the Kwantung Army that continued to demand southward expansion after the creation of Manchukuo in February 1932. Yoshihisa Nakamura and Ryoichi Tobe examine the reasons for this insubordination.²⁴ The military had long made a distinction between national affairs (*kokuju*) and political affairs, that is, between questions that affected the national interest and the squabbling of parliamentary groups pursuing partisan aims. As parliamentary government became more powerful in the 1920s, reformist army officers felt they alone could speak and act for the nation. The army’s definition of

22. Edward J. Drea, “U.S. Army and Imperial Japanese Army Doctrine During World War II,” in Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor*, 60–74.

23. Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991).

24. Yoshihisa Nakamura and Ryoichi Tobe, “The Imperial Japanese Army and Politics,” *Armed Forces and Society* 14 (Summer 1988): 511–25.

national defense issues, which included anti-Communist police actions on the Asian mainland as well as the development of autarky, made aggression and insubordination inevitable. Marjorie Dryburgh, by tracing the continuing influence of Kanji Ishiwara and Seishiro Itagaki, another Kwantung officer behind the seizure of Manchuria, in extending Japanese aggression into North China, is one of the latest authors to argue for army culpability in the China war.²⁵

Other authors have questioned the primacy of the Kwantung Army in making China policy. Writing in 1964, James Crowley insisted that army action was consistent with a broader plan, formulated by the most influential Japanese government ministers since the early 1930s, to establish hegemony in northern China.²⁶ Insubordinate elements within the army, although troubling to Tokyo, thus never acted in opposition to fundamental government aims. Even the fatal decision in 1938 to refuse to negotiate with the Chiang Kai-shek regime, which Crowley believes obliged Japan to fight an endless war in China, was taken by Prime Minister Prince Fumimaro Konoye along with the most influential members of his cabinet. Toshihiko Shimada, similarly dissatisfied with interpretations of an unruly Kwantung officer corps uncontrolled by a moderate civilian establishment, has argued more recently that most civilians in the Japanese governments of the period supported aggression. He also suggests that it was the desire for conquest, and not fears of Chinese Communists or the Soviet Union, that inspired this policy.²⁷ Katsumi Usui also claims Prime Minister Konoye was the prime culprit here.²⁸ It was Konoye who rejected any suggestion that Japan's economic problems might be solved by cooperating with the West in restoring liberal trade policies. He also refused to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek, thus hindering Japan's withdrawal from China. This latter decision is also criticized by Shinkichi Eto, who has studied the opposition of some General Staff officers to the China war.²⁹ The objections of these officers,

25. Marjorie Dryburgh, *North China and Japanese Expansion, 1933–1937: Regional Power and the National Interest* (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon, 2000).

26. James B. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930–1938* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964).

27. Toshihiko Shimada, "Designs on North China, 1933–1937," in *The China Quagmire: Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent, 1933–1941*, ed. James William Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 3–230. These are selected translations from *The Road to the Pacific War: A Diplomatic History* (Taiheiyō senso e no michi: kaisen gaiko shi), first published in 1962–63 in seven volumes by the press of Japan's largest newspaper, the *Asahi Shimbun*.

28. Katsumi Usui, "Japanese Approaches to China in the 1930s: Two Alternatives," in *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia, 1931–1949*, ed. Akira Iriye and Warren Cohen (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1990), 93–115.

29. Shinkichi Eto, "Japanese Maneuvers for Peace with China, 1937–1940," in Barrett and Shyu, *China in the Anti-Japanese War*, 45–61.

who were convinced that Japan had to conserve its strength to fight the Soviet Union, were disregarded by Konoye as well as by many junior military men. Margaret Lamb and Nicholas Tarling, in their general review of international relations between the wars, also blame Konoye for most of Japan's problems in China.³⁰

Donald Jordan disagrees with this narrow interpretation. Chinese hostility caused by the conquest of Manchuria had inspired a 1932 boycott of Japanese goods in the lower Yangtze region. He shows that the demands for military intervention by the Japanese business community, both in China and at home, were almost unanimous.³¹ Jordan also provides a detailed account of the failure of that early anti-Chinese initiative.³² The Japanese navy had originally landed marines in Shanghai in 1932, thinking it enough to threaten Nanking to force Chiang to end anti-Japanese activities. They later had to be reinforced with army units. Faced with unexpected military resistance, all were eventually obliged to withdraw. The Japanese army leadership remained anxious to erase their shame. Five years later, they would get their chance.

Chiang's diplomatic maneuverings prior to the war to stop the Japanese also had ended in failure. He had hoped the West would join China in opposing Japan. Britain was the Western power with the greatest interest in the country. As Antony Best makes clear, however, Whitehall's concern about the Japanese menace was limited.³³ British governments, consistently underestimating Japanese strength, were convinced through the 1930s that Japan would be unable to establish regional hegemony. They therefore remained neutral. Some members of the British government, as Greg Kennedy points out, went even further, arguing for a new Anglo-Japanese alliance.³⁴ This reflected the opinions of much of the British community in China. Having been threatened by Kuomintang agitators since the 1920s, many British businessmen had come to regret their country's concessions to Nationalist demands, and supported Japanese military action against the truculent Chinese. Aron Shai discusses the shortsightedness of these attitudes. Recognizing the absence

30. Margaret Lamb and Nicholas Tarling, *From Versailles to Pearl Harbor: The Origins of the Second World War in Europe and Asia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

31. Donald A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts versus Japanese Bombs: The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy," 1931–1932* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

32. Donald A. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire: The Shanghai War of 1932* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

33. Antony Best, *British Intelligence and the Japanese Challenge in Asia, 1919–1941* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 2002).

34. Greg Kennedy, *Anglo-American Strategic Relations and the Far East, 1933–1939* (Portland, Oreg.: Frank Cass, 2002).

of American support, and an inability to use Britain's full military capacities, Shai argues that Whitehall might still have used Japanese perceptions of British strength to launch diplomatic initiatives against further aggression. Having deserted the Chinese in their time of greatest need, he concludes, Britain suffered an irreparable loss of prestige in East Asia.³⁵ On a more practical level, Martin Brice, a veteran of service on a British China river gunboat, provides a detailed assessment of limited British naval strength on the China Station before the war.³⁶

American policy offered Chiang equally little solace. Several essays edited by Akira Iriye and Warren Cohen suggest that the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration (1933–45) in its first years dealt with China in a permanent state of absentmindedness.³⁷ Cohen himself disagrees, claiming at least some American leaders were seriously interested in East Asian affairs. He believes, for example, that Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson had recognized the Japanese danger while still in the Herbert C. Hoover cabinet, but was able to begin creating an Asian system of collective security only after he joined the Roosevelt cabinet as Secretary of War in 1940.³⁸ China, Cohen suggests, was the first beneficiary of this policy. Waldo Heinrichs is not so sure. He believes Roosevelt, who recognized the links between the European and Asian wars, had first become interested in China only after 1939. His primary interest after June 1941 was to keep the bulk of the Japanese army tied down in China, thus preventing a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union that might allow Germany to win in Europe. The American oil embargo had ostensibly been created by Roosevelt in July 1941 in retaliation for the Imperial army's entry into Indochina. Yet, by forcing the Japanese to go still further south to the oil-rich East Indies, the embargo had the ultimate effect not of protecting French and Dutch colonial possessions, as Heinrichs points out, but of drawing Japan still further away from Russia.³⁹

The "China Incident," 1937–38

The China-Japan war began with a clash between Japanese and Chinese troops in July 1937 at the Marco Polo Bridge outside Peking. It has

35. Aron Shai, *Origins of the War in the East: Britain, China and Japan, 1937–1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1976).

36. Martin H. Brice, *The Royal Navy and the Sino-Japanese Incident, 1937–1941* (London: Ian Allan, 1973).

37. Iriye and Cohen, *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia*.

38. Warren Cohen, "American Leaders and East Asia, 1931–1938," *ibid.*, 1–27.

39. Waldo Heinrichs, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Risks of War, 1939–1941," *ibid.*, 147–78.

long been assumed that Kwantung Army officers arranged this as an excuse to invade China. This version is presented again by Yun-han Li.⁴⁰ It is disputed by Ikuhiko Hata, who argues that the incident had largely been concluded by the end of July and that the Japanese navy was the true author of the larger war. Following murders of Japanese naval personnel in Shanghai between 1935 and 1937, Navy Minister Mitsumasa Yonai, invoking a 1936 interservice agreement, requested that two army divisions be sent to Shanghai as the first step toward the occupation of Nanking. Hata suggests that it was navy “opportunism,” combined with the “drift” of a deeply divided Japanese government, that led to the occupation of the Chinese capital.⁴¹ However, Japanese author Katsumi Usui believes that Chiang’s reluctance to reach a compromise was equally to blame for the expansion of the war. The head of a deeply divided nation, Chiang preferred to use the conflict to escape the pressures of domestic politics. Usui, however, also recognizes Japanese culpability. It was Japanese arrogance in both government and army, he concludes, that was ultimately responsible for continuing the war.⁴²

Once the fight began, the Japanese poured almost effortlessly over the North China plain. By the end of 1938, they controlled the very rich lower Yangtze valley as well as most of China’s ports. This rapid success has inspired a number of studies of the Japanese army and officer corps. Edward Drea has studied the training that made the Japanese soldiers the bravest and most tenacious in the world.⁴³ It also made some senior officers highly successful field commanders.⁴⁴ Richard Fuller has supplied biographies of over eight hundred Japanese generals, many of whom served in China.⁴⁵

40. Yun-han Li, “The Origins of War: Background of the Lukouchiao Incident, July 7, 1937,” in *Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945*, ed. Paul K. T. Sih (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1977), 3–36.

41. Ikuhiko Hata, “The Marco Polo Incident, 1937,” in Morley, *China Quagmire*, 233–86.

42. Katsumi Usui, “Japanese Approaches to China in the 1930s: Two Alternatives,” in Iriye and Cohen, *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia*, 93–115.

43. Edward J. Drea, “Trained in the Hardest School,” in Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor*, 75–90.

44. Edward J. Drea, “Adachi Hatazo, A Soldier of His Emperor,” *ibid.*, 91–109.

45. Richard Fuller, *Shokan: Hirohito’s Samurai* (London: Arms and Armour, 1992). These 820 represent only a fraction of the 1,600 general and flag officers who were on active duty in 1945 alone. Fuller also provides troop dispositions and the entire Japanese order of battle at the end of the war. Save for an occasional error (General Baron Giichi Tanaka died in 1929; he was not released by the Allies without trial in 1947), this is a useful contribution.

David Graff, Robin Higham, and Anne Wells have written more general reference works about the China war.⁴⁶

More than thirty years ago, Frank Dorn described the brilliant early Japanese successes.⁴⁷ Contemptuous of Chinese performance, he details the conquest and orderly occupation of Peking and the other cities of the north. He is equally critical of Chiang's ferocious defense of the lower Yangtze, which he believes cost the lives of too many Chinese soldiers and civilians. Chiang followed his early military blunders, which cost him his best (and most politically reliable) troops, by promising unrelenting resistance and "defense in depth." Further defeats followed. The fall of Wuhan and Canton in 1938 eventually allowed Japan to control almost all the major rail lines and ports in the country. Ultimately, Dorn states, Chiang's "realization of the objectives of a war of attrition was in fact a catastrophic disaster for [China's] hundreds of millions of people." Dorn also criticizes Chiang's destruction of the Communist New Fourth Army and the administration of Allied Lend-Lease aid by the "rapacious" staff of Chiang's brother-in-law T. V. Soong. Only those Chinese like Wang Ching-wei, who attempted to collaborate with the Japanese, receive harsher treatment. Dorn, whose detailed description of Chinese and Japanese divisions explains the invaders' greater firepower, is far easier on the Imperial forces. He even suspends judgment about the later attack on Pearl Harbor. The primary Japanese mistake, in addition to having assumed the capture of Nanking would end the war, was to get mired in central China. In the end, Chiang won the war "he was morally too bankrupt to wage" only because of his American ally. Remarkably, Dorn also claims Chiang knew about the Japanese plan for Pearl Harbor at least thirty-six hours before the attack, but did not warn Washington for reasons that remain obscure.

Roy Stanley, writing almost a decade later, is also admiring of early Japanese performance.⁴⁸ Providing detailed descriptions of Japanese and Chinese arms and divisional organization, he offers a good outline of the major Japanese campaigns from 1937 until the end of 1941. China's greatest weakness, he notes, was the small size of its trained army, thirty divisions (three hundred thousand men), "a comfortable bodyguard for an authoritarian state," but totally inadequate for war with Japan. The greatest strategic weakness of the Japanese was their inability to end the

46. Anne Sharp Wells, *Historical Dictionary of World War II: The War Against Japan* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1999); David A. Graff and Robin Higham, eds., *A Military History of China* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press), 2002.

47. Frank Dorn, *The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941: From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974); quotations on 221, 400.

48. Colonel Roy M. Stanley, II, *Prelude to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982).

war. Their most important tactical weakness was dependence on the country's seventy-five hundred miles of railroads, made necessary by the poor state of Chinese roads. Downplaying the importance of the December 1937 massacre that followed the Japanese capture of Nanking, Stanley claims that only one hundred thousand Chinese were killed. He believes the 1927 Nationalist seizure of the city had been almost as bloody. He notes more convincingly that the subsequent capture of Wuhan in October 1938 was a watershed in the war, after which the Japanese no longer enjoyed the one-sided victories they had before. Stanley commends Chiang for keeping much of his army intact. He also notes that Chinese regular troops and guerrillas had some success, including three major battles around Changsha. His catalog of Japanese weaknesses includes arrogant field commanders easily goaded into rash actions, as well as inferior Japanese tanks, machine guns, and artillery. Finally, he chides the West for not learning from the China war. The result was that the lessons about the Japanese war machine had to be learned again after 1941—the hard way.

Edward Dreyer has recently written about the China war until its end.⁴⁹ He is even harder on the Chinese than earlier writers and entirely discounts the Chinese contribution. Because Chiang Kai-shek's primary interest was defeating the Communists, he kept what remained of his best troops out of the fighting after the fall of Wuhan. It was Chiang's decision not to equip forces potentially disloyal to him that prevented China from becoming the major military power American planners hoped it would be. Dreyer is equally contemptuous of the Communist war effort, noting that after their twin defeats by the Japanese in the so-called Hundred Regiments offensive in August–December 1940, and the destruction of the New Fourth Army command by Nationalist troops in January 1941, Communist leaders were equally careful to keep their forces well away from the Japanese. Chiang's decision to open the Yellow River dykes during the Wuhan campaign, and the murderous "Three Alls" campaign launched by the Japanese after the Hundred Regiments offensive, are among the examples the author cites of Chinese ineptitude, leading to millions of civilian deaths. Refusing to give the Chinese credit even for tying down large numbers of Japanese troops, he insists that it was American naval and air power that defeated Japan. Dreyer also criticizes American planners, who, unlike the British, were unable to recognize, at least until 1944, the unimportance of the Chinese war effort. China, he concludes with disarming frankness, had only been a hindrance in the war.

49. Edward L. Dreyer, *China at War, 1901–1949* (London: Longman, 1995).

Hu Pu-you, a contemporary of Dorn, presents a different picture.⁵⁰ He claims Chiang Kai-shek, following the principles of Carl von Clausewitz, was the author of China's victory. Published in Taiwan, and full of detailed troop movements and many excellent maps, his book is also a catalog of the "countless minor victories" won by the Chinese, as well as major triumphs such as the battles for Changsha. He praises the guerrilla tactics that allowed Chinese forces to control most of the countryside. Hu believes China's ability to hold out for eight years, thus depriving the Japanese of a speedy victory, which is what they wanted most, was its greatest achievement. It was only the Allied decision to place greater emphasis on Europe than Asia that resulted in a failure to end the war simultaneously in both theaters, allowing the Soviets and Chinese Communists to grab the fruits of victory. Hsiang-hsiang Wu also praises the Nationalist war effort.⁵¹ He lauds army performance against very heavy odds. Since the Japanese could neither destroy the Nationalist army, conquer the country, nor crush the Chinese will to resist, he concludes that Chiang's strategy of retreat into the interior and trading space for time was correct.

Wenzhao Tao's more recent work similarly claims the Chinese effort contributed greatly to the war.⁵² By holding down enormous numbers of Japanese troops (as many as twenty divisions by the estimate of British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill), the Chinese prevented a massive invasion of India. China also provided convenient bases for U.S. bombers. Tao in addition states that Chinese resistance boosted the morale of other Asian peoples fighting the Japanese. While this last is questionable, the presence of China on the Allied side did contradict Japan's claim that it was fighting for Asian independence.

James Hsiung believes that American misperceptions of the Nationalist war effort are in part due to the American "Dixie Mission," the American liaison with Communist leader Mao Tse-tung's forces that had been sent to work for closer American-Communist cooperation. Members of the Mission first came to believe, and later helped perpetuate, the

50. Hu Pu-you, *A Brief History of Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)* (Taipei: Chung Wu Publishing Co., 1974).

51. Hsiang-hsiang Wu, "Total Strategy Used by China and Some Major Engagements in the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945," in Sih, *Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War*, 37-87.

52. Wenzhao Tao, "The China Theater and the Pacific War," in *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima: The Second World War in Asia and the Pacific, 1941-1945*, ed. Saki Dockrill (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 1994), 134-49.

myth that only the Communists were fully dedicated to fighting the Japanese.⁵³ He reminds us that Nationalist forces fought in all the major positional battles in the China war. Hsiung insists that Chiang committed his best troops against the Japanese in the battles for the lower Yangtze in 1937, and depended on other units only after these had been exhausted.

Diana Lary also finds reason to praise the Nationalists.⁵⁴ She notes that, although materially disadvantaged, the Chinese resisted the Japanese advance for months, winning at Taierzhuang at least one famous battle during the Suchow campaign in early 1938.⁵⁵ This helped restore Chinese morale after the unending defeats in the previous year. Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, while quick to criticize the Chinese officer corps, high command, armaments, and logistics, still finds the overall national performance in the war impressive.⁵⁶ This includes the overall organization of resources and the tenacity of ordinary soldiers in battle. The Chinese military's greatest weakness after 1941, he believes, was a "passive mindset," a desire to survive a war the Chinese were sure the Americans would win for them. Jui-te Chang argues that the Nationalist officer corps, although originally poor, improved through the period of the war with better professional training.⁵⁷ Marvin Williamsen admires the Medical Service Corps for its evacuation and treatment of the wounded under very difficult conditions.⁵⁸

Other recently published works have been more critical. The reports of a Dutch military observer, edited by Ger Teitler and Kurt Radtke and published in 1999, both criticize and praise Chinese battlefield performance.⁵⁹ Colonel Henri De Fremery of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army found the Chinese hopeless at orderly regrouping and maneuvering in the open field, making them vulnerable to Japanese encirclement. (The Japanese soon learned to advance against the Chinese in parallel

53. James C. Hsiung, "The War and After: World Politics in Historical Perspective," in *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan, 1937–1941*, ed. James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 295–306.

54. Diana Lary, "Defending China: The Battles of the Xuzhou Campaign," in *Warfare in Chinese History*, ed. Hans van de Ven (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 398–427.

55. Suchow was known from 1912 to 1945 as Dongshan. It is rendered as Xuzhou in pinyin.

56. Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, "The Military Dimension, 1942–1945," in Hsiung and Levine, *China's Bitter Victory*, 157–84.

57. Jui-te Chang, "Nationalist Army Officers During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945," *Modern Asian Studies* 30 (October 1996): 1033–56.

58. Marvin Williamsen, "The Military Dimension, 1937–1941," in Hsiung and Levine, *China's Bitter Victory*, 135–84.

59. Ger Teitler and Kurt W. Radtke, eds., *A Dutch Spy in China: Reports on the First Phase of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1939)* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

columns. When one met resistance, the other circled round, almost invariably routing the hapless Chinese.) He was, however, impressed by the Chinese capacity to meet frontal assaults. Most importantly, he found the Chinese willing to learn from their mistakes and adapt new tactics. He also admired the ability of guerrilla fighters to tie down large numbers of enemy troops. Some of the problems of the Chinese army are explained by Hans van de Ven, who notes that the educational training that the Nationalist government had hoped would make war “a national enterprise in a situation where the nation yet hardly existed,” had not yet had time to succeed.⁶⁰

A number of authors are also critical of the Japanese. Colonel De Fremery found many weaknesses. Like many observers, he praised their fanatical zeal in engaging the enemy. But having watched them for three years, he thought Japanese failings equally remarkable. First among these was the impetuosity of ordinary soldiers and lower-ranking officers, which often thwarted the plans of senior commanders. The rigidity and lack of imagination of field commanders was almost as bad. Japanese generals repeated the same campaign plans continually. In fact, he suspected their flanking tactics were modeled on the battle of Mukden in the Russo-Japanese war. He also believed the arrogance and contempt with which they approached operations against the Chinese unwarranted.⁶¹

Edward Drea thinks the Japanese inability to learn from their mistakes was their greatest weakness. In marked contrast to the Chinese, the Japanese became prisoners of their own success. Having done so well in the first eighteen months of the China campaign, they saw no reason to change. Repeated defeats forced the Chinese to be innovative. While Drea admires the precocious way the Japanese developed amphibious warfare techniques, which they used with repeated success in the early months of the campaign, he notes that even here they soon ceased to be innovative.⁶² Far more serious, he emphasizes, was the Japanese refusal to learn from their 1939 defeat at the hands of the Red Army at Nomonhan (Khalkhin-Gol).⁶³

60. Hans van de Ven, “New States of War: Communist and Nationalist Warfare and State Building (1928–1934),” in van de Ven, *Warfare in Chinese History*, 321–97.

61. Teitler and Radtke, *Dutch Spy*.

62. Edward J. Drea, “The Development of Imperial Japanese Army Amphibious Warfare Doctrine,” in Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor*, 14–25.

63. Edward J. Drea, “Tradition and Circumstances: The Imperial Japanese Army’s Tactical Response to Khalkhin-Gol, 1939,” *ibid.*, 1–13.

Alvin Coox's detailed account of Nomonhan, General Georgi Zhukov's "perfect battle of encirclement," contains a long list of Japanese failures.⁶⁴ These include the piecemeal commitment of forces, poorly trained junior officers, primitive ground support capabilities, inferior ordnance and unimaginative doctrine, and poor-to-nonexistent logistical planning. Even more serious for Coox was an emphasis on spiritual superiority and a no-surrender policy in the face of superior firepower, a hatred of the defensive, and a contempt for military intelligence. The will to believe only what they wanted to believe led to an inability to correct mistakes. Coox contrasts this with well-coordinated Soviet joint operations that included armor, infantry, artillery, and aviation. Coox is also impressed by Soviet firepower, which surpassed the Japanese in quantity and range. Japanese planners had chosen to depend on their country's cheapest resource, men. They also depended on light infantry tactics that allowed rapid encirclement of the enemy, a method which had worked well in China. The result was that the Imperial forces faced Soviet tanks, armored cars, flamethrowers, long-range artillery, and planes with little more than ancient bolt-action rifles, satchel charges, and improvised gasoline bombs. Defeat frequently results in the development of new tactics and armaments, but not, Coox concludes, in the case of the Japanese. A deep cultural resistance to change that was especially strong in the army continued to prevail.

Dick Wilson is more critical of Japanese strategy than tactics.⁶⁵ Like other authors, he believes the inability of the Japanese to achieve a quick victory, followed by a stable peace, was their most serious failure. Other important mistakes include the devastation of the lower Yangtze valley, a region that might have produced many useful collaborators. The 1938 decision to move troops north to fight Chiang at Suchow resulted in a battle that lasted months, raised Chinese morale, and prevented the rapid seizure of Wuhan. Wilson considers the subsequent Chinese withdrawal of troops and equipment from Wuhan up the Yangtze gorges to be "China's Dunkirk," a retreat that ultimately led to victory. He does treat fairly Japanese victories through 1945, including the 1944 Ichigo campaign. He wisely concludes, however, that these triumphs were unimportant compared to the fatal flaws in overall Japanese planning.

The Nanking Massacre

64. Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985).

65. Dick Wilson, *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945* (New York: Viking Press, 1982).

The Nanking massacre, the most notorious atrocity of the China war, followed the capture of the Nationalist capital in December of 1937. It has been described most famously by Iris Chang.⁶⁶ Chang examines the event from three perspectives, those of the Japanese soldiers who perpetrated it, their Chinese victims, and the foreigners who witnessed it. The Japanese, who seem to have been overwhelmed by the number of prisoners, were convinced that many Chinese soldiers were still hiding in the city. Japanese logistics had already obliged the army to live off the country. The search for both food and Chinese deserters led to the abuse and murder of many civilians. Chang, who believes more than three hundred thousand died, provides additional explanations for the massacre: the brutality with which Japanese soldiers were treated by their own officers, the severely hierarchal nature of Japanese society, and the contempt Japanese had for Chinese. Chang also makes considerable use of the diaries of John Rabe, the German who helped organize the so-called International Safety Zone that saved many Chinese, and whom Chang calls the "Oscar Schindler" of Nanking. Her controversial book also exaggerates the unwillingness of modern Japanese to admit the massacre took place. Rabe's diaries themselves, edited by Erwin Wickert, have recently been published.⁶⁷ Documents describing his work, as well as others produced by the International Safety Zone Committee, are reproduced in a volume edited by Timothy Brook.⁶⁸ Similar humanitarian work by Minnie Vautrin, the American missionary director of Nanking's Ginling College, is described by Hua-ling Hu.⁶⁹ Shi Young and James Yin have compiled a collection of more than 480 photographs taken in Nanking at the time of the massacre.⁷⁰

The Nanking massacre has become one of the symbolic events of the war, a paradigmatic example of Japanese brutality and Chinese victimization. Daqing Yang, a Nanking University graduate, has written extensively on this subject.⁷¹ Many Chinese writers, he notes, have viewed the

66. Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

67. Erwin Wickert, *The Good Man of Nanking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

68. Timothy Brook, *Documents on the Rape of Nanking* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

69. Hua-ling Hu, *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking: The Courage of Minnie Vautrin* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000).

70. Shi Young and James Yin, *The Rape of Nanking: An Undeniable History in Photographs* (Chicago: Innovative Publishing Group, 1997).

71. Daqing Yang, "The Challenges of the Nanjing Massacre: Reflections on Historical Inquiry," in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 133-79.

massacre as a kind of “master narrative,” without examining the particular circumstances in which it took place. Mark Eykholt has demonstrated how the Chinese government has used the atrocity as a tool for gaining moral ascendancy over Japan.⁷² A number of Japanese writers, in reaction, have denied the massacre entirely. Yang suggests this is perhaps their way of insisting that such actions are not unique to either the Sino-Japanese War or the Japanese. He has continued to call for a common understanding of the event that eschews both Chinese and Japanese polemics.⁷³ While he condemns attempts to write “objective” history as leading to an amoral view of the world, he believes a common historical understanding might still be developed. He has criticized Iris Chang’s reductionist statements about “the mind of the Japanese,” as well as claims of Japanese revisionists. Looking for explanations for the murders, he blames poor Japanese logistics that forced soldiers to requisition food to live.⁷⁴ Yet he also blames the Chinese scorched-earth policy that drove many refugees into Nanking and made the Japanese even more desperate for supplies.

Sun Zhaiwei is another Chinese critical of the Nationalist army’s operations in Nanking.⁷⁵ A scholar from the People’s Republic of China (PRC), he blames Chiang’s generals for leaving ninety thousand leaderless soldiers incapable of defending themselves in the city. This gave the Japanese, while looking for soldiers, an excuse to murder indiscriminately. If the Chinese army had been withdrawn in an orderly way, the form and severity of Japanese atrocities might, he suggests, have been very different. Nanking thus continues to provide opportunities for anti-KMT, as well as anti-Japanese, polemics. Daqing Yang is aware of the problem. Faced with all aspects of the Nanking story, including those inspired by partisan politics, he finds himself confronted with a “historical Rashomon,” a collection of irreconcilable accounts that he fears might never be synthesized into one narrative.⁷⁶ Ironically, perhaps the

72. Mark Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” *ibid.*, 11–69.

73. Daqing Yang, “Toward a Common Historical Understanding: The Nanking Massacre as a Challenge of Transnational History,” in *Nanking, 1937: Memory and Healing*, ed. Fei Fei Li, Robert Sabella, and David Liu (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 236–59.

74. Daqing Yang, “Atrocities in Nanjing: Searching for Explanations,” in *Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China*, ed. Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), 76–96.

75. Sun Zhaiwei, “Causes of the Nanking Massacre,” in Li, Sabella, and Liu, *Nanking, 1937: Memory and Healing*, 35–46.

76. Daqing Yang, “Convergence or Divergence? Recent Historical Writings on the Rape of Nanking,” *American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 842–65.

most insightful account of what occurred is a work of fiction. Haruko Taya Cook praises the young novelist Tatsuzo Ishikawa, who, having been at the front for only eight days, wrote *Living Soldiers*, one of the most powerful Japanese stories of the war. While not writing specifically about Nanking, Tatsuzo shows how war brings out the worst in people.⁷⁷ Cook ends by asking why so many Japanese reporters ceased to describe all aspects of the conflict, including incidents like Nanking, and instead became propagandists for the government.

Argument over the number of those killed remains one of the most controversial elements of the Nanking debate. Takashi Yoshida has written several articles on the subject. Tracing the long battle between Japanese who discount the number of those massacred, and “progressives,” who insist on higher figures, he is critical of both Iris Chang and revisionist (and best-selling author) Nobukatsu Fujioka.⁷⁸ Katsuichi Honda, while agreeing with Chang in some matters, believes that between 100,000 and 200,000, rather than 300,000, Chinese were killed in Nanking.⁷⁹ En-Han Lee of Taiwan’s *Academica Siniaca* suggests the number of dead might have been even higher, between 300,000 and 350,000.⁸⁰ Higashinakano Shudo, a professor of intellectual history and an extreme revisionist, claims the history of the massacre is nothing more than a compilation of hearsay evidence.⁸¹ Masahiro Yamamoto is more moderate.⁸² He believes 15,000 to 50,000 mostly adult men were massacred in Nanking in the six weeks following the capture of the city. The great majority were soldiers out of uniform. Total losses in the city and vicinity, he concludes, were between 45,000 and 65,000, with as many as 20,000 being civilians.

77. Haruko Taya Cook, “Reporting the ‘Fall of Nankin’ and the Suppression of a Japanese Literary ‘Memory’ of the Nature of a War,” in Li, Sabella and Liu, *Nanking, 1937: Memory and Healing*, 121–53.

78. Takashi Yoshida, “Refighting the Nanking Massacre: The Continuing Struggle over Memory,” *ibid.*, 154–80; Takashi Yoshida, “A Battle over History: The Nanjing Massacre in Japan,” in Fogel, *Nanjing Massacre in History*, 70–132.

79. Katsuichi Honda, *The Nanjing Massacre: A Japanese Journalist Confronts Japan’s National Shame* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

80. En-Han Lee, “The Nanking Massacre Reassessed: A Study of the Sino-Japanese Controversy Over the Factual Number of Massacred Victims,” in Li, Sabella, and Liu, *Nanking, 1937: Memory and Healing*, 47–74.

81. Higashinakano Shudo, “The Overall Picture of the ‘Nanking Massacre,’” *ibid.*, 95–117.

82. Masahiro Yamamoto, *Nanjing: Anatomy of an Atrocity* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000).

The “China Incident” and the Pacific War, 1939–45

The Japanese advance into China slowed in 1939. Chiang Kai-shek's refusal to yield to Japanese demands after the fall of Nanking and later of Hankow meant there would be no early end to the war. The Japanese controlled the richest cities and most of the railroad lines. This “points and lines” strategy left most of the countryside in Chinese hands. However, the Japanese had never planned to control all of China. They simply wanted to force Chiang to accept Japanese control of Manchuria and North China by disrupting the Chinese economy. The Japanese seizure of Hainan in 1939 and the occupation of northern Indochina the following year were similarly aimed at starving Chiang's forces of supplies. The Japanese still did occasionally launch offensives for limited goals, as when in June 1940 they seized the Yangtze River port of I-Chang to stop the flow of rice from central China to Chungking, then the Nationalist capital. But the days of the great offensives that characterized the first eighteen months of the war were over. They would resume only in 1944. Until then, the army leadership chose to wait upon events for a way of ending the conflict.

Chiang, his forces depleted, also chose to wait. His hesitation, however, was combined with a feverish search for allies. Youli Sun claims Chiang's foreign policy initiatives now became central to his planning.⁸³ Unfortunately, as John Garver points out, he was largely unsuccessful. His attempts to get Britain and the United States to help China in 1937–38, to prevent Germany from ultimately abandoning him in favor of Japan, or to get sizable military supplies from the Soviet Union, all failed.⁸⁴

This is not the place to discuss the origins of the Pacific war, except as it affected the China theater. Jun Tsunoda has argued that America's refusal to accept Japanese control of Manchuria, combined with the appointment in October 1941 of General Hideki Tojo as prime minister (for which he blames Marquis Kido), were the prime causes of the Pearl Harbor attack.⁸⁵ The United States, he writes, would not accept anything except the status quo of 1930, while Japan was determined to hold Manchuria at all cost. John Toland, in his monumental history of the war in Asia, also claims that Manchuria was the chief issue of contention

83. Youli Sun, *China and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1931–1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

84. John W. Garver, “China's Wartime Diplomacy,” in Hsiung and Levine, *China's Bitter Victory*, 3–32.

85. Jun Tsunoda, “The Final Confrontation: Japan's Negotiations with the United States, 1941,” in *Japan's Road to the Pacific War*, ed. James William Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1–405. This is the fifth and final volume of the series of translations from *Japan's Road to the Pacific War*.

between the two nations. America, he believes, made a serious mistake in allowing the welfare of China, which was not vital to its interests, to become the keystone of its Asian policy.⁸⁶ He blames Secretary of State Cordell Hull, in particular, for not making it clear in the fall of 1941 that America's demand for Japanese withdrawal did not include Manchuria.

Saki Dockrill disagrees, claiming Roosevelt did not care about Japanese expansion on the mainland. It was only the potential Japanese threat to Malaya and Singapore, which the President feared might divert Britain from its war with Germany, that caused him to take measures against Japan.⁸⁷ Peter Lowe insists that Britain's (and America's) chief error was to underestimate the amount of damage Japan could inflict once full-scale war began, and to overestimate the ease with which it could be contained. This made them insensitive to Japan's ambitions in the northeast.⁸⁸ David Evans and Mark Peattie, disagreeing with them all, blame the shortsighted policies of the Japanese navy for the Pacific war.⁸⁹ Competition with the army for allocations of strategic materials had forced the navy to emphasize the American threat, without which plans for a massive naval buildup would have been pointless. When, in 1940, the Japanese army, to escape the American embargo, proposed invading the Dutch East Indies without bringing America into the war, the navy rebelled. Since the army could not invade without the navy's help, naval strategy prevailed. While the Japanese army was responsible for the China war, Evans and Peattie conclude that the navy was the author of the Pacific war.

Military aid to China increased enormously after Pearl Harbor. U.S. General Joseph W. Stilwell and Major General Claire L. Chennault both contributed to the war effort. The struggle between the two is well known. Stilwell was determined to improve Chinese infantry performance. Chennault believed a small but well-trained air force, striking at the most advantageous time and place, could produce results far out of proportion to its strength. Both Roosevelt and Chiang, looking for an easy way to fight the war, supported Chennault.

Martha Byrd has recently described the success of Chennault's Flying Tigers.⁹⁰ With never more than one hundred flyers under his command,

86. John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945* (New York: Random House, 1970).

87. Dockrill, *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*.

88. Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War: A Study of British Policy in East Asia, 1937-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

89. David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997).

90. Martha Byrd, *Chennault: Giving Wings to the Tiger* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987).

Chennault was able to interdict river and coastal traffic enough to significantly reduce Japanese industrial production. Daniel Ford explains the reasons for this success in another account of Chennault's American Volunteer Group.⁹¹ Guangqiu Xu has also written a detailed account of Sino-American cooperation and conflict in the air war against Japan.⁹² Praising the accomplishments of the Chinese-American Composite Wing (CACW) commanded by Chennault, he concludes that Chinese strategic planning for the use of Allied air power against the Japanese was correct, and that the United States should have given China even more support. His book *War Wings* extends the history of Sino-American cooperation from the late 1920s to the end of the civil war in 1949.⁹³ Jerome Klinkowitz, who has collected the memoirs of former Flying Tigers, discovered that Japanese air tactics were as predictable as those of the army. If something worked, it was constantly repeated.⁹⁴

Edward Fisher has written about Stilwell's frustrations in dealing with both Chiang and Chennault.⁹⁵ The general was exasperated by Chiang's political calculations in deciding the movements of Chinese armies. American ignorance of (and indifference to) the intricacies of Chinese politics is discussed by Michael Schaller.⁹⁶ Stilwell, unconvinced by Chennault's arguments about the primacy of air power, had warned that the Japanese army would move unopposed to take his air fields unless there were well-trained and equipped troops on the ground to stop them. He was soon proven right.

Chennault had been effective enough to provoke the 1944 Ichigo offensive, the largest in the war. Beginning with an invasion of Honan, the Japanese moved south, finally capturing Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province. They then took Chennault's air bases at Guilin. This also gave them for the first time complete control of the rail lines from Mukden to Hanoi. Then, in early December, just as the Japanese seemed unstoppable, their offensive came to a halt. Their mission, which was the destruction of the air bases, had been accomplished. At the end of 1944, the Japanese thus still seemed victorious in China. At the same time,

91. Daniel Ford, *Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and the American Volunteer Group* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1991).

92. Guangqiu Xu, "The Issue of U.S. Air Support for China During the Second World War, 1942–1945," *Journal of Contemporary History* 36 (July 2001): 459–84.

93. Guangqiu Xu, *War Wings: The United States and Chinese Military Aviation, 1929–1949* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001).

94. Jerome Klinkowitz, *With the Tigers Over China, 1941–1942* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999).

95. Edward Fisher, *The Chancy War: Winning in China, Burma, and India in World War Two* (New York: Orion Books, 1991).

96. Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

Chiang could console himself that his government, and at least some elements of his army, had survived.

It was all an illusion. Japan was losing the Pacific war and would soon surrender. Chiang's position was equally precarious. His prestige was declining precipitously. The beginning of the Pacific war had made him one of the most important allies of the United States and Britain. Roosevelt had treated him as an equal at the 1943 Cairo Conference. The Generalissimo had returned to China with his prestige greatly enhanced. But Chinese failures during the Ichigo offensive had diminished him in American eyes. As early as February 1944 American planners had already decided to concentrate on cracking the "Japanese citadel" of the home islands, Korea, Manchuria, and Shantung with an assault across the Pacific. Japan was to be defeated by American forces. Roosevelt also decided that the Japanese in Manchuria would be dislodged, if necessary, by the Soviets. The Chinese war effort for America thus had become largely irrelevant. Chiang's domestic position had become equally dangerous. His armed forces by the end of 1944 were at their weakest since the beginning of the war. The Communists, who had successfully avoided any large-scale confrontation with the Japanese since the end of 1940, were strategically placed to win a civil war. Chiang Kai-shek would emerge a victor in 1945. Four years later, he would be forced to leave the mainland forever.

Life in Nationalist China During the War, 1937–45

The sad decline of the Nationalist army, followed by Chiang's defeat in the civil war, have colored perceptions of all aspects of KMT rule. Nationalist incompetence and corruption have become proverbial. But wars are seldom fought by soldiers alone, and some aspects of home front organization remain worthy of praise, as demonstrated by the essays in Paul Sih's pioneering collection.⁹⁷ Tsun-chen Ou shows how Nationalist education contributed effectively to the war, as well as in preparing the nation for postwar reconstruction.⁹⁸ Tsung-han Shen demonstrates how government-organized food production and distribution kept the army fed and helped prevent massive famine.⁹⁹ Lawrence Shyu reveals how some elements of public administration actually got better after the Japanese invasion.¹⁰⁰ Chi-ming Hou finds similar

97. Sih, *Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War*.

98. Tsun-chen Ou, "Education in Wartime China"; and John Israel, "Southwest Associated University: Preservation as an Ultimate Value," *ibid.*, 89–130.

99. Tsung-han Shen, "Food Production and Distribution for Civilian and Military Needs in Wartime China, 1937–1945," *ibid.*, 167–93.

100. Lawrence N. Shyu, "China's 'Wartime Parliament': The People's Political Council, 1938–1945," *ibid.*, 273–328.

improvement in certain areas of public finance.¹⁰¹ Hung-hsun Ling provides a detailed description of improved transportation managed under very difficult conditions.¹⁰² Lloyd Eastman describes the economic and military development of Yunnan, and the important contribution of that province to the war effort.¹⁰³ The last article in Sih's collection, by Chintung Liang, suggests that conditions in China were still sound enough that, had the United States been willing in 1945 to negotiate a multiparty treaty, rather than obliging Chiang to negotiate a bilateral treaty with the Soviet Union, the postwar situation in China might have been different.¹⁰⁴ Ka-che Yip has more recently praised Nationalist wartime anti-epidemic efforts.¹⁰⁵ Eugene Levich traces the history of reform in Kwangsi during the first years of the war.¹⁰⁶ Following the ideas of Sun Yat-sen, local leaders made their province a model for all of Nationalist China through peasant mobilization, education reform, and the introduction of technological improvements to reduce rural poverty. This allowed them to field a motivated citizen-army against the Japanese. Lloyd Eastman has recently traced the sagging Nationalist morale and the growing problem of inflation during the war years.¹⁰⁷ Despite all these problems, he remains impressed by the perseverance of Nationalist resistance.

Chang-tai Hung suggests some Nationalist intellectuals saw the war as a catalyst for national revival.¹⁰⁸ Hung traces the spread of popular culture, which he defines as mass-produced media such as newspapers and cartoons, from the cities to the countryside, as urban intellectuals took patriotic propaganda to peasants in KMT-controlled areas. By 1940, most had drifted back to the cities, but they brought with them a new interest in rural life. Since most anti-Japanese resistance was based in

101. Chi-ming Hou, "Economic Development and Public Finance in China, 1937–1945," *ibid.*, 203–41.

102. Hung-hsun Ling, "China's Epic Struggle in Developing Its Overland Transportation System During the Sino-Japanese War," *ibid.*, 243–71.

103. Lloyd E. Eastman, "Regional Politics and the Central Government: Yunnan and Chungking," *ibid.*, 329–72.

104. Chin-tung Liang, "The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance of 1945: The Inside Story," *ibid.*, 373–404.

105. Ka-che Yip, "Disease and the Fighting Men: Nationalist Anti-Epidemic Efforts in Wartime China, 1937–1945," in Barrett and Shyu, *China in the Anti-Japanese War*, 171–88.

106. Eugene William Levich, *The Kwangsi Way in Kuomintang China, 1931–1939* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993).

107. Lloyd E. Eastman, "Nationalist China During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945," in Lloyd E. Eastman, Jerome Chen, Suzanne Pepper, and Lyman Van Slyke, *The Nationalist Era in China, 1927–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 115–76.

108. Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); quotation on 285.

the countryside, the village became the quintessential symbol of China. As villages were also the center of Communist strength, Hung suggests “the new political culture that shifted China’s attention to the countryside . . . provided a historic opportunity for the Communists to make their cause visible and appealing.”

Other authors are more critical of Nationalist rule. Pusen Jin agrees that while Nationalist grain policies might have averted even worse calamities, sky-rocketing inflation and unfair rural tax policies made life difficult for many urban and rural workers.¹⁰⁹ Hongmin Chen, also concerned with wartime food supply, compares the Nationalist system for transporting food with the Communist “Great Production Movement” for growing it.¹¹⁰ Chen shows how transportation was weakened by corruption. The Communist system, run more honestly and based on mass political mobilization, proved more effective. Frederic Wakeman examines a seamier aspect of wartime China. Resistance in Japanese-occupied Shanghai presents a confusing history of local gangsters and double agents who mixed occasional anti-Japanese activities with opium dealing and murder.¹¹¹

One of the most terrible effects of the war was the increasing militarization of Chinese society. Hans van de Ven argues this had been going on since the late Ch’ing period, as a succession of Chinese leaders looked for ways to strengthen the nation.¹¹² Chiang had depended almost exclusively on the army to unite China, and Nationalist forces had remained through the 1920s the only effective deterrent to warlords and Communists alike. The Japanese invasion further strengthened the military character of the regime, while at the same time increasing government control of the economy. Stephen MacKinnon sees increased political intolerance as another of the tragedies of the later war years.¹¹³ Until the fall of Wuhan in 1938, the anti-Japanese United Front of Nationalists and Communists had worked against the common enemy. This later gave way to more ideologically rigid attitudes within both Nationalist and Communist camps.

109. Pusen Jin, “To Feed a Country at War; China’s Supply and Consumption of Grain During the War of Resistance,” in Barrett and Shyu, *China in the Anti-Japanese War*, 157–69.

110. Hongmin Chen, “Traditional Responses to Modern War: The Nationalist Post-Stage System and the Communist Great Production Movement,” *ibid.*, 189–203.

111. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Shanghai Badlands: Wartime Terrorism and Urban Crime, 1937–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

112. Hans van de Ven, “The Military in the Republic,” in *Reappraising Republican China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Richard Louis Edmonds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98–120.

113. Stephen MacKinnon, “The Tragedy of Wuhan, 1938,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, part 4 (October 1996): 931–44.

The Nationalists' greatest weakness was their inability to attract a mass political following. Chiang was no demagogue, and in his old-fashioned way he respected property rights and traditional customs. This was not enough to lead a modern nation in wartime. Eastman shows how Chiang's attempt to create a conservative, authoritarian regime without mass support ultimately proved a fatal handicap.¹¹⁴ Chiang's failure to shape public opinion also left him at the mercy of more adept Communist propagandists, as Parks Coble demonstrates.¹¹⁵ It was public opinion, as much as his kidnapping by General Chang Hsueh-Liang in December 1936, that forced Chiang to declare war on Japan, and create a United Front with the Communists against the foreign invader. This later allowed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to increase its strength in the countryside. When, after 1937, Chiang's troops did most of the fighting against the Japanese, they were blamed for defeat. When Communist guerrillas engaged the enemy with far less effect, they were lauded by public opinion as heroes. Under his wartime leadership, the KMT, as Hsi-Sheng Ch'i demonstrates, came to represent no one, not even rural elites.¹¹⁶ Yu Shen explains how this same lack of grassroots support also prevented the development of an effective Nationalist guerrilla movement.¹¹⁷

Collaboration with the Japanese

Many Chinese also attempted to accommodate themselves to Japanese occupation. The Japanese desire to end the war, combined with the mutual refusal of Chungking and Tokyo to negotiate, led to the creation of puppet regimes with which Japan hoped it could make peace. The first, the so-called Reform Government, ruled only Kiangsu, Chekiang, and Anhwei provinces, and lasted from 1938 to 1940. A second, headed by Wang Ching-wei, formerly one of China's most influential KMT politicians, lasted from 1940 until the end of the war. This reorganized National Government nominally ruled more than one hundred million people in the richest area of central China, which had previously been Chiang Kai-shek's chief base of support.

114. Lloyd E. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984).

115. Parks M. Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991).

116. Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1982).

117. Yu Shen, "Juntong, SACO, and the Nationalist Guerrilla Effort," in Barrett and Shyu, *China in the Anti-Japanese War*, 135-54.

Gerald Bunker has traced Wang's long career from Kuomintang leader to collaborator.¹¹⁸ Defeated by Chiang politically in the late 1920s, Wang had been assigned in the early 1930s to conduct negotiations with the Japanese. By the end of the decade, he had concluded that only collaboration could save China from further devastation or Communism. Wang believed he could negotiate a peace that, in return for Chinese recognition of Manchukuo, would result in Japanese withdrawal from China. He was wrong. In the end he merely facilitated Japanese military occupation. John Boyle is equally hard on Wang.¹¹⁹ The KMT politician had naively assumed China was divided in half between Chiang's supporters and those who were willing to collaborate. He soon discovered otherwise. Wang's greatest error was his inability to realize that the Japanese army leadership wanted to crush China, not cooperate with it. His crime was to lend his name to Japanese efforts to do so.

Timothy Brook is more generous. He explains Wang's efforts as an attempt to restore traditional values in the hope of making the nation stronger.¹²⁰ Chiang had tried to make China a Western nation. Wang claimed he wanted to build a more authentic Eastern nation based on Confucianism. The brutal Japanese occupation made this impossible. Brook has also written about the opium trade that helped finance the first Reform Government (as well as the Japanese war effort), and which was one of the most discreditable aspects of Japanese rule.¹²¹ Motohiro Kobayashi examines the more ambiguous attitude of the Wang Ching-wei government toward opium.¹²² Mark Eykholt describes popular wartime opposition to both "opium regimes."¹²³

Other recent authors have also attempted to deal with the ambiguities of collaboration. David Barrett and Larry Shyu, hoping to escape the "moralistic framework" that has informed previous studies, have collected essays that explore "the conflicting motives, tactical concessions,

118. Gerald E. Bunker, *The Peace Conspiracy: Wang Ching-wei and the China War, 1937–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

119. John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War, 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1972).

120. Timothy Brook, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied and Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, ed. Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 159–90.

121. Timothy Brook, "Opium and Collaboration in Central China, 1938–1940," in *Opium Regimes: China, Burma, and Japan, 1939–1952*, ed. Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 323–43.

122. Motohiro Kobayashi, "An Opium Tug of War: Japan versus the Wang Jing-wei Regime," *ibid.*, 344–59.

123. Mark S. Eykholt, "Resistance to Opium as a Social Evil in Wartime China," *ibid.*, 360–79.

helplessness and uncertainty of life in that period.”¹²⁴ Brook offers a new look at the creation of the 1938 Reformed Government.¹²⁵ Barrett provides a similar treatment of the Wang Ching-wei regime.¹²⁶ Marjorie Dryburgh examines the career of one northern Nationalist commander caught between demands for resistance and knowledge of its consequences.¹²⁷ Peter Seybolt explores the complex political choices made by people in Neihuang County in northern Honan, and the political battles between rival groups that were far more terrible than any fighting against the Japanese.¹²⁸ These same ambiguities are examined in a series of essays about occupied Shanghai collected by Wen-hsin Yeh. They include studies of both foreign and Chinese resisters as well as collaborators. There is also an examination of divisions within the local Japanese community.¹²⁹ Frederic Wakeman discusses the difficulty of defining treason in wartime China, noting that many wavered between resistance, passivity, and collaboration.¹³⁰ Poshek Fu discusses this same behavior among Chinese writers.¹³¹ A few remained passive, surviving without sacrificing their ideals. A far smaller number resisted. Most collaborated. Parks Coble examines business collaboration in Shanghai and the lower Yangtze.¹³² Most Chinese manufacturers, he finds, were primarily concerned with preservation of their family firms. Having attempted to escape Japanese control, mostly by remaining until the end of 1941 either in the international areas of Shanghai or Hong Kong, they later made the best deals they could with their occupiers.

124. David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, eds., *Chinese Collaboration with Japan, 1932–1945: The Limits of Accommodation* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

125. Timothy Brook, “The Creation of the Reformed Government in Central China, 1938,” *ibid.*, 79–101.

126. David P. Barrett, “The Wang Jingwei Regime, 1940–1945: Continuities and Disjunctures with Nationalist China,” *ibid.*, 102–15.

127. Marjorie Dryburgh, “Regional Office and the National Interest: Song Zheyuan in North China, 1933–1937,” *ibid.*, 38–55.

128. Peter J. Seybolt, “The War Within a War: A Case Study of a County on the North China Plain,” *ibid.*, 201–25.

129. Wen-hsin Yeh, ed., *Wartime Shanghai* (London: Routledge, 1998).

130. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., “*Hanjian* (Traitor)! Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai,” in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 298–341.

131. Poshek Fu, *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937–1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

132. Parks M. Coble, *Chinese Capitalists in Japan’s New Order: The Occupied Lower Yangtze, 1937–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

There have been several recent memoirs about Jewish life in Shanghai. One, by Rena Krasno, describes daily life in the city.¹³³ Another is by Evelyn Rubin, one of ten thousand “stateless” Jews who were obliged to live in an overcrowded “designated area” in Hongkew.¹³⁴ Both write of daily life in the city and of encounters with Chinese and Japanese helpers and bullies. Marcia Ristaino’s more ambitious book deals with members of the White Russian as well as Jewish diasporas in Shanghai.¹³⁵ She traces the intricate social relations between various Sephardic and Ashkenazi groups, as well as those between Jews and Russians. Ristaino makes an important contribution in treating the ambivalent attitudes of Japanese officials to Jewish refugees, as well as the occasionally sympathetic (and frequently hostile) attitudes of Shanghai Jews to Japanese policies in China.

The Communist Insurgency

It is universally acknowledged that the Japanese invasion transformed the Chinese Communist movement by gravely weakening Chiang Kai-shek’s efforts to destroy the Communist organization of the countryside. The CCP was able, as a result, to extend its control over large parts of the country. This contributed greatly to the Communist victory in 1949.

Prior to the invasion the Communists had been seriously weakened by Chiang’s extermination campaigns and further decimated by the rigors of the 1934–35 Long March. By 1937 Mao’s followers were as far from creating a revolution as they had ever been. It was the Japanese who prevented Chiang from destroying them. The Kwantung Army leadership, which had justified its aggression as an anti-Communist police action, turned its full fury against the Nationalists. Communist guerrilla groups in remote areas of the country, understood by the Japanese to be of negligible military value, were largely ignored. This gave the Communists the opportunity to increase the size and number of their base areas. It also allowed them to court millions of patriotic Chinese convinced, incorrectly, that the Communists were devoting all their energy to fighting the invaders.

133. Rena Krasno, *Strangers Always: A Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai* (Berkeley: Pacific View Press, 1992).

134. Evelyn Pike Rubin, *Ghetto Shanghai* (New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc., 1993).

135. Marcia Reynders Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort: The Diaspora Communities of Shanghai* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

Kui-Kwong Shum recognizes the war as being crucial to Communist success.¹³⁶ Their ability to learn from their mistakes, he notes, was very important. The Communist defeat in 1927 at the hands of Chiang had taught them they needed independent territorial bases and their own army, as well as worker and peasant support, to survive. They had learned from their defeat in 1934 that they could not alienate the so-called “middle peasants” and other petty bourgeois groups without also losing rural support. The war gave them a new opportunity to appear both patriotic and revolutionary. Shum believes there is overwhelming evidence that the anti-Japanese United Front was the most important factor in allowing the growth of Communist power from 1935 to 1945. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the United Front belied the Communist image as a divisive, sectarian party; second, it legitimized Communist organization of peasants for anti-Japanese resistance; third, it neutralized the opposition of landlords and bourgeois elites, thus preventing them from helping the Japanese or the KMT; fourth, it won the support of patriotic gentry, landlords, and merchants; fifth, it seemed to demonstrate the willingness of Communists to subordinate their own interests to national ones; and finally, it narrowed the base of pure KMT anti-Communist support to a few big landlords and wealthy capitalists. The CCP thus made itself appear the embodiment of moderation, reformism, and pragmatism rather than radicalism.

Peasant support was the most crucial element in maintaining Communist base areas and guerrilla activity. There has been considerable discussion about whether it was patriotism, or the promise of social revolution, that won the CCP most of that support. Writing in 1940, George Taylor claimed anti-Japanese resistance was the key factor.¹³⁷ Edgar Snow believes that social revolution, including land reform and rent reduction, had initially drawn peasants to the Party. Only then was it able to recruit fighters to oppose the Japanese.¹³⁸

Chalmers Johnson’s claims about the primary importance of nationalism in winning peasant support rekindled debate in the 1960s.¹³⁹ Donald

136. Kui-Kwong Shum, *The Chinese Communists’ Road to Power: The Anti-Japanese National United Front, 1935–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

137. George Taylor, *The Struggle for North China* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute for Public Relations, 1940).

138. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (London: V. Gollancz, 1937).

139. Johnson had originally claimed national resistance was the sole reason for peasant support. He gives equal importance to social reforms in his 1967 revisions. Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937–1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962, 1967).

Gillin, reacting against the suggestion that Communists were successful only when they abandoned economic reforms, replied that nationalism had appealed only to Chinese elites and that it was the promise to eliminate rural poverty that had moved the peasantry to resistance.¹⁴⁰

In the early 1970s Mark Selden provided a synthesis.¹⁴¹ He acknowledged that demands for social revolution had been moderated during the period of United Front resistance between 1936 and 1941. He added, however, that land and rent reform, which had been very popular before 1936 (and which had been the key to peasant recruitment), was taken up again in 1942, when it appeared that compromise with non-Communist groups was weakening socialist zeal. Social reforms were also combined with important political changes in rural areas. The "village democracy movement" that destroyed the political power of traditional elites was the real key to Communist success. It allowed them to gain control of village administration. Selden believed the combination of economic reforms and ruthless pursuit of local political control, which he called the "Yenan Way," was Mao's unique contribution to the successful Chinese Communist revolution. Although more willing to criticize Mao's regressive peasant values and political intolerance when he returned to the question in 1995, Selden's opinion about Mao's contribution remains largely unchanged.¹⁴²

Yung-fa Chen discusses the successful application of this northern "Yenan Way" in central China.¹⁴³ Unlike local Party leaders who wanted to cooperate fully with Nationalists against the Japanese, Mao insisted on the rapid creation of new base areas that would allow Communist control of village government. Since the Communists were not strong enough to introduce radical land redistribution, they organized "struggle sessions" to divide landlords from the poor. By the end of the war, Communists had developed a number of base areas in Anhwei and Kiangsu. They were poised, Chen notes, to destroy traditional rural elites between the pincers of a Communist-controlled state apparatus and grassroots peasant revolutionary support.

Other studies continue to debate the relative importance of social revolution, political reform, and Party organization in spreading Communist influence. The role of economic reforms remains the key ques-

140. Donald G. Gillin, "'Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Communism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 23 (February 1964): 269-89.

141. Mark Selden, *The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

142. Mark Selden, *China in Revolution: The Yanan Way Revisited* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995).

143. Yung-fa Chen, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

tion. Many authors have questioned the importance of the “Yenan Way” as a blueprint for Communist success. They have found that economic reform, except as a way of helping Party cadres acquire local political power, was of little importance during the war years. The war itself was important in that it eliminated Nationalist forces that had previously prevented Red organization in all but the most remote areas. Kathleen Hartford has found that the abandonment of radical land redistribution helped assure Communist success in the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei region.¹⁴⁴ David Goodman sees a similar strategy in southeast Shansi.¹⁴⁵ Pauline Keating finds that the Communist cooperative movement, rather than class warfare, allowed them to increase their influence in northern Shaansi.¹⁴⁶ A growing body of evidence thus suggests it was the cadres, and not revolutionary peasant guerrillas, who were the true authors of Communist victory.

Goodman finds an equally pragmatic Communist approach to women’s equality.¹⁴⁷ Depending on political conditions and the strength of local prejudices, women were either excluded from political participation or else mobilized in organized movements.

Nationalist ineptitude also sometimes helped Party organizers. Odoric Wou finds the threat of radical land reform before the war had gravely weakened Communist strength in Honan.¹⁴⁸ Even the Japanese invasion could not restore it. The Nationalist decision to blow the Yellow River dikes in 1938 did. Almost one million people were killed, and thirty-five hundred towns and villages destroyed. That, combined with the abandonment of economic radicalism, eventually allowed the Communists to construct a new base area in the province.

The Communist movement entered a new phase in mid-1940. Their contribution to the fighting until that time had been a series of small raids on weakly held Japanese positions. The Nationalist press began to claim that Communists were using 70 percent of their efforts for expansion,

144. Kathleen Hartford, “Repression and Communist-Success: The Case of Jin-Cha-Ji, 1938–1943,” in *Single Sparks: China’s Rural Revolutions*, ed. Kathleen Hartford and Steven M. Goldstein (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), 92–127.

145. David S. G. Goodman, *Social and Political Change in Revolutionary China: The Taihang Base Area in the War of Resistance to Japan, 1937–1945* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

146. Pauline B. Keating, *Two Revolutions: Village Reconstruction and the Cooperative Movement in Northern Shaanxi, 1934–1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997).

147. David S. G. Goodman, “Revolutionary Women and Women in the Revolution: The Chinese Communist Party and Women in the War of Resistance to Japan 1937–1945,” *China Quarterly* 164 (2000): 915–42.

148. Odoric Y. K. Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses: Building Revolution in Henan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994).

20 percent to defeat the Chungking government, and only 10 percent to fight the Japanese. It also suggested that the “move and hit” style of Communist guerrillas, much lauded by Mao, was in fact mostly moving, and very little hitting. Emboldened by the growth of base areas in the north, CCP leaders therefore decided it was time to begin a major offensive. This was to be combined with the movement of Communist forces southwards toward the Yangtze. Elements of the Communist New Fourth Army, still in the south, were to simultaneously move north, into the richest part of China immediately south of the river. This would allow Communist infiltration of the area between Shanghai and Nanking that had been Chiang’s old power base. These operations, Party leaders were sure, would greatly improve their position in the postwar showdown with Chiang.

There were a number of other reasons for the offensive. Communist leaders, fearful that the lull in Nationalist-Japanese fighting might result in a truce that would allow both to turn on the Communists, decided it was necessary to heat up the war. Lyman van Slyke has suggested the campaign in the north was also designed to divert popular attention from Communist attacks on Nationalist strongholds that had increased as the Eighth and Fourth armies began converging on central China.¹⁴⁹ The Communist plans failed. As a result, both the Party and its guerrilla forces were considerably weakened until the end of the war.

Van Slyke has produced a detailed study of this so-called Battle of the Hundred Regiments.¹⁵⁰ Begun in August of 1940, it was in fact a series of sprawling, decentralized engagements, most involving units far smaller than regiments, which lasted over three months. Although attacks on Japanese-held rail lines were initially successful through September, powerful counterattacks beginning in October, which, lasting until the end of the year, severely mauled the guerrillas. Unrealistic Communist hopes that they could change the entire military situation in Shansi and Hopei provinces soon collapsed. By the end of the year, the Red forces had been forced to retreat to their base areas away from the Japanese army.

The ferocious anti-Communist campaign that followed was one of the great tragedies of the war. It devastated the north. Previous Japanese operations, although brutal, had been directed against carefully selected targets. They were now made more general. The Japanese “Three Alls”

149. Lyman P. Van Slyke, “The Chinese Communist Movement During the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945,” in Eastman, Chen, Pepper, and Van Slyke, *Nationalist Era in China*, 177–290.

150. Lyman P. Van Slyke, “The Battle of the Hundred Regiments: Problems of Coordination and Control During the Sino-Japanese War,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, part 4 (October 1996): 979–1005.

campaign—kill all, take all, burn all—was highly effective. A widespread protected-hamlet program, combined with tight control of local movement, reduced the Communist-controlled population from forty to twenty-five million. The Red Army shrank by 25 percent to three hundred thousand soldiers. The period from mid-1941 to mid-1943 was the most difficult for the CCP during the entire war. In the end, the damage the Communists had done to the Japanese was tactical and of short duration. The damage inflicted on the Communists was much more severe and longer lasting.

The successful Nationalist attack on the Communist New Fourth Army in January 1941 was another setback. Gregor Benton has studied the army, which had remained in the south after the Long March.¹⁵¹ Since it operated where Nationalist forces were strong, he believes its history is more interesting than that of Mao's northern forces. Like its northern counterpart, however, the army was primarily interested in defeating the Nationalists, and fought the Japanese only to position itself strategically for the postwar conflict. The decision to move the army into the lower Yangtze led to increased clashes with Nationalist forces. This culminated in the destruction of its command structure.

Chiang clearly understood the threat to the central region. He acted decisively to drive the Communists back to the north, where he believed they would be forced to fight punishing battles with the Japanese. He also wanted to dislodge them from the area around Nanking. He had hoped the Japanese would welcome his anti-Communist offensive and refrain from attacking him. He was wrong. The Japanese increased their pressure on the Nationalists. Even worse, much of Chinese public opinion, which up to that time had favored Chiang over the Communists, began to turn against him. Once again, as Benton points out, the Communists won an enormous propaganda victory.¹⁵² Still, they had also been eliminated for a while from much of the lower Yangtze. They would continue to suffer failures elsewhere as well.

Their most notable one was in Manchuria. Chong-Sik Lee explains how the Japanese destroyed the guerrilla movement there.¹⁵³ The Japanese had learned from Chiang's extermination campaigns. Following his

151. Gregor Benton, *Mountain Fires: The Red Army's Three-Year War in South China, 1934–1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

152. Gregor Benton, "Comparative Perspectives: North and Central China in the Anti-Japanese Resistance," in *North China at War: The Social Ecology of Revolution, 1937–1945*, ed. Chongyi Feng and David S. G. Goodman (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 189–223.

153. Chong-Sik Lee, *Revolutionary Struggle in Manchuria: Chinese Communism and Soviet Interest, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

example, Communist areas were surrounded by large numbers of troops to deprive them of food and munitions. Collective hamlets, to prevent guerrilla contact with the rest of the population, had already been in place since 1934. As many Chinese newcomers had found land in Manchuria, there was not the same sense of hopelessness as among poor peasants elsewhere. Lee also suggests that the Chinese leaders, who recognized Manchuria as part of China, could not appeal to separate Manchurian nationalism. The Japanese, through the puppet emperor Pu Yi, could. All this deprived the CCP of a mass following. Steven Levine has found the Japanese did such a good job that there was little spontaneous revolutionary feeling among the peasants even after the war.¹⁵⁴ Harold Tanner has described the painful evolution of postwar Communist strategy there that, with Soviet assistance, eventually allowed them to win.¹⁵⁵

The Communists also failed in Shantung. David Paulson argues that the massive presence of Nationalist guerrillas impeded the growth of a Communist movement.¹⁵⁶ He gives little credit to Chiang, who had failed to impose a unified command structure on the formerly autonomous warlord armies operating in the province. More importantly, the Generalissimo refused to support any local initiative against the Japanese for fear of encouraging too much independence. Paulson suspects Chiang might have hoped these warlord forces would be ground down fighting the Communists, thus strengthening his own position. In the end, some Nationalist guerrilla groups, believing that America would win the war for China, even began to cooperate with the Japanese against the Red guerrillas. The record of the Communists, who fought the Nationalists more than the Japanese, is hardly more creditable. Elise DeVido, who has studied both anti-Japanese and internecine warfare in Shantung, believes they were so weak they were mostly concerned with survival.¹⁵⁷

The War Seen from Japan

The conquest of Manchuria had received widespread support in Japan. Louise Young describes the reaction of two elements of Japanese

154. Steven I. Levine, *Anvil of Victory: The Communist Revolution in Manchuria, 1945–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

155. Harold M. Tanner, "Guerrilla, Mobile, and Base Warfare in Communist Military Operations in Manchuria, 1945–1947," *Journal of Military History* 67 (October 2003): 1177–1222.

156. David M. Paulson, "Nationalist Guerrillas in the Sino-Japanese War: The 'Die-Hards' of Shandong Province," in Hartford and Goldstein, *Single Sparks*, 128–50.

157. Elise A. DeVido, "The Survival of the Shandong Base Area, 1937–1943: External Influences and Internal Conflicts," in Feng and Goodman, *North China at War*, 173–88.

society, the media and industry.¹⁵⁸ Special editions and unannounced broadcasts about the war allowed Japanese press and radio to expand beyond urban markets into the countryside. The film industry eagerly produced a large number of patriotic films. The business community, although initially more wary, eventually invested almost six billion yen in Manchuria by the end of 1941. Military expansion farther south was at first sold by the popular press as an additional (and welcome) expansion of the “China market.” However, Lincoln Li suggests Japanese businessmen were more skeptical about North China.¹⁵⁹ He believes private Japanese capital remained unwilling to invest sufficiently to make coal and iron mining there profitable. Parks Coble’s more recent work suggests a greater willingness by the *zaibatsu* to invest in both northern and central China.¹⁶⁰ This allowed improvement in infrastructure, as well as increased productivity of heavy industry. Coble also demonstrates how the Japanese army and business cooperated to reduce Chinese cotton and silk production for the benefit of Japanese competitors. Clearly, he concludes, at least some large Japanese firms worked to create a colonial economy in China to complement industry in the home islands. Richard Samuels and William Fletcher show how even industrial leaders not personally committed to investment in China also supported expansionism.¹⁶¹

The Japanese intellectual community, as Andrew Barshay demonstrates, was also largely united in support of the war.¹⁶² Many saw it as a revolt against Western cultural dominance. Masakazu Yamazaki describes at least one panel discussion in 1942 during which a group of professors and writers insisted that the attempt of Anglo-Americans to propagate their values of individualism and rationalism as universal principles had to be fought.¹⁶³

Essays edited by Marlene Mayo, J. Thomas Rimer, and H. Eleanor Kirkham examine the work of Japanese poets, playwrights, actors,

158. Louise Young, “Japan’s Wartime Empire in China,” in *The Shadows of Total War: Europe, East Asia, and the United States, 1919–1939*, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Forster (Washington: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2003), 327–45.

159. Lincoln Li, *The Japanese Army in North China, 1937–1941: Problems of Political and Economic Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

160. Coble, *Chinese Capitalists in Japan’s New Order*, 49–66.

161. Richard Samuels, *The Business of the Japanese State* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987); William M. Fletcher, III, *The Japanese Business Community and National Trade Policy, 1920–1942* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

162. Andrew Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

163. Masakazu Yamazaki, “The Intellectual Community of the Showa Era,” in Gluck and Graubard, *Shōwa: The Japan of Hirohito*, 245–64.

painters, filmmakers, and cartoonists.¹⁶⁴ Haruko Taya Cook discusses the history of *Living Soldiers* and the controversy that has surrounded it since its publication in 1938.¹⁶⁵ Kyoko Hirano describes the career of Itami Mansaku, an important filmmaker who, unlike most of his colleagues, was skeptical of the government's insistence about the superiority of Japanese "spirit" over Western "materialism."¹⁶⁶ Most artists, however, supported the war. John Dower discusses the cinematic notion that "war purifies," a common theme in Japanese films of the period. He also notes how most elements of army life, from the brutal training of soldiers to the terrorization of Chinese civilians, were entirely ignored.¹⁶⁷ Expanded government control of the media, natural in wartime, is examined by Gregory Kasza.¹⁶⁸

Other Japanese remained unconvinced. John Dower explores occasional criticism of the war and government among broad elements of the public, and the fears of revolution this inspired among both the police and conservative leaders, as the war turned against Japan.¹⁶⁹ The diary of Kiyoshi Kiyosawa, journalist and diplomatic historian, reveals an educated man distrustful of wartime propaganda and nationalism.¹⁷⁰

A very small number of Japanese were even ready to work against their government. The career of Hotsumi Ozaki is studied by Chalmers Johnson.¹⁷¹ Ozaki, one of the most influential China experts for the first Konoye cabinet, was also the Comintern spy who passed news of the Japanese decision in 1941 not to attack the Soviet Union. This information allowed Joseph Stalin to transfer Siberian divisions from Asia to attack the Germans around Moscow in December 1941. Ozaki was executed in 1944.

164. Marlene J. Mayo, J. Thomas Rimer, and H. Eleanor Kirkham, eds., *War Occupation and Creativity: Japan and East Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

165. Haruko Taya Cook, "The Many Lives of *Living Soldiers*: Ishikawa Tatsuzo and Japan's War in Asia," *ibid.*, 149–75.

166. Kyoko Hirano, "Japanese Filmmakers and the Responsibility for War: The Case of Itami Mansaku," *ibid.*, 212–32.

167. John W. Dower, "Japanese Cinema Goes to War," in *Japan in War and Peace* (New York: New Press, 1993), 33–54.

168. Gregory Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

169. John W. Dower, "Sensational Rumors, Seditious Graffiti, and the Nightmares of the Thought Police," in Dower, *Japan in War and Peace*, 101–54.

170. Eugene Soviak, *A Diary of Darkness: The Wartime Diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

171. Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990). This is an expanded version of the book first published in 1964.

Reporting on Wartime China: Intelligence and the News

Military intelligence and news reporting are both vital elements of modern warfare. The first determines strategic and tactical planning. The second shapes public opinion, which in democratic societies is as important in determining the outcome of wars as battlefield success. Carolle Carter has interviewed veterans of the “Dixie Mission.”¹⁷² Mission participants, like many Americans in China, had been disappointed about Nationalist failures and overly impressed by the importance of the Communist war effort. The inability of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services to create a useful intelligence network in China is discussed by Maochun Yu.¹⁷³ Handicapped by divisions between Nationalists and Communists, as well as among rival KMT factions, it was further weakened by rivalries between American agencies in China.

American news reporting on China was also important. Chiang had the unstinting support of the Henry Luce publications. The Communists also had their friends. Chief among these was Edgar Snow, whose work is studied by S. Bernard Thomas.¹⁷⁴ Snow’s *Red Star Over China* had praised the Communists, and Mao in particular, even before the war. Convinced the Communist leaders were men of “probity and selflessness,” he also believed in the effectiveness of mobile guerrilla war based on a revolutionized peasantry. Snow helped make the CCP “respectable” in America by insisting Mao was a democratic leader and “agrarian reformer,” who stood apart from the international Communist movement.

Stephen MacKinnon and Oris Friesen have collected a number of interviews with newspaper veterans of the China theater.¹⁷⁵ Primarily interested in how the reporting affected American public opinion and government policy, they discovered most American reporters had no Chinese language skills, and so had depended on their assistants, as well as Nationalist government releases, for their information. Although a few understood the Communists were far from being mere “reformers,” most had also been charmed by Chou En-lai, the most effective Chinese propagandist of the period. In contrast to Henry Luce, most despised Chiang, had been sympathetic to Stilwell at the time of his recall, and were critical of Roosevelt for indulging a decadent KMT. Considering the

172. Carolle J. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison with the Chinese Communists, 1944–1947* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997).

173. Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996).

174. S. Bernard Thomas, *Season of High Adventure: Edgar Snow in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

175. Stephen R. MacKinnon and Oris Friesen, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

amount of new information that has come out about the Communists since the interviews were conducted in 1982, many of the observations collected by the editors now seem shallow. The disingenuousness with which the reporters underestimate the power of the press to influence popular opinion is also remarkable.

The End of the Chinese War

The end of the war came suddenly. By the beginning of 1945 the Japanese occupied more Chinese territory than at any time since 1937. It did them no good. The United States, having won the Pacific war, threatened the Japanese home islands with invasion. In August the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria, made this unnecessary. The use of the atomic bombs must be discussed elsewhere. Contributions to the history of the 1945 Soviet offensive follow.

Jonathan Haslam has analyzed the intricacies of Japanese-Soviet relations up to Pearl Harbor.¹⁷⁶ Since Japanese control of Manchuria had not been in the Soviet Union's interest, Stalin had provided military aid to China. In August 1939 the Soviet defeat of the Japanese at Nomonhan, combined with the Nazi-Soviet Pact, had left the Japanese bewildered and uncertain. Since they had not known of German plans to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941, they had feared the Soviet army might turn its full strength against them. Wishing to invade Southeast Asia, the Japanese therefore signed a neutrality agreement with the Soviets in April 1941. Stalin, however, had not wanted China to make peace, since Japanese problems helped keep Siberia safe from attack. His insistence on Chinese Communist support of the United Front had simply been a tactic to strengthen the Soviet position in both Asia and Europe.

Soviet-Japanese relations had remained uneasy, but peaceful, until 1945. President Roosevelt, fearful that the Kwantung Army might continue to fight even if Tokyo surrendered, had won the promise of Soviet assistance in Manchuria. Alvin Coox believes the President was wise to have done so.¹⁷⁷ The Japanese defeat at Nomonhan, he is certain, had played a major role in determining the Japanese advance southward. In August 1945 it was their crushing defeat by the Soviets in Manchuria that convinced them to surrender. Although Japanese naval defeats in the Coral Sea and at Midway in 1942 were clearly the turning points of

176. Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Threat From the East, 1933-1941: Moscow, Tokyo and the Prelude to the Pacific War* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992).

177. Alvin D. Coox, *The Unfought War: Japan 1941-1942* (San Diego, Calif.: San Diego State University Press, 1992).

the war, the Japanese army, Coox emphasizes, did not recognize them as such. The army still had between five and six million men in 173 divisions, as well as between six and nine thousand planes. The Japanese army attitude before August 1945 was that the naval defeat had little to do with them. It was only the Soviet invasion of Manchuria that frightened the generals into surrendering.

David Glantz provides a detailed description of the Soviet Manchurian campaign, complete with operations maps.¹⁷⁸ Meticulous planning, combined with initiative and flexibility in execution, allowed the Soviets to overwhelm the Kwantung Army. Initial surprise, deep penetration, and rapid advance let the Soviets destroy vital command networks and throw the enemy into confusion. Glantz also includes a number of individual case studies of successful Soviet actions. Louis Allen has also described the collapse of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria, as well as the horrors faced by Japanese settlers after the surrender.¹⁷⁹

Yukiko Koshiro suggests that Manchuria, in addition, played an important role in Japanese plans to end the war.¹⁸⁰ The refusal of the Japanese government to surrender after the fall of Germany in May 1945, he believes, was part of a risky gamble to draw the Soviet Union into the Asian war, using Manchuria as bait. This, the government hoped, might lead to a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, out of which Japan could obtain a favorable peace.

Japanese War Crimes

Japanese war crimes in China are well known. Peter Li has collected Japanese memoirs about the Nanking massacre and the sexual slavery of women, as well as a chilling account of an army surgeon's vivisection of prisoners.¹⁸¹ Together, they provide a sophisticated study of the effects of memory (and political amnesia). The book is also, in the editor's own words, a call to action, a demand for Japanese reparations for war victims. Yuki Tanaka has studied a number of less well-known war crimes, both in China and the Pacific.¹⁸² He criticizes the Japanese attitude that

178. David M. Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945: August Storm* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

179. Louis Allen, *The End of the War in Asia* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976).

180. Yukiko Koshiro, "Japan's World and World War II," *Diplomatic History* 25 (Summer 2001): 425–41.

181. Peter Li, ed., *Japanese War Crimes: The Search for Justice* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

182. Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996). This was originally published in a shorter Japanese version as *Shirarezaru Senso Hanzai* (Unknown War Crimes).

they, too, were victims. Laurence Rees, a BBC writer and producer of the documentary *Horror in the East*, writes about the behavior of war criminals in a conformist society under pressure.¹⁸³ Werner Gruhl provides an account of China's losses, as well as those of other nations, during Japan's war of conquest. These include tens of millions of civilian deaths.¹⁸⁴ On a related topic, Stephen MacKinnon's study of wartime refugees suggests that as many as ninety-five million Chinese were displaced by the war.¹⁸⁵

The biological warfare experiments conducted by the Epidemic Prevention and Water Purification Department of the Kwantung Army, better known as Unit 731, are among the most notorious crimes of the period. Yuki Tanaka provides a detailed description of operations near Harbin that included the creation of an anthrax-bacillus bomb, as well as the production of massive quantities of plague, cholera, and typhoid, among other pathogens.¹⁸⁶ He also examines the use of civilians and prisoners of war in medical experiments. Tanaka is careful to point out that this ruthless abuse of prisoners had been unknown in the modern Japanese army before the 1920s.

Two other books also deal with Unit 731. The work of Peter Williams and David Wallace grew out of another British television documentary, *Unit 731: Did the Emperor Know?*¹⁸⁷ The authors are particularly interested in Allied use of data from Japanese experiments. They condemn all those who decided to keep Japanese crimes secret for the benefit of Western biological warfare research as "accessories after the fact." Sheldon Harris also questions the morality of the American cover-up of Unit 731 operations.¹⁸⁸

The use of conscripted women as army prostitutes, or "comfort women," has recently received some attention. This, George Hicks suggests, was only possible because of the changing attitudes of women, and societal attitudes about women, in East Asia.¹⁸⁹ While Korean women were the primary victims of this system of deception and seizure, Chi-

183. Laurence Rees, *Horror in the East: Japan and the Atrocities of World War II* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001). *Horror in the East* was first broadcast on BBC 2 in 2000.

184. Werner Gruhl, "The Great Asian-Pacific Crescent of Pain: Japan's War from Manchuria to Hiroshima, 1931 to 1945," in Li, *Japanese War Crimes*, 243–58.

185. Stephen MacKinnon, "Refugee Flight at the Outset of the Anti-Japanese War," in Lary and MacKinnon, *Scars of War*, 118–34.

186. Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors*.

187. Peter Williams and David Wallace, *Unit 731: The Japanese Army's Secret of Secrets* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989).

188. Sheldon H. Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare 1932–1945 and the American Cover-Up* (London: Routledge, 1994).

189. George Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994).

nese women also suffered. Yoshiaki Yoshimi also condemns this exploitation, arguing that the enslavement of women was a systematic policy organized by the Japanese state which must be understood in the context of gender, ethnic, colonial, and class oppression.¹⁹⁰

The question of the role of Japanese Emperor Hirohito in crimes in China is part of a broader issue of his complicity in the Asian and Pacific wars. It has been of considerable interest since the notorious 1945 Rescript announcing Japan's surrender, in which he expressed no remorse, guilt, or even responsibility for events since 1931. He also denied Japan had ever intended to "infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations, or embark upon territorial aggrandizement." The decision of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, who headed the Allied occupation of Japan, to preserve the emperor as a figurehead in the postwar government, combined with the almost unanimous exculpation of the emperor by government and army leaders during the Tokyo war crimes trials, has only added to the controversy. Stephen Large is one of the more recent authors who finds Hirohito a victim of circumstances.¹⁹¹ Following in the tradition of Leonard Mosley and Ben-Ami Shillony, Large argues the emperor attempted to curb the army in the China war, but was restrained by the constitution.¹⁹² Surely, Large concludes, it would be curious in modern times to criticize an emperor who refused to act despotically. Irokawa Daikichi and Peter Wetzler have also discussed the circumstances they believe limited Hirohito's choice of actions.¹⁹³

David Bergamini has no doubt about Hirohito's guilt. He paints a picture of a cunning tyrant who carefully put a handful of supporters in key positions in order to facilitate Japan's military expansion.¹⁹⁴ Flawed scholarship and a tendency to twist evidence to support his theory have resulted in his work being roundly pilloried. Edward Behr's scholarship is hardly more rigorous. He has produced, however, a more subtle, although ultimately equally damning, picture.¹⁹⁵ Bergamini condemned

190. Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

191. Stephen S. Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge, 1992).

192. Leonard Mosley, *Hirohito: Emperor of Japan* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Ben-Ami Shillony, *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

193. Daikichi Irokawa, *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Peter Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision-Making in Prewar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

194. David Bergamini, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy* (New York: Morrow, 1971).

195. Edward Behr, *Hirohito: Behind the Myth* (New York: Villard Books, 1989).

Hirohito for sins of commission. Behr condemns him for those of omission. Hirohito rode “the tiger of militarism,” never withholding his approval of major military decisions, while simultaneously insulating himself from blame for the war.

Herbert Bix is harsher still.¹⁹⁶ He portrays the emperor as an active war leader who played a decisive role in wartime operations, from the seizure of Manchuria in 1931 through the planning of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Most damning of all, Hirohito prolonged the war in order to preserve his own position, finally using the American atomic bombs and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria to enhance his reputation as a peacemaker. Bix notes that Hirohito supported General Tojo, the main opponent of withdrawal from China, and sanctioned both the extermination campaigns that followed the Hundred Regiments offensive, and the terror bombing of Chungking that began in 1939. He also claims, without evidence, that the emperor knew about the biological experiments in Harbin.

The Politics of Memory

Almost three million Japanese died in the Second World War. Chinese casualties were at least four times as great. Both nations faced the problem, after 1945, of making sense of the slaughter. Paul Pickowicz has shown how China’s immediate postwar films found meaning in the preservation of traditional values.¹⁹⁷ Those who adopted foreign ways are shown to be decadent, irresponsible, and greedy, the captives of alien, capitalist culture. Jui-te Chang has examined the ways that the commemoration of the war in both China and South Korea is still used to keep animosity toward Japan alive, gaining in this way psychological, and occasionally economic, advantage.¹⁹⁸ Arthur Waldron demonstrates the uses to which the history of even someone like General Zhang Zizhong, the highest-ranking officer to die in combat in the Asian war, has been put.¹⁹⁹ Zhang, a warlord deeply distrusted by both Nationalists and Communists, has recently been made a hero in a People’s Republic of China campaign to increase nationalism, organized by a government seeking to create some legitimate basis for continuing its rule other than a discredited Communist ideology.

196. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000).

197. Paul G. Pickowicz, “Victory as Defeat: Postwar Visualizations of China’s War of Resistance,” in Wen-hsin Yeh, *Becoming Chinese*, 365–98.

198. Jui-te Chang, “The Politics of Commemoration: A Comparative Analysis of the Fiftieth-Anniversary Commemoration in Mainland China and Taiwan of the Victory in the Anti-Japanese War,” in Lary and MacKinnon, *Scars of War*, 136–60.

199. Arthur Waldron, “China’s New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, part 4 (October 1996): 945–78.

Japanese reactions have been different. Akira Nakamura has attacked what he believes are Chinese and Korean attempts to distort history.²⁰⁰ The Japanese, he argues, have not asked Chinese or Koreans to revise myths in their own textbooks. There can be no common understanding of history among nations, Nakamura concludes, since it “is invariably linked to national feelings and national interests.” Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa’s 1993 apology for Japan’s “war of aggression,” which he characterized as a “mistaken war,” has increased demands of so-called “free history” advocates, such as education professor Nobukatsu Fujioka, for a more nationalistic interpretation of the “China incident.” George Hicks is not sure whether Japan’s refusal to confront its wartime past is an act of concealment or simply a case of amnesia.²⁰¹ He suggests it is in part due to the American decision to hold a small number of wartime leaders responsible for all of Japan’s crimes, while at the same time rehabilitating Japan as rapidly as possible as a bulwark against Communism. All this made it easier for the Japanese public to forget the Imperial army’s crimes. He concludes by celebrating the 1997 court victory of Saburo Ienaga, author of a controversial book about the war, who protested the Japanese government’s elimination of wartime atrocities from history texts.²⁰²

Haruko and Theodore Cook have attempted to discover what “ordinary” Japanese people remember about the war.²⁰³ Support of the China invasion, they find, had initially been nearly unanimous. At the beginning, one survivor remembered, when there were still not many casualties, “the nation treated the family members of the war dead with such care . . . that their families almost felt grateful to their sons for having died.” Yet, the authors found there were hardly any memories of Japanese victories. Most people remembered only defeat, which they had experienced first-hand. There was also an overwhelming sense of the war being a catastrophe that had somehow happened to them, and for which they bore no personal responsibility. Finally, the Cooks found an almost universally accepted notion that the end of the war had been a “good defeat,” which had laid the foundation of modern Japanese prosperity. The notion of a “useful war” is discussed by John Dower.²⁰⁴ He suggests

200. Akira Nakamura, *Daïtoa senso e no michi* (The Road to the Greater East Asian War) (Tokyo: Tentensha, 1990). This work was originally serialized in the conservative journal *Shokun*.

201. George Hicks, *Japan’s War Memories: Amnesia or Concealment?* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998).

202. Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931–1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

203. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992).

204. John W. Dower, “The Useful War,” in Dower, *Japan in War and Peace*, 9–32.

the war economy increased the skill of the industrial work force, seriously weakened the power of an economically retrograde landlord class, and furthered bureaucratic coordination of the economy. The result was Japan's postwar "economic miracle," created by old and new *zaibatsu* under the guiding hand of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

The Japanese launched the China war in order to secure markets and gain privileged access to raw materials. In doing so they believed they were ensuring the continued life of their nation. They might also have thought they were acting in the time-honored traditions of other empires. They could hardly have imagined when embarking on their China adventure they were sowing the wind. In 1945, they reaped the whirlwind. Japanese leaders believed the war would help preserve their traditional society. In the end, the conflict transformed both Japan and China in ways Tokyo and the Kwantung Army leadership could hardly have imagined. There is much irony in this.