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Wartime China's Resistance against Japanese Aggression: Changing Interpretations and Perspectives

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Bryant University

Department of History and Social Sciences

Introduction

Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practising) in its environment. ... If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself.... If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.[1]

- Chairman Mao Zedong "On Practice" (July 1937)

Mao's reflection on the origin of knowledge echoes the sentiments expressed by many professors. While studying theory and concepts are important aspects of learning, on-site research positions one's historical base at a higher level. Our research into the historiography of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression embraced this approach advised by Mao, as we balanced conceptual study and direct interaction with our subject. Initially, we began studying the history of modern China as part of a special topics course, the U.S. and China from 1931-1950, at Bryant University. Although the course dealt with a relatively narrow time span in history, the focus of our study was still broad. While we understood the complexities of this time period, we did not foresee the intricacies of this historical narrative that we have now discovered through engaging how this history has been and is still being presented.

In June 2010, thanks to support from Bryant University, the Confucius Institute, and Hanban, we were able to supplement our course studies with a research trip to China. For two weeks, we travelled throughout China conducting site visits on events of historical significance to the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (War of Resistance). We visited governmental sponsored museums and landmarks, conversed with local citizens knowledgeable of these sites and events, and gathered official PRC disbursed literature on the War of

[1] Mao Zedong, "On Practice," *Selected Works (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965),* 299-300.

Resistance.[2] Before our trip, our advisor for this project, Professor Judy Barrett Litoff, came across an article by Rana Mitter that discusses the evolution and presentation of the history of the War of Resistance by the Chinese government in the pre and post Mao eras.[3] Mitter noted a few major themes of this reexamination of history, themes which we were able to observe during our own trip. Upon our return, we continued to research the evolution of this presentation by the Chinese government of this historical time period. We found that many scholars, both Chinese and foreign, have begun researching this "new remembering." In 1996, Arthur Waldron coined the term "new remembering" to describe the process of reexamination of the War of Resistance. This "new remembering" is characterized by a more open and balanced presentation of the war years by representing the contributions of the Chinese Nationalists, or Kuomintang (KMT), as well as the Communist Party of China (CPC).[4] Publications on this "new remembering" and time period have grown drastically over the past ten years, indicating that exploration and analysis into this process is far from over. Indeed, analysis of this phenomenon may only be in its infancy.

Our research stems directly from our own observations into the "new remembering" and builds off our examinations of the works published by scholars such as Rana Mitter, Arthur Waldron, and Parks Coble. We first analyze how the primary sources from the Chinese government characterized the war from the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 through the Mao era (1949-1976), giving extra attention to how the war was assessed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Our analysis then examines similar

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[2] Jason Fortin and Thomas Pagliarini, *Faculty and Student Research Trip*, http://www.bryant.edu/wps/wcm/connect/Bryant/Divisions/Presidents/US-China%20Institute/Academics/Faculty%20and%20Student%20Research%20Trip.

[3] Rana Mitter, "Old Ghosts, New Memories: China's Changing War History in the Era of Post-Mao Politics," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 1 (2003): 117-131.

[4] Arthur Waldron, "China's New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996): 945-978

governmentally-sponsored literature proffered in the post Mao era, 1976 to present. We then explain what scholars have described about this process of "new remembering," after which we compare and contrast our own observations against what these scholars have recorded, focusing on trends they have emphasized and aspects they have avoided. We then elaborate on some of the additional locations that we visited, such as the Yan'an Revolutionary Museum and the Eighth Route Army Museum, that were not addressed by many "new remembering" scholars. We also explore how the "new remembering" has been characterized in other media forms, such as a China Central Television series special and a People's Liberation Army Daily website. Finally, we summarize our findings and offer our own interpretation of where the process of the "new remembering" is heading.

Cultural Revolution

Following the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the relationship between the leadership of the KMT and the CPC had already begun to deteriorate. Despite the efforts of the United States under General Marshall, who attempted to negotiate a settlement between the two forces (December 1945-January 1947[5]), a full fledged civil war between the CPC and KMT broke out in 1946. After the Communists defeated the Nationalists, Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1st, 1949. Immediately, the PRC began to forge a narrative of the War of Resistance. As Mao gained more power, the KMT was increasingly blamed for prolonging the bloody war with Japan. Furthermore, a narrative praising the efforts of the CPC guerrilla movement in the north began to take hold. The mindset was that Japan was the defeated enemy, while the KMT became the subdued enemy.[6]

[5]Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall* (New York: Twayne Pulblishers, 1989), 145–51.
[6] Mitter, 119.

During the Mao era (1949-1976), Chinese propaganda emphasized that the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China were the key reasons why China won the war against Japan. The two documents we examined were *From Yenan to Peking: The Chinese People's War of Liberation from Reconstruction to First Five-Year Plan* (1954) by Liao Kai-Lung and *Long live the victory of the people's war; in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of victory in the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan* (1968) by Lin Biao. Liao Kai-Lung was a senior editor of the *People's Daily*[7] while Lin Biao served as Vice-Premier from 1965-1971. The *People's Daily* is considered a governmental source as it is the official spokesperson of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and is directly controlled and overseen by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee.[8] In these two official governmental documents published during the Mao era, detailing the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the role played by the United States in defeating Japan is rarely mentioned. For example, accounts exclude references to battles in the Pacific with the Japanese, largely ignoring the role of the United States in greatly weakening the Japanese military. Likewise, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not discussed.

An analysis of the Mao era shows that a substantial shift in the way the War of Resistance was characterized occurs during the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, the Mao era must be analyzed in two parts: the pre-Cultural Revolution period (1949-1966) and during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). When the role of the KMT is discussed in pre-Cultural Revolution literature, their wartime efforts are characterized as counter-productive, but their contributions are still partially recognized. In 1955, Liao Kai-Lung produced a government sponsored document that details the history of China from 1931-1950. Although an official CPC

[7] Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), viii.
[8] Guoguang Wu, "Command Communication: The Politics of the Editorial Formulation in the People's Daily," *The China Quarterly* 137 (1994): 195.

document, the close proximity in time to the Chinese Civil War forces Liao to devote a substantial portion of his writing to the Nationalists. Liao's book must address the fact that although the CPC was in power, other narratives describing the history of the War of Resistance were still circulating in the public consciousness. Liao overloads the book with statistics to demonstrate the superiority of the CPC's military and economic policies over those put forth by the KMT. Victory in the Civil War is offered as proof that the CPC is the legitimate power in China, and, consequently, can take ownership of the successful resistance against Japan.

During the Cultural Revolution, the role of the Nationalists was not only marginalized, but accounts of their efforts were virtually eliminated. By this time, the CPC had firmly cemented its power over the country. No longer did the CPC have to address the KMT narrative of the war, the word of the Communist Party was the only word —the CPC's narrative was the only narrative. Accordingly, when Lin Biao wrote his account of the War of Resistance in 1968, he could exaggerate the role of the CPC without having to address the KMT narrative. He put forth statements without having to provide justification. His book, therefore, relies less on providing statistically driven evidence and instead conveys a message that is largely ideological in nature. Lin's book contains exaggerated political rhetoric that constantly advances the Communist dogma. Throughout his work, the War of Resistance and the Civil War are used as political leverage to further the agenda of the CPC.[9]

Liao Kai-Lung, in his role as a mouthpiece for the Central Committee, who writes before the Cultural Revolution, states that the "chief factor that account[s] for Japan's defeat was the march into NE China of the Soviet Army."[10] The United States bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki

[9] Lin Biao, *Long live the victory of the people's war! In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of victory in the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan,* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968).

[10] Liao Kai-Lung, *From Yenan to Peking: The Chinese People's War of Liberation from Reconstruction to First Five-Year Plan* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1954), 1.

on August 6th and 9th, 1945, respectively. The Soviet Union invaded northern Manchuria on the morning of August 9th, and Emperor Hirohito announced his surrender on August 15th. The combined shock of the Soviet Union's aggression on top of the two nuclear attacks that Japan had already endured certainly contributed to Hirohito's decision to demand his war advisory board, the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, to declare defeat.[11] However, the Soviet Union's troop movements were clearly not the chief factor for the defeat of the Japanese. Rather, the CPC exaggerated their contribution to glorify the success of a friendly Marxist-Leninist state and marginalize the efforts made by capitalist America.

Describing the KMT's policies after the victory over Japan, Liao Kai-Lung contends that the KMT "were determined to maintain every reactionary survival from the past, old feudal abuses, the rule of the Chinese business compradors with their commercial and political subservience to foreign interests, and to keep themselves in power by barefaced fascist methods."[12] This political subservience is a reference to the American support provided to the Chinese Nationalists both during the War of Resistance and the Civil War—upwards of $750 million from the mid 1930s to 1949.[13] Similarly, Liao refers to the United States as "encroaching on Chinese territory" in an effort to "convert China into a US colony."[14] However, it is important to note that the troops provided by the US were in China to train Nationalist forces for their resistance against Japan. U.S. troops were not provided to the KMT to fight against the CPC. Their contributions during the Civil War were primarily limited to monetary and logistical support.

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[11] Richard B Frank, *Downfall: the End of the Imperial Japanese Empire*. (New York: Penguin, 1999) 87.
[12] Liao, 4.
[13] Wesley Marvin Bagby, *The Eagle-Dragon Alliance: America's Relations with China in World War II*, (University of Delaware Press, 1992), 65.
[14] Liao, 5.

Portraying a negative image of the United States and the Kuomintang, in contrast to a positive image of the Soviet Union, the CPC could reemphasize the faltering relations between the bourgeoisie and the peasants to justify their policies. Liao Kai-Lung even contends that the U.S. had wanted to "plunge China" ever since the beginning.[15] To support the Communist movement, Liao notes that the four most powerful and richest families in China "ruthlessly plundered the people in the former enemy occupied areas."[16] It was commonly known that those occupying these areas were the Communist guerrillas who gained control following the retreat of the Japanese. These negative classifications combined well with Liao's framing of the KMT as illegitimate. Liao points out that the KMT *only* had 4.3 million forces at the beginning of the war, which he contends is a small number in comparison to the 300 million people in the area it ruled.[17] However, he then goes on to suggest that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was such a strong force, despite citing that their numbers were 1.2 million strong.[18] Liao's book frames the CPC as an omniscient power, bolstering this argument with a detailed account of Mao Zedong's criticisms of the KMT regarding everything from their military tactics to their economic weaknesses. The detail provided in this book, however warped, is shockingly different from publications issued during and after the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, works contained few statistics and relied on rhetoric and theory to push the agenda of the CPC.

Contrary to modern presentations of Chinese history, Liao does not reference a "Chinese people," but rather describes historical events in the terms of the KMT or the CPC. This distinction sharply contrasts the PRC's current policy that downplays the historical differences

[15] Liao, 13.
[16] Liao, 11.
[17] Liao, 35.
[18] Liao, 35.

between the CPC and the KMT, promoting a "One China" policy. Furthermore, prior to the Cultural Revolution, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Nationalists were often described as the "KMT *government."*[19,20] This term of legitimacy was abandoned during the Cultural Revolution as Vice-Chairman Lin Biao references the KMT as "KMT *reactionaries"*[21] who were "backed by U.S. imperialists."[22] The changing of this term during the Cultural Revolution evidences an effort to redefine what the KMT actually was, what power it held, and how legitimate its power was. By framing it as a government in the early 1950s, the rhetoric acknowledges that the KMT had some legitimate power. However, during the Cultural Revolution when Biao employs the term KMT "reactionaries," who have obtained their support from "western imperialists" and not the Chinese people, the legitimacy of the KMT's actions during the War of Resistance against Japan is undermined.

Much of the presentation of this history was radically changed during the Cultural Revolution. According to Lin Biao, the real resistance to Japan was the relentless defense by the people and the PLA while the KMT "followed a policy of non-resistance."[23] Lin Biao describes in his book, *Long live the victory of the people's war; in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of victory in the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japan* (1968) the reasons for victory over Japan.

> How was it possible for a weak country finally to defeat a strong country/How [sic] was it possible for a seemingly weak army to become the main force in the war? The basic reasons were that the War of resistance [sic] against Japan was a genuine people's war led by the Communist Party of China and comrade Mao

[19]Own emphasis added
[20]Liao, 15.
[21]Own emphasis added.
[22] Lin, 6.
[23] Lin, 3.

> Tse-Tung, a war in which to the correct Marxist-Leninist political and military lines were put into effect, and that the Eighth Route and New Fourth armies were genuine people's armies which applied the whole range of strategy and tactics of people's war as formulated by comrade Mao Tse-Tung.[24]

While there is some truth to this statement, all of its assertions are not valid. The Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies did in fact head the guerilla resistance championed by Mao Zedong in his work "On Protracted War." However, apart from sporadic guerilla engagements, the victories obtained by these two divisions were limited to only two significant battles during the war: the Battle of Pingxingguan (September 25, 1937) and the 100 Regiments Battle (August 20 - December 5th, 1940). The victories obtained in these battles, however, were far from the driving force in the victory over Japan.

Biao focuses the majority of his explanation of "The Victory of the People's War" on a Marxist-Leninist class analysis. Conflicts between the CPC and Japan are described with words such as "colonial" or bourgeoisie-peasant violence. In lieu of providing detailed accounts of the battles fought throughout the War of Resistance, Biao substitutes discussions of the importance of the CPC ideology. While the book begins with an in depth focus on the struggles of the Communists against Japanese Imperialism, the analysis remains on a theoretical level. It is a battle of ideas, in which the Communist thought emerges as the victor. This account differs from Liao's focus on the CPC-KMT conflict. This change is indicative of the PRC's attempt to wipe out the KMT. Furthermore, successes obtained throughout the war are presented as the results of "Party Policy" as opposed to "China's Policy." The book references the victory against Japan and against capitalism as a Party driven effort. Framing the War of Resistance in this context allowed the CPC to argue "we've won against the biggest enemies, trust our efforts now."

[24] Lin, 4-5.

Despite presenting the Second United Front[25], which was formed in early 1937 after increased pressure from Chiang's top commanders to work with the Communists, as successful, Biao still classifies Chiang Kai-Shek and his close allies as "anti-communist die hards."[26] His piece argues that the Communists were "Anti-Japanese" in contrast to the KMT who were complicit with Japanese expansion.[27] He contends that while the Japanese easily defeated the KMT, the Communists, under the wise policy of Mao Zedong, moved behind the enemy's lines and set up anti-Japanese base areas which grew to 100,000,000 people from 1937-1940.[28] This framework of history effectively credits the Communists with the bulk of the resistance to the Japanese with Mao as the central figure in building the resisting force. Acknowledgments to the fact that the Nationalists bore the brunt of resistance and that the Japanese kept the KMT at the core of their military strategy are neglected. Furthermore, the efforts of the Allied powers in weakening the Japanese force in the Pacific Theatre does not work its way into the account.

However, to promote the idea of unity voiced by the banners of the Cultural Revolution and justify aggression waged against KMT supporters, Biao cites a 1965 speech by Mao titled, "If unity is sought through struggle, it will live; if unity is sought through yielding, it will perish."[29] Describing the War of Resistance in this manner thrust Mao's desire to build a rural revolution base and garner support for the Cultural Revolution. Mao provides a characterization

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[25] In 1924 the KMT and infant CPC formed a United Front. Both parties initially participated in the Northern Expedition (1925-1928) to unify the country, starting from Guangzhou in the Guangdong Province. However, when Chiang halted in Shanghai in April of 1927, he sought to purge the KMT of Communists and communist influence. His attacks slaughtered several thousand CPC and only a small number, including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Zhu De (1886-1976 and founder of Chinese Red Army) escaped to the countryside. The first United Front is rarely emphasized in history; hence for simplicity purposes, we will refer to the Second United Front as the United Front throughout the paper. Referencing the Second United Front in this manner is also consistent with how it is referenced by the majority of Chinese literature on this era. See: Judy Barrett Litoff, *History of the United States and China: 1931-1950,* (lecture, Bryant University, Smithfield, RI, September 29, 2010)

[26] Lin, 40.

[27] Lin, 32.

[28] Lin, 54.

[29] Mao Zedong, "Current Problems of Tactics in the Anti-Japanese United Front," *Selected Works* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 422.

of the War of Resistance that is indicative of the CPC's changing interpretation of history as a means to promote certain policies.

> Since China's key cities have long been occupied by the powerful imperialists and their reactionary Chinese allies, it is imperative for the revolutionary ranks to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution from which to fight their vicious enemies who are using the cities for attacks on the rural districts and in this way gradually to achieve the complete victory of the revolution through protracted fighting; it is imperative for them to do so if they do not wish to compromise with imperialism and its lackeys but are determined to fight on, and if they intend to build up and temper their forces, and avoid decisive battles with a powerful enemy while their own strength is inadequate.[30]

This manipulation of history to support party policy objectives is also a critical component to the "new remembering" which we will explore later in this paper. In this case, the victory against Japan is used as propaganda to further the CPC's policies.

Lin Biao's *Long live the victory of the People's war* ends its explanation of the war about forty percent of the way through the text. The remainder of the work focuses on explaining China's military expansion, the new strategies employed by Mao, the policy of self-reliance, the negative perception towards the United States, and how Khrushchev revisionists are betrayers to the Marxist-Leninist line. In other words, with the coming of the Mao Era, the KMT was eliminated from the historical narrative in order to make way for a rigid and oppressive party ideology.

Post-Mao and the New Remembering

[30] Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, 316-317.

A key component in the assessment of China's "new remembering" is the degree to which information is being conveyed to the public. Beginning in the mid 1980s, as part of a larger ideological shift, reflective of China's "new remembering," the Chinese government began constructing a series of museums dedicated to informing the public about the War of Resistance.[31] During this time, scholarship emerged that began to include efforts by the Nationalists as part of China's overall resistance to Japan. The inclusion of KMT contributions in these new museums is indicative of China's commitment to communicate this new historiography. While reinterpretations of the War of Resistance could have remained a subject isolated to the realm of academia, the Chinese government made it a point to present actively this perspective to the public. In doing so, it is clear that the Chinese government wants the information contained in the museums to become a part of the official history of the time period.

The three museums that were constructed as a part of the "new remembering" were the Memorial Hall for Compatriots killed in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression (constructed in 1985 in Nanjing), the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (constructed in 1987 in Beijing), and the 9.18 Exhibition Museum in (constructed in 1991 in Shenyang). Each of these museums highlights a different aspect of the period from 1931-1945. They focus on a different event and emphasize its significance within the overall context of the time period. The museums also weave overarching themes into the narratives they present. The Nanjing and Shenyang Museums express a theme of "victimization," and the Beijing museum adopts a theme of "heroism" to classify the efforts of the Chinese people.[32] Although we were unable to travel to the Shenyang museum, we had the

[31] Mitter, 127.
[32] Mitter, 127.

opportunity to observe the manifestation of both the victimization and heroism themes in the Nanjing and Beijing museums.

A few scholars have identified this "new remembering" and critically analyzed how this process of remembering has developed and why it has occurred. As Parks M. Coble points out, Mao's history is characterized by propaganda rather than history. During the Mao era, Chiang Kai-shek was given scant credit for the fighting by the Nationalists, and Western contributions were mostly ignored. During the second half of the Mao era, the Communist Party's story of the War of Resistance was not simply the dominant narrative, it was the only narrative. During the thought reforms of the Cultural Revolution, people were arrested, shot, or detained in labor camps if they had any connection to the Kuomintang.[33] Coble notes that "'historical memory' was a 'contested space,' not simply in an academic way, but in a reality."[34] Now, however, museums are beginning to address these issues. For example, the U.S. Army Observation Group's mission to Yan'an (commonly referred to as the Dixie Mission) was mostly absent from the historical narrative for many years. Yet in 2008, with the construction of the Yan'an Revolutionary Museum, it was formally remembered by the PRC on the grounds of the former headquarters of the Communist Party. It is important to note that the Dixie Mission had been remembered in other parts of the country. On August 23, 2004, marking the 60th anniversary of the Dixie Mission, the Society for People's Friendship Studies (CSPFS), the China Institute of International Strategic Studies (CIISS) and the Friends of China Research Foundation invited former Chinese diplomats, scholars, publishers and journalists as well as family members of

[33] Parks M. Coble, "China's "New Remembering" of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937-1945," *The China Quarterly* 190, no. 1 (2007): 397.
[34] Coble, 397.

Dixie Mission staff and American researchers to Beijing to commemorate the historic relationship.[35]

During the Mao era the trail of history focused on propaganda and grandiose statements of Communist ideology until Mao's death in 1976. Even after Mao's death, up until 1979, articles were still published which depicted the Nationalist role as "inactive in resisting Japan."[36] Further, in 1984, Chen Lian published an article in the *Research on Modern Chinese* history journal (published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) that only references the Chinese Communist Army's strategic maneuvers in the war against Japan.[37] It was not until 1985, when an article was published by historian Qi Shirong that both the Red Army and Kuomintang army were credited.[38] As time went on, more narratives that included the Nationalist's contributions began to appear. In 1987, the PLA, the successor of the Red Army, published a biography of military leaders from 1925-1949, which portrayed some Nationalist commanders in a positive light. The following year, the Number Two Historical Archives in Nanjing issued a collection of articles that included the contributions of the KMT forces.[39] The influence of the KMT was framed as cooperative in order to support the vision of a unified China evidenced by a successful United Front (1937-1946). This government sponsored work opened the door for a wide spread "new remembering" of the War of Resistance. The "new remembering" is a slow process and is one that is still occurring. So far, that process has gone as follows: first the KMT was recognized as existing, but contributing in an ineffective manner. Secondly scholarship has noted that the

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[35]China Internet Information Center, "Dixie Mission Remembered in Beijing," <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2004/Aug/105006.htm>.

[36] Zhang Bofen, "The many compromising and capitulationist activities of the Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique during the anti-Japanese war of resistance," *JJindai shi yanjiu,* no. 2 (1979): 215.

[37]Coble, 399.; Chen Lian, "The strategic plan of our army in setting base areas behind enemy lines," *Research on Modern Chinese History*, no 1 (1984): 29-55.

[38] Qi Shirong, "The Position and effect of China's anti-Japanese war of resistance in the Second World War," *Beijing Normal College n*o. 4 (1985): 118-33.

[39] Coble, 400.

KMT did try to fight against the Japanese, but their efforts fell short of those of the Communists. Currently, the KMT is recognized as playing a more substantial role in the war, but the War of Resistance is still primarily framed as having operated under the leadership of the CPC.

Rana Mitter notes that there are two main reasons why the PRC chose to re-remember this war. The first is to promote more cordial relations between China and Taiwan, and the second is to bind the Chinese together.

Coble argues that the Chinese government could have bypassed this "new remembering" and persisted with the same historiography, but strategically chose not to do so. Coble concurs with Ritter that this "new remembering" is an "attempt by Beijing to lure Taiwan into an agreement of unification."[40] Coble goes on to note that the "patriotic nationalist narrative which stresses the heroic achievements of China in the war and its contribution to the global defeat of fascism is dominant in many publications."[41] The PRC has emphasized the role of the United Front to serve this view, and as such, issues running counter to this are now ignored. Therefore, even though the "new remembering" has lifted the history of the War of Resistance out of the vestiges of Mao's dogma, in some ways, the historiography of the War of Resistance is still being directed and controlled.

The second reason for the "new remembering" is an effort by the PRC to bind the Chinese together through a theme of victimization. By engaging the past and viewing the suffering they went through as a collective population, citizens from both sides of the Taiwan Straits can support the Chinese war effort rather than specifically attributing the victory to the Communists or Nationalists. For example, in the Nanjing Museum there are detailed presentations showing torture devices, pictures of mutilated civilians, and smiling Japanese

[40] Coble, 402.
[41] Coble, 403.

militarists standing next to victims they have raped. Previously, accounts of the war did not detail the abuses of the Japanese invaders. Rather, war narratives were intended to boost the national morale by emphasizing the strength of the CPC and the Chinese people. In many ways, the new focus on victimization, as opposed to strictly heroism, is more historically accurate because the initial resistance of the Chinese was largely a failure.

Kirk Denton also writes on the increased attention given to the victimization theme.[42] He notes that increased focus on the brutality of Japan allows the PRC to distract its citizens from the class divide in China. These museums engage the United Front and a "pseudoreligion of victimhood"[43] to divert attention away from the growing socioeconomic divide in post-Mao China. The focus on victimization provides something to unite the country in the void of Mao's ideology. By not focusing on Mao's ideology they can avoid the discussion of class conflict, which is a present reality.

Mitter describes the Chinese government as ruled by "half-willing, half resentful reformers."[44] This dichotomy presents a paradox for Chinese politicians and leaders. While they want to expose Chinese culture to the world and usher interest and investment into China, they do not want to compromise their current attempts to unify their people. Especially considering that these attempts rely on a particular perception of their vivid history. As such, writing on the war remains constrained by political party and popular nationalist sentiment. It is true that historically, Chiang's stand in Shanghai and the role of the Flying Tigers was simply not part of the public discourse. Even when examining the historical media, those in contact with KMT and/or the United States who were not directly under purview of the CPC were more likely to be

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[42]Kirk A. Denton, "Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums," *Japan Focus* (2007), 1. Availabe at: http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kirk%20A.-Denton/2547.

[43]Ian Buruma, "The Joys and Perils of Victimhood," *New York Review of Books* (April 8, 1999), 4–9.

[44] Mitter, 117.

criticized, restricted, and killed during the Cultural Revolution. Communist journalists had more freedom in what they published, which resulted in a large collection of literary resources which heavily supported the role of the CPC and simultaneously marginalized the efforts of the Kuomintang. However, Mitter notes that the PRC currently tries "to foster a new nationalism, inclusive of all Chinese, regardless of party affiliation and, more controversially, nationality, but finding a common enemy to oppose."[45] Mitter argues that the commemoration of the Sino-Japanese war through the two themes of victimization and heroism opens the door for the "construction of a centripetal nationalism."[46]

As pointed out by Mitter and Coble, there is a distinct process to remembering Chinese history. First, a topic is regarded as off limits, then documents are published with negligible commentary. Then, assessments of these documents are released that appear to stay within the confines of the official Chinese historiography of the time. Lastly, the complexities of the time period are assessed more critically by international scholars. According to the process described by Coble and Mitter, it appears that the "new remembering" of the War of Resistance has begun to enter the initial stages of this last phase. However, we have found that there is still a gap between academia and the public. What is being discussed by scholars on this period does not always line up with how the Chinese government presents the history to its citizens. We discovered this gap by personally viewing PRC sponsored museums and their accompanying literature that was written in English.

The next section of this paper will outline what we witnessed compared to the other observations of "new remembering" scholars. However, the flow of information still needs to

[45] Mitter, 120.
[46] Mitter, 121.

permeate the minds of the average Chinese citizen. As such, this "new remembering" is not over. In fact it may only still be in its infancy.

Assessment of the War

Assessing the War of Resistance in an objective historical manner is a daunting, if not impossible task. For many years, the history of the war has been trapped under layers of political distortion from both sides of the Taiwan Straits. As Mitter notes, both China and Taiwan have offered narratives that, although the roles of the Nationalists and the Communists are "diametrically opposed," they follow the same structure.[47] Yet, despite the distortions that have affected the historical accounts of the war, there are certain things that can be substantially asserted about the conflict. To begin, no side is completely innocent, and no side is completely at fault. Both the KMT and CPC have a claim to some of the praise, but both sides must also recognize their shortcomings during the War of Resistance. Furthermore, analysis of the war must also confront the paradox that by most measurements, the Chinese, both the Nationalists and the Communists, lost nearly "every major confrontation on the battlefield, yet they won the war."[48] Indeed, while the Nationalist Chinese may have been able to repel the Japanese in smaller, more isolated fighting, generally speaking, the Chinese were outmatched by the Japanese in larger conventional fighting.

In regards to early victories in the War of Resistance, the few battles won by the Chinese, both the CPC and the KMT, were primarily important for the morale boosts they provided. In late September of 1937, CPC troops of the Eighth Route Army were able to take out a brigade of the Japanese Fifth Division in the Battle of Pingxingguan.[49] In March-April 1938, Nationalist

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[47] Mitter, 129.

[48] Marvin Williamsen, "The Military Dimension, 1937-1941," In *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937-1945*, ed. James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1992), 135.

[49] Williamsen, 136.

troops were able to successfully garrison the walled-in city of Tai'erzhuang. Both of these battles are celebrated more because they were some of the few instances in which the Chinese could attach their name to a victory in the early part of the war. They were used as morale-boosters, esteemed for the "courage, competence, and determination displayed" by the Chinese troops.[50] However, some scholars contend that despite the early success in both of these engagements, the Japanese soon after regained the contested territories.[51] Within eighteen months after beginning their assault on the Chinese mainland in July 1937, Japan controlled the eastern third of China, including all of the major port cities. By the end of 1937, the Nationalist regular forces had lost a total of 370,000 to 450,000 men, which was between one-third to one-half of its original fighting strength.[52]

After the first year of fighting, the Nationalists began to reassess their military strategy. Chiang borrowed the metaphor of the whale and the silk worm in describing how the Nationalists would operate:

> The Japanese were anxious to bite off big chunks of Chinese territories like a whale and not nibble like the mincing of a silkworm. The appropriate counterstrategy then was to deny the Japanese the pleasure of taking big bites and to force them to mince, and the method for achieving this purpose was to "trade space for time."[53]

Trading space for time, the Nationalists moved their wartime capital from Nanjing to Wuhan (1937-1938), then eventually to Chongqing, where it remained for the duration of the war (1938-

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[50] Williamsen, 139.

[51] T'ien-Wei Wu, "The Communist Movement," In *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937-1945*, ed. James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1992), 83 and Williamsen, 141.

[52] Hsi-Sheng Ch'I, *Nationalist China at War: Military Defeats and Political Collapse, 1937-45* (Ann Harbor: University of Michigan, 1982), 43.

[53] Ch'I, 54.

1945). During this same time, scholars argue that "despite its public announcements to the contrary, the CPC put self-preservation and expansion above fighting the Japanese."[54] Indeed, in regards to the notion of a cooperative United Front, the Nationalists claim "little assistance" had been offered by the CPC.[55] Furthermore, while the CPC's guerilla warfare may have been a thorn in the side of the Japanese, the official Japanese position was that "the central issue for the solution of the China incident lies in the destruction of Chiang Kai-shek's resistance against Japan."[56]

Yet, the complexity of the War of Resistance cannot be emphasized enough. It is well established that the Nationalists bore the brunt of most of the destruction caused by the Japanese. As mentioned, Chiang and his troops were the major concern of the Japanese military strategy throughout the war. However, the Communist Red Army was able to not only survive, but managed to greatly increase in strength throughout the war. Their guerilla fighting tied up a large Japanese force that could have otherwise been used solely against the Nationalists. Furthermore, the CPC's relentless propaganda campaigns, though at times overly critical of Chiang, forced the Nationalists to more actively confront the Japanese.[57] The interactions of the Nationalists and the Communists throughout the war, both with and against each other, as well as against the Japanese have forged a complex and dynamic historical narrative. There is so much detail that colors this rich period in history. The challenge is to analyze the picture that has been painted with these colors by the Chinese.

Observations of New Remembering

[54]Wu, 83.
[55] Ch'I, 118.
[56] Ishijima Kiyuki, "Concerning the Development of Base Areas in the Resistance against Japan," 75 quoted from Wu, 88.
[57] Wu, 103.

The Nanjing Museum was the first of the three government sponsored museums to be constructed. The museum is dedicated to the victims of the infamous Rape of Nanjing. The Rape of Nanjing occurred after the Japanese invaded the former Kuomintang capital on December 13, 1937. For six weeks, Japanese soldiers occupied Nanjing and indiscriminately destroyed infrastructure, killed Chinese troops and civilians, and raped thousands of women and young girls.[58] The museum epitomizes the victim theme of the "new remembering" by conveying both a raw emotional narrative as well as citing startling statistics on the amount of destruction that the Chinese endured. As previously noted**,** in the Mao Era, Japan was depicted as the enemy that had been overcome. In 1949, the CPC initially assessed that 9.32 million Chinese had died during the war and that total casualties were approximately 22 million. Yet, in 1995, former General Secretary of the CPC, Jiang Zemin, increased the estimated number of casualties to 35 million.[59] The Nanjing Museum constantly emphasizes staggering statistics like this throughout its halls. Prominently displayed in multiple areas on the outside of the museum is the figure 300,000, the estimated number of Chinese citizens killed during the Rape of Nanjing. However, official estimates of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in charge of prosecuting Japanese war crimes, establish the number of Chinese soldiers and civilians killed is much closer to 200,000.[60] The official position of the Japanese government in regards to this issue is that they believe "it is difficult to determine which the correct number is;" and therefore, decline to provide an estimate.[61] Despite the contention of this number within the international community and scholarship, the 300,000 statistic is a major focus within the

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[58] Fogel, Joshua A. *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (London: University of California Press, 2000), 46-8

[59] Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism*: *Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (London: University of California Press, 2004), 80.

[60] International Military Tribunal for the Far East, Chapter VIII Conventional War Crimes. "Atrocities," http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/IMTFE/index.html, 1114.

[61] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. "Historical Issues Q&A," http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/q_a/faq16.html#q8.

museum and its accompanying literature. The museum also reinforces the estimated 20,000 incidences of rape that occurred during the six week massacre.[62] Furthermore, as both a statistic and a visceral reminder of the atrocity that took place, the museum features a somber memorial called the "Mass Grave of 10,000 Corpses." The memorial shows visitors actual remains from an exhumed mass grave of 10,000 corpses. These numbers, which are at the highest ends of all estimates, effectively support the victimization theme.

Yet, it is not the "numbers game" alone that makes the Nanjing Museum of particular interest; rather, it is what these numbers represent.[63] Nanjing was the Nationalist capital (1927-1937) before its ultimate move to Chongqing for the remainder of the war years (1938-1945). In referencing the number of victims of the Rape of Nanjing, the museum consistently puts forth that 300,000 Chinese people were killed. There is never a party-specific reference to either the KMT or the CPC when it describes the atrocities. Rather, the generic, all encompassing term the "Chinese people" is utilized. Even the museum's title, the Memorial Hall for Compatriots Killed in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression, employs the all inclusive term "compatriots," which is used to acknowledge the sacrifice of individuals from China, Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong. The museum uses this terminology despite the fact that the individuals in Nanjing were clearly Nationalists. Therefore, the use of this terminology bolsters the unifying theme which is a central component to the "new remembering."

In sharp contrast to the victim theme conveyed in the Nanjing Museum, the Beijing Museum communicates a narrative of the Chinese people rising up as one to face the Japanese invaders. It uses the larger narrative of China's victory in the War of Resistance—a fact that is undisputable—in order to manipulate the details on how the war was won. Specifically, the

[62] Nanjing Literature. *The Interpretive Words for the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders* (2007), 29.
[63] Coble, 406.

museum stresses that the Chinese people were able to triumph heroically over the Japanese "under the banner of the Anti-Japanese National United Front advocated by the CPC."[64] This theme is consistently put forth throughout the Beijing museum.

As suggested by the writings of Mitter and Coble, the Beijing Museum does open itself to a more "rehabilitated account of the Nationalist contribution to the war effort."[65] The museum highlights the important victories of the Nationalists during the resistance, such as the Kuomintang victory in the Battle of Tai'erzhuang (March-April, 1938). During the first stages of the Japanese assault, it appeared as though nothing could stop their invasion; however, at the Battle of Tai'erzhuang, Chinese troops were able to defeat a large Japanese force. Consequently, Tai'erzhuang is considered by many to be the "first significant Chinese victory in the war."[66] Despite its morale boosting significance as the first Chinese victory in the war, little mention was ever given to the battle in Chinese military literature during the Mao era.[67] The Beijing Museum not only mentions Tai'erzhuang, but it has a large diorama of the battle in one of its rooms to display the heroism of the Chinese troops. There is also mention of the Salween Campaign (Spring 1944-January 1945) and the re-opening up of the Burma Road. After receiving extensive training and increased Lend-Lease aid from the United States, Kuomintang soldiers along with U.S. Army engineers were able to deal Japan some of the most devastating blows in all of the war during the Salween Campaign.[68]

While the "new remembering" is evidenced by the incorporation of Nationalist victories into the overall narrative of the war, what reveals more is the selective usage of the terms

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[64] Beijing Literature, *Introduction to the Permanent Exhibition of the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression*, (2009),214. Hereinafter "Beijing Literature"

[65] Mitter, 128.

[66] Ch'I, 50.

[67] Mitter, 123.

[68] Hsi-sheng Ch'i, "The Military Dimension, 1942-1945,"*China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937-1945*, ed. James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1992), 62.

Nationalist and Kuomintang (KMT) throughout the museum and its literature. When the museum discusses Chiang's policy, which aimed to avoid all out war with Japan after the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, the museum insists that this was a "compromise and concession policy" and was a product of the KMT.[69] In contrast, special emphasis is made to distinguish this policy decision from the CPC's unwavering calls for "resistance to oppose Japanese imperialism."[70] Furthermore, while the museum broadly states that the KMT dealt" heavy blows" to the Japanese throughout the war, when it comes to specific battles won by the Nationalists, it is not mentioned that these battles were fought by the KMT; rather, the KMT become simply "Chinese soldiers."[71] On the other hand, when it discusses the efforts of Communists troops, such as the guerilla battles in northern China, the 100 Regiments' Battle or the Battle of Pingxingguan, the museum explicitly states that the soldiers were from the Eighth Route or New Fourth Armies. In reference to the Eight Route and New Fourth Armies, the museum keenly notes that these armies were led by the CPC. By contrast, the leadership of the "Chinese soldiers" "Chinese Army" and "Chinese Air Force," which were in fact Nationalist troops, is never specifically identified.

There is one instance of particular note, however, in which there is no mention that the soldiers were in fact CPC troops. In the official museum book, *Introduction to the Permanent Exhibition of the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression*, the famous story of the "Five Heroes on Langya Mountain" is told. Amidst one of the so-called "mopping-up" operations conducted by the Japanese troops, five CPC troops broke off from the main group of soldiers and civilians in order to distract Japan's attention. The five men repelled the force of over 3,500 Japanese troops on Langya Mountain in Hebei Province

[69] Beijing Literature, 114.
[70] Beijing Literature, 115.
[71] Beijing Literature, 167.

until they ran out of ammunition. Rather than give themselves up to the Japanese, the soldiers jumped off the cliff, two of them miraculously surviving by getting caught in the trees on the side of the mountain.[72] Despite that this story has been popularized by the CPC, complete with a feature length film dedicated to the incident, the museum literature does not attempt to herald the story as a demonstration of the heroics of Communists during the resistance.[73,74] Rather, it simply indicates the area in which the soldiers were from and classifies the heroic feat as a reflection of the Chinese resistance as a whole. The presentation of this story as a "Chinese accomplishment," rather than a Communist success, allows the PRC to unify its civilians under the themes of heroic patriotism and superb nationalism.

Throughout the Beijing Museum, victory in the War of Resistance is attributed largely to one key movement: the United Front between the Communists and the Nationalists. The museum emphasizes that the United Front was the "decisive factor for defeating the Japanese aggressors."[75] Furthermore, the museum states that following the Xi'an Incident on December 12, 1936 and the establishment of the United Front in 1937 after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, that the "10-year civil war [1927-1937] was basically ended."[76] To suggest that the United Front ended the hostilities between the KMT and the CPC, and that this newfound cooperation thrust China to victory against Japan is a stretch in interpretation. The New Fourth Army Incident near Maolin, Anhui Province in 1941, only three years later, effectively put an end to the United Front. In late 1940, Chiang had ordered the entire New Fourth Army to move north of the Yangtze. Most of the New Fourth Army had already moved to the north when Chiang issued

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[72] Beijing Literature, 188.

[73] "Ge Zhenlin," *80th Anniversary of the PLA,* http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/2007-07/12/content_875760.htm.

[74] "Five Heroes on Langya Mountain," *10k Bullets*, http://blacklight.betech.virginia.edu/catalog/u5101407.

[75] Beijing Literature, 134

[76] Beijing Literature,123.

this order. At first, upon Chiang's request, the small contingency (approximately 9,000 troops) of the New Fourth that remained agreed to move by Chiang's deadline of December 31. However, out of fear that the proposed route was too dangerous, the CPC instructed the New Fourth to head south instead. This action was a clear violation of Chiang's request. Although the events leading up to the New Fourth Army Incident remain a contested issue, it is clear that KMT soldiers did in fact destroy an outnumbered group of CPC soldiers near Maolin in January of 1941. The attention this conflict garnered essentially broke the fragile relationship maintained between the KMT and CPC.[77] Furthermore, throughout the War of Resistance, the KMT utilized many of their most loyal and better trained troops to surround the Communist stronghold in Yan'an in the Shanxi province, instead of on the front lines against the Japanese. While Nationalist General Hu Tsung-nan's group was given the most attention for the Nationalist blockade, many other KMT forces were used for this purpose throughout the war.[78]

In contrast to the full-fledged cooperation proffered by the Beijing Museum, the United Front existed only nominally. Indeed, there is little to suggest that the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army were actually incorporated into the strategic operations of the Nationalist forces. Chiang's idea of a "united front" stemmed from his wish to have control, or at the least heavy influence, over the movements and operations of the CPC. It was in this sense that Chiang never truly officially called for a real united front.[79] There are two main reasons why the United Front has been emphasized by the PRC's museums and official literature. First, the role of the United Front is expanded and celebrated because it supports the heroic narrative of a unified and strong Chinese victory over Japan. Secondly, recent scholars now view the United Front as successful because, even though not operating to its full cooperative potential, it kept the KMT

[77]Wu, 99-101.
[78]Ch'I in *China's Bitter Victory*, 175.
[79] Wu, 95

and the CPC out of a full-fledged civil war from 1937-1946.[80] In other words, the characterization of the United Front as a movement that, for the time being, stopped a full-fledged civil war between the KMT and CPC allows for the movement to be interpreted as a success. This redefinition by the PRC allows for the United Front to be viewed as a substantial factor in the victory of the War of Resistance. This explains the use of the term throughout the museum and its literature.

The museum's treatment of the United Front also highlights another more subtle aspect of the "new remembering." The mere notion of a United Front indicates that both parties were actors in the War of Resistance. However, all discussion of cooperation and leadership within the United Front is attributed to the Communists. This is evidenced by the audio commentary provided at the Beijing Museum, but can be more fully demonstrated by an analysis of the museum literature. Throughout the over one-hundred pages of the official Beijing museum book, *Introduction to the Permanent Exhibition of the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression*, every reference to the United Front is preceded by or followed with the assertion that a unified act occurred under the leadership, promotion, guidance, or some action of the Communists. It is revealing that even amidst the backdrop that exaggerates the dynamics of the United Front, the CPC remains the primary actor through which all things must flow.

The title of the Beijing Museum, the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression, also conveys a message of unity. The invocation of "Chinese people" demonstrates that the War of Resistance was one in which all of the Chinese, irrespective of ideology, played a part. In addition, the term Chinese people opens up the wartime narrative to be used by both China and Taiwan. While one could speculate as to the

[80]Wu, 103.

degree to which this terminology is being employed for political purposes, it is clear that the language does open the narrative up to be shared between nations.

The third national level museum, the September 18 History Museum, was opened in 1991 in Shenyang on the sixtieth anniversary of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Although we did not have the opportunity to analyze this museum personally, its content is described extensively by other "new remembering" scholars.[81] The museum is situated on the Southern Manchurian Railway, the location of an explosion on September 18, 1931. Although controversy surrounds the origin of this explosion, it has been accepted that the incident was used as a pretext for the Japanese army's advance into the area. Accordingly, this date marks the beginning of the Japanese occupation of China that lasted for fourteen years (1931-1945). In light of this date's significance, the outside of the museum features a massive stone calendar opened to the date of the incident, which suggests that this event will always be a part of the Chinese consciousness.[82]

The Shenyang Museum invokes the same "victim" theme that is expressed by the Nanjing Museum. The opening hall of the museum contains a four-foot-high pyramid in the center of the room. Written on the pyramid in Chinese, Japanese, English, and Russian is a message that explains that the September 18 Incident will forever be "etched" into the hearts of the Chinese people.[83] It is important to note that once again the unifying "new remembering" term of the "Chinese people" is utilized. Although the museum was opened after the Nanjing Museum, its focus is on events that preceded the Nanjing Massacre, therefore, the Shenyang museum extends the victimization theme over a longer period of time.

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[81] See Kirk A. Denton, "Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums" *Japan Focus,* http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kirk%20A.-Denton/2547 (2007).

[82] Denton, 21.

[83] Denton, 23.

Another museum that we unfortunately were unable to visit, but is of significance to the "new remembering" is the Crime Evidence Exhibition Hall of the Japanese Imperial Army Unit 731 located in Pingfang, Heilongjiang Province in Northeast China. Similar to other museums which are expressions of the "new remembering," this museum was constructed in the early 1980s. Unit 731 was a covert research group that was part of the Japanese Army. From 1939 until the end of the war, Unit 731 performed unethical medical and chemical warfare experiments on Chinese and Korean civilians and even some Allied serviceman.[84] Through explicit descriptions of the Japanese violent actions, the museum focuses primarily on victimization. Although the numbers cited by this museum are not exaggerated to the extent of the Nanjing Museum, the Unit 731 Museum also alerts visitors to the number of victims affected by the Japanese. The museum states that 3,000 individuals died from medical experiments and an additional 300,000 people were injured by illegal germ warfare conducted by the group.[85] Although many of the events that the museum describes are grotesque, the museum emphasized that these atrocities be committed to memory. One wall of the museum states that the Chinese people must "Remember Us" (the victims), while another insists that they also "Do not forget national humiliation."[86] Although focused entirely on the atrocities committed by Unit 731, this museum also conveys the victim theme.

Several sites that we visited have largely been left out of scholarship on the "new remembering." They include, the International Anti-Japanese Aviation Martyrs Memorial Park (built in the 1930s) and Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum in Nanjing (completed in 1929), and the Hua Qing Chi Palace in Xi'an (first constructed in 711 B.C.). These sites convey similar themes

[84] Jonathan Moreno, *Undue Risk: Secret State Experiments on Humans* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2000), 92-117.
[85] Denton, 18.
[86] Denton, 18.

expressed in other "new remembering" sites. The Aviation Martyrs Park is dedicated to the serviceman who sacrificed their lives to the War of Resistance in collaboration with the Chinese Air Force. It honors aviators from the Russian, Korean, and United States military for their valiant contributions and sacrifices. Of note is the detailed emphasis that is provided in regards to the American contributions. There is tremendous attention given to the work of General Claire Chennault, head of the American Volunteer Group (AVG). The AVG, nicknamed the Flying Tigers, was a group of around 100 volunteer pilots that went to China from 1941-1942 to support the Chinese resistance against the Japanese Air Force. The group was later formally backed by the United States and integrated into the 14th Army Air Force following America's entering the war after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.[87] When the museum references the Chinese aviators, who were all members of the KMT forces, the park also employs the same unifying "Chinese" terminology that is used in the other "new remembering" museums. The memorial honors the sacrifice of these pilots as part of the overall effort to fight Japan. In doing so, the memorial subtly blends the victim and hero themes into its presentation and focuses on the generation of patriotic sentiments.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum also reflects themes of the "new remembering." Dr. Sun is considered the Founder of Modern China by both the Communists and the Nationalists for his role in the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. Sun is still revered by the CPC for his importance in helping to end dynastic rule, despite the central role he played in the formation of the KMT (1919). Sun's mausoleum, located in the former Nationalist capital of Nanjing, was completed in 1929, only four years after his death. As Sun was one of the founding members of the KMT, the party's flag is prominently displayed on the ceiling in the chamber that contains

[87] Michael Schaller, *The United States and China: Intro the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2002), 67-68

his coffin. During the Cultural Revolution, Zhou Enlai, Premier of the PRC, convinced Mao Zedong to preserve the Mausoleum so long as the KMT flag remained covered. Now, the flag remains open for the public to see, a subtle, yet clear symbol that the PRC has worked to balance historical perceptions of the Nationalists.

The third of these less referenced sites that reflects a "new remembering" is the Hua Qing Chi Palace in Xi'an. This palace, situated at the foot of Lishan Mountain, was constructed during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.). The palace, which served as a bath and spa home for the Emperors, is also home to the Xi'an Incident. On December 12, 1936, General Zhang and General Yang, two of the highest ranking Nationalist commanders, upset with Chiang's unwillingness to cooperate with the Communists in the resistance against Japan, kidnapped the Nationalist leader. The entire site, which is an official "patriotic education" location, has been meticulously preserved, as even bullet holes in the wall are intact.[88] While in captivity, Chiang Kai-Shek agreed to enter into a Second United Front as a means to secure his release. Once again, the success of the movement is evaluated for putting an "end to the internal war which had lasted for ten years." Similar to the Beijing Museum, the site exaggerates the level of cooperation that the United Front fostered between the CPC and the KMT.

The most revealing aspect of this site however, is the name that is used to describe the location where Chiang was found by Generals Chang and Zhang. While at Hua Qing Chi Palace, Chiang was awoken by the sound of gunfire in the middle of the night. A small force of troops under Chang and Zhang had taken out Chiang's bodyguards. Chiang crept out of his bed and climbed up the nearby mountain in an attempt to evade capture. Halfway up the nearby Lishan

[88]There are approximately 100 official national level patriotic education sites in China. A fifth of these sites are from the War of Resistance era, including the majority of sites that we visited. These sites are attended frequently as part of the regular curriculum for young Chinese students. Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2008), 783-806.

Mountain there is a crevice behind which Chiang tried to hide from his kidnappers. After the War of Resistance in 1946, a pavilion was built at the location to honor the event. When the PRC came to power in 1949, according to our guide, the rock was first referred to as the "Capturing Chiang Kai-shek stone." However, in an effort to improve China's relationship with Taiwan, the pavilion was renamed "Remonstration Pavilion" in 1986. Furthermore, the rock is now colloquially referred to as the "Chiang Kai-shek prevailing stone."[89] The transition of both of these terms reflects China's "new remembering" and its efforts to reach out to Taiwan by conveying a narrative that is less hostile to Chiang and the Nationalists.

Other New Remembering Sources

The "new remembering" is not something that is simply isolated to museums and other historical sites. As Mitter notes, the 'new remembering' is part of an all encompassing "reorientation of public education."[90] Accordingly, the Chinese government has tried to disseminate this information to as much of the public as possible through various media. An excellent example of this dissemination is the documentary "The Search for Major McMurrey," aired in 2009 by China Central Television (CCTV), one of China's official government media outlets. The three-part documentary focused on a member of the U.S. military, Major William McMurrey, who served with the Chinese Expeditionary Forces, a division of the Nationalist Army during the Salween Campaign.[91] The documentary explains how after 1949, information about the Chinese Expeditionary Forces, who were controlled by the Nationalists, had been left out of accounts of the war. Furthermore, former members of this force were subject to imprisonment during the Mao era.

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[89] Mr. Li, interviewed by Jason Fortin and Thomas Pagliarini, June 16, 2010.
[90] Mitter, 127.
[91] China Central Television, "The Search for Major McMurrey," http://www.cctv.com/program/e_documentary/20090315/105030.shtml.

As part of an effort to find a record of Major McMurrey in China, the researchers in the documentary uncovered a cemetery dedicated to some of the American servicemen that had aided the Chinese during the Salween Campaign (1944-1945). In 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the cemetery had been partially destroyed. The researchers remark how troubling it is that such an important part of the history of the War of Resistance was "virtually eclipsed by later political upheaval." However, indicative of the "new remembering," the cemetery was restored in 1986. The role these soldiers played in the defense of China was removed from the public record during the Mao Era because of their association with the Nationalists. Yet, despite the efforts to erase the role of the Nationalists, the documentary notes, the local "Chinese people had not forgotten" about the efforts of these brave soldiers.[92] The "new remembering" has reasserted this narrative back into the public consciousness.[93] The PRC totally reversed its treatment of the Nationalists from the Mao era and played an active role in the discovery and then highlight a story of KMT efforts from the War of Resistance.

The memory of the War of Resistance in China is constantly changing. Scholarship on the 'new remembering' continues to grow. However, personal memoirs, which play such an integral role in shaping the overarching narrative of the war have, up until recently, largely been neglected. As Danke Li contends in her book, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China*, historiographies of the War of Resistance have focused on the extreme and dramatic aspects of the war.[94] Gathering personal memoirs on the war of resistance has been a daunting task. As

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[92] China Central Television

[93] Wen Jiang was born in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. She earned a BA and MS from Beijing Forestry University and a PhD from the University of Illinois. She was the organizer and leader of the Yunnan TV Network's tour to interview China-Burma-India veterans for the documentary "Over the Hump" in the fall of 2002. She was a member of the Chinese delegation to the conference The Memory of History in Washington, D.C. in October, 2002. See: International War Veterans' Poetry Archives, "Christina A. Sharik," http://iwvpa.net/sharikca/dear-dad-01.php.

[94] Danke Li, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 3.

Coble notes, when memoir wartime literature began to surface in other countries (1960s), China entered the Cultural Revolution and lost most of these personal stories.[95] During the Cultural Revolution, narratives were suppressed from entering the public sphere, and many wartime documents were destroyed. Nationalist narratives of wartime China were absent from the historical record. Individuals were forced to deny their involvement with the KMT throughout the Mao Era. This pressure and constant fear, in addition to the sheer gap in time, over twenty-five years between the events that took place and when they were retold, pose an issue for the "new remembering." Both of these factors have impacted how individual narratives on the wartime years have formed.[96]

The difficulty of gathering memoir literature is evidenced by the story of the Wartime Child Welfare Protection Agency (WCWPA), a women's organization located in the wartime capital of Chongqing that was dedicated to helping children and families enduring the struggles and ravages of the war. Due to the organization's link to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, during the Mao era its members were not allowed to discuss their experiences from the War of Resistance. Discussion of involvement with the WCWPA led to persecution during the Cultural Revolution.[97] However, in 1987, during the 'new remembering' an article written by Deng Yingchao, the wife of Zhou Enlai First Premier of the PRC (1949-1976), was published that commemorated the contributions the organization made throughout the war. After that, members of the organization were freed to open up to the world about their experiences. Finally, after over four decades of suppression, these women were able to speak publically about the contributions of the WCWPA. In fact, involvement with the organization has seen a complete one-eighty from its treatment during the Mao era. While once illegal to be associated with the

[95] Coble, 407.
[96] Coble, 407.
[97] Li, 178-179.

group, it is now fashionable to be connected with the organization. The alumni network includes individuals from China, Taiwan, and many countries overseas, and membership is considered an honor.[98]

Indeed, some aspects of the "new remembering" have been left out of the presentations offered in the museums and other sites in China. One of these aspects is the museums' failures to present a comprehensive women's perspective. Some museums make passing remarks that women supported the wartime effort, but their story is never effectively woven into the larger narrative. In fact, until Danke Li's *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China* in 2010, literature specifically addressing the contributions of women in the war effort had been sparse. As Li points out, even reputable sources that claim to convey a "holistic" narrative (many of which we consulted for our own research) like *China at War: Regions of China, 1937-1945*[99] and *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan, 1937-1945*, neglect to include the efforts of women throughout the war.[100] However, just as other countries had a delayed incorporation of women's history, Li's work may be a sign that women's contributions will soon be incorporated into the larger narrative of the "new remembering."

While our research has observed the emergence of certain themes throughout the "new remembering," as Li recommends "we need to be careful in making generalizations about the 'Chinese memory.'"[101] The history of China during the War of Resistance is tremendously complex. The accounts that have been rendered from 1949 to present, though they continue to change, all convey some type of truth about the time period. We must keep in mind the role that time plays in the analysis of this period's historiography. For the PRC, the War of Resistance

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[98] Li, 179.

[99] Stephen R. MacKinnon, Diana Lary, and Ezra Vogel ed. *China at War: Regions of China 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); *China's Bitter Victory,* Hsiung and Levine.

[100] Li, 23.

[101] Li, 177.

against Japan and the subsequent Chinese Civil War are major components of the nation's founding narrative.

However, out of the areas that we have identified which could be further expanded to truly adopt a comprehensive history of Wartime China, none was more notable than the "60th Anniversary of Victory in War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression" website.[102] This website, sponsored by the *PLA Daily* of the Chinese PLA, is the official media outlet for military affairs. The website features two main headlining descriptions of the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army on the left side. The right side contains "Selected Works of Mao Zedong on the Anti-Japanese War." Other prominent sections displayed are "Famous Generals," "News Updates," and "Major Campaigns." In the following paragraphs we will explain how this government-sponsored website does not fully recognize the contributions of the KMT and overemphasizes CPC offerings.

First, only two military divisions are presented: the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, both of which were under Communist control. The website does not make direct reference to the armies under the guidance of the Kuomintang. It references the two Communist forces as the backbone of the defense of the Chinese homeland and credits Communist guerrilla warfare as the key factor in defeating the Japanese. Under the Famous General section, only 5 of the 13 Famous Generals were KMT members.[103] Significantly, the contributions of Chiang Kai-Shek, as the Generalissimo of Nationalist China, are ignored. The five Nationalist Generals which the PLA cites as famous are Fan Zhuxian, Zhao Dengyu, Dai Anlan, Zhang Zizhong and Hao Meiling. With the exception of Dai Anlan, the recognized Nationalist generals were only

[102] PLA Daily of the People's Liberation Army, "60th Anniversary of Victory in War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression," http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/kz60/index.htm.

[103] PLA Daily of the People's Liberation Army, "Famous Generals," http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/kz60/node_6929.htm

active during the United Front. The remaining generals, most notably the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, are not mentioned.[104]

On this website, the PLA lists eight Major Campaigns/Battles. It is generally agreed that most major battles during the war were fought by the Chinese Nationalists. Similar to the Beijing Museum, this page refers to the soldiers in these battles as simply Chinese, instead of specifically indicating they represent KMT forces. However, the site makes sure to point out who was a communist solider, and which campaigns were led by the CPC. There are two battles, fought by the Communists, which have been prominently recognized by scholars: the Battle of Pingxingguan and the 100-Regiment Campaign. In most military historiographies, these two CPC battles are recognized, but have been marginalized in comparison to battles fought by the Nationalists.[105] However, on this PLA sponsored website, these two communist battles are listed first among all major campaigns. The next two campaigns listed are also battles fought by the Communists, but have not been seriously recognized elsewhere in academic literature. The remaining four campaigns listed by the PLA were four major Nationalist battles that are consistently mentioned by scholars. The issue in this remembering of history is how the campaigns are described. The four campaigns that were led by the Communists receive specific attention as being under CPC control and the "government" in Yan'an. Yet, the four campaigns that were fought by the KMT were not identified as Nationalist contributions; they were simply referred to as battles fought by the "Chinese Army." The terminology employed is consistent with how other governmental sources distribute credit for wartime activities.

The last section on this website is the bolded link at the top of the page entitled "Selected Works of Mao Zedong on the Anti-Japanese War." These articles, although clearly primary

[104] The PLA Daily of the People's Liberation Army, "Famous Generals," http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/kz60/node_6929.htm

[105] Hans van de Ven, "The Military in the Republic," *The China Quarterly*, 150 (1997): 352-374.

source materials, focus solely on the contributions of the Communists, and emphasize the difficulties Mao and his party had with aligning with the Nationalists. Throughout these reports there is no historical documentation that highlights the KMT perspective. What is presented is only one aspect of the Resistance against Japanese Aggression. This historical recount primarily focuses on the Communist perspectives of the war, leaving out the actions of the KMT. Through Mao's detailed plan in "On Protracted War," he criticizes the KMT, arguing that "through the subjective errors of the Kuomintang military authorities,"[106] China is still a long way from defeating Japan. Although Mao was correct to recognize that there were many hurdles that must be overcome before defeating the Japanese, it is important to notice that this piece was published in May 1938, long before the Communists had any substantial military power. In 1937, when the Second United Front was formed, the Eighth Route Army was officially recorded with a population of 45,000 men. At this same point in time, the Nationalist Army held about 1.7 million men under its ranks.[107] These specific facts contradict Mao's writings which overemphasize the participation of the Red Amy and claim the KMT was non-engaged in the early resistance of the War.

Museums lacking a "New Remembering"

There are two historical sites we visited that have not fully incorporated the "new remembering." The Eighth Route Army Museum in Xi'an and the Yan'an Revolutionary Museum, by their nature, both have a stronger connection to the Communist Revolution. The Eighth Route Army was the largest division of the Red army. In 1937 it had 30,000 soldiers, but

[106] PLA Daily of the People's Liberation Army, "Selected Works on Mao Zedong of the Anti-Japanese War," http://english.chinamil.com.cn/site2/special-reports/2005-08/12/content_271571.htm; Mao Zedong, *On Protracted War*, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_09.htm.

[107] "Chinese Forces 1937-194," http://ww2total.com/WW2/History/Orders-of-Battle/China/Chinese-Forces-1939.htm.

swelled to 400,000 by 1940.[108] Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, along with many other prominent members of the CPC spent some time at the headquarters of the Eighth Route Army. Once Yan'an was established as the capital of the CPC in late 1936, the Eighth Route Army base was used as the "last stop" for those who wished to travel to the headquarters of the CPC. The base was used to educate individuals who wanted to join the Communist Party through instruction of the party's literature and its ideology.[109]

The Yan'an Revolutionary Museum, built in 2008, is adorned by a giant statute of Chairman Mao outside of the museum's entrance. As the title denotes, the museum captures China's revolutionary journey and includes the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, resistance against Japanese aggression, and of course the Chinese Civil War. The giant statue of Mao outside of the museum, as well as the many tributes to Mao's actions throughout the revolution offer insight into how the perspective in Yan'an differs from other areas in China. In general, Chinese citizens with whom we conversed praised Mao for bringing together the Chinese people and helping to establish New China. Indeed, the establishment of the PRC in 1949 unified China in a way that had never been accomplished before. However, after that, the pervading thought was that Mao's ability as an effective leader began to decline as he acted like an "emperor" and consolidated his power. Henceforth, most individuals with whom we spoke placed more praise with Zhou Enlai and were truly apprehensive of Mao—especially after the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. However, in Yan'an, support for Mao was noticeably more pervasive and criticisms of his policies after the establishment of the PRC were less profound. Recognition was still afforded to the contributions of other leaders, like Zhou

[108] Encyclopedia Britannica, "Eighth Route Army," http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/181256/Eighth-Route-Army.

[109] Mr. Li, interviewed by Jason Fortin and Thomas Pagliarini, June 16, 2010.

Enlai; however, the cult of personality associated with Mao still held sway over the people in the former Communist capital.

Inside, the museum focused on how Yan'an was the guiding center of the Chinese Revolution, as it expressed the idea that the Communist Party served as a beacon for all of the people throughout China. All references made to the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression were framed around the contributions of Mao and the Red Army. However, similar to other "new remembering" sites, it exaggerates the success of the United Front, describing it as a "magically invented weapon [by the communist] for defeating the enemies."[110] Yet, contrary to other "new remembering" sites, there is far less mention of the involvement of the KMT in the War of Resistance. The museum marginalizes the role of the Kuomintang in the United Front. The museum focuses almost exclusively on the guidance provided by Mao Zedong thought, the strength and determination exemplified by the Communists, and the close contact the CPC maintained with the Chinese people. These elements, the museum contends, drove the Yan'an spirit, which "laid a solid foundation for the victory of the new democratic revolution and the founding of new China."[111] In contrast to the other museums we visited, these two locations did not have any available English translations of the museum's government-sponsored literature about the museum. Though both museums cover aspects of the War of Resistance, they have not yet incorporated China's "new remembering" into their storyline. This is especially revealing considering that the Yan'an Museum was built in 2008, making it the most modern of all the sites we visited. However, a possible explanation for this lack of "new remembering" is that these sites have not been heavily influenced by foreigners. For example, our tour guide told us

[110] This quote is taken directly from an English translation of a plaque on the wall of the Yan'an Revolutionary Museum.

[111] This quote is taken directly from an English translation of a plaque on the wall of the Yan'an Revolutionary Museum.

that this was the first time in his seven year career that any Westerner had ever requested to travel to Yan'an, and that our trip to the Eighth Route Army Museum was his first as a tour guide for westerners.[112] Yet, while Western influence may be foreign to these sites, they remain critical components in the education of youths and individuals looking to join the CPC.

Conclusion

The War of Resistance is an integral component of the People's Republic of China's foundational narrative. Yet, for the first half of the country's existence, critical discussion of the war years was suppressed. The "new remembering" only began in the late 1980s. By that time, nearly four decades had passed since the War of Resistance. This large gap in time has had a profound impact on how the history of this time period could be remembered. Since the beginning of the "new remembering," China has only had around twenty-five years to construct an objective and comprehensive history of the War of Resistance that highlights the contributions of the both the Nationalists and the Communists. In this sense, the "new remembering" may have only just begun to truly take shape.

Despite this phenomenon being relatively new, the historiography of the War of Resistance has already come a long way since the Mao years. Official accounts of the War of Resistance that once removed the Nationalists from the wartime narrative now acknowledge their contributions in the victory over Japan. Accordingly, the first stages of this "new remembering" opened up discussion of the overall wartime dynamic. While primacy is still afforded to the CPC, the Nationalists are credited a large role in the War of Resistance. Nationalist troops may be characterized generically as "Chinese," but their efforts are nonetheless accounted for. The "numbers game" of the victim theme may be partially exaggerated, and the dynamics of the United Front may be colored in an interesting way, but the fact that these events are now part of

[112]Mr. Li, interview by Jason Fortin and Thomas Pagliarini, June 16, 2010.

public discussion is what is important. In doing so, the "new remembering" has allowed for a more detailed and rich history to develop.

Yet, the process is not over; indeed it is still moving forward. Discussion of the War of Resistance remains a "front page issue" in modern China.[113] While specifics are afforded to battles and campaigns, the wartime narrative still remains in part a construct of high-level politics. As time moves on, one can anticipate that the "new remembering" will be widened to include experiences of ordinary men and women. There is much to be determined about the War of Resistance through the lenses of ordinary individuals. Their perspectives will elucidate details of the overarching wartime narrative and will help explain the complexities of the era.

The PRC still has much ground to cover in order to sponsor a history that accurately accounts for the complexities of the time period. It will need to continue to incorporate the role of the Nationalists and personal narratives from ordinary people who lived through this time period. However, the fact that certain areas of the wartime narrative are in need of improvement should not allow us to discard their successes. In little over twenty-five years China has radically transformed the official story-line of the War of Resistance. This effort must be heralded and appreciated, but also continued. It is still too early to tell whether China will continue its journey of self-discovery, but its current "new remembering" provides the framework for a future of optimism. One can only hope that the limited and politicized environment of the PRC's first thirty-five years has not irreparably damaged the historical understanding of the War of Resistance. We have examined the development of this historical story-line and eagerly await to observe how the new historiography will build off the foundations set by this "new remembering."

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