Winning the Hearts and Minds of the Chinese People
A study of Japanese, American, Kuomintang and
Communist Propaganda 1937 - 1945

by

Ona Wu

Submitted to the Department of Humanities and Social Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

The second Sino-Japanese War was not only a battle for land and resources. It was also a struggle for the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. The victor would be the one who ultimately controlled China. However, unlike most occupied nations, the Sino-Japanese war was not only a battle without, but also within. Factions promoting pro-Japanese, anti-Japanese, pro-Communist, anti-Communist, pro-Nationalist, anti-Nationalist, pro-West, or anti-West sentiments vied for the support of the people. Often, many of these factions (Japan, CCP, KMT, Allies) encompassed one of more of these sentiments in varying combinations. By examining the battles waged in China’s newspapers, movies, schools, pamphlets, airwaves and popular culture, one can not only receive a sense of the political tensions of the time, but also an idea of the forces which can move men to kill other men and to be willing to die at the hands of other men.

Thesis Supervisor: Peter C.Perdue
Title: Associate Professor of History
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Finally, I must thank my parents for tolerating me all these years. An interesting academic study for their child was the actual lived events of their lives and the lives of their friends and family. Although historians study past events, grand or small, we must never forget the actors in our drama, the people who lived through those events. For all the people who lived and died in those tragic years, this thesis was written.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The second Sino-Japanese War was not only a battle for land and resources. It was also a struggle for the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. Japan realized that although seizing a piece of land is in itself a difficult task, the true hardship begins trying to hold on to it. As America learned in Vietnam, it is next to impossible to reign over a conquered territory without the support of the indigenous population. In an attempt to win the support of the Chinese people, Japan embarked on a campaign of propaganda and indoctrination not dissimilar to what was conducted at home among her own people. This meant censorship of any and all anti-Japanese material and distribution of propaganda extolling the virtues of the “New Order” and later the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACS). The brainstorm of the Japanese propagandists, the GEACS concept reinvented Japan from her role as aggressor upon her fellow Asians to that of liberator of the Asian people from the double yoke of Western Imperialism and Communism, the newest manifestation of imperialism. She emphasized racial solidarity and the creation of a new world order where Japanese spiritualism would replace the decaying institutions of Western materialism.

Naturally, Japan’s propaganda campaign aroused great fears in the Western world. She was advocating nothing short of a new world order where “the little brown man” would replace “the white man” as the leading authority. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the Southeast Asian colonies, their worst fears were realized. The Western powers became dismayed as they saw most of their old colonies welcoming Japan with
open arms. Because race was of such a primary consideration to the Western Europeans, who often used skin color as proof of their inherent superiority, naturally, they transferred their racial obsessions to the people they had been oppressing for years.

Because Japan attacked what the United States considered part of America proper (not bothering to remember the dubious manner in which America had gained control of Hawaii), it would be America who would primarily wage the war in the Pacific. However, America had one consoling fact – the majority of Japan’s forces were engaged in China, allowing her time to exercise the United States’ “Europe First” policy. What remained to be seen, though, was whether China could resist interminably. With Japan’s alluring offers of a united Asian front, America could not help but doubt the loyalty of her erstwhile ally. To the United States, since “all Asians look the same,” they would, of course, all act the same. Never considering them as individuals, the United States looked upon all Asians as a homogeneous “yellow horde” ready to swarm and destroy the millennial accomplishments of white civilization as Genghis Khan had done before.¹ A slight exaggeration perhaps of the fears of the American public, but the basic point is that America desperately feared that Japan’s call for racial solidarity would be all too readily answered. To counteract Japan’s propaganda, once the United States entered the conflict, she issued her own pamphlets and leaflets which focused instead on the benevolence of the United States and the Allies. In addition, she tried to stir up racial hatred against the Japanese and urged their annihilation by the Chinese.

By examining the propaganda of this period that was inflicted on the Chinese population, we can get not so much an accurate picture of the success of attempts at thought control, but rather an accurate picture of the ideology and fears behind those disseminating the propaganda. For instance, the propaganda from the foreign nations – Japan and the United States – show a persistency of not being so much concerned with China as a power as they are for each other. In both of these countries, we see classical propaganda techniques as are often used in Western countries. There was the use of mass media such as manipulation of newspapers, radio broadcasts, movies, and very highly stylized pamphlets and leaflets. They used all the available propaganda technology, such

as dropping “bomb” leaflets, to try to influence the people.

Despite the outward differences in the propaganda between the United States and Japan, there were more similarities in the nature of their material than they would probably like to admit. Essentially, the crux of both their arguments was to incite anti-foreign sentiments. Although the targets of their anti-foreign propaganda might be different, the basic ideology (“It’s you against them”) and manner in which they were expressed were very similar.

However, in a study of propaganda aimed at the Chinese populace, it is essential that we do not forget the propaganda arising from the Chinese themselves. The native Chinese propaganda can also be divided into two basic factions – those from the Nationalists and those from Communist sources. By examining the propaganda from these factions, we see that their biggest concerns were the political situation within China. The Nationalists emphasized how good the current government was and how the people should owe allegiance to it and only it. They also tended to attack the Communists both physically and verbally whenever the opportunity arose. This is not to say that they ignored the fact that half the country was currently occupied by invaders. In fact, they benefitted from this situation early in the war years. However, once the Americans entered the war and defeat of the invader ensured, the Nationalists became once again concerned with guaranteeing their position in post-war China.

The Communists, as most opposition parties do, tended to point out the faults of the current regime. The most significant difference, of course, lies in the fact that they called for unity (since that would be for their greatest benefit) while the Nationalists insisted on one party rule. In addition, the Communists never removed the mantle of being the true Chinese patriots. Whereas the Nationalists had at times considered appeasing the Japanese while they settled China’s internal problems first (namely the Communists), the Communists always emphasized the necessity to resist the Japanese with whatever means possible. However, this could be due to the fact that the Japanese never called for the extermination of the Nationalists, and it was in the best interests of the Communists to keep the war of resistance continuing. The Nationalists, on the other hand, saw the conflict more as an interruption in their plans of consolidating power and wanted the
war to end as soon as possible so that they could recommence their plans. In addition, of all four factions distributing propaganda, the Communists were the only ones who tried to gain the support of the peasants. The other factions, including the ones from the United States and Japan, were aimed at the intelligentsia or the local elite. When they did concern themselves with the “common people,” typically, it was only to urge desertions or to requisition their food.

Besides the basic foci of the propaganda, the style was significantly different between Chinese manufactured and foreign manufactured material. The former’s material was more of the nature of wallnewspapers, with slogans and inspiring pictures. The nature of the slogans tended to be rather dogmatic and heavy-handed – always lecturing at the people to do this or that. Foreign propaganda, on the other hand, was highly stylized. The discrepancies were probably due to better technology on the part of the foreigners. However, some of these differences were also as a result of the various attitudes and cultural differences of the distributors.

In the next few chapters, which have been divided by source of propaganda, covering first the foreign manufactured materials and then the indigenous Chinese ones, the various forces seeking to influence the Chinese people in this time of crisis are examined. From the propaganda, a theory of how each nation perceived its role in its wars can be possibly reconstructed. Often, propaganda is not so much a reflection of what the propagandist truly believes, but of its fears and how it wants to be perceived. Japan always proclaimed “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity” because they were afraid the other countries would not follow its leadership. The Americans wanted to promote “Ding Hao!” or “thumbs up,” the symbol of Chinese goodwill, since they were afraid of the realization of the racial war that Japan was urging. The Nationalists would always shout slogans “Long live Chiang Kai-shek!” but that was because they feared a coup. Communists would say “The Eighth Army is the People’s Army” because they were afraid that the people would not support their army, which because they were a guerrilla army, would be fatal to their existence. Under each of these titles are subsections which delve more deeply into how these factions attempted to eliminate their own personal “perceived” threat.

The source of the majority of the American manufactured propaganda has been from
the National Archives Collection of Office of Strategic Services (OSS) mission files which have been appropriately termed "Morale Operations." Much of the Communist and Nationalist propaganda is from eyewitness reports of Americans located in China at that time. Some of the Communist propaganda has come from the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace from memoirs and personal correspondences of missionaries, Office of War Information (OWI) workers and statesmen stationed in China. Of course, the classic eyewitness accounts of Agnes Smedley, Graham Peck, and others provided an invaluable primary source from which I was able to glean fragments of the rhetoric that the Chinese were daily assaulted with.

In the coverage of Japanese propaganda, in the interest of keeping the length to a minimum, I have grouped the Japanese sponsored puppet government's propaganda with those directly distributed by Japan. Although Japan was not guided by a single principle in her propaganda, but was an amalgam of conflicting interest groups such as the militarists, the pan-Asianists, the politicians, the businessmen, opportunists and Chinese puppets, to prevent confusion I refer to all competing factions under the single heading of "Japanese" originated propaganda. Although the Pan-Asian group and the Pro-Peace Groups had two distinct styles, the ultimate goal of all this propaganda was the same – peaceful coexistence of Japan and China. Not having the original Japanese files, I would have been unable to accurately split propaganda that was made by the Chinese puppet government from that made by the Japanese government and distributed in China. I felt that the safest course would be to categorize these materials in the same category since they ultimately promoted the same cause.

However, the greatest obvious shortcoming of this dissertation that must be kept in mind is that it does not cite many Chinese language resource materials. Therefore many of the accounts, because they are from English language resources, are naturally biased with Western ideology. Because many of these sources were translations of Chinese language material or based on Chinese material, I hope that the lack of Chinese language primary resources will not too adversely affect the conclusions.

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2 Unfortunately, the author, despite what one might mistakenly assume from her name, happens to be more illiterate than the peasants in the farthest reaches of China when it comes to the Chinese language.
Figure 1-1: Wall posters
Chapter 2

The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere

On July 7, 1937, shots fired between Japanese and Chinese garrisons at the Marco Polo Bridge marked the commencement of eight years of death and destruction. Debate still arises over exactly who fired the first shots. The Japanese claimed that they were merely practicing maneuvers when they were fired upon without provocation. The Chinese argued that they fired in self-defense since the Japanese were conducting their military exercises in Chinese territory at a very odd time – midnight. Furthermore, Japan had previously used such military “exercises” to extend their control over Chinese territory as they did in the case of Manchuria. To strengthen their cause, the Chinese also pointed to Japan’s persistent encroachment over the last decade into North China. Regardless of which side one believes, the end result was the rapid escalation of hostilities and subsequent mobilization of large numbers of soldiers by both parties. By the end of 1938, Japan controlled almost every major city in China including Nanking, China’s capital. The Nationalists, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, were forced to retreat and establish Chungking as the new wartime capital of Unoccupied China.

China and Japan immediately both tried to gain international support for their respective sides. China based her case on the argument that Japan was waging a war of aggression. Japan, on the other hand, blamed China for the Marco Polo Bridge incident and claimed that she was forced to invade China for her own protection. Japan accused
the Nationalists of having “embarked on an anti-Japanese campaign of the most vicious kind.” China, therefore, had to be “compelled to mend its ways” and to “act in unison for enduring peace in East Asia through sincere cooperation.” If Japan was waging a war against China, she claimed, it was one only against the corrupt and insincere rulers who were misgoverning China. The “insincerity” which so irked Japan was the creation of the United Front between the Nationalists (referred to also as the Kuomintang or simply the KMT) and the Communists (CCP) after the Sian Incident. Japan viewed the end of hostilities between those traditional enemies as a precursor to a unified and perhaps a strong China who could thwart Japan’s goals of becoming the economic and political leader of Asia.

However, in order to justify her actions and gain foreign support, Japan argued that she was liberating the Chinese from a government which would bring disaster not only to the Chinese, but to Asia and the world as well. Because of Chiang’s “anti-foreignist” policies, Japan was acting not only to protect her own interests but those of the other foreign nations as well. Chiang’s own words in his China’s Destiny, indicted him on this point. In addition, Japan claimed that since it was her responsibility to protect Asia as she had done in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, she had to stop Chiang for Asia’s sake.

To the Chinese citizens, on the other hand, Japan primarily assumed the role of liberator. Not only would she liberate the Chinese from their old corrupt leaders, but she will usher China into a new era of prosperity. She sought only to repay the centuries old debt Japan owed China for borrowing some aspects of her culture, such as Confucianism, by helping China as well as the rest of Asia to modernize themselves as Japan had

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2 On December 12, 1936, Chiang was kidnapped by Chang Hsieh-liang, his second-in-command who until that time regarded Chiang as his “blood sworn elder-brother.” The reason was that Chang wanted Chiang to set up a United Front with the Communists against the Japanese to retrieve Manchuria, his hereditary domain. Chiang, until the Sian Incident, had been pursuing a policy of exterminating the Communists first and then dealing with the Japanese. For a more detailed discussion, see the chapter on Nationalist propaganda.


4 Japan’s victory in 1905 did in fact cause many Asian nations to regard her highly and as a role model since she showed for the first time that the little brown man could in fact best the white man.
modernized herself. "Co-Prosperity", she continually stressed, could only be achieved through racial unity under the leadership of the Yamato race. United, the yoke of the white imperialists – especially Great Britain and the United States – could be overthrown and a time when “Asia for the Asiatics” could finally become a reality. Thus, the image the Japanese propagandists tried to create was that of a united Asian front working together in harmony and for mutual prosperity.

A Life of Ease Will Be Yours

Before Japan could embark on propaganda to maintain “social control through the development of attitudes harmonious with the interests of the conqueror,” she first had to deal with propaganda to ease the “task of military conquest” in order to demoralize the Chinese in unoccupied territories, create desertions and garner support among the natives. Of the two jobs, the first was by far the one which enjoyed greater success since when people are miserable any change is conceivably for the better. In China, this was especially true since Japan’s accusations of corruption in the Nationalists' regime were by no means a fabrication. The situation in some Kuomintang controlled areas were so bad that the peasants would actually help the Japanese capture Chinese KMT troops. During the Honan famine, for instance, officials still demanded the same tax quotas from the people although they were already starving. People had been forced to eat dirt and commit cannibalism in order to just survive. Because of the KMT’s merciless policies, when the Japanese invaded Honan in 1944, the peasants attacked the KMT soldiers as they were trying to steal their plow animals. More KMT soldiers were disarmed by the peasants themselves than by the Japanese.

Besides appealing to social discontent, the Japanese also appealed to the baser aspects of human nature. Because they considered the Chinese to be inherently corrupt and self-
serving, they would promise riches to those who betrayed their countrymen. In one of the fliers dropped by Japanese airplanes into Communist controlled territory early in the war, there was a cartoon with four pictures. In the first picture, Communist guerrillas are shown destroying a bridge while a small boy watched. The next two picture sequences show the boy racing to the Japanese garrison to report on the Communists' activities. The very last frame displays the laughing face of a boy waving bank notes.\(^9\) Other fliers were made to look like bank notes, with the reverse of the notes urging the Chinese troops to desert and promising that a "life of ease would be theirs" afterwards.\(^10\) Whether these bank notes really had an effect on the Chinese cannot be determined. However, many of the Chinese who left Free China for Occupied China probably did so because of their impression that in Japanese territory a better life could be obtained. In actuality, this migration was more related to the horrible conditions in Nationalist controlled territory than the luxurious lives of the Chinese in Japanese areas since most Chinese citizens' lot did not improve in Occupied China.

Another emphasis, besides greed was sex. Either the Japanese accused their opponents of living a life of debauchery\(^11\) or they promised sexual rewards to deserters. One example was the "Army Return Certificates" which read, "You are still fighting the war of resistance. If you continue to fight, you will die in the field! Come back and....!" On the reverse of these certificates were pictures of nude women. These certificates, appropriately termed "Sex Appeal" notes, were released in 1943.\(^12\) (See Figure 2-1.) Besides being highly sensationalistic, they captured the basic concepts most often used against enemy troops. They contained the encouragement of desertion in face of inevitable defeat and certain death, and the promise of material rewards for surrendering.

Other examples of propaganda meant to demoralize the Nationalist army were pamphlets declaring the superiority of Japanese military might, which was already inflicting devastating defeats on the Allies.\(^13\) Another leaflet declared that the Japanese soldiers

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\(^10\) Ibid, p. 262.

\(^11\) This aspect of maligning their opponents with sexual misconduct will be covered in the sections dealing with propaganda aimed at their opponents.

\(^12\) *Chinese Weekly Review*, 13 April 1946, p. 144.

\(^13\) This was only after the Allies officially declared war on Japan.
were loyal subjects of their emperor and therefore could last 10 or 20 years against the Chinese.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, it would be fruitless for the Chinese to even attempt to wage a war of attrition against the Japanese. Of course, the greatest demoralizing factor for the people of Free China was the smuggling of Japanese goods by the Nationalist troops into unoccupied territory. The people's desire to continue fighting was shaken as they saw those who were supposedly fighting the enemy working and profiteering with them instead. However, this was not due to any conscious efforts of the Japanese to demoralize the population. Instead, much of this was the activity of opportunistic Kuomintang officials.

In terms of manufactured propaganda, Japan, lacking an efficient way to distribute her material, was at a disadvantage. Another consideration for the paucity of propaganda in these areas was the fact that Japan was not really concerned with the territory not in her control by the end of 1938. In her opinion, she already controlled all the areas that really mattered – the big cities and ports. Her next major military onslaught would not be until after 1941 when she declared war on the Allies and seized territory that used to be under their rule such as Hong Kong and Shanghai. After taking these major treaty ports, she did not launch a major campaign until late 1944. However, that was aimed at destroying American airfields in China and not for capturing more Chinese territory.

\textsuperscript{14}Shanghai Municipal Police Files, Document No. D8461. (The Shanghai Municipal Police Files are hereafter referred to as SMP.)
Therefore, the majority of Japan’s “morale operations” was centered on pacifying and winning the support of the people in the major cities that were in her control by 1942.

We Come in Peace.

Propaganda aimed at already conquered peoples was the most difficult to implement. This type of propaganda entails long term indoctrination through social methods such as education, cultural associations, religion, popular culture and censorship. Perhaps providing the best summary of Japan’s self-professed reasons for her involvement in China was the late 1930’s film Why Defend China? which was shown both in the West and in China.\textsuperscript{15} The first reason they cited, as was already mentioned, was the increasing anti-foreignism that was developing in China. As an example, the film displayed school books with slogans “Down with Japan!” and “Oust the Japanese!” in them. It also showed samples of posters and pamphlets containing anti-Japanese slogans. The next shots were of the Japanese setting up hospitals, colleges, and other cultural institutions to “help” China. “And how did the Chinese repay the Japanese?” the film asked. The ungrateful Chinese shot at and then bombed the benevolent Japanese, forcing Japan to defend herself. The film then proceeded to show Shanghai citizens welcoming the victorious Japanese troops enthusiastically for ending the war and bringing peace once more. The next half of the film dealt with life under Japanese rule. There were shots of the Japanese coexisting very happily with the Chinese, and even helping the poor Chinese peasants who were robbed by the corrupt retreating KMT troops. The film then includes the “must” scene shown by almost all invaders – that of troops giving candy to the native children. Throughout the last half of the film, there was the recurring image of women and children looking very happy. The film ends, however, emphasizing that combating Communism was the main reason for Japan’s invasion of China. It was the corrupt Chinese politicians manipulated by the Red imperialists who led to the “misunderstanding” between these two traditionally brotherly nations. By eliminating

\textsuperscript{15}A copy of this film can be obtained in the National Archives Motion Picture Department where I saw this film. Although the film’s distribution is not exactly known, it was safe to assume that it was distributed in English speaking areas since the film was narrated in English.
these cancerous Red forces, a "brighter and happier future for both countries" can be achieved.

As seen from the previous synopsis, "anti-foreignism" within China and the ungrateful and untrustworthy nature of the Chinese was once again emphasized. However, it should be kept in mind that this film was produced for viewing by Western audiences. Thus, there was the obvious lack of any mention of race war and Japan's own later attempts to inculcate a sense of anti-foreignism in China. The propaganda calling for the overthrow of white imperialists would not come until later in the war when diplomatic relations between Japan and the West, especially the United States - its chief war material supplier, became strained. Instead, this film emphasized peace and harmonious cooperation between China and Japan. Despite the fact that this was aimed mainly to gain Western support, this film was still indicative of the nature of the propaganda distributed early on in the conflict.

Strange as it sounds, one of the most dominant images Japan projected of herself starting early in the war was that of a lover of peace. She claimed that she did not want to continue this conflict that was destroying so many innocent lives. Indeed, it was the evil Nationalist troops who persisted in furthering the hostilities and bringing war to the people. A report released by the South Manchurian Railway Company in August, 1937, titled "Regarding the Outrages Committed by the Armed Chinese on Japanese Civilians in Tungchow," claimed that the Chinese East Hopei Peace Preservation Corps had attacked Japanese residents, emphasizing the fact that among the casualties were old men, women and children, but no Japanese soldiers. This showed how ruthless the Chinese forces were who waited "for any opportunity to murder by foul means innocent Japanese civilians," rather than fighting the Imperial Troops in honorable combat like real men. In contrast, the report emphasized the fact that Japanese troops took excessive care to warn all civilians, especially the Chinese, to move to safety before they actually launched an attack. Even when they did attack, the report claimed, they assured the civilian population that they would not harm them "as long as they do not aid the anti-Japanese Chinese troops who are the enemies of Japan."16

16South Manchurian Railway Company, *Regarding the Outrages Committed by the Armed Chinese on
From SMP, Document No. 8986A (November 21, 1939).

Figure 2-2: The Road of Resistance is Responsible for the Death of Many People
Although this report was also probably propaganda aimed at mostly foreign observers since it was written by an American author and in the English language, there were numerous other instances of Japan claiming the role of peacekeeper. In Peiping, for instance, whenever Japan captured a city, streamers on balloons would announce the victory declaring “The Japanese Army Preserves the Peace of East Asia.” Military campaigns were declared “peace-keeping” missions. Japan claimed that the air raids on Nanking, Canton, and other cities with large civilian populations were necessary in order to force the Chinese to conclude hostilities as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{17} A memo to Stanley Hornbeck, the chief of the Far Eastern Affairs Division, in August 1937, declared that Japan was forced to destroy the famous Nankai University in Tientsin due to circumstances beyond their control. Japan’s army had warned faculty and the students to escape before attacking due to the presence of Chinese troops nearby, whereas it was the Chinese army who forced their own civilians to stay. The Chinese soldiers then shot at the Japanese troops who did not fire back, but instead waited “patiently, hoping that all the civilians had by this time left for safety.” However, because the Chinese continued shelling them, they were “compelled against their wishes” to destroy the university.\textsuperscript{18} Shortly before “The Rape of Nanking” in 1937, the Japanese dropped pamphlets from planes proclaiming that:

\begin{quote}
“Japanese troops exert themselves to its utmost to protect good citizens and to enable them to live in peace, enjoying their occupations....Though harsh and relentless to those who resist, the Japanese troops are kind and generous to noncombatants and to Chinese troops who entertain no enmity to Japan.”\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Common slogans promoted by the Japanese included “Peace and Prosperity to China!” and “Lay down your guns and take up the plow!” Japan also took advantage of visuals by showing posters of Japanese soldiers among the peasants, carrying children and doing

\textsuperscript{17}Tuchman, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{18}Stanley Hornbeck, Memorandum Received, Hoover Institution Archives. Box No. 355, (1937).
business among the locals. This poster was titled “Please notice the amiability of the Japanese soldiers.”

In 1940, following the tactic that was successfully followed by the Communists in subverting Japanese troops, Japan sent letters to the guerrilla troops in an attempt to coopt them, emphasizing the good life to be had in Japan occupied territories:

“I am a Japanese colonel and I feel very sorry about the war between China and Japan. I am a man of East Asia; you are men of East Asia. Why, now, do we men of the same race wage war? My Empire is now building a happy world in which Japan, Manchuria, and China will go forward together....Look at the conditions of the Chinese armies that come over to us. They are very happy. Hand in hand...with the Japanese army they are rebuilding East Asia.”

Other pamphlets distributed in this time period and area emphasized the generosity of the Japanese toward the Chinese and their purely peaceful intentions. Even the martial National General Mobilization Law was declared not to oppress the people but to maintain peace. Although these items can be placed under the category of military conquest propaganda, since they attempted to weaken resistance, they contain more similarities in terms of thematic ideas of peace than the propaganda for demoralization purposes. In addition, many of these claims were declared after the victory of Japan’s forces and were used to justify actions already committed by Japan to the populace.

In addition to her image as bringer of “peace” Japan soon adopted the policy of urging cooperation between Japan and China. The best method to prove that Japan was not a conqueror, only a guiding hand, was to establish a collaborationist or puppet regime. As early as 1937, Japan set up the Provisional Government of the Republic of China in Peking headed by Wang K’o-min. This was done as part of Japan’s general policy of promoting a North China Autonomy Movement prior to the Lukouchiao Incident. One month after this Incident and the fall of Nanking, the Reformed Government of the Republic of China in Nanking was set up under the leadership of Liang Hung-chih. By the end of March 1938, the two governments were united and a new national government was established in Nanking to oppose the existing one in Chungking. Once the Japanese had

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20Smedley, *The Battle Hymn of China*, p. 479. It should be noted that the guerillas felt that this note was an attempt to entrap and ambush them on the part of the Japanese troops, that the call for peace was an insincere gesture.
created what they believed to be a legitimate government, they immediately proceeded to attack their government’s major opponent – the government of Unoccupied China. Thus, propaganda urging the overthrow of Chiang and the Communists became typical themes of fliers thrown off Roof Gardens and posters put on lamp posts. In one interesting turn around of their enemy’s usual rallying point – “kill traitors” – the Japanese informed the patriots who were killing puppets that “Chiang Kai-shek is the greatest traitor who...has obtained considerable amounts of loans from foreign countries, whereby China has virtually become a colony of the white race.”

Therefore, if any traitor deserved to be executed, Chiang should be the one. Here, we see the beginnings of not only an anti-Chiang movement, but also of an anti-white movement.

In a booklet that was distributed in Shanghai in April 1938, titled “The Regeneration of Japan and the Solution of China-Manchurian Problems,” the Japanese encouraged the Chinese public to cooperate with Japan in order to solve China’s problems. The best means of doing this was to adopt the “Japanese spirit,” which meant primarily a revitalization of Confucianism and the establishment of Emperor worship within China. It explained to the people the superiority of Japan’s “Imperial and Kingly Principles” over those of Communism, which enslaved the peasants and laborers. Besides its pro-Japanese propaganda, this booklet was further revealing in the sense that it showed that the Japanese viewed the true opposition to “Japanese spiritualism” as being so much the established government’s New Life Movement as Communism from Yenan.

By October 1938, “a New Order for East Asia based on an anti-Communist bloc of Japan, China and Manchoukuo was announced and the Chinese Government invited to join on condition of repudiating its anti-Japanese past” and reforming its personnel. The New Order would be an association of Asian nations, where the leaders were given their positions by the Japanese who would work together for the empowerment of the Asian people. A book written by Tatsuo Kawai published in Shanghai in December 1938, *The Goal of Japanese Expansion*, summarized the essence of this New Order. First it declared the importance of Japan within this New Order, stating that “the emergence of

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21SMP, Document No. D8461
22Tuchman, p. 195.
Japan as a new living force marked only the opening page of the history of the Asiatic race.” It was Japan’s “noble obligation to promote its unique and sublime spiritual life and to contribute to the advancement of mankind through free and whole-hearted cooperation with the rest of the world” starting with the Asiatics. The old Western civilization was a thing of the past which could not compare with the spiritualism of the Orient. “The Asiatic peoples should cast aside all the selfish individualism and materialism of Europe. They should embrace one common faith of Asia and live an Asiatic life.” The New Order promoted the return to Oriental traditions which existed before the invasion of Western thought. “The Confucianism that originated in China and was perfected in Japan....long ago laid down the stern and solemn code of ‘self-mastery and return to decorum.’...Through the mastery of self and the purification of group life, all the nations of Asia may be united in the Asiatic spirit and under Asiatic order and discipline.” In order to show the greater benefits of Japanese spiritualism over the existing status quo, the book emphasized the fact that Chiang was dragging China into an “abyss” by collaborating with the Anglo-Saxon powers whose sole intentions were to keep China as a quasi-colony for Western imperialists. In addition, foreshadowing the events to come in later years, it declared ominously “it is the irony of fate that Japan’s quest for peaceful cooperation should have ended in open hostilities. It is to be hoped that the present affair shall not prove to be only one scene in a still more terrible tragedy - the conflict of the East and West with China as the stage.”

To promote this New Order, Japan embarked on a massive public relations campaign. With the “New Order” came a new flag. An extension from the days of pacifying Manchuria, the five-barred flag became a symbol of the New Order.24 “Wherever the Sun flag waves side by side with the five colored flag we see already signs of a new order.”25 Colors carrying greater significance to the Japanese than to Westerners26, the Japanese had a distinct color representing what they believed to reflect the national character

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24 In fact, shopkeepers who did not fly the flag on official holidays were considered Communist or guerrilla sympathizers.
25 SMP, Document No. D8509
26 Dower, p. 210
of each of the member nations of the Order. The first color was naturally red, which represented Japan and its primary position in this new order. The other colors’ orders depended on which nation it was flown in. They were blue representing Mongolia, white for China, black for Korea and Yellow for Manchoukuo. Most of their posters in this period were distinguished by the pervasiveness of these colors in their graphics.

Copying Communist tactics, which by 1939 had already proven to be a force to be reckoned with, when Japanese troops took over Nationalist territory, they would often confiscate the land of the landlords who had fled\(^{27}\) and give the land to the peasants as New Year gifts in addition to ten cents. Of course, there was also the much publicized giving of candy and cakes to the children, which Japanese newspapermen would often take pictures of.\(^{28}\) In March of that year, the Reformed Government announced the celebration of the “East Asia New Order Week.” In Shanghai, the program of events included lectures by the Japanese Youth Corps, concerts by the Japanese Navy Band, pro-Japanese programs conducted during theater intermissions and radio broadcasts exalting the New Order.\(^{29}\) Organizations such as the “Great People Society,” “China and Japan Friendship Fostering Association” and the “Asiatic Research Society” appeared\(^{30}\) urging for the end of hostilities and a peaceful resolution with Japan.

By July 1939, in conjunction with the New Order Movement, a Peace Movement was underway with the blessings of the Japanese, headed by Wang Ching-wei, a prominent official within the Kuomintang. Throughout this period posters pushing for cooperation and peace were seen everywhere in the cities. Slogans such as “Japan and China should unite to build a new order in Asia,” “Japan-China-Manchoukuo Economic Rapprochement,”\(^{31}\) and “Down with all obstructionists to peace!”\(^{32}\). Posters of that time often showed Chinese and Japanese working together. A sense of racial kinship was

\(^{27}\)However, this policy did not pertain to the many more gentry who had stayed and collaborated with the Japanese


\(^{29}\)SMP Document.

\(^{30}\)However, actual members could not be found for these groups and the only record of their existence lies in the pamphlets this group allegedly distributed. Consequently, it would be safe to assume that many of these “National Salvation” groups did not truly exist.


\(^{32}\)SMP, Document No. D8986, (December 1939).
repeatedly emphasized. However, Japan’s position in a dominant role was obvious in that in almost all the visuals, Japan always assumed the position of yang to China’s yin. One charming poster was one captioned “China and Japan are like brothers in building peace in East Asia.” The graphics show a boy dressed as a Japanese soldier rescuing another boy with a queue out of a stream of water flowing from a broken jar.33 In another graphic, titled “China and Japan are friendly to each other, East Asia is in peace,” two people, one wearing an emblem of Japan the other the New Order flag, were shown standing together. In the background, a picture of a globe showing Japan occupying the center position was used to symbolize Japan’s new position in the world. In all of these visuals, the boy representing Japan was always shown in the foreground occupying a central position, or doing some activity which showed his superior position to those of the other member nations who were at times depicted as females or younger brother types.34

A recurring image in almost all of these posters were that of happy, smiling children, typically boys. The most probable reason for this was that Japan wanted to promote itself as youthful and vigorous, a reflection of the New Order.35 Typical posters contained images of young boys full of youthful exuberance holding the five barred flag. The captions of these posters would emphasize modernity with proclamations such as “Building a new order. Striking the bell of peace.” or “Striking into the period of new China, the sky and earth is always bright and clear.”36 In contrast, when depicting Chiang or their Anglo-Saxon foes, Japan would depict them as old and decrepit, symbolizing the decaying corrupt institutions of the West. Again the symbolism of the flag plays a very important role in the Japanese propaganda. In one of their posters, titled “New Government of the Republic of China,” there is an image of a man holding the five-barred

33There seems to be a penchant among the Japanese to portray the Chinese as fishlike and enclosed in big jars as can be inferred from the later sections on anti-Chiang propaganda. The cultural significance eludes the author at this time.
34The majority of the posters are located in the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Japanese and Chinese Poster Collection. Unfortunately, the author is unable to provide examples due to the difficulty of reproducing hard copies of slides.
35For this analysis I am indebted to John W. Dower who provides a much more detailed explanation in War without Mercy.
36The italics are the author’s.
flag in Nanking. The Japanese Rising Sun flag can be seen in the background. However, when the poster portrays the Kuomintang flag of white sun on blue, it is shown torn and collapsing, indicating the imminent fall of the old regime.

However, in 1940, when Wang “successfully” launched his Peace Movement and established a “legitimate” government in Nanking, he adopted the same blue-sky, white sun flag that symbolized the Kuomintang. The only difference was that until 1943, a small red pennant proclaiming “peace, anti-Communism and national construction” flew above it. After 1943, there was no difference at all.\(^\text{37}\) This of course added complications to the Japanese propaganda. Instead of slogans urging “Rise and overthrow the Kuomintang!” slogans aimed specifically at Chiang appeared. Even so, the Japanese still promoted rumors that Wang was secretly in contact with Chiang in order to trick the populace into allowing themselves to be ruled by Wang under the illusion that they were actually being ruled by Chiang. This type of propaganda can be categorized as “black propaganda,” also known as unofficial propaganda. On the official side, to counteract the Nationalists’ “Long live Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek!” the puppet government shouted “Support Chairman Wang!” However, there has been a general consensus that the collaborators in the Japan sponsored government were generally opportunists who did not have the prestige for the most part to win the support of the sophisticated city dwellers. For this reason, Japan consistently made efforts to negotiate peace with Chiang, and thus have him give legitimacy to their actions in China. As late as 1943, the Japanese were still making overtures to Chiang, promising that if he cooperated, he would be given the position of President and Wang would be his Vice-President.\(^\text{38}\) Nonetheless, by having Wang Ching-wei as the head of what was called the Republic of China, Japan managed to maintain a limited facade of acting only in an advising role and not as a conquering force.

\(^{38}\)OSS, Miscellaneous Document. Document No. 77929
Down with Chiang Kai-shek

Because Japan wanted people to recognize the regime she supported, naturally she attacked those who opposed her plans, namely the so-called "resistance fighters" and guerrillas. Of the Chinese resistance forces, Japan attacked the Communists the most frequently and tended to blame all anti-Japanese activities on them whether they were guilty or not. Of the other source of Chinese resistance, the Nationalists, Japanese vilification was often relegated to personal insults of Chiang Kai-shek, which sometimes extended to attacks on the entire Kuomintang regime. Chiang was originally blamed for mounting a resistance movement to Japan's purely peaceful intentions. "War ruins homes – fault of Chiang. Join the new government."39 One leaflet showed Chiang riding across a field of spikes on the back of a skeleton called "the People" while holding in his hand a sword labelled "Protracted War."40 However, the attack on Chiang for continuing the war was really more an extension of the peace motif discussed earlier than an attack on the Kuomintang regime per se.

One motif which was distinctly against Chiang and probably the most effective one in the public's eyes pointed out the widespread corruption and apathy to the common people in his regime. One example frequently used by the Japanese was Chiang's scorched earth policy, especially the destruction of the Yellow River dikes by retreating Kuomintang troops in an attempt to prevent the advance of Japanese troops into Hankow in 1938. The flooding completely devastated the countryside, more so than if the Japanese had captured the area,41 which they finally did three months later. Exploiting the heartlessness of Chiang's order even more, Japan scattered leaflets contrasting Chiang's inhumanity with Japan's relief work in the area that was providing food and rescue operations

40Aoki Shigemasa, Chief of Staff, "Ro" Group Army's Senden bira sanpu jisshi no ken hāoku, item 4, (Nov. 23, 1939), cited by Johnson, p. 205.
41The destruction of dikes has often been so frowned upon by civilized society that it is considered a crime against humanity. At the end of World War II, one of the twenty-four people to be executed in the Nuremberg Trials was Seyss-Inquart for ordering the destruction of dams in the Netherlands to block Allied supply lines. Thus, although Chiang destroyed the dikes before this was declared a violation of international law, as seen by the decision in Nuremberg, he could still have been held accountable after the war for previous actions. See John Duffett, ed., Against the Crime of Silence (New York: Ohare Books, 1968), p. 188.
for the displaced farmers. They also claimed that they wanted to mend the dikes for the farmers, but were being prevented from doing so by the Kuomintang.

The Japanese also attacked Chiang with posters containing slogans such as “Chiang Kai-shek is a slaughterer who kills the common people,” showing people being massacred by a man wielding a sword. The puppet government would also give speeches declaring “the Kuomintang had no regard for the needs of the common people.”42 They declared that although the Nationalist’s Three Peoples’ Principles or San Min Chu I43 may sound feasible, in practice the Kuomintang just used Dr. Sun’s theories to establish one party rule and suppress dissension. The “lives of the people” were worse off after the Kuomintang took power. The streets of Shanghai, in particular were aswarm with homeless and unemployed people, business was stagnating, and the countryside was “littered with corpses and skeletons and infested with bandits and irregulars.” There was no such thing as the “rights of the people” due to government censorship and oppression. Who was to blame for this fiasco, the Japanese asked. “The responsibility rests entirely on Chiang Kai-shek, who, since coming into power 10 years ago, has practiced evils of every description which even the warlords of old would not have the nerve to do.” The Japanese, on the other hand, spoke for the people.44

To show the depth of corruption of the Chiang regime, and therefore by comparison the benevolence of the Japanese alternative, the Japanese would also emphasize the difference in living standards between officials and the masses. In one cartoon, captioned “how rich Chinese indulge in debauchery in Hong Kong while the common people starve under the lash of national resistance,”45 they showed pictures off fat lecherous men with pretty women while the skeletal masses were under the whip of “resistance.” (See Figure 2-3.)

In addition, to discourage people from joining the army and to arouse discontent in general by informing the people of the rampant corruption which pervaded Chiang’s armed force, Japan distributed pamphlets urging people not to join the army by describ-

42Randall Gould Collection, “The Occupation of Nanking,” Eyewitness Report, Hoover Institution Archives, Box No. 4, (Nanking, 1938), p. 960-6
43The Three People’s Principles was the official slogan by the much revered Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who gathered support based on this platform of Nationalism, Democracy and People’s Livelihood.
44SMP, Document Nos., D8509, D8477 1938
45Smedley, The Battle Hymn of China, illustration between pp. 262 and 263.
Another piece of typical Japanese propaganda. It purports to show how rich Chinese indulge in debauchery in Hongkong while the common people starve under the lash of national resistance.

From The Battle Hymn of China, illustration between pp. 262 and 263.

Figure 2-3: How rich Chinese indulge in debauchery

...ing the horrible conditions that soldiers were subjected to. They would declare, “people who join the army is like pig or sheep going to a slaughter house. Think about parents and the wife who you are leaving...Don’t join the army...Go home, be happy.” They used the same animal imagery to appeal to the officers as well. In the early part of the war, they distributed leaflets to army officers showing the Chinese militarists treating the men and officers like pigs while the caption of the leaflet advises the officers to surrender and promises weapons, material wealth and good treatment from the Japanese.

As noted earlier, however, the main source of tension between Chiang and the Japanese was that they saw him as a traitor to the supreme anti-Communist cause. His worst sin was not that he collected grain taxes during times of famine, nor that his underlings would “squeeze” the peasants to the brink of starvation. Rather, it “was that at a time

46SMP, Document No., D8509
48The Japanese themselves had a saying that peasants were like sesame seeds, meant to be squeezed for all that they were worth.
when the whole world was against Communism, the Kuomintang had let the Communists in China”49 with the creation of the United Front. One of the more common caricatures of Chiang was as a puppet on strings. Either he was a puppet of the Anglo-American Imperialists or, more frequently, a stooge for the Communists. In one especially slanderous cartoon, the Japanese collaborators portrayed Madame Chiang intimately dancing with Stalin, while poor Chiang carried a lantern saying “Fight to the End” underneath the adulterous couple.50 (See Figure 2-4.) The imagery in this caricature, called “Moscow and Chungking Dance” was extremely sexual in nature, which not only involved an anti-Communist theme, but an anti-foreign one as well by playing on fears of miscegenation.51 There was, of course, also less salacious propaganda against Chiang. Handbills would be distributed in Shanghai revealing a “secret pact” between Chiang and the U.S.S.R. describing how all weapons would be given to the Red Army, how the Soviet Union would gain special rights in China and how Chiang’s new chief advisor would be a Soviet.52 Others would describe how various Chinese local governments were already under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, which had insidiously seized control while Chiang stood haplessly by. With the encouragement of local Japanese forces, organizations such as the “Shanghai Citizens’ Anti-Chiang Kai-shek and National Salvation Peace Assembly” were formed which organized protests and lectures denouncing Chiang and extolling Japan. In “New Order” rhetoric, anti-Chiang statements were often couched accusing him of having “brought calamity upon the people by causing the present hostilities through his adoption of a pro-Soviet and pro-Communist policy.”53

In the same vein, anti-Chiang propaganda also accused him of not only selling out to the Communists, but also to the foreign devils as well. Pamphlets were distributed declaring that “Chiang Kai-shek, the Comintern and Great Britain are the three devils!”54

49OSS, “China and Manchuria,” p. 36
51In another use of Madame Chiang, puppet newspapers often had headlines which included “Chiang Estranged From His Wife” in hopes of a little sensationalism and to create a further sense of chaos in unoccupied China, where the head of state could not even govern his own life, let alone a country as large as China.
52SMP, Document No. D8509, (July 6, 1938).
53SMP, New Order Movement in the Orient, (Shanghai City Government, March 8, 1939).
54SMP, Document No. D9069
Figure 2-4: Moscow and Chungking Dance!
A cartoon distributed before Pearl Harbor showed Chiang praying in war debris holding paper in his hands, one titled “Agreement for the abolition of Special Privileges in China by Britain and the U.S.A” and others saying “Loan to Chiang,” and “assistance to Chiang.” The cartoon was captioned “He prays in vain. Those are worthless cheques.”

(See Figure 2-5.) In another handbill released around the same time, two characters labelled Communists and Kuomintang are fighting in a big vessel, trodding on a skeletal person representing the Chinese commoner. Chiang, meanwhile sits on top looking at broken bats with the emblems of Britain, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Finally, there is a man, labelled “Peace Movement” who is trying to overturn the jar and stop the fighting.

In this handbill, there was the theme once more of the peace movement seeking to end hostilities within China which was hurting the common Chinese man. Chiang, meanwhile, was portrayed as someone merely biding his time, until foreign aid would give him an edge over his opponents. Thus, oddly, the Japanese propagandists contradicted their previous propaganda by showing that all the Kuomintang and the Communists were not in fact working together and that Civil War was very likely.

Once the Allies declared war on Japan, propaganda assumed mostly an anti-foreigner and anti-Allied nature. However, Chiang was still not spared from attacks. Chiang, of the members of the “Big Four,” was typically the worst portrayed. He was often shown as a trapped rat, monkey or some other beast ridden or led by imperialists. Easing up on accusations of accommodating the Communists, the brunt of the Japanese attacks on Chiang were now based on his very real alliance with the Anglo-Americans rather than the imagined secret pacts with the Soviets. Playing once more with the “peace” theme, they blamed Chiang for “acting so ignorantly in accepting the stupid and foolish advice of the English, Americans and the public, thus hindering peace and destroying the lives of the people.”

His government was also accused of “shameless depravity in slaughtering members of the yellow race with the aid of the white race....Chungking has introduced

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56 Ibid.
57 Dower, p. 241.
58 OSS. Programs of Japan in China Part II, Entry 136, Box 54, Folder 651, (1944), p. 14
Figure 2-5: He prays in vain. Those are worthless cheques.
an invader, and therefore, Chungking is not a savior of but a traitor to China, a reference to the American air raids in China in 1945. However, although Chiang was still an object for ridicule, the attacks no longer referred to the rampant corruption of his regime as it did before. Instead, they referred to his alliance with the white races rather than any real social issues. Thus, the later material against Chiang can be viewed more as part of the greater propaganda campaign against foreigners than any personal enmity against the dictator of China. In fact, towards the end of the war there were more overtures of peace to Chiang than criticisms. Unofficial Japanese policy was to be not overly harsh in its criticisms of Chiang. In cartoons, they would show him as a sick man who was urged “Please, dear Chungking comrade, take this elixir quickly.” where the medicine was naturally peace. (See Figure 2-6.) When the Japanese launched their last offensive against American airbases in China, they stopped before they could have captured Chungking, maintaining that their objectives were against the foreigners and that they only had peaceful intentions for the Chinese. However, the details of the amount of cooperation between China and Japan will be dealt more thoroughly in the chapter regarding Nationalist propaganda. For now, it is sufficient to remark on the change of policy of Japan towards Chiang as was reflected in the targets of their propaganda. Chiang was, after all, strongly pan-Asianic; his anti-foreign sentiments could be appealed to and coopted for Japan’s purposes in the end. Besides, after Pearl Harbor a greater opportunity made itself available from which Japan could garner support from the Chinese people, traditionally a somewhat xenophobic group.

The Great Emancipator of Asia

The concept of “co-prosperity” and “Asia for the Asiatics” themes were fundamental reflections of Japan’s anti-foreign policy. Pan-Asianism was the attempt to create a sense of solidarity that was not really based on historical traditions, but developed more as an adverse reaction to Western colonialism. After the onset of the Pacific War period, Japan

59OSS No. 17, p. 2, 1945
60OSS. New Cartoon Weekly, Entry 144, Box 130, (Hankow, October 16, 1943.)
Figure 2-6: Please, dear Chungking comrade, take this elixir quickly.

justified her actions repeatedly by pointing out that "to liberate Asia from the white man's prison is the natural duty of every Asiatic. All of you Asiatics who have groaned under the yoke of the white man unite!"61 To prove her purely noble intentions she would maintain that the only possessions she seized control of were former colonies of Western countries or treaty ports as a result of unequal treaty agreements. After Pearl Harbor, Japan was no longer just the benefactor of China, but the liberator of all Orientals. However, although this claim could be argued persuasively perhaps in Southeast Asia and parts of China, such as Shanghai, which was given as concessions to foreigners, this argument could not be used as effectively in China since China was the only other country in Asia besides Japan to maintain some semblance of sovereignty. Instead, Japan had to try to create a schism between China and the West. One of the best arguments she could offer was to let the West's past behavior do its own condemning. Using techniques such as commentaries, editorials, speakers, leaflets and film, Japan continually reminded the Chinese of the history of economic subjugation from white foreigners starting from the Opium War up to the current situation of extraterritoriality and special concessions. They would also give speeches revealing the "true" nature of their Allies with descriptions of the Oriental Exclusion laws in America and in general with tales of how their overseas

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61Dower, p. 207.
brothers fared in these countries. Predictably, their existence in "the land of opportunity" was shown to be one relegated into ghettos, despised by the white ruling class.

Even before Pearl Harbor, due to the very nature of their propaganda of "Asia for the Asiatics," anti-foreignism was very noticeable. They warned the Chinese not to look to the West for Allies lest China become the imperialist battleground between the competing United States and Great Britain and Russia. Already, a proxy war was being fought in the form of the China's civil war, where the American interests were represented by Chungking and the Russians by Yenan.\textsuperscript{62} In other words, do not trust the Americans who were just as bad as the Russians. In fact, do not trust any Western power since the white man sought only to enslave China. China's only true friends by elimination were thus the Japanese who did not have imperialist dreams in China, but who only sought to lead her on the road to prosperity. Chiang was merely an unfortunate puppet being manipulated by the West. One leaflet shows this theme explicitly by depicting a hand labelled Anglo-America using Chiang as a puppet. Into this same leaflet, arrives another hand labelled Japan who cuts the puppet strings with scissors labelled the Security of East Asia and assures the Chinese that "the devil's puppet show will soon be over."\textsuperscript{63} (See Figure 2-7)

Ironically, before the fall of France and attack on Pearl Harbor, although extremely anti-Communist and anti-labor at home, Japan advocated the formation of unions within China using slogans such as "Overthrow the running dogs in the employ of Great Britain, the United States, the U.S.S.R. and France!...Long live New China and the victory of the laborers in various trades!"\textsuperscript{64} However, these slogans did not emanate from Japan's interest in setting up a strong labor movement. Instead they were used to create turmoil in foreign owned factories, especially ones owned by Great Britain, Japan's greatest economic competition. Other common slogans were "Down with Britain! Boycott British goods! Confiscate British Property in China! Destroy the British Flag! Knock Down Britain!" showing how the current hostilities could be viewed as the violent extension of the competition for China's one billion potential consumers. In 1939, as part of the New

\textsuperscript{62} OSS, \textit{China and Manchuria}, p. 38
\textsuperscript{64} SMP, Document No. D8509, (1938).
Figure 2.7: The devil's puppet show will soon be over!

Order Movement, the Chinese were encouraged to “save themselves by cooperating with one another” against the “economic oppression of the White people.” The Westerners were responsible for “starting Chinese civil wars....White people are only blood sucking germs and will eventually strangle us.”65

Although much of those speeches may have been mere rhetoric, there were many who believed these speeches since history had shown the less than peaceful intentions of Britain repeatedly. When the puppets maintained that “Great Britain is our sworn enemy. Don’t forget that the first country which invaded China was Great Britain,”66 there was a grain of truth in their statements. In 1942, after the Japanese seized power, they celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Treaty of Nanking which ended the Opium War. Chinese citizens could not and did not discount the statements as only propaganda, and did indeed remember the past humiliations inflicted on China by that country. Leaflets would be distributed showing British police in a pool of Chinese blood with the caption “Indeed, this is typical of the cold-blooded man-killing British.”67 Japan also made use of films and plays to remind their audience of the past, such as “A Perfume to Last Ten Centuries,” a film about the first Opium War and “Sorrow Left at Spring River” which was about the Taiping Rebellion.68 Of all Japanese propaganda, the anti-British campaign was the most effective, whereas the “new citizen” and revival of Confucianism tended to enjoy very little success.69

Once the war broke out in Europe, Japan’s anti-foreign propaganda altered from reminding the Chinese of past indignities to showing the weakness of Western democracies as Germany swept through Europe. Now there was another reason to drive out the foreigners – to prevent the extension of hostilities in Europe from being fought on Chinese soil. New leaflets were distributed in 1940 showing European powers fighting each other and disturbing the peace of an otherwise “tranquil” China. Others showed the inevitable doom of the British and French governments in Europe who were falling apart at that

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65 SMP, Leaflet, (March 8, 1939)
66 SMP, Document No. D9069.
69 Johnson, p. 43.
Figure 2-8: Alas! The British and French Governments are Moving their Capitals very moment under German pressure while the Americans sat ineffectually by.

By late 1940, Japan's propaganda was no longer satisfied with just the expulsion of the physical presence of foreigners. Instead, it assumed the fanatical, evangelical mode that characterized Japanese propaganda of the latter war years, calling for the purging of all Western values and ideology. One of the first victims of their ideological assault was naturally religion. In a leaflet titled "Advice to Christians," the puppet government urged the people to cooperate with the new government and help create a new church, declaring that the old ones were dependent on foreigners and foreign ways:

"Missionaries change the customs and habits of the land of our ancestors. These missionaries use a demoniacal device for the absorption of men's minds. Thus have been absorbed (perverted) the minds of the converts. Have
Figure 2-9: The Tragedy of Europe.
From SMP, Pound leaflets distributed by the Shanghai Offices of Japanese Secret Service, Document No. 8089, (June 20, 1940).

Figure 2-10: Coming Now
you found satisfaction in believing European or American religion? Have you found security? We feel that you could not have found this satisfaction....Missionaries have not led their converts to respect their own country....Free yourselves from the oppression of foreign missionaries....The time has come for Chinese Christians to organize a new, indigenous Church.”

Although there were anti-Western slogans before 1941, there was considerably more materials attacking the United States and Great Britain after Pearl Harbor. Once Pearl Harbor fell and all of the old British colonies toppled like dominoes, Japan would have the puppet government display posters and hold parades congratulating Japan on the fall of Singapore, much like they had made people come out to celebrate the fall of Chinese cities at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese conflict. The propaganda to create alienation between China and the West was also increased and the methods improved upon. However, instead of pointing to past indignities, Japan now had the added fuel of the current treatment of China at the hands of her “allies,” who still treated the Chinese as second class citizens, the clearest indication of which being the Allies “Europe First” policy. Especially damning were the several well publicized comments of Churchill who did not want aid that should go to the more important European theater, namely Britain, going to her ex-colonies. In addition, if her colonial possessions were actually armed to fight against the Japanese, what would happen after the war when Britain wanted her colonies back? Besides obnoxious comments by Churchill, there was also no Pacific Charter of anti-colonial principles guaranteeing the abolition of the unequal treaties for after the war. Therefore, China had no guarantees that her sacrifices now would not be rewarded after the war with a return to her semi-colonial status as before the war. As was shown, much of Great Britain’s actions indicated that this would be so if the decision was up to Britain.

Another factor Japan played upon was the fact that things did not improve after America entered the war. In fact, they had even gotten worse. The Burma Road was lost, Yunnan was invaded due to the Doolittle air raids, and the Japanese launched new

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70 Advice to Christians, Enclosed in letter from Hwanghsien missionary to Ida Pruitt, November 1940, Tuchman, p. 303.
71 The Chinese were already considerably annoyed at the British for having closed the Road in 1940, an action done to preserve British control over her Southeast Asian colonial possessions at the expense.
offensives. In addition, the Allies seemed to expect China to continue to resist while her supplies were cut off, suffering tremendous casualties, and yet still be denied the privileges accorded the other Allies, such as inclusion in the Cairo conference. Wang also “accused the United States and Britain of supplying Japan with oil and scrap iron to fight China" while at the same time financing China to fight Japan, asserting that they were thus playing off the Orientals against each other, while making money in the process.” For these reasons Japan was able to successfully launch a whispering offensive using rumors as the principle medium of transmitting propaganda. Because of the low level of literacy among the Chinese population, the Japanese enjoyed greater success using this method than they had with leaflet bombings, which contained essentially the same message. The gist of these rumors were that America and especially Britain were not truly interested in helping China, were unwilling to sacrifice their youth for the war while expecting China to, and were weak militarily. This offensive enjoyed surprising success, “believed by officials, teachers, students, businessmen, farmers, coolies....Particularly noticeable is the gullible readiness of intelligent, educated men” to believe these rumors since they were also conveyed in written propaganda aimed at the intelligentsia.

Because Japan’s main opposition in the Pacific was currently the United States, which was the most responsible for waging the Pacific War the most, the target of the majority of propaganda attacks after 1941 was the United States. Pamphlets were distributed declaring “China and Japan have to be united to defeat U.S. aggressive invasion” showing happy Chinese farmers and a Japanese soldier carrying a very well fed child waving the Nanking flag. (See Figure 2-11.) In addition, Japan accused the United States of lack of humanity in attacking Chinese cities, killing innocent civilians with their air raids. This was especially true since the Japanese did not provide any air raid shelters for Chinese civilians and as a result as many as 700 civilians died in a single air raid in Hong Kong.

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73This was indeed true before 1940.
74Hornbeck, China: A Social-Political-Economic Survey, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Box No. 56, (May 15, 1942) p. 82.
76Ibid.
Figure 2-11: China and Japan have to be united to defeat U.S. Aggressive Invasion

However, the lack of shelters for the Chinese was predictably not mentioned in Japanese propaganda, leaving only a believable half-truth to be spread. When the U.S. bombed Canton in 1942, Japan spread rumors that the Americans were coming to slaughter the Chinese, which caused people to be distrustful of the U.S. air force.\(^7\)

In addition, Japan tended to degrade the Americans whenever the opportunity arose. The Japanese held exhibitions of the shot-down remnants of an American bomber, pictures of victorious Japanese dog-fight battles and photos of the modern superior production of Japanese war planes. They would also report in puppet newspapers the supposed deaths of American pilots who died over Hankow as a result of the poor quality of American parachutes. Although admitting to some Allied successes, the Japanese reported minimal damage done to their planes while reporting the multitudes of losses inflicted on the Americans. Using the whispering offensive tactic, the Japanese spread outrageous

\(^7\)OSS, Programs of Japan in China. Part II, p. 13
rumors about American soldiers not being able to endure war because the U.S. Army did not have enough cows to produce milk to feed the “weak, soft American soldiers.”

Naturally, in the anti-American propaganda, the Japanese also used fear of miscegenation to produce hostility towards the Americans. In a Canton newspaper, in 1942, the puppets “report that American men rape Chinese women in Western China and humiliate the Chinese people and that the Chungking government is powerless to protest, etc., and that this occurs almost daily.” Another leaflet, “To Discover the true face of the American soldiers!” distributed in Shanghai, showed American soldiers partying and dancing with Chinese females, while Chinese men were dying in battle. (See Figure 2-12.) There was a revival of Madame Butterfly in 1942, a tale showing of how Americans use Asians and then abandon them. However, this fear of miscegenation was a reflection of Japan’s internal obsession with her own racial purity. This obsession she transferred to China as can be seen in her broadcast in Hong Kong: “In Chungking controlled areas, American soldiers are taking advantage of their position to treat with violence Chinese women, young or old....American soldiers regard every Chinese woman as an adultress. To keep our race pure and moral, we should drive the Americans from the Chinese mainland.” The effectiveness of this propaganda tactic lay not only in China’s xenophobia, but partially in truth. In Chungking, there were many Chinese “jeep girls” who rode around in American jeeps and were typically prostitutes or dance hall girls. It was also not uncommon for the local landlords to group women together to work in a brothel to provide comfort to the victorious forces, whatever race they might be.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, propaganda emphasizing the superiority of the oriental to the occidental was stepped up. Two months after the attack, the North China Publicity League was created in Peking unifying all the various means of propaganda. By September 1942, the Greater East Asia (GEA) Ministry was established. From 1942 to 1944, on the race course in Shanghai could be seen eight large signs each with the face

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78 OSS, A Phase in Japanese Psychological Warfare.
81 OSS, Document No. 69597.
Figure 2-12: To Discover the True Face of American Soldiers!

of a GEA leader – Wang Ching-wei, Tojo, Pu Yi, Governor Decoux, President Vargas, Premier Pibul Songgram, Adipai U Ba Mau, and S. C. Bose. By the years 1943-1944, the Co-prosperity theme reached an apex.\(^{82}\) By using the term “co-prosperity,” Japan seemed “to promise Asia something actual and more immediately necessary even than liberty, that is, the means of continuing life, food and existence.”\(^{83}\) The path to “wealth and power” did not rest in Western liberalism and rationalism as has been the common misconception for previous decades. Instead, it lay in Japanese spiritualism. Only with Japan’s guidance could China hope to ever enter into the age of modernity and prosperity. As proof of the benefits Japan had already brought to China, Chou Fo-hai, the official

\(^{82}\) OSS, China and Manchuria, p. 37

\(^{83}\) Ibid, p. 42.
spokesman for the Peace Movement, declared in 1944:

"Who [in the depressing days of 1938] could have dreamed that the Nationalist government could return to Nanking, the blue-sky-white-sun flag could unfurl on the side of the Tzu-chin Mountains? Who could have dreamed that extraterritoriality is now abolished and foreign concessions returned to China? We have obtained from Japan [the promise] that when peace becomes a reality, Japan will immediately withdraw all her soldiers from Chinese soil, to the extent that she would not even insist on her right to station troops in north China as stipulated in the Boxer Protocol."

During the early part of the Pacific War, fresh from her military successes, Japan took every available opportunity to humiliate the white man. Whether it was in films or speeches, the white man "was completely 'de-bunked' as a superior being." American observers indignantly reported that "white people were forced to parade through the streets carrying their own luggage, dirty, hungry and demeaned" when Japan captured Hong Kong. The Japanese soldiers would slap whites, rape British nurses, kill doctors and patients. "A Perfume to Last Ten Centuries" not only reminded the Chinese of past indignities, it also ridiculed the British by having actors wear big noses and curly blond wigs. The ambassador was shown as rather decrepit and shifty looking, symbolizing stagnation and corruption of the Anglo-American system. Using cartoons, the Japanese also sought to promote anti-foreign sentiment by showing the British and Americans, either in the form of Churchill and Roosevelt or Uncle Sam and John Bull, fighting each other over China, working together to milk China or being condemned together after losing China.

In contrast to the weak Americans, Japan would compare the resilience of the Japanese troops. The closer the American victory came to reality, the more fanatical the Japanese became. They exaggerated their military victories while downplaying their losses. They would show Japanese youths leaving their homes to become pilots in order to protect

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85OSS, Hong Kong under Japanese Occupation, [by Robert Ward], p. 36
86As an aside, and thereby marginalizing the Chinese, the observer mentions "the Chinese suffered also from wholesale raping."
87OSS, New Cartoon Weekly.
the skies of Asia. Their propaganda took the exterminationist tone, that previously had belonged mostly to the Americans, with their proud declarations that “the Chinese, Japanese and nationals of other nations in Hong Kong are showing their determination fully in the extermination of the Anglo-Americans.”

Nearing the end of the war, defeat in sight, Japan launched a “Peace Offensive” which consisted of making more overtures of peace to Chungking. Solidarity against the Anglo-Saxons were urged. Drawing on her past traditions, the tone of Japanese propaganda material became more philosophical, centering on transcendentalism and impermanence of all things as defeat closed in. In late 1945, Radio Hong Kong announced, “The judgment of the war will be passed by God. No doubt the righteous will win. At that time, peace and lovely light will shine on earth.” However, Japan never took off the mantle of righteousness and moral superiority that she had assumed as her own since the beginning of the conflict. America was condemned for bombarding hospitals, schools and churches, the same crimes often attributed to the Japanese which they merely transferred to their enemies. Only when defeat became inevitable did Japan adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards her conquests. She granted some countries back their independence in an attempt to appeal to a race revolt against the Europeans, who were sure to attempt to try to repossess their pre-war colonial possessions. In China the situation was not as simple, since China had always had her nominal sovereignty. However, as the war ended, Japan proffered something Chiang could not and did not refuse – assistance versus the Communists. The one constant theme throughout the war years was that of anti-Communism, the Communists being the only group Japan consistently targeted for extermination without exceptions ever granted.

Exterminate the Communist Bandits

The primary reason Japan consistently gave for her invasion of China was to prevent the spread of Communism. Although Japan wavered on the question of foreigners (i.e.

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89Ibid, p. 117.
Germans expulsion was not urged for) and attacks on Chiang went in and out of style, Communism was always an object of vilification in Japanese propaganda. In this, Japan shared a common interest with Chiang and as a result the ratio of enmity to cooperation between them could never be quite determined. The slogans urging "same script, same race. Defeat Communism, restore peace"\(^{91}\) appealed to Chiang’s own sentiments. Ironically, one of the main reasons for Japan’s dislike of Chiang was due to their mistaken perception of Chiang as a pro-Communist element. Seemingly after realizing their misconception in the latter half of the war, Japan attempted to take advantage of this overlooked ally. Furthermore, their anti-Communist policies were also actually viewed favorably by some Westerners before Pearl Harbor, who saw the Japanese as putting up a valiant struggle against the Communistic evils. One American statesman reportedly exclaimed, "Pity Japan carrying the struggle against Communism alone in Manchuria" in 1936.\(^{92}\)

Communism had no place in Japan’s New Order. Many of the autonomy movements sponsored by Japan had taken as their primary concern the extermination of Communism. The separatist North China movement, acknowledged to have been the handiwork of Japan, even proclaimed its anti-Communist stance in the name of its government, "East Hebei Autonomous Government for the Prevention of Communism." After seizing control of many territories, the Japanese would sponsor many anti-Communist demonstrations. Puppet newspapers would report the gratitude of the people towards the Japanese Army for stopping the insidious disease of Communism, which Chiang had proved so ineffective in doing. Manifestos were released officially and unofficially praising Japan’s "desire to rescue the people of China...from the hands of the Red beasts" Japan thus "resolved to despatch her Expeditionary Forces to China to chastise the Kuomintang and Communist Armies."\(^{93}\) Films were produced with a distinct anti-Communist theme. One example was "Girl of the Frontier," a film recreating the battle of Tsitsihar, which


\(^{92}\)Ibid, p. 79.

An example of the Japanese trying to break up China's United Front.

*From SMP, Document No. 8509, (August 2, 1938).*

Figure 2-13: The Kuomintang is Committing Suicide with a Rope Supplied by the Communists
contained a scene of Mongolian priests laughing at a caricature of Stalin. The 1941 flick "Peking Night, Vow in the Desert" was about a young Japanese man who falls in love with a Chinese girl. However, their idyll is interrupted by the bad guys, in this case, the Communists. On his death bed, the young Japanese man makes such a moving speech that even the Communists are converted to pan-Asianists.

To the Japanese, the Communists were the biggest threat to Japan's dreams of Pan-Asianism and a Greater East Asia. In their propaganda, Japan tended to blame almost every guerrilla or nationalistic action on the Communists, who were usually referred to in Japanese rhetoric as bandits. They would distribute fliers in which the Communists, in one form or another, were depicted as actual robbers, stealing gold and handbags from the Chinese people. One flier, using the youth motif described earlier, showed three children, one holding a Japanese flag, a second the five barred flag of Japan's New Order and the third a Kuomintang flag standing on a stone under which was a man who was labelled a "Communist Bandit." The Japanese declared that it was only "small batches of bandits disturbing the people's peaceful living by their guerrilla activities." Therefore, "to suppress the ideological movement characteristic of the above mentioned trend and to intensify the pacification measures will be the administration's efforts of first priority in this year [1940]," the year marking the commencement of the mopping up exercises.

Of all the groups fighting in China, the Communists were the only group for whom the Japanese urged total annihilation, continually and without any possibility of reprieve. Slogans heard throughout the war spanned the range from those of pure hatred such as "Destroy the Red Army," "Eradicate the Red Evil" and "Annihilate the Communists" to more politically aware ones such as "Communists are declaring that they want to fight the Japanese....even if they could succeed, still they would merely turn and confiscate all your property afterwards." Notice that in neither of these slogans was there any mention of spiritualism or of peace, thus revealing the true underlying economic nature of

94Leyda, p. 134.  
95Ibid, p. 135  
97Ta Chung Cultural Cooperation Association, Opinions of the Japanese with Regard to the Northeast Combined Anti-Japanese Forces, p. 82. (The Association is hereafter referred to as TCCCA.)  
the conflict that existed beneath the rhetoric of pan-Asianism. Showing Japan's greater concern with the Communists, the Japanese offered much more money to Red Army deserters than those from the Nationalist Army, and often attempted to bribe Red Army men to turn on their commanding officers by offering huge sums for assistance in the capture of a Red Army officer.

In Communist strongholds such as the area called "Communist Paradise"\(^{99}\), the Japanese often followed policies of "mopping up exercises" and reprisal raids among the people, claiming that these were preventive measures against future Red attacks. However, typically, immediately following such "punitive expeditions" there was a revival of patriotism among the people, as could be seen in the sudden emergence of anti-Japanese banners and music. Sometimes the Japanese would dress as Eighth Route Army soldiers and rape, kill and pillage a whole village in order to discredit the Communists.\(^{100}\) Following policies very similar to what the Americans later adopted in Vietnam, the Japanese adopted "blockade, deforestation and residence concentration" policies to isolate the Communists from the people.\(^{101}\) All of these measures were done in the name of rural pacification or land purification. After the Hundred Regiments Offensive of the Communists in 1941, the Japanese, under the guidance of Okamura, retaliated by launching the "three all" policy or sankō seisaku – kill all, burn all, and destroy all (sometimes referred to as loot all due to Japanese soldier's practice of looting rather than destroying) – causing the wholesale massacres and indiscriminate executions of peasants in the countryside in the name of anti-Communism. Those who were suspected of being Communist members of the Combined Anti-Japanese Forces were executed and their properties burnt away.\(^{102}\) The Japanese "carried out literally thousands of large and small scale punitive expeditions against them. They looted and burned thousands of villages, raped the womenfolk and slaughtered countless civilians, in a terror aimed to wipe out all thought of resistance."\(^{103}\) The utter devastation caused by this policy can be seen in that it man-

\(^{99}\) TCCCA, Struggle for peace and democracy in the Northeast, p. 62.
\(^{100}\) Smedley, China Fights Back, p. 233.
\(^{101}\) TCCCA, Struggle for peace and democracy in the Northeast, p. 77.
Anti-Communist Propaganda.

From SMP, Document No. 8509, [August 2, 1938].

Figure 2-14: The Red Movements have Ruined Our Country! Anti-Communism is the Only Way to Peace.

aged to reduce the population from 44 million to 25 million civilians.\textsuperscript{104} All such actions were attributed to the necessity of weeding out the Communist evil influence which had caused China’s economic distress and which had been “dreaded by the whole world.” For the people’s own good, all of these harsh medicines were necessary in order to cure China of this Communist “disease of the heart.”

By 1940, an integral part of Japan’s peace offensive was the necessity of Japan and China to cooperate in order to “jointly carry our anti-Comintern defense,” which in prac-

\textsuperscript{104}Dower, p. 43.
tice meant the razing of any village suspected of being Communist. Wang appealed to Chungking not to allow itself to be the puppet of the Chinese Communists, since the true enemy was not Japan but Yenan. A characteristic cartoon showed the Communist Party as a snake wrapped around a tree symbolizing the Chungking government and being beheaded by a sword labelled Japan-Nanking Agreement.\(^{105}\) (See Figure 2-15.) It was with extreme eagerness that Japanese read and publicized the clashes between the Communists and the Nationalists that became more prevalent by the end of that year. Regarding the New Fourth Army Incident, the Japanese declared that the destruction of that Communist force had begun and that it was their job to finish the Kuomintang's job.\(^{106}\) Possibly “to exacerbate Kuomintang-Communist relations,”\(^{107}\) the Japanese even admitted that the Communist forces were actively engaging Japanese troops, contradicting Nationalist declarations to the contrary.

Towards the end of the war, whether it was propaganda or not, the Japanese publicly noted that their greatest hindrance to victory in China was the Communists. Based on intelligence operations, these reports were probably factual and not merely “propaganda to exacerbate Kuomintang-Communist relations,” as C.E. Gauss in the U.S. State


\(^{107}\) OSS 120599
Department suggested. By 1944, the Japanese recognized that "the only hindrance to the accomplishment of reviving China and defending East Asia now existing is the Communist bandits who have not been entirely annihilated." By 1945, Tokyo newspapers blamed "Communist bandits for preventing the Japanese from carrying out "the three great policies of peace, production and purification of thought." By that time, Chungking troops had become so demoralized and riddled with corrupt officers that the only possible source of resistance within China could be from the Communists, who were the only viable force left as confirmed by American intelligence sources. Ironically, as can be seen from news clippings from that time, although the Communists as a whole were hated by Japanese policy makers, the Communists as an Army managed to win the respect of the Japanese troops who saw them as an disciplined and active political force among the people, not at all like the corrupt Chinese politicians mired in warlordism as in the case of the Chiang regime. Nonetheless, despite this respect in battle, the Japanese officers and leaders maintained their animosity towards the Communists until the very end, refusing to surrender to any Communist forces.

The New Order – Japanese Imperialism & Shisō Zendō

For all the idealistic and righteous poses the Japanese assumed, in the end the New Order was only new in the sense that the oppressors were no longer the Anglo-Americans, but the Japanese. As with almost all colonial powers, Japan hoped to instill in the population ideals suitable with Japan’s policies. By controlling every aspect of the Chinese citizen’s life, Japan’s Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere revealed its true identity to be really Japan’s Prosperity Sphere. Although Japan proclaimed self-abnegating slogans, in practice the people were subjected to an indoctrination which promoted defeatism and

\[^{108}\text{OSS, Report of Kuomintang and Japanese Views of Effectiveness of Communist Forces, Document No. 120599, [by John Service], (1944).}\]

\[^{109}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[^{110}\text{Smedley, The Great Road, p. 410.}\]

\[^{111}\text{OSS, Report of Kuomintang and Japanese Views of Effectiveness of Communist Forces.}\]
materialism while all sense of nationalism and ethnic pride were obliterated. Because Japan’s goal was to completely subvert the old Order and establish a pro-Japanese one in its stead, a program of social indoctrination proved to be the most suitable and effective method. Such attempts to modify the Chinese people’s behavior were not necessary when it came to either the Allies or the Nationalists, since their objective was to preserve the status quo rather than change it. The only other faction who worked actively among the people to gain their support were the Communists, since they too were promoting in a sense a “New Order” of their own, but one that would be based on Marxist-Leninist ideology rather than “Japanese Spiritualism.”

By drawing from her past experience of pacifying her own people in the face of social discontent, Japan launched a campaign of shisō zendō or “thought guidance.” “Indoctrination...would be effected through extensive control of the channels of information. Art, sports and tourism that heightened a consciousness of East Asian solidarity would be promoted. Propaganda about Japan’s culture as well as its national power would be widely disseminated. A new history of the world would be taught, focusing on East Asia with Japan at its center, rather than on the West or China as Leretofore. The emerging native elites would be trained by the Japanese.”\textsuperscript{112} Religion and any other social organizations would be used to promote ideology most beneficial to Japan. By controlling every aspect of the Chinese citizen’s life, Japan hoped to achieve the same homogeneity of thought which she had obtained at home.\textsuperscript{113}

The first and foremost virtues which Japan actively promoted among the public were defeatism and materialism. Newspapers rarely reported any news other than pro-Japanese or pro-Puppet articles since the Japanese would immediately take control of the newspapers once they seized a town. The newspaper’s size would be reduced and the amount of newsworthy material diminished to next to nothing. By 1942, the newspapers in the Shanghai area were only four pages in length four times a week and two pages the other three days. Only a fraction of the newspapers contained any significant information on the current war. The rest of the paper contained commentaries on social conditions

\textsuperscript{112}Dower, p. 284
\textsuperscript{113}This also proves to have been a misconception since by looking at the number of strikes and riots, we can infer that not all was peaceful on the home front.
and appeals for charity. In one publication, the “Liyan Pictorial,” all of the articles were news about “cinema stars, sing-song girls, actresses and actors” and how some were so disappointed in life that “they chanted Buddhist hymns in monasteries.”\textsuperscript{114} However, we should not be too harsh on the Japanese by evaluating them in terms of Western journalistic standards. In the early 19th century, the purpose of newspapers were to show advertisements. “Chinese society of those days, both high and low...regarded the daily paper only as an enterprise of the foreign firms, having little to do with [themselves].”\textsuperscript{115} Keeping with this tradition, there were several ads for young and healthy people for jobs with high pay either doing “secretive” work, or to travel to Mukden and receive great riches and plenty of food as a reward.\textsuperscript{116} Besides the fifty daily papers, there were, by 1945, over one-hundred and fifty magazines in distribution. Like the newspapers all of them were Japanese or puppet owned. Unfortunately, “most of these magazines contained sex stories and were so full of pessimistic sentiment that they produced just the contrary effect to the Japanese propaganda policy”\textsuperscript{117} that the Japanese were seriously considering stopping publication on these magazines.

Although the printed medium only promoted virtues of passivity and hedonism, the film industry was even worse when it came to corrupting Chinese society. Even if the newspapers and magazines actually contained substantial propaganda, it would have been ineffective in China, since only 5% of the entire nation actually read the newspapers\textsuperscript{118} let alone bothered to read non-fiction books. However, through the power of motion pictures and people’s tendency to believe their eyes, the cinema naturally lent itself to being a prime candidate as a “thought guider.” The majority of the films shown projected an image of Asia as stable and unworried.\textsuperscript{119} An example of a film made at the Hsinking studio in Manchuria was “Blossoms in Late Spring,” a tourist-like film which showed the local customs of Manchuria. The protagonist was a virtuous Japanese clerk who

\textsuperscript{114} OSS Report, n.d. n.p.
\textsuperscript{116} OSS, Propaganda as political sentiment in Shanghai, [by Theodore Herman], Document No. 102612, (October 25, 1944).
\textsuperscript{117} OSS Report (April 1945)
\textsuperscript{118} Lin, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{119} Leyda, p. 132.
is pursued by two attractive Chinese heroines.\textsuperscript{120} Like the gender roles in propaganda posters, the protagonists in Japanese sponsored films were typically a virtuous Japanese male and a helpless Chinese female needing to be rescued. The films would typically never reverse the nationality of the genders. Once more the emphasis of the Japanese as dominant and superior male type was seen again, whereas the Chinese always assumed the female role.\textsuperscript{121}

By 1939, most of the films produced in China, however, had degenerated into what can be categorized as escapist musicals and remakes. The musicals were not unlike Western conceptions of MGM style extravaganzas. They were mostly celluloid versions of classic Chinese operas with gaudy costumes and set in feudal China as part of Japan's "back to ancestry" promotion. In addition, the costume dramas were considered safe venues for the filmmakers since the extravagant costumes were often used in place of a plotline.\textsuperscript{122} Because of the popularity of Western films, rather than show the original films, Japan would often remake them, putting the events in a Chinese context as they did in their 1940 remake of "Snow White" called "Chinese Princess White Snow."\textsuperscript{123} However, although the quality of Chinese film making noticeably depreciated, due mostly to the fact that her best filmmakers were Leftists and had fled to Communist territory, Japanese produced and Chinese dubbed films gained in popularity. The fact that most of these films were what would be considered in Western terminology as B grade escapist flicks indicate that most of the population did want to "escape" from their present troubles by entering the fantasy world of the movies. Typical films produced before Pearl Harbor were "Song at Midnight (Part II)", "Miss Change-Body" and "Mr. Wang" series, "Red Lotus Temple" thrillers, and remakes of classic films such as "Street Angel."\textsuperscript{124} After Pearl Harbor, the major thematic subjects predictably assumed an anti-American and anti-British tone. The Japanese filmmakers "spared no expense in dramatizing the most embarrassing episodes in the history of European evils in China."\textsuperscript{125} However, the notion

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{121}Dower, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{122}Leyda, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{123}Leyda, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{124}Ibid, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{125}Ibid, p. 146.
of racial solidarity was still emphasized along with this new emphasis on anti-foreignism.

Although mass media and entertainment were very effective means of shaping public opinion, Japan needed a tactic that had the power to alter the very fabric of Chinese society for many generations to come. For this, they drew upon their own past and the indoctrination required after the Meiji Restoration, and utilized education for purposes of "thought guidance." The nature of this guidance, though, was often contrary to Japan's espoused aim of Asian nationals working together in cooperation for mutual benefit. Instead, her education policy in China would emphasize the central role of the Japanese in this "New Order." Schools were forced to hire Japanese teachers and hold Japanese language courses. The Chinese teachers were required to go through an indoctrination of their own in order to ensure they were teaching the appropriate material. In addition, textbooks were completely revised and rewritten to promote coexistence between the Asian races, whitewash China's past humiliations at Japanese hands and attempt to eliminate any nationalistic emotions among the students. Schoolbooks containing anti-Japanese sentiments were burned in week long bonfires along with laboratory equipment from the Hopei Medical College when the Japanese first took over in 1937.126 In coursework, any classes which might remotely promote nationalism were replaced with more "cultural" activities. For instance, Chinese civics would be replaced by Chinese ethics while the girl scouts would be replaced by boxing and fencing. Even coursework was adapted to emphasize the inherent supremacy of the Japanese culture. One instance of the fanaticism and politicization of all facets of students' lives involved an incident when a Japanese teacher caught a student drawing a picture of a man falling from a mountain. Assuming that the falling man represented Japan, the teacher became quite agitated and lectured the class on the "Holy Spirit of Japan" and declared "Japan is very firm in his steps and will never fall down."127

In addition to controlling their academic lives, the Japanese also sought to shape the Chinese youths' viewpoints through school sponsored activities. The Japanese would force students to celebrate the "defeat of Communism" whenever a Chinese city fell.

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126 Tuchman, p. 168.
127 OSS, Entry 136, Box 55, Folder 657.
"They were to be happy for being saved from their own destruction."\textsuperscript{128} Especially after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese concentrated on creating anti-foreign sentiments among the students. They would hold student elocution contests which would open with the reading of Wang's Declaration of War on America. Essay topics asked on an exam in the venerable Yenching University included "The duties of youths toward the Greater East Asian War," and "The meaning of Peace, Anti-Communism and Reconstruction."\textsuperscript{129} In May of 1942, the North China Education Conference established an eleven point program which instituted educational standards which concentrated on the "eradication of all Anglo-American cultural influences" and the elimination of Communist ideology. The success of the Japanese indoctrination of the youths of China can be seen in the fact that by 1944 Chinese youths would speak in terms of a "Greater East Asia" and refer to Manchuria by the Japanese given name of Manchukuo.\textsuperscript{130}

Often, specific targets of Japanese bombardments were schools, since they were suspected of being hotbeds for Communist activity. According to the \textit{Ta Kung Pao}, "the enemy also aims to destroy our culture...Besides schools churches are eyesores to the Japanese."\textsuperscript{131} Those that were neither destroyed nor coopted by the puppet government were shut down. Library collections were desecrated, books being sold as firewood, the more valuable ones sent back to Japan. By 1945, all aspects of Chinese culture and education in Manchuria was suppressed and controlled. Required schooling was reduced from twelve to nine years. Medical college was reduced from seven to four. Confucianism, anathema to almost all Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century was revived while slogans urging "back to ancenstry" were promoted. In Hopei, there were a total of 1,175,648 students enrolled in 12 colleges, 78 middle schools and 13,192 primary schools by 1942. However, comparing these figures with those from 1934, when there were 24 colleges, 148 middle schools, 148 vocational schools and 29,3115 primary schools with an enrollment of 1,211,821 students in the primary schools alone, one cannot help but notice that educational standards dropped by over 50% in the regime that was to

\textsuperscript{128}Letter from Laura Cross to Rowland Cross from Peking, 1938.
\textsuperscript{129}OSS "\textit{Peking Chronicle Abstracts}," (March 5, 1942).
\textsuperscript{130}OSS, Document No. 77930
\textsuperscript{131}OSS, Entry 136, Box 56, Folder 667.
usher the Chinese populace into an era of modernity.\textsuperscript{132} College education was all but neglected. Instead emphasis was placed on primary school and vocational education. In 1943, a new training center was established to teach Japanese language and spirituality. People were educated mostly as teachers, government clerks and bankers. As an incentive, people who performed well were given the opportunity to go to Japan to promote “Japan-China” relationships. However, in practice, only well known artists or literati were eligible for such benefits.\textsuperscript{133} In 1944, under the auspices of improving agricultural production, the Japanese established an agricultural training school in Kwangtung. However, in practice, the school was used more to “cultivate the youth to love toiling” and to work diligently than to teach new farming methods.\textsuperscript{134} In Hong Kong, by 1944, there were no universities at all – the only schools of higher learning were technical institutes.

However, sometimes the pressures to conform to Japanese standards were not so subtle. Often, the officers would knock down people who could not understand Japanese, since it was proof of their hostility to accepting the spirituality of Japan. Economic incentives to learn Japanese among the adults included the fact that one could not get a job in the government without speaking Japanese fluently. Because of these efforts, Japan’s officials proudly proclaimed in 1944 that “Japanese is now the second most popular spoken language next to Cantonese.”

Besides education, the Japanese also used cultural means of indoctrination such as through the use of religion and cultural associations. In terms of religion, when the Japanese first seized control, they maintained that they would allow freedom of worship to continue. Nonetheless, they forced all religious organizations to register with the government as a mechanism through which they could maintain control. Despite their “tolerance” of the Occidental religions, Buddhism and Confucianism were by far the most encouraged and promoted as “the spirit of Asia.” However, that did not stop Japan from trying to introduce Shintoism into Chinese society by actually building shrines in the major cities. Besides for their Oriental origins, these traditions were promoted because

\textsuperscript{132}OSS, \textit{“Peking Chronicle Abstracts,”} (May 5, 1942).
\textsuperscript{133}OSS, \textit{Programs of Japan in China. Part II.}
\textsuperscript{134}Ibid.
they "were particularly adapted to the instilling of attitudes of docility."\textsuperscript{135} Instead of bringing China into the "modern" world, Japan, in fact, seemed to be attempting to bring it back into its stagnant past when it was ruled by Emperors and everybody believed in the principles of yin and yang and the moral rectitude of proper place.

Although "cultural societies were aimed primarily at showing the uniformity of Japanese and Chinese cultures," nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that the "Japanese interpretations of the original Chinese culture were the true and correct implementations\textsuperscript{136} according to Japanese propaganda. In 1942, in Hong Kong, the government formed the "East Asia Cultural Association" in which all people were invited to join. They emphasized that because Japanese culture was not that different from "the authentic culture of China" there was a basis for fellowship between China and Japan. There were naturally several youth groups such as the "Greater East Asia Youth Corps," the "New Youth Inspiration Movement" and the "New Youth Corp." In all these organizations, there was the stress on neumes. The students in these groups were not the same as the radical Communist students of old China. Instead they believed in the pure notions of Pan-Asianism and Japanese Spiritualism. As an added incentive for youths to join these cultural societies, the Japanese sometimes used bribery and would give members several hundreds of dollars per month, as well as a monthly allowance of coal and flour.\textsuperscript{137}

Although there existed several of these groups purporting to be in favor of Japanese rule such as the Great Peoples Society and Chinese Laborers Welfare Association, the chief propaganda agent in North China was the "Hsin Min Hui" or Society for the Renovation of the people. This organization was responsible for organizing mass victory parades, promotion of Confucianism, "New Order" campaigns, anti-Communism campaigns, Japan as leader of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere promotions, anti-Western imperialism slogans, anti-Kuomintang corruption propaganda, peace movements and finally a spy system to follow the progress of all this propaganda.\textsuperscript{138} Despite the lofty stated goals of Taniguchi Yochiko that "There has to be established a new cultural

\textsuperscript{135}OSS, China and Manchuria, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{136}Ibid, p. 33
\textsuperscript{137}OSS, Document No. 77930.
\textsuperscript{138}Hornbeck, China: A Social-Political-Economic Survey, p. 83.
order"...[which] should be rooted in religious, moral, philosophical, scientific, literary, ideological, artistic and educational foundation,"\textsuperscript{139} more often than not the leaders of this movement "were colonial parasitic types who wandered from place to place in search of lucrative appointments."\textsuperscript{140} Schools which had formerly taught the Three Peoples' Principles now taught the indoctrination of the Hsin-min hui. These schools stressed the importance of self-sacrifice, anti-Communism, coexistence with Japan, co-prosperity, nation building and, most importantly "the country which best exemplifies the Eastern spirit and yet remains the most creative is Japan!"\textsuperscript{141} Many of the graduates from these schools went on to become guards and spies for the Japanese.

Besides attempts to indoctrinate the people in the belief of the central role of Japan culturally, the economic policies of Japan showed a similar self-centeredness. Although the Japanese would argue various ideological reasons for invading China, the most fundamental reason, as with all other colonial powers, was essentially economic. Japan was suffering from overpopulation at home and needed a "frontier" as a safety valve. "The Co-Prosperity Sphere would solve Japan's overpopulation problem....In spreading out geographically, the Yamato race would draw closer psychologically."\textsuperscript{142} The experiment with the opening of Manchukou proved to be quite successful and provided a strong enough diversion to quiet dissent at home for awhile and was so popular that further encroachment on Chinese territory was inevitable under the militarist Japanese administration. The economic imperialist factors were clearly demonstrated in that when Japan seized control of a Chinese territory, all foreign goods disappeared from the markets and were replace by either Chinese or Japanese goods. However, even the Chinese manufactured goods tended to come from factories run by Japanese management such as in the case of the North China Development Company which was essentially run by the Japanese zaibatsu.\textsuperscript{143}

In addition to the appeal of China's potential "one billion" customers, China also had

\textsuperscript{139}Akira Iriye, "Toward a New Cultural Order: The Hsin-min Hui" in his The Chinese and the Japanese: Essays in Political and Cultural Interactions, p. 254
\textsuperscript{140}Ibid, p. 258
\textsuperscript{141}Ibid, p. 268.
\textsuperscript{142}Dower, p. 278.
\textsuperscript{143}OSS, China and Manchuria.
large stores of natural resources which were just waiting to be exploited. In the Japanese view, "the Chinese were smug, insincere, guileful in their diplomacy and ignominious in their military affairs."\(^{144}\) Worst of all, the "stupid Chinese" were allowing all of their precious natural resources be exploited by Westerners, thereby accelerating seiryoku tōzen, or the eastern advance of Western power. By her foolish actions, China was not only endangering her own sovereignty but all of Asia as well.\(^{145}\) Japan stepped in to amend this situation. Thus, when Japan argued for co-prosperity, she really meant that China would provide the natural resources, while Japan would exploit it and make it profitable. In reality, however, Japan's conquest pushed China economically backward.\(^{146}\) Whenever Japan entered an area, she would buy up flour and grain and other raw materials in great quantities to be shipped back to Japan in exchange for bullets, naturally causing grain shortages in an area.\(^{147}\) When they first entered a major economic strongpoint, such as Hong Kong, she would actively try to disrupt the economy so that when they finally did invade, finances would be so confused that Chinese merchants would be more than willing to have the Japanese take over and reorganize the economy for them. Other times, using the force of the Japanese Imperial troops, Japan would do a "forceful takeover" of foreign companies and banks. Almost any position of influence or wealth were given to Japanese emigres. In this manner Japan was able to literally take over China's economy and make it a Japanese subsidiary.

In order to convince the people of Japan's benevolence, Japan sought to control all aspects of Chinese life. However, all of Japan's righteous slogans and notions calling for the unity of the Asian people could not erase the humiliations nor disperse the memories of the atrocities inflicted on them by the Japanese soldiers. "The enemy came in, pledging protection to the poor oppressed people." What they gave the people was:

"burying alive, giving dope injections, burning alive, beheading whole families – little children and all, students who had marched and sung patriotic


\(^{145}\)This is located on p. 80 of the reader for 21.479.

\(^{146}\)American Information Committee, China Exploitation Company Unlimited, (Shanghai: American Information Committee), 1939 p. 11. (The Committee is hereafter referred to as AIC.)

\(^{147}\)Letters to Ida Pruitt.
songs, young women who had attended the mass education classes, teachers who taught them, girls with bobbed hair and natural feet..."\[148\]

"The Army to Exterminate Red Bandits" had come to be looked upon as the "Bandits to Exterminate the Reds." The brutality and the arrogance of the Japanese occupiers could not be hidden or whitewashed with either soothing words or witticisms of the politicians. The humiliation suffered by a proud race could not be easily forgotten or forgiven. The beheadings, arbitrary executions and streets littered with corpses could never be justified by any amount of rationalizations. In any war, death is inevitable. However, the deaths of civilian non-combatants is inexcusable. It was true to a certain extent that Chiang may have let his people die due to his self-serving policies. But, one must not forget that it was the Japanese who launched a campaign, if not of literal extermination, of virtual cultural genocide through their conscious policies described above.\[149\] No matter how illiterate the Chinese masses were, the images of mass graves and arbitrary executions could never be erased by pictures of Chinese leaders shaking hands with Japanese ambassadors.

\[148\]Private correspondence to Ida Pruitt, Shantung, 1939.

\[149\]Many of Japan's policies can be seen to fulfill many of the necessary conditions as established by the Genocide Convention of December 20, 1948 of attempted genocide. However, this is a topic that should be covered in its own right in another paper.
Chapter 3

Ding Hao!

Ironically, the United States believed Japan's propaganda of an oncoming racial war even more so than the intended targets. The United States was always very racially sensitized, as demonstrated by its long history of contemptuous treatment of non-white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States and the rest of the Western world were shocked out of their colonialist complacency. Japan's attack awakened the West to the very real threat posed by an angered and armed colonial people. "The vision of the menace from the east was always more racial than national. It derived not from concern with any one country or people in particular, but from a vague and ominous sense of the vast, faceless, nameless, yellow horde: the rising tide, indeed, of color."¹ America reacted by trying to dismember this amorphous mass with a divide and conquer strategy. One of the most important targets of this strategy was China, which, if went over to the Japanese camp, would mean an additional billion yellow faces for American sons to fight. To counteract this growing threat, America developed a strategy of propaganda to discredit her enemy. If the Japanese claimed that Japan and China were of the same racial stock, America would riposte by emphasizing the traditional ethnic rivalry between the two countries. When Japan urged Chinese citizens to rise against the Anglo-Saxons, America responded by declaring that the United States was China's true friend. Just as Chiang was the epitome of corruption in early Japanese literature,

¹Dower, p. 156.
in American propaganda Chiang was the great hope of China. Thus, the position which America tended to assume was any that would refute Japan’s claims.

Do Not Let Even Half a Jap Escape!

Because of America’s racial focus, the same blatant racist graphic imagery which pervaded American propaganda within the U.S. could be seen in China as well. “In the course of the war in Asia, racism, dehumanization, technological change and exterminationist policies became interlocked in unprecedented ways.”\(^2\) However, in the U.S. development of propaganda for distribution in China, an additional level of complexity existed since Americans had to be careful not to alienate their erstwhile allies. This meant in particular to refrain from using comments such as “slant-eyed jerks” or “yellow bastards.” However, the already existant tradition in America of dehumanizing non-white people as subhumans without necessarily mentioning skin color provided a convenient solution to the propagandists’ dilemma.

In John Dower’s *War Without Mercy*, he notes that a common graphic in American media was the depiction of the Japanese as monkeys or pestilential creatures. These same images could be seen in the propaganda produced by Morale Operations distributed in China. The tendency for Americans to use their own racial biases against the Japanese in Chinese propaganda was perhaps best shown in one leaflet titled “Origin of the Japanese Flag,” in which the Japanese were literally apes. (See Figure 3-1.) In this leaflet, the header, called the “Origin of Japan” shows a distorted picture of the Japanese goddess Ameratsu, as a turtle with a human head laying eggs. The inscription says, “Japan’s ancestor is Tien Chao goddess, look she’s laying eggs.”\(^3\) Out of these eggs hatched crazy little Japanese men waving samurai swords and a Japanese flag. They are all congregating around Mount Fuji, which in this image looks more like an anthill than a mountain. On the mountain is a Shinto shrine, under which are already several hatched eggs. Thus, already, there was the notion that the Japanese were not human, like the Americans nor

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\(^2\)Ibid, p. 95

\(^3\)I cannot be sure of the accuracy of this translation.
the Chinese. Instead, there was the American biased conception that the Japanese were a “closely disciplined and conformist people, a veritable human bee-hive or ant-hill.”

However, the racial hatred became more shrill in the rest of the leaflet, which exploited a “Chinese proverb” that the Japanese race was a result of the mating between apes and Chinese criminals expelled from China by a kind emperor. The first frame shows a prisoner being deported from China whom the Chinese did not want on their land anymore. He lands on Japan’s coast where there are no humans, only monkeys. He marries a monkey wife, and they have children and grandchildren who make up the Japanese race. As time passes, the monkey wife becomes old and is about to die. One of her children is chosen to paint a portrait in honor of the monkey wife. However, he finds her face too ugly and instead paints a picture of her red behind instead, which looks much better. They place the picture in a temple where the Japanese monkey-humans worshipped it as a national treasure. As time passes, the portrait becomes faded and artists touch it up until it becomes round and is mistaken for the rising sun. From then on, they made their flag to resemble this portrait. Now,

Every day there’s the ceremony,  
Every soldier must be present,  
Put on the hat and uniform,  
Play the bugle and drums,  
All salute the flag,  
Salute the monkey’s red behind.

Thus, by using Chinese folklore and folk rhymes the Americans desired to give validity to this foreign made propaganda. (See Figure 3-2.) Another example was the manipulation of the similarity between the ideographs for the Japanese Imperial troops and locusts. In one of the “Locust Campaign” leaflet series, locusts with Japanese stereotyped features (glasses, buckteeth, and Japanese army uniform) were shown eating grain and standing on the dead bodies of the Chinese peasants who were holding cracked and

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4Dower, p. 83.  
5Ibid, p. 85. However, it should be noted that I could not find any Chinese who has heard this proverb before.  
6This is probably based on the Chinese proverb that women who wear too much makeup, and therefore too much rouge, resemble a monkey’s red behind.  
7OSS, Hsian Project, Entry 144, Box 109.
日本旗的来历

1. 日本的诞生
2. 日本人的起源
3. 日本的国旗
4. 日本的历史

From OSS, Hsinan Project, Entry 164, Box 109.

Figure 3-1: Origin of the Japanese Flag
empty rice bowls.⁸ (See Figure 3-3.) Another one in this series showed a Chinese farmer chasing these same locusts out amidst the smoke from burning crops.⁹ (See Figure 3-6.) Although the Americans used Chinese sayings to convey U.S. ideas of the Japanese, the racial overtones seen in American propaganda was not common in typical Chinese propaganda as will be shown in the next few chapters. By using subhuman imagery of the Japanese, the United States wanted to engender a sense of difference between the civilized Chinese and the animalistic Japanese in order to counteract appeals of racial solidarity from the Japanese. Because the Japanese urged “All yellow races unite!,” Americans basically attempted to convince the Chinese not to unite with the Japanese since the two were not even of the same species.

If old ethnic differences were not enough, to widen the gulf between the Chinese and the Japanese, American propaganda reminded the Chinese of Japanese atrocities, especially ones that involved the violation of Chinese women. In one leaflet, the Americans proclaim, “Japs are jerks.....Killing and burning they give Chinese people a hard time.” There were graphic caricatures of these atrocities such as of a woman stabbed in her genitals or of a boy stabbed in the back while a Japanese soldier with a big bag of “blood money” stands nearby. A booklet distributed in Shanghai said, “It is time for the Shanghai people to get revenge for the atrocities committed by the Japs on August 13th [when Japan captured Shanghai in 1937]....[they] killed our civilians. Raped our wives and daughters!...Under the regime of the Japs and puppets, poverty and starvation and disease was rampant...”¹⁰ (See Figure 3-4.) Another one said, “They have robbed us of our food and clothes. They have raped our women and now they have kidnapped over a thousand of our boys and girls in Changsha and taken them into the North Country.”¹¹ As part of a cartoon weekly published by the Political Training Board of the Wuhan Pacification Headquarters, the caption of one cartoon claimed, “Two thousand cases of raping Chinese women by the Japs have occurred in Shanghai. The Japs used to rush into the houses to rape Chinese women during the blackout. Some times they shoot each

⁹Ibid, Project C-33.
¹⁰Ibid, Project C-34.
¹¹Ibid.
On a very high mountain a family dwell,
of ten of their rooms nine of them fell,
The old japs come out with a great deal of trouble,
    The little Jap hobbles after, his body bent double,
Their three legged dog is as thin as a rail,
    And their rat fearing cat is minus a tail.

A Jap is sick, and the second's afraid,
    The third calls for a doctor, the fourth gives him aid,
By the fifth he is borne, by the sixth he is buried,
    The seventh comes crying because he is worried.
When asked by the eighth, why it was that he cried,
    He said, "in my home everybody is bombed and died."

You strike three times on the top, you see,
    And strike three times on the bottom for me,
The top and bottom you strike very fast,
    And Japan will become a big hole at last.

Froggie, old froggie, come over to me,
    You will never go back to your home over the sea,
Yesterday the Shin-kuo temple is bombed, I saw,
    When you got home, your papa is dead now.

The rain has come and has overflowed,
    The dew and the frost are on the road,
The last of the grass has dropped its head,
    The Japs are on it, frozen dead.

Pat a cake, pat a cake, little boy fair,
    There is a Jap in the temple without any hair.
You take a tile, and I will take a brick,
    And we'll hit the Jap in the back of the neck.

The train has no locomotive,
    The cars have no oil,
The Japs are thinking of running away,
    The puppets are worrying about their consequences.

From OSS, Hsian Project, Hsian-15, Entry 144, Box 109.

Figure 3-2: Leaflets based on Chinese Rhymes
other in the fury of jealousy.”

Besides the graphic use of sexual violence, America also wanted to convey the idea that the people were materially miserable as well. In the aforementioned “Locust Campaign” series, after dehumanizing the Japanese, the Americans, pretending to be Chinese, distributed posters saying, “We plough but we have nothing to eat. We raise crops but we are hungry. The Locust (Imperial) Troops have eaten all our food. Down with the devil Imperial troops. We shall starve to death if the locust army is not annihilated.” Here, the extermination attitudes of the Americans towards the Japanese can be detected. In addition, the Americans were trying to convince the people that the Japanese were responsible for food shortages to contradict Japanese propaganda claiming that their occupation had brought prosperity. The recurring images of empty, even cracked, rice bowls and of skeletal Chinese often lying face down on the ground pervaded U.S. literature. Because much of the Chinese population were in fact starving and miserable under the Japanese, this type of propaganda was probably one of the more effective ones. The theme of food was continually emphasized throughout much of American-originated propaganda. A leaflet would ask, “Why must we starve?” The answer, naturally was “because most of the food is taken away by the Japs.” The outcome was either to starve or to make the Japanese go home. After pointing out the fact that the Chinese were miserable under their racial kin, America naturally asserted that the only people benefitting from the GEACS were the Japanese who were getting fat off the blood of the Chinese people. Thus, the only way for the Chinese to relieve their misery was to get rid of all Japanese soldiers.

A large part of the American propaganda was not aimed at merely creating animosity between the Japanese and the Chinese, but also gave instructions on how to resist and harass these proven enemies. The most common of the instructions was to hide food and other natural resources from Japanese troops. Examples of such slogans were: “The next crop must be ours. Don’t let it be stolen by the Japs.” “Hide your scrap iron and other materials that might be useful to the enemy.” “You can force the Japaneese to leave soon

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12Ibid, Project C-27.
14OSS, Hsian Project.
They killed Our Civilians!

Raped Our Wives And Daughters!

Then Shanghai became a Terrestrial Hell. Under the Regime of the Japs and puppets poverty, starvation, and disease was rampant.

From OSS, Morale Operations. Project C-34. Entry 139.

Figure 3-4: Exploiting Japanese Atrocities
To Demoralize Japanese Troops:

As the waterways are all cut off by the Allies, Japan's food problem becomes very serious. People are taught to eat wild grass by a movement led by the Japanese Militarists.

Exploiting Japanese Atrocities:

2000 cases of raping women by the Japs have occurred in Shanghai.

From OSS, Morale Operations. Project C-27. Entry 159.

Figure 3-5: Cartoon Weekly
Figure 3-6: Kill All the Locust Army and Everybody Will Live Comfortably
by hiding your food where they cannot find it.” Accompanying these slogans would often be images of people standing above a hidden cache of food and telling the soldiers that they had no food.\textsuperscript{15} (See Figure 3-7.) The Americans provided additional guidance in civil disobedience such as instructing the Chinese to tell the Japanese wrong directions, make mistakes at work, ask stupid questions to annoy the Japanese, abuse any machinery, and decrease productivity. More active guerilla activities that were encouraged included destroying railroads, placing rocks in the middle of the roads, destroying bridges and cutting phone lines. Of course, it is important not to forget the American exhortation to “not let even half a Jap escape”\textsuperscript{16} and for even children to stone Japanese soldiers to death. (See Figure 3-8.) By stoking the fires of vengeance, America hoped to create enough hatred such that the Chinese would not only not harken to the call of racial unity, but continue the war of resistance while America was embroiled in Europe.

However, some of the American propaganda must have seemed ridiculous when considering that if any peasant actually did what America instructed him to do (such as telling the Japanese soldier that there was no food) they would have automatically been killed. In the “Locust Campaign” series, one leaflet claimed that the peasants “would rather burn all the crops” than have them taken by the Japanese soldiers. (See Figure 3-6.) This instruction would most likely have annoyed the peasants, if they could have even read it, due to the lack of food at the time. Of all the propaganda material, the instruction leaflets were probably the ones least heeded by the people since they were based on inaccurate assessments of the condition of the peasants in China.\textsuperscript{17}

**Surrender Now, Defeat is Inevitable**

To further discourage any assistance the Chinese might receive from the Japanese, another common message in American distributed propaganda was the inevitability of defeat in the face of combined American forces and the new American trained Chinese

\textsuperscript{15}OSS, Morale Operations, Project AJ-15, Entry 139.
\textsuperscript{16}OSS, Hsian Project.
\textsuperscript{17}However, we should not be too hard on American propagandists since much of their intelligence data came from the Chinese Bureau of Intelligence and Statistics and other Chinese government sources.
日本鬼子把我們自己吃的米都偷走了，鬼子把米糧吃完，就不會滾蛋，一天有米他們就一天不會走。所以只要我們把米糧藏起，好滾蛋，不要叫鬼子就來叫鬼子找不到，鬼子就只好滾蛋。我們不但要打，還要打勝仗，我們有英雄的人民，我們有偉大的理想。
Figure 3-8: We will not let even half a Jap escape.
Nationalist Army. These leaflets were aimed not only to demoralize the Japanese and puppet troops who might see them, but also to give encouragement to Chinese citizens to continue resisting since the end of their troubles was at hand. In the “Japs are jerks” leaflet, the main image was that of the inevitable doom of the Japanese. (See Figure 3-9.) The Japanese man with the bag of money is shown about to be shoved off the cliff. The caption says, “Heaven will seek revenge. Now you cannot escape. Chinese army charge from the front, guerillas coming from behind. There’s even the American soldiers using bombers, ships and machine guns from all directions. You Japs have nowhere to run. We will dig graves to put all Japs in.”\(^{18}\) The manner in which some leaflets were done, with the gruesome imagery of dead Japanese, most likely reflected the exterminationist attitudes of American propagandists. In face of their doom, a common motif was that of Japanese soldiers committing *hara kiri* or shooting themselves in the head. Ridiculing Japanese mythology concerning their divine origins, a leaflet captioned “The Sun does not have an unworthy grandchild like you” shows the Sun yelling at the Emperor of Japan while American missiles destroy Mount Fuji and chase Japanese soldiers away from China. (See Figure 3-10.) Around the base of Mount Fuji is once again a Shinto shrine, but instead of being surrounded by eggs hatching crazy Japanese soldiers, it is surrounded by skulls. In the water rests a Japanese soldier on his back, being eaten by the fishes, with a sword through his midriff.\(^{19}\) The puppet government was not spared from attack by the Americans either. Depicting the inevitable downfall of the Nanking puppet regime, one poster showed a horde of “sneaky mouse-like puppets,” rats with human faces, led by Wang Ching-wei\(^{20}\) fleeing from a burning Nanking.\(^{21}\) (See Figure 3-11.)

In conjunction with demoralizing enemy troops, America also issued material trying to convince the enemy to surrender immediately. Propaganda released in China, but aimed at the Japanese soldiers and written in Japanese, shows Japanese citizens watching Tokyo going up in flames, Japanese militarists living a life of debauchery while troops were forced

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\(^{18}\)OSS, Entry 144, Box 109.

\(^{19}\)OSS, Hsian Project

\(^{20}\)Oddly, by the time this poster was made, July 1945, Wang Ching-wei had already died.

\(^{21}\)OSS, *Nanking Rats Flee*, SACO/MO, Project No. VF/C/12 (July 1945).
Figure 3-9: Japs are Jerks
Figure 3-10: The Sun Does Not Have an Unworthy Grandchild Like You
图 窮 煉 金

子主了失，子鼠孫鼠，子耗陵金
死一免不，逃難限大，子富了燒

From OSS, SACO/ MO, Project No. VF/ C/12 (July 1945).

Figure 3-11: Nanking Rats Flee

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to eat rats, and Japanese citizens fleeing from American missiles.\textsuperscript{22} (See Figure 3-12.) The purpose of this propaganda was to demoralize the Japanese troops within China with concerns over the fates of their families and to create anger at their officers such that they will mutiny and stop fighting. The Americans also used less direct methods such as "black propaganda" to demoralize enemy troops. "Black propaganda" typically consists of official looking documents meant to subvert enemy morale. For instance, one poster was put up near the Japanese Army dispensary by the United States aimed at inducing malingering among the Japanese troops. It claimed to provide answers to common questions asked by Japanese soldiers such as how to prevent hands from shaking and not being able to shoot straight from fighting too long, the spread of dysentery and resulting deaths among Japanese troops, and the possibility of permanent deafness from exploding shells. Included in this array of debilitating diseases from fighting too long was naturally the potential loss of "sexual powers." The official answer according to the poster was based on German studies of soldiers who were asked to have intercourse twenty-four hours after hard fighting, "87\% have failed. After three days quiet, 75\% regained their potency. The 25\% practiced twice each month, for six months, and as a result is 3\% remaining. The other 22\% have entirely lost their sexual ability."\textsuperscript{23} To make surrendering more appealing to the Japanese troops, the Americans dropped leaflets showing Chinese treating enemy troops kindly in order to dispel Japanese propaganda that prisoners were tortured and executed.\textsuperscript{24}

However, the majority of American propaganda was aimed at puppet troops, urging them to desert or kill their Japanese Commanding Officers and receive plenty of food as a reward, or otherwise face ten thousand years of shame as traitors to their own people. In "To Beg Life from the Dead," a leaflet shows a puppet soldier being armed by a fat Japanese officer. He takes the gun and shoots the officer instead. In the fifth frame of this cartoon, the ex-puppet soldier is shown crossing over into free china with the head of his officer. The very last frame shows the soldier laughing and surrounded by

\textsuperscript{22}OSS, Entry 139, Box 168, Folder 72248.
\textsuperscript{23}OSS, Morale Operations, Entry 139, Box 168, Folder 2250, (Chihkiang) Project J-24.
\textsuperscript{24}Paul M. Anthony Linebarger Collection, Box 22.
This leaflet was issued showing Japan's forces collapsing. Notice the recurring image of the prostrate Chinese man juxtaposed with a rice bowl, either empty or out of reach.

1. Enemy officer commits suicide because he misses home and hates the war.
2. The puppet government is printing money against an empty bank.
3. Japan is going to fall apart. Rumors are everywhere.
4. Most grains are taken by the Japanese. Poor people are starving to death.

*From OSS, FARO Project, Entry 144, Box 109.*

*Figure 3-13: Inevitability of Japanese Defeat*
Figure 3-14: The puppet’s tomb stink for ten thousand years.
Figure 3-15: To Beg Life from the Dead
food and wine. (See Figure 3-15.) The previous scenario was a common one which
the United States repeated many times in leaflets dropped in Occupied China. Not
only would puppets be shunned in this life, pamphlets were distributed describing the
ten thousand years of shame to come in the after life as well, since no one would want
to worship an ancestor who betrayed his own people. (See Figure 3-14.) In terms of
“black propaganda,” the United States would attempt to convince the puppet troops
that the Japanese were going to use the Chinese troops as a suicide squadron. They
distributed documents claiming “win fame as the designer of the official insignia of the
heroic Chinese suicide regiments now being formed....some will be human bombs, some
human mine detonators. All will die gloriously.” Finally, because the United States
wanted to create a sense of abandonment, they would tell the puppet troops that the
Japanese had deserted them and that already many other puppets had surrendered or
killed their officers and were enjoying the good life. “What are you waiting for? The
Americans have come” and victory would be theirs.

Welcome the Americans

Besides creating animosity to her enemy, the United States wanted to ensure a future
China amenable more to the Americans than any dangerous notions of racial solidarity.
However, the Americans were at a disadvantage when compared to the Japanese at
creating a bond between the two cultures. They could not just take over the schools
and institute an all-pro-American curriculum since America’s position in the war was as
friend and supporter of the Chinese. They had to dispel the old but still prevalent opinion
that Westerners were imperialists only interested in exploiting China’s natural resources.
The United States, therefore, put all her influence and prestige behind the “legitimate”
Chungking regime and preserving the pre-Sino-Japanese Conflict status quo.

For this task, America pursued direct methods of propaganda in the form of dropping
leaflets and putting up posters emphasizing fraternity between the United States and

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25 OSS, Hsian Project
26 OSS, Morale Operations (Chihkiang).
China. There would be pictures of Roosevelt with the caption “The Resources of America are also the resources of China.” (See Figure 3-16.) Sounding very much like the Japanese Co-prosperity propaganda, America would show pictures of Roosevelt and Chiang with slogans such as “The people of China and America should unite together to protect and lead to eliminate the violence and destruction done by Japan” (see Figure 3-17.) and “China and America together to defeat violent Japan and establish peace.” (See Figure 3-18.) Immediately, one senses that this propaganda was issued for the express purposes of countering Japanese claims. It is not Japan whom China should work with if she wants peace, it is the United States. Japan is violent, America is peaceful. America is the true friend of China. “Thumbs up and say: ‘Ding Hao,’ when the Americans come, they are helping us [the Chinese] to fight the Japs.”\(^{27}\) (See Figure 3-19.) An image America tended to associate herself with was that of provider of food as opposed to the Japanese who took away the Chinese people’s sustenance. In that aspect of propaganda America was very successful, since from the Grisholm reports,\(^{28}\) America was well liked since the people associated America with more food whereas the British were still highly disliked since they still represented to the Chinese white imperialists. According to reports from OWI, even the “Ding Hao!” campaign seemed to have been effective since “the lone American uniform set off a chorus of Ding Hows – that thumbs up salute of goodwill.”\(^{29}\)

However, in order to counteract any distrust of the United States that might be engendered by Japanese propaganda, a program of improving its public image was undertaken. Part of this involved having photo exhibitions by OWI in Free China showing pictures of American war effort in Europe and in the Pacific. From OSS and newspaper reports, these photo exhibits were immensely popular among the Chinese. There would be pictures of the immense military capability of America showing gunboats, airplanes and other military equipment. However, at the same time, they would try to convey America’s earthiness by describing how a person from a small midwestern town became Vice-President of the United States. There would be slogans such as “Democracy, Cohesion, Victory” and “Four Freedoms” and portraits of the “Big Four” leaders consisting

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\(^{27}\)OSS, Hsian Project.

\(^{28}\)Interviews with repatriated Americans consisting mostly of missionaries and educators.

\(^{29}\)Sutton Christian, “Chinese cry ‘Kan-pei’ to OWI.” *OWI Special Issue.*
Figure 3.16: The resources of America are also the resources of China.
Figure 3-17: The people of China and America should unite together.

of Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and finally Chiang. OWI showed movies and newsreels in Free China giving Chinese citizens a taste of American life and technology through documentaries such as "Town" and "Biography of a Jeep"\(^{30}\) as well as films showing American enthusiasm in waging the war in the Pacific to counteract Japanese propaganda that America was lazy and flabby and was not truly interested in helping the Chinese. To improve China's self-esteem, America also showed films such as "We Fly for China" which depicted Chinese pilots training in the United States. OWI films receive the most enthusiastic reception in the rural areas rather than in the cities. In the cities, the Hollywood idealized version of America was preferred over documentaries of jeeps and small towns. Besides, as will be shown in the next chapter, most city dwellers tended to try to ignore the fact that the war even existed. Although OWI did attempt to use the radio to "bring truth, news, encouragement, entertainment and hope to the people of the occupied countries, our fighting forces and people of the world,"\(^{31}\) generally they found this tactic to be not effective, especially in the countryside, since people did not have handsets. Instead, they used rumors and gong men who went through the street banging a gong to tell news.

But, although America had a favorable image among the people of China, her allies did not. This did not only pertain to Great Britain as mentioned earlier, but more im-

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\(^{30}\)Ibid.

\(^{31}\)John Raymond Hutchinson. Correspondences from Gus Paton of O.S.S. to author from OWI. Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives. Box Nos. 1, 2.
Figure 3-18: China and America together to defeat violent Japan and establish peace.
portantly was true for the Chungking regime. According to American intelligence, most propaganda promoting pro-American, anti-Japanese sentiments was effective, except that of Chungking being a modern democratic government. Most of the people were rather apathetic to the Central government according to those reports. Even generating enthusiasm to fight the war in Free China did not succeed. The general attitude being, "Why use good nails when a rusty one will do?" not many intelligentsia wanted to enlist in the army. America tried to counteract this defeatism by showing films of American youths joining the U.S. army. However, this was rather unsuccessful. Just as Americans tried to demoralize the enemy in Occupied territory, they tried to boost morale in Free China, specifically enthusiasm for Chiang. They would issue handbills declaring, the "Chinese Army is a new army, well equipped with rifles and plenty of ammunition. They have plenty of food. They are healthy and strong" to eliminate traditional stereotypes of rampaging, looting soldiers. Of course most of these statements were ineffective since, as will be shown in the next chapter, they were outrageous distortions of the truth. Most of the Nationalist troops were underfed, diseased and conscripted against their will. Reports from the field told the State Department that America "need not support the Kuomintang for international political reasons. The day when it was expedient to inflate Chiang's status to one of the "Big Four" is past, because with the obvious certainty of defeat Japan's Pan-Asia propaganda loses its effectiveness." Despite such reports, as early as October 1944, because of the strong Chiang lobby, America continued its fateful policy which encouraged Chiang to continue his demagogic ways and eliminated the possibility of a "Third Party" or coalition government. However, the fault of "who lost China" does not rest on American shoulders, but ultimately lies on the Chinese government of the time. Japan realized the social inequities within China at the time and tried to use this fact to gain support. However, instead of solving the problems,

32Hutchinson Collection, Box 2, Folder 1
33OSS, Miscellaneous Handbills, Entry 139, Box 168, Wash-MO-GP-79, (Changsha).
34Frank Dorn Collection, Memo from John Service to Stilwell. "The Need for Greater Realism in our Relations with Chinak Kai-shek," Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Box 1, Folder 46, (October 10, 1944).
35This was due mostly to the charms of Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the strong Christian support they received since the Chiangs were Christians.
she merely replaced one set of dogmatic leaders with another, or coopted the ones already in power. America, on the other hand, tried to ignore the problems and hoped that by saying Chiang was a wonderful leader enough times the people would believe it. For these reasons, and the fact that they were foreigners, the United States and Japan could not fully win the support of the common people. They were more concerned with international politics and each other than with the existing social realities within China.
Chapter 4

Long Live Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek!

After the establishment of the United Front in 1936, the future of China never seemed brighter. For the first time since the Northern Expedition, the people’s two main parties, the Communists and the Kuomintang, were once more working together to preserve the vestiges of Chinese sovereignty. Patriotic anti-Japanese songs were no longer banned and could be heard sung openly on the streets and even officially broadcast on the radios. Leaders of “National Salvation Leagues” and other anti-Japanese movements were finally released, the charges of Communist insurrection dropped. Even the shots at Marco Polo Bridge did not interrupt this seeming idyll of Chinese solidarity. In the beginning years of the war, the Central Government granted regional generals more independence, took steps towards decentralization by creating the “People’s Political Council,” relaxed the persecution of liberals, encouraged social and political unity, appealed to patriotism and even went so far as to introduce new taxes to temporarily divert the financial burden from the peasants.¹ Slogans urging the need for solidarity in order to effect “national reconstruction” literally wallpapered the streets of China’s cities. “The war of resistance” elevated Chiang’s status and popularity to heights he never enjoyed before and would not enjoy again. Whole industries followed Chiang into the wild interior of Chungking,

men literally wheeling factory equipment on wheelbarrows out of the cities lest they fall into Japanese hands. He urged the people to make sacrifices and they responded with all the patriotic fervor in their hearts.

Down with the Traitor Wang Ching-wei!

In these seemingly romantic days of the "Resistance," Chiang distributed propaganda traditionally issued by those trying to wage a war against foreign invaders. He appealed to the people's patriotism, their pride in their own homeland and their instinct to protect it. Common patriotic slogans heard were "Down with the Japanese Imperialism! The war of resistance must be victorious! Fight for the glory of our nation!" Even the movie theaters were filled with patriotic films made under the auspices of the United Front such as "Fight to the Last," and "Songs of the Anti-Japanese War.""² Chiang told the people to expel the Japanese invaders and, more importantly, not to help them. "Down with those newspapermen and news reporters willing to become traitors! Puppet soldiers have no souls! Do Not Become Slaves! Execute the Chinese traitors! Traitors are public enemies and therefore may be killed by anyone!"³ were scribbled on walls or written on fliers thrown from the roof gardens. People were urged not to become traitors to their own people by obeying the enemy or joining traitor organizations or helping the enemy in any fashion. One cartoon, as late as 1941, showed a soldier accepting a poison apple labelled "Peace" from a snake wearing the trademark Japanese soldier cap. A film released the same year, titled "Baptism of Fire," was about a Chinese woman who was really a Japanese spy in a factory in Chungking. The woman is eventually betrayed by the Japanese, who kills her loved one and kills her too in the end. In brief, the point of the film was "do not become a puppet, they will betray you and kill your family." Most of this anti-puppet propaganda was distributed in order to counteract the Japanese peace movement that was being waged extensively at this time under the nominal leadership of Wang Ching-wei.

²Leyda, p. 117.
Naturally, however, the brunt of his attack was aimed at Wang Ching-wei. Wang, in Chiang's eyes, not only committed the evil of joining the Japanese camp, but committed the unforgettable crime of setting up a government in direct opposition to Chiang's own. He even had the audacity to adopt the Kuomintang's insignia for the new government in Nanking and call it by its old name. The enmity between Wang and Chiang can be traced to their party disagreements and political power struggles even before the war. As a result, Wang was usually a target of Chiang's attacks. One of the more common slogans was "Down with the traitor Wang Ching-wei and his subordinates!" or just simply "Down with Wang!" Traitor burning ceremonies in which effigies of Wang and his wife were the major victims were common sights. Wang would also be the target of several Chungking sponsored newspaper cartoons. Caricatures always displayed Wang as rather short and with a rather stupid facial expression as opposed to Chiang who was always shown tall with a resolute expression.
Obey the Leader and his Party

The denigration of Wang was but a minor part in the greater propaganda campaign of glorifying Chiang. In fact, the greatest efforts of the Kuomintang propaganda machine was used to exalt Chiang Kai-shek. The simplest manner to identify propaganda material distributed by the Nationalist government was the ubiquitous final slogan, "Long live Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek!" Chiang's visage appeared on so many portraits that he came "to symbolize the indomitable resistance of the Chinese people."⁴ According to Graham Peck's eye-witness account of China in this period, Two Kinds of Time, "all over wartime China the principal rooms of schools, theaters, hotels, restaurants and government offices were dominated by posters, photographs or plaques of Generalissimo Chiang's shaven pate and placidly determined, slightly self-satisfied smile."⁵ Chiang was always "pictured in dainty military regalia...[as he] gazed into the distance with a blandly pleased air of decision."⁶ By examining posters from 1937 to 1945, Peck's description seems valid, especially when one considers that on almost every poster, even if the subject was not about Chiang, Chiang's visage appeared somewhere. The Americans, as noted before, also helped greatly in this campaign by placing Chiang's face on almost all their official propaganda promoting cooperation between the United States and China. Chiang's mug could be seen in almost all the papers in Free China as well, except perhaps the Communist publications. One only has to browse through any weekly Chungking journal to find that the pages were invariably filled with photographs of Chiang. Another common image besides Chiang was Madame Chiang Kai-shek. For example, whereas American sponsored photo exhibits showed war battles, the Central Government would sponsor exhibits showing Madame Chiang's visit to America.⁷ In government sponsored newspapers, alongside stories of the "greatness of our leader" Chiang would be stories of the generosity and charity of the "beautiful Madame Chiang Kai-shek." Although

⁵Peck, p. 99.
⁶Ibid, p. 97
this emphasis on personality may seem rather farcical, nonetheless, this tactic proved effective, as shown by the fact that “few [peasants] knew anything of the Kuomintang except Chiang Kai-shek’s name.”  

Part of the reason for the emphasis on personalities rather than substantial news was that the KMT propaganda machinery tended not to dwell on “the war of resistance” since it could “cause the people to become restless.” In fact, a common slogan heard would be “Don't Talk Politics.” Violators of this rule, typically non-Kuomintang party members, were harshly punished by the Kuomintang secret police. Although newspapers would print the short official press releases declaring victories, the majority of the paper centered on foreign issues or the charity work of Madame Chiang. People knew more about the European war than the Japanese invasion next door. Because of the emphasis on foreign affairs went to the extreme point of neglecting to mention any local news, the people started losing faith in the official news and lent more credence to rumors and gossip.

No matter how harmless the Chiang cult of personality campaign may seem at first, it was merely the surface of a deeper propaganda goal of the Kuomintang – namely, that of absolute subservience to Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang party. There were more slogans of the nature of “Obey the Leader and Reconstruct the Country” or “Obey the Leader and Observe the Three People's Principles” than “Down with Japanese Imperialism.” The emphasis was that only by “following the leader” could the war of resistance be successfully waged. In the schools, even in the very midst of the conflict in 1940, teachers would instill in their pupils the sense that “in wartime a unified nation and one leader were essential.” Here was also the call for unity which would come to characterize most Chinese propaganda. But, in Chiang's interpretation, unity meant one party rule which in turn meant only one leader, the head of that party, could exist. Otherwise, under a multiparty system, the national unity would be disturbed. Therefore,

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8 Peck, p. 315.
9 Ibid, p. 257.
10 Ibid, p. 141.
11 Ibid, p. 257.
Chiang would argue, only with one leader, being himself, could the country truly be unified, and it was only through the unified and unselfish leadership of the Kuomintang that China was able to wage this war of resistance at all.

As part of Chiang’s attempt to validate his dictatorship, besides promotion of himself, the government also actively praised the virtues of the Kuomintang party, the organization through which he had acquired and later legitimized his rule. Even in 1938, teachers in Shanghai were instructed to promote the “educational employees’ oath-making movement.” In this movement, teachers were urged to take an oath of loyalty to “deal with education absolutely in accordance with the aims and purposes of education as promulgated by the National Government.” They pledged not to join the puppet regime, and to submit themselves to “the most severe punishment from the people and the Government” if they violated this oath.14 The education promoted by the National Government consisted of indoctrinating students in Kuomintang rituals beginning from primary school age.15 Patriotic student youth groups were riddled with Kuomintang spies whose purpose was to neutralize any popular movements that might arise. This attempt at indoctrination through education was not unprecedented, since in the years before the United Front the Kuomintang attempted to indoctrinate youths with anti-Communist sentiments through the school system. This indoctrination process was merely extended to include attacking the puppet regime. Even after the creation of the United Front, the Kuomintang would still force people accused of being a Communists into thought correction camps where KMT rituals were once more instilled in them.

Besides education, the Kuomintang also celebrated holidays with propagandistic intent – for example, by making Sun Yat Sen’s assumption of power in 1921 a national holiday in 1939. They, like the Japanese, also forced people to participate in parades demonstrating their “support” for the Kuomintang. According to one observer, with “the apathy of people who had not the slightest idea what they were doing, the celebrants would shamble along, raising their fists and shouting the slogans only when they were told to.”16 In such a manner, the people were directed to sing “For He’s a Jolly

14SMP, Document No. D8957.
15Peck, p. 240.
16Ibid, p. 143.
Good Fellow” to Dr. H. H. Kung, the brother-in-law of Mme. Chiang. By such public
developments of popular support, the Kuomintang hoped the people would be convinced of
the strength of the party and cease their clamor for a coalition government, which was
increasing daily by late 1944 when censorship by the Kuomintang was not as brutal due
to the presence of and reliance on the Americans who might notice and disapprove. These
developments seemed to have been most believed by American officials, who were convinced
that Chiang truly represented and received the unmitigated support of the people.

America’s faith in Chiang led them to the ill-fated policy of promoting him in their
literature in an attempt to show that America was Chiang’s friend, who represented the
people. Therefore, the logic went, Americans were the Chinese people’s friends. The
fact that Chiang was a member of the “Big Four” was continually exploited to show that
the KMT government had the support of this powerful and wealthy nation. When the
Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, it “had been greeted as the herald of salvation....China
had no further duty but to hold out and emerge on the winning side. ‘Pearl Harbor day
in America...was Armistice Day out here.”17 Because the party believed they would gain
“face” by associating with the Americans, parties held in honor of the Americans were
well publicized in party controlled newspapers.18 With the weight of America supporting
them, the Kuomintang would often point to their own leadership role in the current war.
They claimed that if “responsibilities were handed over to all parties and groups, the
Central Government would certainly be swayed by every word, which would certainly
result in military defeat and chaos in the country.”19 Thus, although it has been argued
by distinguished scholars such as Chalmers A. Johnson that the Sino-Japanese War firmly
established the Communists in power, one can argue that it also delayed the downfall of
the Kuomintang as well.

By 1940, morale in Free China was already flagging. “The air raids were of constant
value to the Kuomintang, as a reminder of the national war, channeling popular resentment
away from other problems.”20 As a result, any economic hardships the people were

17Tuchman, p. 233.
18Peck, p. 136.
20Peck, p. 56.
suffering were blamed on the “Japanese imperialists” rather than internal corruption. Any harsh political measures were just safety measures required for time of crises. By bringing up the specter of the pillaging Japanese Imperial troops, the Nationalists sought to quiet dissension and to garner unquestioning support.

**Let us fight to the last drop of coolie blood!**

As part of the “war of resistance” rhetoric, a pervasive theme in Chinese propaganda was that of “sacrifice”. Generally, however, the greatest sacrifices, as always, were demanded from the peasants. The slogan, “Rich men give money, poor men give labor” indicates the nature of the sacrifices expected from each class. Chiang’s “trading space for time” strategy reflected the basic passive attitude he took towards the Japanese. In 1938, while retreating from Japanese forces he destroyed the Yellow River dikes, causing flooding which destroyed eleven cities, four thousand villages, devastated three provinces and left two million homeless in order to prevent the Japanese from advancing and taking the cities of Hsuchow and Hankow.\(^{21}\) This event, condemned by the Japanese, was lauded by the Nationalist newspapers as an example of the “heroic bravery” of Chiang’s troops.\(^{22}\) Besides, flooding was a small sacrifice for saving the lives of the wealthy in the cities and allowing them three months to move to Chungking before the Japanese would finally capture these cities.

From the safety of Chungking, Chiang continually urged the people in Occupied China to resist and “to make every sacrifice in order to overthrow the brutal enemy and to recover our lost territory.” A new movement was launched to “regard selfishness as a humiliation and sacrifice as an honor.”\(^{23}\) Slogans were heard everywhere that the Chinese would continue to fight the Japanese to the very last man. “If the invasion does not stop, we will not stop fighting.” “The more we fight the stronger we are. The more the enemy fights the weaker they are.” Lest the people relax their vigilance, even while promising

\(^{21}\) Tuchman, p. 187.
\(^{22}\) This was after Chiang had unsuccessfully tried to accuse the Japanese of blowing up the dikes. Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China*. p. 221.
victory, some posters still urged the need to continue sacrificing with such slogans as “The closer we are to victory, the more we need to struggle.”24 (See Figure 4-2.)

In addition to slogans, films were also sponsored aimed at creating a sense of resistance among the peasants. The 1938 film “Protect our Land” was aimed specifically at the peasants with its slow and simplistic dialog and lack of non-essential human emotions such as love or romance scenes.25 Another film made that same year, “Hot Blood and Faithful Soul,” was also aimed at the peasants but treated everyone condescendingly and had annoying phrases such as “What does Japanese mean?”26 However, this is not to say that they would not have been popular or even believed if shown to the peasants. But, the truth of the matter was that none of these films were actually ever seen by peasants and at best by very few.27

Part of the resistance to the Japanese in Occupied territories was of the economic nature. Regarding the money issued by the Hwa Hsing Bank in 1939 in Shanghai, the government responded by issuing propaganda telling people not to accept “God of Death” notes. If a person accepted one of these notes, he or she would be in fact digging a grave for himself or herself as well as killing his or her Chinese brother fighting at the front.28 Slogans written on the back of some of these notes declared, “The reason why the Japanese issue these reserve notes is to catch our legal tender and valuable goods. Those who really love their motherland will never let reserve notes circulate in our market.”29 Slogans declaring the worthlessness of Wang’s money were also a recurrent theme, sometimes taking on a humorous nature such as “If reserve notes could be accepted as money, ghost money and toilet paper could also be used as paper money.”30

In addition to not using Japanese currency, the people were urged not to buy enemy made goods or to sell provisions to the Japanese. There would be posters put up

24 National Archives Still Picture Collection
25 Leyda, p. 117.
26 Ibid, p. 118.
27 After 1938, there was a marked decrease in films aimed at the peasants, partly due to the abandonment of Chungking by the most talented of the film makers to Yenan. Those who did not flee to Communist territory tended to go into opera due to the misappropriation of funds by the Government.
28 SMP, Miscellaneous Document, (June 6, 1939).
29 OSS files of actual banknotes along with translations.
30 Ibid.
on shops declaring, "My store will never sell anything made in Japan." Contradictingly, however, this injunction did not prevent the government from taxing all smuggled commodities, even luxury goods, or from making no sincere efforts to stop their influx. Instead, they would issue propaganda of the nature that "this commerce was wholesome because everything that came in was of military or industrial value." Because government officials usually received "squeeze" or part of the profits from such illegal activities, it was in their best interests not to stop them.

Along with everything else that was related to the party, the KMT tended to glorify the Nationalist army's achievements while obscuring or just plain censoring any defeats. Plays and early movies in the nationalist territory would always show the victorious Chinese army pushing back the Japanese. A magazine, Pei Yen or White Bayonet, took a role similar to America's Leatherneck by publishing writings from soldiers at the front to gain sympathy at home. Unlike America, which did not have to drive invaders off its soil, China had the added task of convincing the peasantry to "Help the Chinese Soldiers drive out the Japanese," since soldiers have been the traditional enemy, along with famine, of the Chinese farmer. To accomplish this, the KMT used the common strategy of bombarding peasants with posters and slogans. A typical poster would show a peasant carrying a wounded soldier to safety, while the text said that ordinary people should perform rescue work while soldiers killed the enemies. To promote the reputation of the Chinese army, the Central Government would often report false stories of heroic resistance, when in actuality areas often went to the Japanese unopposed. Because the Chinese citizen often saw these forfeitures, they did not give any credence to these claims of victory. However, despite intelligence reports which showed contrariwise, American statesmen did.

Similar to the Locust Campaign of the United States, Chiang too asked unrealistic sacrifices and demands from the people. Perhaps one of the more ludicrous propaganda

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31 Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Poster Collection, CC 243.
32 Peck, p. 20.
34 Peck, p. 344
35 Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Poster Collection, CC 220.
campaigns which the Nationalists embarked on was that of the New Life Movement. Not only was it another form of the "sacrifice" propaganda, it also tended to chide the people continually for not sacrificing enough. Oddly, whenever the Chinese suffered a loss, instead of posters of defiant people declaring "We'll be back," Chiang tended to blame the people for not fighting valiantly enough despite the fact he initiated the "trading space for time" strategy. Like the Chinese father who has been too patient with his taxing children, Chiang would make speeches that the losses were not the fault of the government but of the people. A physical and spiritual reconstruction of the nation was needed.

The New Life Movement was not a creation of wartime necessity. It had been established in 1934 for the express purposes of saving China by giving the people "a new soul."\(^{36}\) It was Chiang's solution to Communism. If the people could be taught to mend their ways, China's road to modernity and prosperity would be cleared. However, even from its onset, the movement tended to concentrate more on the trappings of modernity than the substance. Instead of urging and enacting laws which would try to eliminate illiteracy, there were numerous slogans which were more of the nature of a nagging parent towards an unfilial child. The people were told to "Be clean. Do not spit in the streets. Button your suit properly. Stand up straight. Do not eat noisily....Do not drink, dance or gamble....Shun high living and dissipation."\(^{37}\) Similar to Japan's attack on Western materialism, the common targets of the New Life Movement's attacks would be those who adopted Western ways such as smoking or perming their hair. The crime of the New Life Movement was not so much in its intent to reform the people, but in that it totally ignored the realities of the Chinese peasant's life. The proselytization telling people to button their suits properly while ignoring the fact that most people had only rags to wear was a case in point. A more morbid, but perhaps more telling example, was the verbal assaults on "people who threw orange peels in the canals, which ordinarily were aswarm with rats and from which, in the big cities, the corpses of the latest victims of starvation were fished out every morning."\(^{38}\) The *Ta Kung Pao* remarked of these

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\(^{36}\) Bianco, p. 127.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.
“reforms” by drily noting “it is true...that peasants sometimes lead disorderly and even impure lives; but they really cannot be any more frugal or live any more simply than they do already.”39

After the invasion by Japan, a reemergence of the New Life Movement occurred in order to provide the Kuomintang the convenient scapegoat of the Chinese citizen to blame for the Japanese invasion. In Shanghai, in 1938, handbills circulated preached that “males must banish all frivolous thoughts from their minds....Females must undo the waves of their hair, wash rouge and powder off their faces, take off their high heeled shoes and become Chinese citizens of that Great Nation of ours....The present hardships and tribulations we are now undergoing are the outcome of our past failures.”40 The targets of these pamphlets seemed to be especially Chinese youths. Many of the leaflets calling for “abandoning selfishness” were distributed by youth groups such as “Youth’s Self-Encouraging Group,” which, for example, claimed responsibility for “The Character Training and the War” and “The Female Vanities” leaflets. The cities were not the only ones subjected to this barrage of scoldings. “Uplifting wall slogans were posted in villages where nobody could read and peasants who could not afford soap were lectured on the duty to wash.”41 When the government did bother to call mass meetings, there were lectures on foot binding, queues, public health, morals and the necessity to hate not only the Japanese but the bandits as well, an indirect reference to the Communists.42

The entrance of Americans into the war did not improve the situation, but merely exacerbated it. In attempts to “save face” in front of the Americans and prove that they were worthy allies, the KMT increased the emphasis on superficial appearances in lieu of substantial reforms. “A city could be made theoretically clean and modern with New Life hygiene posters instead of a sewage system. An army would be strengthened with mud-and-timber forts patterned after pictures of the Maginot Line, rather than well-trained, well-treated soldiers.”43 In 1942, in honor of U.S. Presidential nominee, William Wilkie,

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39Ibids.
40SMP, Document No. D8158, (February 8, 1938).
41Peck, p. 96.
43Ibid, p. 188.
whom Chiang preferred to Roosevelt, huge banquets were given, receptions, reviews, banners and welcoming wall slogans appeared overnight in place of the homeless, who were relocated until Wilkie left. Chiang appeared in the traditional Chinese scholar’s gown. Military parades were ordered in the streets of Chungking to show their military fitness. All of these efforts were successful in convincing Wilkie that China was now indeed a modern and unified nation.44 There was also the “Model Refugee Village” which was built from Red Cross funds donated by Ambassador Johnson to the Kuomintang who immediately proceeded to evict the homeless out of Chungking and build grandiose houses in their stead.46

“It was no coincidence that more stringent New Life rules against permanent waves or dancing parties commonly followed some disgracefully resisted Japanese drive, or that an artificially enlarged famine in the provinces should coincide with a ban on ice cream in the capital.”46 By denial and emphasizing morality and spirituality, the government hoped to deflect the people’s attention from their current misery into a self-criticism. If the people were starving and food prices were too high, it was not the government’s fault, but “because the people were disobedient and greedy, buying and eating too much.”47 During the famine year of 1944, Chungking blamed the sky-rocketing food prices on the moral failings of the people. “The people are indulged in luxury and sensuality and the prices have reached a record height....As our leader [Chiang] has told us: ‘Chinese morale, as compared with three years ago, degenerates many times. We must say that if prices continue their upward trend, the morale would sink further to a record level. And in this way, China would be a failure, even if she wins the war against Japan’ ” reported the Kuomintang official newspaper, The Central Daily News, in February of that year. As a plan to combat inflation, one official urged the people to chew thirty times since this way they get more nourishment and eat less.48 When it came to military affairs, again the government dwelled mostly on appearances. Soldiers who barely had enough to eat

44 Tuchman, p. 332.
45 Peck, p. 125.
46 Ibid, p. 96.
48 Ibid, p. 111.
and suffered from “a thousand ailments”49 were scolded for not buttoning their uniforms properly. The Minister of War General Ho Ying-chin would inspect the kitchens and bathrooms to make sure they were clean as part of the New Life Movement instead of inspecting the army’s health and fortitude.

Whether Chiang was truly of the same ignorance that inspired Marie Curie to utter, “Let them eat cake” or merely a heartless dictator, the end result was the same. These restrictive and ridiculous regulations of the New Life Movement caused the people to naturally lose faith in a government which declared in its regulations “No public banquets unless absolutely necessary”50 when people were eating the flesh off the corpses in Honan just to survive.51 The government was probably not intentionally being sadistic with these rules. Chiang, accustomed to warlord politics and its reliance on feudal relationships, probably honestly assumed that the people, as loyal subjects, would believe what they were told. Ironically, one of the underlying themes behind this seeming pointless movement, besides improving China’s appearance for the sake of “face” and the foreigners, was, similar to Japan’s goal, an attempt to reintroduce Confucianism with its proselytization of proper place between ruler and subject. Thus, Chiang seemed to promote many of the same xenophobic reactionary policies Japan advocated but under the auspices of Chinese Nationalism instead of the benevolence of Japanese superiority. However, the greatest commonality between the Japanese and the Chiang regime was the emphasis on thwarting Communism. So great was this bond, that Chiang’s propaganda, which at first had some semblance of nationalistic and patriotic themes which urged the expulsion of the foreign invaders, changed its tone as early as 1941 to emphasizing the evils and misconduct of the Communists. Although the New Life Movement persisted throughout the war years, anti-Japanese sentiments were no longer as vociferous as before 1940. Instead, the most venomous of Chiang’s attacks were reserved for the Communists.

49White, p. 135
50Peck, p. 277
51White, p. 271
Exterminate the Communists!

Besides the struggle occurring between the Chinese and the Japanese invaders, there was also the internal strife between the KMT and its opposition parties, the major one being the Communists. At the beginning of the war, shortly after the creation of the United Front, there was a temporary truce between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For a short while, censorship was eased and the country worked together against her common enemy, Japan. The Communists were no longer outlawed. Their newspaper even was allowed to circulate in Chungking. Even non-Communists benefitted from the relaxation of state control. However, this romance was short-lived and ill-fated from its conception. As early as December 1939, the KMT launched its first undisguised attack on the Communist Eighth Route Army. One month later, while engaging the Japanese, the Communists were attacked from the rear by the KMT.\(^{52}\) However, this account of the attack was based on hearsay from the Communists. In addition, the KMT troops which attacked the Communists could have been puppet troops as well. However, the New Fourth Army Incident of January 1941, investigated and confirmed by many, was the first confirmed attack on Communist troops by Nationalist troops. From the Communists’ point of view, the incident was caused in December 1940 when the Central Government had ordered the New Fourth Army to evacuate across the Yangtze at points which would leave them especially susceptible to Japanese attacks. It was felt by the CCP that in order to ease negotiations with Japan, Chiang was offering the Communist troops as sacrifice. By January 7, 1941, the majority of the troops had indeed left the valley, but there were a few stragglers left, consisting mostly of civilian types such as medical personnel. These people were massacred by the Kuomintang. This marked the beginning of the reassumption of the Communist extermination policy of pre-1936.

The Kuomintang’s stance on the New Fourth Army Incident was that the guerillas were guilty of “illegal occupation of the national territory”\(^{53}\) and the Incident was the result of the New Fourth Army mutinying and trying to change its route of crossing. The

\(^{52}\)Smedley, The Great Road, p. 375.

\(^{53}\)Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 417.
army had to be “liquidated for insubordination.” Regardless of the truth, the end result was that any semblance of a United Front had ended. Chiang set aside his best troops to create a blockade against the Communist armies. “The government was soon forced into a new campaign of repression and ‘thought control.’” Anything which could be perceived as slightly Communist was banned. People in schools caught reading ‘liberal’ books were beaten. Censorship of printed media was reassumed. Liberal officials or intellectuals who refused to work with the government were accused of being Communists and oppressed. Almost every evil was blamed on the Communists. According to one story, when Chiang’s “nephew...fell off his horse, breaking his collarbone,” rumors spread that it was a Communist plot, “possibly involving a Communist trained horse.”

Almost all liberal or cooperative organizations that were not under the direct control of the Kuomintang were labeled Communist. In 1939, Koji Wataru created the Japanese Anti-Imperialist League or Hansen Domei. They distributed anti-war leaflets in hand grenades, and went so far as to even give presents to the Japanese Imperial troops to encourage pacifist sentiments. However, because the leaflets tended to concentrate too much on the war’s effect on the poor, and due to the crack down of liberalism, the Hansen Domei was soon discontinued. There were no official Central Government organ dealing with propaganda to the enemy after this.

Even foreign sponsored organizations were not spared from the anti-Communist crusade. They attacked Rewi Alley, the founder of the Chinese Industrial cooperatives, as a “new imperialist....By promoting reforms which had not been started by the Kuomintang, they reasoned, he showed as much arrogance as the commercial adventures of the nineteenth century.” These cooperatives could not flourish since Chiang persecuted anyone in the organization as Communists. They accused the CIC of singing Communist songs for hours and that “some of the children...were Communists too.” For these reasons, the KMT persecuted these cooperatives and caused their failures.

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54 Peck, p. 106.
55 Peck, p. 178.
56 Ibid, p. 152.
57 Letters to Ida Pruitt.
58 Peck, p. 173.
By the end of the war, once an American victory was virtually assured Chiang Kai-Shek’s aversion to the CCP became more overt. He made more overtures of peace with the Japanese government than he did towards the CCP. For example, he would reserve his best troops to crush the CCP while sending undernourished, maltreated conscripts to battle the Japanese. His propaganda reflected whom he considered his true enemy. The popular misconception of this period was that it was only after the United Front collapsed in 1941 that anti-Communist indoctrination once more became prevalent. However, as early as 1940, Chiang claimed that “there are no Communists left in China,” since they had all been renamed “social reformers.”

In 1940, the “North West Youth Labor Camp” was established to “correct” the thoughts of youths by emphasizing such New Life themes as the “virtues of the Kuomintang and the San Min Chu I and the alleged baseness of the Chinese Communist Party and of their tenets.” The anti-Communist slant can be seen from the fact that most of the students selected for “correction” were either Communists or had some Communist viewpoints. Throughout the war, remaining the same as before the war, the schools remained a center for indoctrinating KMT ideology.

Although the Kuomintang used education for indoctrination, this method alone would not be enough to rouse anti-Communist sentiments since it only targeted the educated elite. To rouse anti-Communist sentiment among the peasants, the Kuomintang would resort to attacks on the Red Army. The KMT would spread propaganda accusing the Eighth Route Army of “roaming around the country, stirring up the people and disturbing the social order.”

Instead of calling for a United Front, the Kuomintang spent much of their time accusing the Communists of not living up to the agreement and “merely using the war to extend their influence with the aim of establishing their power after the war.” They would argue that the Communists “represent imperialism, and they only fight the Japanese because the Government pays them clothes and money.” Typical of most political “mud-slinging”, the Kuomintang would spread rumors of sexual “perversion” in

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59Tuchman, p. 188.
60OSS, Kuomintang-Communist Relations, [by George Atcheson], Document No. 48406, (August 19, 1943)
61Smedley, The Great Road p. 376.
63Smedley, Battle Hymn of the Republic, p. 427.
the army. Such accusations consisted of free love, kidnapping of boys and girls for sexual purposes, and the keeping of hsiao kwei or the military go-fors for homosexual purposes. After the New Fourth Army Incident, the Kuomintang accused the commander of leaving the Communist Party to marry a rich woman, or that he resigned from cowardice.\textsuperscript{64} Naturally, the KMT also appealed to Christians by declaring that the Communists were heathens who burned, robbed and slaughtered peasants and opposed Christianity.\textsuperscript{65}

The most frequent anti-Communist propaganda concentrated on disputing Communist accomplishments. Even the liberal Ta Kung Pao was not immune to the government's machinations. In 1941, after the Loyang defeat, the most "liberal" newspaper in Chungking blamed the Communists for the defeat and having a secret truce with the Japanese.\textsuperscript{66} The accusations of cowardice and treachery continued despite the knowledge that "XXX Army", where XXX meant censored materials, had cut the Japanese railways.\textsuperscript{67} Throughout most of the war, the official Kuomintang line would be that the Communists did no fighting at all but was merely interested in establishing bases for the inevitable post-war civil war. These accusations became more and more frequent when American victory became assured. In 1944, the Men Li News Agency blamed the Communist for selling and growing opium, and, in the language of the New Life Movement, accused the CCP leaders "to have been indulged in luxury and sensuality, but the people are not permitted to utter any word of resentment and those who did are given severe punishment."\textsuperscript{68} In interviews with American press, the Kuomintang tended to accuse the CCP of having lost the Hopei area to the Japanese. In an interview with Gunther Stein, on May 16, 1944, General Ho Ying-chin claimed:

"China has NO millions of guerillas. All this talk is just fairy tales... The only time the Red Army fought was in 1937. They did NO fighting afterwards....they took [their weapons] from the farmers who have weapons for defense against bandits. They also bribed and disarmed 10,000 of Yen Hsi-shan's troops three or four years ago....What they [CCP] always do is cut

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid, p. 259.
\textsuperscript{65}Ibid, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{66}Peck, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{67}Ibid, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{68}OSS translation of newsbrief, 1944.
the tail of the Government troops when they are engaged by the enemy."\(^{69}\)

Another spokesman declared:

"the innocent foreigners had been carried away by eternal differences of geography and weather and population. that these inexperienced observers had come to the political conclusions because of such non-political facts as the clear desert climate of Yenan which made the poorest look rosy and the fogs of Chungking which made the Generalissimo pale."\(^{70}\)

**But not the Japs!**

Quite fascinating about all the attacks on the failings of the Communist troops, was that it revealed more about the Kuomintang than it did about the Communists. Most of the accusations lobbed at the Communists were, by consensus, some of the worst crimes of the KMT. Probably the worst of these crimes was the increasing trend for Chiang to collaborate with the Japanese. Although he outwardly continued to attack the enemy, it should be noted that the most vociferous of these attacks were aimed at puppet Chinese officials, who posed an immediate political threat, rather than the Japanese. Chiang continued secret negotiations with the Japanese throughout the war. As early as 1938, Chiang was highly "tolerant of efforts to find a way to reach Japan" conducted by Kao Tsung-wu with Chou Fo-hai, the spokesman for the "peace-movement".\(^{71}\) By 1944, both the Americans and the Communists believed that Chiang had signed a non-aggression pact with the Japanese. One observer had declared, in a memo in October 1944, "our support of the Kuomintang will not stop its normally traitorous relations with the enemy and will only encourage it to continue sowing the seeds of future civil war by plotting with the present puppets for eventual consolidation of the occupied territories against

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\(^{69}\)OSS Report of Kuomintang and Japanese Views of Effectiveness of Communist Forces. However, this general neglected to mention Yen Hsi-shan happened to have been one of the most corrupt generals who abused the troops and the people so much that the people would help capture KMT troops for the Japanese in that year.

\(^{70}\)Peck, p. 158.

However, when one examines the true weather conditions, the North was actually a desert which was worse for health conditions.

\(^{71}\)Marsh, p. 322
the Communist led forces of popular resistance.” According to O.S.S. documents, there was a widespread belief among U.S. officials that Chiang had reached an unofficial agreement with Japan which stipulated that if Japan eased up the attack on Free China, he would, in return, go easy on Japan in the peace conferences. An indication of these agreements on Japan’s part was that in December 1944, the press was ordered in the Occupied territories to no longer be too anti-Chiang. In addition, when Japan launched the Ichigō offensive, its last major assault in 1945 to eliminate the American airbases, it stopped at Kunming before taking Chungking, which it could have done just as easily as the Imperial troops seizure of the airfields. Nominally, Japan declared that this was a part of Japan’s policy of non-aggression towards China. In terms of Chiang’s part of the agreement, right after armistice, Chiang also used much of the old puppet troops and Japanese troops against the Communist forces in the Occupied areas. In addition, some of the worst war criminals in China who would surrender only to the Nationalist troops, such as Okamura, the father of the “three-all” policy, were released by Chiang in the end, lending credence to the conspiracy theory.

Besides political machinations, Chiang did not refrain from physical attacks on the Communists. According to Communist sources, the unofficial policy of KMT troops in areas that were liberated by the Communists were to replace the militia that had been established by the CCP, with “Peace Preservation Corps” and to revoke any other reforms that had been instituted while the Communists were in power. The unofficial policy during wartime China was for generals to instruct the troops to attack Communists first since they were “an obstacle in the war of resistance.” The obedience of the troops in this matter can be seen not only in the New Fourth Army Incident in 1941, but in the many other numerous assaults and skirmishes between KMT and CCP troops which were typically blamed on the “mutinous Reds.” In addition, it was felt by the Communists that an ulterior motive for these attacks were hopes on Chiang’s parts that the Communists would fight back, whereby he could justify his blockade on them in the Northwest where

72 Frank Dorn Collection, Memo from John Service to Stilwell, “The Need for Greater Realism in our Relations with Chinak Kai-shek.”
73 Smedley, The Great Road, p. 373.
74 Ibid, p. 374.
75 Frank Dorn Collection, Report from John Davis, “My Visit to Yenan, December 15 - 17.” Hoover
about 200,000 of his best and most well-equipped troops were stationed.

Avoid the Army and KMT Officials

The Nationalist Government in Chungking countered the establishment of the new Republic of China by calling its leaders traitors. At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the Chiang regime appealed to the people through a sense of nationalism and resistance. Propaganda exhorted sacrifice and resistance from the people. As the war dragged on, the nature of Chiang's propaganda changed, and resumed a more noticeable anti-Communist stance. However, whatever the nature of Chiang's propaganda, the majority of it was not believed due to the fact that there was little or no truth in it. As was shown before, the propaganda claiming that the Communists were using the invasion for improving its own lot might have been slightly true, but it was doubly so for the Kuomintang. The people could not help but notice the free trade condoned and supported by the government between free and occupied China. If anyone, "the Kuomintang used the Japanese invasion to increase its nation wide monopolies of economic, political, and military power."76 Chiang's "first consideration is to maintain his own control over the best troops and material so that his position cannot be threatened....He was always thinking of what he could save for later on."77

While blaming the people for selfishness and causing inflation, the government would be one of the worst hoarders. Due to inflation and the subsequent complete devaluation of Nationalist currency, the tax collectors began to collect their dues in grain. The government would set barbed wire over these food stores claiming that this was to keep the food from the Japanese. In reality, these stores were used as a precaution against food riots. Understandably, when the people heard the empty rhetoric of the New Life Movement, chances were they did not believe it. In American intelligence reports, the majority of the people, if they did not simply hate the Central Government, were at best apathetic to it. It was a common saying among beggars to wish people who gave them

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Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Box 2, Folder 5, (December 27, 1944).

76 Peck, p. 38
77 Tuchman, p. 197.
money that he "may become an official," a position of power and wealth, as a way of wishing good luck to somebody.

Another glaring falsehood was the propaganda that told peasants that the soldiers were the "friends to the people" protecting them from the foreign devils. However, they would see the KMT retreat without giving up a fight, killing peasants for their clothes, stealing their food and valuables and raping their woman. In fact, the crimes attributed to Communist troops were crimes which have been substantiated by eye-witness accounts as having been committed many times by the Kuomintang troops. In 1944, two thousand troops fleeing the Japanese stopped to loot a town and because of their avarice did not maintain a proper lookout and were massacred by the Japanese to the peasant's satisfaction. From a "vengeful desire to see the Chinese military in Honan overthrown," many Chinese peasants were heard saying that they would be glad if the Japanese come.\textsuperscript{78} When they did come, not only were the peasants happy, but they helped the Japanese capture the KMT troops whom the people clearly did not "love" but regarded more like the plague.

Even in 1938, when "China has done her part in holding off Japan" for only one year, one cynical general's attitude was that "yes, losses had been heavy...but that was really a good thing....The Chinese soldiers are all bandits, robbers, thieves and rascals. So we send them to the front and they get killed off and in that way we are eliminating our bad elements....University students and graduates are all cowards. They would run."\textsuperscript{79} In addition, the students themselves did not feel that it was fitting for people in their position to join the army since they believed "why use good nails when a rusty one will do"\textsuperscript{80} although the government made a superficial attempt at convincing young people join with slogans such as "Young and brave people go to the army."\textsuperscript{81} (See Figure 4-3.) However, the well-educated's aversion to the army was understandable, given the terrible conditions within it. The KMT's claim of the army's excellent fighting condition

\textsuperscript{78}OSS, \textit{Attitude of the People toward the Chinese Military in Honan Province}, Document No. 114799, (January 4, 1945).
\textsuperscript{79}Tuchman, p. 183.
\textsuperscript{80}Hutchinson Collection, Box 2, Folder 1
\textsuperscript{81}National Archives Still Picture Collection.
Figure 4-3: Young and brave people go to the Army
would be laughable if it were not for the misery of the conscripts. One popular rumor was that once the army generals allowed a train load of conscripts to burn to death by Japanese bombardment rather than risk them running away. The majority of the KMT troops were underfed, mistreated and abused by incompetent and corrupt leaders. Often, these leaders would be the same students who did not want to join the army in the first place, but who did want to enjoy the monetary benefits from being an officer. One general reported matter-of-factly that he received 30% of every government contract.82 One American officer’s complaint about the Chinese generals was that they were either incompetent or greedy or both. Given the poor attitudes of the leaders and the infamous conditions of the army, it was only natural that when parents were called on to fulfill the conscript quota, they would often send their mentally retarded or physically handicapped sons who added to the poor reputation of the army.

The problem with the Kuomintang propaganda was clearly due to the lack of any substance in their material. As P.M.A. Linebarger noted in his guides to psychological warfare, the most effective propaganda had some truth in it. Unfortunately for the Kuomintang, there could be none since the situation in China was decaying daily. In order for public morale to have truly improved, the army become truly “the friend of the people,” reforms in deed not only in spirit had to be effected. But, according to American military reformers, “it [the Central Government] will not permit these reforms because its war against Japan is secondary to its desire to maintain its own undemocratic power....And the Kuomintang’s attitude prevents the utilization of other forces, such as the Communist or Provincial troops, who should be more useful than the Kuomintang’s demoralized armies.”83 The same was said of the failure of Japanese propaganda to be believed. The common thread was that they both realized China needed some sort of change, and that the change was needed in the people’s attitudes. However, they did not attempt to change the essence of a stagnating and corrupt society. They blamed all of China’s problems on the evils of Western ideology poisoning the people’s minds. America, also, did not attempt to alter the status quo of pre-World War II, but remained

83 Frank Dorn, Comments about Commanders in Chinese Army, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace Archives, Box No. 1, Folder No. 45, (October 10, 1944), p. 1.
contented in its delusions that Chiang was the people's choice. The only party who catered to the people's needs and saw the necessity for not just reforms in personnel, but a revolution that would shake off hundreds of years of mind-numbing and humiliating conditions, would be the one whose propaganda achieved the greatest success and thus won the faith and confidence of the people.

\footnote{One only has to look at the case of General Stillwell's recall and replacement by Wedemeyer who knew very little about China's politics.}
Chapter 5

The Eighth Route Army is the People’s Army!

One trend common to Japanese, American and Nationalist propaganda was that the majority of the material was aimed at city dwellers or at least the literati. In their propaganda, the Japanese assumed that the peasants could read how Japanese spiritualism would save them from the decadence of Western materialism. The American leaflets also presupposed that the peasants would be able to read these dropped leaflets. All the posters the Kuomintang hung up exalting the virtues of Chiang also assumed the people could read that their Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek should live long. Although there might be one person in every village who could read this written propaganda, and although these factions also used other means of indoctrination and winning popular support, in general the peasants tended to be ignored until their grain was needed for food. When it came time to feed the soldiers, however, the peasants often wished for the continued oversight, since the government’s new found concern only meant hunger and taxation for them.

The Chinese Communist Party, however, did not forget the peasants, who made up 95% of the population, and tended to concentrate their recruiting efforts among the peasant communities. It was during the war years 1937-1945 that the once nearly exterminated Communist Party firmly established a basis of support among the agrarian population and developed organizational and military tactics which would lead to the
Communists’ victory in 1949. By actually going among the peasants and treating them with respect and dignity, they were able to win the wholehearted support of the majority of the farmers. In addition, by portraying themselves as the true nationalist and anti-Japanese force in China, the Communists were also able to gain support among those with non-Communist but strongly nationalist sympathies.

**Down with Japanese Imperialism**

One of the immediate purposes of the Communists propaganda, as was true of Nationalist propaganda and any other nation at war, was the attempt to raise people’s morale. One method in direct opposition to New Life Movement’s puritanism was through singing patriotic songs and showing patriotic plays which mostly dealt with nationalistic themes and the ability of the people to overcome adversity through ideals such as self-sacrifice. Sometimes they would try to keep up morale with slogans such as “Japan is near her end” to show that their sacrifice would lead to victory in the end. Of course, as in most countries engaged in war, the Communist’s propaganda also urged “Hope all [follow] with obedience” and “Don’t get tired of the repeating announcements.”

The underlying theme behind these appeals to nationalism and attempts to raise morale was to prevent people from cooperating with the Japanese. The defiant declaration, “Defend Wuhan to the Death” tried to convince the people not to give up and that even death was better than coexisting with the Japanese. More obvious slogans were “Not to be influenced by money! Not surrender through intimidation! Not to be utilized by the enemies and puppets!” People who joined the Rural Pacification Movements of the Japanese were termed *han chien* (traitors to China) if civilians or *wei-chin* (bogus soldiers) if soldiers. In a Communist pamphlet issued in Kiangsu in 1941, the Communists argued that the true goal of the Rural Pacification Movement was “to turn the people of the Kiangnan area into nationless slaves.” In addition, they issued a list of “Ten Do’s and Don’t’s” in which the “do” list included acting as spies, resisting the

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1OSS, Communist Posters, Entry 139, Box 140, Folder 1894, (1945).
2Johnson, p. 66.
Japanese and boycotting Japanese goods while the “don’t” list included joining peace movements, the greatest enemy to a country at war. People who did, the most notorious of them being Wang Ching-wei, were called “running dog of the Fascists”\textsuperscript{3} and other unpleasant descriptive.

So far, Communist propaganda does not seem to be significantly different from the Nationalists’ material. In terms of winning popular support within a war torn country, there were in fact many similarities between Nationalist and Communist propaganda. The most obvious commonality were their anti-Japanese sentiments. Just like the Kuomintang and the Americans, the Communists were not above ethnic slurs and would use such slogans as “Down with the Japanese Dwarf Devils.” In fact, as the Communists frequently pointed out during the Civil War, they were the first to declare war against Japan immediately after the Manchurian Incident. It was only after the Sian Incident, under threats of physical harm, that Chiang was finally persuaded to follow an anti-Japanese policy. The Sian Incident was probably the turning point for the Chinese Communists. Chiang, poised on edge of releasing a new Communist extermination campaign which he claimed would eliminate the Communists once and for all, found his plans foiled by the nationalistic spirit the Communists aroused in Northern China with its large Manchurian refugee populations. On December 11, 1936, the eve of the incident, the walls of Sian were plastered with anti-Japanese posters, the newspapers filled with stories promoting National Salvation and the Communist’s renowned mobile theater were presenting anti-Japanese plays and troops to the people.\textsuperscript{4} As noted earlier, Chiang had no alternative but to recognize and honor his people’s overwhelming demand for a United Front against the Japanese.

Once the Communists became a legal party, they established their own paper, the “New China Daily,” which emphasized the necessity of national resistance. In the early war years, the majority of the Communists’ propaganda was aimed to rouse anti-Japanese and nationalist sentiment. They would distribute leaflets with slogans written on them

\textsuperscript{3}Smedley, The Battle Hymn of China, p. 150

\textsuperscript{4}Of course, contrary to Agnes Smedley’s eyewitness account recorded in Battle Hymn of China, p. 139, the Nanking newspapers reported that Chiang was murdered and rampant pillaging and raping was going on in Sian. In retrospect, one sees how the newspapers were rarely a source for facts in that era.
such as "Arise, all who do not want to become Japanese slaves!" "Boycott all Japanese goods," "Drive the Japanese from China," and "Arm yourselves, fight until the Japanese are all driven from China!" Some slogans were naturally tinged with Communist sentiments such as "Down with Japanese Imperialism" and the long-winded "Destroy Foreign Aggression and Promote the Emancipation of the Chinese People." They would also issue bank notes in denominations of $1, $5 or $10 with "Resistance Against the Japanese to the End" written on the backs. Sometimes they would even turn the Japanese propaganda against the distributors. One case was when the Japanese posted cartoons mocking guerilla warfare, in which the guerilla forces were perched in a tree which the Imperial Troops were chopping down. However, the guerillas vandalized the cartoon by writing, "We shall not fall down this time. We will descend sometime, not falling down but jumping down, to kill you Japs!" However, the most frequent point used by both Nationalists and Communists to show the utter hopelessness of a Japanese victory was China's vastness. Even before war was officially declared, Mao correctly predicted:

"China is a very big nation, and it cannot be said to be conquered until every inch of it is under the sword of the invader....We would still have a great force to fight against Japan's warlords, who would also have to fight a heavy and constant rear-guard action throughout the entire war."

In order to promote the people's ability to resist, the CCP used various entertainment resources. Because many of the best writers and directors were Leftists, the Communists had a ready source of propaganda through the entertainment medium. Before the end of the United Front, Leftist filmmakers made many anti-Japanese films which centered on the brutality of war. One film made in 1938, "Blood Splashes on Paoshan," was a reenactment of the slaughter of five hundred soldiers killed by the Japanese in Shanghai. In 1939, the Chengtu Northwest Film Company produced "Wind and Snow [struggle?] in Taichan Mountains" where the Japanese were shown kidnapping peasants and forcing them to work in coal mines. However, by 1940 the United Front was slowly

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6OSS, China (Occupied) Conditions in Lower Yangtze Valley, Document No. 81926, (June 2, 1944).
7TCCCA, Struggle for peace and democracy in the Northeast, p. 67
8Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 109
9Leyda, p. 125
10The [struggle?] was the translation given by Leyda.
disintegrating and such united efforts frowned upon.

One means of entertainment which the Communists did manage to have access to throughout the war years was the power of music. The Communists allowed and actually encouraged singing among not only the people in its area but among their soldiers as well. They would adopt traditional folk songs, such as the “Anti-Japanese Seasonal Song” that was originally about the sorrows suffered by the peasants in the building of the Great Wall, by changing the lyrics to vehement defiance against the Japanese foe. Other songs were army marching songs such as “Fight Back to Your Native Home,” the “Vanguard Marching Song,” and the “Red Army Marching Song” which were originally composed by the Communists to raise the morale of the troops. One of the Communist’s most popular propaganda vehicles was the Anti-Japanese Red Theater headed by Ting Ling. Three of their plays, “Lay Down Your Whip,” “Fight Back to Your Native Home” (where the song originated from) and “The Whistle in the Forest” dealt directly with the situation in Manchuria. Another, “Mother,” dealt with the Marco Polo incident and “Cheng Chia Chuang Battle”\(^\text{11}\) was a reenactment of a glorious Red Army victory. To urge the peasants to rise, they also showed a pantomime of a peasant uprising against the Japanese called “The Last Smile.”\(^\text{12}\)

However, the majority of these plays did not only rely on the spirit of nationalism. More often the plays were about what happened to the Chinese once the Japanese took over. One play, called “Invasion,” was about what happened after the Japanese came and all the “non-resisting” (an indirect reference to Kuomintang) soldiers had fled. Actors pretending to be Japanese soldiers were shown eating like pigs, using Chinese men as chairs while raping their wives. If this was not bad enough, they would force people to buy drugs and those who refused to do so were harangued with: “You don’t buy morphine, you don’t obey Manchukuo health rules,\(^\text{13}\) you don’t love your ‘divine’ emperor P’u yi...You are no good. You are an anti-Japanese bandit!” The play showed Japanese

\(^{11}\)English translation in Peterkin Collection at Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace.

\(^{12}\)Smedley, China Fights Back, p. 7.

\(^{13}\)Propaganda against vaccinations had spread rumors that Japanese administered inoculations were actually poisons or narcotics. Both the Communists and the KMT worked against vaccinations given by the Japanese since inoculations was used by the Japanese as a means of maintaining control over the local populace by having some means of registration.
harassing Chinese citizens, killing them and stealing their food. By the end of the play, unable to bear the humiliations anymore, the women and children swore to "fight to the death" the Jih-pen-kuei or Japanese devils. This play so affected the audiences that reactions of disgust and hatred for the Japanese were uttered during the show and "Death to the Japanese Bandits" shouted by the end of the play.\textsuperscript{14}

The force of these plays, however, did not really rest in the appeals to nationalism as much as remind the people of the horror of their lives under the Japanese. These plays were "not just political propaganda to them, nor slapstick melodrama, but the poignant truth itself."\textsuperscript{15} To see an act of brutality and violence creates a much more devastating effect on a viewer than to hear a dry narration of events. The impact was even more so on communities which had little or no source of entertainment or information other than rumors and gossip. The fact that the audience actually experienced many of the events depicted created an intensity of emotions that overcame poor scenery and costumes. Through the safe distance of spectators, they would once more relive their horrible past. As much as nationalism and racism may have been factors in the decision for many of the Chinese to fight rather than to cooperate, none were perhaps as strong as the memories of the atrocities which the Japanese committed. One of the best statements reflecting this sentiment came from Chu Teh, the head of the Red Army:

"The day of revenge and emancipation is nearing! We shall never forget your... years of anguish, your blood and tears and the insults you have suffered. Mobilize! Unite! Prepare to welcome our attack!"\textsuperscript{16}

The Communists, however, went beyond valiant slogans vowing defiance to the bitter end. Instead, they would often try to teach the peasants how to successfully resist the Japanese without endangering their own lives. Instead of the "Kill Japanese, then die" policy of the Kuomintang as epitomized by the "Dare to Die" corps of General Yen Hsishan, the Communists practiced "Kill Japanese and live" strategy.\textsuperscript{17} In their propaganda, the Communists showed peasants, who, although not directly opposing the Japanese in

\textsuperscript{14}Snow, \textit{Red Star Over China}, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16}Smedley, \textit{The Great Road}, p. 393.
\textsuperscript{17}Smedley, \textit{The Battle Hymn of China}, p. 261.
open warfare, were opposing the Japanese through subtler means. In “Good Beating,” a Red Theater play, the story describes how a village protects a wounded Eighth Route Army man in occupied territory. Spies were sent disguised as Communists to capture the man. The people knew that they were spies, and proceeded to tie them up and beat them. When the Japanese authorities came, the people pretended to be stupid and declared that the spies were Eighth Route Army soldiers (whom they claimed to be) and that was why they beat them. The authorities could do nothing but say “Good Beating! Good Beating!” and in the end the hidden soldier would come out and everybody would celebrate with a great feast. “Good Beating” was a humorous play to relieve the tedium of farming. Nonetheless, it provided the people a flicker of hope of resistance without death. In the “Grain,” a play telling people not to trust the Japanese promises, there was also the theme that people could gather grain for themselves in spite of Japanese oppression. The Communists formed Women’s National Salvation Associations where women trained to become the “eyes and ears” of the Red Army, combat defeatism, watch for spies like those in the “Good Beating” and generally “guard the rear of our Army.”\textsuperscript{18} Although the people were urged to fight to the very last man, the Communists, unlike the Nationalists, provided ways in which utter annihilation of the peasants was not a necessary prerequisite for freedom.

**Down with Japanese Militarists!**

Generally acknowledged to the Communists, whether to their detriment or benefit, has been their politicization of all facets of their operations, be it civilian or military. Every Red Army soldier was given political indoctrination the moment he joined the army. Not only did this tactic strengthen the army by giving them a reason for why they were risking their lives, but it also provided the soldiers with a powerful weapon which allowed them to wage political as well as military offensives. It was this emphasis on indoctrination, so necessary to the Red Army’s survival during the pre-United Front days, that distinguished the Red Army’s warfare from all of the other factions. The

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid, p. 72.
Red Army’s battles were not ones only of bullets, since if that was the case they would long ago have been annihilated, but of will power as well. The Japanese soldier was not spared from the onslaught of political slogans and indoctrination which the Communists brought with them into every battle.

Although the Nationalists did have a short run of propaganda meant to demoralize Japanese soldiers under the guidance of Koji Wataru, it was quickly repressed due to its emphasis on class issues. By 1941, it was no longer functioning. America also distributed a barrage of leaflets at the Japanese. However, the majority of these tried to demoralize Japanese troops through apocalyptic visions of impending death and destruction, not only to themselves, but also to their homes and families. The CCP, on the other hand, could not really afford to threaten to destroy the homes of the much better equipped Japanese without risking the ire of the troops who would most likely retaliate destroying the Chinese homes. Instead, Communist propaganda attempted to promote a sense of fraternity between the Japanese soldier and the Chinese people. “Through softening their hostile feelings toward us [the CCP], we build a bridge for our propaganda to reach them.”

However, instead of using the bonds of common traditions such as Confucianism, which the Japanese did in trying to win the Chinese people’s support, the Communists stressed in their material their common bonds of oppression brought on by the capitalist world.

At first, the Communists drew on techniques which had worked very well when fighting against the Kuomintang during the civil war years. For example, at the Pinghsingkuan Battle in 1937, the Communist troops had surrounded the Japanese units and shouted in Chinese, “Give up your arms! Surrender to us! We will not hurt you.” When the Chinese troops went to pick up the guns and lead away prisoners, they were shot at and nearly wiped out by the Japanese. In the end, conforming to American stereotypes of the fanatical Japanese soldier, no one was captured and no one surrendered. However, unlike the Americans who tended to discount this behavior as a peculiarity of the Japanese race, the Communists decided to revise their strategy and entered into what they categorized

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20 The majority of the information in this section comes from the OSS Yenan Report unless otherwise noted.
as the first stage of psychological warfare against the Japanese. In this stage, Lin Piao ordered that at least three sentences must be learned in Japanese: “Wounded soldiers will receive medical aid. Those who surrender will not be killed! Give up your arms!”

At first this seemed like a relatively good idea. Unfortunately in practice it did not turn out as first expected since often, after the Red Army soldiers shouted these memorized sentences, the Japanese soldiers would often reply. However, no one could understand let alone reply. At other times, the Chinese soldier, who was often a peasant who just learned Japanese and therefore did not speak it clearly or properly, and even perhaps saying things he should not, would inadvertently get the Japanese troops irate and cause them to start shooting instead of surrendering to him. Not forgetting the ever-popular use of leaflets, the Communists also distributed ones aimed at the Japanese. Often they were the same ones they had used against the Kuomintang, but given a Japanese twist. Common slogans on them were: “Carry out the revolution in Japan! Overthrow the Emperor! Down with the militarists! Kill your officers! The war is unjust – it’s a war by and for the militarists and big bourgeoisie. Come over to us.” As can be imagined, such heretical leaflets which attacked their sacred Emperor, as reported by Japanese prisoners of war, often angered them and created suspicion and hatred of the Red Army rather than feelings of amity.

By 1938, Mao passed a resolution declaring that Chinese soldiers should sympathize with the Japanese soldiers since they too were “the sons and brothers of the toiling masses. Deceived and coerced by the Japanese warlords and financial oligarchs, they have been forced to fight against us.”

Thereafter, the CCP started producing leaflets and pamphlets proselytizing to the Japanese that they were also victims of oppression and that they should rebel against the fascist militarists in their country. To the CCP’s surprise, the Imperial troops did not mutiny. In fact, much of the CCP’s propaganda went unheeded. What did work, though, was the CCP’s policy of caring for the wounded and treating prisoners of war kindly. To prevent any surrenders, Japanese propaganda had told all soldiers that the Communists tortured and executed all POW’s with beheadings.

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21OSS, *Yenan Report*, p. 3.
22OSS, *Psychological Warfare Carried on by the Eighteenth Group Army*, Entry 136, Box 55, Folder 669, (January 19, 1945).
Contrary to this propaganda, once the wounded prisoners healed, the CCP would often let them stay or go according to the prisoners' own desire. At first, the soldiers were justifiably reluctant to return prisoners since it would just mean that they would just have to fight them again. However, the Communist party leadership correctly predicted that the POW’s “very presence will incontrovertibly prove – 18th Group Army\textsuperscript{23} soldiers do not mistreat prisoners”\textsuperscript{24} when they return to their division. In addition, when the soldiers did return, they would often be executed by their commanding officer causing unrest among enemy troops.

By ordering this proper “battle discipline,” the Communists were able to capture some prisoners. Although in theory they were allowed to go, in actuality they often were compelled to stay by the fact that the peasants would have killed them outside of the protection of the CCP. Even if they managed to return alive to their division, the Japanese prisoners often faced certain death at the hands of their officers. Thus, many stayed, helping the CCP by sending letters to their former division, sometimes urging others to desert. They also helped by teaching Japanese and prepare propaganda material for distribution among their old troops. In 1939, when the Awakening League was established as a branch of the Chungking organization founded by Koji Wataru, the second stage of psychological warfare was begun. The Awakening League consisted of POW's who were sent to “Japanese Workers and Peasants Training School” to work as propagandists. By 1942, after the dissolution of the Chungking center, the Anti-War League Conference was held in which 228 demands suggested by the prisoners of war was placed in a pamphlet titled “Demands of the Soldier” which included demands for more food, end of corporal punishment, and universal male suffrage. These new pamphlets, which left the Emperor alone, but emphasized actual material needs of Japanese soldiers were very successful on the average with the Japanese troops.

Psychological warfare against the Japanese entered its third stage of development when all propaganda were handled and signed by the Japanese POW's as individuals or as part of the league. By having Japanese soldiers rather than the Red Army sign

\textsuperscript{23}The Central Government officially renamed version the Eighth Route Army the Eighteenth Group Army because the former name had gained too much prestige and popularity with the people.

\textsuperscript{24}OSS, \textit{Psychological Warfare Carried on by the Eighteenth Group Army}. 
the leaflets, as was done before, a greater credibility was given to these leaflets. These leaflets could be categorized into four groups – demand leaflets (i.e. demanding easier long marches with more rests), agitation leaflets (i.e. story of the harsh treatment of Japanese common soldier), greetings (i.e. New Years and Summer friendly greetings), and anti-war leaflets (i.e. desire to go home and live with mother). These material not only encouraged discontent but conveyed an impression of the good treatment the POW’s would receive from the Communists if they surrendered. Besides pamphlets and leaflets, the league also sent personal letters to Japanese soldiers in blockhouses, held conversations and sang to the more isolated garrisons. They also sent care packages containing gifts, food and, of course, leaflets, some of which were politicized while others were just short stories. The success of this tactic could be inferred from the strict punishment often given to those caught with these leaflets, the increased number of surrenders and prisoners captured, less “cornered-rat” resistance by Japanese troops and friendly letters from enemy soldiers, some of which would actually warn of incipient campaigns.

After 1943, Okano Susumu took control of the league, renaming it the Japanese People’s Emancipation League. Entering its fourth stage, Chinese psychological warfare against the Japanese was able to assume a revolutionary stance without offending the soldiers, since the material now came from fellow Japanese. On July 7, 1943, Okano wrote “An Appeal to the Japanese People” which urged people to oppose the war and overthrow the militarists. Leaflets were distributed urging: “Cease hostilities immediately! Make a just peace! Down with the militarists who started the war!...Improve the life of the laboring masses! Down with the warlike government of Tojo!” Although these slogans sound very similar to those espoused earlier in 1938, the difference lay in who signed these leaflets. Instead of the enemy Chinese Communists, the people describing the evils of Japan were fellow Japanese. This new tactic improved on the third stage in that it not only made the Japanese soldier aware of the iniquities of his situation but provided some means to improve it. The success can be seen as before in increased surrenders and willingness on the part of the Japanese to provide information to the Communists.
Unite All Anti-Fascist Forces of China

Lest we forget the other enemy troops in China, the Communists also waged psychological warfare on puppet troops as well. However, in general the Communists often did not want to engage puppet troops since many of them were spies ordered there by the Communists.25 In cases when they had to fight real puppet troops, they would shout slogans such as “Chinese will never fight Chinese,” and “We want your guns not your lives” or would sing anti-Japanese songs to them. If the troops deserted, they would give them food. If they did not, they were branded traitors and slaves. A typical practice of the Communists would be to put a banner above a puppet’s home declaring “Traitor’s Home.”

The importance of ethnic solidarity was repeated in much of the Communists’ propaganda to their Chinese adversaries – both the puppets and Kuomintang. The defeat of Japan, according to Mao in 1936, would mean “that the Chinese masses have awakened, have mobilized, and have established their independence. Therefore the main problem of imperialism will have been solved.” However, in order to obtain victory, three conditions had to be met: “first, the achievement of the National United Front against Japanese imperialism in China; second, the formation of a World Anti-Japanese United Front; third, revolutionary action by the oppressed peoples at present suffering under Japanese imperialism. Of these, the central necessity is the union of the Chinese people themselves.”26 Notice that in all three conditions, Unity played a major role. Communist posters in Free China often emphasized the idea of unity and proposed “an immediate establishment of an emergency national conference establishing an united government with a center for united directance.”27 Throughout the war years, the Communists argued for the elimination of corrupt government officials and the establishment of a coalition government of all political parties. “Such a government will be supported and trusted unanimously by the people. It will be able to mobilize all manpower and material power throughout the country. It will win international prestige and coordinate our offensive

25OSS, China (Occupied) Conditions in Lower Yangtze Valley.
27OSS, Document No. 129174.
with the victorious advance of our Allies!” As late as 1945, they were still arguing for the need to “put the Three Principles of the People into reality...establish the joint government...[and] back up the good people.” As was shown in the last chapter, the government responded to these requests by stressing that only through the primacy of one and only one party could the Chinese achieve victory. Of course when slogans did not always succeed in quieting complaints, the Kuomintang did not refrain from using brute force to eliminate political opponents.

Although the Communists called for unity, that did not stop them from criticizing Chiang for the same reasons that the Japanese did – his despotic leadership and rampant corruption in his regime. The Communists blamed the many losses in China as “the result of the lack of democracy in China” because the high levels of corruption sapped all of the people’s vitality and promoted a sense of defeatism. They argued that only through democratic reforms would the people be able to regain enough dignity and pride to defeat the Japanese. In addition, the corrupt policies in Chungking were attacked for alienating China’s European allies. All of these accusations had much truth in them despite the fact that they were Communist propaganda. By looking through American intelligence reports, many of the KMT battalions did indeed surrender or retreat without any resistance, since the troops were either so underfed that they could not fight or their commanders did not want to risk their own lives and would often surrender to the Japanese instead. The complaint that Chiang was alienating China’s American ally was also valid since by examining many of the American officer’s memoirs from that time, there was a definite dislike on the part of American commanding generals of Chiang and his cronies due to their corruption and insincerity in helping their own people. Even his promise to call a congress to set up a constitution was, as described by the Communists, “a treacherous camouflage used to deceive our Allies and postpone the realization of democracy in our country.”

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28Sutton Christian Collection, “The Declaration of the Yunnan Branch of the China Democratic Federation with Regard to the Present Situation.”
29OSS, Communist Posters.
By 1943, the Communists were actively proclaiming themselves the true nationalistic force in China, touting figures that showed that they were engaging 58% of the Japanese troops and 90% of the puppet troops and fighting 21 out of 36 divisions of Japanese troops.\textsuperscript{31} The uprising in Honan in 1944 convinced the Communists that the KMT was essentially finished as a vital political force in China, since they could not even prevent their own people from abandoning them for an invading hostile power. Seizing their opportunity, the CCP began an active propaganda campaign against the KMT. That year, Chu Teh declared that the Communists “work and fight for the liberation of China and the emancipation of our people. But Kuomintang officials and officers loot the people and soldiers, black marketeer in Allied Lend Lease supplies and deposit their plunder in American banks.”\textsuperscript{32} On the radio, the Communists started attacking Chiang as a despotic and corrupt leader, blaming him for the fall of Honan. Posters put up declared “resistance has been so weak. Government has abandoned people...dictatorship confuses everything. Monopoly is against the people's will....Get rid of the bad governors.”\textsuperscript{33} By 1945, the Communists would stop mail passing from the Central government in Shensi and insert anti-Chiang leaflets referring to the esteemed general as “Mr. Chiang” rather than “Generalissimo” or “President” Chiang, his proper title, thereby showing total disrespect to the people’s nominal leader.\textsuperscript{34} Schools in Communist controlled areas would hold two hour sessions in which children were taught that Chiang was a dictator. Just as Chiang claimed unity stemmed from one party rule, the Communists argued that only through democracy and the Four Freedoms could “real unity” be achieved. Even in the United Front days, of the ten United Front principles, only three dealt directly with the Japanese enemy, the other seven were essentially democratic reforms to ease the harsh living conditions of the people calling for less taxes and famine relief. As has been continually noted by biased and unbiased observers, the Communists’ propaganda were anti-Japanese first and Communist second. Although, one could disagree with the first hypothesis, since the Communists were not anti-Japanese (in the sense the Americans

\textsuperscript{31}China’s Resistance in It’s Sixth Year. (October, 1943).
\textsuperscript{32}Smedley, The Great Road, p. 406.
\textsuperscript{33}OSS, Communist Posters.
\textsuperscript{34}OSS, Document No. 128584, (May 1945).
were) as they were nationalistic, the second supposition was unquestioningly true in that much of their propaganda had a Communist slant.

The Red Army Helps the Peasants

In all countries engaged in warfare, especially wars of attrition, there is the overwhelming necessity for all armies to have the support of the people whose soil they are fighting upon. Without the full fledged support of the people, the army is in constant threat of not only being attacked from the front but from the rear as well. There is also the matter of supplies to feed and equip the soldiers. For the Chinese, the fact that the war was on their soil logistically should have worked to their advantage as opposed to the Japanese, who would have had to actively work to win the Chinese people’s support since they were the invading force. However, this did not prove to be the case. Although the Chinese did not like the Japanese, partly due to old racial prejudices, at times, they actually preferred the Japanese and the economic prosperity they promised to the old grasping Chinese regime. The only enemy the peasants recognized was that of starvation, their oldest and deadliest of enemies.

Next to starvation, the next oldest enemy of the farmers was the soldiers, who typically were the agents of starvation and death by their requisitions, pillagings, rapings and disease spreadings. The Sino-Japanese war did not help improve this image of Japanese and Kuomintang soldiers who alternatively demanded grain from the peasants as payments for “protection” from the other side. However, because the Japanese soldiers were often better fed than their Chinese counterparts and therefore slightly less avaricious in their acquisitions, the Japanese soldiers were sometimes preferred to the Kuomintang troops as was shown decidedly in Honan in 1944.

However, into this picture arrived a creature the peasants had never seen before – soldiers who not only paid for what they ate, but who also treated them with respect and dignity. The Red Army repeated emphatically that the Red Army was the people’s army.

35 Chinese conscripts were often kept on close to starvation levels in order to insure that they did not run away.
They, like the Kuomintang, also urged the people to “Support the troops who fight for the country’s salvation! Help the army to free the nation! The people must cooperate with the army to exterminate the invading enemy!” However, unlike the uneducated conscripts of the Kuomintang army, the Red Army was made up entirely of volunteers who were educated and fought for ideals and not merely for food. Another dissimilarity between the Kuomintang troops and the Red Army troops was the high morale of the Red Army. Part of this was due to the existence of a drama group as well as organized athletics within each platoon, since although the primary job of a soldier is to kill, sometimes to ease the tensions of combat some form of entertainment is necessary to maintain morale. In the case of the Kuomintang troops, no such thing as entertainment was even conceivable. While marching, the Red Army would sing patriotic songs such as the “Guerilla Marching Song” which declared that “they had no food, no clothing, no guns, but that they would capture these from the enemy.”\textsuperscript{36} Often, they would exalt the great sacrifices and heroism of the troops against the “beastly actions” of the Japanese under Okamura, the author of the “three-all policy.” The troops were no longer considered as merely cannon fodder, as they were in the Nationalist armies. They were treated not only with the dignity all humans deserve, but with respect and as heroes. When they were wounded, they were no longer left behind on the road to die as would have happened if they were members of the KMT armies. Instead, they were treated to some kind of medical care in Communist hospitals. Wounded soldiers would be sung the “Consolation for the Wounded Song,” which honored the soldier for having “suffered the wounds of war for millions of women and children.”\textsuperscript{37} Well-fed, clothed, properly equipped and respected, it was no wonder that so many able-bodied young men joined the Red Army of their own free will whereas the conscripts of the KMT army consisted of retarded and handicapped children of farmers trying to make the conscript quota in addition to their grain quota.

Although the Red Army might have been a better treated army, it still had the task of winning the support of the people. The soldiers often would shout slogans such as

\textsuperscript{36}Smedley, \textit{The Battle Hymn of China}, p. 247
\textsuperscript{37}Smedley, \textit{The Battle Hymn of China}, p. 275.
"The Army is the...people’s army – they are soldiers of brotherhood. They do not only fight the Japanese fiercely but also obey their regulations strictly. They don’t disturb anything anywhere they go." More than anything the peasants wanted to be left alone to farm their little plot of land. Catering to this desire, the Red Army emphasized their non-disturbatory nature. Like the Kuomintang and the Americans, they would also put up posters showing peasants welcoming recruits, bringing soldiers hot water, caring for the wounded, and donating their animals for food and transportation. However, in any town they occupied, the Communists also put up signs displaying their army regulations, so that if the peasants found any rules violated they could report it to the Communist commanding officers. The three basic rules of the Communists were first, act strictly upon orders; second, to back up the democratic government which fights Japan (meaning the CCP) and third was to protect the people’s properties and rights. There was also a poster of eight remarks such as speak fairly, trade fairly, return whatever was borrowed, pay for what was broken, urinate only in outhouses, clean up after oneself, respect the people’s customs and do not steal from prisoners of wars. Of course, the people had only heard rumors of such a strange army which paid for things. However, they still did not believe it until they saw these soldiers actually paying for their food and leaving their women alone. Even when they did pay, the people tended to believe that this could not be a very good army since it could not even take food from the people. However, once they saw the victories of the Army on top of the good treatment given to and received from the soldiers, the Communists were able to recruit many supporters from the population. As a result, widespread rumors among the peasants declared that the Eighth Route Army brought happiness to the people.

Our Party is a Party of the Proletariat

However, an “Army of the People” would not be enough in the long run in terms of firmly establishing a firm basis of political support among the people. In order to do this, the

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38 OSS, Communist Posters.
39 Bianco, p. 158.
Communists had to convince the people that the Communist Party “exists for the Chinese people.” Because of the strong convictions of the leaders of the Communist Party, the party’s policy was to stress political indoctrination above all other considerations even in military affairs. Although it was the Red Army which politicized the peasants, it was the Communist Party leaders who politicized the Red Army. Unlike the Kuomintang and the Japanese, the Communists did not constantly emphasize ideologies of Confucianism and proper place. Instead, the Communists constantly preached, “Our party is a party of the proletariat and of the broad masses of the Chinese people. The party and the people are forever inseparable.”

Rather than stressing principles based on hierarchy, the Communists stressed the integral relationship between the people and the party. The benefits were clearly seen in that the Communists “move about the people as freely as fish swimming in the ocean. By organizing and training the people we automatically eliminate the traitors. We rest in the hearts of the people.”

So widespread was this saying that when the Japanese implemented their internment policy, they claimed that they were taking the water away from the fish.

Throughout the war years and extending into the civil war, the Communists constantly stressed even among their own cadres the importance of the people. The leaders often found themselves chiding the more enthusiastic student members that “the revolution will be fought through only by the masses. You students think you are the whole show.”

Even the Leftist intelligentsia found themselves accused by Mao for not appreciating “[the workers, peasants and soldiers] emotions, their manners, their budding art and literature such as wall newspapers, murals, folk songs and folk tales.”

The artists and literati, as often tends to be the case, had looked down on the peasants and the peasants in their turn ignored the literati. Nonetheless, the primacy of peasant culture won out in the end. Songs and plays, as noted earlier, tended to be adaptations of already existing folk traditions among the peasants. In the plays and meetings, there

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42 Ibid, p. 156
43 Leyda, p. 154
was also much repetition of Communist ideology in order to indoctrinate the people. However, this was done without the insipidness of “What does Japanese mean?” as was seen in the case of the liberal urbanites. In a sense, like the Japanese and the KMT, the Communists also used traditions to win the support of the people. However, they used traditions which celebrated life such as folk songs and myths rather than the ones exalting feudal practices that had led to China’s stagnation. Even on the currency they printed, they would emphasize peasant life by depicting mountains and happily working peasants instead of portraits of their leaders as was typical in the case of the other factions.  

The Communists, throughout the war years, never forgot their debt to the farmers and peasants of China. Peng Teh-hwei said, “It was the masses that gave us our strength. We represented their interests, drew all our man-power from them. The people are honest and upright and they could have exterminated us if we oppressed them.” All of this propaganda was true since the Communists, having been blockaded by the Kuomintang early in 1941, could only receive its food and shelter from the peasants. Although they could have seized what they needed as the Japanese and Kuomintang did, given that they were surrounded by more powerful enemies, the chances that the peasants would have assisted either the Kuomintang or the Japanese in capturing them could not be dismissed. Thus, from just the sheer necessity of survival, the Communists had to emphasize that the Communists loved the people and especially that the people loved the Communists.

**No Extra High Taxes**

Nonetheless, in almost every political struggle, each side always claims that the support of the people belongs to their faction exclusively, and that the people hate the opposition vehemently. One only has to examine the propaganda discussed in earlier chapters to see posters and slogans shouting “Long live XXX” whether XXX were the Japanese sponsored regime, the Americans or the Kuomintang. The difference in the Communists’ case was that they were not just contented with shouting slogans exalting leaders, but

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44 However, in looking at pictures from Yenan that was available at the Hoover Institute, besides pictures of students at class, there were a few woodcuts of Mao Tse-tung.

urged reforms as well. The Americans and the Kuomintang, as noted earlier, tended to ignore any mention of reforms since it was in the ruling party’s best interest to preserve the status quo. Although the Japanese claimed that they wanted to help lead China into modernity, they rarely introduced any reforms to improve the people’s welfare. When they did, they were really attempts to neutralize Communist influence in an area. Overall, the Japanese was relatively content to allow corrupt officials, even Chiang, to hold onto their positions as long as they instituted policies that were not harmful to Japan’s economic interests. Furthermore, when one considers the plight of the working class and peasants in Japan, they were only slightly better off than the working class in China in materialistic terms, but in terms of political freedom and equality, the Japanese poor were probably on par with their Chinese fellows.

The Communists, on the other hand, actively promoted reform. At first, the Communists ingratiated themselves with the populace with an anti-Japanese policy among people who were being oppressed by these foreign invaders. According to Chalmers Johnson’s well-known thesis, the Communists established themselves by taking over the power vacuum left as a result of retreating Kuomintang forces. However, although they may have been able to take control as a result, it was only by implementing reforms that they were able to keep this control and gain the people’s support in the process. Whenever they recovered lands from the Japanese, according to their propaganda and rumors, the Communists would establish a democratic government based on the four freedoms (freedom of speech, press, meeting and association) and the three basic rights (human, property and political). Only by adopting “democratic, social, economic and political measures that the masses of the people really feel that they have something to fight for, something to die for if necessary, but, above all something to live for.” In general, peasants did not want to draw attention to themselves. Their greatest desire was to be left alone and anyone who did that would have their support. Even being branded a traitor did not work on the peasants who, in general, sought only to survive. Only

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46 Chu Teh, “We Know How to Hold on the War Until Victory is Won” in *China's Resistance in Its Sixth Year* (October, 1943.) pp. 34-43.
48 Henry G. Schwarz, *Liu Shao-Chi and “People’s War”*, (Kansas: Center for East Asian Studies,
when they were given a stake in the society, when other peasants cared enough to take action against "traitors" who threatened their new found freedoms, were the peasants mobilized.

From the very beginning, propaganda was an integral part of Communist policy. According to the head of the Agitation-Propaganda Bureau in 1936, "propaganda is devoted to informing, instructing and stimulating people to action; agitation is for the purpose of organizing the emotion and the revolutionary thinking created (stirred up) by propaganda. Without propaganda Soviet policies cannot be fully explained and understood by the people."49 Agitation that the Communists used against their enemies were already discussed in the earlier sections. Propaganda, in this definition, includes material extolling the Red Army, the close relationship between the Communists and the people and the Communist party in general. For example, the films made in Yenan were all of the nature of actuality films or documentaries. From the titles alone, Yenan and the Eighth Route Army, Dr. Bethune, Shansi - Chahar - Hopei Mobilization Meeting, International Youth Festival, Yenan Celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the 1911 Revolution, Cloth Weaving behind Enemy Lines50, one can see the propagandistic nature of them.

However, in this definition of propaganda, material which promoted reforms can also be included. One such reform was the improvement of hygiene which the Kuomintang had tried to improve through its New Life Movement.51 The Communists would hold meetings and lectures on "National Resistance and Health" which taught people better personal hygiene in order to stop the spread of diseases. They also constructed delousing stations in order to help keep the people clean. But, it should be kept in mind, the squalor in which these people lived was not by choice, but by circumstance. The peasants did not choose to be dirty but had no alternative, since they could not spare the water to take baths. Therefore, before major advances could be made in health care or in terms of any other social reforms, the peasants economic situation had to be improved first.

University of Kansas, 1969), p. 17


50Leyda, pp. 151-152.

51However, this was done mostly for the benefit of the Americans who complained that the soldiers were so ill and diseased that they were would be incapable of resisting any Japanese attack.
As soon as the Japanese army left any area, either through belief that the area was sufficiently pacified or from being beaten back by the Communist forces, the Communists would enter and immediately start implementing reforms. They realized that before they could expect the peasants to leave their families to fight the Japanese, they would have to provide some insurance that their family would not starve to death in their absence. According to Peng Teh-wei, “Our peasants are unbelievably poor.... Their basic needs must be satisfied so they will not have to drudge and worry all the time about food; then they can take part in the anti-Japanese movement.”

The first of all reforms would be the relief of the peasant’s economic burdens. Sometimes this would include the reduction of land taxes, the elimination of usury and redistribution of property of landlords who had fled from the Japanese. Although the Communists also had to requisition grain and supplies from the peasants, it would usually be at the much lower rate of 8 to 15% as opposed to the 50-90% of the crop yield under Chiang.

Sounding much like modern politicians, by 1945 the Communists were promising “No extra high taxes. Fair trading. No forced soldier draft. Protect the people and their property.” By offering the people more than just subsistence survival, the Communists were able to provide the people the opportunity to start thinking of a better life.

Before any long term reforms could be implemented to modernize China, the people would first and foremost have to be educated. Peng Teh-wei declared in 1938 that, “You’ll find a lot of inspiring slogans and posters of course, but of greater importance is the gradual process of educating our troops, the guerillas and the people.” At first, they attempted to achieve universal education through bureaucratic means such as through laws and edicts. However, this tactic did not prove to be very effective since parents tended to keep their children home to do farming. The Communists overcame this reluctance by teaching two or three children vocational skills, such as making hair nets, and then selling the hair nets and having the children go home with their profits. Once the parents saw that education could be profitable, they were more willing to let

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52 Smedley, The Battle Hymn of China, p. 162.
54 OSS, Communist Posters.
55 Smedley, The Great Road, p. 361
their children go to school. The same gradualness was also needed for other social reforms such as the elimination of the food binding practice. At first, the Communists would use slogans such as “Emancipate Feet,” and punish families with women with bound feet. However, this was also not very popular and made the Communists seem as bad as the Kuomintang with their strange rules. But, through propaganda methods, the Communists were able to convince the people that binding women’s feet was a feudal practice and eventually the people listened.

Once the parents permitted their children to attend schools, the children were naturally indoctrinated in Communist ideology. The Communists strongest supporters, in fact, often came from the younger generation. By examining the textbooks, a sense of what these children were taught can be obtained. Common primers were, “Why can’t the peasant eat the rice he produces and the weaver wear the clothes he weaves?...Why is there a distinction between the rich and the poor?...Why is the Japanese Army the most cruel in the world?” More reform minded subjects were, “On the advantages of work...On cooperation...On hygiene...On government...On bound feet...On women’s equality...On religion.” In general, however, the greatest emphasis was on the glories of work and the need for the peasants to produce. Like most nations attempting to modernize, the key to modernization rests on the backs of the peasants, the human fodder for the industrial machines. China was no exception. It was to the Communists’ benefit for the peasants to work as much as possible. With the Kuomintang blockade, the Communists revived traditional handicraft skills that had long ago become dormant as a result of competition with foreign imports. However, although the Communists would have lessons titled “On the advantages of work”, it should not be forgotten that it was through the Communists’ policies that the people once more had time to do handicraft labor instead of continually working in the fields trying to grow enough grain to pay back their debts to usurious landlords and officials.

Despite the emphasis on work, unlike the Kuomintang, the Communists also allowed

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56 Belden, p. 118.
57 Belden, p. 82.
59 Belden, pp. 120-22
time for recreation since some of their most effective propaganda were done through these means. By allowing the people to sing and dance and to relax, the Communists were able to create a much more enjoyable existence for the peasant than under the Kuomintang, where they were not allowed to do anything that might be construed as "sinful." As noted by Edgar Snow, one of the Communists' most powerful weapons of propaganda was the Red Theater. "When the Reds occupied new areas, it was the Red Theater that calmed the fears of the people, gave them rudimentary ideas of the Red program and dispensed great quantities of revolutionary thoughts, to win the people's confidence." As discussed earlier, it was through the Red Theater that anti-Japanese sentiments were often aroused and the confidence to resist created. Revolutionary ideas such as the breakdown of class barriers as seen in the play of an accountant falling in love with the landlord's wife were presented to the people. The villains of these plays were the Japanese, the traitors, feudal elements, loafers and other people who hampered either the war effort, production, political or social progress. The heroes were, of course, the Red Army, the militia, pioneers of class unity and fighters of superstition and illiteracy, and model workers. For many, this was also a source of news and gossip which were presented to the people in the form of a "living newspaper" where news was told to the people by an announcer. Peasant traditions were reaffirmed by harvest dances and celebrations. An observer for the Dixie Mission once observed, "They [Chinese farmers] must be really starved for entertainment when they will sit outdoors in the cold ten hours and fifteen minutes to hear speeches and see a play." However, as Snow noted earlier in 1936, the peasants were, in fact, "always grateful for any diversion in their culture-starved lives" and transferred this gratitude to the people who provided them this break.

60Snow, Red Star Over China, p. 123.
61Peterkin, Memoirs of Dixie Mission, p. 43.
We Know How to Hold on the War Until Victory is Won

In a speech in 1943, General Chu Teh described the great accomplishments of the Communist Party against many adversities. He stressed the fact that the Communists bore the brunt of the attack of the Japanese. However, in addition to attacks by the Japanese, the Communists also had to withstand attacks from Kuomintang troops who were often acting in conjunction with the Japanese to carry out a Communist extermination policy. How were the Communists able to withstand this two pronged attack? With the support of the people, the Communists answered. Even in their propaganda, the Communists had to fend off these dual enemies. Primarily, as during the war, the Communists' propaganda were aimed at Japan and was secondarily Communist, since, according to Mao, “If our country is subjugated by the enemy, we shall lose everything. For a people being deprived of its national freedom, the revolutionary task is not immediate socialism, but the struggle for independence. We cannot even discuss Communism if we are robbed of a country in which to practice it.”

In the end, Japan served the Communists' cause more than it weakened it. If hostilities were to cease, the Kuomintang could once more redirect the totality of its forces against the Communists instead of split between the Communists and the Japanese. One of the reasons sometimes cited for the Communists launching the One Hundred Regiments Offensive was that they wanted to keep up the people's will to resist, especially after the fall of France. Afraid that the Japanese would reach an agreement with Chiang, the Communists attacked the Japanese, forcing them to retaliate. The Japanese readily complied with their “three-all policy” and its wholesale executions in the countryside. Thus, the Communists' greatest propaganda machine was perhaps the Japanese army ravaging the Chinese countryside, while Chiang, too concerned with his “destiny,” watched idly. The peasants had no recourse but to join the only viable force in the area, the Communists. In fact, if nationalistic slogans and Japanese atrocities were not enough to convince people to become guerillas, the Communists often destroyed the

63Ibid, p. 387
registers in people’s homes in areas where lack of such registration implied disloyalty to the Japanese government and would be enough justification for further questioning and imprisonment by the occupying authorities. Therefore, since the peasant was already a condemned man, at least it would be better to go down fighting and take some of the enemy with him than to die from their tortures or from starvation from their looting. However, unlike the Kuomintang who formed “Dare to Die” corps, the Communists also promised a new life after the war, something to which the people could look forward. The drastic measures described earlier were necessary to force the people out of their stasis and pave the way for a revolution. Although poor conditions would cause the people to rebel looking for an immediate solution to their most pressing problems, only through the guidance of the CCP could the people have been awakened to the necessity of far-reaching, long term revolution. The contrast between the comparative peace under the Communists who were renowned for actively resisting the Japanese, and the ravaged areas under Kuomintang rule, where people starved while men like H.H.Kung became wealthier everyday doing nothing to stop the butchering of their fellow countrymen, would be what the people remembered in the end.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

Throughout China, a battle of slogans was being waged. The victor would be the one who ultimately controlled China. However, unlike most occupied nations, the Sino-Japanese conflict was not only a battle without, but also within. There were a total of four factions – pro-Japanese, anti-Communists, anti-Japanese and pro-Communists – vying for the support of the people. Often the pro-Japanese and the anti-Communists were one and the same. On the other hand, by the end of the war, to be pro-Communist came to be synonymous with being anti-Japanese. However, there was also large number of anti-Japanese Chinese who were not Communists. One only had to look in non-government controlled newspapers to see calls from non-party affiliated Chinese for a United Front and for maintaining a war of resistance. These people tended to be liberals who based their appeals on patriotism and an optimistic view of humanity. Their slogans were often just “Down with Japanese Imperialism,” with posters showing the victims of war such as that of a devastated Chinese village family. By depicting the atrocities of war and the need for continued resistance, the woodcuts of C.J. Shih and other artists were prime examples of purely patriotic appeals. (See Figure 6-2.) Others, like Mei Lan Fan¹ were killed for being famous and merely expressing their patriotism. Many students left to join the army to do what they could to fight for China’s independence, only to be

¹He was the world renowned female impersonator, who in order to be able to refuse Japanese invitations to star in their movies grew a moustache. He was executed on December 27, 1943 by Japanese ronins for staging a patriotic play in Shanghai.
discouraged by the fact that they were trained as gendarmes to be used in the inevitable next war – the Civil War. And yet, for some strange reason China was able to persist in her resistance for four long years before Pearl Harbor and four more after.

How were the Chinese able to withstand the barrage of propaganda from the Japanese? Why did they persist endangering their lives when they could have just as easily reached an agreement with Japan? Did the thoughts that America was coming have anything to do with it? Partly, but this does not answer why China did not just surrender in 1938 after all her coastal cities fell. Was it fear to disappoint their generous benefactor, may he live long, Chiang Kai-shek? It may be possible that zeal for Chiang was so strong that people would resist because he told them to, the proper response of filial subjects. However, the fact that people were killing his soldiers and acting very disobediently at times would tend to negate this line of reasoning. Another reason could have been just simple xenophobia. However, as can be seen from the fact that much of their propaganda did not call for the utter and complete extermination of the Japanese for no other reason than that they were Japanese, it is most likely safe to assume that the reason China continued to fight the Japanese was not due to an endemic and virulent racism on China’s part.
WOOD-CUT ARTISTS DEPICT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WAR

Determination for another year—by G. N. Wang.


Chinese troops capture a Japanese truck—by W. S. Shih.

Guerillas And Regulars

"Peasant and Soldier"

By the artist C. J. Shih, this woodcut depicts unity of Chinese peasants and the Army of Opposition to Japanese Aggression.

The Chinese wood-cut artist, W. S. Shih depicts various phases of the war. Top shows Chinese troops attacking a Japanese artillery unit. Below is a guerrilla band assembling in a village street for an attack.

From China Weekly Review 8 February 1941, p. 335; 11 January 1941, p. 194; 15 February 1941, p. 381.

Figure 6-2: Patriotic Woodcuts
The failure can be traced to the manner in which Japan ruled her conquered territories. Not only did they rule with little thought to the welfare of the people they were "liberating," they often treated the people worse than the Westerners did. "The pompous English were replaced by the rough, vulgar Japanese....Forms of racial discrimination never practiced even by the British were imposed." Although this argument was made in reference to Japanese rule of her Southeast Asian possession, the same was true in China. All throughout her rule, a basic belief in the equality of all the Asian peoples were never espoused. They urged the people to work in unison under Japan. In fact, a basic tenet of Japanese ideology was the inherent superiority of Japan's culture to all others. The Yamato race, although guiding the other races, had to remain pure and thus separate from the people they ruled. The leaders believed that "to view those who are in essence unequal as if they were equal is in itself inequitable. To treat those who are unequal unequally is to realize equality." Obviously, the other races, to the Japanese, were not equal to Japan, since they did not achieve the purity of the Yamato race who had the guidance of the Emperor to thanks.

Despite all self-attributions of purity, the Japanese soldiers behaved far from the ideal. Their own harsh treatment at the hand of the militarists have often been pointed to as the cause of Japanese atrocities. The soldiers' indoctrination at home probably contributed significantly to the Japanese soldier's behavior, often brutal and arrogant. They would often go about slapping people in the face, despite the fact that in most Asian cultures this resulted in a tremendous "loss of face" and caused many of them to believe that "it would be better if they took my life" rather than subject themselves to such shame. The puppet regime which the Japanese installed in China were little more than aggrandized thugs or displaced gentry yearning for the past. These puppet governments were made up of opportunists who were nothing but lackeys to the Japanese, giving loyalty to whoever happened to be in power at the moment, as was shown when the puppets quickly changed sides to Chungking after the American victory. Using the connections of these disreputable characters, the Japanese engaged in gambling rings,

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2Ienaga, p. 173.
3Dower, p. 264
drug trafficking, blackmailing and prostitution. Many of the gentry class, on entrance of Japanese troops would seize the local peasant women and force them to work in brothels and serve as comfort girls to the Japanese soldiers.

Economically and intellectually the Chinese were worse off than before the institution of the “Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere.” The flag of the rising sun was everywhere, a constant reminder that they were under occupation. There was high unemployment in the cities, as Chinese skilled workers lost their jobs to the Japanese. The number of students in university education decreased, while there was greater emphasis on primary school to promote peasant work ethics among the people. But more than the economic difficulties and educational setbacks, which are horrific in themselves in the long run the greatest propaganda against the Japanese was their own behavior. Although propaganda can be effective in shaping the opinions of the masses, there has to be some semblance of truth in the claims. For this reason, the propaganda against the Americans and British were Japan’s most effective propaganda. But visions of a “Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere” were just not believable to the people, who were subjected to conditions which produced the Rape of Nanking. The situation would have been changed if that was merely a one time incident, a deviance in an otherwise civilized rule. However, in the process of “rural pacification,” the Japanese burned, slaughtered and devastated the countryside. They showed a shallowness of feeling for the havoc they wreaked, exemplified by a poem written by a Japanese soldier on the beauty of a destroyed city.\(^5\) The cities, although better off than the countryside, were not spared. While photographers would take pictures of relief work at a concentration camp, Japanese soldiers raped women in the back.\(^6\) Women were debased and taken from their homes, sometimes given by their husbands to entertain the Japanese officers. It was the utter dehumanization of those they conquered which fueled the flames of resistance more than any propaganda campaign America, the KMT or the CCP could have launched.

A society in which all traditional bonds were broken or perverted was bound to self-destruct. Japan’s greatest influence on China was its promotion of vices. Morality could


not exist when a man was ready to sell his own wife for prestige in an organization which systematically violated all notions of human dignity. However, we can not blame Japan alone for this sorry state of affairs. Japan’s declarations that the Kuomintang was a corrupt and collapsing regime was an accurate assessment. Because the Japanese did not offer a viable alternative to the existing status quo, they were not successful in winning the support of the people. Although parts of their propaganda were partially believed, the most important section, the one regarding coexistence, was completely unbelievable. Although the words were fine, the reality of the situation was so removed from the eloquent words that it completely nullified them. As for American propaganda, America was mostly concerned with its own image and to prevent China from entering a race war. She too enjoyed a limited success with her propaganda. However, America’s failure to “hold on to China” was due to her failure to understand the true situation in China. She did succeed in winning the people’s approval, even the Communists, by helping them against the Japanese. However, she was only to lose this support again soon after by supporting the Kuomintang, whom the people hated.

Why was the Kuomintang’s propaganda such a miserable failure compared to the other two? This was due to the fact that it contained the worst faults of the previous two and none of their good points. There was no reality on which the Kuomintang propaganda was based, except the part about China being invaded by Japan. Other than that, the Kuomintang did not promise anything to the people or point to any real accomplishments. The people could see that the Japanese did in fact oust the European imperialists from China and that Americans were indeed fighting in the war, as could be seen by the American soldiers roaming about Chungking. With their tremendous wealth, it was quite believable that once the Americans came everybody would get food to eat. Chiang, on the other hand, spent most of his time chiding and scolding, never promising a better life, more food or more freedom. The Communists did and thus were successful in winning the people’s support. Not only did they claim that the army was friends with the people, it actually was. Rumors were that the Communists paid for their food. When the Communists entered a territory, they did. They maintained that they were the true

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7 For various atrocity stories of life under occupied Japan, see Jack Belden’s *China Shakes the World*
nationalists who were fighting against the foreign invaders. When the people heard the Japanese even proclaim that their true enemy was the Communists, this meant it had to be true. In addition, cadres were publicly executed by the Japanese where they would be asked, "Why did you join the Communists?" and they would respond that it was because they loved their country. Dramatic, perhaps, but completely effective in swaying the public to Communist sympathies. The Kuomintang, on the other hand, continued taxing the people despite famine and war, and smuggling the grain tax to the Japanese. The Communists promise of a better life and their seeming ability to live up to their claims enabled them to win the support of the people. It was because the Communists were of the "hearts and minds" of the Chinese peasants which enabled them to win their "hearts and minds" in the end.
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