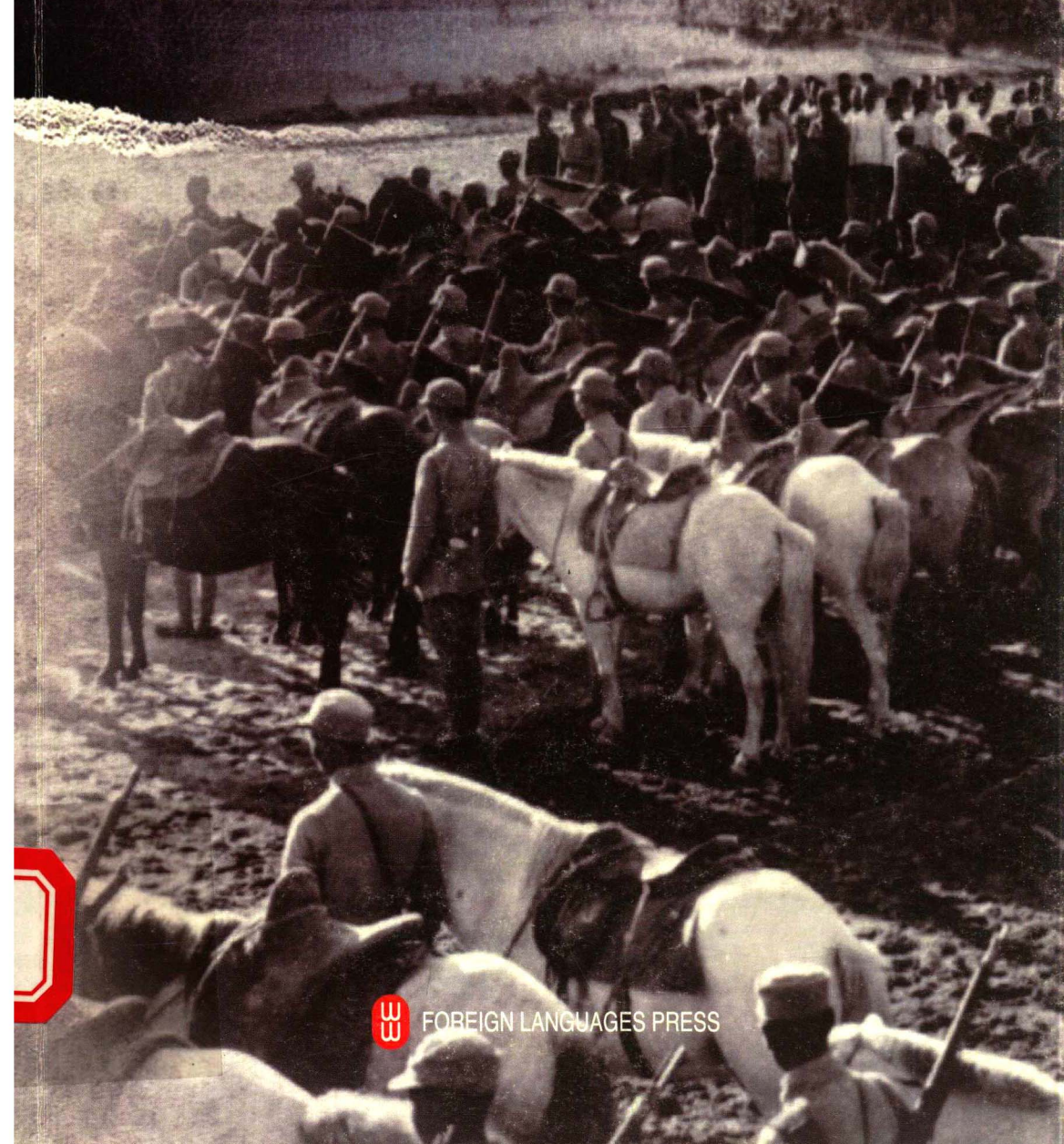


Truths
& Facts

Truths and Facts

Interpreting the Second Japanese Invasion of China



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



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Interpreting the Second Japanese Invasion of China

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View the War of Resistance Against Japan from the Perspective of the World Anti-Fascist War

The flames and smokes of the Second World War have long dissipated and the years of war are far behind us. However, this war is still fresh in the memories of people throughout the world, who have kept making increasingly profound reflections on it.

View the War of Resistance Against Japan from the Perspective of the World Anti-Fascist War

Tang Chongnan

The flames and smokes of the Second World War have long dissipated and the years of war are far behind us. However, this war is still fresh in the memories of people throughout the world, who have kept making increasingly profound reflections on it.

May 8 and September 2, 2014 marked, respectively, the 69th anniversary of the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan. The Second World War, which was started by the Axis powers, namely, Germany, Japan, and Italy, turned out to be an unprecedented holocaust for humankind and world civilization. It had been unprecedented in several aspects: it boasted the largest scale (84 countries and regions involved and 22 million square meters of war zone areas); it boasted the largest number of armed forces and civilians (totaling about 2 billion people, which accounted for over 80% of the world's population then, including 180 million armed personnel); it caused the heaviest casualties (over 100 million, including 70 million deaths); it inflicted the most serious property losses (US\$1.3 trillion in military expenditure and US\$4.2 trillion in other property losses, both of which are calculated on the basis of the then US dollar exchange rate); it was the most bloody (being put in use of all the most lethal modern weapons for land, sea and air battles, including atomic bombs); the belligerents on both sides allocated millions of soldiers, tens of thousands of cannons and airplanes, several thousand tanks, and several hundred warships in just a single battle) in human history, never seen any time in the more than 14,500 wars that have been recorded in history books for the previous 5,000 years ever written. The Axis powers invaded and expanded vehemently in

an attempt to dominate the world through wars, enslavement, and the conquering of all mankind, thus becoming the common enemy of all countries and people throughout the world. Therefore, the Second World War was defined as an anti-peace, anti-human, anti-civilization, and anti-democracy war of aggression by German, Italian and Japanese fascists.

Despite the huge gap between their social systems, ideologies, and domestic and foreign policies, the invaded and threatened countries, as represented by China, the US, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and France, shared the common goals of safeguarding world peace and the survival of the human race and dignity, and fighting against the German, Italian and Japanese fascists in the face of a deadly and devastating war. Hence, a worldwide alliance was formed, and the Second World War also became a just and great world anti-fascist war.

After years of bloody fighting, in 1945, the Second World War came to an end with the fascist countries defeated and the anti-fascist allies winning. In order to unveil the truth of history accurately, this article will focus on bringing back the relationship of mutual help and interdependence between the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the world anti-fascist war by reviewing it from the perspective of the world anti-fascist war, and correctly evaluate the great contribution of the Chinese people had made to the world anti-fascist war.

1. Significance of the Victory

During this just and anti-aggression war against fascism, the invaded countries all had experienced an unprecedented holocaust, suffered great damage and made huge sacrifices. Long years of arduous fighting (14 years for China), (nine years for Ethiopia), (six years for West European countries, such as Britain and France) and (four years for Southeast Asian and Pacific countries, such as the Soviet Union and the United States) had led to the ultimate victory of the global anti-fascist war.

Friedrich Engels once said that every unlimited historical disaster would be paid for with the advance of history.¹ No doubt, the Second World War was

¹ *Collected Works of Carl Marx and Frederick Engels*, Vol. 39 (Chinese edition), Beijing, People's Publishing House, 1974, p. 149.

an historical disaster in human history, but it was also this war that have educated people profoundly. The cruelty of fascism impassioned people all around the world and forced all peace-lovers who pursued democracy and progress to unite together for the fight against fascism. They put up a fearless fight and won victory, peace and progress around the world.

The victory of the world anti-fascist war is of the broadest and most profound significance in human history and, therefore, should be fully confirmed and appreciated. Seven decades ago, Chairman Mao warned that it would be a great mistake to underestimate the significance of the victory of the Second World War.¹

China's victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression was the first great victory China had won over Japan since the 1840 Opium War when China had been frequented by invasion and bullying, setbacks and failure. The Chinese people's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and its resplendent victory also thoroughly changed the course of development of Chinese history. Thanks to the persistent resistance the Chinese people had waged out against the Japanese aggressors, China acquired its status as one of the major four anti-fascist countries, namely, China, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, during the Cairo Conference in 1943, and since then Britain, the US and other countries had begun to sign new treaties with China, declaring that they would forsake their extraterritoriality and abolish unequal treaties they had forced upon China previously, thus freeing China from its former semi-colonial status and allowing it to embrace its independence. Also, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and China's victory accelerated China's course towards modernization, especially the founding of the People's Republic China after the War that realized the country's long-aspired independence and emancipation and set it on the broad road to socialist modernization featuring prosperity and strength.

In a nutshell, China's victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression resulted in marked social progress in China and kicked off the nation's great awakening and rejuvenation, which in turn greatly inspired the post-

¹ *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (One-Volume edition in Chinese), Beijing, People's Publishing House, 1967, p. 1250.

war historic social progress of the world. “In the post-war period, the political progress, stable international relationship, the leap-frogging social and economic development, and the advancement of science and technology constitute the world’s social progress, all of which is closely related to the victory of the Second World War.”¹

The significance of China’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression as well as the global anti-fascist war can never be overestimated. Today, while we are celebrating the 69th anniversary of this victory, we echo Chairman Mao’s warning and remember the words of Engels. Here, I will summarize the significance of this victory in the following nine major aspects.

First, the victory of this war delivered the defeat of the Axis powers and their unconditional surrender, symbolizing the doom of anti-human, anti-peace and anti-democracy fascism. This victory revealed the truth that justice will eventually triumph over evil, civilization over turbulence, progress over reaction, and brightness over darkness, and the truth that people is bound to win.

Second, the victory of this anti-fascist war marked a turning point of the world history in the 20th century, in that it ended the old period of worldwide war and turbulence and opened a new epoch of peace and development. The scale and cruelty of this war eclipsed all others throughout our history, and the nuclear, and high-tech biological and chemical weapons that appeared during the war had reached the limit of destroying the Earth, mankind and all civilizations, thus forcing all nations and peoples to think seriously about the issues of war and peace, and the survival of mankind as well, eventually leading to a rapid rise in the number of factors constraining and controlling worldwide war and to the dominant position and making peace and development rapidly rise to the position of the theme and trend of our era. A review of the changes over the past seven decades makes us more confident to conclude that the victory of the Second World War announced the end of the era of worldwide wars and ushered in the era of global peace and development.

Third, the elite status played and indelible great contribution made by the former Soviet Union to the victory of the global anti-fascist war gave sufficient

¹ Hu Dekun and Luo Zhigang, *The Second World War and Post-War Global Social Progress*, Hubei People’s Publishing House, 1993, p. 1.

expression to the superiority of socialism, and prompted the birth of a number of socialist countries in the late stage and after the war, including the founding of the People's Republic of China, and promoted the development of the communist movement. The world system of socialist was established shortly after the war and formalized with the establishment of the socialist state power in China.

Fourth, a post-war international order was quickly established on the basis of the results of the Cairo Conference and the Potsdam Proclamation, together with the establishment of a new pattern of international relations featuring the confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union (respectively representatives of the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc) based on the Yalta Conference and Yalta System. The new world order and pattern are rare legacies for the world from the world anti-fascist war, undoubtedly playing a positive role in development in the world after the war (of course, the Yalta System has its own negative side), because they laid down the principle of peaceful coexistence of countries adopting the two social systems, i.e., socialism and capitalism, and the overall goal of safeguarding world peace after the war, thus ensuring the avoidance of worldwide war in the longer term.

Fifth, the United Nations, an organization developed during the Second World War on the basis of the anti-fascist allies and born after the victory, made positive contributions to post-war world peace and development. From the very beginning, China has remained one of its five permanent members and played an instrumental role in the organization. The Chinese leaders spoke highly of the UN by saying that “it served the needs of the times and the strong aspiration of people from all nations for eliminating war, and it gave expression to the sound ideal of humankind to build a new world of peace, equality, cooperation and prosperity.”¹

Sixth, the victory of the anti-fascist war “opened up greater possibility and a more realistic path for the liberation of the world proletariat and the oppressed nations.”² With the victory, the “independence and liberation of

¹ *People's Daily*, October 25, 1995.

² *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (One-Volume edition in Chinese), Beijing, People's Publishing House, 1967, pp. 1249-1250.

nations” had become a historical trend in the wake of the war, thus creating conditions for the boom of the national liberation movement in developing countries. As a result, several billion people had seen the colonialist shackles on them smashed and over 100 countries had embraced their independence along with the collapse of the colonial system imposed by the imperialist powers over them. In particular, the rising of the People’s Republic of China had provided a more powerful guarantee to the foundation of post-war world peace and development and promoted the post-war national liberation movement to new heights.

Seventh, the victory of the anti-fascist war “turned the old world upside down” by forcing the fascist countries to reverse their course through post-war reform, thus removing the sources of war in both the East and West. Japan and East and West Germany carried out reforms and took a path of peaceful development. At the same time, social progress and development had also been observed in other major capitalist countries thanks to social reforms they had carried out.

Eighth, the anti-fascist war pushed forward international economic, scientific and technological developments, with a new round of high-tech revolution rising rapidly after the war. The third wave of technological and industrial revolution swept across the world, just as economic globalization did. The new high-tech revolution is still in full swing, exerting a great and profound influence over the world.

Ninth, the Second World War gave rise to the fifth military reform in modern military history. Amongst this reform was China’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, in which the theoretical system and great practice of guerrilla and people’s war turned out to be a very important means of battling against the fascists. Such fighting was also seen to varying extents in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In China, however, guerrilla and people’s war was an important form of fighting, and its strategic role was particularly prominent, turning out to be a brilliant chapter in the world history of war and war theories.

2. China's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression: A Significant Component of World Anti-Fascist War

First, China became the first theater of war in the world against fascism – the major battlefield in the East, and played a significant role and produced a profound influence in the world anti-fascist war. The September 18 Incident (also known in the world as the “Mukden Incident”), staged by the Japanese militarists in 1931, ignited the flames of aggressive war by fascists and also raised the curtain of the global anti-fascist war. The Chinese military and civilians plunged into their great War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression from the very day of the incident. The war of resistance in China underwent two stages, i.e., local and nationwide. The Chinese people did not hesitate to rise and fight back as evidenced by the defensive battle on the very day of the incident and the battle to defend Qiqihar. Thus, China turned out to be the first country in the world rising to fight back against fascist armed aggression and the first theater of the global anti-fascist war in the East that shouldered the historical task of fighting Japanese fascists.

Second, China's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression was of a large scale and lasted the longest time – 14 years if counted from September 18, 1931 when the so-called Mukden Incident took place and eight years from Lugouqiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident on July 7, 1937. Calculated either way, this is longer than the resistance of the UK, the Soviet Union and the US.

The July 7 Incident (Marco Polo Bridge Incident) in 1937 marked the beginning of an all-out war of aggression launched by Japanese fascists against China.

Propelled and led by the Chinese Communist Party, China promptly forged a national anti-Japanese united front to wage a protracted war of resistance in which the frontal battlefield was closely coordinated with the battlefield behind the enemy lines. On the frontal battlefield, the Chinese armed forces fought the Japanese forces in 22 decisive battles, 1,117 major and 38,931 small ones. On the broad battlefield behind the enemy lines, the Communist Party of China led the Northeast Democratic Anti-Japanese United Army in

fighting and killing over 170,000 Japanese invaders from 1931 to 1937. And from 1937 to 1945, the people's armed forces led by the Communist Party of China had fought in a total of 125,000 major and minor battles, wiping out over 527,000 Japanese troops and over 1.186 million puppet officers and soldiers, and seizing over 1,800 cannons and 690,000 weapons of various kinds. Also, the people's armed forces led by the CPC opened and developed about a dozen anti-Japanese base areas in 19 provinces. Meanwhile, the Chinese people fought behind the enemy lines in the forms of tunnel and landmine warfare, trapping the Japanese invaders in the wild ocean of the people's war. Of all the battles fought by the military and civilians led by the Communist Party of China, the better-known ones are the Hundred Regiments Offensive, the Battle of Pingxingguan Pass, and a number of local counteroffensives.

China's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, in which the Communist Party of China served as the mainstay, has been a miracle in both the world's war history and the history of the global anti-fascist war in that China not only rose to the challenge of anti-fascism alone for seven to eight years, but also held out in a protracted war, pinning down in the China theater of war of the main part of the Japanese ground forces. Prior to December 1941 when the Pacific War broke out, China had been the only battlefield resisting the Japanese fascists, taking down 78-94% of all the ground forces of Japan, to be specific, 88% in 1937; 94% in 1938; 83% in 1939; and 78% in 1940. In the four years after the outbreak of the Pacific War, China remained one of the main battlefields against Japanese aggression, pinning down 34-69% of all Japanese military forces.

The largest number of Japanese fascists were killed on the battlefield in China. According to the statistics released by Japan, the Japanese war casualties totaled 1.95 million, of which 1.33 million were lost in China, making up for 70%. Also, the largest number of Japanese officers and men were shot dead in China, as the above-mentioned statistics stated that 446,000 Japanese military personnel were killed in China and 190,000 on the battlefields of the Pacific and Southeast Asia, in addition to 80,000 of Kwantung Army in the Far East campaign fought by the Soviet Red Army. But according to statistics collected in China, the Chinese military killed, wounded and captured in total 1.547 million Japanese troops during the war, in addition to 1.283 million Japanese officers and men surrendering to Chinese forces, accounting for 50% of all the Japanese

forces stationed overseas.

Finally, the China theater of war served as a strategic pillar and reliable rear base for the global anti-fascist allies in the Asia-Pacific.

The battlefield of China was of great significance in the military strategic vision of the United States in that the protracted resistance in China was envisioned as a precondition and important guarantee of the US-UK alliance's military strategy of "Europe first and Asia second." Moreover, the battlefield of China served as an airbase for the allies and an important military base for their counterattack and even direct offensive on Japanese soil. To aid the fight of the allies in Burma, China dispatched an expeditionary force of 300,000 which stayed there for three years, helping to open up the "Stillwell Road" and turned the table in the Southeast Asian battlefield in favor of the allies, thus laying a solid foundation for the allies to recover Burma. All of this undoubtedly put the China battlefield in a position of strategic importance for the allies in the Asia-Pacific.

The above three points not only clarify the role of the China battlefield in the world anti-fascist war, but also explain the great contributions made by China's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression.

3. Great Contributions Made by China's War of Resistance

China, as one of the four allies (China, the US, the Soviet Union, and Britain) in the world anti-fascist war, was the major battlefield against Japanese fascists in the East, and Chinese military and civilians, as a decisive force for triumph over Japanese fascists, had made an indelible contribution to the ultimate victory of the global war against fascism at great national sacrifices. The global war against fascism was composed of two battlefields, i.e., the East and West, with the battlefield in the East being formed by the battlefield of China and the battlefield of the Asia-Pacific after 1941, and the battlefield in the West being composed of the three Western Europe, North Africa, and the so-called "Eastern Front," meaning the war between the Axis powers and the Soviet Union.

Fourteen years of undaunted and bloody fighting of the Chinese military and civilians effectively supported and coordinated with the fight on Western battlefield of the global war against fascism.

In the political report he made to the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China, entitled “On Coalition Government,” Mao Zedong wrote, “China is one of the five biggest countries taking part in the world war against fascism and it is the principal country fighting the Japanese aggressors on the continent of Asia.... China has made very great efforts to liberate herself and to help the allied countries during the eight years of the War of Resistance against Japan.”¹

Below, a more detailed discussion will be given from five different perspectives.

First, the China battlefield and the courageous and protracted resistance of the entire Chinese nation against Japanese aggression threw into disarray and thwarted Japan’s various plans of external aggression and delayed the formation of the Western and Asia-Pacific battlefields, thus earning valuable time for the allies to make war preparations.

China’s nationwide resistance disrupted Japan’s ambitious plan of external expansion – driving north to attack the Soviet Union and south to conquer Southeast Asia, thwarting its “plan of aggression to the north” and seriously impeding its “plan of aggression to the south.” A major part of the Japanese troops was bogged down in the quagmire of protracted war in China, setting back Japan’s planned coordination and aggressive actions with other Axis powers, shattering the attempt of the German and Japanese fascist aggressors to effect a junction in the Middle East and dominate the world, and winning precious time for the major anti-fascist allies, i.e., the US, Britain and the Soviet Union, as well as a host of other countries and regions to make preparations.

Second, heroic resistance against the Japanese aggressors by the Chinese armed forces and civilians provided a strong support to the fight of the Soviet armed forces in their fighting against German fascist aggressors and their eventual victory over the latter.

¹ Mao Zedong, “On Coalition Government,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Beijing, Foreign Languages Press, 1975, pp. 208-209.