WAR CRIMINALS AND THE ROAD TO SINO-JAPANESE NORMALIZATION: ZHOU ENLAI AND THE SHENYANG TRIALS, 1954 – 1956

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On 19 June 1956, eight Japanese prisoners entered a brightly lit military courtroom in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang (沈阳). Having emerged from their prison in neighboring Fushun (抚顺) and borne the shame of public confessions of crimes ranging from the massacre of Chinese civilians to the promotion of Japanese "cultural imperialism (文化帝国主义 *wenhua diguozhuyi*)" in Manchukuo, the repentant war criminals now stood to receive their verdicts. With the judicial announcement that death sentences had been rejected, and that most of the war criminals would soon be released back to Japan, cries escaped the lips of the convicts and their tears welled up. Throughout, flashbulbs exploded and Xinhua film reels whirred, recording the spectacle of justice for its ultimate conveyance to audiences on the Chinese mainland and in Japan.[1]

Watching carefully from Beijing was Zhou Enlai (周恩來 1898-1976), the man whose orders had initiated the trials and whose foreign ministry was using every power at its disposal to promote the trials and render the subsequent release of the war criminals as a propaganda success. In the mid-1950s, Zhou was in the midst of orchestrating a major turn in Chinese policy toward Japan; and, indeed, mass amnesty and repatriation of Japanese war criminals played an important component in the foreign minister's drive toward rapprochement. The policy of magnanimity adopted by the Chinese Communist Party (共产党 [CCP]) toward the war criminals was, further, a significant component in Zhou Enlai's "people's diplomacy (民間外交 *minjian waijiao*)" offensive toward Japan. Beginning in the early summer of 1956 more than fifty Japanese stood trial in Shenyang and Taiyuan. The trials marked the high point in PRC prosecutions of Japanese for war crimes, coinciding precisely with China's unmistakable push for diplomatic normalization with Japan.

Because the trials intersect with so many important narratives of twentieth-century Chinese history, it is surprising that so little has been written about the proceedings. The burgeoning literature on Chinese Communist domestic and foreign

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[1] *Shanxi ribao*, 22 June 1956.

policy in the 1950s rarely engages the trials as an object of inquiry.[2] Mainland historians tend to take the trials more seriously as a component of the Sino-Japanese relationship, but mostly follow the CCP's predetermined narrative that emphasizes the humanity displayed by the CCP toward the war criminals, implicitly modeling the "correct" form of penitence for guilty Japanese.[3] Similar trials were taking place all across the Communist bloc in the 1950s, but the Shenyang proceedings have eluded comparison with other trials in that period.[4] The Soviet trial and repatriation of German prisoners of war after 1954 has been well studied, for instance, and its remarkable similarities to the procedure and intent of the Shenyang trials could be profitably juxtaposed.[5] Scholars of prisoner of war (POW) culture in East Asia in the 1950s

[2] The exception is Takeshi Yoshida, who uses primarily Japanese sources. See his *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). See also Caroline Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?* (London: Routledge, 2006), 36-37. For treatments of CCP foreign and domestic policy in the 1950s, see Michael Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Chen Jian, "How to Pursue a Critical History of Mao's Foreign Policy," *China Journal*, no. 49 (January 2003): 137-142; David Bachman, *Bureaucracy, Economy, and Leadership in China: The Institutional Origins of the Great Leap Forward* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950-1965* (White Plains, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1979); and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics at Mao's Court: Gao Gang and Party Factionalism in the Early 1950s* (White Plains, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990).

[3] Feng Ruihui, Gao Xiuqing, and Wang Jie, *ZhongRi guanxishi* (History of Sino-Japanese relations) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), 3: chapters 3 and 4.

[4] North Korea held major trials in 1953 and 1956, but both were for domestic rather than foreign foes. See Dae Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 130-136. For discussion of differences between Asian trials and those in the Soviet Union, see Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 150-51. For North Korean support for the Soviet trial of Japanese at Khabarovsk in 1949 for biological weapons war crimes in China, see Xinhua dispatch from Pyongyang, 9 February 1950, quoted in Heilongjiang weishengbu, eds., *Rimo qisanyao budui xijun zhanfan de zuixing ziliao,* PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive (hereafter MFA) doc. #105-00076-03, 64-65.

[5] In January 1954, the Soviet authorities released 6,143 persons who had been sentenced by Soviet courts after 1945. See Peter Erler, "Zur Tätigkeit der Sowjetischen Militartribunale (SMT) in der SBZ/DDR (On the activities of the Soviet Military Tribunal in the Special Border Zone/German Democratic Republic)" in *Sowjetische Speziallager* (Soviet concentration camps) (Berlin: Wiley-VCH, 1997) 1:186; Alexander von Plato, *Sowjetische Speziallager in Deutschland 1945 bis 1950* (Soviet concentration camps in Germany from 1945 to 1950) (Berlin: Akademie, 1998), 172-87; and for analysis in English of the previous two sources, see Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). On the amnesty granted to more than 6,000 war criminals in West Germany in the period 1949-1954, see Georg Bönisch, "'Verwirtte Zeitverhältnisse': Die meisten NS-Täter entgigen der Strafverfolgung (Crumbled circumstances: most Nazi perpetrators defied sentencing and punishment)" *Der Spiegel* (10 March 2008): 52.

might also find the trials noteworthy.[6] Beyond such comparisons, the Shenyang proceedings as documented in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (中国外交部档案馆 Zhongguo waijiaobu dang'anguan) could fuel further discussion of Sino-Soviet relations, war and memory, "thought reform (思想改革 *sixiang gaige*)" among prisoners, and, of course, the wide range of political campaigns occurring in China in that unique year of 1956.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The 1956 trials at Shenyang grew out of the CCP's need to accelerate overtures towards Japan, but the trials were also entwined with larger issues of repatriation of Japanese after 1945. In the absence of Japanese diplomatic recognition of the new Chinese People's Republic, people-to-people contacts, particularly the thousands of Japanese who had remained in China after 1945, kept the two nations connected. Many of these Japanese had migrated to Manchuria and North China in the 1930s, and in "staying on" after 1949, actively aided the CCP in its revolutionary aims.[7] However, as Japan regained control over its foreign affairs after the formal

[6] On POW exchanges in Korea, see Pingchao Zhu, *Americans and Chinese at the Korean War Cease Fire Negotiations* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001). On prison camp culture among Japanese inmates in Sugamo, see Dan Kurzman, *Kishi and Japan: The Search for the Sun* (New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1960), 242; Yoshio Kodama, *Sugamo Diary,* trans. Taro Fukuda (Japan: Radiopress, 1960). On prison camp culture in Fushun, see Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo (Fushun War Criminals Management Center), eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi* (Place of new life of Japanese war criminals) (China: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2005), 164 ff. For prison camp culture and Sino-Korean exchanges in the 1950s, see David Chang, "Huijia: The Origins of Forced Screening for 'Voluntary Repatriation' of Chinese POWs during the Korean War," (unpublished manuscript, University of California at San Diego, June 2008).

[7] The MFA Archive contains great depth and variety of coverage on the question of Japanese in China (the "Riqiao") after 1949. One representative MFA document from spring 1950 notes: "With regard to Japanese with revolutionary zeal, they should be sent back to their country before or after March of this year to become soldiers of struggle in the Japanese revolution. . . . They can also stimulate Japan's revolutionary movement, improve . . . China's position in the Far East and stimulate the two nation's revolutions. . . . This means that prior to [their] going back, we must continue the satisfying education work so that like those who came back from the Soviet Union, the Japanese who return from China can in their language and actions increase greatly the power of democracy." "Riben zhan fu he Riqiao zai Huabei (Japanese prisoners and immigrants in North China)," 1 March 1950, MFA, doc. #118-00086-09.

Secondary literature on the postwar Japanese in China has grown greatly in recent years. See Liaoning sheng Huludao shi zhengfu xinwen bangongshi, Liaoning sheng shehui kexueyuan, eds., *Huludao bai wan Riqiao da qian fan* (Great repatriation of one hundred million overseas Japanese from Huludao) (Beijing: Wuzhou zhuanbo chubanshe, 2005); Li Yu, Tang Chongnan, and Xia Xingyuan, *Zhongguo de ZhongRi guanxishi yanjiu* (Chinese research on history of Sino-Japanese relations) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2000); Adam Cathcart, "Chinese Nationalism in the Shadow of Japan, 1945-1950" (PhD diss., Ohio University, 2005); Daqing Yang, "Resurrecting the Empire? Japanese Technicians in Postwar China, 1945-49," in *The Japanese Empire in East Asia and Its Postwar Legacy,* ed. Harald Fuess (München: Ludicium, 1998), 185-206; and Donald

end of the U.S. occupation in 1952, influential newspapers like *Mainichi shinbun* (毎日新聞) and civil groups in Japan began to put pressure on the PRC to repatriate all Japanese from China immediately. Using evocative language that depicted the would-be repatriates as children who remained outside the embrace of the motherland, Japanese politicians found powerful imagery in pushing for repatriation. This action aided in asserting a distinct Japanese foreign policy and accelerated the nation's reintegration into world politics. In the mid-1950s, many Japanese felt that the war had receded far enough into the past to merit the return of their overseas compatriots, including war criminals. After seven years under the control of an occupying army, they implied, the newly independent Japan was well within its rights to demand the return of her missing children.[8]

Imprisoned Japanese war criminals, particularly those still held in China, were obvious targets for, and beneficiaries of, the public discourse on repatriation in Japan in the 1950s.[9] Since 1950, some 967 of these men had been held in a special facility in Fushun, a city just east of Shenyang.[10] Fushun's prison population consisted of over 1000 Japanese, Manchukuo *hanjian* (汉奸) or traitors (a label which included former puppet emperor Pu Yi [溥儀 1906-1967] and members of his court), and Guomindang prisoners of war.[11] Nearly all of the Japanese men and many of the

G. Gillin and Charles Etter, "Staying On: Japanese Soldiers and Civilians in China, 1945-1949," *Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 3 (May 1983): 497-518.

[8] Lori Watt, "When Empire Comes Home: Repatriation in Postwar Japan, 1945-1958" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2002). On postwar Japanese sublimation of war atrocities in occupied China, see Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 83-86.

[9] In fact, the United States was facing similar pressure from the Japanese with reference to detainees still at Sugamo Prison in Tokyo. Of the 577 men still being held in Allied custody in Sugamo Prison in 1955, "the largest group is composed of the 210 men sentenced by the United States, of whom 123 are serving life terms. Australia follows with 149 and the Netherlands with 131." Consulate of Japan in Seattle, "Japan Report: For Publication and Background Use" 1, No. 2 (23 August 1955), 4-5. The "Japan Report" was an English-language newsletter generated by the Japanese Foreign Ministry and distributed in a limited but targeted fashion through its consulates general. The authors obtained copies at the University of Washington, Suzzalo Library.

[10] Fushun would have been familiar to Japanese for its legendary coal production under the Manchukuo administration. It was also the site of some rather well-known Soviet atrocities in spring 1946. See Jiang Pei, "The Yalta Treaty and Soviet Troops Evacuating the Northeast: Before and After," in *Lao zhaopian* (*Old photographs*) (Jinan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2002), 26: 127-141; Jiang Pei, "Yijiu sijiu nian chun fan su yun dong shu ping (Critique of the spring 1946 anti-Soviet movement)" in *Zhonghua minguo shi xinlun: zhengzhi, zhongwai guanxi, renwu juan* (New theory of the history of the Republic of China: politics, foreign relations, personalities) (Beijing: Xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2003).

[11] For a gloss on the term, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "*Hanjian* (Traitor)!: Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai," in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond,* ed. Wenhsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 298-341.

Manchukuo "traitors" had arrived via Soviet custody.[12] From 1945 to 1950, these Kwantung Army officers and high officials in the Manchukuo government had been held in a special prison outside of the Soviet Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk.[13]

In examining the new and previously available records from 1950, it appears that Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai did not press for the return of the Soviet-held Japanese during the Sino-Soviet negotiations in Moscow.[14] On 22 April 1950, TASS, the Soviet news agency, announced that 971 Japanese POWs in Soviet custody "who had committed serious crimes against the Chinese people" would be handed over to the government of the People's Republic of China."[15] The Soviets, however, apparently did not communicate to the Chinese Foreign Ministry when or how these men would be repatriated, indicating that the announcement had been made as part of a move to placate Japanese public opinion, not as part of a change in policy toward Beijing. Only with the publication of Zhou's manuscripts in spring 2008 did the PRC government admit that the Soviet Union had completely surprised Zhou Enlai on 10 July 1950, with its sudden offer to transfer these men into Chinese custody. Zhou was forced to scramble for time, improvising a holding facility at Fushun and asking that the train from the northern border take a "slow route" to the Shenyang area.[16] The apprehension that the war criminals themselves may have felt upon being handed over to the CCP is aptly summarized in Italian film director Bernardo Bertolucci's cinematic portrayal of their transfer. Waiting in the border station at Suifenhe, former Manchukuo head of state Pu Yi, who was indeed among the prisoners, attempts to

[12] As the Red Army had destroyed Manchukuo, they also whisked hundreds of thousands of prisoners north into Soviet gulags and prisons. For detailed and comparative analysis of the Soviet approach to these prisoners, including courts for war crimes within POW camps, see Kermit G. Stewart, Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, "Russian Methods of Indoctrinating Captured Personnel: World War II," April 1952, Central Intelligence Agency Records Search Tool, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, doc. # CIA-RDP65-00756R000400030003-2 [hereafter referred to as CREST]. For an analysis of the postwar conditions in Manchuria, see William F. Nimmo, *Behind a Curtain of Silence: Japanese in Soviet Custody, 1945-1956* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 5-40.

[13] On the Khabarovsk trials, see Adam Cathcart, "'Against Invisible Enemies': Japanese Bacteriological Weapons in China's Cold War, 1949-1952," *Chinese Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 103-108.

[14] Sergey Radchenko and David Wolff, "To the Summit via Proxy-Summits: New Evidence from Soviet and Chinese Archives on Mao's Long March to Moscow," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16, 105-183.

[15] Consulate of Japan in Seattle, "Japan Report" 1, no. 1 (1 August 1955): 2-3.

[16] Zhou Enlai to Chairman Gao [Gang], "*Guanyu jieshao Riben zhanfu shi gei Gao Gang de dianbao* (Telegram to Gao Gang regarding the matter of the handover of Japanese prisoners of war)," 10 July 1950, *Jianguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao* (Manuscripts of Zhou Enlai since the founding of the republic) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2008), 3: 22-23; "Guanyu Sulian yijiao Riben zhanfan de laiwang wendian (Telegram regarding Soviet transfer of Japanese war criminals)," 27 June 1951-30 November 1951, MFA, doc. #118-00151-01, 1, 5; and "ZhongSu guanxi da shi ji zhi yi (yi jiu wu ling) (Chronicle of Sino-Soviet relations [1950])," MFA, doc. #109-01352-02, 2-3.

cut his own wrists. Although this "suicide attempt" was a Hollywood invention, it appropriately captures the dread felt by the war criminals upon their handover to the new Communist government in Beijing.[17]

Although the CCP chose not to execute the Japanese and Manchukuo convicts, the party was also unable to use these convicts as diplomatic tools during the Korean War. In a period of extreme stress, when Manchuria was a giant rear area for the war effort, and allegedly full of spies and counter-revolutionaries, to suggest the release of these men would have appeared illogical, if not criminal, from the CCP standpoint.[18] Sparse Chinese contacts with Japan in the early 1950s made the international emergence of the Fushun convicts even less likely prior to 1953. There was no point in the CCP pushing for rapprochement with a Japan whose sovereignty and foreign relations effectively were being wielded by the very military power (the United States Eighth Army) that was fighting Chinese troops in Korea.[19] A final point worth considering is the role of the CCP's in-depth dealings with POWs and repatriation issues in the Korean War. The war ultimately slowed China's process of normalizing relations with Japan, but, by the same token, long negotiations with such constituencies as the Red Cross provided the PRC with experience regarding repatriation, which helped the party with its handling of the Fushun convicts.

The end of the Korean War and the emergence of a relatively independent Japanese foreign policy raised the value of the Fushun convicts as diplomatic and political tools. Of course, any action taken by the CCP towards the Fushun convicts—including execution—would have had clear ramifications in East Asian relations, as the men themselves inevitably represented the CCP's policy direction toward Japan and attitude toward the War of Resistance (1937-1945). With the stabilization of the situation on the Korean peninsula, Zhou Enlai began to welcome visiting Japanese delegations to Beijing with increased frequency. Although his discourse with such groups was polite and even jocular, these ostensible allies of the CCP wasted little time in pressing Zhou by describing the need for the CCP to return the Japanese still living in China, including war criminals. Such conversations, taken along with close monitoring of Japanese press reports, impressed upon Zhou and the CCP leadership that they could not hold the men in Fushun interminably. Consequently, in the con-

[17] Arnold C. Brackman, *The Last Emperor* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 257 ff.; *The Last Emperor*, DVD, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci (1987, Santa Monica, CA: Artisan Entertainment, 1999).

[18] This point, along the near-hysteria engendered by the Korean War in Northeast China, was starkly illustrated in late 1950 when the convicts were temporarily moved from Fushun to a distant corner of Heilongjiang until the Korean front stabilized the following year.

[19] On U.S.-Japan treaty relations after the San Francisco Conference, see Thomas W. Burkman, ed., *The Occupation of Japan, The International Context: The Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Sponsored by the MacArthur Memorial, Old Dominion University, the MacArthur Memorial Foundation, 21-22 October 1982* (Norfolk, VA: MacArthur Memorial, 1984); Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

text of ongoing negotiations over Japanese nationals and the early stages of "people's diplomacy," the fate of the men at Fushun took center stage.

From 1952 to 1954, the PRC explored ways of returning some war criminals to Japan even though no official diplomatic ties existed between the two countries. Reflecting the seriousness with which it regarded requests from Japan, the CCP assigned the lead on repatriation issues to Li Dequan (李德全 1896-1972), whose concurrent work as Minister of Health and head of the Chinese Red Cross had been effective both before and during the Korean War.[20] When a delegation of Japanese members of parliament raised the repatriation issue in October 1952, the Chinese minister rather surprisingly informed the delegation that repatriation of all Japanese had already been completed from the mainland. By declaring disingenuously that repatriation was finished, Li was in fact beginning a new diplomatic phase and setting the stage for a tougher Chinese stance on the repatriation of war criminals.[21] In August 1954, through Li Dequan's Red Cross and with the advice of "Japan hand (日本手 *Riben shou*)" Liao Chengzhi (廖承志 1908-1983), the CCP demonstrated its good faith to the Japanese by unilaterally releasing 417 Japanese war criminals, some of whom had been held at Fushun, back to Japan.[22] The release of such a large number of war criminals in 1954 is notable, as it was timed to coincide with the Japanese Diet's enactment of two national defense bills that appeared to stretch Japan's adherence to its own peace constitution. The CCP was confidently taking steps to align itself with anti-militarist currents within Japanese civil society, and, as it would for the remainder of the decade, the party made clear its unequivocal support for street demonstrations and agitation against the national defense legislation.[23] After the 1954

[20] Li was also one of the more successful "third party" individuals in the early PRC, having had extensive contact with the prior regime. She had married the warlord general Feng Yuxiang in the 1920s, worked with Madame Chiang Kai-shek in wartime Chongqing, and spent much of the War of Resistance working on children's health issues. Before and during the Korean War, she had led anti-biological weapons drives with great vigor and bureaucratic effectiveness. For general biographical information, see Li Dequan, "Health for All the People," *China Reconstructs* (October 1953): 14-20. Detailed documentation on Li's work on biological weapons issues is available in the Foreign Ministry Archive; for a representative example, see "Wen Jianfeng, Canjia zhongyang weishengbu zhaokai guanyu Riben zhanfan xijun zhanzheng zuo tanhui de baogao (Wen Jianfeng, Report on participating discussions at meeting convened by Central Health Ministry regarding Japanese biological weapons war crimes)," 9 February 1950, MFA, doc. #105-00076-02, 15.

[21] Kurt Werner Radtke, *China's Relations with Japan, 1945-83: The Role of Liao Chengzhi* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 102-103.

[22] "Wo waijiaobu faxin ren jiu Riben zhengfu suowei [gui fan Riben guomin de yaoqiu] fabiao shengming (Published declaration by our foreign ministry regarding the call by Japanese government to return its citizens)," 16 August 1955, MFA, doc #105-00064-01, 8.

[23] These bills, the Defense Agency Establishment Bill and the Self-Defense Force Bill, were introduced into the Diet in March 1954 and enacted on 1 July 1954. See Yoshida Shigeru, *The Yoshida Memoirs: The Story of Japan in Crisis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 189. For a somewhat conservative retrospective on political debate in Japan at this time, see Tachibana Takashi, "1955: A Pivotal Year for Japan and the Cold War," *Japan Echo,* 33, no. 5 (October 2006): 51-54.

wave of POW releases, Li provided the Red Cross Society of Japan with a list of 1,069 war criminals and information concerning their conditions.[24]

By releasing POWs back to Japan, the PRC foreign ministry set the stage for further overtures to Japan. On 11 October 1954, Zhou Enlai clearly stated for the first time China's intention to restore relations with Japan, and reaffirmed his desire for normalization the next day in a joint statement with the USSR.[25] China's strategy for normalization was based on the concept of "people's diplomacy," which was characterized by an upsurge in cultural diplomacy toward Japan.[26] From January 1955 to June 1956, the PRC dispatched more than two thousand cultural and art delegations to a total of 52 countries.[27] The United States could no longer prevent visits by groups from "Red China," and Japan became a particular target of cultural delegations from the PRC. However, China's "people's diplomacy" encountered problems in 1955, when the Japanese government reaffirmed its commitment to the immediate repatriation of all Japanese nationals from China.

The shock was dealt to the CCP in July 1955 from Japan's Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Sonoda Sunao (園田直 1913-1984). Sonoda, flush from fierce negotiations with Soviet envoys in London regarding the estimated twelve thousand Japanese still in Far Eastern gulags, demanded that "the Government of the People's Republic of China take proper steps toward a humanitarian solution" concerning the fate of what he estimated were forty-seven thousand Japanese nationals remaining in China.[28] Following this stunning estimation, Tatsuke Keiichi, Japan's Consul General at Geneva, amplified the demand and indicated that Chinese correspondence on the issue should be channeled through him.[29] Tatsuke made no prom-

[24] "Wo waijiaobu faxin ren jiu Riben zhengfu suowei [gui fan Riben guomin de yaoqiu] fabiao shengming," 8. Given the absence of diplomatic relations at this time, discussion on repatriation of Japanese civilians in China was channeled through third parties and semi-non-governmental organizations such as the respective Red Cross associations. For a detailed and innovative study of related negotiations in North Korean-Japanese relations in this period, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan's Cold War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

[25] Japan had also been seeking to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. See "Gongtong she pinglun zuijin de guoji xingshi he RiMei guanxi (Comments on the recent international situation and Japanese-American relations)," *Renmin ribao*, 7 January 1955, 4. For discussion of the Japanese-Soviet normalization of November, 1955, see Radtke, *China's Relations with Japan,* 194.

[26] Radtke, *China's Relations with Japan,* 102-103. For a Japan-focused treatment of "people's diplomacy" in the 1950s, see Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[27] Two-thousand forty-eight, to be exact. Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, Division of Research for Far East "Intelligence Report: Communist China's 'People's Diplomacy,' January 1955 through June 1956," 7 February 1957, CREST doc. # CIA-DRP78-00915R00070006 0004-4, 3.

[28] Consulate of Japan in Seattle, "Japan Report," 1, no. 1 (1 August 1955): 2.

[29] "Wo waijiaobu faxin ren jiu Riben zhengfu suowei [gui fan Riben guomin de yaoqiu] fabiao shengming," 8.

ise regarding the establishment of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations if the Chinese government repatriated the war criminals; however, his statements made it clear that normalization of relations would be unlikely if the Chinese government refused to compromise on the repatriation issue.[30] As impossibly high estimates of prisoners in Communist custody had become a standard feature of Japanese allegations, the men at Fushun were certainly included by Japan as part of the group requiring repatriation. Adding insult to injury, the Fushun detainees were labeled by the Japanese as "so-called war criminals," in an apparent taunt at China's inability to mount a timely prosecution. While the CCP was certainly capable of initiating its own actions on the repatriation of Japanese war criminals, the party was now being forced to respond to Japanese moves.[31]

Although constrained by Japanese demands, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sought to regain some control in the design of repatriation. In response to the Japanese complaints, the spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (中国外交部 Zhongguo waijiaobu) issued a statement claiming that "Japanese civilians residing in China who desire to return to Japan have always been provided facilities by the Government of the PRC."[32] Those who remained in China (approximately six thousand out of thirty-five thousand civilians according to the PRC) had "expressed desire to reside in China," and were not being held against their will. Despite Japan's insistence that large numbers of Japanese were being held in China, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stood fast by its claim: all Japanese civilians remaining in China had already been given the option of returning to Japan. This argument effectively meant that the previously wide-ranging repatriation debate had now, from the Chinese perspective, become exclusively centered on the fate of Japanese war criminals in Chinese custody. Given the extraordinary emotions raised via the assumption of Japanese war guilt that these convicts represented, the Chinese negotiators clearly felt that they stood on firm ground. Chinese publications firmly reminded the Japanese Foreign Ministry that the final decision regarding Japanese war criminals lay in the hands of the Chinese government, noting that "war criminals will be dealt with . . . in accordance with Chinese judicial procedures." Trials of Japanese war criminals, the PRC Foreign Ministry further emphasized, were "a matter of Chinese sovereign rights, in which the Japanese Government has no right to interfere."[33] This rather abrasive statement illustrates a continuity of CCP foreign policy whereby jurisdiction over Japanese war criminals in China had become an essential element of Chinese

[30] Consulate of Japan in Seattle, "Japan Report," 1, no. 1 (1 August 1955): 2.
[31] The role of Japanese social movements and the United States occupation in stimulating action from the Soviet Union (and China secondarily) regarding repatriation in 1949 is discussed in William J. Sebald, *With MacArthur in Japan: A Personal History of the Occupation* (London: The Cresset Press, 1965), 146; Eiji Takamae, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy,* trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum Press, 2003), 111-113.
[32] "Wo waijiaobu faxin ren jiu Riben zhengfu suowei [gui fan Riben guomin de yaoqiu] fabiao shengming," 9.
[33] Ibid.

sovereignty, not to be relinquished to other nations.[34] The party would thereafter make a virtue of necessity, using the trials and associated repatriations of 1956 as a propaganda campaign aimed at the Japanese public with the ultimate aim of forcing the Japanese government to the table for talks on normalization.

The party's Central Committee laid the immediate groundwork for the trials in January 1954, when it ordered a comprehensive assessment of the war criminals' progress from Fushun. A large investigative group was rapidly assembled comprising 366 cadres from various central, provincial, and municipal departments. This group arrived at Fushun in March 1954, where it divided into smaller groups spread through twelve different provinces to collect data on a nationwide scope. The group continued its work for two years, and according to CCP sources, collected testimony from nearly twenty-seven thousand witnesses, gathering eight thousand case files of interrogations and evidence totaling 431,400 pages.[35] These materials were held at the group's temporary work quarters, the Gaoershan Mountain Forest Investigation Bureau (高尔山森林调查队办公楼 Gaoershan senlin diaochadui bangonglou) in Shenyang.[36] The foreign ministry also solicited detailed reports in this period about Nazi war criminals released in West Germany. While such reports allowed the CCP to issue press releases denouncing the shibboleth of fascist revival in the West and strengthen sympathetic ties with East Germany, given the context, they very likely also provided Zhou Enlai with comparative guidance for China's own release of Japanese war criminals.[37]

In early 1956, confident that preparations were basically complete, Zhou Enlai clarified how the PRC could profitably resolve the problem of the war criminals. In a 14 March 1956 speech in Beijing about the war criminals problem, Zhou announced that the PRC intended to indict 51 of the 1,063 Japanese incarcerated in China. The remainder, he stated, would be repatriated to Japan in three subsequent waves for

[34] For earlier rhetoric confirming this statement, see Zhou Enlai, "1950 nian wu yue shiwu ri Zhou Enlai Waizhang qianze MacArthur xuanbu tiqian Zhong Guangkui deng zhan fan de shengming (Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai's 15 May 1950 declaration denouncing MacArthur's announcement of early [release] of Mamoru Shigemitsu and other war criminals)," 15 May 1950, MFA, doc #105-00022-02.

[35] Very little of this material is held in the MFA Archives, and is likely held instead at Liaoning Provincial Archives. See Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo, eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi*, 140.

[36] Ibid., 142.

[37] "Guanyu xiDe fangyi nazui zhanfan de cailiao (Materials regarding West German release of Nazi war criminals)," 30 September 1954, MFA, doc. #110-00262-03. It is also possible that the foreign ministry was vigilant about German military advisers going to Taiwan to join World War II-era Japanese generals such as Yasuji Okamura in advising Chiang Kai-shek. West German military advisors, some with backgrounds in the Nazi Wehrmacht, went to Taiwan from 1963-1975, but not before. See Chern Chen, "Deutsche Militärberater in Taiwan: Die deutsch-nationalchinesischen Beziehungen im Kalten Krieg (German military advisers in Taiwan: German-Nationalist Chinese relations in the Cold War)," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Contemporary History Quarterly) 51, no. 3 (July 2003), 385-402.

maximum effect.[38] Through lenient treatment, Zhou plainly stated, the CCP could influence perceptions of China even among segments of the Japanese population inclined to hold negative views of China, such as war veterans. And while Zhou noted the potentially positive impacts that generous trials could have on Japanese popular opinion, he described how the Chinese public was being similarly prepared for a shift in the Sino-Japanese relationship. Ongoing visits by the convicts to northeastern cities such as Anshan and Dalian, Zhou stated, would be continued until the trials.[39] Zhou justified his willingness to parade the convicts around to various Chinese cities: "Why shouldn't they go sightseeing a bit (他们为什么不可以参观一下呢 *tamen weishenme bu keyi canguan yixia ne*)?" he asked in mock exasperation. "Since we released them, they are our friends (既然放了他，就是朋友了嘛 *jiran fangle ta, jiushi pengyoule ma*)!"

Zhou, perhaps still smarting from Japanese complaints, also hinted at his displeasure with China's inability to mount trials in a more timely fashion, stating that "these men [in Fushun] have already been imprisoned for more than ten years, and throughout we have done nothing to settle the issue (现在关押时间已经十年了，我们一直没有处理 *xianzai guanya shijian yijing shinian le, women yizhi meiyou chuli*)." To Zhou, the need to resolve the POW issue was closely tied to the need to end the "state of war with Japan . . . sign a peace treaty, and . . . restore diplomatic relations (我们和日本还处在战争状态，没订和约，没有恢复邦交 *women he Riben hai chu zai zhanzheng zhuangtai, mei ding heyue, meiyou huifu bangjiao*)" with Japan.[40] Time, Zhou stated, was of the essence. He sought summer trials of the convicts, as such a course of action would prevent China "from taking too long and losing the opportunity (考虑处理这批人的时机不宜太晚 *kaolü chuli zhepiren shiji buyi taiwan*)," adding diplomatically, "I have already told [the Japanese] that the time would come this spring or early summer (我曾讲过在今春夏初之间 *wo ceng jiang guo zai jin chun xia chu zhi jian*)."[41] Before moving on to issues of Guomindang war criminals still in PRC custody, Zhou urgently directed his audience to see the Japanese POWs as situated purely within the broader contemporary matrix of Sino-Japanese relations, reminding his comrades that "Japan's situation after ten years has shown a tremendous change (日本的情况十年来有了很大变化 *Riben de qingkuang shinianlai youle hen da bianhua*)" and that, consequently, "now is the time (现在应该处理这批人 *xianzai yinggai chuli zhe pi ren*)" to handle the Fushun war criminals. Given successful resolution of this issue, Zhou argued, it would be possible to influence not only the Japanese Left, but, given the help of cadres like

[38] Zhou Enlai, "Guanyu Riben he Guomindang zhanfu de baogao (Report on the resolution of the question of Japanese and Guomindang war criminals)," 14 March 1956, in *Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan* (Zhou Enlai's military papers), ed. ZhongGong Zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun junshi kexueyuan (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1997), 4: 372.
[39] Ibid., 4: 373.
[40] Ibid., 4: 371.
[41] Ibid., 4: 372.

Liao Chengzhi, even unlikely populations such as Japanese military men could be swayed into the pro-China camp.[42]

Now that Zhou had established the parameters under which the Fushun convicts would be tried, the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee of the First National People's Congress (第一届全国民代表大会常务委员会 Di yi jie quanguo renmin daibiao dahui changwu weiyuanhui) in Beijing ratified and expanded on the decision with its "Decision on prosecuting the war criminals under detention who were involved in the Japanese War of Aggression against China." This order was made public the next day with a writ by Mao Zedong.[43] The Chinese public, in the midst of several other major propaganda campaigns, had been served notice that the party's policy on Japanese war criminals was undergoing a major change and that they, the Chinese masses, should support increased Sino-Japanese friendship. Within the dizzying context of the liberalization on political discourse marked by the Hundred Flowers campaign that same month, perhaps the notice regarding the Japanese war criminals did not spark a shock in the Chinese public.

As if to confirm to all that Japan was indeed being wooed, Zhou Enlai dispatched Peking opera artist Mei Lanfang (梅蘭芳 1894-1961) to Japan in mid-1956. There, the superstar singer met with Hirohito's brother Prince Mikasa and made clear that ties between their two countries could be extended further.[44] A major drive began in Northeast China to show a series of leftist films from Japan that highlighted the struggle of China's working-class brethren. The war criminals themselves were even sent in delegations to tour Northeast Chinese cities and sites evocative of Japan's past crimes (including Unit 731's infamous "Death Factory" outside of Harbin), where they met with local villagers, urban residents, and victims of Japanese atrocities. The abject apologies offered by the POWs on these visits, intended for both Chinese and Japanese audiences, mixed with the excitement expressed by the convicts for the amazing socialist modernization they encountered.[45]

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[42] Ibid, 4: 372. The other main leg of Zhou's speech deals with Guomindang prisoners in Fushun. For further analysis of the interaction between pro-Japan and anti-Taiwan propaganda from the CCP in the same period, see Patricia Nash, "The Taiwan Problem and Sino-Japanese Negotiations, 1954-1956" (paper presented at Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, St. Olaf College, Minnesota, 10 October 2008).

[43] Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo, eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi*, 141.

[44] Wu Zuguang, et. al., *Peking Opera and Mei Lanfang: A Guide to China's Traditional Theatre and the Art of its Great Master* (Beijing: New World Press, 1980), 47. Although Prince Mikasa had visited the Japanese bacteriological weapons factory at Pingfan in the late 1930s, his own blighted history with Manchukuo was not mentioned in Chinese press reports; nor is it likely that his wartime junket to see Ishii Shiro [石井四郎 1892-1959] came up in the course of conversation with Mei Lanfang. Sheldon H. Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932-1945, and the American Cover-up* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 142.

[45] Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo, eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi*, 168 ff. In the 1950s, the CCP pushed similar themes on visiting delegations of East German journalists and youth, combining stories of past Japanese chemical weapons atrocities with images of wondrous modernity in Manchuria. See "Berichte und Auswertung über den Aufentalt und die Tätigkeit der Delegation der FDJ, in

Upon their return to Fushun itself, the Japanese war criminals were nearing the end of their long political re-education. According to one report sent to most of the Central Committee on 15 September 1955, internees at Fushun had been receiving special "political education (政治教育 *zhengzhi jiaoyu*)" for a year in preparation for the trials. The prison administrator's report noted that the Japanese inmates had come to understand the basic tenets of CCP policy, at least the increasingly important ideological line which emphasized the evils of capitalism and the danger of American intervention in Asia. Specifically, the report asserted that the men had come to an understanding that the force behind Japanese imperialism's war against China had been the capitalists. In driving toward an economic interpretation of Japan's past aggression, the CCP was simply following a line of its own (as well as Guomindang) propaganda techniques dating from the War of Resistance.[46] But the report from the Fushun administrators went further along the CCP's new postwar line on Japan, stating that the prisoners in their facility could "see for themselves that American imperialism controls Japan, is agitating to re-arm Japan, and is preparing for a plot for a new war of invasion that will bring the Japanese people great suffering and destruction."[47]

Indoctrination along these lines did not differ substantively in content from Communist efforts to interpret Japanese aggression to Chinese citizens in Northeast China in the 1950s. In fact, this dogmatic interpretation of the War of Resistance runs parallel to similar interpretations of the Korean War and Taiwan problem within the construction of an official narrative for the consolidation period. To reinforce these themes, however, the incarcerated and repentant Japanese had to be able to bring them to the fore in a trial situation. To determine the behavior of Japanese in the advent of a trial, the Fushun management center organized discussions among the war criminals about the subject. Six war criminals spoke at the meeting, with the high point coming when Koyama Ichiro led his fellow speakers in a unanimous demand of capital punishment for their crimes. The men then stated that, if sentenced to death,

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der Volksrepublik China vom 23 Sept – 22 Nov 1953 (Reports and evaluation about the travel activities of the Free German Youth Delegation in the PRC from 23 September to 22 November 1953)," Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massen-organisation der DDR im Bundesarchiv (Documentary archive of party- and mass-organizations of the German Democratic Republic in the Federal German Archive), Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth) Files, DY 24 / 916, Berlin, Germany.

[46] For further information on the originator of many of these techniques, Nosaka Sanzo, the Japanese Communist Party leader in Yanan during the War of Resistance, and also about the Guomindang's work with Japanese POWs during the same conflict, see Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 132-43; see also Andrew Roth, *Dilemma in Japan* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), chapter 10; and Korogi Ichiro, "Under the Tower of Treasure: Nosaka Sanzō, Japanese Anti-War Soldiers, and the Yanan Experience" (M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1988), 28-45.

[47] "Guanyu zai ya Riben zhanfan yu weiman hanjian de yi jieguo yu chuli yijian de qing er bao gao (Report concerning imprisoned Japanese war criminals and Manchukuo traitors)," 19 September 1955, MFA, doc #105-00501-01, 2.

they would not cry, "Long live his majesty the Mikado (日本天皇万岁 *Riben tianhuang wansui*)!" but instead would shout, "Long live the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国万岁 *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wansui*)!*"* Inspired by Koyama's example at the meeting, thirty more war criminals wrote and submitted applications for death sentences. It appeared that these answers and responses by the Japanese detainees satisfied the Chinese Communist officials.[48] The CCP was carefully preparing the war criminals to act as messengers not only for Sino-Japanese rapprochement, but also to promote the rest of Zhou Enlai's foreign policy goals—acting as the point of a wedge between Japan and the United States.

THE TRIALS

The CCP began the trial of forty-five Japanese defendants in June 1956 in Shenyang. Shenyang was chosen as the site of the trial for both pragmatic and historical reasons. As the site of the September 18 Incident that had opened the floodgates to Japan's annexation of Manchuria in 1931, the city resonated with deep historical symbolism. It was also near Fushun, where the prisoners were being held. Shenyang was the administrative nerve center of the Northeastern region, and in 1956 was one of China's most modern cities. Moreover, the Northeastern People's Government had been a central node for research of Japanese war crimes since before the founding of the PRC, making the Northeast a logical choice from the standpoint of mounting a vigorous and well-documented prosecution.[49]

The trials began in June 1956 in a courthouse overseen by the Shenyang special court. Evoking previous judicial proceedings against Japanese defendants, hundreds of spectators attended the elaborately choreographed trials. As no announcement can be found in Shenyang newspapers in the weeks preceding the trial, it is likely that attendance in the courtroom was by invitation only. The stringent guidelines for attendees at the trials marked a departure from the laissez-faire, often chaotic, approach to show trials of the *hanjian* held by the Guomindang in 1946 and for Japanese general Yasuji Okamura (岡村寧次 1884-1966) in January 1949.[50] Reflect-

[48] Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo, eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi*, 144.

[49] "Ri mo qisanyi budui xijun zhanfan de zuixing ziliao (Evidence materials of Unit 731 bacteriological weapons atrocities)," 1 February 1950, MFA, doc #105-00076-03.

[50] For a more detailed treatment of Guomindang postwar trials of the *hanjian*, see Margherita Zanasi, "Globalizing Hanjian: The Suzhou Trials and the Post-World War Two Discourse on Collaboration," *American Historical Review*, 113 no. 3 (June 2008): 731-751; Nanjingshi dang'anguan, ed. *Shenxun Wangwei hanjian bilu* (Trials of the puppet traitor Wang Jingwei), 2 vols. (Shanghai: Jiangsu guxing chubanshe, 1992). On the 1947 trial of Aisin Gioro Xianyu, see Niu Shanseng, *Chuandao fangzi de jingren miwen: Guomin zhengfu shenpan Jin Bihui mimi dang'an* (Shocking secrets of Chuandao fangzi: secret documents from the trial of Jin Bihui by the Nationalist government) (Hong Kong: Jinjian zixun jituan youxian gongsi, 1994). On Chen Gongbo, see Dongyoun Hwang, "Wang Jingwei, the Nanjing Government, and the Problem of Collaboration," (PhD diss., Duke University, 1997); Charles Musgrove, "Cheering the Traitor: The Post-War Trial of Chen Bijun, April 1946," *Twentieth-Century China* 30, no. 2 (April 2005): 3-27. On GMD trial of Yasuji Okamura in January 1949, see Mao Zedong, "On Arresting Okamura and Guomindang Civil War

ing the importance of the trial, many representatives from the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing were present at the trial.[51] There were a number of representatives visiting on behalf of various "democratic parties," indicating that the CCP still saw its exaction of justice on Japan for war crimes as levers for securing the "middle forces" that were still outside of the CCP orbit.

The docket for the Shenyang trials consisted primarily of Manchukuo officials indicted for Manchukuo-era crimes. On 2 July 1956 the titular head of Japan's puppet government, ex-emperor Pu Yi, appeared as a witness against Manchukuo ministers Furumi Tadayuki (古海忠之 1900-1983) and Takebe Rokuso (武部六藏 1893-1957). Furumi Tadayuki had been a deputy director of the general affairs department of Manchukuo's State Council (满洲国国务院 Manzhouguo guowuyuan), making him the highest-ranking Japanese official on trial and thus the embodiment of the crimes of Manchukuo. Of the forty-five men on trial, twenty had been security officials or soldiers in Manchukuo, and six had been high-ranking officials in the Manchukuo administration. The remaining ten also had strong ties to war crimes committed in Manchuria—nine were in the Kwangtung Army, one as a member of Unit 731.

Although all of the men on trial in Shenyang were Japanese, Pu Yi's appearance as a witness reminded perceptive observers that the so-called "Manchukuo *hanjian* （满洲国汉奸 *Manzhouguo hanjian*)" interned alongside the Japanese were not yet slated for trial. In a special report prepared for the central leadership on the condition of the detainees, the authors noted that the Manchukuo officials "especially fear death." However, noted the judicial organization, the good treatment these men had received during the prior decade could "calm their psychology" as they looked forward to and hoped for a resolution of their cases that reflected the PRC's generosity. Despite his prominence, Pu Yi was not specifically mentioned in this document.[52] The PRC's ambivalence about the legacies of Manchukuo can be seen in the much slower process of trial and amnesty for these men of Chinese and Manchu descent, most of whom only began to emerge from the cloistered cells of Fushun in the early 1960s.

The Shenyang trials focused on the crimes of Manchukuo, but the indictments reveal that the scope of the trials was not confined to crimes committed during

Criminals," January 1949, *Selected Works* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1978), 4:327; Ren Jun, *Rifu Riqiao da guifan* (Great repatriation of Japanese prisoners and overseas Japanese) (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 2005).

[51] Fushun zhanfan guanlisuo, eds., *Riben zhanfan de zai sheng zhidi*, 147.

[52] Highest People's Investigative Institute Party Organization (*Zuigao renmin jian chayuan dang zu*) to Chairman [Mao], [Liu] Shaoqi, [Zhou] Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun, [Peng] Dehuai, Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, [Dong] Biwu, [Deng] Xiaoping, etc., "Guanyu zai ya riben zhanfan yu wei man hanjian de tongxun jieguo yu chuli yijian de qingshi baogao (Request and circular regarding experience of and views of the handling of the matter of imprisoned Japanese war criminals and puppet-Manchukuo traitors [including views on the crimes of 28 Japanese war criminals])," 17 September 1955, MFA, doc #105-00501-01, 3.

the War of Resistance. Indeed, crimes committed during the post-1945 Chinese civil war were not only included, but in many ways emphasized by PRC court documents. This emphasis may reflect the CCP's desire not to appear too dependent on the Soviet Union: those standing trial for civil war-era crimes had been captured by the People's Liberation Army (中国人民解放军 Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun [PLA]) rather than the Soviet Red Army, highlighting Chinese capabilities rather than dependence. Trying men for civil war-era crimes also emphasized the continued dangers posed by the Guomindang and saboteurs within the PRC, supporting a significant trope in CCP propaganda in the 1950s. Finally, the incorporation of criminals from the pre-1949 era (as opposed to pre-1945 era) may underscore the emerging CCP narrative on the War of Resistance—a narrative in which Guomindang complicity and cooperation with Japanese forces took center stage. Thus, while the normalization of Japan remained the primary interest which the Shenyang trials were intended to serve, other contemporary propaganda themes were woven into the trial.

Biographies of the Japanese defendants contained in the Foreign Ministry documentation shed light on the particulars not just of the individual cases, but also on the Chinese approach to the history of the War of Resistance in the 1950s. One prisoner named Sumioka Yoshikazu (住冈义一) used the name Zhu Zhenbang (祝振邦), a moniker whose adoption made him distinct from his fellow inmates and indicated a degree of sinification. Sumioka was only 39 years old in 1956—he had spent nearly half of his life in China, and one-third of his life in a Chinese prison. He was a native of Osaka, and a graduate of Kansai Academy's Religion Department. An officer who never advanced very high in the ranks, Sumioka Yoshikazu's greatest crimes were committed during the War of Resistance in occupied areas. In August 1942, he ordered the extermination of seventy civilians—including fifty female students—via bayonet and sword. On another occasion he ordered the killing of fifteen Chinese with handguns. Areas under his command assumed the ominous nomenclature of "de-peopled regions (無人區 *wuren qu*)."

What distinguished Sumioka from his colleagues, and the context of his prosecution, was his radically different postwar trajectory. While the men with whom he was in prison were huddling in concentration camps outside of Chinese coastal cities or boarding cattle cars for a fatal trip to Siberia, Sumioka remained itinerant in North China. He evaded capture in late 1945, and from February to April 1946 Sumioka moved around rapidly, leading a group of 300 "bandits (匪军 *feijun*)" that included thirty of his fellow Japanese refugees from Allied justice and ignominious repatriation. His troops frequently clashed with Communist forces; in 1946 and 1947, Sumioka's troops killed eighty PLA troops, wounded 73 more, and captured several Chinese soldiers. Within his indictment, Sumioka was decried for having stripped local farmers of grain (allegedly more than 88,000 *jin* in total), and stealing sheep, firewood, minerals and horses from the locals. The existence of Japanese-led "bandits" such as Sumioka's troop allowed the post-1945 PLA legitimately to describe themselves, as they did in this document, as "anti-Japanese forces (抗日军队 *kangRi jundui*)."

Sumioka's post-war tenure in China was anything but apolitical. It appears that he staunchly opposed communism. He ended up in Shanxi province under the wing of warlord Yan Xishan (閻錫山 1883-1960). From October 1946 to March 1947, Sumioka acted as the head of education (教育科长 *jiaoyu kezhang*) at the Shanxi Public Security Bureau Headquarters (山西公安局司令部 *Shanxi gong'anju silingbu*), building up the security forces and training troops around Yan. On 10 July 1948 the PLA found Sumioka holed up in a village in Qingxu County (清徐县 *qing xu xian*), Shanxi, and promptly arrested him. At the time of his seizure, Sumioka was said to have been busy working for Shanxi's extensive telecommunications system. The CCP held Sumioka without charges for eight years, and in 1956 decided to sentence him to fifteen years in prison, most of which was commuted.[53]

Another charged criminal, Ono Taiji (大野泰治 1900-?), also used a Chinese name, going by Wang Taishan (王泰山) or Wang Tai (王泰). Ono was born in 1900 in Japan, and came to China in January 1935. Like Sumioka, after the Japanese surrender in 1945, Ono joined a bandit troop in Shanxi, and subsequently entered the Bao'andui (保安队 Department for protecting the peace) in Datong. After working at a middle and an elementary school in Datong, he was finally arrested in 1950 by the (Communist) Gong'anju (公安局 police) in nearby Taiyuan for having "actively participated in counter-revolutionary movements and continuing to act as the enemy of the Chinese people (进行反革命活动，继续与中国人民为敌 *jinxing fan geming huodong, jixu yu Zhongguo renmin weidi*)."[54]

That the CCP chronicled Ono and Sumioka's post-1945 lives in such detail further suggests the importance of the war crimes trials in extending forward the narrative of the War of Resistance for New China. Moreover, that the indictments for 8 out of the 45 men standing trial included postwar crimes further distinguished the proceedings from those held at Tokyo, and showed China's ability to modulate conversations about the War of Resistance into areas advantageous to the CCP. In a further benefit of holding a public trial of these men, it seems that they were, in some sense, really on trial for opposing the CCP, thus reinforcing the power of the party.

Documents describing the varied backgrounds of the Japanese on trial were distributed among the very highest levels of the CCP. Mao, Deng Xiaoping (邓小平 1904-1997), Liu Shaoqi (刘少奇 1898-1969) and practically everyone else in the upper reaches of the party was briefed at length on the status of these criminals, indicating the trials' importance. What Mao thought when he read reports on the Shenyang trials is unknown, but the description of all of the crimes did not prevent him from acting gregariously when meeting with the Japanese delegations. Zhou Enlai and Peng Dehuai (彭德怀 1898-1974) were similarly unfazed by narratives of Japanese atrocities. The prosaic response of the CCP leaders to the revelations of the brutalities undertaken by the Japanese in wartime set the direction for the assumed public

[53] "Guanyu zai ya Riben zhanfan yu weiman hanjian de yi jieguo yu chuli yijian de qing er bao gao," 48-50.
[54] Ibid.

response. Short sentences were handed down, and in the immediate aftermath of the trials, the CCP released large numbers of prisoners back to Japan via Tianjin.

A study of the Shenyang trials, the stories of the men who stood trial, and the place of the trials and men within the delicate Sino-Japanese rapprochement negotiations, therefore, is not merely a study of propaganda. The time, place, and conditions of release complicate the idea that the sole legacy of the Fushun POWs is that of having served as propaganda pawns. The trials at Shenyang and the men indicted were multi-faceted and multi-purposed. Public statements and internal memos strongly suggest that the party, through careful selection and planning, was able to use the trials and statements of the prisoners as part of a calculated and precise rearrangement of Japan's wartime legacy on the Chinese mainland.

REFLECTIONS OF THE SHENYANG TRIALS IN ZHOU ENLAI'S DIPLOMACY, 1956

No sooner were the trials completed than they became explicitly linked to the ongoing process of "people's diplomacy" spearheaded by the CCP. Zhou Enlai made clear his feelings of urgency about the trials in his subsequent meetings with Japanese delegations. At every turn, Zhou wove the benevolent treatment of Japanese war criminals and the fair trials at Shenyang into dialogue about Japanese business interests, the atomic bomb, U.S. influence, and the Taiwan problem.[55] By emphasizing China's treatment of Japanese war criminals, Zhou Enlai and his deputies sought increased cooperation from the Japanese Left in an effort to convince the Japanese public to regard the PRC as a power that was friendly toward Japan and able to mitigate the burdensome influence of the United States in East Asia.

A discussion between Zhou Enlai and a Japanese labor and industry delegation at Zhongnanhai on 28 July 1956 showed clearly how the war criminals issue could be injected into Japanese-U.S. relations. On this date, in the immediate aftermath of the trials, Zhou flaunted China's benevolence at the proceedings, taking care to compare China's liberal stance with the adamant refusal of American officials to release Japanese war criminals still held in Tokyo. Zhou therefore urged Japanese delegations to reach a conclusion on which state, China or America, had the best interest of the Japanese people in mind, and framed the debate by asking Japanese delegations how many Japanese prisoners the Americans were still holding in Sugamo Prison. "To my knowledge," he stated, "the United States has still not released many Japanese war criminals (据我所知，美国现在沒有释放的战犯还很多 *Ju wo suozhi, Meiguo xianzai meiyou shifang de zhanfan hai hen duo*)," adding "isn't that right (是不是 *shi bu shi*)?" for emphasis.[56] This marked a truly momentous turnabout!

[55] For more information on Japanese economic interests in the developing "people's diplomacy," see Akira Iriye, "Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1945-90," *China Quarterly*, no. 124 (Dec. 1994): 624-38.

[56] "Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian Riben gongshang jie daibiaotuan tanhua jilu (Record of conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and Japanese labor and industry delegations)," 28 July 1956, MFA, doc #105-00500-06, 3.

Now, rather than criticizing the U.S. for being soft on Japanese war criminals, as he had stalwartly done in winter of 1950, Zhou was again outmaneuvering the U.S. by showcasing China's changed sense of justice via the speedy release of its own Japanese war criminals. Zhou clearly understood the societal pressures building in Japan for release of World War II-era war criminals.

As of 1955, the Allied Powers still held 577 Japanese prisoners in Sugamo, and 210 of these prisoners were incarcerated by the United States. Despite Japanese pressure to release the Sugamo detainees, a matter that Japan's government and people viewed as inextricably linked to the issue of Japanese sovereignty, the United States refused to capitulate—practically paving a path for Zhou Enlai's juxtaposition of liberal China and recalcitrant U.S. attitudes toward the release of POWs and the relinquishment of wartime atrocities.[57]

The campaigns to normalize relations between the PRC and Japan were multifaceted, but, for Zhou, the overarching theme was to pull Japan away from the United States and create a Japanese ally. Zhou, seeing a clear opportunity to emphasize Chinese friendship over American antagonism, pounced on the opportunity to stir resentment of American policy towards war criminals. Speaking again to a large delegation of Japanese visitors on 28 July 1956, he stated:

> I also want to testify (证明 *zhengming*) a bit about the handling of the war criminals . . . Why do we discuss how we handled this matter? Because we sentenced none to death, and regarding the length of sentence, the longest given was twenty years. Everybody knows that the war criminals at Tokyo, [those tried by] the United States, and France's [postwar] trials all received death sentences. But we considered that now what was needed was not such action, and that it was appropriate to release them.[58]

Zhou further justified the Chinese trials of Japanese war criminals, explaining that the CCP's trails were not motivated out of desire for revenge, in stark contrast to the death sentences levied by Allied Powers after Japanese surrender.

The Chinese foreign ministry made no attempt to obscure the diplomatic aims of the Shenyang trials. The benevolent treatment and quick trials of Japanese war criminals, Zhou stressed, was intended to demonstrate China's desire for Sino-Japanese friendship. He nakedly stated that finishing the case of the war criminals could aid in "beginning our friendly cooperation [with Japan] in all areas (来开始我们全面的友好合作 *lai kaishi women quanmian de youhao hezuo*)."[59] Moreover, the benevolent treatment of war criminals earned the Chinese government profuse thanks

[57] Consulate of Japan in Seattle, "Japan Report," 1, no. 2 (23 August 1955), 4-5.
[58] "Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian Riben guoying tiedao gongren daibiaotuan, Yazhou tuanjie weiyuanhui wenhua daibiaotuan, faxue daibiaotuan, dianying jiehe maoyi daibiao tanhua jilu," 4.
[59] Ibid., 4.

by Japanese delegations that visited later that year, serving as an icebreaker to the more convoluted topics of Sino-Japanese rapprochement and the Taiwan problem.[60]

The Central Government's desire that the trials proceed smoothly led to extensive directives to, and heavy responsibilities for, local authorities. Party requirements for media coverage and security were extensive, and internal documents describe the care taken so as to assure that the intended message was conveyed. In describing the multiple layers necessary for publications about the trials, the foreign ministry instructed cadres in Fushun and Taiyuan:

> All articles regarding the case and articles related to the benevolent release of war criminals must be revised in Beijing to receive the signature of the head of the Highest People's Court, after which they can be forwarded to Xinhua for distribution to all local propaganda *danwei* (单位 work unit) that can then unite the process of publication . . . .
>
> In Fushun and Taiyuan, these two places' news writing (including public wall posters and mobile news trucks), interviews and other draft writings must first be submitted for the order of the united offices under local comrades. After the trial and the return to Beijing, the most important local trial materials should be all be stored; in Fushun, give them to Comrade [Illegible] and Comrade Li Pushan [李甫山]: in Taiyuan, give them to Zhu Yaotang [朱耀堂]. With regard to central newspapers, broadcasting and editorials, criticisms must be given first to Comrade ~~Zhang Hanfu~~ [*sic*] Qiao Guanhua at the Foreign Ministry for inspection and approval [~~章汉夫~~桥冠华同志审定 *Qiao Guanhua tongzhi shending*].[61]

In addition to revealing the procedure by which any news about the trials had to be handled, the document is also interesting from the standpoint of an understanding of the internal politics of the Foreign Ministry. Although Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Hanfu (章汉夫 1905-1972) had originally been slated to oversee the media coverage of the event, Qiao Guanhua (1913-1983)'s bureaucratic acumen won out. By 1956 it was obvious that Zhang Hanfu's status was eroding slightly to the pragmatic Qiao, even though Zhang had edited the *Xinhua ribao* in Chongqing and, more recently, had extensive experience coordinating multi-departmental discussions of Japanese war crimes and their propagandistic function.[62]

[60] Ibid., 3.

[61] "Guanyu chuli Riben zhanfan wenti de xuanchuan tongzhi, xuanchuan gaojian shencha banfa he liyong waiguo jizhe xuanchuan de yijian (Concerning the handling of propaganda notice of Japanese war crimes problem, propaganda release information on the examination of ways to exploit foreign journalists' opinion on propaganda)," 10 April 1956, MFA, doc. #105-00502-02, 9.

[62] "Wen Jianfeng, Canjia zhongyang weishengbu zhaokai guanyu Riben zhanfan xijun zhanzheng zuo tanhui de baogao," 15.

Because the ultimate standard of success of the Shenyang trials rested with favorable treatment in the Japanese press, the CCP took great pains to assess how the Japanese media was reporting on the prison terms and trials. The publication of letters by repatriated Japanese war criminals to the government of the PRC and prison officials at Fushun was one such means of distribution.[63] However, given that special permission needed to be granted by the Japanese foreign ministry to publish these documents in Japan, one can assume that more letters were penned than published.[64] Regardless, these letters naturally apologized for crimes committed by the Japanese Army during the "war of aggression (侵略战争 *qinlüe zhanzheng*)" and blamed corrupt and militaristic education, while praising China for the high quality of treatment received during their years in captivity.[65] Although the letters blatantly criticized Japan's past actions, surprisingly the Japanese press did publish a few of them. Even though Zhou Enlai frequently used meetings with Japanese delegations to criticize Japanese Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru (重光葵 1881-1957), Zhou actually asked one group to extend his appreciation to Shigemitsu for allowing the publication of letters written by the returned Japanese POWs.[66]

At the fore of Japanese apologies and thanks are accounts of atrocities committed by the Japanese military in China (sometimes recounted in graphic detail). One particular letter, written by a repatriated Japanese war criminal and published on 22 August 1956, describes how during the invasion of China, the Japanese "warlords (軍阀 *junfa*)" brutally slaughtered civilians, plundered and stole Chinese property, burned houses, and raped women.[67] Within the letter of apology, the author condemns these actions and demonstrates his current understanding of the evil that led to such action. "From my young childhood," he states, "we received the atrocious education of militarism (从幼小时候起就受到野蛮的军国主义教育的我们 *cong youxiao shihou qi jiu shoudao yeman de junguozhuyi jiaoyu de women*)," and believed that this war of invasion was a "'just holy war' and 'for the nation' (相信这一侵略战争是正义的圣战是为了国家 *xiangxin zhe yi qinlüe zhanzheng shi zhengyi de shengzhan shi wei le guojia*)."[68] Other letters half-heartedly justified individual crimes by citing the overtly militaristic nature of Japan's pre-war government and educational system. Xinhua's publication of these letters was clearly intended to reassure the people that China was not releasing Japanese militarists, but re-educated

[63] Takeshi Yoshida, "Brainwashing or Reflection?: The Emergence and Development of War Guilt and Responsibility in Postwar Japan," (unpublished article manuscript).
[64] "Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian Riben santuanti daibiao tanhua jilu (Record of Premier Zhou Enlai's meeting with (three) Japanese group)," 27 June 1956, MFA, doc. #105-00500-04.
[65] "Fujian: Xiang Zhonghua renmin gongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu he guanlisuo dangju de ganxie wen (Appendix: Thank you to the People's Republic of China's Central People's Government and the administration authorities)," 22 August 1956, MFA, doc. #105-00503-07, 7.
[66] "Zhou Enlai zongli jiejian Riben santuanti daibiao tanhua jilu."
[67] "Fujian: Xiang Zhonghua renmingongheguo zhongyang renmin zhengfu he guanlisuo dangju de ganxie wen," 7.
[68] Ibid.

Japanese who were sympathetic to the Chinese people. The letters reinforced the transformation of the Japanese war criminals, condemned Japanese and American imperialism, praised the Chinese people, and thanked the Chinese government. The letters' frank acknowledgement of atrocities committed, display of guilt and shame, and blatant juxtaposition of the beneficent treatment Japanese prisoners received at the hands of their Chinese captors with the atrocities committed by the Japanese in China two decades prior also constituted powerful propaganda tools in the drive to sway Chinese public opinion in favor of potential political rapprochement. At the same time, such letters could confirm the traumas wrought on individual Japanese by militarism and, on the occasion of their publication in Japan, raise awareness among Japanese civilians of crimes committed in China.[69]

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, despite the attempts of the Chinese foreign ministry, "people's diplomacy" ended as a dismal failure. The consolidation of the Japanese right-wing, embodied in the rise of putative war criminal Kishi Nobusuke (岸信介 1896-1987) and the Liberal Democratic Party, brought Japan closer to what the Chinese government perceived as the U.S. empire in East Asia. The signing of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1960 resulted in renewed anti-Japanese militarism propaganda in China and crushed any hopes for rapprochement. However, the importance of the 1953 to 1957 negotiations and meetings is not nullified by this conclusion. The bilateral discussions marked a serious attempt by both China and Japan to take the road toward ultimate diplomatic recognition, and marked the growing maturity and independence of both countries. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, fresh from recent successes at Geneva, sought every opportunity to pry Japan away from the United States, even to the extent that the ministry actually negated its past propaganda work. Surprisingly, China softened its previous demands for harsh justice for Japanese war criminals—essentially modifying the narrative of the War of Resistance for four years. Likewise, the CCP's exertions with the Fushun prisoners were not undertaken in vain. During the period of negotiations Zhou Enlai often wove the magnanimous treatment of war criminals into his carefully choreographed diplomatic dance, turning a potential soft spot into an opportunity for offensive. Finally, the returned convicts from Fushun remained staunch advocates of a pro-China foreign policy, maintained dialogue with the Chinese government, and were among the best apologists for the Beijing regime throughout the remainder of the Cold War.[70]

[69] The Chinese government had been working to change the Chinese popular perception of Japan since at least 1954, when Xinhua had often published sometimes overly optimistic articles about Japanese resentment of U.S. militarism and desire for peaceful relations with other Asian countries. For a representative example, see "Renmin de yizhi bineng fenshui zhanzheng (The people's will necessarily can smash war)," *Renmin ribao,* 1 January 1954.

[70] Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 119-134.

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