



EAI Working Paper Series 2

Veterans and the Failure of Martial Citizenship in China

January 25, 2007

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Missing Days

The Chinese state, like many modern ones, has two calendars. The first, shaped by culture and history, is the more familiar one: all students in courses in East Asian Studies departments learn about Chinese New Year, the Moon and Dragon Boat Festivals, Qingming (Tomb-Sweeping) and others. The other, less familiar to foreigners, is the political calendar. Its features, however, are readily recognizable: a day celebrating a political founding (Oct. 1, 1949 in the PRC; Jan. 1, 1912 in Taiwan), critical junctures in history, or the contributions of various social groups to national development (for example, May 1st for labor, March 8 for women). Sometimes cultural and political holidays overlap—the ROC government notes that, during the Qingming festival, it is “customary to visit the tombs of the martyrs or the revolution”—but usually the calendars remain separate, and change little or only incrementally, usually accompanied by controversy. Governments, like leaders of organized religion, understand the need to maintain ritual and routine to sustain legitimacy, and attempt to create rituals that speak to the heart of their citizens.ⁱ

Despite the plethora of political events and the variety of groups they commemorate, two days are conspicuously missing from the PRC’s political calendar: a “Veterans Day” and “Memorial Day.”ⁱⁱ Even though the CCP emerged victorious from its decades-long rivalry with the Nationalist Party, awarded veterans high class status, claims victory in the war against Japan and the United States in the Sino-Japanese and Korean Wars respectively, defeated the Indian Army in the border wars of the early 1960s, there is not a single holiday devoted to the people responsible for these accomplishments.ⁱⁱⁱ Nor, for that

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matter, are there any stadiums, bridges, parks, or road commemorating veterans, although “Workers Stadiums” abound. Even current-day bellicosity among some “nationalists” (who threaten to use military force against Taiwan and the US should Taiwan declare independence) has not translated into a commemorative holiday for veterans, even as they were called the “flesh and blood” of the revolution and were the primary force behind the CCP victory.^{iv} Nor has political activism made much difference: veterans have staged uprisings, strikes, work slow-downs, sit-ins and petitioning, but these have not resulted in their “elevation” to holiday status, unlike workers, women and children, who each have their days.^v Groups of organized veterans are swatted away much like any other group that “threatens social stability.” In April 2005, just to give one recent example, 1,000-2,000 veterans, including divisional commanders, many wearing their old uniforms, gathered in front of the General Political Department of the PLA to protest their post-discharge treatment, but the police quickly arrested the leaders and the rest were dispersed.^{vi}

When considering the comparative record of modern states that have fought and won large scale wars in the 20th century, the missing commemorative day for PRC veterans is somewhat of an anomaly.^{vii} The United States, which has lost far fewer soldiers than the PRC, has a Veterans Day and a Memorial Day; the Mall in Washington is festooned with public memorials for three wars, including one that was lost (Vietnam) and one that ended in a stalemate (Korea). Israel’s Memorial Day comes the day before Independence Day, cementing the link between sacrifice and nation-building. In the post WWII period in the Soviet Union, perhaps the country most comparable to China in terms of its political system, veterans “carve[d] their own space” within the “highly styled parameters of the Soviet polity.” As noted by Amir Weiner, Red Army veterans dominated the post-war scene politically and culturally: war novels, memoirs, and parades and honors galore were bestowed upon the victors in the “Great Patriotic War.” There was no status higher than a decorated and wounded combat veteran; those not serving in combat were marginalized in the Communist Party.^{viii}

China’s missing days, I argue, are not happenstance; they reflect the failure of the modern Chinese state (Republican and Communist) to successfully cultivate an appreciation of “martial

citizenship” among its own officials and ordinary people, as well as the resistance of business and cultural elites to see much of value in military service, no matter what the cause. Chinese citizens, this article will show, frequently failed to provide veterans (of the anti-Japanese, Civil and Korean Wars) with a sense that their service was honored, valued, or appreciated.^{ix} Hundreds of reports from those years when the emotions associated with patriotism supposedly peaked—the tension-filled 1950s and 1960s^x—document a widespread pattern of overt and covert discrimination, limited access to medical care and land, and politically motivated bullying and retribution by other officials.^{xi} By the mid-1950s, veterans in the provinces wrote letters to the Chair of the National People’s Congress, Liu Shaoqi, complaining that they were being treated like “donkeys slaughtered after having ground the wheat” (*momian shalü*), disposed of after having served their purpose. Others warned that they would not serve in the reserves if a war broke out because of the lack of state and public support for them.^{xii} In a single factory in Shandong, eighty veterans, angry at the CCP, refused to register for the reserves,^{xiii} and suicides among them were serious concerns. Given that politics in the PRC during these years have been described as militarized (there were “campaigns,” “production brigades,” “advances” and “fronts”), China fought several wars and the most iconic figure from the Maoist years—Lei Feng—was a soldier, the seething discontent among veterans is clearly something that requires further exploration and explanation.

While the reasons for this phenomenon are complex, I argue that many can be boiled down to one anomalous facet of modern Chinese political development. Unlike the United States, Japan, the Soviet Union and many Western European states, China never had the combination of mass army^{xiv} that was based on something close to universal conscription (which often breaks down class barriers) and was involved in what might colloquially be called a “good war,” that is, one that had a reasonable degree of popular consensus against a hated foreign foe. Evidence from comparative cases, we will see, demonstrates a link between the nature of warfare, the level of class integration in the military and the subsequent political, legal, social and cultural status of veterans;^{xv} others have taken this even further by arguing that “the social history of nations is largely molded by the forms and development of their armed

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forces.”^{xvi} While the majority of European national anthems (as of 1961) included themes of war-making—including the Danes’ pride in King Christian’s sword that was “hammering so fast, through Gothic helm and brain it passed”^{xvii}—in China the military and its soldiers’ exploits and experiences generally fall on a deaf and unsympathetic ears, particularly among elites, even those who tend to crow about the resurgence of national power after 1949 and write books about the China that cannot be “bullied”^{xviii} and use veteran images to grimly warn the United States, “We have met on the battleground before.”^{xix}

The results of the failure to cultivate a stronger sense of martial citizenship—a problem that has long preoccupied and vexed Chinese politicians from Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, Sun Yatsen and Mao Zedong^{xx}—are far-reaching. Unlike many other countries in which military service has proved to be one of the only avenues towards full-fledged citizenship for poorer and more marginal populations, in China, peasants, who have long constituted the majority of its rank and file soldiers, have not enjoyed a significant “boost” in their status in the eyes of elites because many of their class have served in the military. Furthermore, to the extent that we can conceive of “nationalism” as involving more than just rhetorical barbs, sharp-tongued essays and short-lived, government approved protests against other countries (generally confined to educated urbanites) but rather in how ordinary citizens treat those whose service has actually made China strong, we should also question whether it is as powerful and “rising” force in society as some scholars and journalists have suggested recently.^{xxi} As noted by Chen Yung-fa in his now classic study of the CCP’s wartime base areas in Eastern China, the Party’s recipe for revolutionary success was based on identifying and *intensifying domestic tensions* in the countryside (and later on in cities) in such a way as to enhance the power of the emerging party-state, notwithstanding all the calls for “nationalism” and “national unity” issued by Mao and his comrades during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945). Chen characterized the Communists’ approach as one of “controlled polarization,”^{xxii} a strategy that has not ended to this very day, but still remains cloaked in nationalistic rhetoric and patriotic campaigns.

This essay, as befitting one that deals with military issues, is comprised of three sections. The first deals with the concept of martial citizenship, and how citizenship of this type, as opposed to that based largely on a conception of rights, has been a critical feature in both the expansion of citizenship for marginalized groups, and veterans' post-war status. After this, I turn to the more empirical section, examining the ways in which Chinese veterans did not enjoy an enhanced sense of status and respect, focusing on their health care, role as political whistleblowers and employment status. The third section focuses on explanation. By drawing from a wide array of comparative cases where martial citizenship was a more critical part of post-war culture and politics, we can see with greater precision what cultural, social and political resources Chinese veterans' lacked. Here I pay particular attention to the role of warfare and conceptions of masculinity, and the critical role of veterans' organizations and groups in civil society in the spread of martial citizenship.

Martial Citizenship

Recent years have witnessed an outpouring of scholarship on citizenship around the world. Sometimes prompted by the emergence of transnational entities such as the European Union or the emergence of politically active groups demanding the same rights given to other citizens, scholars have documented both the contested nature of citizenship and the extent to which the granting of citizenship may not necessarily result in the complete actualization of rights. Citizenship as a claim to rights—in the Chinese case, these have been more oriented towards social welfare and subsistence than demands to participate in the exercise of power^{xxiii}--has been the guiding intellectual tradition in most of this scholarship. In reviewing recent literature on citizenship in her study of the impact of the G.I. Bill, for example, Suzanne Mettler writes that the central issues tend to cluster around “the citizens themselves and the extent to which they participate—or, more than likely fail to participate in civic life. The other focuses on government and the extent which it bestows—or fails to bestow—rights on citizens in the

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form of social, civil, and political guarantees.”^{xxiv} Since modern citizenship in democracies has been defined more by a slow, often conflict-ridden, broadening of rights than an expansion of duties,^{xxv} the rights-oriented conceptualization of citizenship makes some sense. Moreover, it has provided an opportunity for scholars to document the struggle for rights among a wide variety of groups in different regimes, and has served as a rough gauge of just how far states have “progressed” vis-à-vis these groups. When peasants in rural China scrawl on a wall, “We’re citizens. Return us our citizenship rights!”^{xxvi} we know for certain that the rights-based conception of citizenship has spread very far indeed.

This rights-oriented conceptualization of citizenship (sometimes called “liberal”) is difficult to argue with on a normative level, but, as Morris Janowitz noted over 25 years ago, “the long term trend has been to emphasize and elaborate citizen rights without simultaneously clarifying the issues of citizen obligation.”^{xxvii} Does citizenship also involve particular obligations towards fellow citizens? Janowitz raises this point by citing an oblique section of the classic study of the progression of citizenship as the evolutionary expansion of different kinds of rights in Europe, T.H. Marshall’s “Class, Citizenship and Social Democracy”:

If citizenship is invoked in the defense of rights, the corresponding duties of citizenship cannot be ignored. Those do not require a man to sacrifice his individual liberty or to submit without question to every demand made by government. But they do require that his acts should be inspired by a lively sense of responsibility towards the welfare of the community.

Unfortunately, Marshall does not elaborate on whether this “lively sense of responsibility” also requires *action*, but one senses in this passage that citizenship not only should be understood in terms of the individual (does the citizen vote, for instance), and their vertical relationship to government (what rights does the individual demand and the state bestow), but also *horizontally*: how do citizens treat one another? Methodologically speaking, we can gauge the success or failure of “citizenship” not only by looking at laws and policies, but also how people interact with one other and their actions towards each other, or James Burk puts it, the extent to which “we enjoy recognition and respect from our fellow citizens as worthy members of the political community.”^{xxviii} It is, I suggest, in the sometimes silent nod of respect,

the tipping of the hat so to speak, the kind word, and the helping hand extended by elites that this sort of citizenship can best be discerned. Law and public policy can have powerful effects by incorporating new groups as citizens in the formal sense (the guest worker gets her passport), or granting new rights and benefits to weaker groups in society who are already formally citizens (the G.I. Bill to African American veterans), but these have their limitations in the second, more horizontal and subjective dimension of citizenship.

Here we have to return to the role of the military and warfare. Whatever one's view about the military and military service, the fact remains that throughout history, but particularly in Continental Europe after France showed the world the power of a conscripted citizen army, citizenship status for males (and nationalism) has been umbilically connected to military service in conscripted armies in protracted conflicts.^{xxix} The ideal of universal conscription, to be sure, was never achieved: provisions for bounties for substitutes ensured that most regular soldiers came from the lower classes.^{xxx} Nevertheless, the principle remained: citizenship could be *proven*, and respect attained *if* men demonstrated courage, sacrifice, and comporting oneself with honor in difficult circumstances. Yet, despite its historical significance, *martial citizenship* has received far less attention in the social sciences than rights or law-based approaches: there are no "Centers for Veteran Studies," while institutions devoted to law, rights, and citizenship abound. When it has been considered, it has often been in a critical light, as either concealed or overt nativism, militarism, jingoism, a barrier to those who were not allowed to serve (women and the disabled, for instance), or the assertion of hyper-masculine sexist ideals.^{xxxi}

In contrast to these sorts of critiques, minorities and other politically or socially marginalized groups have accepted, or perhaps tolerated, this martial principle. Military service has led to more than just the conferring of formal rights; in some cases, it has, over time and after political struggle, led to more equitable treatment. "War," notes US historian Lucy Salyer, "has often been critical to nation building and particularly to the expansion of civil and political membership;"^{xxxii} Rogers Smith points out that major US wars (the Revolution, the Civil War, WWII), produced the most liberal and inclusive

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citizenship policies.^{xxxiii} Disadvantaged groups ranging from Indians, Mexicans to Japanese and African-Americans have parlayed military service into demands for more rights, and for more respect from their fellow citizens.^{xxxiv} In the Japanese-American case, formal citizenship did not prevent their internment during WWII, but that war, like the first, provided yet another opportunity to demonstrate loyalty and courage. By the early 1950s, thanks in large part to the battlefield successes of Japanese-American units in Europe (which Japanese-American leaders repeatedly called attention to) all racial barriers to citizenship fell.^{xxxv} For many African-Americans, military service often led to a much stronger sense of identity, and less willingness to tolerate abuse. As a black veteran from Mississippi recalled, “I had low self-esteem...the army built me up and made me proud of myself. It sounds stupid. But that’s the way it was. And I’ve still got it in me”; a mechanic learned from his service that “he was able compete”; a pilot said, “When you defend your country, I think you were due full citizenship rights.”^{xxxvi} Not all agreed with such sentiments, as it well known. Blacks served in all American wars, but it took WWII and the Cold War to spur President Truman’s decision to integrate the military (1947). Today, the US military has been at the “forefront” of the effort to end the stigma attached to race and it is one of the few institutions in American society where large numbers of minorities (male and female) routinely command whites.^{xxxvii}

This relationship between war and martial citizenship is not confined to democracies. Russia in the late czarist and early Soviet periods demonstrates this point as well. There, research by Joshua Sanborn shows, military officials in the army high command, concerned about national security, argued for a very broad extension of “military service and citizenship” by means of the Universal Military Service Law (passed in the 1870s). As late as 1894, military officials explicitly argued for the “citizen-building role of the military,” since few institutions besides the military would be able to weaken “tribal differences” among Russians.^{xxxviii} It was also the military that argued for a conception of citizenship in which people can, and should, expect something in return from the state for their military service. Even though the autocracy fell not long after this, the Bolsheviks, building on this military conception of citizenship, generated a “discourse that finally incorporated the idea that soldiers acquired rights when they performed their national duty.”^{xxxix} Sanborn argues that the military-led creation of the new identity

of “national citizen” undermined both the czarist and Bolshevik regimes, since it contested both the notion of “subject” and class-based political identity.^{xl}

Why is China interesting in this respect? Like African and Japanese-American men in the United States who joined the military (and often volunteered for very dangerous combat) hoping to gain more respect and rights as citizens, so too have China’s lower classes—mainly male peasants—attempted to parley military service into more status and respect in society, what I call “martial citizenship.” Under Mao and Deng, the state actively encouraged this notion through preferential policies in employment in the state sector, pensions for disabled veterans, financial assistance to military dependents (helping with the harvest, welfare provisions), and numerous patriotic propaganda campaigns during the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the elevation of the soldier Lei Feng (whose diary contained numerous references to his devotion to Mao and the CCP) to iconic status in the early 1960s and then millions of urban youth parading around in military fatigues during the Cultural Revolution. From this perspective, martial citizenship was embraced. But, to the extent that citizenship also can be evaluated by the quality and content of interactions *between people*—the respectful nod and gesture, the pat on the back—most veterans did not benefit from Mr. Lei’s halo effect. At the very same time that educated youth were playing dress-up in fatigues, and even miners were able to boast that their status as “workers” made it easier to find wives,^{xli} real-life veterans continued to experience discrimination.^{xlii} It is this second, more action-oriented, horizontal dimension of martial citizenship that China has failed to cultivate and embrace, even as state intellectuals have churned out reams of propagandistic films, movies (even a MTV channel) glorifying the PLA. Let us now turn to see how this played in the sort of mundane circumstances that have generally been under the radar of the scholarship on the military and civil military relations.^{xliii} When veterans sought to exercise social rights granted by the state (political rights are far less relevant), how were they treated?

Vulnerable Biographies

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When people engage the political system, they bring to it a complex amalgam of experiences, resources, problems, and abilities, all of which shape their capacity to get what they want from it. To the extent that we are interested in horizontal dimension of martial citizenship—the content of interactions between veterans and the state and their community—as well as the causes of their difficulties, we must begin by examining what sort of “cards,” so to speak, they brought to the political table, and why many of these were trumped even by players without the ace of spades. Given the size and diversity of China’s veteran population, this isn’t easy. The veteran population changed over time: those who joined the PLA in the mid-1950s had different experiences than those who participated in the war against Japan (1937-1945), the Nationalists (1928-1936, 1945-1949) and in Korea (1950-1953). Nevertheless, several issues rise to the surface in the archival sources, especially when we look at China in comparative perspective.

Generally speaking, since the advent of mass land armies, most people who have served in the military have largely come from the lower socioeconomic strata, especially among enlisted men. This was true of the Continental Army during the US Revolutionary War,^{xliv} the British Army until WWI,^{xlv} and Russia until the Bolshevik victory over the Whites.^{xlvi} In those countries, the mass, more “total” nature of warfare in the late 19th and early-mid 20th century led to a significant broadening of the social classes that were drafted into military service; writers, poets, businessmen, clerks, laborers and government officials were all thrown into the mix. There was a relatively high degree of literacy among ordinary soldiers, as well as a modicum of social and financial capital that helped them reintegrate after war. China was notably different in this respect. Owing to the rural-to-urban dynamic of the Chinese revolution, as well as the absence of near universal conscription, the majority of soldiers (and veterans) were peasants who often hailed from some of the poorest provinces in the country (Anhui, Shaanxi, Shandong, Hebei). Most had minimal education.^{xlvii} They were also overwhelmingly male; roughly 25% of them (in Shandong, among 550,000 vets in the early 1950s) were unmarried at the time of their discharge because of lengthy military service.^{xlviii} Given that women were in relatively short “supply,” and willing to divorce using the provisions of the 1950 Marriage Law (in Xu Family Village in Shandong,

for example, 25 out of 32 young women divorced in 1952^{xlix}), the bachelor-veterans were probably anxious about their own prospects.

These problems, however, paled against a much more significant “marker” of veterans’ biographical profile: poor health in a political and historical context where the “strength of the nation” was frequently linked to the health and strength of bodies. Since the mid-19th century, Chinese reformers, who all came from a very narrow band of the intellectual class, argued that the imperial state was weak because Chinese were *physically weaker* than their Western counterparts owing to Confucianism’s supposed disdain for physical education, organized sports, and the sort of disciplined physical training one acquires during military service; hard agricultural labor, in their view, did not make peasants strong. Mao Zedong, like many educated youth at the time, wrote about this issue, calling for military style “drills,”^l while political leaders and other elites during the 1920s and 1930s strongly encouraged the development of sports to strengthen the body, as well as military institutions to strengthen the nation; armies could not fight well with malnourished and sickly recruits.^{li} Veterans had often proven themselves in difficult circumstances, but by the end of war their bodies were often battered. Most all reports and investigations concerning veterans pointed to the health-related problems, particularly chronic diseases (10% of all veterans in Shandong^{lii}), post-traumatic stress disorder (then diagnosed as “insanity”), depression, or unexplained maladies. The 1952 report on 2,105 Shanghai vets mentioned earlier noted that “most” veterans were “not healthy.” Chronic illnesses were common (818 veterans or 38.8%), and some suffered from STDs (89 veterans, or 4.2%), and mental illness (32 veterans or 1.5%). Only 893 of the 2,105 veterans were said to be in good health.^{liii} In Qingpu, some 8.2% of veterans had officially recognized disabilities, mainly severed limbs and facial injuries, a category that did not include those with chronic illnesses.^{liv} In Shandong, one of five veterans had disabilities in 1951.^{lv} But even when the medical infrastructure improved after the establishment of the state, the PLA generally drew from the same recruiting pool: peasants and lower-class urbanites. Many veterans, particularly in the 1950s, thus

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entered politics and society lacking many of the skills necessary to compete with those who, by virtue of different pre-1949 experiences, were more educated, skilled, or just healthier and stronger.

Whether they were discharged back to villages or cities—the policy was to discharge veterans to their hometowns—veterans immediately encountered grave difficulties, which were aggravated further by unsympathetic citizens and officials who had little appreciation for military experiences. Take marital status for example. Much like soldiers in the US and Australia during war,^{lvi} some veterans returned to their village and discovered that their wives were living with other men, or found out that they had been abused, “seduced” or raped by village officials.^{lvii} Eventually, most veterans married, but not easily. The All-China Women’s Federation helped “arrange” veterans’ marriages, especially for those who were disabled.^{lviii} In one county in Anhui, 28% of the veterans absorbed between 1949-1958 received some assistance finding a spouse.^{lix}

Sex, marriage, and family-related problems also account for suicides among ostensibly “good class” veterans throughout the 1950s.^{lx} A 1956 investigation of veterans in Shanghai noted 18 cases of suicide attempts “in the last several years.” Among these, four were due to “ridicule because of marriage problems or because they feared punishment because of illicit sexual relations.”^{lxi} A 1957 report from that city indicates a higher number—“40 suicides in the last several years”—with 27% attributed to marriage problems and adultery-related panic.^{lxii} Suicides occurred in rural areas as well. A 1954 report on Shandong veterans noted that 75% of 24 cases in a six month period were due to marriage or family related disputes.^{lxiii} The chain of events preceding these suicides varied. Veteran An Fuhan in Shanxi Province took his life when he returned home from service and found that his wife had remarried and his son and mother had died; according to the case synopsis, no one helped him out. In Sichuan Province, Wenjiang county, Wu Qingyun fell in love with a poor widow and wanted to marry, but the village chief accused him of immoral behavior and threatened him. Soon after, he hung himself.^{lxiv}

Veterans’ health was even more problematic, and serves as a stronger gauge of a government and society’s willingness to give veterans a “fair shake” than marriage. Health care is a scarce resource that involves significant costs—medicine, hospital beds, sick leave, pensions—as well as many educated

personnel (doctors, nurses, personnel officials in work units) who were exposed to state propaganda about the heroic role of the PLA in liberating China.

Two impassioned letters from Gao Jinlong and Zhang Xinyi, two disabled veterans, to the chief of Qingpu county, is a good place to start to get some sense of their views. In his letter, Gao had a litany of complaints, many of them implicating local officials for callousness. Even though he was entitled to government aid, he claimed that he did not receive any, but others did. District officials were aware of his situation, but took no action. The land he received in land reform could not sustain him because he never received fertilizer, his father was old, and, because of his disability, he could not perform heavy labor. Years away from Qingpu meant that, at 30, he was still unmarried, and did not have his own home. Zhang's complaints were more serious. He joined the army in 1937, right after the beginning of the war with Japan; there were six people in his family. When he returned in 1951, his father, mother, and daughter had died, and his wife left him during the war, taking their son with her. He scratched out a living because he was not allocated land during land reform, and depended on other villagers' assistance. He wrote hoping that the county could help return his son.^{lxv} While these letters might have exaggerated certain circumstances to gain officials' sympathy, the circumstances they describe were not exceptional—there are many like them in the archives. Taken together, they highlight several features of disabled and sick veterans' existence: dependence, poverty, as well as a strong sense of martial citizenship, as seen in their willingness to complain about these issues.

Dependence is a near universal experience of those with disabilities or chronic illnesses, and the near universal solution to it is gainful employment. The disabled want to work to reduce their dependency, and governments are anxious to provide work to lower their financial burden. Few employers in China, however, wanted to shoulder this extra responsibility, and they had enough discretion to refuse to hire them, or at least try to. The hiring process did not cause this—had there been enough political will there could have been a way—but it made it fairly easy to do. Throughout most of the 1950s, veterans' dossiers would be sent from the military to the local “Resettlement” department of the Bureau of Civil Affairs,

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who would then contact the Personnel Department of the hiring unit, who could then select the veterans he would hire, if any; local Labor Bureau employment offices also forwarded files of “regular” unemployed people.^{lxvi} Given the labor supply, many units simply refused to hire disabled or chronically ill veterans.^{lxvii} In the spring of 1955, for example, the China Record Factory was preparing to hire 200 workers. Someone mentioned hiring veterans, but the “leading cadres” at the firm said, “They’ve all been disabled fighting war. But some might have some skills—those guys we can assign to clean up.”^{lxviii} For their part, hospitals routinely turned away veterans with chronic illnesses, claiming insufficient funds to care for them, or that they “never received” the policy regulations from the Ministry of Health.^{lxix} Not surprisingly, in Qingpu county, 50% of letters the Bureau of Civil Affairs received from veterans in 1958 were job-related. Of those, half were written by the disabled or sick veterans appealing for employment assistance or transferring to a more appropriate job, since they had been assigned to jobs requiring hard physical labor.^{lxx}

Ill veterans who passed through this hoop and found positions in government or factories did not necessarily fare very well, however. Poor health increased political vulnerability, which was not counteracted by sympathy or appreciation. In Qingpu, for example, Ling Linsheng returned to the village in 1953 and was appointed secretary of the township Youth League and militia. He was reported to be very effective at his job, but was frequently ill. This led to arguments between him and the township party secretary, Tao Genfu. Using Ling’s recurring illness as an excuse, Tao forced him out of power, sending him back to his village to work in agriculture. Two village officials, however, opposed this move, but Tao falsely told the two that Ling was to return “by order of the district party secretary.” They eventually relented and Ling returned home.^{lxxi}

The case of Shao Ran, a Korean War veteran working at the Jinxing Pen Factory in Shanghai, illustrates the causes of this sort of critique.^{lxxii} Like many veterans, Shao frequently experienced flare-ups of his old wounds, sometimes resulting in high fevers. On one occasion, his fever reached 40°C and he was not able to go to the hospital himself. He requested that the factory’s personnel department arrange for a vehicle to send him. The department refused, arguing that, because Shao’s injury “was not a work

accident,” it was not their responsibility to help him. With the help of some of his fellow veterans “angered at this injustice,” however, Shao managed to get a vehicle. But his problems did not end there: the hospital called the factory demanding to know who would cover the hospital expenses, despite state regulations stating that disabled revolutionary veterans were entitled to free medical care.^{lxxiii} They sent him back to the factory, where he was treated in the infirmary. Because of his absence, his salary was docked 50 yuan. When he complained, management accused him of looking at issues only through the narrow lens of money. He then went to the union and said, “I’m a disabled veteran, and according to central state regulations I am entitled to 100% labor insurance coverage.” The union turned him down. Its chair, Xie Yimin, told him, “You’re a war hero and a labor model and you still want 100% insurance coverage?” Shao then contacted two organizations that were expected to help enforce central state regulations, the Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Municipal Veterans Committee. They both called union chair Xie about Shao, urging him to implement the regulation guaranteeing 100% coverage for disabled veterans. Xie again refused, telling them that “government institutions can’t tell our factory what to do.” Sometime later, Shao overdosed on drugs in a suicide attempt. Management was unmoved, and claimed that Shao attempted suicide because of “unrequited love.”^{lxxiv}

Shao’s case was but one of many health-related suicides (and suicide attempts) throughout the 1950s and 1960s in urban and rural areas. Lack of access to medicine, chronic pain, lack of public and family sympathy and official indifference were generally cited as the main causes.^{lxxv} In a 1956 report from Shanghai, 22% of 18 suicide cases from 1954-1956 were due to “ridicule because of mental illness,”^{lxxvi} and in 1959, Chen Shusen, a high-ranking Civil Affairs official responsible for the northern provinces, noted in a summary report that “a considerable proportion of suicides among veterans during the last several years have been caused by chronic illnesses that were not treated in a timely manner.”^{lxxvii}

More can be gleaned from these reports than victimization, however. Veterans in China, like many of their counterparts around the world, were convinced their military duty entitled them to first-class, or “turbocharged,” citizenship, even if this perception was not widely shared in the communities in

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which they lived. They also shared with fellow veterans a propensity for frank and direct language, and a boldness and courage that are probably derived from military service; collective action among veterans is not uncommon in history.^{lxxviii} The veterans in Qingpu cited earlier petitioned the county chief and frequently wrote letters to administrative offices; Shao Ran was determined to secure his rights to free medical care, and persisted despite the objections from his superiors; similarly, Zeng Jiti, a veteran in Wan county, Sichuan, wrote to Marshal Liu Bocheng, then one of the heads of the CCP's Southwest Bureau, "asking him to send someone to investigate" why county industries were hiring, but veterans were still jobless, or held "inappropriate ones,"^{lxxix} while in Shanghai they appealed to the local People's Congress, and "frequently" went to the District Committee or local BCA to seek help transferring jobs.^{lxxx} An investigation by *People's Daily* mentioned veterans who filed charges with the "district, country, provincial people's congresses and even CCP central."^{lxxxi} For civilian officials who wrote reports on veterans, these sorts of behaviors were labeled as "arrogance." Some veterans, they complained, "think of themselves as having rendered a great service," and looked down upon officials whose history and class status was less illustrious, had never been abroad ("I've been in Korea! What makes you think you're such a hotshot?") or who were younger than them;^{lxxxii} in Qingpu, veterans were well-known for their "strong personalities" and for "saying whatever they want to say" (*yousa jiangsa*, in local dialect).^{lxxxiii}

Veterans' biographical profiles were, it seems, very complex. While generalizations about large populations are always fraught with methodological difficulties, the available evidence does suggest that, for many, everyday life posed formidable challenges. Many veterans experienced many health problems, outsider-status in cities and in villages, high rates of illiteracy, poverty, and the stresses of bachelorhood. This profile, in some respects, mirrored the recruiting pool of the PLA, which drew disproportionately from the rural areas where Chinese revolution was based for many years, as well as the disinterest of cultural elites from serving in the military after 1949 (many more were inclined to serve during the Cultural Revolution, when schools were closed). These attributes were somewhat balanced by veterans' sense of entitlement, confidence, and "strong personalities."

The Job Front

For many veterans in China, surviving war or extended periods of military service turned out to be only one of several obstacles they had to overcome. Health and marriage related vulnerabilities were exacerbated by other deficiencies in “social capital” that were not remedied by state policies or by community level sympathy and support. As a result, employment, job security and promotion were all battles that proved to be as challenging as some of their experiences in the military. But quite unlike the military, where one can marshal non-technical skills such as courage and perseverance, modernization and industrialization—with their emphases on urbanization, production, and technology—proved to be a very forbidding one, particularly for veterans who hailed from poor rural areas. This situation was not unfamiliar to top Chinese leaders: central state policies encouraged units to hire veterans knowing they faced many disadvantages, as well as out of recognition for their sacrifices. But this recognition was not widely shared in society and many organizations refused to employ them and did their best to frustrate their ambitions.

The determined refusal to hire veterans was no secret in China. During the mid-1950s, the *People’s Daily* published several highly critical articles concerning the practice of “unreasonably refusing to hire veterans,” Letters to the Editor from veterans, responses to these letters and “apologies” from personnel departments, as well as words of encouragement from former comrades-in-arm.^{lxxxiv} These articles indicate that discrimination was widespread—problems in Shanghai, Shandong, Liaoning, Guangzhou and Jiangsu were all covered in these articles—but affected urban areas with even greater intensity.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s cities were magnets that attracted hundreds of thousands of veterans from around the country owing to better economic prospects, pressure from family members, abuse at the hands of rural officials, lack of assistance for disabled soldiers, difficulty adjusting to back-breaking work, natural disasters or a sense that after their horizon-opening experience in the army,

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returning to become an ordinary peasant was simply out of the question.^{lxxxv} Rural officials were only too glad to be rid of them, so they “casually” issued them unauthorized “letters of introduction” to whatever urban destination they desired.^{lxxxvi} If such letters could not be procured, veterans forged them (even as late as 1961), making sure to falsify their native place, party member status, or location of family members.^{lxxxvii} Urban officials, however, concerned with overpopulation, were far less pleased by the influx of veterans: Shanghai cracked down, and pleaded with the PLA and the central government to be more careful with their paperwork and verification processes, as did other municipalities throughout the 1950s and 1960s.^{lxxxviii} They were only partially successful: while some veterans who could not find a position in the city labor force could be persuaded to return to the countryside, most did not give up so easily. In Shandong, unemployed veterans banded together and “raised a ruckus” in local government offices; others joined with veterans from neighboring Hebei province and paraded down the street with an image of Mao Zedong and a “moral economy” inflected sign that read, “The government doesn’t care, so we have to beg.”^{lxxxix} Some wrote to Mao and Marshal Zhu De, while others plopped themselves down on railway tracks (“a very bad influence”), begged, sold matches and odds and ends, slept in police pillboxes, threatened suicide (“the Huangpu River will be my home!”) or pummeled urban officials who tried to force them back to the countryside. Theft of food was not uncommon. Some were said to have sold every piece of clothing they owned except what they had on their backs.^{xc} As late as 1957, demobilized naval veterans in Wuhan threatened a large demonstration if the government forced them to return to the countryside.^{xc1}

This initial reception did not bode well for veterans’ future job prospects. Because of their military service, many were newcomers to the urban work force and power structure, and thus lacked connections to employers who valued skill and similar native place ties. Moreover, because the overwhelming majority of urbanites did not experience military service, “networking,” a critical resource in even capitalist labor markets, was close to impossible for them.^{xc2} This is not unusual: when African-American veterans from WWII faced comparable political and economic discrimination when they returned to the South, many of them migrated to Northern cities, where they occupied the lowest rungs in

the labor force.^{xciii} Perceptively, a letter written from a high-ranking veteran in Hebei to Liu Shaoqi compared Chinese veterans to African-Americans: “we’re treated just like white people treat blacks in the US!”^{xciv} Moreover, much like African-American veterans who carried the extra burden of their skin color but also an enhanced sense of martial citizenship after their service, Chinese veterans brought with them a lot of unwelcome “baggage”: an “attitude” about privileges and their rightful place in the polity, unsophisticated manners and lack of education; “they all have problems,” one manager complained.^{xcv} “As soon as they hear the applicant is a veteran, they think of dozens of excuses not to hire him,” a provincial report noted.^{xcvi} In Qingpu, when two employers approached the Civil Affairs Bureau looking for a cook, the Bureau official referred them to several veterans. At this, the employers “wrinkled their eyebrows, frowned, and asked ‘isn’t there any one else?’” Bureau officials then reminded them of the State Council directives regarding veteran employment, to no avail: “Um, we don’t need a cook anymore.”^{xcvii}

Owing to the rapid expansion of industry in the early 1950s, many veterans eventually managed to find jobs, but these tended to be in low-skill positions in the expanding state sector. By the mid-1950s, however, employment opportunities for veterans constricted. The gradual dismantling of the private sector during the socialist transformation of industries meant that few private firms were willing to take on new workers. Veterans were aware of this transition and refused to be assigned to firms in that sector because “it doesn’t have a future.”^{xcviii} Moreover, in the mid-1950s the government implemented a fiscal austerity program that resulted in very tight restrictions on hiring: factories needed higher-level approval to add even one temporary worker, but veterans were the exception to this rule.^{xcix} Nevertheless, when firms hired, they were extremely particular about the applicant, and veteran status decreased the chances of being chosen. For example, Shanghai Factory #614 received authorization from the Central Bank to hire 153 workers. The Bank informed the Central Veterans’ Committee, which in turn notified the Shanghai Veteran Committee, of 50 positions for which veterans were to receive priority. All had to meet the following conditions, however: “politically reliable, healthy, and junior high school education.” The

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Veteran Committee sent 700 files of qualified veterans to the factory's personnel department, but the factory only chose six, after a month and half of delays.^c

Similar problems were noted in firms and organizations in the publishing and cultural world. More than most, these institutions were staffed by the urban cultural elite, and their jobs probably involved publishing magazines, books, and films extolling the virtues of the PLA and CCP. In December 1955, an investigation team found that publishing houses repeatedly failed to implement the 1955 State Council "Decision" (*jueyi*) regarding preferential access for veterans in employment. Here again, Personnel Department directors appear to have been the main obstacle preventing veterans from gaining access to good jobs. In 1955, Hu Zhangxian, a section chief of personnel in the Publishing Division (which was responsible for publishing houses), approached Zhu Chuanrong of the Bureau of Civil Affairs seeking fifty veterans, mainly to work as apprentice editors. The two agreed that they would consider veterans with high school education (which precluded most all rural veterans), "reliable" politics, "clean" political history, and relatively good physical condition. On May 25, Zhu sent over 60 files for them to peruse. Sometime later, Zhu called Hu and told them that his superior in Personnel, Gu Qiu, demanded that those selected also be CCP or Communist Youth League members, not "ordinary people." If they could not satisfy these conditions, he would not even look at the files. Zhu called Hu Zhangxian, complaining that only 24 veterans of the 60 were CCP or CYL members, but most had the necessary educational credentials and had "undergone several years of revolutionary tempering." But the Personnel Director refused to reconsider. After another round of negotiating, they "reluctantly" agreed to take a look at the files. In the end, seven people were chosen as apprentices. Among those rejected were two CCP members, 15 CYL members who were teachers in the army or involved in the communication field. On August 6, 1955, investigators sent their findings to the city government, charging that the demands of cultural institutions were "divorced from reality." The city requested that the Publishing Division reconsider this problem, but they ignored the letter; no sanction for this violation of policy was mentioned.^{ci}

This, as well as other reports, not only suggest that veterans were discriminated against when they applied for jobs, but also that when they were placed, it was usually at the lowest rung of the hierarchy—as apprentices and contract and temporary workers. Such placement meant that they earned less than workers who were younger but who had more skills and work experience, or were better educated. Veterans could have earned more to the extent that their units followed national salary regulations, which stated that veterans’ civilian job rank and salary scale should include their time in the army.^{cii} But this regulation was frequently ignored with apparent impunity. In Shanghai, some managers claimed that they “never received” the relevant documents, but even when they did, they were not implemented; salary analyses showed that it was common for veterans to be 3-4 ranks below what they deserved.^{ciii} In Liaoning Province, *People Daily* reporters noted very similar problems.^{civ}

This issue proved to be a major source of contention between veterans and other workers and local authorities. Veterans wrote letters complaining about it (63% of letters from veterans to the Labor Bureau concerned salary and rank not including time spent in the military^{cv}), staged work slow-downs and strikes, even at very sensitive facilities (such as the Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai), posted big character posters, and petitioned local authorities.^{cvi} It is also highly likely that many veterans were involved in the 1957 “Strike Wave” in Shanghai, as those who were most active in it were temporary and contract workers.^{cvi} By bringing this issue to the attention of city or district level officials, coupled with some degree of media attention, collective action proved to be an effective, but limited, political resource, just as in the post-Mao period unemployed workers have learned that the bigger the noise they make, the more likely it is for their problem to be addressed, even if a comprehensive solution cannot be obtained. Some veterans received “permanent worker” status after bouts of collective action, or had their salaries adjusted after city or county level investigations.^{cvi}

Whistleblowing and Retaliation

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If veterans had a difficult time securing material benefits or making sure local officials carried out national policies, were they more successful playing, or at least taking succor in, other facets of their identity—for instance their political status, confidence, and willingness to speak out against real and perceived slights? It would seem that their “red” and “revolutionary” status could be their “Ace”; many veterans did take central state policy and propaganda to heart—they considered themselves patriotic citizens worthy of respect. But to what extent was this feeling reciprocated, or at least tacitly acknowledged, by lower levels of the state and the general public? What might explain a tepid reception to claims based on martial conceptions of citizenship?

An excellent way to examine these questions is to focus on the politics surrounding whistleblowing—an act that is often motivated by the desire to do good, but also threatening to authority. In their extensive study of whistleblowing in the United States, Myron Glazer and Penina Migdal Glazer noted that whistleblowers tend to be “conservative people devoted to their work and their organizations...they believed that they were defending the true mission of their organization by resisting illicit practices.” They also note that this defense frequently comes at a steep price. Regardless of how well-justified the complaint, government and industry showed a “consistent pattern of harsh reprisals—from blacklisting, dismissal or transfer to personal harassment.”^{cix}

While the slightly anachronistic term “whistleblowing” (how many police still use whistles?) does not have a lexical equivalent in Chinese, the concept is not foreign. In the Confucian tradition, it was the literati’s obligation to call attention to immorality, injustice, and corruption in government; in more modern times, intellectuals and educated youth, as the literati heirs, have claimed this mantle, “whistleblowing” against the regime during the 100 Flower Movement (1956-7), “revisionism,” corruption and sexual immorality during the Cultural Revolution, and against leftist radicalism and injustice in its aftermath (Democracy Wall). But when we have sources that allow us to turn our attention away from educated elites, “movements,” and “campaigns,” it becomes clear that in everyday life it was often veterans, not intellectuals, who “blew the whistle” on corruption, injustice, and “immorality” in the state and society. Those veterans who found themselves outside of the power structure took seriously at

least some of the public-minded ideals they had been taught and experienced in the military. Much like some American WWII veterans in the South who ran for office on “clean government” platforms because they were disgusted by the waste and corruption they witnessed around them,^{cx} so too in China veterans’ strong personalities, frankness, and conviction that they were protected by their status led to an outpouring of complaints, protests, strikes, and sarcastic letters addressed to civilian officials throughout the Maoist years, even during the early 1950s, when the regime supposedly was in its “honeymoon years” prior to the anti-rightist campaign, Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution.^{cxii}

Much like the US case, the press was where whistleblowing often surfaced. In 1957, Zhang Zhengfei penned an essay that appeared in *People’s Daily* under the title, “In the end, is complaining a lot good or bad?”^{cxiii} In it, he recalled the following incident:

In the fall of 1953 I was at a meeting in the Shanxi government. I overheard a personnel official in the General Office proclaiming that “there are very many veterans who have come to Taiyuan [the Provincial capital], and there are some units in the city that think that veterans “raise too many objections” (*ti yijian*) and refuse to hire them. We’re now supposed to rectify this mistake.”

This brief account does not delve into details about what sort of issues veterans raised, but it does show that as early as 1953, veterans already had a reputation. References to veterans “habitually” (*ai tiyijian*) or “readily” (*hao tiyijian*) raising objections to various practices abound in the archival sources as well. These were often paired with complaints about the difficulty “leading” veterans (*bu hao lingdao*) and retaliation (*baofu*) against them. These issues were connected: veterans’ claims to status, dissatisfaction and tendency to speak out did make it more difficult to “lead” them, and retaliation usually followed complaints. The topic of complaints varied over the years, but tended to focus on several issues: sex, corruption and waste as the following abbreviated examples show.

Sex

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Two cases from Qingpu suggest that veterans brought with them to civilian life a rather austere sense of official morality, even though quite a few of them, for reasons discussed above, failed to maintain the ideals of a “socialist family.” The first case involved Tang Jinfu and two veterans, Wang Rong and Shen Yanmin. Shen and Wang were temporary workers who became aware of Tang (who served in the county’s fishing industry department), committing adultery. Together they reported him to the higher authorities. Tang retaliated by charging that the two veterans had a “bad attitude at work,” which promptly resulted in their dismissal; another document on the same case notes that Tang falsely claimed that their contract “expired.” Eventually they found work in a factory that employed only veterans—a solution that prevented their mingling with other civilians during working hours.

The second case, which is a more fleshed out, took place in Zhaidong township and involved a veteran named Tao Baoqing, who was discharged in 1950. Upon his return, Tao was upset to discover that Zhang Yongzhen, a member of Siyi village’s Women’s Committee, was having an illicit relationship with Zhao Borong, a village cadre. He repeatedly yelled and cursed at Zhang and Zhao, who naturally came to despise him. In 1951, village cadre Zhao refused to supply water for Tao Baoqing’s field, causing a loud argument between them. The two then attempted to mobilize the village women to struggle against him, but this plan was nixed by the township organization committee. Tao had yet another argument with township and village cadres in 1952, during the campaign to eradicate pests; the latter all claimed that Tao was “unruly” and “lacked authority” among the villagers. As for Tao, he was said to be “very dissatisfied” with village and township authorities and did not hesitate to complain about them. “A very negative influence,” the report noted.^{cxiii}

Corruption, Theft and Waste

These of course were more serious charges than illicit affairs, as the CCP had specifically targeted them in political campaigns throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The conventional wisdom about these campaigns is that veterans were the primary perpetrators of corruption: they entered the city, got

power, and were seduced by urban materialism.^{cxiv} This was undoubtedly true, but since most veterans did not have access to power and valuable resources, it stands to reason that more may have complained about corruption than perpetrated it. Veteran complaints against corruption were very threatening, and the retaliation against them harsh. In Qingpu, for example, a veteran surnamed Lu worked at a cooperative and witnessed the director falsely reporting inventory and then selling the extra goods at a higher price on the private market. Lu “exposed” him and was promptly fired and reassigned to a factory that only employed veterans. “If you raise objections, only misfortune befalls you,” veterans noted.^{cxv} In Liantang district, Zhenghe township, the head of a production team named Lu Renliang took some melons from a field, but veteran Cao Xiangqin caught him red-handed. Cao charged that officials cannot just walk into a field and take whatever they feel like (this was a strict rule in the PLA). As a result, Lu told other officials that Cao was “an unruly bastard” with a “wavering class standpoint” because his wife was a daughter of a rich peasant. Lu was very worried about his future in the village.^{cxvi} In Shanghai, a report from 1955 noted that when veterans criticize “some unreasonable phenomenon the factory,” administrators think they are a “pain in the ass” and then falsely charge them with “violating labor discipline.” Factory unions collaborated in the search for incriminating materials, arrests, and expulsions from the party. One union took pride in having veterans berated for their “mistakes,” spreading the word on the factory floor that “the union really stuck it to the PLA.” A pharmaceutical firm’s manager said at a public meeting, “On the battlefield they were heroes, but in the factory they’re just teddy bears.” These “mistaken views and attitudes” were reported to be “relatively common.”^{cxvii}

Corruption, to be sure, was not limited to “decadent” Shanghai, nor was retaliation for its exposure. Veterans who blew the whistle on corruption in rural areas—even those with a long history of military recruitment—suffered comparable punishments. A summary report by a “Letters and Visits” office in Shandong in 1962 included a case in a village in Chendu commune in which a veteran named Xiao Changli was beaten and eventually murdered by local cadres for exposing corruption. Xiao’s wife, Hu Siling, filed charges against them at the provincial government. The Letters and Visits Office

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contacted the provincial procurator, and introduced her for a face-to-face talk. The case was handled properly, they noted. This was a “positive” example in the report, but negative ones were also included, such as local cadres who “took revenge” upon disabled veterans by arbitrarily canceling their benefits, lowering their disability level, beating them up, taking away their good class status, and denying financial aid to their families. Most of these cases remained unresolved: an investigation revealed that many counties and cities paid little attention to these letters, stuffing them into drawers or under chairs.^{cxviii}

To be properly understood, corruption charges in China (as in other countries), must be placed in political context. For many veterans, the most salient feature of this environment was their struggle for power, survival and respect against cadres who rose through other means: militia leaders, activists during land reform, technocrats, personnel officials, unions, or those with more education or specialized skills. Numerous reports indicate both estrangement and mutual resentment between these cadres and veterans, and were even noted in a speech by Marshal Peng Dehuai in *People’s Daily*.^{cxix} Because veterans rarely constituted a majority, it was not very difficult to isolate them politically.^{cxx} In Shandong, Qingpu, and elsewhere veterans disrespected village cadres because they “talk a lot, but can’t get much done,”^{cxxi} while local cadres complained of veteran “arrogance,” telling them that “the revolution would’ve succeeded without you,”^{cxxii} and “why are you so arrogant if you need welfare?”^{cxxiii} Even when rural cadres respected veterans—a sentiment I have not yet seen in urban archival sources—they feared them politically, and kept them at a distance (*jing er yuan*).^{cxxiv} Accusations of corruption were surely an attempt to gain leverage in this struggle, as well as an effort to purge the party of those who were seen as corrupting the revolutionary ideal. Whereas in the post WWII Soviet Union, a “harsh battle” took place between partisans and the Red Army veterans over “what the legacy of the war should be” and the *former* went down in a resounding defeat,^{cxxv} Chinese PLA veterans were more often than not losers. The similarity in political systems was overshadowed by the very different nature of warfare between the two countries during WWII. The Red Army was based on mass conscription during total war, and the PLA was not.

But why couldn't veterans play what they considered their ace—their strong identification with the revolution, victory and patriotism—more strongly and frequently? When factory officials and union jailed veterans for “violating labor discipline,” it was not only because veterans threatened their power, but also owing to the fact that many citizens did not share the central government's (and veterans' own) assessment of their worthiness to receive benefits and status as veterans in the first place. For veterans and the center, fighting against Japan, the US, and the Nationalists were the most critical elements in establishing their sense of citizenship. In the abstract, people could concur that it was good that the PLA emerged victorious, but in practice few seemed willing to draw any conclusions about individuals' or “corporate” (veterans as a quasi-“group”) worthiness. Instead, officials and citizens pointed to far less flattering identity markers, particularly family background and experiences.

By drawing attention to family background issues rather than a demonstrable record of service, civilian officials—including those who were highly educated and exposed to “nationalist sentiments”—capitalized upon the organizational history of the CCP and PLA. Both of these organizations operated for many years in harsh conditions in rural areas where only very few people were politically “pure” in the sense of having perfect class background (poor peasants with unblemished records). After 1945, the main effort of the revolution shifted to the conquest of cities, during which time the PLA absorbed elements of the Nationalist Army. As a result, the PLA that emerged from the civil war in 1949 was not very similar to the mass-conscripted Red Army during WWII, which represented a “nation-in-arms,” but instead a hodgepodge of individuals with a variety of political, class and social backgrounds (mainly from rural areas), and so were its veterans. A 1952 analysis of the social and political background of 2,105 veterans in Shanghai, for example, showed that 70% were “volunteers,” 6% left the Nationalist Army on their own accord and were absorbed into the PLA during the latter phases of the Civil War (*qiyi*) and almost one-quarter were pre-1949 POWs who were reeducated.^{cxxvi} After 1949, the PLA tried to balance its personnel by recruiting more people from cities, which prior to 1949, were “enemy territory.” These veterans were also “problematic” for many employers, their military service notwithstanding. The

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Minister of the Interior, Xie Juezai, wrote that “the majority” of problematic cases involved veterans with some education and urban background (and thus likely to have more contact with the Nationalists), and the minority were former POWs and Nationalist soldiers.^{cxxvii} The implications of a muddled background could be the same for all groups, however.

Crime and suicide statistics reveal some of the repercussions from “problematic” social and political histories. In a 1957 investigation of 40 suicide cases occurring between 1955-1957, 12.5% were caused by stress and anxiety stemming from “political history problems,”^{cxxviii} while some 25% of 135 criminal cases involving veterans in 1956 resulted from the politicized charge of “counterrevolution,” the second largest category after theft (36%).^{cxxix} The categories of “counterrevolution” and “problematic history” incorporated a wide range of experiences, but mainly referred to veterans who were in the Nationalist Army at some point, had kin or friends in Hong Kong or Taiwan, suspect class background (landlord, rich peasant) or whose father or brothers were in trouble with the government.^{cxix}

Some cases flesh out the stories behind the statistics. In Shanhe county, Shandong, Lu Yongwen was a veteran, but had landlord background. After he was discharged, he returned to the county and sought permission to enter a mutual aid team. The county refused, and he threw himself into a well. In a Guizhou case (Songtao county), Wu Enyun joined the PLA while he was a student at Sichuan university. When he was discharged in the mid-1950s, Wu tried to resume his studies, but the university refused because his father was a “counterrevolutionary” who had been arrested (other relatives were also under investigation) and he had been in a Nationalist Party organization (not unlike Chairman Mao, Zhou Enlai and many others). Wu traveled to Beijing and lived at the guest house of the Ministry of Interior. From there he appealed to the Department of Higher Education, who sent a letter back to Sichuan inquiring about Wu’s situation. The university explained their case, and the Education Department concurred with their decision. On January 5, 1956, Wu attempted suicide at Beijing’s Worker’s Cultural Palace, but this, too, failed. There were “very many” similar cases (all were violations of central state policy), and they caused veterans a great deal of anger at the government, stress, and sense of hopelessness.^{cxix}

Given the complex history of the Chinese Revolution and the need to remain on war footing in the early 1950s, the CCP was justified in limiting some former regime elements from gaining access to important jobs. Nor is it unusual: it took thirty years and two wars (the Spanish-American and Indian) for former Union and Confederate soldiers to reconcile after the Civil War.^{cxxxii} But even less reasonable, and probably more indicative of the failure of martial citizenship, was the discrimination they faced even when there was no evidence of participation in the Nationalist Army or political organizations. Throughout the 1950s, a widely held but mistaken perception in Chinese society was that *anyone* who became a veteran had some sort of “political problem,” otherwise, why would the PLA have demobilized them? By discharging them the PLA “separated the bones from the meat,” a union official claimed.^{cxxxiii} According to an investigation by the cadre section of a Shanghai firm, *all* veterans were said to have “physical or political history problems or else were purged by their units.”^{cxxxiv} Another quoted a workshop director who said that veterans were “garbage (*laji*) swept out by the military ”or “inferior goods” because of all their baggage and ailments.^{cxxxv} Scores of documents from the Center to local officials attesting to the contrary were ignored or filed away, or else read, but not announced publicly.^{cxxxvi}

What might have improved this situation? If the US case of Union and Confederate reconciliation can be any sort of guide, a foreign conflict help resolve, or at least soften, animosity between former combatants. If war-stimulated patriotism was indeed on the rise among wide swathes of the public, the tensions of the Civil War in China might have given way to a stronger sense of unity against the United States during the Korean War; certainly by 1951 the US posed a more serious threat than veterans who 15 years ago served in the Nationalist Army! Archival sources on the “Resist American, Support Korea” and “Patriotic Compact” campaigns question the extent to which Korean War veterans benefited from the wartime mobilization of public sentiments. Workers wondered: where’s Korea in relation to China? Why isn’t the PLA liberating Taiwan rather than fighting in North Korea? Why was China fighting for North Korea, when that country “helped Japan”? Many were unwilling to

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contribute anything to the war effort.^{cxvii} Reviews of efforts to get people to sign “patriotic compacts” (*aiguo gongyue*) in support of the war noted that the campaign failed to materialize in 40-50% of firms; in an investigation of 950 work units, “empty and vague” compacts were found in 600 of them.^{cxviii} In one firm, compacts were signed then posted on a wall, but they were quickly blown away by a strong wind. When investigators asked workers what the compacts were actually about “no one could remember.” In “very many firms,” patriotic compacts simply became a method to discipline a fairly unruly workforce; patriotic compacts morphed into “labor contracts”: workers promised to avoid “dozing off,” and “eating whenever we feel like it,” among other infractions. Workers “didn’t see the meaning and the connection between themselves and the patriotic compacts.”^{cxix} Typical remarks included:

I’m old—let the young ones do it. I don’t get why I should” (Qian Xuedu).

We’re only doing this because the factory makes inferior cloth and we’re going to be shut down. Let’s hurry up and sign already! (You Xideng)

What’s a ‘compact’? I don’t understand. (Liu Cui’e).

Signing a patriotic compact is like investigating a criminal. You go to a small room and Mr. Feng [a leader] reads a document line by line and then tells us to raise our hands in agreement. We all say ‘fine’ (*hao*), but we really don’t understand what the whole thing is about (Jiang Genmei).

That the war reached a stalemate and there were many POWs did not help either. Veterans in Shanghai were sometimes derided as “POWs,”^{cxl} while those who returned to rural areas were denied land they were entitled to during land reform. It also explains the widespread desire among veterans to return to the “warmth” of military service after their “cold” experience in civilian life.^{cxli} Rather than enjoy whatever “fruits of victory” that accrue to victors, many veterans returned from Korea only to find that their situation was quite similar to veterans from other states that fought *losing* wars with questionable legitimacy and public support, such as the notoriously disgruntled veterans from WWI in Germany (who sought revenge through participation in right-wing political organizations).

The Missing Ingredients

The complexity of different states' relationship to their veteran populations makes it close to impossible to use the J.S. Mills "Method of Differences" to figure out precisely which variables would have led to a better outcome in China. That said, by shifting our perspective from a worm's eye view to that of a bird crossing national boundaries, we can, at least in broad strokes, gain some appreciation for how China was substantially different than many other states. Let's begin with some of the similarities and then move on to the key differences.

Even a cursory glance at the comparative evidence on veterans returning from war is enough to demonstrate that Chinese veterans' experiences were not very unusual. In Ghana after WWI, veterans expected "better jobs," war bonuses, gratuities and pensions, but "on the whole, they were disappointed and disillusioned." Those veterans who managed better after the war tended to have good occupations *prior* to their enlistment, but "for most, war service merely heightened their frustrations by raising expectations that they post-war Gold Coast economy could not satisfy."^{cxlii} In the United States after WWI, employers, especially those in highly urbanized centers, were reluctant to fire workers who had taken veterans' places during the war, since in the meantime the former accumulated valued skills (and consequently earned more money than returning veterans). When veterans begged and peddled odds and ends in their uniforms to gain sympathy, the US government, like its Chinese counterpart, complained that uniforms were being misused.^{cxliii} On the whole, WWII veterans fared far better: the economy was humming and most veterans benefited from the GI Bill, a wise piece of legislation that emerged from widespread recognition of serious problems with the demobilization after WWI. But even after this so-called good war, the "peace dividend" was unequally divided. African-American veterans, like their Chinese counterparts, expected to see a rise in their economic status and better jobs because of their military service (in addition to more rights and privileges), but because fewer of them had a high school education prior to their enlistment, did not benefit nearly as much as better educated white veterans,^{cxliv} a repeat of what happened after WWI when there was no GI Bill.^{cxlv} Moreover, uneven implementation of

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the GI Bill's job training program in the Deep South (often due to racism) left many African-American veterans at a disadvantage in the labor market;^{cxlvi} very few were able to take advantage of its housing provisions, since the Federal Government only agreed to guarantee loans if banks agreed to lend the money.^{cxlvii}

In many Western (or more Westernized) countries that experienced mass warfare and close to universal conscription, however, there were countervailing cultural, social and political forces which served to ameliorate these problems to some extent and were conspicuously absent or negligible in the Chinese case. First, in many of these countries there was a shared *gender-based* understanding of the meaning of war insofar as it affected the men who served, which served as a post-war adhesive to political alliances as well as what Barbara Hobsen has called a “discursive resource” in strengthening veteran identity and citizenship claims.^{cxlviii} One central cultural narrative related to military service was that it helped demonstrate *worthiness as a man* and exemplified several positive masculine virtues; this, in turn, sometimes translated into demands for citizenship rights and better treatment—“real men” could not be easily dismissed and marginalized.

The record of this linkage is extensive. In Australia, veteran identity after WWI explicitly drew upon the masculinity associated with the “bush worker,” but was extended further by a decidedly masculine narrative surrounding the exploits of the ANZACs in Gallipoli.^{cxlix} Wounded British veterans of that war felt that their manhood was strengthened by their tragedy, and were often considered as “men among men” for having endured bodily harm.^{cl} In Spain, the Civil War was said to have destroyed Nationalist soldiers’ “lean and manly figure” and “virility,” so the only possible consolation could be “social recognition of their bravery and sacrifice.”^{cli} Russia, according to Joshua Sanborn, military authorities, particularly after WWI, were critical in developing the notion that “masculinity” (based on the aesthetic ideal of ancient Greece) was an essential component in nationhood and citizenship; they harshly criticized intellectuals for their scorning of sports and physical fitness, since they would not be “capable of bearing arms to defend the national ideal” (In China today, most top athletes come from the working classes).^{clii} In Bolivia, where most conscripts come from the powerless sectors of society, soldiers are still

able to “lay claim to militarized conceptions of masculinity to advance their own agendas. They advance a positive sense of subaltern masculinity tied to beliefs about bravery, competence and patriotic duty...to earn respect from women and male peers...a counterpoint to the degradation experienced from more dominant males.”^{cliii} Similar to these marginalized Bolivians, for African-Americans in the United States, every war since the Civil War was seen as an opportunity to defend and prove their “manhood” against their detractors, and veterans after the war enjoyed a boost in status in their own community having proven themselves in this way.^{cliv} While minorities were able to get special political leverage by their association with masculine ideals, whites also recognized that combat heightened masculinity and status among other men; as reported by Samuel Stouffer’s research team after WWII—and sharply contrasting to the situation in China after the war—the “front line combat man” was at “the top” of the status hierarchy; he was “the only person who could not be asked, ‘What are you doing for the war?’ He had no need to justify himself. He had also proven his manhood by withstanding the severest kinds of stress.”^{clv} This view was most certainly not new in the United States: Civil War veterans formed organizations that deliberately connected their masculinity and citizenship status,^{clvi} while prominent individuals among them, such as Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the most unlikely settings, such as at his 1895 Commencement Address at Harvard University, promoted an “ideology of manliness” (juxtaposed to the “comfort and greed of commercial culture”).^{clvii} In part, it was recognition of manliness on the battlefield, or “male warrior heroism,” that helped (white) northern and southern veterans reconcile after the Civil War.^{clviii}

In China, by contrast, there is little history of men proving their worthiness as citizens by proving their masculinity on the battlefield, despite efforts by some reformers to teach the population that martial qualities should be appreciated; even Guangong, the God of War in popular culture, was known in some areas as a patron of popular justice, not masculinity per se.^{clix} As a result, when wars were over and other citizens questioned the extent to which they deserved high status, veterans could not claim this mantle, or “masculine cultural narrative,” and others did not support them on this account. In significant ways, this

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is not that surprising. Martial citizenship, and nationalism for that matter, emerged during periods of mass warfare and (almost) universal conscription (such as WWI, WWII, and the Civil War); an intellectual such as Oliver Wendell Holmes most probably would not have spoken up in favor of masculine virtues if he had not served himself. China has never experienced warfare of this nature, and so veteran identity has never received the “boost” that comes with a cultural narrative equating masculinity with warfare. Chinese peasants, from whom the PLA draws most of its manpower, also suffer from this lack of connection: they are far easier to dismiss because society and the state does not admire them for “manly” service in the military.

It would misleading, however, to suggest that this cultural nexus just happened to “emerge”: there were, as it turns out, powerful social forces behind it. The status of veterans has gradually risen in the West largely owing to political battles led by either autonomous or semi-autonomous national veteran organizations, which to this day are missing from the Chinese scene (although present in Taiwan, South Korea and, from 1956, the former USSR, China’s “big brother” at the time). These highly “macho” organizations (such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the United Confederate Association, the British Legion, American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam War Veterans Association, and the Returned Servicemen’s League in Australia, among others), more than well-intentioned speeches by politicians or cultural elites, helped generate the shared political rituals in American civil religion that validate veterans’ experiences (such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day). The results of veteran activism are impressive: by 1910, decades of Grand Army of the Republic activism led to legislation for pensions for veterans and widows that represented 25-30% of average national earnings;^{clx} WWII veterans benefited from the GI Bill of 1944 in part because the administration feared tangling with them after the traumatic early 1930s, veteran-led “Bonus March.” To be sure, the US is not the only example of this. Modern Australian patriotism is founded upon the heroics of the ANZACs (the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces during WWI) at Gallipoli and the “intense member support” and “front-line pride and ethos” of their veteran organization, the Australian Returned Servicemen League.^{clxi}

Japan's military successes over China can certainly be partially attributed to its more successful cultivation of martial citizenship in the context of the Meiji-era policy of universal conscription.

But *how* were these veteran organizations successful? One common denominator is that most all of them possessed significant cross-class membership and allies in society who agreed that they were entitled to the respect that should come with citizenship. Owing to the dynamics of the Chinese revolution, the PLA and CCP's membership was overwhelmingly rural; even today few children of intellectual "nationalists" or businessmen would contemplate sending their children to the Army. In contrast, in post WWII Soviet Union, demobilized writers and novelists published diaries and stories in literary journals, books or plays, and the heroes of a "barrage of popular novels" on the post-war countryside were "demobilized officers."^{clxii} In his study of France, Eugen Weber argues that war and "something close to universal conscription" played an important role in promoting "national awareness" in the late 19th century;^{clxiii} Antoine Prost notes that the National Union of Veterans in France was supported by the state, "men of good works," and business; the national veterans movement included peasants *and* small traders from cities.^{clxiv} In the United States, WWI veterans—who came from all social strata—were the "dominant object of commemoration," a multivalent symbol that received the support of businessmen, civil organizations, and politicians.^{clxv} After WWII, African-American veterans teamed up with liberal groups and labor (all of whom had veterans among them) to press for changes in their status.^{clxvi} Until the post-Vietnam all volunteer army—which effectively formed a narrow warrior class (one-tenth of 1% of the population)—soldiers had "historically been America's truest reflection, a socioeconomic cross-section borne from common ideals."^{clxvii}

In China, this has not yet happened to any significant degree as the regime continues to pursue its "controlled polarization" governing tactics, and as a result demobilized veterans continue to be ignored by society, even if the state is forced to pay them more heed because of their protests. This goes a long way to explaining the failure of martial citizenship, and what strikes me as a sense of patriotism that is largely confined to highfalutin anti-foreign rhetoric rather than action on behalf of other citizens. After all, in the

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West, it has been veterans and others associated with the military—not professors, businessmen, or lawyers—who have pressed for a version of patriotism that stresses sacrifice and action (as opposed to words that do not involve costs^{clxviii}), as well as for civic activities and holidays promoting “love of country” such as flags in schools and public buildings, the pledge of allegiance in schools, national holidays, singing the National Anthem in sport events, war memorials (many with an anti-war message), pilgrimages, parades, fireworks, and a great deal of social and political activism.^{clxix} I will be more convinced when China’s “new nationalists” and “patriots” go to the countryside on their own accord, when physicians and nurses help improve the physical health of their fellow citizens by hanging up their shingle in rural areas, when elites give more of their time in NGOs or actually boycott Japanese products (instead of just talking about it), when lawyers help veterans sue employers for violating labor contracts (many free law clinics at PRC universities were established with funds from *overseas* foundations^{clxx}), or more students with advanced degrees return to China to work in poorer areas. Absent integrative institutions (such as the military) or campaigns (such as the policy of sending educated youth to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution), future Chinese elites will continue to write about citizenship and nationalism but are unlikely to develop any sense of empathy, or what Adam Smith called “fellow feeling” or “bonds of affection” (Abraham Lincoln) for their rural brethren, or veterans. It is not a coincidence that the revived attention to rural problems in China has coincided with the rise of political leaders who spent time in the countryside.^{clxxi}

Conclusion

With very few, if any, exceptions, people rarely get everything they want out their political systems—democratic or not. With so many demands placed upon them, and so many groups and individuals clamoring for attention, state officials cannot distribute material and symbolic resources in a way that satisfies everyone. Given that this is an enduring feature of politics, we might ask: so what if many Chinese veterans did not get all that they wanted, or felt unappreciated—like African-Americans or

“a donkey killed after grinding the wheat”? Are veterans really any different from unemployed workers demanding compensation, or farmers dispossessed from their land to make room for a mall? Aren't they similar to other interest groups that do not have a lot of clout in the capital?

My answer to these questions is yes; veterans are different, if only because many governments, including the PRC's say this is so; in the US, they even have cabinet level representation. In policy, veterans were granted martial citizenship (in the sense of preferential treatment and praise) based on their contributions to military victory, and military terminology coursed through the polity throughout the 1950s and 1960s (there were “campaigns,” production “brigades” etc.). Large scale campaigns were mounted to praise the PLA and its soldiers, and, as noted earlier, during the Cultural Revolution, youth enjoyed parading around in military fatigues. Moreover, intellectuals often speak in prideful terms about China's post-1949 rise in international stature, a feat that can be attributed more to its successful wars than its pre-1997 economy.

But policies and rhetoric, however well-intentioned or crafted, cannot substitute for the sort of shared experiences, sacrifices and leveling impact of a nation-in-arms in a mass war, which China never had. As a result, China does not have a culture that truly appreciates veterans, and so in the post-war period veterans lacked allies that empathized with them and lent them a helping hand. The same can be said of the state: political leaders in China in the 1950s and 1960s were a varied lot, but most of them came from the May 4th generation of cosmopolitan intellectuals, and various Marxist “theoreticians” and writers had more sway over policy than military veterans (much like non-veteran, intellectual neoconservatives in the United States in the Bush administration); even during the Cultural Revolution, leftist intellectuals such as Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Chen Boda had far more impact than the one veteran among them, Wang Hongwen. Unsurprisingly, veterans' sense of themselves as “first class” citizens was rarely reciprocated by others. Whereas in many other countries war and military service changed the “political opportunity structure” for many marginalized groups (it is harder to deny citizen rights to veterans who answer the call to arms), in China martial citizenship has been too controversial

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and contested to serve as a vehicle for significant social mobility, to the great misfortune of the rural population that serves in the PLA and veterans.

* I am very grateful to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for generous funding for this project. I am also grateful to participants in EAI sponsored lectures and symposia in South Korea, at Keio University in Tokyo and National Taiwan University in Taipei.

ⁱ The term “civil religion” (which has a legacy running from Rousseau to Durkheim and Robert Bellah) is often associated with this effort.

ⁱⁱ The PRC does have an Army Day (Aug. 1st) during which the state celebrates the achievements of the military and “comforts” (*naiwen*) military dependents, family members of revolutionary martyrs and disabled veterans, but it is generally seen as a day to support mobilized soldiers and their families more than veterans.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nor is there is separate Veterans Administration. In South Korea, the link between veterans and patriotism is quite explicit: the agency that administers to veterans is called the “Patriots and Veterans Agency.”

^{iv} Shanghai Municipal Archive (SMA hereafter) B168-1-655, 5.

^v Neil J. Diamant, “Hollow Glory,” in Neil J. Diamant, Stanley Lubman and Kevin J. O’Brien (eds.), *Engaging the Law in China: State, Society and Possibilities for Justice* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2005).

^{vi} This protest did not receive extensive coverage, quite unlike the protests against Japan the same year. See Radio Free Asia, 4/13/2005.

^{vii} Most African countries do not have a veterans day, except for those tied to the British Commonwealth. In Latin America, only Argentina has a veterans day. Victory day is celebrated in Eastern Europe, and veterans are honored during this. Veteran’s Day is more common in Western Europe, the US, UK and Oceania.

^{viii} Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), ch. 1.

^{ix} To be sure, these problems did not affect all veterans all the time—higher ranking officers were more successful in the transition to civilian life, as were veterans who were sent in large groups (1000+) to take over cities or where they constituted a majority of cadres in a party organization—but they did shape the lives of hundreds of thousands in the enlisted ranks and junior officers, particularly the 70-80% of discharged soldiers who did not become bureaucrats and were forced to return to agriculture or relatively menial jobs in the industrial sector of the economy. For an excellent account of rural revolutionaries transforming a city see James Gao, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre, 1949-1954* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2004). The number of veterans able to become officials varied over time and place, but rarely exceeded 35%, and most of these positions were at the village level and below. For instance, a report from Kunshan county near Shanghai noted that they received 1,258 veterans in 1960, of whom 492 (35%) became “cadres and people’s representatives” (SMA B168-1-655, 2); in Qingpu, a military investigation team showed that in an 11 year period (1951-1962), 9% of 1007 veterans received positions at the commune or county levels. Qingpu Archives (QA hereafter) 48-2-155, 23.

^x James Townsend, “Chinese Nationalism,” in Jonathan Unger (ed.), *Chinese Nationalism* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 20-1. Townsend is rightfully suspicious of accounts of popular nationalism in the post-Mao period, however (23).

^{xi} I used the term “widespread” following reports that indicate “very many problems,” “very serious problems” or “not a few problems” in a revised document that in its first draft that used the adjective “widespread” (*pubian*). See SMA B123-3-1442, 6; SMA B168-1-628, 30.

^{xii} SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 162; 161; SMA B168-1-628, 90.

^{xiii} Shandong Provincial Archive (SPA hereafter) A1-2-516 (1957), 17.

^{xiv} By “mass army” I rely on Barry Posen’s definition. He argues that “mass” refers to both size and “its ability to maintain its size in the face of the rigors of war,” and its ability to “retain its combat power.” See he “Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power,” *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993), 83.

^{xv} Posen does not note the level of social integration, but does attribute the rise of nationalism in Europe to warfare. By the same token, countries that have not experiences mass warfare, especially of a protracted nature, would be less “nationalistic.”

^{xvi} This is attributed to the historian Sir Lewis Namier. It is cited in Roger Hackett, “Japan,” in Robert Ward and Dankwart Rustow (eds.), *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), 328.

- ^{xvii} See Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly (eds.), *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 1.
- ^{xviii} Scholars in China have often told me that Mao's redeeming quality was precisely this: he messed up the economy and society, but China became a force in international affairs once again.
- ^{xix} This image can be found in Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004), 59.
- ^{xx} For late Qing and early Republican views of the importance of *shangwu* (respecting the martial) see Hans van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 13.
- ^{xxi} See especially, Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002); "Balancing Act; A Survey of China," *The Economist*, March 25, 2006.
- ^{xxii} Chen Yung-fa, *Making Revolution: The Communist Movement in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986), 11. Emphasis mine.
- ^{xxiii} Elizabeth J. Perry, "Chinese Conceptions of Rights: From Mencius, to Mao, and Now?" paper presented at Conference on the work of Benjamin Schwartz, Shanghai.
- ^{xxiv} See *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 119. Ronald Krebs, in *Fighting for Rights* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2006) views citizenship in terms of nationality and rights: "citizenship establishes a permanent home for some, declares some probationary residents, and fully excludes still others, and citizens alone are entitled to particular rights and subject to particular duties...to challenge another's citizenship is to challenge his or her place in the community." See p. 11.
- ^{xxv} On the contested process of citizenship see Charles Tilly, "The Emergence of Citizenship in France and Elsewhere," in Tilly (ed.), *Citizenship, Identity and Social History* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).
- ^{xxvi} Kevin J. O'Brien, "Villagers, Elections and Citizenship," in Merle Goldman and Elizabeth Perry (eds.), *The Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), 212.
- ^{xxvii} See "Observations on the Sociology of Citizenship: Obligations and Rights," *Social Forces*, Vol. 59, no. 1 (1980), 1.
- ^{xxviii} James Burk, "Citizenship Status and Military Service: The Quest for Inclusion by Minorities and Conscientious Objectors," *Armed Forces and Society*, 21, 4 (Summer 1995), 503.
- ^{xxix} This link is quite old in the West. It can be found both some of the city states of ancient Greece and Rome as well, in addition to writings of Machiavelli and Hegel. See Michael Geyer, "War and the Context of General History in an Age of Total War," *Journal of Military History*, 57, 5 (1993), 152-3.
- ^{xxx} Meyer Kestnbaum, "Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: The Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States," *Armed Forces and Society*, 27, 1, (Fall 2000), 28.
- ^{xxxi} Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999), Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001).
- ^{xxxii} See Lucy Salyer, "Baptism by Fire: Race, Military Service and U.S. Citizenship Policy, 1918-1935," *Journal of American History*, 91, 3 (December 2004), 849.
- ^{xxxiii} Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 16.
- ^{xxxiv} As many as 5,000 African-Americans fought against the British to gain their freedom, "or, if free, to enhance their standing in the community." Since then, it became "an article of faith" among blacks that "military service during wartime represented a path toward freedom and greater postwar opportunity." See Wray Johnson, "Black American Radicalism and the First World War: The Secret Files of the Military Intelligence Division," *Armed Forces and Society*, 26, 1 (Fall 1999), 29, 33. Also see James Burk, "Citizenship Status and Military Service," 506.
- ^{xxxv} Krebs, *Fighting*, 170.
- ^{xxxvi} Cited in Neil McMillen, "How Mississippi's Black Veterans Remember World War II," in McMillen (ed.), *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South* (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1997), 95-7, 107.
- ^{xxxvii} Burk, 508..
- ^{xxxviii} Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2003), 9, 12, 18.
- ^{xxxix} Sanborn, 5, 50.
- ^{xl} Sanborn, 5.
- ^{xli} Elizabeth Perry, "Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition," Harvard University, December 1, 2006.
- ^{xlii} According to ROC intelligence reports on Fujian province (where they had particularly good access owing to its proximity to Taiwan), employers who only reluctantly taken on veterans prior to the Cultural Revolution (and paid

low salaries), absolutely refused to hire them, especially those who were disabled or ill. Some returned to their villages because of the daily discrimination they faced. Other veterans took revenge: in May 1972 in Nan'an county, Fujian, a group of ten veterans burned communal granaries and stole weapons from the local militia. See Zhou Ziqiang (ed.), *Gongfei junshi wenti lunji*, Justice Ministry Archives (Xindian, Taiwan), Call # 590.8/3882, 209-10.

^{xliii} Most studies of civil-military relations focus on far higher levels, policy-making or the PLA. See, for instance, Ellis Joffe, "The Chinese Army After the Cultural Revolution: The Effects of Intervention," *The China Quarterly*, no.55 (1973), 450-477; Morton Halperin and John W. Lewis, "New Tensions in Army-Party Relations in China (1965-1966)," *The China Quarterly*, no. 26 (1966), 58-67. It is worth noting that many of these studies emerged at the highpoint of PLA influence during the Cultural Revolution, but today very few political scientists or sociologists are working on the military or civil-military relations. Topics related to political economy are far more popular.

^{xliiv} Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution* (N.Y.: Viking Penguin, 2005), 216-7.

^{xli v} Alan Skelly, *The Victorian Army at Home* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Univ. Press, 1977), 297-8.

^{xli vi} John Keep, *Soldiers of the Czar: Army and Society in Russia, 1492-1874* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 147.

^{xli vii} An analysis of 2105 veterans in Shanghai in 1952 noted that 64% were either illiterate or had primary school education, 34% had attended middle school and 3% had university experience. See SMA B168-1-607, 53.

^{xli viii} SPA A1-2-519, 19.

^{xli x} SPA A20-1-41, 69.

¹ Mao Zedong, "On Physical Education," in Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Penguin, 1974).

² Andrew Morris, *Marrow of the Nation: A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004).

³ SPA A1-2-519, 19.

⁴ SMA B168-1-607, 54.

⁵ QA 48-2-141, 12.

⁶ SPA A20-1-029, 17.

⁷ Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 191; Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne, 1982).

⁸ SMA B168-1-607, 73.

⁹ Ningguo county gazetteer, (Beijing: Sanlian, 1997), 574; SPA A20-1-109, 47.

¹⁰ Donzhi county gazetteer (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1991), 538.

¹¹ There is very little data on suicide rates across occupational groups, so it is difficult to establish if veterans' experience was unique. But suicide does reveal the gap between official status and the everyday predicament faced by many veterans.

¹² SMA B168-1-628, 22.

¹³ SMA B168-1-633, 78.

¹⁴ SPA A20-1-109, 48.

¹⁵ State Council Office on Veteran Resettlement, *Jundui ganbu zhuan ye fuyuan gongzuo wenjian huibian, 1950-1982* (Beijing: Laodong renshi chubanshe, 1983), (*Jundui ganbu* hereafter), 159-160.

¹⁶ QA 48-2-30, unpaginated.

¹⁷ As far as I can tell, the PLA, which might have lobbied more aggressively for them, was completely out of this loop.

¹⁸ SMA B168-1-628, 73; *Jundui ganbu*, 158.

¹⁹ SMA B168-1-628, 74. All firms preferred hiring temporary workers "from society" than veterans.

²⁰ SMA B127-1-358, 38; *Jundui ganbu*, 162.

²¹ QA 48-1-40, 18.

²² QA 48-2-98 (1956), 68.

²³ SMA B168-1-628 (1956), 45-6, 74; SMA B168-1-517, 139.

²⁴ This was not an isolated problem, as it came to the attention of the State Council in national-level reports about veteran issues. See *Jundui ganbu*, 162.

²⁵ Although there is no direct evidence for this, it is possible that this conflict masked regional tensions: most union officials came from the lower Yangze region, traditionally a fairly wealthy area with a long tradition of discriminating against relatively poor and unsophisticated northerners, the recruiting ground for the PLA. On these tensions see Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994).

- ^{lxxv} For evidence of Shandong suicides in the early 1950s see SPA A20-1-81 (1953), 62. For the mid-1950s see SPA A1-2-516 (1957), 17. For the early 1960s see SPA A20-1-332, 1.
- ^{lxxvi} SMA B168-1-628, 22
- ^{lxxvii} Dongcheng District Archive, 11-7-306 (1959), 3.
- ^{lxxviii} For Rome see Keppie, *Colonization and Veteran Settlement*, 122, and Alston, *Soldier and Society*, 53-4.; on politically aggressive Australian veterans see Garton, *The Cost of War*, 59-61; on war producing a new, “assertive” citizen see Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 67; for “frankness” of veterans see Antoine Prost, *In the Wake of War: ‘Les Anciens Combattants’ and French Society*, Helen McPhail trans. (Providence: Berg, 1992), 106-7.
- ^{lxxix} *Jundui ganbu*, 159.
- ^{lxxx} SMA B168-1-619 (1955), 49, 20.
- ^{lxxxi} *People’s Daily*, Aug, 6, 1956.
- ^{lxxxii} SMA B168-1-619, 70; 48; QA 48-2-155, 24; SMA B168-1-641, 14; SPA A20-1-109, 4-5; SPA A101-1-607, 28.
- ^{lxxxiii} QA 48-2-98, 66.
- ^{lxxxiv} See *People’s Daily* April 3, 1955 (“Unreasonably refusing to hire veterans”) August 3, 1955 for Shanxi; Dec. 25, 1955 (Jiangsu, Taicang county); November 29, 1956 (Liaoning); October 19, 1956 for a Letter to the Editor entitled “Why aren’t veterans being hired?” For a letter of encouragement, see May 9, 1955.
- ^{lxxxv} Shandong officials commented extensively on this problem, which they deemed “very serious.” Most all Northeastern cities witnessed an influx of veterans. See SPA A20-1-109, 48. For Shanghai, see B168-1-607, 74.
- ^{lxxxvi} *Shandong xinzheng gongbao*, December 1954, 13; SMA B168-1-607, 74; *People’s Daily*, May 6, 1954.
- ^{lxxxvii} SMA B1-2-1519 (1954), 1-3; SMA B168-1-649 (1960), 19.
- ^{lxxxviii} SMA B168-1-658 (1961), 43-44; B168-1-607 (1952), 50.
- ^{lxxxix} *Shandong xinzheng gongbao*, December 1954, 13.
- ^{xc} SMA B168-1-607 (1952), 74; B168-1-611 (1952), 124; *Jundui ganbu*, 159.
- ^{xci} SMA B1-2-1958, 55.
- ^{xcii} Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*.
- ^{xciii} Brooks, *Defining the Peace, Defining the Peace: World War II, Veterans, Race and the Remaking of the Southern Political Tradition* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004), 24.
- ^{xciv} SMA B168-1-628, 162.
- ^{xcv} *Shandong xinzheng gongbao* (December 1955), 13.
- ^{xcvi} *Shandong xinzheng gongbao*, 13; QA 48-2-141.
- ^{xcvii} QA 48-2-71 (1955), 38.
- ^{xcviii} SMA B168-1-619, 52.
- ^{xcix} SMA B168-1-633 (1957), 81; B168-1-619, 52.
- ^c SMA B168-1-619, 53.
- ^{ci} SMA B168-1-628, 43-4.
- ^{cii} This meant that if a veteran was an apprentice in 1950, joined the military for five years and then returned to the factory, their salary should be based on 5 “work years.”
- ^{ciii} SMA B168-1-628, 88; B168-1-633, 79; QA 48-2-141, 14.
- ^{civ} See issue of November 29, 1955.
- ^{cv} SMA B127-1-358, 37.
- ^{cvi} SMA B168-1-628, 140-54 ; B168-1-666, 9; B168-1-649 (1960), 30; SMA B168-1-666, 9.
- ^{cvi} Elizabeth Perry, “The Shanghai Strike Wave of 1957,” *China Quarterly*, no.137 (1994), 1-27.
- ^{cvi} SMA B168-1-633 (1957), 79; B168-1-649 (1960), 31; *People’s Daily*, Sept 22, 1957.
- ^{cix} See *The Whistleblowers: Exposing Corruption in Government and Industry* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1989), 5, 7.
- ^{cx} Jennifer Brooks, *Defining the Peace*, 7.
- ^{cx} Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden, “The Origins and Social Consequences of China’s Hukou System,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 139 (1994), 646.
- ^{cxii} May 29, 1957.
- ^{cxiii} QA 48-2-98, 68; QA 48-2-71, 38.
- ^{cxiv} Archival evidence tells of many veterans and martyr families who were caught in the net of political campaigns. The 5 Antis campaign, which ostensibly targeted the middle and upper classes, increased the ranks of unemployed among veterans and martyr families as well. See SMA B168-1-607, 50.
- ^{cxv} QA 48-2-71, 38.
- ^{cxvi} QA 48-2-141, 15. Also see QA 48-35, 2 for exposing corruption in a private business.

- cxvii SMA 168-1-628, 21, 30.
- cxviii SPA A20-1-332, (1962), 1, 82-4.
- cxix Nov. 16, 1956.
- cxx SPA A20-1-109, 48; QA 48-2-141, 15.
- cxxi QA 48-2-141, 13.
- cxxii QA 48-2-141, 15; *People's Daily*, April 18, 1956.
- cxxiii SMA B168-1-633, 80.
- cxxiv *People's Daily*, Aug, 6, 1956; SPA A1-2-516, 17; QA 48-2-109 (1957), 4.
- cxv Weiner, *Making Sense*, 9, 70, 73.
- cxvi SMA B168-1-607, 53. I am not sure if this composition was typical, however.
- cxvii *Minzheng jianbao*, May 24, 1956, 2.
- cxviii SMA B168-1-633, 78.
- cxvix SMA B168-1-517, 39.
- cxx *Minzheng jianbao*, May 24, 1956, 2.
- cxxi *Ibid.*
- cxxii O'Leary, "Blood Brotherhood," in John Bodnar (ed.), *Bonds of Affection: Americans Define their Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996).
- cxxiii SMA B168-1-628, 21.
- cxxiv SMA B123-3-1442, 6.
- cxxv SMA B168-1-628, 47; B168-1-607, 50.
- cxxvi SMA B168-1-628, 3.
- cxxvii SMA C1-2-361, 32, 33, 37; C1-2-121, .22; A22-2-45, 55.
- cxxviii SMA C1-2-362, 29.
- cxxix SMA C1-2-362, 30.
- cxl SMA 168-1-628, 98.
- cxli SMA B168-1-628, 22; *Jundui ganbu*, 635.
- cxlii Adrienne Israel, "Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads: Protest and Politics in Post-War Ghana," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30, 2 (1992), 361-2.
- cxliii Mary Jessup, *The Public Reaction to the Returned Service Man after World War I* (Washington DC: US Department of Labor, 1944), 10, 16-18, 21, 32.
- cxliv Jennifer Brooks, *Defining the Peace*, 17.
- cxlv Mary Jessup, 38.
- cxlvi David Oknst, "First a Negro...Incidentally a Veteran," *Journal of Social History*, 31, 3, 517-534).
- cxlvii Florence Wagman Roisman, "National Ingratitude: The Egregious Deficiencies of the United State' Housing Programs for Veterans and the 'Public Scandal' of Veterans' Homelessness," *Indiana Law Review*, 38, 1 (2005), 149-156.
- cxlviii Barbara Hobsen, "Women's Collective Agency, Power Resources, and the Framing of Citizenship Rights," in Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly (eds.), *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States*, 152. Hobsen writes that discursive resources include "the cultural narratives and metaphors that social actors exploit in the public representations as well as the contesting ideological stances that they take on dominant themes and issues on the political agenda."
- cxlix Garton, *The Cost of War*, 230-2.
- cl Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), 130; Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and the Great War in Great Britain," *American Historical Review*, 99, 4 (1994), 1169.
- cli Paloma Aguilar, "Agents of Memory: Spanish Civil War veterans and disabled soldiers," in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the 20th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 88.
- clii Joshua Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2003), 132-144.
- cliii Leslie Gill, "Creating Citizens, Making Men: The Military and Masculinity in Bolivia," *Cultural Anthropology*, 12, 4 (1997), 527-8.
- cliv For the Civil War see Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 2004), 5-8, 143. For WWI see Wray Johnson, "Black American Radicalism and the First World War: The Secret Files of the Military Intelligence Division," 33-4; for WWII see Brooks, *Defining the Peace*, 3-4.

- ^{clv} Samuel Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*, Vol. II (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1949), 309.
- ^{clvi} O’Leary, *To Die For*, 55.
- ^{clvii} David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2001), 209.
- ^{clviii} O’Leary, “Blood Brotherhood,” 54.
- ^{clix} Ralph Thaxton Jr., *Salt of the Earth: The Political Origins of Peasant Protest and Communist Revolution in China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997).
- ^{clx} O’Leary, *To Die For*, 47.
- ^{clxi} G.L. Kristianson, *The Politics of Patriotism: The Pressure Group Activities of the Returned Servicemen’s League* (Canberra: Australia National Univ. Press, 1966), 189, 212.
- ^{clxii} Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 45, 49, 57.
- ^{clxiii} Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1976), 298. The army, at least for a time, was considered the “school of the fatherland.”
- ^{clxiv} Probst, *In the Wake of War*, 29, 34, 46-7.
- ^{clxv} John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the 20th Century* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), 84.
- ^{clxvi} Brooks, 7.
- ^{clxvii} Owen West, “America’s troops have moved on,” *International Herald Tribune*, May 29, 2006. The all-volunteer army is highly problematic in wartime, not only from a manpower perspective and the unfair distribution of sacrifice, but also in terms of facilitating public *disengagement* from the conflict. West, a reserve Marine Corps major, overstates the idea of the military “borne from common ideals,” but his larger point about class is accurate.
- ^{clxviii} Probst writes of French WWI veterans: “It is impossible to overstate the veterans’ hatred for the patriotism of the home front. They detested the middle-aged men who demanded offensives and paid for them light-heartedly with the lives of others—their own lives” (p. 81).
- ^{clxix} See Mona Siegel, “History is the Opposite of Forgetting”: The Limits of Memory and the Lessons of History in Interwar France,” *J. of Modern History*, vol. 74 (2002), 784-7; David Glassberg and J. Michael Moore, “Patriotism in Orange: The Memory of World War I in a Massachusetts Town,” in Bodnar (ed.), *Bonds of Affection*, 164-5; Probst, 53-4.
- ^{clxx} China News Digest ([Hwww.cnd.org/H](http://www.cnd.org/H)), August 16, 2002.
- ^{clxxi} For this argument see Cheng Li, *China’s Leaders: The New Generation* (Lanham: Rowman Littlefield, 2001).