



Forgetting and Denying: Iris Chang, the Holocaust and the Challenge of Nanking

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This article problematizes representations of Chinese victimization during World War II as a 'Holocaust' or 'Forgotten Holocaust'. Literature on the Jewish Holocaust suggests that comparing other genocides to it benefits the non-Jewish group. Opinions differ as to whether Jewish history suffers, and whether such comparisons are justified. Using studies of the rape of Nanking in 1937 by Iris Chang and Chinese Diaspora groups, I argue that while using the Holocaust as a means of packaging Chinese suffering may initially stimulate interest, and help to highlight the problems of Japanese denialism, extending such parallels too far creates problems of representation. This includes distorting the roles of victimized and perpetrator nations, decontextualizing victims and events, while advancing a number of inaccurate comparisons with both Germans and Jews.

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Introduction

This article questions the wisdom of representing Chinese victimization during World War II as a 'Holocaust' or 'Forgotten Holocaust'. Generally, literature on the Jewish Holocaust suggests that comparing other genocides with the Holocaust benefits the non-Jewish group. Opinions differ, however as to whether Jewish history suffers as a result, and whether such comparisons are justified. Using studies of the rape of Nanking in 1937 by Iris Chang and various Chinese Diaspora groups, I argue that while using the Holocaust as a means of packaging Chinese suffering may initially stimulate interest in lesser known historical tragedies, extending such parallels too far creates problems of representation. This includes distorting the roles of victimized and perpetrator nations, decontextualizing victims and events, while advancing a number of inaccurate comparisons with both Germans and Jews.

Using the Holocaust

In modern world history, few tragedies resonate as strongly as the Holocaust of European Jews, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 6 million people.



The Holocaust has achieved a pre-eminence unequalled by any other genocide in history. As Goldstone notes: 'No other genocide has evoked this response from the international academic community' (Goldstone, 2001, 42), while Rubenstein argues, 'Few events of the twentieth century have been the object of as much persistent and popular interest...' (Rubenstein, 2001, 33). Sydnor sees 'a vast literature in a variety of languages' (Sydnor, 1993, 74), Levin, a 'huge proliferation of literature, television programs, and films' (Levin, 1993, 197). Young charts a 'museum boom', with '[t]housands of monuments, preserved ruins, plaques, museums, and study centers,' (Young, 1994a) while Novick describes 'a flood of books, films, university courses, and docudramas ... invoked as reference point in discussions of everything from AIDS to abortion' (Novick, 1994, 159).

Stemming from the idea that the Holocaust has been successfully commemorated or even 'industrialized' (Finkelstein, 2000) has emerged a debate about whether the Holocaust can be compared to other tragedies, and whether or not the word 'holocaust' should be borrowed by other groups seeking to commemorate their own histories. Many historians condemn any 'borrowing' of the vocabulary and imagery of the Final Solution. Landau has described a process of 'hijacking' and a 'grotesque competition in suffering' (Landau, 1998, 3–5). Huyssen notes also 'the proliferation of an often facile Holocaust victimology in a whole variety of political discourses' (Huyssen, 1994, 13), while Rosenbaum condemns 'inappropriate "word-napping"' (Rosenbaum, 2001, 13–14). Such 'absolutist' views, as Rosenberg argues, negate the very idea that the Holocaust can be compared to anything that preceded or followed it (Rosenberg, 2000, 150–151).

A number of Holocaust historians have initiated projects to compare the Holocaust with other genocides, often in an effort to promote Holocaust uniqueness, while reducing the significance of other tragedies. Katz, for example, has down-played, even denied, other genocides, such as those of North America's indigenous peoples, and the Armenians (Katz, 2001, 21, 26, 30–34). Bauer locates the Holocaust within world history, yet sees it as genocide-plus: 'a radicalization of genocide: a planned attempt to physically annihilate every single member of a targeted ethnic, national, or racial group' (Roth, 2000; Bauer, 2001, 10–12). As such the term can only be used for the Jewish Holocaust or a future genocide which uses the Holocaust as 'a precedent for similar actions' (Roth, 2000; Bauer, 2001, 10–12; Rosenberg, 2000, 155). Melson, in his four-stage model of genocide, puts the Holocaust in a separate category, over and above 'total genocide' (Melson, 1992, 26–27, 29).

Other historians, however, see comparison and borrowing as inevitable. Moshman argues that since our contemporary understanding of genocide is based on the Holocaust, we have little choice but to invoke this 'prototype' as a symbol for comparison (Moshman, 2001, 432, 444–448). For Flanzbaum, the



Q2 Holocaust has become a ‘touchstone of victimization’, while Kaplan sees its ethical components as a ‘standard of measure for right and wrong, good and evil in the growth of moral civilization’ (Moshman, 2001, 447; Kaplan, 1994, ix). The view that the Holocaust can and should be used as a comparative device is becoming more widespread (Berenbaum, 1990, 34; Novick, 2001, 9; Stannard, 2001, 192).

The ‘Chinese Holocaust’

Such lively academic debates have traditionally focused on the Jewish community, and the outcomes of comparison on Holocaust research, the moral standing of Jews worldwide, and the emotional impact on survivors and their families (MacDonald, 2003). Generally, it is assumed that other groups who invoke a ‘holocaust’ benefit from it, that it is a useful means of promoting and packaging one’s own history. An emerging field of comparative genocide studies offers a large selection of non-Jewish groups using the Holocaust as a means of representing their past histories. Rosenberg has dubbed these ‘trivialists’: those ‘quite willing to see the Holocaust as an event of major importance, but they nevertheless agree that the claim of uniqueness cannot be sustained in any non-trivial form’ (Rosenberg, 2000, 150).

Stannard, for example, writing on North America’s indigenous peoples, has angrily insisted that the elevation of the Holocaust constitutes ‘the hegemonic product of many years of strenuous intellectual labor by a handful of Jewish scholars and writers ...’ (Stannard, 2001, 249). Churchill ironically acknowledges Bauer and Katz as the ‘negative inspiration’ for his work (Churchill, 1997, i). For ‘trivialists’, while the Holocaust (with a large ‘H’) ‘clearly applies exclusively to the genocide that was perpetrated by the Nazis against their various victims’, holocaust with a small ‘h’ should ‘belong to anyone who cares to use it’ (Stannard, 2001, 249). Following the trivialists’ lead, a number of new ‘holocausts’ emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Chief among these perhaps is the ‘Chinese Holocaust’, also called the ‘Asian Holocaust’, the ‘Pacific Holocaust’ and the ‘Forgotten Holocaust’.

However, it is by no means certain that adopting the vocabulary and imagery of another group’s dissimilar tragedy is the best means of articulating and representing one’s own history. This article problematises the Chinese Holocaust and the imagery which surrounds it, through a reading of Chinese-American journalist Iris Chang’s (1997) *The Rape of Nanking* and the work of Diaspora Chinese activist groups. Chang’s book became an almost instant bestseller and has been heralded as the most accessible resource on Nanking in the English language. However, while the use of Holocaust imagery may initially attract public interest in the historic plight of Chinese victims, framing



Chinese victimization in this way leads to problems of misrepresentation. Direct comparisons have led to a series of false dichotomies, which distort historical accuracy and reduce the authentic significance of Chinese victimization. Chang's work specifically encounters problems in this regard, as does the work of many of her fellow activists in the United States.

Japanese Atrocities

The exact number of Chinese victims of Japanese aggression in the 1930s and 1940s is difficult to establish with certainty. Between 1,578,000 and 6,325,000 people were said to have died directly as a consequence of Japanese crimes against humanity. When one factors in Chinese deaths as a result of looting, medical experimentation, starvation, bombing, and battle deaths, the total may be as high as 19 million people (Shermer and Grobman, 2000, 232). Some provide lower estimates, of 10 million or less (Beigbeder, 1999, 52–54). Chinese activists routinely use a much higher figure of 35 of million deaths, a figure also advanced by the People's Republic of China ('The Project of the Preparatory Committee...').

Within the accepted overall totals for Japanese atrocities, certain events stand out as particularly horrendous. The siege and brutal occupation of Nanking in December 1937 has figured as a key Japanese atrocity, one which for some possesses 'the same resonance as Auschwitz had in Nuremberg' (Buruma, 1995, 114). Generally, Nanking can be contextualized within a larger war of Japanese aggression in China. By the end of 1937, much of Northern China and Inner Mongolia was in Japanese hands. Nanking was one of the few cities remaining after Shanghai and other key cities had fallen to the Japanese. (Hunter Boyle, 1972, 54; Tao, 2001, 32–33). Sadly, in some respects, Nanking was hardly unique. As Eastman reveals: 'the historian sickens in reading the repeated and relentless accounts of similar acts of inhumanity', including 250,000 civilians killed in Shanghai and other 300,000 civilians on the way from Shanghai to Nanking (Eastman, 1980, 218).

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Yet, Nanking does have unique features. It 'stands out because of its scale and intensity', but also because of its being witnessed by 'neutral observers' (Eastman, 1980, 293–295). The presence of Westerners, and the fact that they were able to document and bear witness to the atrocities committed here made Nanking a *cause celebre* during the late 1930s. That Nanking was the capital of Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists also gave it special significance (Hunter Boyle, 1972, 54).

On 15 August, Japanese forces began air raids, which continued until 13 December, after which time Japanese troops entered the city (Mackerras, 1998, 39; Eykholt, 2000, 11). What followed the siege were 6 weeks of mass brutality,



rape and murder. Chang describes massacres of civilians ‘in every section of the city’, ‘moaning and screaming’, ‘rivers of blood’ — unimagined horrors (Chang, 1997, 46). A figure of 20,000 rape victims is commonly cited, with many writers noting the extreme brutality that accompanied the violation and killing of women and other horrors such as head-chopping contests (Bagish and Conroy, 1978, 325–327; Williamsen, 1992, 143–145; Buruma, 1995, 118–119; Dreyer, 1995, 219–220; Chang, 1997, 49, 52–53, 128). Morton chronicles ‘such horrible rape, murder and looting that even the Japanese High Command was alarmed ...’, while Hunter Boyle describes an ‘orgy of raping and looting’ (Hunter Boyle, 1972, 55; Eastman, 1980, 293–295; Morton, 1995, 196).

Others, however, dismiss the random or orgy-like nature of violence. Eykholt charts the orderly disciplined nature of the invasion: troops stayed with their units, atrocities followed ‘organized patterns’: ‘discipline and order continued amid the murder and mayhem’ (Eykholt, 2000, 14–15). Philips reasons that the length of the massacre suggests a ‘major policy decision, not a temporary failure of discipline...’, while Bisson’s 1938 account locates Japanese ‘excesses’ in the connivance of officers, ‘some of whom were seen directing the looting of street shops’ (Bisson, 1938, 287; Phillips, 1996, 127). The death toll is somewhere between 42,000 at the low end (Beigbeder, 1999, 53), more realistic figures of between 200 and 300,000 in the middle (Bagish and Conroy, 1978, 325–327; Eastman, 1980; Williamsen, 1992, 143–145; Dreyer, 1995, 219–220; Friedman, 1995, 135), and a higher figure of well over 350,000 favoured by Chang (Chang, 1997, 4).

Commemorating the ‘Chinese Holocaust’

Whatever the reasoning behind such atrocities and its specific losses, the ‘forgotten’ nature of the rape of Nanking is crucial for Chang. It has remained ‘an obscure incident’ — ‘neglected in most of the historical literature published in the United States’. Her survey of secondary school history texts in the United States proves the point. Compared with the Holocaust and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ‘the horrors of the massacre at Nanking remain virtually unknown to people outside Asia’ (Chang, 1997, 6–7).

This view is shared by other Diaspora Chinese, who have used the forgotten nature of the tragedy to highlight the injustice of historical scholarship. The remembered Jewish Holocaust *vs* the forgotten ‘Chinese Holocaust’ provides a point of departure. The rise of memory and commemoration of Nanking and other instances of Chinese victimization has its root in Chinese Diaspora communities, particularly in the United States. These groups generally have more money, more coercive power, and better access to the Internet than their counterparts in the People’s Republic. Indeed, *The New York Times* recently



identified a ‘cottage industry’ of remembrance, with ‘dozens of groups working the Internet to publicize it, as well as recent documentaries, novels and exhibits’ (Marino, 1998). While traditionally divided between support for the Taiwan and the People’s Republic, in the 1990s, the Diaspora began to unite, embracing a ‘multiplicity of voices’ (Maier, 2000, 3).

Q4 Several key factors triggered Diaspora commemoration. One was the reaction to Japan’s claim of sovereignty over the Diao-yu-tai islets, another, the textbook controversy in 1982, which will later be discussed (Rose, 1998, 80–120; Chu, 2000). Activism also increased after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, when pro-democracy groups began working increasingly to document and commemorate Chinese history (Chang, 1997, 9). Groups such as the ‘Global Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II in Asia’ and the ‘Alliance for Preserving the Truth of the Sino-Japanese War’ emerged during the 1980s, and play key roles in promoting remembrance. According to Ignatius Ding, of the Alliance: ‘Chinese-American intellectuals have reached a “maturity” in this country whose roots are secure, allowing them to turn their attention to issues such as Nanking’ (Marino, 1998). This sense of rootedness, and the development of media skills and techniques partially explains why now, more than 60 years later, this ‘Forgotten Holocaust’ is slowly being remembered.

A key aspect of commemoration is a copying of Jewish Holocaust educational curricula in American secondary schools. For activist Poland Hung, the paucity of information on the Sino-Japanese War is a deplorable omission, especially since ‘the Chinese Holocaust created by the Japanese ... was more horrific and devastating than the Jewish Holocaust.’ Hung’s programme focuses on such issues as the Rape of Nanking, germ warfare, and ‘comfort women’, while written assignments include constructing narratives from the point of view of Nanking victims, or petitioning the United Nations, ‘demanding that the Japanese military be tried for war crimes, showing the ways in which they violated the Hague Conventions’ (Hung, 2003).

Priscilla Chan’s curriculum on Nanking also presents Japanese atrocities as a ‘Forgotten Holocaust’, seeing the European and Asian conflicts as ‘very similar’, with a ‘domineering group spreading its power’ on one side, and ‘a prime group suffering from the take-over of the domineering group’ on the other (Chan, 2003). Curiously, both curricula include sections on Japanese denialism, seeing the ‘other side’ as crucial to understanding the history of Nanking. Curricula that acknowledge denial differ markedly from Jewish Holocaust curricula, which often refute the concept of debate. Lipstadt for example, rejects denialism as ‘the other side’, or a ‘different perspective’. To debate with deniers is to elevate denial ‘to the level of responsible historiography — which it is not’ (Lipstadt, 1993, 1–2). While similar in many respects, Chinese atrocity scholarship does pursue different approaches.



Supplementing curricula are public venues designed to highlight the suffering of the Chinese and their links with Jews as fellow victims. This includes ‘Chinese Holocaust’ museums, directly inspired by Jewish commemorative efforts, which are often touted as inspiration and ‘models’ for Chinese American action (Chu, 2000). A temporary ‘Chinese Holocaust Museum in the United States’ was constructed in Oakland, California in 2000, to be followed by a permanent museum for the Bay area, and another in Washington DC (‘Exhibition to Show Japan’s War Crimes’).

By 2001, public exhibitions of some 918 artifacts from Japan’s colonial forays and atrocities began touring a number of major American cities (‘Exhibition to Show Japan’s War Crimes’). An exhibition on the Nanking Massacre entitled ‘Never Forget’ was organized in Nanking, with help from the CHM. For Chen Jiabao, the vice-mayor of Nanking: ‘The Nanjing Massacre was no less a crime than the Holocaust ...’ (‘Nanjing Massacre Exhibition ...’) By 2002, another museum (The ‘American Museum of Asian Holocaust WWII (1931–1945)’) was opened in Falls Creek, Pennsylvania, by Congressman Mike Honda, featuring many similar exhibits. The Alliance’s contributions here were glowingly noted (‘Press Release...’).

The Role of Denying

Part and parcel of establishing a ‘Chinese Holocaust’ have been linkages and comparisons between what Jews and Chinese have endured at the hands of their respective aggressors. While many Jewish groups find invocations of other ‘holocausts’ unacceptable, Nanking is in some respects an exception, partially because of the vast scale of the atrocities — but also because of the very real problems of denialism in Japan.

As Chang argued in 1997: ‘Sixty years later the Japanese as a nation are still trying to bury the victims of Nanking, not under the soil, as in 1937, but into historical oblivion’ (Shermer and Grobman, 2000, 232). She has spoken of a ‘double rape’ — the first occurring with Japanese invasion, the second being the forgetting/denying of atrocities. Such a ‘second rape’ arguably humiliates and horrifies victims still further (Chang, 1997, 199–214). Japanese atrocity denial can be traced back to the pioneering work of Hayashi Fusao, from 1963 to 1965, who contextualized the Japanese ‘war of liberation’ within a century-long struggle against Western imperialism (Hicks, 1998, 29–30; Yasuaki, 2002, 209). Deniers in the 1970s, like Schichihei and Akira, dismissed Japanese crimes as exaggerated, particularly those in Nanking (Yoshida, 2002, 81–83).

The 1980s featured works by Manabu, Masaaki, and others denying any ‘instance of planned, systematic murder in the entire history of Japan’ (Buruma, 1995, 119; Shermer and Grobman, 2000, 235–236; Yoshida, 2002, 87,



108–109). The so-called ‘text book controversy’ erupted in 1982, when the Ministry of Education began asking for revisions to school history textbooks (Yoneyama, 1999, 5; Yoshida, 2002, 85). Whether or not the Ministry was merely ‘suggesting’ changes, the revision issue raised a furor on mainland Asia which has yet to fully die down (Hicks, 1998, ix, 44–46).

Denialism has often been promoted by the Japanese political and intellectual establishment, particularly, conservative factions of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which has held political power almost continuously since 1955. The LDP has included many ‘die hard nationalists’ who have traditionally seen the Pacific war as a legitimate defence against Communism’s ‘Red Peril’ and Western colonialism’s ‘White Peril’ (Godemont, 1997, 147; Dower, 2002, 218–219). While Yoshida notes early references to Nanking in post-war textbooks, even fleeting references to ‘atrocities’ were removed after a ‘red purge’ in the early 1950s (Buruma, 1995, 119; Yoshida, 2002, 74–75). Dower and Hicks both locate denialism in Japanese preoccupations with advancing a ‘correct’ national history — one which instills pride in the nation. Fujioka Nobukatsu’s argument is typical: ‘The people that does not have a history to be proud of cannot constitute itself as a nation’ (Dower, 2002, 221). As a further twist, forms of Japanese anti-Semitism would also emerge in the 1980s and 1990s. For Kowner — logical conclusions were drawn from the work of American Holocaust deniers — if the Holocaust, ‘the most notorious war crime ever, was a hoax, as some uninformed Japanese may have believed, Japan’s war crime too could be a fabrication’ (Kowner, 2001, 266–269).

Historical reasons for denial include American domination of the Tokyo Trials, which disproportionately punished crimes against America (like Pearl Harbor) while down-playing other atrocities (Finn, 1992, 150; Awaya, 1998, 222, 224; Hicks, 1998, 7–8; Eykholt, 2000, 19; Yasuaki, 2002, 208–209). Atrocities in China, such as the germ warfare experiments of Unit 731, were covered up, and participants were spared prosecution (Hicks, 1998, 15). Asian victims of sexual assault were generally ignored (Yoneyama, 1999, 11–12, 16). Hirohito was never punished for his crimes, and continued as Emperor, despite criticism (Hicks, 1998, 12; Efron, 2000; Nish, 2000, 86; Dower, 2002, 233). His escape would be interpreted as a ‘declaration of innocence for the country’, resulting in a form of ‘amnesia’ (Beigbeder, 1999, 74). Yet, despite this history of denialism, Nanking scholarship has grown tremendously in Japan since the 1980s, when the veteran’s association *Kaikosha* effectively proved that Nanking atrocities had taken place. However, while denial of the massacre itself is on the decline, debate continues over the numbers of dead and scale of atrocities, with Chinese historians accused of exaggeration (Yamamoto, 2000).

Further, many of Japan’s more conservative politicians still refuse to acknowledge that their nation has ever done anything wrong (Tokushi, 2002, 91). In 1985, Prime Minister Nakasone would use the term ‘masochistic’ to



describe those who highlighted Japanese crimes (Godemont, 1997, 180; Hicks, 1998, 59, Dower, 2002, 236). In 1990, Ishihara Shintaro, a key LDP official, denounced Nanking as a ‘story made up by the Chinese ... a lie’ (Shermer and Grobman, 2000, 233–234). More recently, in July, 2003, former cabinet minister Takami Eto echoed the view that Nanking was a ‘big lie’, criticizing Prime Ministers who apologized for Japan’s wartime past (‘Fury at Nanking “Lie” Claim’). While in the minority, such sentiments continue to be worrying.

Shermer and Grobman’s analysis of Jewish Holocaust denial features a chapter entitled ‘The Rape of History’ devoted largely to Chang’s book and the ensuing debate about Japanese denialism. They compare and contrast both forms of denial and to express solidarity with the author:

Nanking Denial is part and parcel with Holocaust denial in methodologies, arguments, and motivations, and reflects the larger pseudohistorical trends seen in other claims ... we contend that such historical denial is a form of ideologically driven pseudohistory, which adopts techniques designed to undermine historical claims that do not fit with present ideologies and beliefs. (Shermer and Grobman, 2000, 237)

Thus there is solidarity between Holocaust historians and Chinese scholars, partially because both are fellow victims of past atrocities, but equally because of shared struggles to promote truth and remembering in the face of active and pernicious denial movements. Some Holocaust historians see a powerful antagonist in the Japanese establishment, one which can be compared to the international network of Holocaust deniers. In many respects, the problems of Japanese atrocity denial are real. The Japanese political, cultural and intellectual establishment has certainly downplayed and even denied many of the atrocities committed by Japanese Imperial forces during their occupation of China.

Selling the ‘Chinese Holocaust’

While forgetfulness and denialism are real, there are several key problems with representing the Rape of Nanking as a ‘Chinese Holocaust’, problems which in some ways minimize atrocities and dehumanize the victims. What follows are six problems with ‘holocaust’ representation, some specifically relating to Chang’s work, others of a more general nature.

Japanese vs Chinese

In Chang’s work, the Japanese become a cohesive other — deniers actively deny while the public actively forgets. For the most part, her analysis of



denialism seems accurate — there has been little on Nanking and other atrocities in Japanese history books. She briefly, but ably, documents aspects of the controversy in Japan, covering the textbook conflicts and the struggles of Ienaga, Katsuichi, and others, a literature which has been widely covered (Chang, 1997, 199–214; Hicks, 1998, 52, 104–106, 111–122; Yoshida, 2002, 79–80, 98, 102–104).

However, the other side of the coin privileges the Chinese, making them victims only. Comparing Jews and Chinese implicitly suggests that the Chinese have been active and diligent in promoting Nanking, while the Japanese bear the lion's share of the blame for the West's lack of knowledge. While Japanese historians and officials have often suppressed Nanking in their own country, neither Taiwan nor the People's Republic have done a stellar job of keeping Nanking's memory alive. Chang makes cursory reference to a 'curtain of silence' and 'historical neglect', but offers no detailed analysis, preferring to save her condemnation for the Japanese (Chang, 1997, 11).

However, Buruma suggests convincingly that China's Communist government too had a part to play in suppressing the symbolic and emotive value of Nanking. After all, Nanking was the capital of the Nationalist regime — as much a danger to Mao's Communists as the Japanese. Perhaps this helps explain the paucity of official Chinese commemoration until 1982 (Buruma, 1995, 126; 2002, 8). Maier's analysis is similar, but he cites the 'pride and determined self-reliance of the government in Beijing' as a more likely cause. China's 'self esteem' refused to allow it to admit failings or ask for foreign aid or pity in the case of disasters, manmade or natural (Maier, 2000, 2).

Eykholt traces periods of ebb and flow in discussions on Nanking, with talk being suppressed during periods of strong economic cooperation with Japan, a trend also noted by Shambaugh (Shambaugh, 1996, 88–90; Eykholt, 2000, 24–28). Whether or not one adheres to this interpretation, it is clear that the CCP did not actively and consistently promote the massacre as a key determining factor in Chinese identity. It was only in the 1980s that Nanking was officially commemorated. In Jiangdongmen, a long low building known as the Memorial Hall of the Victims in the Nanjing Massacre was built in 1985 to house some excavated bodies. This hall is built atop but one of many 'wan ren keng' (pits of 10,000 corpses) found in many of the areas occupied by the Japanese (WWW Memorial Hall ...).

Made of concrete and surrounded by a rock garden, the Museum features rocks inscribed with names of locations where people were massacred. Long glassed-in sandboxes display the skulls and bones of a portion of Nanking's victims (Buruma, 1995, 127; Eykholt, 2000, 35). Maier sees Chinese commemoration as half hearted at best, as does Eykholt, who quotes the overarching message: to 'move beyond the Massacre and hold out a hand of



friendship to Japan in the name of China's development.' This is exemplified by a 'homily on brotherly love and international cooperation, specifically between China and Japan' (Eykholt, 2000, 36). Buruma and Schwarcz also locate political implications behind Nanking after 1989. Visiting Nanking soon after Tiananmen Square, Buruma noted with distaste the 'clichéd language of self-righteousness' exhibited by Chinese authorities (Buruma, 1995, 126). Schwarcz too finds a renewed interest in Nanking in the 'enforced amnesia about 1989' that lingers still in China. Interest only reached the forefront when the CCP chose to deflect criticism onto a more historical enemy (Schwarcz, 2002, 187). In short, while Japanese denialism can certainly be blamed for keeping detailed mention of Nanking from Japanese school children, the CCP has been largely responsible for the lack of adequate commemoration or study of the Nanking atrocities. Used primarily for political reasons, Nanking scholarship in China is fraught with controversy.

Nanking vs Auschwitz

While 'Holocaust' seems to be frequently used by museums and educational programmes, more direct comparisons are often made. This becomes problematic when misleading comparisons are drawn between the two tragedies, and indeed, a host of others. Chang's introduction features a comparative dimension. Nanking is quantitatively worse than the sacking of Carthage, Christian armies during the Spanish Inquisition, and some of the horrors inflicted by Timur Lenk. More people died at Nanking in 1937 than British, French, Belgian and Dutch civilians during World War II. Hitler and Stalin killed more 'it is certainly true', but their crimes were 'brought about over some few years', while Nanking has the demerit of being 'concentrated within a few weeks' (Chang, 1997, 5–6). While she does offer tacit comparisons between the Nanking massacres and the Holocaust, Chang asserts that 'her book is not about winning popularity votes over the Jewish atrocities at the hands of the Nazis' (Tang, 1998). Nevertheless, her view of Nanking being somehow worse because of its 'concentration' belies this claim somewhat. Her claims are nevertheless more nuanced when compared to other Alliance members, like Hung, who argues simply that 'the Chinese Holocaust created by the Japanese during the war is so unprecedented in history that it was more horrific and devastating than the Jewish Holocaust' (Hung, 2003).

Not everyone is comfortable with Chang's references to a Holocaust. Heilbrunn, writing in *The New Republic*, found her use of the term 'unfortunate' — 'since the massacre was not — for all its murderous horror — an attempt to wipe out the Chinese as a race.' Kennedy in the *Atlantic Monthly* praised Chang's work but found little evidence of the 'systematic



killing of the Holocaust.’ Unlike ‘Hitler’s purposeful policy’, Kennedy saw Nanking more as ‘individual cruelty or the result of a poorly disciplined army run amok,’ while, by contrast, the Holocaust ‘entailed a methodical application of all the apparatus of the modern bureaucratic state and all the most advanced technologies of killing to the cold-blooded business of mass murder’ (Tokudome, 2001, 198–199). Buruma has equally noted the problems of false equivalence in comparing Nanking to Auschwitz. The Holocaust was clearly about exterminating all European Jews, and had no equivalent in Asia, where ‘[e]ven the most ferocious Japanese ideologue wanted Japan to subjugate China, not kill ever last Chinese man, woman and child’. He blames the Tokyo trials for elevating Nanking in order to create an Asian parallel for the Holocaust, an error in judgment (perhaps) which has warped our interpretation of the facts (Buruma, 2002, 7).

Chang’s own argument for why she uses ‘holocaust’ is not particularly clear. In an interview in 1996 before her book’s release, she was asked why she used ‘holocaust’, when there was ‘Never this sort of gas-chamber, mechanized attempt to kill all the Chinese as there was to kill all the Jews.’ To this she replied:

Obviously the Japanese could never be able to exterminate all of the Chinese people. There’s so many of them. But they wanted to make an example of Nanking, and I would say the method of execution was quite systematic. Of course, it wasn’t as systematic as what the Germans did to the Jews. The Japanese used swords and knives. They used machine guns and fire. But the results were horrifying. It wasn’t as systematic, it wasn’t as ‘clean.’ What happened in Nanking was actually quite messy. (Chen Mills, 1996)

While this interview cleared up little of the confusion surrounding her use of the term, Chang’s primarily point was that none of her Jewish friends seemed offended by her use of ‘holocaust’ (Chen Mills, 1996). This belief was further borne out when Chang gave two talks at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at their invitation. At no time was her use of ‘holocaust’ in this context challenged or condemned (Tokudome, 2001, 198–199). While some Jewish individuals and groups may be receptive to the use of ‘holocaust’ in this context, Buruma and other journalists are right to highlight the very real differences between these atrocities, and the need for more careful usage.

The Jewish Holocaust vs Nanking

The argument that the Chinese Holocaust has been forgotten while the Jewish one has achieved great prominence is misleading. This dichotomization



assumes that little if anything has been traditionally known about Nanking, while everyone knows today about the Jewish Final Solution. Yet citing Holocaust scholarship as a model ignores the very hard work of Holocaust historians and activists who have made the public deeply aware of the Holocaust and its importance. It is important to view Nanking scholarship teleologically, to note that its importance will grow as time progresses.

The Holocaust, after all, has not always been so prominent. Petrie's exhaustive study of 'holocaust' reveals that it only became a key descriptor in the 1950s, through the work of Yad Vashem (Marrus, 1987, 3–4; Petrie, 2000, 33–34, 39–41, 47). Petrie controversially advances that Holocaust was used and then capitalized because of its associations with nuclear annihilation in 1950s America. Abandoning other terms, Holocaust became the favoured term so that Americans would be able to 'associate emotionally the Nazi Judeocide with a feared nuclear mass death' (Petrie, 2000, 48).

Nevertheless, the Holocaust as an event separate from the general carnage of World War II was not obvious before the 1960s. For Novick, what mattered was the totality of Axis evil, not the specific victimisation of Jews, a point backed up by Lagerwey (Lagerwey, 1998, 47; Novick, 1999, 20). The Holocaust only came into its own in the 1960s, due to a number of events, including the Eichmann trial, the Six Day War, and the American civil rights movement, which for the first time permitted a discourse of otherness and victimization (Arendt, 1963, 7–8; Marrus, 1987, 2, 4–5; Adams, 1993, 108; Friedman, 1993, xix; Friedlander, 1994, 155; Novick, 1999, 148–152).

Thus to argue that the Holocaust writ large has always had the same status is misleading. Like the 'Chinese holocaust', the Jewish Holocaust was commemorated well after the fact and is as Novick succinctly argues 'largely a retrospective construction, something which would not have been recognisable to most people at the time' (Novick, 1999, 20). This indeed provides hope for Chinese 'holocaust' scholarship in the future. During her lectures at the USHMM, Chang found much support for her work, even the belief that while representations and scholarly study of the 'Pacific Holocaust' were some 25 years behind that of the Jewish Holocaust, a 'similar kind of flowering of literature on the Sino-Japanese war' would be forthcoming (Tokudome, 2001, 198–199).

Japanese vs Germans

Tied in with issues of remembrance, forgetting and denial is a contrast of atonement vs unrepentance — the goodness of the Germans who remember, vs the evils of the Japanese who forget. This argument is advanced by various



Chinese Diaspora organizations, as well as Chang, whose work juxtaposes and contrasts German and Japanese responses:

What baffled and saddened me ... was the persistent Japanese refusal to come to terms with its own past. It is not just that Japan has doles out less than 1 percent of the amount that Germany has paid in war reparations to its victims. It is not just that, unlike most Nazis ... many Japanese war criminals continued to occupy powerful positions in industry and government after the war And it is not just the fact that while Germans have made repeated apologies to their Holocaust victims, the Japanese have enshrined their war criminals in Tokyo — an act that one American wartime victim of the Japanese has labeled politically equivalent to ‘erecting a cathedral for Hitler in the middle of Berlin’. (Chang, 1997, 12, 200)

She later argues from the same position in the book’s conclusions. Germany has accepted both individual and collective guilt for the horrors of Auschwitz, something Japan has not been willing to do in Nanking (Chang, 1997, 12, 200). The Alliance’s website uses Germany as the benchmark for how victims are compensated and remembered. On 11 separate issues, the Germans emerge as superior. This includes a formal apology, restitution, opening wartime archives, admission of atrocities, discussion of wartime activities in educational material, identification and punishment of war criminals, restitution for slave labour, and return of looted property. Issues such as tribute to the victims are particularly controversial — Germany has built a National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Berlin, while Japan’s War Memorial Museum ‘contains not a single trace of its wartime brutality in occupied or colonized nations.’ While German war criminals have either been punished or rejected from society (for the most part), Japanese war criminals are ‘openly worshipped’ in shrines ‘by government high officials and society at large. Most War Criminal[s] became key government, business, and academic leaders’ (‘Alliance for Preserving the Truth...’).

Slave labour is another key point of comparison between the two countries. The Chinese Holocaust Museum notes the payments made to 2.3 million surviving slave workers by German companies. By contrast, of the 30 million Chinese slave labourers: ‘They suffered far more in the hands of the Japanese than their counterparts in those of the Nazis. Certainly they deserve the same human rights and sympathy as bestowed upon the Nazi slave laborers’ (‘The Project of the Preparatory Committee ...’). But activists like Tien-Wei Wu wonder whether it is even possible for ‘pagan Confucians like the Japanese war criminals who do not believe in Jesus the Christ’ to demonstrate ‘true remorse like the Germans did’ (Wu, 2003). For Wu, showing true remorse demonstrates some measure of repentance and transformation, something not evident in



Japan. He even sees the possibilities of new conspiracies unless Japan is willing to repent:

Unlike her wartime ally Germany ... Japan has persistently followed the 'three-nos policy' — no admitting of aggression, no apology, and no compensation. ... Without true repentance, the Japanese government can only continue to distort historical facts, deny truth and justice, and cheat the young, all of which naturally will redound to the revival of militarism and cherish the spirit of *revanche*. How could we know that the Japanese are not racking their brains and working hard for developing some new weapons more dreadful than the plague germs of Unit 731, which might be used to subjugate China and the United States! (Wu, 2003)

This fear of hard core militarists in Japan plotting World War III is not uncommon. As Zhang argues, while most Japanese are against the revival of militarism, a small 'very active minority' have 'never given up their wishful thinking of reviving an old dream of ruling the roost of Asia and contending for hegemony of the world.' For Zhang, a very real danger thus exists which memory serves to combat (Zhang, 2001, xiv).

While Japan undeniably committed atrocities, Germany's path to redemption has not been smooth, as Maier's work reveals. Comparisons between 'forthright Germans and prevaricating Japanese is to obscure much of the postwar history of both countries.' The Japanese debate over memory has also been more vigorous than commonly assumed, and Germany's less so. Both countries have had an 'uneven and turbulent' evolution of their respective collective memories (Maier, 2000, viii–xi). Comparisons, while highlighting Japanese hypocrisy, seem to clear Germany of any wrongdoing, which becomes a model of what a 'good' genocidal nation should do to shoulder its full share of responsibilities. Good genocidal nations must admit their mistakes, compensate their victims, feel guilty and commemorate the evil they have committed.

Yes, Germany has paid compensation to its surviving victims, and has publicly acknowledged its atrocities (Goldstone, 2001, 41). However, Germany's track record has not been as stellar as Chinese Diaspora publications allege. In studies at the end of 1948, almost 50% of West Germans still approved of the Nazi regime, and even by 1952, roughly 30% of the population retained a positive view of Hitler. A total of 37% believed that West Germany would be better off without Jews, while one-third felt that 'antisemitism was primarily caused by Jewish characteristics'. Such statistics were hardly reassuring (Wistrich, 1995, 269). When in 1952, Adnauer's government accepted responsibility for Nazism and agreed to pay reparations to Jewish survivors, only 11% of Germans favoured this move (Koonz, 1994, 112).



As Renn argues, German textbooks during the Cold War were reluctant to accept the *People's* responsibility for Nazism and the Holocaust. Rather, 'Hitler's morbid anti-Semitism' coupled with SS 'terror' were blamed. By demonising Hitler and his 'brown Dictatorship', the German people presented themselves as bystanders or dupes (Renn, 1993, 481–482). In Communist East Germany, memory was even more problematic. Leaders railed against Bonn's 'fascist stooges', erecting a 'memory wall' against the Nazi past, creating a 'zero hour' — where de-Nazification was neither welcomed nor required (Koonz, 1994, 111–113). As Koonz recalls: 'the moral of Buchenwald was not "never again" to racism, genocide, and political terror as much as "never forget" the destructive power of "international fascist capitalism"' (Koonz, 1994, 115).

When West Germany did indeed compensate victims and recognize its past aggression, much of this has had to do with left wing politics in the FRG. When in the 1980s, right wing historians tried to normalize the Holocaust and Hitler during the *Historikerstreit*, the Marxist Left 'provided an important base for those intellectuals trying to control their countries' authoritarian histories ...' The Left in Japan, however proved to be much weaker. Their attempts critique wartime history were actively suppressed with the rise of the LDP in the 1950s (Maier, 2000, xii–xiii). Thus while Germany has been 'better' than Japan, the reasons behind it, including popular support in the 1950s and 1960s, remain suspect. One must be careful about overplaying the German model of a 'good' genocidal aggressor.

Chinese Victims vs Jewish Victims

A serious problem in repackaging Nanking as a 'holocaust' is that by playing up the Chinese–Jewish comparisons, the victims of Nanking lose their stories, and their identity. Chang's work focuses almost entirely on the Japanese aggressors and the Western bystanders, with little detail of the victims themselves. Some have argued that Nanking resonates so strongly because of the presence of Western observers, many of whom helped create the International Safety Zone (Eastman, 1980, 293–295; Dreyer, 1995, 218). If a tree falls in the forest and no Westerners are there, does it make a sound?

Chang's story features German businessman and Nazi party member John Rabe, 'the living Buddha of Nanking' to many, and for Chang 'the Oskar Schindler of China'. His work in the Nanking Safety Zone makes him '[p]erhaps the most fascinating character to emerge from the history of the Rape of Nanking'. Rabe was a true believer in Nazism, but largely its *socialist* aspects, according to Chang and Rabe's granddaughter. His naïve optimism even prompted him to pen a note to the Fuehrer in November, 1937, demanding help. He also petitioned the Japanese, and went out himself to scare



off would-be rapists and murderers, sheltering victims and taking them to the safety zone (Chang, 1997, 109–116). As a result of his work, his tombstone was moved from Berlin to the Nanking memorial in 1987 (Schwarcz, 2002, 192). Other Westerners include surgeon Robert Wilson, Minnie Vautrin, missionary James McCallum, and other members of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. In total the fifteen members of the Committee managed to save an impressive 250,000 people (Chang, 1997, 122–123).

Who are the victims? Chang begins with a discussion of the Japanese, complete with photographs and profiles of some of the perpetrators, including Matsui Iwane, the commander of Japan's Central China Expeditionary Force. By Chapter Three, she offers details of Chinese Nationalist leaders and their decision to abandon the city. Chapter Five focuses on Western bystanders and helpers. Even Chapter 9 on 'The Fate of the Survivors' focuses primarily on Rabe, Vautrin and Wilson.

Where are the victims? Chang's family survived the war, and although they never witnessed Nanking, tales of Japanese horror influenced the young Chang as she matured. Yet strangely the victims remain largely anonymous, their stories still untold, the massacre in some respects still 'forgotten'. In the picture section of her book, perpetrators and bystanders receive captions and biographical notes, with an almost Victorian portrayal of the Safety Zone Committee, compete with oval black and white photos. The victims by contrast, are depicted as rows of heads, blindfolded and bayoneted bodies, naked raped women, beaten bruised and battered corpses, and lastly, as a pile of bones and skulls. We get little sense of the victims' humanity other than their tortured and mutilated status.

By the middle of the book, there are some personal stories of Chinese civilians and their suffering. Tang Shunsan, who survived a Japanese killing contest, is discussed, as is the sad case of the Hsai family. The tragic but ultimately heroic tale of Li Xouying, a young 18-year-old bride during the siege, is uncommon (Chang, 1997, 83–86, 92, 96–98). There are very few personal stories here, although Chang writes of interviews she conducted with survivors (Chang, 1997, 83). And there is little follow-up. What of the psychological scars left on the survivors after the conflict? What happened to those who did survive? Chang writes a mere three paragraphs on the survivors, their cramped squalid conditions, and their physical injuries (Chang, 1997, 182–183).

Contrast this to Holocaust studies, where the victims of Nazi horror often take centre stage. Their humanness makes the tragedy both more accessible and more horrible. Memoirs, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, humanize victims and make suffering real. According to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam: 'In confronting her story we are made acutely aware that the persecution of the Jews did not annihilate an *anonymous six million* ... it was



the murder six million times over of unique individuals, of human beings' (Young, 1994b, 131; Metselaar and van der Rol, 1996, 5). Similarly for Kulter, who has reviewed 70 of the many hundreds of memoirs and diaries from Holocaust victims: 'The diaries humanize the numbers. Six million people become individuals with passions and agonies that we can understand' (Kutler, 1993, 522–523). An ability to understand and relate to the victims is crucial in keeping memory alive. As Clendinnen argues: 'We recognise ourselves as very like urban Europeans of five or six decades ago: people who looked like us, lived like us, who had like us come to assume the reliability of physical and emotional comfort, with death tamed to a distant prospect' (Clendinnen, 1999, 18).

Coupled with a lack of survivor testimony is an over-reliance on Rabe and other Westerners. As Novick has argued of *Schindler's List*, a common Jewish complaint was that the film 'distorted the lesson and meaning of the Holocaust by focusing on a Christian rescuer' (Novick, 1999, 180). Schindler gave the Holocaust a happy ending, thanks to a kindly German, with Jews in a subordinate position. Novick's criticism of Schindler rings true for Chang's depictions of Rabe, who gains star billing, while the identities of the victims are reduced. In fairness to Chang, she discovered Rabe's diaries and made them public to the world, after convincing Rabe's granddaughter to release them (Chang, 1997, 195). However, marketing Rabe as 'the Oscar Schindler of China' is problematic. It relies on comparisons between Rabe as revealed through his memoirs, and the largely fictional Schindler as presented in *Schindler's List*. Huttenbach rightly contrasts the 'artificial "Schindler,"' with the 'actual Schindler of the Final Solution' — two very different people, since of the real Schindler, 'very little of substance is known ... anything definitive said about this shadow Schindler of yesteryear is, at best, conjecture ... a paradise for a fertile imagination.' Huttenbach caution us to be careful of allowing 'pure entertainment' to teach us moral and ethical lessons — 'trouble begins, when the *false* images are taken at face value' (Huttenbach, 1998).

Japan's Humiliations and Transformations: The Empire Strikes Back

Not discussed in Chang but nevertheless pertinent to the discussion of memory and forgetfulness are Japan's own myths of victimization, which have made Japanese acknowledgement of any Chinese 'Holocaust' exceedingly difficult. At one level, myths of victimization concern the over two million soldiers and sailors who died in the War, alongside one million civilians (Dower, 1996, 121; Godemont, 1997, 141). As Dower recalls: 'It became commonplace to speak of the war dead themselves — and, indeed, of virtually all ordinary Japanese — as



being “victims” and “sacrifices” (Dower, 2002, 218, 228). Orr similarly notes a ‘mythologizing of war victimhood ... manifested in a tendency to privilege the facts of Japanese victimhood over considerations of what occasioned that victimhood’ (Orr, 2001, 3).

Perhaps a more persuasive form of victimization for those outside Japan is the legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Atomic devastation produced what Dower calls a ‘victim consciousness’ (*higaisha ishiki*) or for Orr: ‘atomic victim exceptionalism’ (Dower, 1996, 123; Orr, 2001, 7). For Dower: ‘Hiroshima and Nagasaki became icons of Japanese suffering ... blotting out recollection of the Japanese victimization of others’ (Dower, 1996, 123). Buruma adds: ‘Hiroshima is a symbol of absolute evil, often compared to Auschwitz.’ To this end, the Japanese would undertake efforts at joint commemoration, such as a Hiroshima–Auschwitz Committee in Hiroshima, novels which singled out both Japanese and Jews as fellow victims of white racism, as well as a plan in the late 1980s to construct an Auschwitz memorial in a small town near Hiroshima (Buruma, 1995, 92).

The view that Japan was transformed by its victimization would lead to the anti-nuclear ‘peace movement’ (*heiwa undo*) in the 1950s (Dower, 1996, 135; 2002, 239–240). The ideal of Japan as a peace-loving society emerges clearly in Hiroshima monuments, museums, fountains, domes, and public statements issued (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, ‘The Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Genbaku Dome’). The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which has seen over 5 million visitors since 1955, promotes peace, while advancing Hiroshima’s special significance as a martyred city. (‘Introduction’ ... Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum). Hiroshima websites and declarations are often free of soul searching, wartime guilt, repentance, or reconciliation. What is promoted is the victimized nature of the city and its people, the transformative power of suffering and destruction.

The portrayal of Hiroshima and its people as victim people is nowhere more apparent than in the recent ‘Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims’ which was opened in 2002. Not unlike the ‘Hall of Remembrance’ at the USHMM, the ‘Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims’ features a Hall of Remembrance — an underground cylindrical room with a vaulted ceiling. Perhaps the name is a coincidence — or perhaps not. Hiroshima’s Hall is described as ‘a space in which to reverently mourn the victims and contemplate peace. The walls of this room display a panorama depicting Hiroshima after the atomic bombing ... a mosaic of about 140,000 tiles, the number of victims said to have died due to the bombing by the end of December 1945’ (‘Hiroshima Peace Site’... Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum). The professed aim of this Hall is to mourn the victims while ‘praying for peace’, not a dissimilar aim to that of the Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Hall: ‘a solemn, simple space designed for public ceremonies and



individual reflection. Epitaphs are set onto the limestone walls that encircle an eternal flame' (Hiroshima Peace Site; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

The need for Japan to ape the USHMM's use of memory triggering symbols and monuments is somewhat disturbing. This is perhaps less surprising when confronted with the writings of such authors as Nanking denier Uno Masami, whose popular works enjoined Japanese to learn from Jews. In a well-known chapter of *The Day the Dollar Becomes Paper*, Uno advanced that Hiroshima should have been left in ruins, like Auschwitz. A crumbling Auschwitz allowed Jews to remind the world of their martyrdom. It was Japan's bad fortune to have been duped by the Americans into rebuilding Hiroshima so quickly, which acted only to reduce Japanese identity and 'racial virility' (Buruma, 1995, 97).

Nevertheless, American wickedness is not a key determinant in the Hiroshima myth of cult which has developed over the past five decades. The myth is based primarily, Buruma recalls, 'on the image of martyred innocence and visions of the apocalypse.' One is thus confronted with 'normal life — laughing children, young girls singing, house wives cleaning, good men working — then, in an instant, all was turned to ash.' Hiroshima and the Auschwitz join together symbolically by their existence outside of time and seemingly outside of the war itself. And both gain apocalyptic overtones — representations of absolute evil (Buruma, 1995, 101).

Conclusions

What emerges from this discussion is the crucial role of the Jewish Holocaust in helping to come to terms with the history of Japanese atrocities and denial. The Chinese face problems, however, from the fact that Japan at least tacitly condones 'forgetfulness', although admittedly things have improved since 1997. Nevertheless, the belief that to deny is inherently patriotic has not been refuted on a wholesale basis. The situation is further complicated by Japan's own competing myths of victimization.

For Nanking, the Holocaust and its elements help to 'sell' and package the atrocity, with Nazi-like persecutors, Jew-like victims, and Schindler-like bystanders. The Holocaust also provides a useful template for educating children and the general public. This type of thinking sees the Holocaust as a useful frame of reference — a window of opportunity for exploring further atrocities. Thus the creation of 'Holocaust museums' and websites are no coincidence, nor are 'holocaust' curricula. The Holocaust also helps to make sense of Japanese denialism, seeing Jewish and Chinese groups combating similar menaces.



Yet as I have tried to show, casting Nanking as a 'holocaust' spawns false dichotomies, which get in the way of giving a full and accurate rendering of the facts, particularly when it comes to revisiting the lives of the victims. At one level, the invocation of a 'Chinese holocaust' performs a useful role in marketing the tragedy for a Western audience. However, there is a need for a certain degree of caution and sensitivity in how events are packaged and why.

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