

The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation, 1937-1945 (New Approaches to Asian History)

Diana Lary



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The Chinese peoples' experience of war during the Second World War, as it is known in the West, was one of suffering and stoicism in the face of dreadful conditions. China's War of Resistance began in 1937 with the Japanese invasion and ended in 1945 after eight long years. Diana Lary, one of the foremost historians of the period, tells the tragic history of China's war and its consequences from the perspective of those who went through it. Using archival evidence only recently made available, interviews with survivors, and extracts from literature, she creates a vivid and highly disturbing picture of the havoc created by the war, the destruction of towns and villages, the displacement of peoples, and the accompanying economic and social disintegration. Her focus is on families torn apart, men, women, and children left homeless and struck down by disease and famine. It is also a story of courage and survival. By 1945, the fabric of China's society had been utterly transformed, and entirely new social categories had emerged. As the author suggests in a new interpretation of modern Chinese history, far from stemming the spread of communism from the USSR, which was the Japanese pretext for invasion, the horrors of the war, and the damage it created, nurtured the Chinese Communist Party and helped it to win power in 1949.

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