

nen, demgemäß staatliche bzw. parteiideologische Verbote von Ritualen früher oder später in immer mehr Bereichen fallen, nachdem wachsender Druck von unten – in Form von gelebter Praxis – sie irgendwann aufgeweicht hat. Im Bestreben, ihre Legitimitätsbasis zu verbreitern, versuchen Staat und Partei dann wiederum im Gegenzug, Teile dieser rituellen Praxis mit ihrer eigenen Ideologie und Geschichte in Einklang zu bringen und beides symbolisch zu integrieren. Im Dorf bedeutet das dann konkret: „(...) das Mandat der dörflichen Führungselite [d. h. Partei, staatliche Verwaltung und Kultkomitee gemeinsam] ist an den Auftrag gebunden, das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen staatlichen Interessen und lokalen Bedürfnissen [Wertauffassungen] zu harmonisieren.“ (S. 193)

Insgesamt ein sorgfältig recherchiertes Buch, in dem Endres neben englisch- und deutschsprachiger Literatur zahlreiche vietnamesischsprachige Quellen ausgewertet und auch ausgiebig Material aus Provinz- und Dorfarchiven berücksichtigt hat. Eine theoriegeleitete Interpretation der reichen empirischen Daten wird allerdings nur bedingt geleistet.

Erland Meyer

STEFAN HELL, *Der Mandschurei-Konflikt. Japan, China und der Völkerbund 1931–1933*. Tübingen: Universitas Verlag, 1999. 285 pages, € 25.00. ISBN 3-924898-25-1

Stefan Hell has undertaken the task of analysing the role of the League of Nations in the serious conflict between Japan and China. This conflict, together with the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy and the forthcoming power play by Hitler, led to the cessation of the League's activities. The study is more than just an analysis of a conflict. It shows prerequisites for, and mechanisms of, peace keeping and peace restoring.

The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 determined the foundation of the League of Nations. From the very beginning the League was hampered by a serious one-sidedness: It consisted mainly of European members. The only non-European power was Japan. The USA did not join for isolationist reasons and the Soviet Union absented on ideological grounds. Although the USA was not a member of the League, its policy was largely determined by the triangle Geneva-Washington-London.

The primary roles of the League were the peaceful solution of conflicts, enforcement of arms limitations and supervision of the Versailles Peace Treaty. In the first decade of its existence the League was able to achieve the peaceful solution of 25 international conflicts, amongst which were a threatening war between Greece and Bulgaria and an explosive situation between Italy and Greece. All these conflicts were within Europe. The Manchuria conflict was the first case overseas. In the Manchuria conflict the League had to develop its own joint policy, it served as a stage for the Western member states and it was the international stage for Japan and China.

China had become a republic in 1912. Governments were constantly changing and civil wars were frequent. From the 1920's, the communist party emerged as a new political power. Manchuria, ruled by local warlords, was almost totally beyond the control of the national government. In Shanghai there were British, Japanese,

French, Italian and US extraterritorial sectors. China only played a very minor role on the international scene, having a low international reputation.

Japan, through its victory over Russia in 1905, acquired major rights in Southern Manchuria and, by siding with the Allies in the 1914–1918 war, it had become a major international player. It dominated the Far Eastern region and was a standing member of the board of the League, its international reputation was high. In the 1920's the internal political situation started to change, the economic slump of 1931 radicalised national groups. Manchuria became a focus of Japanese interests, spear-headed by nationalist military forces.

The US government considered the Far Eastern market economically important, the emphasis being laid not on China, but on Japan, which was on one side a bulwark against the Soviet expansion in Asia, and on the other a competitor for power in the Pacific. Great Britain persisted in the idea of being a world power, without disposing of the necessary means to back that pretension.

The first incident took place in the night of September 18 to 19, 1931, near Mukden and is therefore called the "Mukden incident". It was brought to the notice of the League on September 19 and marks the beginning of its involvement. Stefan Hell describes what follows as six phases: Three phases of hectic activity and significant events, and three phases of confidence, passivity or Japanese concessions.

Important characteristics of these six phases are: 1. What began as a local conflict, declared by Japan as a matter which would soon be solved, gradually evolved into a full-scale occupation of Manchuria. It was not the Japanese government which played the leading role, but the military in Manchuria. 2. The League and the Western powers first tried to mediate. When it became obvious that this was achieving nothing, and being short of reliable information, it was decided on December 10, 1931, to despatch a fact-finding commission to Manchuria. It was headed by Lord Lytton and left for Manchuria, via USA and Japan, on February 2, 1932. Its report was published in Geneva and Washington on October 2, 1932, 10 months after the decision to set up a commission had been made. 3. In the meantime the Japanese forces had occupied a large part of Manchuria and set up the puppet state of Manchukuo. Pending the outcome of the Lytton Report, the Western powers did not wish to take any sanctions against Japan. 4. The call in the report for Japan to withdraw all forces from Manchuria and the heated discussions in which small countries played a very active role, culminated with Japan quitting the League on February 24, 1933.

Stefan Hell attributes the failure of the League to achieve a peaceful solution in the Manchurian conflict to institutional weaknesses of its covenants and the lack of determination by the powerful members to take action against Japan. They were plagued by economic, social and political problems and were well aware of their lack of real power of intervention. Rather than strengthening the League, the members were concerned about their own interests, one of them being the anxiety not to put their colonies at risk. On top of this: The powers were ignorant of the fundamental changes that were taking place in Japan.

The book provides an excellent insight into largely unknown details. It also bears testimony to how important it is to unite all states within an international secur-

ity system, backed by real means of intervention. The literature quoted is impressive. The appendix includes a map of Manchuria and Shanghai in 1932, extracts of important covenants of the League of Nations of 1919, the Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928, the Washington Nine-Power Agreement on Principles relating to China of 1922 and resolutions of the League of Nations regarding the Manchuria conflict.

Richard Dähler

MALCOLM TREVOR, *Japan: Restless Competitor. The Pursuit of Economic Nationalism*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001. 274 pages, \$25.00. ISBN 1-903350-02-6

Since the Japanese bubble economy of asset inflation burst in 1992, books on Japan (of the 'what can we learn from Japan' sort) are clearly out of favour. Instead, benign neglect, prevalent until the 1970s, when the world woke up to Japan's high tech competitiveness, is once again the order of the day. This is a pity since the country is economically speaking seven times the size of China, accounts for 70 % of the Asian economy, and with its highly skilled, motivated and disciplined labour force is likely to remain a formidable global competitor.

The author presents this thesis, arguing that Japan's competitiveness was also due to the fact that it was able to gain and to utilize fully unfair advantages in international trade, notably towards its main competitors, the US and the EU.

Japan's expansion, according to Trevor, was engineered by MITI through allocating cheap capital and public funds to high growth value added sectors (p. 212), permitting cosy sectoral and horizontal cartels (notably the re-emergence of the Keiretsu networks of closely affiliated companies), allowing cut throat pricing for export market share expansion, keeping labour and other cost factors low (p.37) and, finally, through keeping competitive imports out as long as possible.

Trevor documents at great length instances of collusive practices and structural corruption permeating large sections of Japan's political economy, since the political and administrative class in Japan both define their business interests as the "national interest" (p.161). He describes the extra-legal practice of 'administrative guidance' (*gyosei shido*) which limits competition (p.155), the placement of retired senior bureaucrats in management advisory and in business associations (like, for instance, the Japan Chain Store Association, p.159), the lengthy series of permits required, be it for the admission of new cars (p.140), or for the opening of new retail stores even after 'deregulation' (p.214), systematic bid rigging on public works contracts (*dango*) due to close ties of the construction industry with the governing LDP (p.188-90), and the ever growing need of funds by the government party and its quarrelsome faction (p.171).

Trevor's conclusion is then straightforward: Japan does not play according to the rules of a market economy. The costs of this uneven competition are borne by foreign competitors and increasingly by Japanese consumers, employees and tax payers, who pay in terms of higher prices, lower wages and reduced public services as the costs for the public bail out of the persistent banking crisis mount.