

kong-Ausstellung herausgebrachte Sammelband *Hongkong-Architektur. Die Ästhetik der Dichte* fehlen, mag angesichts der zwischenzeitlich schier unüberschaubar gewordenen Hongkong-Literatur entschuldbar sein.

Bleiben einige Schlussbemerkungen zu Breitung's methodisch sauberer und fleißiger Dissertation: Der eigentliche Integrationsprozess Hongkongs in die seit der Entkolonisierung veränderte Gesamtsituation ist weder politisch noch wirtschaftlich abgeschlossen, und die vorgelegten Statistiken beziehen sich in der Regel auf die Jahre vor 1997, dem Jahr der Rückgabe Hongkongs an die VR China. Breitung's Zeitfenster hat den von ihm zum Thema gewählten Prozess also erst in seiner Startphase erfasst. Unbeantwortet bleibt die doch in vielerlei Sicht hoch interessante Frage, weshalb neben den nur für 99 Jahre von Großbritannien gepachteten New Territories eigentlich das Herzstück Hongkongs – Hongkong Island eben – 1997 ohne zwingende politische Notwendigkeit auch an die VR China übergeben wurde. Erst das Aufzeigen der bereits zur Mao-Zeit versorgungstechnisch vollkommenen Abhängigkeit Hongkongs vom "Mutterland" China (Wasserpipelines, Züge zum Transport von Schweinen u. Ä.) macht klar, dass sich eine innige, weil überlebenswichtige, Verbindung zwischen der Kolonialregion Hongkong und der VR China als viel älter als die moderne Globalisierungs- und Integrationsdiskussion erweist. Und schade ist es auch, dass Breitung's so inhalts- und detailreiche Arbeit – obzwar nach dem Prinzip der Dezimalgliederung in über 140 Gliederungspunkten präsentiert – mangels eines fehlenden Stichwortregisters sich nicht gerade benutzerfreundlich darstellt.

Horst Eichler

Southeast Asia under the Japanese Occupation

- NICHOLAS TARLING, *A Sudden Rampage. The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia 1941–1945*. Singapore: Horizon Books, 2001. 286 pages, S\$ 20.00. ISBN 981-04-4341-2
- PAUL H. KRATOSKA (ed.), *Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Occupation*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2003. 175 pages, S\$ 18.00. ISBN 9971062-417-6
- OUI KEAT GIN, *Rising Sun over Borneo. The Japanese Occupation of Sarawak 1941–1945*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999. 158 pages, £ 45.50. ISBN 0-333-712690-9.
- PAUL H. KRATOSKA (ed.), *Southeast Asian Minorities in the Wartime Japanese Empire*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. 251 pages, US\$ 165.00. ISBN 0-7007-1488-X.
- PATRICIA LIM PUI HUEN / DIANA WONG (eds.), *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2000. 193 pages, S\$ 40.00. ISBN 981-230-037-6

Not only present US experience in Iraq confirms that it is sometimes easier to conquer a foreign territory than to administer and pacify it properly in a military occupation. The Japanese occupation of the vast territories of South East Asia, which they overran in less than 3 months in 1941/42, is another case in point.

Generally it is assumed that Japanese occupation policies are poorly researched, as the occupant had burnt most records, and after the war both sides showed little inclination to recall, let alone investigate, this unhappy and all too often bloody period.

These five volumes, which were published only recently, succeed in conveying often by pain-staking research a fair picture of the intentions, errors and constraints of the occupier and of the suffering and the reactions of the different occupied peoples. These publications, although slim and sometimes very expensive, share the great common merit of rescuing this important period, which in all affected countries accelerated the struggle for independence, from oblivion. The picture emerging fortunately transcends the usual stereotypes. There are great differences in occupation regimes, ranging from mindless slaughter and repression (in Singapore, West Borneo and parts of Malaya) to more enlightened policies of re-establishing order and leaving people in peace (like on Java and in Sarawak). In turn, the reaction of the occupied peoples varied between armed resistance, outright collaboration, or, in most cases, sullen acceptance. For many the chaos, inter-ethnic strife and settling of accounts of the post-war period turned out to be worse than the occupation period itself, during which these tensions built up. In this, there are in fact many similarities to the European postwar experience.

Southeast Asia was never a Japanese war objective. For the army, the concept of 'Lebensraum' was largely limited to Manchuria, apart from the colonies of Taiwan and Korea. It was only after the Allied oil embargo, which threatened her conduct of war in China that Japan turned southward. The lure of oil off Sumatra and Borneo, which seemed poorly defended (the Netherlands and France were already defeated in Europe, and the UK was struggling for survival) and the prospect of cutting off China's supply lines in the South prompted the move.

The Japanese military had little knowledge of the region, let alone detailed designs for a prolonged occupation and its objectives. Hence, occupation policy, at least initially, showed "little sense of purpose" (Kratoska, 2003, p. ix). The Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, proclaimed in 1940, soon turned out to be anti-Western propaganda with little operational meaning.

Rather, the primary purpose was to supply Japan's war efforts with raw materials (oil, cotton, special metals), to feed the Japanese troops and to supply forced labour for defense projects (fortifications, airfields, railways, harbours and roads). In addition, the Chinese business communities were forced to make sizable "donations" to the Japanese war effort – in "atonement" for their earlier support for China's war and for the boycott of Japanese goods. The sinking of

most shipping by Allied submarines by 1944 led to the almost complete cessation of trade and of most industry and plantation economies and an increased focus on self-sufficiency, notably of basic foodstuffs. Where this objective was not realized, the native population began to starve as the Japanese military requisitioned crops for its own needs.

In the end, the Japanese occupation seemed to antagonize almost everyone, including the Burmese, Malay and Indian population, which it initially wished to win over for its further war aims (like the conquest of India), due to the general economic decline, the hardships and arbitrariness of its regime and the high death tolls, the privations and the maltreatment during forced labour.

In order to secure their supply and immediate defence needs, the Japanese military preferred to deal with the old pre-war local elites as intermediaries. It even disbanded and discouraged anti-colonial nationalist groups. Only very late in the war (1943) did Japan grant a very limited nominal "independence" to Burma and to the Philippines. They had to remain allied with the Empire, which continued to control their foreign, military and economic affairs.

In Indochina, Japan granted independence only in March 1945 after instigating a violent coup against its erstwhile French allies, the Vichy administration of admiral Decoux. The resulting power vacuum created the conditions for a Communist uprising, which was to haunt Indochina for the next four decades. In Indonesia independence was permitted only after Japan's capitulation. In fact, the Japanese navy never intended to relinquish control of its area of occupation, the Eastern half of the Dutch East Indies. The same applied to Singapore, which as 'Syonan' was to become a Japanese fortress (with Mitsubishi taking over the shipyards). Large chunks of northern Malaya and western Cambodia were given belatedly, in 1943, to Japan's reluctant Thai allies. Hence Japan's anti-colonial record exhausted itself mostly in fierce anti-white rhetoric (Tarling, p.132) and in the mistreatment of the interned European civil population or Allied POWs. Their death rate in Japanese captivity stood at 27%, whilst in German and Italian camps only 4% died.

In the fragile inter-ethnic mix of South East Asia power vacua often triggered violence. First it was the fight and defeat of colonial troops which led to inter-ethnic violence, like between Burmese and Karen, and anti-Chinese riots and looting on Java (triggered by irresponsible Dutch scorched earth policies). In fact, the lawlessness was only stopped by the Japanese army which on Java (like in Sarawak and in Thailand) acted as a protector of the Chinese.

The Japanese capitulation mostly left a power vacuum until the arrival of Allied troops some weeks later. Often an ugly settling of accounts ensued, which quickly took the form of ethnic violence. In Malaya, it was the Communist Chinese MPAJA which began murdering Malay policemen and mayors as alleged collaborators. In retaliation, there were anti-Chinese massacres notably in Johor. In Sarawak, Chinese merchants were killed by Iban tribesmen as presumed collaborators, and on Java, again, anti-Chinese programs occurred.

Nicholas Tarling, a former history professor from Auckland, limits himself to a broad overview of the overall picture. Unfortunately he devotes half of his volume to a fairly conventional account of the Pacific War, which has little novelty value except perhaps for US college students. The four other volumes, two of which were meticulously edited by Paul Kratoska, give a more detailed and differentiated picture, often reconstructing fairly minute local episodes in great detail. While none of them is of any importance for the eventual outcome of the war, they are instructive for the varied experiences encountered by the occupied peoples. As mentioned, the Japanese military regime could be tyrannical and murderous, like in Singapore, parts of Malaya and in West Borneo, and relatively relaxed and even protective towards the Chinese as on Java and in Sarawak.

The native peoples' reaction varied according to circumstances, as they were caught in a conflict between two outsiders – between the Japanese and their colonial powers. Only some of the Chinese immigrants (*totok*) in Malaya understood their armed struggle against the Japanese (and later against the British) as an extension of the war and later of the Communist insurrection in China.

The Japanese reaction to armed resistance was again varied. Yoji Akashi (in Kratoska, 2003) offers a fascinating account of fairly sophisticated counterinsurgency operations in the Malayan jungle of Kedah in which the MPAJA was particularly strong and ruthlessly active (pp. 83–118).

Hara Fujio reports on a fairly ill planned uprising in the town of the Kota Kinabalu (formerly Jesselton) in North Borneo in October 1943, which was brutally suppressed by the occupant with some 3,000 people, mostly uninvolved, killed (in: Kratoska 2003, pp. 111–23).

Even more chilling is the report by Kaori Maekawa on the bloody prosecution of two wholly implausible, allegedly anti-Japanese conspiracies “discovered” by two *tokkai* (naval police) inspectors in Pontianak (West Borneo) in the course of which the entire, some 2000 persons in all, local leadership of the Chinese, the Indians and the Indonesians was tortured and murdered (in: Kratoska, 2002, pp. 153–164).

In contrast, Kawashima Midori reports that when an entire Japanese infantry company was annihilated by order of two disgruntled local chieftains in September 1942 near Tamparan in Central Mindanao, there was no Japanese reaction, presumably for fear of triggering a general uprising among the restless militant Moro population (in: Kratoska, 2002, p. 238).

Equally, in Kokang State, an outlying part of British Burma, adjacent to Yunnan, which was de facto controlled by a KMT army (until 1953), the Japanese army limited itself to armed reconnaissance, but due to the area's lack of strategic importance abstained from an occupation (Kratoska, 2002, p. 39).

Gregory Chancey offers an explanation for the usually needless brutality of Japanese military behaviour. As army and navy were expected to live off the

land, mass requisitioning quickly degenerated, like in China, into looting, plunder and rape (much like Soviet military behaviour, A.R.). This was replicated at the most senior military level, when commanding generals exacted forcible contributions by blackmailing the Chinese merchant communities. The *bushido* ideology of the Emperor's army brutalised its recruits. This made them ready for ruthless attacks and immune to losses. But it also brutalised their behaviour towards prisoners of war, the wounded and the civilian population (including their own – as evident in Okinawa and in Manchuria). As an occupation power, the *bushido* spirit made the military singularly inept as regards governance and political rule (in: Krastoska, 2002, p. 14). The Indian National Army apart, they usually managed to antagonize potential collaborators. As Ba Maw, Burma's wartime president, perceptively put it: The one-dimensional thinking of the Japanese military made it incapable of understanding others, or of making itself understood.

Compulsory *romusha* labour usually had to be done under terrible conditions: Heavy physical work for road, airfield and railway construction, or mining and jungle clearing, for intermittent periods, without food or medical care, with constant beatings and harsh punishments for minor transgressions. In addition, there were increasing attacks by Allied bombers. Maritime transports of labourers (e.g. from Java or China) were sunk by enemy submarines.

Death rates of conscript labour for many projects stood at around 40% (most infamously, the 450 km Burma-Siam railway project, including the Bridge over the River Kway, which involved 250,000 civilian labourers and 60,000 POWs), but could increase to 90% due to hunger, untreated epidemics, work accidents and enemy fire. Small wonder that the numerous forced labour raffles managed to antagonise even those who, like the Malays and the Indians, were relatively well disposed to Japanese rule. Often this was done out of pure arrogance and thoughtlessness, viz. beating natives for not greeting the *nihonmaru* with proper bows, holding drinking parties in mosques, harassing Muslim women (Abu Talib Ahmad, in: Kratoska, 2003, p. 25), or by confiscating rifles from Iban hunters (Ooi Keat Gin, p. 70).

After the war, some of the true or assumed perpetrators were hung. Others escaped, most famously the notorious Colonel Masanobu Tsuji, the mastermind who designed the vicious "purification by elimination" (*sook ching*) scheme and engineered the mass murder of between 5,000 to 50,000 Chinese and Eurasians in Singapore alone in 1942 (Cheah Boon Kheng, in: Kratoska, 2002, p. 101). While his boss, General Yamashita, went to the gallows in Manila in October 1945, Tsuji had himself later elected as an honourable member of the Japanese Diet. Readiness for senseless brutality was, however, no exclusive privilege of the occupant. Consider the following order given by Churchill, who failed to send reinforcements to General Wavell on 10.2.1942: "no thought of saving the troops or sparing the population. Officers should die with their troops. No mercy or weakness in any form." (quoted by Cheah, p. 103). Luckily this order,

given from perfect safety 10,000 kms away, was largely ignored. Five days later, the British capitulated.

Patricia Lim and Diana Wong have edited a volume dedicated exclusively to remembrance of the war, with contributions based mostly on oral history, personal anecdotes, literary products and local monuments. Clearly, there is a plurality of memories, depending on ethnic, social and individual differences and necessarily varied personal experiences. Whilst these memories become highly selective and frequently inaccurate with the passage of time, at least they have the advantage of not being the usual propaganda produced hurriedly by the victors after the war.

Some respondents actually continue to see the Japanese as liberators (Diana Wong, p. 2), who facilitated their people's struggle for independence. Others, like in the hitherto neglected rural Malay district of Yan, for instance, praised the Japanese establishment of a new agricultural school, teaching Japanese farm techniques, and the construction of rural roads, which had been neglected by the British (Abu Talib Ahmad, pp. 69). However, for most people – as they moved from laissez-faire colonial rule to a harsh Japanese military dictatorship – its hallmarks of force and violence, of mass executions, the public display of decapitated heads, *kempetai* brutality, the fear of denunciations, of forced labour conscriptions and painful shortages of food and essential commodities became a shared experience of the war generation. Yet, unlike in China or in Europe, the ethnically differentiated war experience was not conducive to myths of mass resistance, loyalty and liberation in Southeast Asia (Wong, p. 5).

For the immigrant Chinese the war was the extension of their struggle in China (p. 15). For most colonials it was the dispute between two imperialists in which they were caught up. The Europeans (the British, the Dutch and the POWs), who were imprisoned in concentration camps, received the harshest treatment. The survivors understandably reacted with the strongest moral condemnation. But their experience was not shared by most Southeast Asians (Wong, p. 20). Thus PM Mahathir in 1994 could tell Japan that there was no need to keep on apologizing for the war (Cheah Boon Keng, p. 35), as continuously requested by the press in the US, the UK, the Netherlands and in China.

Abu Talib Ahmed describes how ordinary Malays were affected. In school life Japanese discipline was introduced, with Japanese replacing English as second language, propaganda songs being taught, and agricultural training introduced as part of the "grow more food" self-sufficiency campaign to produce more food crops including vegetables, tapioca, yam, sweet potatoes and maize, which did not really motivate most Malays (p. 62). Adults were adversely affected by the forced labour raffles (to which the occupants resorted increasingly once the word of the hardships suffered and of the promises broken as regards decent wages, food and clothing spread and dried up the pool of volunteers) and by recruitment into self-defense organizations of poorly armed and trained village militias, the *jikeidan*.

P. Ramasamy presents the Indian experience as one of the Indian middle class exploiting Indian estate workers in the absence of their British masters (p. 92 ff.). According to him Indians participated in the Indian National Army mostly to escape forced labour (p. 95). Their military experience helped many to become militant leftist trade unionists after the war. His account is interesting, but has one major flaw: as principle source the author quotes mostly himself!

Yeo Song Nian and Ng Siew Ai review Chinese war and post-war literature, beginning with 1937, written in the region. The samples they quote, however, show agit-prop writing of no discernible literary quality (of the sort: "The [Japanese] devils in the planes were laughing with evil smiles", p. 109, and: "The Japanese Army has to be a kind of animal. ... They are sadists." p. 114), reproducing hateful stereotyping of the Ilya Ehrenburg type.

In places like Johor, where the Japanese military in 1942 committed some of its worst massacres in Malaya, Patricia Lim sadly concludes that their death toll was soon bypassed by the post-war terrorist campaign of the Communists and by the British/Malayan counterinsurgency operations in this erstwhile MCP stronghold (p. 151/2).

Albrecht Rothacher