

I won't attempt to directly address any replies to my comment essentially for two reasons: firstly because I see almost nothing of substance worth replying to and secondly, in the very few cases where this is not the case a serious reply would have to be far too long for this sort of forum. However, everything I wrote in my post is based on objective and very reliable sources, mostly primary, so all I am going to do is list them and relate to the claims made in my first comment.

First, let me first state what I consider to be the two best and most unbiased sources concerning such things as the Japanese attitude to the Asian populations that found themselves under Japanese rule during the Pacific War. Here I consider as the two most objective and well informed sources two wartime memoirs you two journalists, one Japanese and one Australian.

The Japanese is Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, an American educated liberal intellectual who during the Pacific War wrote, at high personal risk, a diary entitled "A Diary of Darkness". As one can tell from the title, Kiyosawa hated the war and was extremely critical of both the Japanese Army who brought it about and the Japanese intellectuals who, in his view, displayed extreme stupidity in generating inane propaganda (very similar to the one that nowadays emanates from Russia, China, and Korea), with which they supported it. Kiyosawa was a very rare phenomenon: a genuine patriot who was neither a nationalist nor a communist or a communist sympathizer (he frequently comments on the fact that wartime Japan, in spite of anti-communist rhetoric was increasingly resembling a communist state). In spite of his hostility to the war and very critical attitude to all prevailing nationalism Kiyosawa was very unhappy that he was not allowed in any way to help his country in her darkest moments. In fact, as a liberal and suspected "American sympathizer" Kiyosawa was under a publication ban and his friends expected him to be arrested any moment. Nevertheless, throughout the war Kiyosawa maintained close contacts with out of power liberals at the highest levels of Japanese society and with the foreign ministry, which sometimes published articles and analyses written by him under a pseudonym. He also attended many lectures by senior political and intellectual figures and even gave some. The virtual ban on publication reduced Kiyosawa to penury and as a result he died of pneumonia caused by malnutrition shortly before the end of the war.

One of the things Kiyosawa comments on several times in his diary was the issue of the treatment of prisoners of war. He attended several times lectures by senior Japanese military in charge of the treatment of prisoners of war (in particular Colonel Odjima) who explained Japan's approach to this issue. They are quoted as saying essentially this. At the time of the Russo-Japanese war Japan adopted the Western ideas of chivalry and human rights and the treatment of war prisoners was very humane. The same approach was followed during the First World War. However, in the present war (Odjima explained) these ideas on the treatment of prisoners of war were considered "Anglo-American", and were therefore rejected along with all other Anglo-American ideas. In this war the treatment of prisoners of war was going to be based on international law and Japanese ideas. From these words Kiyosawa concludes that the treatment would be extremely bad. First of all, the Japanese treatment of their own soldiers and even students undergoing military training was based on frequent beatings and other physical abuse, and Kiyosawa correctly concluded that the same will be done to prisoners of war thus causing terrible

damage to Japan's reputation. As for international law, Kiyosawa noted that hardly anyone in Japan knew anything about it, so as he put it "naturally abuses will probably run to the extremes". As in most other cases, Kiyosawa's guess proved correct, but even so what he describes deserves much more to be called "a lack of policy" than a "policy of abuse".

In my opinion, Kiyosawa's diary is the most important document there is anyone who wants to understand the condition of Japan during the war and what led to it. The second most important primary source I rely on is even less well known. It exists only as unpublished typescript. I am referring to "Rabaul 1942-1945 An Account of Four Years As A Prisoner of War Of The Japanese" by Gordon Thomas, an Australian journalist and newspaper editor. Thomas was a journalist and a newspaper editor who became a prisoner of war after the Japanese Army captured Rabaul in Papua New Guinea from the Australians in 1942. The reason why I consider Thomas' memoirs (written almost immediately after the end of the war) more important than any other for the understanding of the Japanese attitudes and behaviour during the war and the Japanese treatment of both Westerners and Asians are several. The most important is that Thomas was not held in a prisoner's of War camp but, together with three other Australians, worked at the only Freezer on the island. The Australians, although prisoners, were attached to the Supply Headquarters of the Japanese Army and enjoyed relative freedom of movement. Moreover, in the climate of the Papua the importance of the Freezer cannot be overestimated and it became the social center of Rabaul, around which 100,000 Japanese troops were stationed, as well as prisoners of war of various nationalities, Korean laborers, and a large number (between 600 and 3000) of "comfort women": mostly Korean but also Japanese and Taiwanese. Thomas had acute powers of observation and excellent writing skills. During the three years he got to know personally Japanese soldiers of various ranks, from the lowest privates to senior officers, as well as Taiwanese soldiers, Chinese and Indian prisoners of war, Korean laborers and, and that is the most interesting and unique aspect of this document, both Korean and Japanese "comfort women". Nobody can accuse Thomas of being pro-Japanese, the following characterization he gives of low ranking Japanese soldiers should be sufficient: *"The ordinary ranker was, as a rule, a simple-minded individual; child-like in his little vanities, in his love of power; susceptible to any form of flattery - especially from any member of the white race - and underlying it all, beneath the thin veneer of army discipline and mimicry of western organisation, there lay his original streak of savagery. Like the little boy who loves to pull the legs off flies, or singe the cat's whiskers with a match."*

Thomas's view of Japanese officers was different and he actually praises many of them, even though his testimony is always strongly tinged with racial prejudice typical of his times. But he makes many interesting comments (and provides evidence) on a number of issues related to this thread. For example, he states *"The Japs, as a rule, treated the Chinese, both local and the soldiers prisoners-of war from Shanghai, far better than anyone else."*

He gives a lot of evidence of this and explains this as partly due to the fact that, because of their common usage of Kanji the Chinese and the Japanese understood each other much better and partly because the Chinese readily carried out all what the Japanese demanded efficiently and without any visible reluctance. Thomas makes also completely clear that the Japanese treatment of other Asians depended above all on how much the Japanese trusted them. Those

who were considered pro-Japanese were treated much better than those who were not. The most striking example were the Indians: there were both pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese Indian prisoners of war in Rabaul and the Japanese treatment of the two groups was very different. This was a universal phenomenon throughout Asia. There are plenty of other primary sources that support this conclusion. In “My lucky life”, the memoirs of Sam Falle, who was a prisoner of war of the Japanese in Indonesia, the author clearly states that the Indonesians completely supported the Japanese and always immediately handed over or reported any escaped allied prisoner’s of war. As the Japanese did not recognise the right of a prisoner of war to try to escape, such escapees were as a rule executed.

Similarly, the famous Jewish Indian general J.F.R. Jacob in his autobiography “An Odyssey in War and Peace” states that the Indonesians sided entirely with the Japanese. Jacob served as an officer in the British Army that together with the Dutch recaptured Indonesia. He writes that the Indonesians refused to accept any money except Japanese and that constantly ambushed British units even after the Japanese surrender. Jacob also writes: “the Japanese in defeat were disciplined and behaved with dignity”.

The Japanese behaviour in countries where the majority of the population was hostile, such as the Philippines was, of course, very different.

The memoirs of Gordon Thomas are probably unique in one respect: he was probably the only Westerner who for two years was in almost daily contact with “comfort women”, who are a subject of so much controversy these days. In view of that it seems amazing that Thomas’ testimony is so rarely mentioned in this context but maybe there is a reason. Thomas believed that the majority of the Korean comfort women had been deceived into believing that they were going to be provided with work on coffee plantations (he was told so by a Korean worker) but in spite of that he strongly commends the idea of the comfort women system as something that should be imitated by the other military (it was). He even writes:

*“In Rabaul - for the most part- where Cho-sen (Korean) women who were supposed to have been tricked into the profession; but it is more than likely if they had not been living in Rabaul they would have been toiling somewhere else in their own country, where the conditions would not have been as good.”*

Another significant point that Thomas mentions: at the end of 1943 when the allied bombing of Rabaul became very heavy all the “comfort women” were sent back to their countries by the Japanese. Thomas describes their departure thus: *“amid a flourish of cheers and waving as they sped through the streets, seated on top of their beds and baggage. They were the last remaining splash of colour in a town of dark drab grey and green landscape and uniformed humanity.”* The ships carrying these women home were bombed by the allies when they were just outside Rabaul and almost nobody survived.

For more on Thomas and the “comfort women” of Rabaul I suggest my article I already mentioned in my first post, since I do not know of any other source where it is discussed in such detail.

As I am running out of space and time I will only add that concerning everything I wrote about the Japanese policy of assimilation in Korea and in particular Koreans serving in the Japanese military I relied primarily on the most complete source available: “Fighting for the Enemy, Koreans in Japan’s War, 1937-1945”, by Brandon Palmer. This is a thoroughly documented historical source published by the University of Washington Press.

One more comment. Those who believe that when one finds in some group of people and especially a nation a great deal of hatred for another people it is a proof that the hated must have seriously injured the haters should try to answer the question: why is South Korea today one of the most anti-semitic countries in the world although it has no history of Jews living there or any significant contact with them and the relations between the Korean and Israeli governments have always been good? That South Korea is one of the most anti-semitic countries in the world is proved (as much as such things can ever be proved) here:

<http://global100.adl.org/#country/south-korea>

In particular, 38% of South Koreans answered “yes” to “Jews are responsible for most of the world’s wars” (vs 11% of Japanese) and 40% answered “yes” to “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust” (18% Japanese). Nobody to my knowledge has attempted to answer these results, but in my opinion the answer is quite clear and is related to a similar phenomenon in war-time Japan mentioned many times in “A Diary of Darkness” of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi.