

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20092]

Proposed title of the session

Total War? Rethinking Resource Mobilization in the Japanese Empire, 1895-1945

Abstract

Surprisingly little has been written about the economic history of the Japanese empire as a whole. Key to understanding the particular way in which the Japanese empire expanded from 1895 to 1945 is the question of resource mobilization. Conditions of each territory constituting the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" were far from the same. Japanese rule was characterized by differentiated sovereignty; it was not a monolithic empire. Thus during the Second World War, resource mobilization in the older colonies of Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria was not carried out in the same manner as in the newly occupied territories of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. More than examining Japanese economic strategy, decision-making, and politics, this panel will examine the various strategies employed by the Japanese as they adapted to local situations throughout the empire. The economic exigencies of the shift towards "total war" in the late 1930s created a need to incorporate new players, to reconfigure existing arrangements, and to develop previously untapped resources. Papers will address the interactions between Japanese authorities and local producers, the adaptation of colonial monopolies and financial systems to a wartime mobilization regime, and how the Japanese identified, acquired and developed mineral resources.

Each of the papers begins with the prewar Japanese economic relations for a particular region, resource, or sector of the economy; the specific plans for the mobilization of resources; and the activities of Japanese intermediaries (including economic missions, affiliated agents, and research institutes). Each paper then focuses on the wartime methods and practices of resource mobilization as well as the reactions of local intermediaries to those measures. Finally, in each of these cases, each paper concludes with the postwar continuities (or discontinuities) leading into the new economic configurations of the Cold War.

The panel will consist of two parts. The first will focus on the colonies of Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria, with papers on the state monopoly of tobacco in colonial Korea, on the creation of a Japanese imperial financial network that linked Korea, Japan, and Manchuria through the Bank of Chosen, and on the mobilization of raw materials in Manchuria.

The second set of papers will look at Japanese activities in Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, and New Caledonia. Indochina constitutes a unique case. Despite increasingly intense Japanese influence following the French armistice in 1940, French authorities in Indochina nevertheless maintained their sovereignty. Unable to simply seize the property of French companies, Japanese authorities imposed quotas of materials to be exported to Japan. The papers will look at how Japanese companies took part in the prospecting of mineral resources and exploitation of mines, and even maneuvered to take control of established French companies in Indochina and New Caledonia (though that colony was never occupied), as well as Dutch mining operations in the East Indies, and will show how Japanese economic policies and strategies in French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies transformed the existing structure of the colonial economies of these two countries.

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. Chad B. Denton (Yonsei University [Republic of Korea])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Michael Kim (Yonsei University [Republic of Korea])
3. Howard Kahm (Yonsei University [Republic of Korea])
4. Jaehyun Jeoung (Université Paris VII [France])
5. Thuy Van Pham (Vietnam National University, Hanoi [Viet Nam])
6. Daqing Yang (George Washington University [United States of America])