Hong Kong's place in South East Asia

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Chapter 7 Wars Within and Without (1941-50)

When World War Two hit Hong Kong, its Eurasian core – Ho Tung, Soares, Macumber Churn, Kadoorie, Ruttonjee, Kotewall, Anderson, Ebrahim Abdoolally and others – all adapted to survive, keeping a vision of home intact. Whereas World War One, the 1911 revolution and civil war in China had challenged Hong Kong Eurasians to consolidate their communities and forge new networks, in the 1940s they faced a whole new level of threat. Now, how one's identity was defined, by oneself and by various governments, would become not merely a question of wealth or education but a matter of life and death. Did one want to be British to escape Hong Kong before the war, or Portuguese to get to Macao? Was it safer to be Chinese, even to identify with the new occupying power, Japan? Or was it a cunning plan to be Eurasian? In this defeated British colony, what did being 'British' mean?

This chapter looks at how the Japanese victory over British power and the pressures of Japanese occupation of Hong Kong directly impacted Eurasian families and networks. We will see how structural racism across the British empire made a difference to people's fates, but also who chose to stand up and die for Hong Kong. Some divisions of race and class dissolved when all kinds of Hong Kongers mucked in together to fight and get by. But now those of mixed roots faced Japanese definitions too, which involved trying to encourage Indian and other Asian revolts against British rule; they also forbade allied support for some 'Asians' which they defined as their own and then ignored.

British and allied civilians were interned in the civilian internment camp at Stanley where the risk of death from starvation of lack of care was ever-present. Some Eurasians chose to be British to enter; others such as American writer Emily Hahn (with a lover in British intelligence, Charles Boxer) claimed a Chinese husband in order to stay out of camp. Outside camp, those with more ambiguous identities, or no identity documents at all, faced often more terrifying daily challenges. Ambiguity offered choices and the chance to escape; it also brought new meaning to the word 'collaboration'. Whereas those of mixed origins and identities had got ahead in pre-war times, now it became clear that the line between living through optimizing the best of both worlds or suffering the worst of both worlds, was thin indeed.

Not British enough to leave

Conscription came into force in July 1939 but many had already joined the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force, whose companies were proudly named Portuguese, Chinese, and Eurasian. Government architect Leslie Wright, a third-generation Hong Konger, says race was treated differently then. 'Hong Kong was based on racial differences before the war without being racial in the modern sense… The Volunteers were extraordinary, where Number 1 was English, Number 2 was Scottish, No 3 was Eurasian, Nos 5 and 6 I think were Portuguese, and 7 was Chinese. This was not looked upon as racial classification. The Scots were proud of their Scottish company. The Eurasians did the best of all, they fought a terrific battle against the Japanese at Wong Nei Chong Gap. I think they did a great job for the Eurasian community because people realized how well they had fought in the Battle of Hong Kong. This was not being racial. It was just a fact of life.'[529] Solomon Bard said the Volunteers 'was one of the few institutions in Hong Kong where the gap between the races did not exist. While in training Chinese and Europeans were as one. Only when the uniforms came off did the barriers return.'[530]

Indeed, one could put one's life and the safety of one's family at risk the same as the next man. But when Governor Northcote announced (on 28 June 1940) that all British women and children should be evacuated, it was left unclear as to who, precisely, qualified. Among the European community, the frantic packing and planning was shot through with anger that families were being divided, the men left behind; some women went through sudden permutations to become 'indispensable' to the war effort and so to stay. On the other hand, many wives of men fighting for Hong Kong, found themselves excluded. What did 'British' mean?

Did British mean all holders of British passports? If so, then families of many endangered volunteers from the Eurasian and other communities of Hong Kong would qualify. Or did British mean 'white'? Some Eurasians were blocked from boarding the ships. Joyce Anderson, who would marry Robert Symons and become headmistress of the Diocesan Girls' School, was with her sister when told by a

[529] Interview, 17 September 2015.
[530] Gillingham, *At the Peak*, p174.

registration official that he didn't know what to do 'with the likes of you,'[531] and the Bliss sisters too were turned back for not being racially 'pure'. Others found, when the *ss* Empress of Asia sailed on 5 July 1940 from Kowloon to the Philippines, they would be filtered out and sent back – because the 'White Australia' policy banned non-Europeans from immigrating to Australia. No one in the Hong Kong government had thought that through. When pressed in the Legislative Council, it claimed its aim had been to help people with no real domicile in Asia. The result was that the Hong Kong taxpayer paid for a tiny elite to reach safety, leaving 99.9 percent of the population unprotected. Council leaders said the government had, with this measure, lost the respect and confidence of the community, and put a heavy strain on the loyalty of a large part of the population.[532] Suddenly being 'British' was racial.

The issue turned on the government term, 'domicile'—the assumption that white/British residents of Hong Kong were only ever temporary, bound by the husband's job, and due to go back 'home' when the job ended. In fact many 'pure' British people did nothing of the sort. They spent their whole lives in Hong Kong, birthed babies there, grew up there, always returned there, even dying there. Hong Kong officials tried to correct London's assumptions on this front, in vain. The *South China Morning Post* was led to conclude (in an editorial, 2 August 1940) that domicile was just another word for racist discrimination. Historian Vivian Kong found that letters to the newspapers reinforced a 'vision in which Britishness transcends the boundary of race,' but official views showed a 'historical reality in which Britishness was reserved to those of "pure European descent" at the time of war.' When the Hong Kong government tried to arrange evacuation for its non-white subjects, racism elsewhere in Empire got in the way: when it asked the governments of Fiji, Ceylon, Burma, and India to receive about 2,393 Portuguese, Chinese, and Eurasian British subjects, only Fiji agreed to take the Chinese.[533] It was the most egregious example yet of the failure of bureaucracy to keep up with Hong Kong's multicultured and multicolored population.

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[531] Symons, *Looking at the Stars*, p23. Also 'Left Behind by Racist Policy,' *Sunday Morning Post*, 9 August 1998.
[532] Advocates in the Legislative Council were M.K. Lo and Leo d'Almada e Castro. D'Almada's family was ineligible for evacuation; his brother would lead a company of volunteers in the fighting; sister Gloria (Barretto) sent secret messages under occupation. *South China Morning Post*, 3 July 1940; also 1, 2, and 5 July 1940.
[533] Kong, ''Hong Kong Is My Home,' p556.

Meanwhile, the Ho Tung diamond wedding party went ahead, as did a 'Tin Hat' ball at the Peninsular Hotel thrown in aid of the allied war effort. Gwen Priestwood remembers the orchestra playing 'The Best Things in Life Are Free' after she had been at the races that afternoon amid 'crowds of Britishers, Americans, and wealthy Chinese, winning and losing bets; the pretty frocks of the women; the gay little groups sipping Gimlets and whiskey-sodas…' She later reflected that a life on the China coast through all manner of perils had made her blasé this time. 'Having lived since 1919 in China, where wars and rumors of war are so prevalent, and also having seen the bombing of the outskirts of the International Settlement in Shanghai in 1932—watching the bombs drop across the road from me, yet still living through them—I had somehow become a little disbelieving… This time—well, would it be any different?'[534] Yes, it would.

British enough to die

The doomed defense of Hong Kong began on the same day Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, 7 December (8 December in Hong Kong), 1941. Britain had dithered about reinforcing this colony, and its wartime leader, Winston Churchill, made clear he knew it would fall; the hope was a gallant defense to delay further Japanese advance. British, Canadian, and other Allied forces suffered around 2,000 men killed or missing, and perhaps the same number of wounded (the counts vary). The toll for 'Indian Other Ranks' was at least another 1,000 men. For the next three and a half years, almost 11,000 Allied soldiers were held in grisly prisoner of war camps where another almost 300 died; of those who survived, many never fully recovered from the ordeal. In addition, 2,400 British and Allied civilians were detained in Stanley Internment Camp, where hunger and disease ruined lives. Gruesome atrocities were perpetrated by the Japanese before and after the British surrender. 'The sybaritic life of pre-war Hong Kong faded into a dream,' noted the historian Paul Gillingham.[535]

The willingness of Hong Kong's Eurasians to, literally, die for Hong Kong is seen in the Battle of Wong Nei Chong Gap, that route from one side of the island to the other. By mid-December 1941, Japanese troops held the New Territories and Kowloon so this was 'the valley that the Japanese must surely attack; 'by chance or

[534] Priestwood, *Through Japanese Barbed Wire*, pp1, 3–4.
[535] Gillingham, *At the Peak*, p177.

good planning' No. 3 Company was 'on the exact path that the Japanese would choose for their move inland.'[536] No. 3 (Machine Gun) Company comprised almost entirely Eurasian volunteers, all graduates of the Diocesan Boys' School.[537] Evan George Stewart, orphaned son of China missionaries and headmaster of St. Paul's Co-Ed, was the officer in charge. He presided over three platoons (numbered 7, 8, and 9). Commanding 7 Platoon was Captain Leslie Holmes, who, as was his wife, was a crack shot. Commanding 8 Platoon was the first local magistrate of Hong Kong and older brother of the renowned educationalist Joyce Symons, Donald Anderson. But of Stewart's three platoon commanders only Lieutenant Bevan Field, commanding 9 Platoon, survived the war. He worked at Hongkong Land. The men included lawyers, accountants, civil servants, engineers, teachers, salesmen, storekeepers, clerks, brokers, a journalist,[538] and several university students. Such men and their families formed the bedrock of prewar Hong Kong society.[539]

After days-long struggle, 30 men from the company had died, with two more killed later and many of the survivors wounded. Several of those who survived—including Douglas Hung, C.S.M. Quah, and brothers George and Jimmy Kotwall—evaded capture and joined the resistance British Army Aid Group (BAAG); others joined clandestine or commando units such as Force 136 and Mission 204; yet others reached Burma and joined the Chindits, the British-led guerrilla force fighting behind Japanese lines. Major-General C.M. Maltby (General Officer Commanding, Hong Kong), said in Dispatches in 1948: 'I should like to place on record the superb gallantry of No 3 (Eurasian) Company at Wong Nai Chung Gap.' As prisoners, members of No. 3 Company achieved a higher survival rate than others. 'While familiarity with Hong Kong's dubious pre-war sanitation and the accumulated immunity may have helped, no doubt personal motivation was also a factor.'[540]

Within months after Hong Kong fell, the Japanese-controlled Hongkong News reported that Jimmy's Kitchen, the Parisian Grill, and Ruttonjee's brewery were back

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[536] Banham, *Not the Slightest Chance*, p122.
[537] These included V. H. White, Norman Broadbridge, George Winch, Ernie Zimmern, Harry Gubbay, and George J White.
[538] The journalist was John Prettejohn at the *South China Morning Post*.
[539] Whole families joined up—all seven Reed brothers, the Matthews, Broadbridges, Youngs, all five Zimmern brothers. Often they worked together or lived nearby to fellow volunteers, although the class spread seen in the location of their homes was vast—from the Peak to dockside housing in Kowloon or small flats in Taipingshan.
[540] Banham, *Not the Slightest Chance*, p129.

in operation. But the city had deteriorated, Japanese ships failed to bring supplies, repression was intensifying. By 1944, food shortages were acute, people were starving, the economy had atrophied. A population of 1.5 million before the war was reduced, also by killing, flight and forced evacuation, to around 600,000 by its end.

The Japanese governor Rensuke Isogai was keen to play the racial card, encouraging Asians to rise up against their British colonial masters by backing Japan in a war of the coloured races against the white. But daily life under the Japanese—the rapes and looting, lack of food and work, the infliction of petty humiliations, corruption at every level, the atrocities—soon stripped the Japanese option of any appeal. The sudden British collapse in Hong Kong and across Southeast Asia had grossly damaged British prestige, as had a prewar scandal in Hong Kong when the girlfriend of the officer in charge of air raid precautions made money by supplying substandard concrete,[541] but a local preference for past normality revived. Within a year, the Japanese had shown they could be more racist, bossy, and brutal than anything previously experienced in the colony. Meanwhile, efforts by the Japanese to recruit Eurasians who, they assumed, must have suffered discrimination at the hands of the British, to join an Asian 'Co-Prosperity Sphere' met with negligible success. 'Asians' were never a homogenous bunch, ripe for the picking, but a hugely diverse jumble of cultures, countries, economies, and peoples. No one power, be it Chinese, Japanese, or Western, could ever get it all under control.

Despite a history of distrust, of being seen as second best, or derided as 'not British enough,' it was the crucible of war and occupation in which the character of the true Hong Kongers was displayed. Young women from good Eurasian, Portuguese, British and other homes worked as confidential assistants to military men, as air raid wardens and nurses. Young men lined up to shoot and be shot at; families sought ways to bury wealth or hide their daughters; many fled to Macao; members of the Hong Kong Club patriotically drank as much of the alcohol stocks as possible to stop them falling into Japanese mouths. When later interned in Stanley Camp, these same men ran their company boards on camp stools and empty stomachs, authorizing money for the club housekeeper, and plotting actively for life after the war. Some

[541] Because the girlfriend was called Mimi Lau, the faulty anti-blast concrete blocks became known as 'Mimi Laus'; her boyfriend committed suicide.

future executives grew up in Stanley Camp, such as Peter Hall; others were born there.[542]

Outside camp, hospitals flying the Red Cross flag were violated, Chinese stretcher bearers with Red Cross armbands were killed, and scores of nurses were raped. In 1942 alone, said director of medical services Dr Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke, 83,435 burials of Hong Kong residents were recorded, some from fighting or reprisals, but many from starvation. Bank accounts were frozen; people sold anything for food. Bad rice increased in price more than twelvefold before the end. The Japanese rounded people up on boats and towed them out to sea to sink or swim.[543] Selwyn-Clarke soon found that Japan was not a signatory to the Geneva Convention. He could run only an Informal Welfare Committee, which, nonetheless, made sure medical supplies reached many in need. Once citizens of Britain and its allies were interned near Stanley Beach on the south side of the island, on 21 January 1942, he organized deliveries of beds, clothes, diapers, infant foods, kitchen utensils, and drugs; he even smuggled in a dentist's chair. He made note of the spontaneous generosity, at great risk to themselves, of Chinese, Indians, Portuguese, and others who were living outside.[544] Arrested on charges of passing secret messages to British spies in China, he survived. Japan gave Indians and other Asians control over interned Europeans and forced Legislative Council members Sir Shouson Chow and Sir Robert Kotewall to run a Rehabilitation Committee, 'trotting off to Japanese celebrations and making polite, deferential remarks about the virtues of the new regime'.[545] In March 1942 came the powerless Chinese Representative Council and the Chinese Cooperative Council.

Hong Kong people saving Hong Kong

Simply by continuing to find fuel and food, and ways to survive, the working population achieved a form of wartime resistance. Their numbers were drastically reduced, however, by forced evacuations (often to drown), killings and starvation.

[542] Such as George Cautherley, who traces family roots back to the trading firm of Augustine Heard & Co, through Bartou and Lobo family lines into the Eurasian clans.
[543] Selwyn-Clarke, *Footprints*, pp62, 69.
[544] Selwyn-Clarke, *Footprints*, pp74–75.
[545] Lethbridge, 'Caste, Class and Race,' p108.

When Japanese troops had poured over the hills and into Kowloon, a young Lawrence Kadoorie got a handful of transport passes for all senior staff of China Light and Power and commandeered a small bus. Passing La Salle College he rescued 'five somewhat terrified European nurses at their wits end and wondering what to do. I adopted them and put them in my bus…' At the power station, all was under control: explosive charges were in place, it was ready to blow, and key parts already adorned the harbor floor. On his way back to the pier, he met his Portuguese accountant Remedios, who gave him one Mrs. Wookie carrying a baby, saying she was the common-law wife of a British sergeant. Collecting three American sailors, he got everyone Hong Kong–side. He managed to offload the nurses onto a grateful Dr. Selwyn-Clarke, and 'after heated argument' persuaded the American consulate to take the sailors. Then, with Mrs. Wookie and baby, Lawrence went to his home on the Peak, now filled with Canadians. 'Mrs Wookie and her baby, not being considered 'enemy subjects' were found accommodation elsewhere,' recalled Lawrence; her fate would become clear as the war progressed. Lawrence, meanwhile, interned at Stanley, reckoned he became skilled at scrubbing toilets and living rough. It no doubt helped that his family was rich and prominent—after just five months in Stanley they were allowed back to Shanghai.[546]

Barbara Anslow, a young British woman, had signed up for Air Raid Precaution duty and remembers being billeted in Dina House, a building still owned by the Ruttonjees, where she shared rooms with Eurasians and British women. By the end of the war, she felt the change in herself: 'How did the time in camp affect my life? It altered my outlook on racism and religion. Pre-war I had no Chinese, Portuguese or Eurasian friends or acquaintances; our ways didn't cross. In Stanley I had close connections, mainly through R.C. church activities, with all three races and made many friends among them… I like to think camp made me more tolerant.'[547]

The Ruttonjees chose to serve Hong Kong and its peoples, at great personal risk. In 1944 both Jehangir Hormusjee Ruttonjee and son Dhun, accused of engaging in anti-Japanese activities, were thrown into prison, and tortured, only to be freed at war's end. Meanwhile, Mrs Ruttonjee slowly eked out her savings and sold pieces of

[546] Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, Interview with Oxford Colonial Archives Project, Rhodes House Library, South Parks Road, Oxford, UK.
[547] BAnslow, *Tin Hats & Rice*, pp27, 31, and 335.

jewelry to stretch the stash of tinned foods and other goods on which she, and many hangers-on, could survive. Lachman Narain's father was a messenger for many Hong Kong Indians as his father's brother owned a store in Macao and could send letters overseas; others in the community were ambulance volunteers or contributed funds and food. A core of British bankers was kept outside camp for some months by the Japanese to keep the banks issuing currency, later recognized as duress notes. One of these was G. A. Leiper: 'My two colleagues and I, and many others, were especially indebted to the late Hon Dhun Jehangir Ruttonjee CBE; his father H.H. Ruttonjee; and to Dr the Hon Sir Sik Nin Chau CBE, who also gave his professional services and supplied medicines free on many occasions. After the war none of these gentlemen would accept any form of repayment for the financial and material help they had given to us.'[548]

A Sindhi businessman, U.S. Chellaram, described the Japanese attitude to Indians as 'honey on the tongue, dagger in the heart.'[549] He and his family escaped overland by pretending to go on 'holiday' to Vietnam; when they got to Chungking the British authorities refused assistance, so they trudged on to Guilin to get a flight to Calcutta with the help of the U.S. Army. Shapurji Fakirji Jokhi, like Ruttonjee a Parsi, suffered 11 months of torture and solitary confinement for supplying food and medicine to camp internees. 'When a new camp commandant reviewed all death sentences and asked Jokhi if he had indeed supplied such parcels and why, Jokhi said that he would do the same for a Japanese prisoner because his religion required him to feed the sick. 'We are,' he said, 'Asiatic religious people.'' The commandant was moved and commuted the death sentence to imprisonment; three months later Jokhi was freed. He then built housing for more than two thousand people back in Navsari. Fellow Parsis such as Minoo Master, and the Canton residents Behram C. Tavadia and Jal Patel, his brother-in-law, were also tortured, Patel fatally.[550]

Abdoolally Ebrahim & Co, the oldest firm in Hong Kong still operating,[551] was not Parsi but part of the Dawoodi Bohra community, an Ismaili sect that moved first

[548] Leiper, *A Yen for My Thoughts*, p157.
[549] Thampi, *Indians in China*, p216.
[550] Hinnells, *The Zoroastrian Diaspora,* p177.
[551] It topped the list of clients in the earliest ledger of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank in 1865 and was, said the bank, 'A respectable firm with whom our dealing [sic] have been very satisfactory and whom we consider would not enter into any engagements they could not see their way to fulfil…HSBC Archives (London), HSBC Bankers Opinions, HQ SHG II 688.

from Yemen to India in 1539. While following Koranic rules against the charging of interest, the tiny but long-lasting Bohra community was and is deeply enmeshed in business. They speak their own language, an Arabized form of Gujarati, and practise their own form of worship,[552] while remaining members of Hong Kong's Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund. Ebrahim's company dealt in spices, silk, and art, imported cotton goods, and raw cotton from India; it diversified into shipping, real estate, and manufacturing. It ran the very first ferries across the harbor before the Star Ferry was established, small boats still called 'walla-walla,' a name originating in India, as walla means 'person from,' explained Zafir T. Ebrahim, a fifth-generation Hong Konger.[553] Many of the Bohra were schooled—alongside Portuguese, Eurasians, and Chinese—at the Catholic St. Joseph's College and the Anglican Diocesan Boys' School. 'For a long, long time we have seen Hong Kong as our only home,' said Norman Hoosenally, a community elder who arrived in 1930. 'We are almost more local than many of the Chinese. It's just that we don't have Chinese faces.' When the fifty-second dai (the intermediary between the Prophet Muhammad and the Bohra people) visited Hong Kong in 1997, a full-page newspaper notice recorded that about a million Bohra lived in India, Pakistan, the Middle East, East Africa, and the West: 'A community eager to explore avenues of trade in the East were encouraged to come to China over 150 years ago by the 47th Dai. They remained and prospered. The 52nd Dai now arrives… His guidance remains: 'Be loyal to your land of abode.''[554] And so they proved.

Both the Barma and Ebrahim families had friends and relatives interned in Stanley Camp during the war—and in the resistance. When a couple of Hong Kong Bank employees, Luis Souza and Charles Hyde, needed help, it was to Ebrahim's office that they came. The two men had been put up by the Japanese at the 'bankers' hotel,' the Sun Wah, where it was too dangerous to keep their radio. When the bankers asked the Ebrahims to hide it for them, they immediately agreed. They also lent money for food and medicine for camp internees, including one Uncle Saleh, also known as Shanghai Taipan. 'Yes, we kept documents for the bank and a radio,' Ebrahim confirmed. The researcher Brian Edgar adds: 'Hiding the radio meant death if it was discovered, but even making a loan was dangerous—a Turkish restaurant

[552] Their organizing body is the Hoseinee Society and their place of worship is in rooms above the Wyndham Street Post Office, central Hong Kong.
[553] Interview, 15 November 2018. Other leading Bohra families are Barma, Tyeb, and Kayamally.
[554] *South China Morning Post*, 24 August 1997.

owner and his wife were brutally tortured after incriminating documents were discovered. A quick-thinking Abdoolally employee ate a promissory note from HSBC man Hugo Foy when he realized the Kempetai were entering the premises.'[555]

Macao as Casablanca

In Kowloon, acting Portuguese Consul, Francisco Soares, decided it was time for all Hong Kong Portuguese who might have seen themselves as British until now, and indeed had just fought on the British side in the war, to now reclaim their Portuguese identity for sanctuary under neutrality nearby. He allowed his home on Liberty Avenue to become a refuge that doubled as consulate, frantically issuing Portuguese passports. About 85 percent of Hong Kong's Portuguese would flee to Macao. On their way, about 400 crowded into the Soares mansion, where chickens were reared on the roof and many of those staying had their own guns and guarded the whole area at night against looters. Sanitary waste was a problem, but then a beautiful mango tree in the garden that had never blossomed suddenly, thanks to a fresh sewage trench, burst into fruit.[556] Living nearby were the Gosano and Braga families. One member recorded amazement when they realized how they could escape using Portuguese identity: 'We had become 'Our People' indeed!' Macao, with its sleepy verandas, its hawkers and Catholic fathers, was still, even with its overcrowding and 'off-duty' Japanese, a safer prospect.[557]

Another family to find refuge there was that of Margaret Choa.[558] She had a privileged upbringing in a mansion in Happy Valley, but that all changed when British troops requisitioned it during the fighting, then the Japanese advanced. Her family threw what they could into large bedsheets and walked to Central. They had no idea where to go but 'there was a wonderful shop owned by Indians which was Kamali [sic: Kayamally?] … a very old Indian establishment, and they gave us two rooms upstairs of their own building. I think they must have seen us coming up looking for a place and we stayed in those two rooms to start with. But being Eurasians we were not put in camp or given any problems and we were given passes

[555] Charles was later executed for resistance work.
[556] Hong Kong Heritage Project, Oral History, Frank Correa, 17 October 2008.
[557] Hong Kong Heritage Project, the Braga Papers, various.
[558] Her grandfather, Choa Leep-chee had been the Malacca Chinese who came to Hong Kong to trade in sugar. Margaret would later marry Roger Lobo becoming Lady Lobo; her family tree intertwines with those of Bartou, Belilios, and others.

to leave Hong Kong … and gradually my family in, in batches went into free China because there you could find jobs with the American army and the British army in consulates and so on…'[559] Her future husband Roger's father was Pedro José Lobo, one of two key middlemen who—along with the British consul John Pownall Reeves—kept supplies and support moving for the growing refugee flows into Macao. Pedro Lobo had been born in another Portuguese colony, Timor, but had arrived in Macao young and married into the Hyndman family. Meaning it in the nicest possible way, Pedro became the major 'collaborator' and savior of Macao. With his 'oriental psychology' and the 'skills of a Kissinger,' Lobo made numerous interventions with the Japanese.[560] He was head of the powerful Macao Central Bureau of Economic Services, manager of the Macao Water Co., and now led the Companhia Cooperativa de Macao, a joint Macao government–Japanese army private venture. Portuguese surplus, such as tugboats or telephone equipment, was exchanged with the Japanese for food from the mainland. Lobo, father and son, bartered everything they could, from gasoline or church bells to metal frames, wire, nails, and more. At the same time, Lobo senior helped refugees with schooling, and young Roger Lobo worked periodically with British intelligence.[561]

Personal fortunes were made, for example by Stanley Ho: 'I was in charge of a barter system, helping the Macao government to exchange machinery and equipment with the Japanese in exchange for rice, sugar, beans… I was a semi-government official then; I was the middleman,' Ho said.[562] Ho got to Macao aged twenty just before the invasion of Hong Kong; by 1944 he had bought a launch, the Coloane, and his future as casino and transport king of Macao was on the way.

In Macao, a revitalized branch of the Portuguese Red Cross was run by another leading Macao merchant, Fernando de Senna Fernandes Rodrigues. Though neutral, Macao's Portuguese leaders knew that if the British were entirely ousted from China, their own time in Macao was likely to be short. So its practice of neutrality was highly ambiguous. The Macao Red Cross of 1943 mainly helped the British Portuguese Eurasians fleeing Hong Kong. Rodrigues made deals for provisions, and

[559] Hong Kong Heritage Project, Oral History, Lady Margaret Lobo, 25 August 2009.
[560] Gunn, *Encountering Macau*, p124.
[561] Gunn, *Wartime Macau*, p110. Gunn says Hyndman was a Dutch Portuguese family but Lobo confirms it was Scots.
[562] Simon Holderton,'Ho Surveys Empire That Gambling Built,' *Financial Times*, 20-21 May 1995.

had large storage facilities and a wide net of contacts useful not only for foodstuffs but for intelligence, too. Then he was shot dead on a Macao street on 10 July 1945 and this incarnation of the Red Cross lasted only another year.[563] Rodrigues's daughter Norma was shot in the back when she attended, aged 12, her father's funeral; she would live in Hong Kong from 1951, in a gracious Kowloon Tong home with many Portuguese neighbours. After marrying d'Almada Remedios she had three children: National Security trial court judge Sue; Leo, a lawyer; and Jose. 'Yes, we all have Chinese blood. My grandfather was pure Portuguese and married a typical Chinese lady.'[564]

Also in Macao was Sir Robert Ho Tung. After that wedding party at the Peninsula Hotel on the eve of war, he had retired 'for a rest,' staying at his lovely Macao mansion with garden and high walls. Perhaps he'd been tipped off it was time to go. While men such as his son-in-law Billy Gittins fought in the Volunteers, was imprisoned, and eventually died in Japan, and Billy's wife, Jean, starved gently in Stanley Camp, Ho Tung was comfortable. His son Eddie had his feet and half a leg shot off as he sought food under fire in Hong Kong. A brother, Ho Wing, was jailed by the Japanese and tortured. Another brother, Ho Kom Tong, at last could run the Jockey Club, keeping the races going through the war. Japanese Colonel Sawa visited Ho Tung in Macao, urging him to join the governance councils being set up in return for help to retrieve confiscated properties. Ho Tung did not succumb to the blandishments but he did visit Hong Kong in March 1942, a trip described by the Japan-run *Hongkong News*, under the headline 'Ho Tung Expresses Earnest Willingness to Cooperate—Anxious to Assist in Bringing a New Era of Prosperity'. He met the press at the Peninsula after a chat with Governor Isogai. 'Accompanied by a lady secretary, Mr Ho appeared in splendid spirits and, fanning himself meanwhile…' said he'd come to see his wife and injured son; the Japanese had been 'most solicitous of his welfare. He could not adequately express his deep gratitude for their kind interest in him.' Wishing to help bring a new era of prosperity to Hong Kong, he welcomed the advice of the Japanese, the press, and all. When pressed, he said he would 'contribute his share towards the establishment' of the Co-Prosperity Sphere in East Asia. 'This concluded the interview but before leaving, Mr Ho

[563] See also Lopes, 'Inter-imperial Humanitarianism'.
[564] Interview, 16 March 2018.

smilingly asked the Press representatives how he looked. When told that he was very healthy for his age, he appeared extremely pleased.'[565]

Meanwhile, Carlo Henrique Basto was arrested at Club Lusitano in 1942 while playing bridge with friends—the Japanese thought his score sheet was coded message-making. He was taken out and killed.

Also executed for espionage were Jimmy and George Kotwall (not related to the Kotewall family of Sir Robert). The Kotwall brothers were neighbours of Saleh Ebrahim, of the Bohra radio-hiding family. With George Samuel Ladd, he joined the resistance network led by the British Army Aid Group or BAAG during 1943 and formed part of 'K' Group alongside Jimmy Kotwall. Edgar notes the men were joining at a most dangerous time. 'Using code, the team sent a wide variety of intelligence to BAAG Field HQ at Waichow, detailing, for example, the movement of ships through Hong Kong harbor, damage caused by American bombing, conditions at Stanley, and the activities of the pro-Japanese Indian Independence League . . .' They were betrayed and arrested in March 1944, and interrogated for 38 days before being killed. Mr Ladd and Mr Ebrahim received sentences of eight years, while a Chinese associate, Lau King Sing, was sent to prison but died that year.

Boris Pasco had arrived from Russia in 1919 via Vancouver, Montreal, Southampton, and Yokohama. He ran a book shop in central Hong Kong and kept getting sued, or suing others, for copyright infringement or even assault. During the war his shop was used to drop off money for the underground, and provisions for prisoners of war; he, too, was taken by the Kempetai.[566] In 1948, a plaque was erected at the synagogue for the Jews who died in defense of the colony.[567]

For many young men of the Volunteers who either avoided or escaped internment, joining BAAG was the next obvious step. Eduardo Liberato Gosano, or Eddie, was one example. He was a HKU medicine graduate but, when made surgical officer in the government's medical department, was paid as a local—meaning no free

[565] *Hongkong News*, 29 March 1942.
[566] Howard Elias, Jewish Historical Society, 15 October 2018; *China Mail*, 6 July 1938.
[567] Carl T. Smith Collection, Index Card 76-1322; *South China Morning Post*, 14 June 1948. Those named are Vivian Benjamin, Leontine Ellis, S. D. Gerzer, Sarah Gubbay, Dr. Rudolf Hoselitz, H. B. Joseph, H. Lipkovsky, A. Samuel, Leo Weill, and Reginald Goldman, from the Hong Kong Volunteers, I. L. Goldenberg of the RNVR, and D. Kossick of the Civil Defence.

housing or long paid leaves—rather than the 'British' scale accorded his fellow doctors from abroad. Yet he risked his life for Hong Kong by becoming the famed Agent Phoenix for BAAG. He had been interned but, when released as a 'third national' by the Japanese, went to Macao, joined fellow Portuguese doctor Horacio Ozaorio then working at the British consulate, and became a courier for the underground. He also helped rescue of the Hongkong Bank's records, which had been brought to Macao ahead of the Japanese invasion but now needed to be sent farther away, to Chungking.[568] Agent Phoenix would also help Leo d'Almada get to London to work with the Hong Kong Planning Committee, plotting the British return to Hong Kong.[569]

Gosano had earlier, with Albert Rodrigues and Solomon Bard, all medical graduates from HKU, worked inside Sham Shui Po POW camp. They had been in the Field Ambulance of the Hong Kong Volunteers—and in the summer of 1940 Bard had just become naturalized as a British subject: 'Incidentally, the Japanese made no effort to isolate or distinguish Jewish POWs; Nazi propaganda had either not reached Sham Shui Po or was ignored by the Japanese,' said Bard. Jewish POWs managed to gather for Sabbath services using prayer books sent into camp by the YMCA.[570] His wife, Sophie, was not interned, being British merely by marriage.

Camp changed lives and fortunes—such as when Bevan Field of the Hongkong Land company met young Bob Baker and recruited him for a postwar career while reconstructing company minutes in camp. Baker's successor in the job, Peter Hall, was surprised that Bob was a Eurasian too.[571] He was one of the eleven children of John Baker and Gladys Fenton, both Eurasians. Gladys was left bringing up the children when John deserted her, succumbed to opium, and died bankrupt before the war. Another of her sons, Thomas, a journalist, was recruited as press attaché at the British embassy in Shanghai and Chungking. Thomas's wife, Doris (née Fenton), and her son's wife joined him by the overland escape route out of Hong Kong and joined a high-flying social crowd during nasty and unsafe times, meeting General

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[568] Gunn, *Wartime Macau*, pp147, 153.
[569] See Gosano , *Hong Kong Farewell,* for his modest account of his wartime heroism, pp25–29, and his bitterness at second-class citizenship under the British. His wife, Hazel Lang, was a niece of the two Kotwall men executed for their resistance work, p30. Jimmy Kotwall's widow, Doris, was given neither British passport nor pension, p32.
[570] Bard, *Light and Shade*, p111.
[571] Interview, 18 August 2011.

and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, and entertaining officers and diplomats.[572] Fluid relationships, across ideology and borders, are seen in the fact that few overland escapes succeeded without help from the Communist-based East River guerrillas.[573]

Clifford Matthews, a cricketer refused entrance to the 'British' Cricket Club, fought for Hong Kong and was interned; he was later among those sent to a shipbuilding yard near Hiroshima, but despite backbreaking work, bad food, and disease he survived.[574] Phylis Nolasco da Silva née Anderson (whose brother Donald had died in combat) took on the highly dangerous task of running BAAG agents, earning a King's Medal for Gallantry. Her sister Joyce taught English to refugee children in Macao. Douglas Hung worked in intelligence and Mary Suffiad in counter-espionage. She and her sister Zaza retired to California, but said Hong Kong would always be home. Sam Gittins and Oswald Cheung were cipher clerks in the British General Liaison Office in China.[575]

Yet another Eurasian who committed wholly to his Hong Kong community was Osler Thomas. His father, George Harold Thomas, also known as Tam Ka-sze, had no idea who his real parents were; George was adopted by a woman, a converted Christian, who sent him to Diocesan Boys' School; George went on to graduate in medicine from HKU.[576] During the battle of Hong Kong, Dr. George Thomas, now

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[572] Among those who didn't make it was Donald Anderson, another HKU graduate (in arts, 1932), a brilliant lawyer and cricketer, who died in that desperate battle of Wongneichong Gap. Albert Prew was killed in the massacre at Repulse Bay.

[573] This, grown out of a Hakka clansmen's group in Hong Kong and Asia, focused on propaganda, indoctrination, relief, and money-raising. Students from Hong Kong's top colleges joined the movement in 1937; the next year a liaison office was opened under the guise of the Yue Hwa tea trading and import-export firm, supported by people such as Dr. Selwyn-Clarke's wife, 'Red' Hilda, and M.K. Lo. Government support was erratic, but these Communist guerrillas provided essential early experience for later intelligence successes—as well as the 'little devils,' child agents, who carried messages and escorted many Hong Kongers to safety. See Chan, *East River Column*. Also Chan, *From Nothing to Nothing*. Also, Fanny W. Y. Fung, 'Unsung Warriors Set Up in Sai Kung: The Hong Kong Guerrilla Fighters Who Battled the Japanese in WW2,' *South China Morning Post*, 15 August 2015.

[574] Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, pp411–12.

[575] 'Ozzie' Cheung, another DBS and HKU boy, would become acting headmaster at DBS after the war before qualifying as a barrister and joining the Legislative and Executive councils, earning a knighthood in 1987. His war service began with an escape to Macao with his family, and on to the French treaty port of Kwang Chow Wan; he was eventually linked up with W.P. Thomson, a former police superintendent of Hong Kong, now head of the British General Liaison Office, part of British intelligence. Young Ozzie's job was to monitor Japanese activity in South China and coastal waters. He recalled problems with secret ink and radio and being often on the run, taking trains with a bag full of coded messages.

[576] George Harold Thomas's life was spent in Hong Kong. He married Norah Gourdin, daughter of an American trader who had long lived in Hong Kong and had a Eurasian wife. George and

medical superintendent at Tung Wah Hospital, was able to send an ambulance to rescue his son Osler, who had been part of a group that surrendered to the Japanese only to be lined up for beheading. Young Osler decided to fall into the ditch full of corpses and survived a day and night under the putrefying mess before staggering out and being given new clothes from an old woman in a shack on a nearby hillside. Five weeks later he went back to the ditch and spoke to a gardener who said yes, the water had run red for a few days. Osler managed to retrieve his pips (shoulder decorations to indicate rank), which he had hidden, and, seeing he was a survivor, the gardener handed over the medals of the sergeant major who had been killed there. The bodies were exhumed and reburied in Stanley Military Cemetery.

Osler Thomas joined what became a group escape of HKU students into Free China in August 1942. Journeying by truck, sampan, river junk, and bribery, long days of walking and nights of bedbugs, some completed their studies at various Chinese institutions. Some of the funding for this escape came from the tiger balm entrepreneur Aw Boon Haw. Others, like Osler, reached BAAG headquarters by November, and joined Force 136. He spent all of 1943 infiltrated back into northeastern Hong Kong helping mainly Indian escapees. He heard the Japanese surrender in 1945 on a pedal-powered radio. 'I had been asked by Colonel Ride a few months before if I would like a period of leave and recreation in India, and had declined his offer, thinking the end was near and wanting to be 'in at the kill.' After all, Hong Kong was home,' he recalled.[577]

Living between the faultlines at Rosary Hill

Young Pat Botelho spent her wartime childhood skipping school, and eating broken red rice and yam leaves, which her mother had started growing on the dug-up tennis court. She remembered pushing a trolley to one of the Ho Tung family homes to collect water from its well.[578] Charlie Churn learned how to fiddle the gas meter to

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Norah produced four children, including three more doctors. Osler would marry a Vietnamese-Chinese, Lily Trinh, also brought up in Hong Kong; their children went to DBS and DGS. Daughter Audrey returns to Hong Kong annually to lay a wreath in her father's name at the war remembrance ceremony. Carl T. Smith Collection, Index Card 62-665: *Daily Press*, 3 June 1923; *South China Morning Post*, 25 February 1975. Interview with Audrey Thomas, 13 November 2013.

[577] Matthews and Cheung, *Dispersal and Renewal*. Also Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, pp401–26.

[578] Interview with Pat Botelho, 21 January 2019.

make it go backwards, and how to chop trees for fuel.[579] Both Charlie and Pat remember taking some lessons from Hugh Asome, a teacher at St. Joseph's College. Hugh was the product of a Jamaican-Chinese father and a Liverpool British-Chinese mother. Taken to Hong Kong at a young age, he knew little of Chinese culture and grew up Eurasian. The Asome family huddled at St. Joseph's for safety; home to boys of all faiths and races since its founding, it too was a Portuguese refuge during the war. Hugh's son John recalls growing up alongside Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others. 'Perhaps racially I should have felt more Chinese than anything else, but my grandparents were brought up in particular parts of 'the West' and we had western habits.' They used sit-down toilets, ate Western food with spoons and knives, and sat on comfy sofas rather than hard-backed blackwood Chinese chairs. John concluded: 'Being Eurasian is not just about race or class, it's a state of mind.'[580] His aunt Agnes Theodora Asome, a nurse working at the French Hospital, was then 'interned' at some place called Rosary Hill, until she appeared one day after the war loaded with fresh fruit. Everyone gorged on it and fell sick, but freedom felt fine.[581]

Not until May 1942 could permission be gained to open a Red Cross office to disburse allowances guaranteed by the Allies for people inside and outside camp. It was specifically barred from caring for Filipinos and Indians left in the lurch by the war; these were the 'Asiatics' for whom Japan claimed responsibility (and then largely ignored). It was only allowed to help those American-Chinese who had registered as Americans; this effectively eliminated all American-Chinese, as none of them declared their U.S. nationality to the Japanese for fear of anti-Western repercussions. As for helping Hong Kong's Chinese, this was impossible, as Japan said the Red Cross 'must abstain from giving any assistance… even to those that had British papers, or to Indians … or to any other Orientals, except to those were Dependents of POWs, or of men killed or missing, or of Stanley Civilian Internees.'[582] By the end of January 1943, there were officially almost seven thousand Third Nationals in Hong Kong, not including internees or 'Enemy-Nationals.' As for defining who was of which race and which nationality—often not the same thing at all—the definitional complexities multiplied. Third nationals included the local

[579] Interview, 3 March 2018.
[580] Asome,'Growing Up Eurasian,' p8.
[581] Email Correspondence with John Asome, 2017–2019.
[582] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Archives, BG 017 07-060, Draft Report, 28 February 1943. BG017 07-068, Letter, 7 May 1943.

wives or common-law partners, even stray loves and mixed offspring of internees. Here, too, were stateless people of perhaps Latvian descent, or Peruvians with Chinese surnames; 'Asiatic Iraqis' whose names such as Hardoon and Gubbay suggest they were Baghdadi Jews; people with Western surnames calling themselves Chinese; plus Portuguese, Irish, Americans, and people of British nationality who were too richly colored to be British enough to be interned at Stanley.[583]

Their plight was only ameliorated through the initiative of a Swiss businessman named Rudolf Zindel.[584] He was a trader in Hankow and Shanghai for an export-import business, Arnhold Trading and Co. (the now defunct relative of the still existing Arnhold and Co.), before joining his company's Hong Kong office in 1939. Suddenly given the task of caring for the defeated of Hong Kong, he had no background in relief work and was constantly constrained by the Japanese, allowed only highly controlled, quick appearances in some camps. Money and relief parcels had to sail through hostile waters to be disbursed through the Red Cross delegation in Tokyo; parcels and thousands of messages never made it. Zindel endured surveillance, threats, censorship, and an increasing risk of arrest and torture by the Gendarmerie, as he tried to find ways to navigate this vast minefield in such a way as to gradually improve internees' conditions. He also, at huge personal and financial risk, finally resorted to raising loans locally from three Belgian bankers and a Danish consul with which to buy gold in local (military yen) currency at black market rates, to be paid back in Swiss francs after the war. (One of those Belgian bankers was Pierre Mardulyn, linked to the Macumber Churn Eurasian clan by his marriage to Mabel Churn.) Even more extraordinary: after horrendous pressure for three and a half years, Zindel stayed on and did for 22,000 Japanese internees all those Red Cross services that these same Japanese had made it so hard for him to provide to their opponents.

Zindel's innovation for the many people outside camp was to pool the allowance funds he was disbursing individually into one fund with which he set up the Rosary Hill Home. It was a hostel that all stray dependents and other random people could choose to enter, bringing their own basic needs in clothes and household goods, but

[583] For the only full study of the Irish of Hong Kong during the war, see Edgar, 'Steering Neutral?'
[584] For full story, see England,'Zindel's Forgotten War—the Story of Rosary Hill.'

leaving any pretension of private life behind. This would be communal living, in an empty college halfway up the Peak (the use of which Zindel negotiated with the Spanish Dominican Fathers for a fee). Deciding who was eligible was not easy. A set of medals, a wedding ring, or parts of a uniform might be genuine, but could have been faked or stolen. Explained Zindel to his colleagues back in Geneva: 'This question of 'adopted children' particularly, is not, of course, an unusual one in Hongkong. Men in the Armed Forces, in time of peace, quite often lived with, or were married according to Chinese Customs, to Chinese girls, have children which perhaps were acknowledged by their fathers, but also left behind when they or their Regiments were transferred. In many cases, the Mothers of such children later on entered an alliance with some other soldier and the children of the previous marriage were taken in, but never really adopted. Their status now, with regard to our scheme of paying allowances, gave much cause for thought…' Common-law wives caused similar dilemmas, with little to prove their claims. Invariably he erred on the side of generosity.[585]

At Rosary Hill, by mid-1943, 1,104 'Dependents' had found shelter. The composition of this community gives an insight into the actual makeup of prewar Hong Kong society. Here were 143 British Legal Wives, 61 Common-Law Wives of British Subjects, 41 Portuguese Legal Wives, 25 Third National Legal Wives, one Common-Law Wife of a Third National, 28 Eurasian Legal Wives, 1 Eurasian Common-Law Wife, and 19 Chinese Legal Wives. There were also 166 Close Relatives of a former supporter now in Camp, four Fiancées (which interestingly added up to five beneficiaries), and 26 Wives of Men serving with British forces and/or the British Merchant Marine abroad.[586] One of them was the woman collected in Lawrence Kadoorie's mad dash through Kowloon as war began—Mrs. Florence Wookey, 'Eurasian, British by Marriage,' and so given sanctuary.

Eurasian dilemmas

In post-war correspondence, Zindel explained more of what might be termed the Eurasian dilemma, through the case of young Egbert Charles Watson, a nineteen-year-old orphan in desperate circumstances. What should he call himself? To the

[585] ICRC Archives BG 017 07-060, Draft Report, 28 February 1943.
[586] ICRC Archives BG017 07-067, Letter from Zindel to Geneva, 30 April 1944.

Japanese, it was better to obscure British nationality and appear Chinese—but in young Egbert's case this almost killed him. His father was Gilbert Charles Watson, a British engineer in the Mercantile Marine who, as far as Egbert could recall, had died in October 1937 on his ship, leaving only a collection of postage stamps. Egbert's mother was Chan A Sin, a Chinese woman; of two brothers, he thought one was killed and the other missing. Once his father's burial expenses were covered, the widowed Ms Chan got help from the harbour master, who got the stamp collection sold in London. She bought two properties with mortgages just before the war but the Japanese demolished one to expand the airport (offering her military yen which she refused to accept). The second was demolished by locals who sold the wood for fuel. Said Egbert: 'The reason why we did not register with and apply for assistance from the local branch of the International Red Cross Association is because my mother had ignorantly registered the whole family as Chinese nationals and given us Chinese names. After a long time, when she came to know about the work of this Association it was too late to do anything because any change of names and nationality would bring about long-term imprisonment and corporal punishment for the whole family. Therefore throughout the war we passed as Chinese nationals.'

That status deprived Egbert and his family of Red Cross assistance, and made them vulnerable to periodic compulsory repatriation orders by the Japanese. One such forced expulsion in July 1945 caught up his brother George, never seen again, and then Egbert and his mother. Robbed thoroughly of even their outer garments by gangs on the junks used to deport them to Chinese territory, Egbert's mother died within three days. Young Egbert, meanwhile, smuggled himself back to Hong Kong on foot.[587]

For some Eurasians, those educated and with more resources at hand, it was precisely their ability to morph identity at will, that enabled them not only to survive, but to do good work. One such was Archibald Zimmern—future son-in-law of Sir Robert Kotewall and prominent barrister. Rosary Hill had a revamped Administrative Council in early 1944, which included Y.C. She, who ran general stores, fuel, rations, medical stores, education, the sewing department, indoor sports,

[587] ICRC Archives BG017 07-071, Letter from Zindel to Geneva, 2 November 1945.

and entertainments.[588] He was actually Archie Zimmern, who had been interned in Shan Shui Po POW camp but, on changing to Chinese name and garb, was able to take advantage of a release of Chinese prisoners from camp. There was at least one such release, in September 1942, when about 120 men were freed, in line with Japanese policy that they had no quarrel with Asian people and anyway the Chinese must have been forced to fight for the British. Recalled his fellow internee Solomon Bard, 'As far as I recall, there was no resentment in camp at the release of the Chinese POWs, especially as most of them had families in Hong Kong or Macao. As we learned later, some of the released men managed to escape from Hong Kong and rejoin the Allied forces in China and India…'[589] This is just what Archie She would do: when he resigned from Rosary Hill and escaped through southern China to Chungking, he was feted as a leading British citizen with vital information on conditions in Hong Kong. He was both Chinese and British and got the best out of both identities. At the same time, two elderly relatives, Mr. and Mrs. S. Y. M. Zimmern, aged seventy-four and seventy and listed as 'Chinese,' were residents first of the French Hospital Red Cross Section and then briefly of Rosary Hill.[590]

Zindel noted how 'unbalanced' his Rosary Hill community was, hinting at tensions over race, class, age, and gender. Certainly there were a lot of confused social mores due to this mass throwing together of people. Most of the men were under twenty years old and had not previously been required to clean up after themselves. The majority of residents were women, and the Japanese rule that residents must be back in the home by dark caused its own challenges, noted Zindel: 'We have a number of 'Ladies' in our midst, who, whilst they possess the necessary credentials as 'dependents,' find it apparently difficult to withstand the lure of their 'old profession.' Periodical 'roll-calls' have disclosed a number of such 'Absentees,' who

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[588] This Council included Leopold Gaddi in charge of three kitchens, outdoor sports, safety services during air raids, fire prevention, boys' working crews and wood-chopping. Gaddi would become famed for his eponymous fine-dining restaurant at the postwar Peninsula Hotel. Through the Red Cross Gaddi could cable his mother, Constance, back in Switzerland: 'Dearest Mother, We are well, still hoping to be very soon with you all. Trust all well at Home. Working for Red Cross. God's blessings. Love, Leopold and Mildred.' ICRC Archives BG017 07-065, cable 6 March 1944.

[589] Bard, *Light and Shade*, p118. However, Peter Hall's father told him he had seen only Zimmern men released and assumed it was thanks to Kotewall using alleged contacts with the Japanese to secure their release; family members wonder if money was paid.

[590] ICRC Archives BG017 07-071; letter from Red Cross Chungking to Geneva recounted Zimmern's inside information, adding: 'Mr Zimmern confirms… that Mr Zindel has gone grey on account of worries particularly in regard to the Refugee Home which he had started and for which he is continuously in want of funds.'

are, however, never at a loss to explain their unauthorized absences by the sudden sickness of an 'Aunt' or a 'Grandmother,' or by an 'unexpected intoxication at a Birthday-Party.' We have now drawn a line under such excuses and future offenders will face the risk of immediate expulsion.' From early 1945, conditions everywhere were worsening dramatically. Food stocks would cover the Home only until about 10 May; available cash was just about exhausted. 'Our ship became less and less seaworthy and actually was in imminent danger of sinking early in April… drastic measures to 'lighten our ship' became unavoidable,' wrote Zindel.[591] Such lightening occurred through the managed departure of 305 dependents, 281 of whom left for Macao in a complex transfer of 1,200 pieces of baggage. By the end of August 1945, there remained at Rosary Hill a total of just 135 persons. Looking back on his Rosary Hill venture, Zindel dared to write that 'thanks to its existence many families have been able to celebrate a Happy Reunion at the termination of the War, instead of standing sorrowful at graves…'[592]

Looking on the wider picture, seeing how Eurasians ducked and wove to survive the war, be it in the fighting, in camps, at large in the city or in flight to Macao and China, it can be seen that ambiguous identities held both promise and strife. Hong Kong under Japanese rule was cut to the bone, reduced from thriving port city to the merest shadow of its former self. Rather than striding boldly into new ventures, all Hong Kongers were now, perforce, more private bricoleurs. They had to make secret lives or new names, to find escape or reserves of tenacity. Many of those who waited out the war cherished hopes for the defeat of the Japanese, knowing it relied on help from outside, be it from Britain, America, China or beyond. Some of the bolder characters found the courage to take steps to help bring that outside help closer.

Hong Kong people restoring Hong Kong?

Three men from Macao, dressed as fishermen, smuggled themselves into Hong Kong in August 1945, and over to the Stanley internment camp, to pass on a message. They were Roger Lobo, Dr. Eddie Gosano, and their fellow undercover operative, the comprador Liang Yun-chang. The message they risked death to deliver was a letter patent, a document from the British government to reestablish

[591] ICRC Archives BG017 07-063, Letter from Zindel to Geneva, 25 May 1945.
[592] ICRC Archives BG017 07-071, Letter from Zindel to Geneva, 7 December 1945.

British authority in Hong Kong. The intent was to instruct the senior British government official in the Stanley camp, Franklin Gimson, to take immediate political control of Hong Kong as soon as the Japanese surrendered. In fact, Gimson had already planned exactly this move from his camp stool and had lined up colleagues to go with him. He even had a flag to hoist. Perhaps more telling is that Eurasian and Portuguese Hong Kongers had made the very same plan. There was no doubt in all these diverse minds that Hong Kong was a place separate to mainland China and should stay so.[593] In Macao, the British consul, John Reeves' committee for Hong Kong's rehabilitation. included senior Chinese, Portuguese, Indian, and Eurasian then in Macao. 'We did our best to prepare plans for the renaissance of that Colony.'[594] They had also formed their own British Eurasian Association.[595]

Given the discrimination and neglect faced by non-white people who identified as British, the commitment to helping a British Hong Kong into a postwar future might be surprising. The point, however, was not being 'British', as this had changed so much through recent travails, but seeing Hong Kong as home, no matter what.

If a plan proposed more than two years earlier by a leader of Hong Kong's Eurasian community, Dr. Douglas Laing, had been acted on, a far richer relationship among all 'British' peoples might have occurred.[596] In a 23 December 1942 memorandum, Laing described Hong Kong Eurasians as 'natives of the Colony … many of them are third and fourth generation descendants of the earliest British settlers … they have always borne a strong loyalty to Britain. This loyalty has always been taken for granted, and proof of it has been given in times of emergency, as in the Great Strike and Boycott of 1925, in the Great War of 1914–18 and in the present war . . .' He noted their exclusion from the 1940 evacuation. Yet still they 'all served without stint

[593] Gosano got Leo d'Almada to London; he also helped Marcus da Silva, another leading Portuguese lawyer, escape after he had been tortured by the Kempetai in Hong Kong for spying and sending funds into the Stanley camp, although Gosano resented the lack of thanks forthcoming. See Gosano *Hong Kong Farewell*, p29. See also 'The Dark World's Fire: Tom and Lena Edgar in War,' brianedgar.wordpress.com/2012/07/23/marcus-da-silva/.
[594] Reeves, The Lone Flag, pp38–39.
[595] Carl Anderson, Welfare League co-founder, chaired the association in Macao and on Reeves' departure, recalled his 'strong and all-embracing humanitarianism… He has looked after our spiritual, educational as well as sporting needs. He has shared with us in our little joys and has felt with us in our hardships. He has even shown to us how to or how not to play hockey…' He wished for more such 'men of sympathetic understanding and of sterling character unknown to snobbery.' Reeves, The Lone Flag, p148.
[596] I am indebted to a descendant, Evelyn Fergusson-Laing, for these papers cited.

and gave of their best … The majority of the young male population was either killed on active service or are interned… Almost every Eurasian family in Hongkong was left in an extremely awkward position. Few had any but the most limited means; many families had lost their all and were entirely penniless…' Many who wanted to flee couldn't afford to. The answer, he pressed, was a mass exit to China or Macao with shelter and work on arrival. Colonel Lesley Ride, the Hong Kong University vice-chancellor who had founded BAAG, gave wholehearted support: 'For many years now I have taught them, worked with them, lived with them and played with them and from that experience alone I would strongly support any move to help them. But the big point about them, I think, is that when the real test of war came they not only served to the best of their ability, but throughout their post-surrender suffering (and as a class I think they have suffered most) they have remained absolutely loyal. There can be no doubt that Hong Kong is for them of all people their home…' The BAAG network could get people out: 'We have the organization and I feel it could legitimately be used for this purpose because a large percentage of the Eurasians are families of those who served with us.'[597]

H. D. Bryan of the British consulate general in Kweilin forwarded Dr. Laing's letter to the British ambassador in China at Chungking on 15 February 1943. He, Bryan, had known Eurasians in Hong Kong and was 'strongly in sympathy with their case…' he wrote. 'They are, like the members of other communities, not without their faults and weaknesses, and there are some black sheep among them, but in general they have been a loyal and hardworking, if comparatively small section of the population, who have in the past not received the consideration they deserved . . .' Laing's letter, wrote Bryan, referred to those who 'have, by reason of blood ties, education and general upbringing, clung to their British connexion [sic], in the face of continual disappointments and rebuffs.' Bryan said the paying of such men of equal education much less 'would appear difficult if not impossible to justify… on broad grounds of equity. The social discrimination against Eurasians which obtained generally in Hongkong, being doubtless characteristic of many other colonies, needs no emphasis.' However, Laing's suggestion of a full-scale evacuation of Eurasians—even if 'necessary or desirable'—would be pointless if there was no work or support for them on arrival. Indeed, it was not to be. A cable on 22 April 1943, to British

[597] Ride letter, dated 19 February 1943, BAAG Kweilin.

diplomats in Kweilin, Macao, and the Foreign Office in London stated the clear opposition of the government of India and Army Headquarters, India, to proposals for assisted wholesale escapes or walkouts of 'Anglo-Chinese and Eurasians' from Hong Kong. This was 'owing to the danger of enemy agents, transport difficulties and impossibility of absorbing these people in India even if guaranteed from security angle.'

The failure to repay the Eurasian loyalty lasted long after the war. On 28 September 1945, the new British Military Administration promised repatriation or cash benefits to former members of the HK Volunteer Defence Corps. But 'In a gesture of racially tinged ingratitude, the BMA decided that all those Chinese, Portuguese, and Eurasian volunteers who had fought for the British in December 1941 should be deemed to have been demobilized from the date of the British surrender to Japan and, therefore, would not be eligible for any further pay or allowances.'[598] Persistent discrimination despite their equal suffering, was deadly. Frank Correa recalled that twenty years after the war, his uncle Mem Soares was suffering from kidney failure developed from his time as a prisoner for three years and eight months at the Sham Shui Po prisoner of war camp. He was denied treatment by the British military hospital and could not even access dialysis machines to treat his kidney failure at government hospitals. Frank wrote a letter to the papers to complain, but it was too late and Soares died in Queen Elizabeth Hospital.'[599]

Britain also refused to pay compensation to Eurasian civilians and others for their internment during the war; they were 'not British enough.' Diana Elias, aged eighty-three, finally won her case in Britain when a court agreed the British government was guilty of racial discrimination. Her family of Iraqi Jews had arrived from Bombay, and Diana was born in Hong Kong in 1924; her grandparents, parents, and herself all held British passports. Interned for being British—a process that led to the death of her father from wartime illness and her mother's nervous breakdown—but denied war pensions by the government made her angry. She had joined the Association of British Civilian Internees, Far Eastern Region, when she moved to Britain, filled in her forms, and heard nothing until the details of her forebears'

[598] Sweeting, ed. Cunich, 'Hong Kong Eurasians,'p98, citing BMA Proclamation No. 14, published 28 December 1945, in Hong Kong (BMA) Gazette 1:1, pp19–20.
[599] Told to me by Anthony Correa.

births were requested. Six years of legal fight later, Diana got her money, but wondered why it had to be so hard.[600]

Again, why were Hong Kong's Eurasians, of all kinds, so wedded to Hong Kong despite all the downsides? What they envisaged was a place to call home, which until the war had been enabled by British rule over a non-Chinese, non-state formation. It was not British rule, per se, that they craved, but a life in an Asian port city which, here and now, happened to involve a British colonial construct. Within that, as a century earlier, governance was present enough to enable a good life but not enough to deny a Eurasian way of life. The precise arrangement of a Hong Kong that was, as it had been before the war, both colony and free city, British and not British, essentially Eurasian throughout, was not fixed in the days after Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945. It would become so, however, at least for a while.

On 30 August, Rear Admiral Sir Cecil Halliday Jepson Harcourt sailed in on HMS Swiftsure to run Hong Kong until a civilian administration returned. But what sort of administration would that be? The Committee of the Social Service Centre of the Churches outlined measures for rights, trade unionism, and much greater participation of women in the postwar colonial order. Renaissance men such as Solomon Bard hoped postwar life would be more generous and tolerant. He would help found the Sino-British Club in 1946, and the Sino British Orchestra (the Hongkong Philharmonic Orchestra from 1957). London wanted to restore British prestige and perhaps, too, shore up a community against a reinvigorated mainland China. Gimson wanted to provide a basis for Hong Kong citizenship, and 'thereby the conception of the colony as a distinct entity from China would be created.'[601] But anti-colonialist U.S. President Roosevelt wanted Hong Kong returned to China.

On 1 May 1946, a new civilian administration took charge under Governor Mark Young—now back from his war spent in Japanese internment in Manchuria. He, too, had been thinking about the future. By 26 July 1946, the government had at last repealed the Peak District Reservation Ordinance (of 1904), which had barred Chinese from living on the Peak. Planning units in London had been promising a 'new angle of vision' since mid-1943, with more democratic governance and a

[600] Adam Luck, 'Subjects of Rough Justice,' The Standard, 28 October 2006.
[601] CO537/1650, 1–2, TNA, Gimson to Ruston, 3 March 1946, in Yap, 'A New Angle of Visions'.

speedy localization of jobs. Young's plans were far-reaching, promising universal suffrage and genuine participation in Hong Kong governance by all its peoples. The historian Felicia Yap wonders if the fact that both Gimson and Young had served in Ceylon was significant. There they had overseen a broad local franchise as they built a post-independence elite. These men had ideas of imperial citizenship where people of all races were equal British subjects.[602] This idea of a colony ruled by popular consent (albeit without full voting or universal suffrage) survived the diminution of immediate threats to Hong Kong's Britishness. When President Roosevelt died, he was replaced by the less anticolonial Harry S. Truman, who accepted British control of Hong Kong. But the consensual ideal did not survive the onset of the early Cold War, when it became apparent that the Chinese Communist Party might win control of a united China, posing an existential threat to all of Westernized East Asia.

But once Governor Grantham took charge in Hong Kong in 1947, Young's plan for a more inclusive future died.

Grantham was ignorant of Hong Kong's resident communities from long before the war, and so was ignorant of that specific Hong Kong identity that had led so many diverse people to build multigenerational homes and families, and even risk their lives for it. Perhaps he listened too much to the newly arrived wealthy Shanghainese who brought money and industry but no Hong Kong history with them; he heard too, those recently restored old families who had no wish to share their privileges. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Grantham simply decided that Hong Kong was a Chinese port and its people would never develop pro-British tendencies. As it would thus never become a self-governing state, in his opinion, he backed the vested antidemocratic interests in his ruling councils, particularly the local Chinese elite. This rich clique, with its family and business ties through every major colonial institution, was unwilling to forgo its own position of unelected privilege. Hong Kong's chance of an independent, self-determining future was lost.[603]

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[602] Yap, 'Eurasians in British Asia During the Second World War.'
[603] Grantham, Via Ports, p111. 'The Substitution in the Legislative Council of elected for appointed members… which eventually was to lead to internal self-government either within or without the Commonwealth, was the order of the day in British colonial policy. But the problem in Hong Kong is different from that in other colonies, for Hong Kong can never become independent. Either it remains a British colony, or it is re-absorbed into China as a part of the province of Kwangtung'.

New divisions in old communities

Meanwhile, there were scores to settle—the punishment of those who had aided the enemy and the war crimes prosecutions of some of the enemy themselves. Inevitably, as the archetypal middlemen, some of Hong Kong's Eurasians and Chinese, were caught in this new crossfire. War crimes trials were held in Hong Kong between 28 March 1946, and 20 December 1948. In the view of the legal expert Suzannah Linton, they were a genuine effort to do justice fairly, and, despite failings, were remarkable for the time and place. She thought the treatment of Hong Kong by the Japanese had been genuinely shocking, particularly the forced displacement program that removed a million people from the city, and the famine and starvation that preceded it. She found it disturbing that large-scale sexual violence against civilians was almost invisible in the tribunal reports. There was textbook Japanese military police abuse in the police stations, including what is today called waterboarding alongside burning, beating, and more. Linton also found that most people did not choose to dwell on these recent horrors after the trials.[604]

By contrast, the treatment of what Britain's foreign office records called 'Colonial Renegades and Quislings' was more ambivalent.[605] Discussions were under way well before the war ended about how to treat various people and deeds, not only in Hong Kong but in India, Burma, and Malaya. Three categories should be prosecuted if possible: those who had prominently engaged in conducting propaganda on behalf of the enemy; those, whether prisoners of war or not, who, during the war, had voluntarily engaged in activities calculated to assist the enemy's operations or to damage the Allied cause; and those who had applied for, and obtained, enemy nationality during the war. Any prosecutions would be conducted speedily. And yet they needed 'to be founded on a tolerant view of their conduct, if by so doing it may be found possible more readily to enlist the loyal support and cooperation of the men of education, ability, initiative and authority upon whom we must necessarily depend, but who, by virtue of their position have in the past been employed by the Japanese.' In other words, some men had blurred lines during the war, but the British would still need them to bolster their rule.

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[604] Linton, Hong Kong's War Crimes Trials. See also John Carney, 'Book Sheds Light on Hong Kong's War Tribunals,' South China Morning Post, 28 April 2013.
[605] For much of this subject, the source is CO968/120/1–2, TNA.

A secret communication of 4 October 1945, 'Quislings & Collaborators,' reported: 'On return to Hong Kong we were made aware of prima facie evidence that nearly all the leading Chinese in the Colony collaborated in one way or another with the Japanese. The only public figure who appears to have entirely clean hands is Mr T.N. Chau, the senior ranking Chinese member of the Legislative Council, who very early in the occupation slipped away to Macao.' The report went on to note that prosecutions would be difficult, not least because the prewar attorney general, Sir Grenville Alabaster, and other British officials had asked Hong Kong's leading Chinese to cooperate with the Japanese. The report added: 'Present charges of Quisling activities are being widely used to pay off old scores and to satisfy personal enmities contracted pre-1941 among the several contending parties and personalities in Hong Kong.' However, while one could not indict everyone, nor could they be invited out. 'It just does not seem possible to have them shouting 'banzai' in August and singing 'God Save the King' in September.'

Under consideration for trial were men such as Darrell Drake, a teacher in Japan who had married a pro-German Norwegian lady. He was a heavy gambler and drinker and, when he went on leave to Shanghai and then Hong Kong in September 1937, was reported to have business connections with Japanese, and with a known German arms smuggler; he then worked for a Japanese news agency in Hong Kong and during the war worked on the pro-Japan Hongkong News. There was Timothy E. Dunn, a Eurasian British subject, formerly with Thomas Cook Co. in Shanghai, where he had been let go for embezzlement. British intelligence thought he was actually Edward Dunn, a half-British, half-Japanese agent for the Japanese, born in China, 'a well-behaved perfect gentleman.' Joseph Carroll, also Japanese-Eurasian, had collected tungsten and grease for Japan's navy; Joseph Richards trafficked watches, cameras, and radios, and then supplied Japanese officers with wine, brandy, whisky, and gin.[606] Richards, also Eurasian, stood accused by British intelligence reports of picking out 'undesirable' third nationals for Japanese detention. He was known to have worked for the Japanese for a long time; he had been interned by the British authorities at the outbreak of hostilities but freed by the Japanese. He was reported to have been entrusted with the examination of

[606] Snow, The Fall of Hong Kong, pp122, 299.

documents, alleged to be Macao's British consular archives, discovered on the riverboat Sai On, which had been seized from neutral Portuguese waters by the Japanese in 1943.

Victor Vander Needa, a well-known amateur jockey, was lauded for conspicuous bravery against the Japanese invasion. But his sense of grievance at slights from his British clients and rulers helped rouse him to 'a state of trembling hope and even occasional exaltation by the rediscovery of his Japanese blood,' reports the historian Philip Snow, who adds that Needa became a 'flourishing merchant' employing many to collect iron, bronze, and aluminum for the Imperial Japanese Navy.[607] At the same time, his brother-in-law Norman Broadbridge was serving in the Volunteers and helped save the life of Bevan Field, a future manager of Hongkong Land. So Needa's wife, Janet, enjoyed reasonable rent for her flower shop (Jeanette's) in Central for decades after the war.[608]

Snow found that 'several hundreds of Eurasians and Portuguese managed to recreate their traditional intermediary role by setting themselves up as 'brokers' to traffic between the conquerors on the one hand and the Hong Kong Chinese population on the other.' He also offered the example of the (Sindhi) Harilela family, which, among other survival tactics, traded rice from the Japanese, to show that 'the brokerage boom enabled some vital goods to flow down to the desperate masses.'[609]

Men such as C. M. Faure, a former Royal Navy commander with a Chinese wife, were also hard to judge. He became head of a Eurasian and Indian propaganda team at the Hongkong News, but in some chroniclers' eyes successfully subverted his role from within.[610] In all, about sixty locals were tried for collaboration and twenty-eight

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[607] Snow, The Fall of Hong Kong, pp120–21.
[608] Veronica Needa is unique in having translated her life story into both thesis and theater. Commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Centre for its FESTIVAL NOW '98: Invisible Cities, her solo show Face—directed by Tang Shu-wing—was performed in both Cantonese and English and toured Asia and the UK. The play in both language versions was published by the Hong Kong International Association of Theatre Critics in 1999, in its collection 10 Best Plays for 1998; it was included in Mike Ingham and Xu Xi's City Stage: Hong Kong Playwriting in English (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005). Later performances included audience interaction through the Playback Theatre (see www.playbackschooluk.org for more information), documented in her MA thesis 'FACE: Renegotiating Identity through Performance' (trueheart.org.uk).
[609] Snow, The Fall of Hong Kong, pp121–22.
[610] Snow, The Fall of Hong Kong, p221.

found guilty: fifteen Chinese, six Indians, one Japanese with Canadian citizenship, and seven 'Europeans or Eurasians.'[611] Concluded the historian Anthony Sweeting: 'On the whole during the Japanese occupation, Eurasians participated in resistance and collaboration. Some Eurasians were, at different times, active in both—for example, as gallant defenders of their homeland, especially prominent in the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force and eventually in the BAAG, and, later, being involved in the black or grey markets. In the main, most Eurasians who did cooperate and even those who collaborated with the Japanese did so for simple, pragmatic reasons—to keep themselves and their families alive.'[612]

Where was Kotewall's community when he needed it?

It was the case of Sir Robert Kotewall that burned hottest, however. The pre-war Attorney General Sir Grenville Alabaster, the secretary for Chinese affairs R.A.C. North, and the defence secretary J.A. Fraser had explicitly asked him and Shouson Chow to cooperate with the Japanese, a request which Kotewall felt unable to refuse despite his misgivings. On 10 January 1942, the Japanese invited Kotewall, Shouson Chow, and others for lunch at the Peninsula Hotel, now their headquarters. Chow and Kotewall thanked the Japanese for not 'harming the people of Hong Kong or destroying the city.' They agreed to cooperate given that the Japanese goal was to 'release the races of East Asia.' Then Kotewall offered a 'Banzai!' and Chow agreed heartily. Kotewall, Chow, and Li Tse-fong all expressed hope for an early end to the war between Japan and China, which Kotewall described as 'more like a family quarrel between two brothers due to a momentary loss of temper.'[613] The Chinese Representative Council created by the Japanese occupiers included as chairman Kotewall, Lau Tit-sang of the Communications Bank and chairman of the Chinese Bankers' Association, Li Tse-fong of the Bank of East Asia, and Chan Lim-pak, a former comprador to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. The Chinese Cooperative Council was chaired by Shouson Chow and had twenty-two members including Lo Man-kam.

[611] Endacott, Hong Kong Eclipse, pp245–46.
[612] Sweeting,'Hong Kong Eurasians,' p97.
[613] Snow, The Fall of Hong Kong, pp107–108, 116.

It was well known that Lau Tit-shing and Chan Lim-pak had strong pro-Japanese views; Chan had even been imprisoned by the British during the Japanese invasion on charges of aiding the enemy. Participation on the councils by others, however, was not seen as a great crime at the time. John Carroll believes: 'That there was so little Chinese resentment toward the two Chinese councils during or after the occupation suggests that most Chinese understood that the Chinese and Eurasian leaders had to cooperate.'[614] By 1944, Kotewall and Li Tse-fong had withdrawn from public duties on health grounds; M.K. Lo frequently avoided meetings on claims of ill-health. Shouson Chow, now in his eighties, was excused on the grounds of age. Just about the only tangible achievement of the councils was the setting up of the Chinese Charity Association in September 1942 to donate and distribute relief goods.

After the war, however, it was Kotewall who was singled out for attack. He would end out being asked to resign from public roles while some figures still wanted his head. Lindsay Ride was a particular critic, calling Kotewall the 'Japanese banzai-boy,' feeling that the British government's decision not to prosecute him for treason after the war 'did irreparable harm to British Colonial prestige' in Asia.'[615] A view promoted by the journalist Emily Hahn, who spent twenty months out of internment after the invasion, was that Kotewall was manufactured from 'cheap material' and went on 'fulfilling his destiny as a genuine talking doll, now that the Japanese instead of the British are winding him up.'[616] Yet others who had been on the same councils and signed the same statements were left unscathed. When Kotewall's daughters Bobby and Maisie went to visit friends in the civilian prisoner of war camp they could feel 'that all was not well. That [a university professor] was too nice to us and somehow I just felt a little uncomfortable and the two of us left,' said Maisie. Yet when Maisie went to a tailor after the war, and the tailor realized she was a daughter of Kotewall, he gave a huge discount because he said he and his family had been in Macao during the war and had always waited for speeches by Kotewall in Chinese from Hong Kong. He said the Japanese probably didn't realize the full message, but that he could read between the lines and had gained sustenance from that.[617]

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[614] Carroll, John M. Edge of Empires, p185.
[615] Cunich, A History of the University of Hong Kong, pp428–29.
[616] Hahn, China to Me, pp324, 328–29.
[617] Interviews by Christopher Cook in 2003, in Cook, Robert Kotewall, pp119–21.

In Kotewall's own 66-page account of his war, he said that when he was taken by Japanese officers to an office three days after the British surrender, Shouson Chow and young M. K. Lo were there before him and had already proposed Kotewall as their spokesman. Kotewall claimed that he wanted to leave town but had a large family, knew he was being closely watched, and besides, had been advised by government officials to stay. A statement issued on 1 January 1942, written above all the local leaders' names, including those of M. K. Lo and Kotewall, had been checked and approved by the British government. None of these men knew, at that time, that Japan would ignore the Geneva Conventions, and rule as brutally as they did. But how long should it have taken before Kotewall and colleagues realized there was no chance of negotiation, or any coincidence of goals, with this regime? One sympathetic chronicler of Kotewall's war wrote of the naiveté: 'There is a kind of pathos in this part of his narrative as Sir Robert, utterly decent and a believer in British fair play seems to believe that he can negotiate with the head of the Kempetai . . .'[618] Kotewall said he kept arguing for search and arrest warrants in advance and for families to be informed of arrests, and for the sending of food to those arrested—all in vain.[619] Wrote Kotewall: 'I served the Chinese community throughout the Japanese occupation—a period of three years and eight months. It was the hardest and most distressing period of my life. While I was compelled by the Japanese to do things that were positively repugnant to me, and was constantly subject to rebuffs, indignities and secret surveillance, my actions were misunderstood by the British, some of whom I counted as friends.'

A memo from a British official, N. L. Smith, dated 22 March 1945, noted, 'It seems to me that it might be difficult to apply too strictly the European standards in the case of persons of Chinese race who (generally by a geographical accident of birth) are technically British subjects… The smaller fry who let their names appear as Members of the Council (Li Tse Fong and his brother Kwok Chan, Thomas Tam and the rest) seem to me not a great deal worse than the postmen or sanitary employees who carried on the machinery of the government. This opinion is fortified by the inclusion in that list of the name of M. K. Lo who is known, from other sources, to have been quite violently anti-collaboration. The most difficult case will probably be that of Sir Robert Kotewall who has undoubtedly praised by voice and pen the

[618] Interviews by Christopher Cook in 2003, in Cook, Robert Kotewall, p149.
[619] Interviews by Christopher Cook in 2003, in Cook, Robert Kotewall, p152.

Japanese figment of co-prosperity… The evidence may be difficult to collect.' Another note pointed out there was nothing that could bring Kotewall under the Treachery Act. Any prosecution 'needs proof of something more serious than propaganda work…' Mr. Smith in London was pleasantly surprised when he finally saw a transcript of a Kotewall speech, calling it 'Harmless stuff!'[620]

David MacDougall, a pre- and postwar government official, now fresh back to Hong Kong from the London Planning Unit, summed it up when he saw that virtually everyone was besmirched by contact with the Japanese, but that Kotewall was both 'unabashed' and 'impenitent.' More, 'The Kotewall business is a mess. So far as I can see no one has a scrap of real evidence, and all I have seen so far would not stand up in court for two seconds. This does not stop people pressing for his immediate arrest and trial. (K. was always a man who inspired violent personal dislike.)' This last sentence is perhaps the most interesting. Why did Kotewall inspire such dislike? Was it his combination of arrogance and naiveté? Was it, too, perhaps an anti-Indian strain of racism?

Any prosecution of Kotewall was firmly quashed once the pre-war secretary for Chinese affairs, R. A. C. North, wrote to Commander Trythall, naval secretary to the commander in chief. He stated, 'Kotewall showed very marked resource, energy and determination throughout. He was primarily responsible for the measures which frustrated the Japanese plans for a rising in Hong Kong on the day on which they reached Kowloon… he even tried to organise a force of Chinese guerrillas to assist in the defence of the island, and was manifestly disappointed when I opposed the scheme on the ground that the employment by ourselves of francs-tireurs would invite a massacre of civilians by the Japanese.' North pointed out, 'Hong Kong was the first British territory to fall into Japanese hands,' and he had so far believed it was possible that 'they would follow the usual practice of civilized nations in protecting life and property and in allowing the Civil Government to continue to function to some extent' that he offered himself to the Japanese as someone who could represent the interests of the Chinese community. When they said no, North offered up Kotewall. Never, said North, had he ever doubted Kotewall's loyalty to the British Empire. North then outlines three reasons for the particular level of vitriol

[620] Hong Kong PRO, HKRS 211, 2–41.

directed personally at Kotewall. 'What follows is highly confidential and I include it reluctantly. It appears necessary however in order to explain the extreme bitterness of the attack on Sir Robert…

(a) The General Strike in Hong Kong in 1925 and the boycott of 1925–27 were part of the nationalist movement in China which led to the elevation of Chiang Kai Shek. On this occasion Kotewall led the local Chinese in the defence of the Colony and his services then were rewarded by the grant of the CMG [a British honor, sometimes preliminary to a knighthood]… Chinese nationalists have never forgiven him for this service to the Empire and would be glad to see him replaced by advisers who might be less shrewd or more amenable.

(b) Personal dislike of Kotewall has for many years been fostered, particularly among European business men, by slanders spread by a Chinese merchant (recently deceased). This campaign was inspired by personal enmity due to a fancied slight, but, equally had its origin in local politics behind the scenes.

(c) There has existed for some time an unfortunate conflict between Sir Robert Kotewall and Mr M.K. Lo. I saw the beginnings of this long before 1941 and am fully aware of the reasons for it. The motives are mixed. I do not believe that Mr Lo would admit even to himself that the vehemence of his criticism has any relation to the removal of an influential rival, or to the diversion of attention from his own yielding to Japanese pressure; but there is such a thing as wishful thinking.

I suggest that when these peculiar reasons for enmity are taken into consideration there is no essential difference between the case of Kotewall and that of the other 'collaborators.'

This defence saved Kotewall from prosecution, but not early retirement. Trythall wrote to Kotewall on 5 October 1945, saying the commander-in-chief 'has, however, formed the opinion that you made an error of judgement in the degree and in the manner in which you interpreted the advice given you by senior British officials to cooperate with the Japanese authorities… [he] considers that you must withdraw from public life.' Kotewall resigned from the Executive Council in May 1946.[621]

[621] Kotewall died four years later, on 24 May 1949. Li Tse-fong was not reappointed to the Legislative Council. 'Clearly, however, the British felt there was a difference between him and Kotewall,' noted Li family biographer Frank Ching, without explaining the difference. See Ching, The Li Dynasty p124.

The British were back in charge, discarding loyal collaborators when they were no longer required. New partners included the Bank of East Asia's Y.K. Kan, knighted for service in both Legislative and Executive councils. He had spent the war playing bridge in the bank's offices with George She, Thomas Tam, and Willy Hung of Deacon's.[622] Among the Eurasians, the winner was M.K. Lo who enjoyed a fine career in political and legal circles. His pre-war radicalism, against colonial racism and in favour of a more inclusive Hong Kong, was now more in tune with the changing times. War had shuffled the Eurasian deck and chastened the British, but not much.

Old money meets new

Many individual Eurasians, of all kinds, did not survive the war, many families never recovered. Yet somehow that idea of their Hong Kong was real, and, for a while, it did survive. The nexus between British administration and a more free-wheeling Eurasian style of life survived. Distinctions of identity continued to be employed when it suited those in positions of power and influence even when daily life denied their sting. A greater looseness of definition also emerged – such as when The Hong Kong Club decided, in 1964, to allow 'members of the local community' to join, the first handful of whom were Eurasian. Older families needed to be light on their feet, and most were, but just who Hong Kong belonged to now remained unclear even after the political structure was reestablished because the Chinese Communist win in China in 1949 sent millions of new arrivals to Hong Kong from the late 1940s. These knew little of Hong Kong's first century; they knew only they didn't want communist rule and continued poverty and deprivation. This was not the same pull of the past when diverse peoples sought new opportunities in a nascent Asian port city. Now the arrivals were almost entirely mainland Chinese, fleeing terror. Their presence would change Hong Kong fundamentally.

Port city people could still thrive, for now at least. New people with no past could still make new lives. The Harilela family is a perfect example. It originated in Hyderabad, Sind (then in India but now, Pakistan) and arrived in Hong Kong from Canton in the 1930s. Living in one room the new family – largely uneducated, whose

[622] 'Time to Remember,' radio interviews, Y.K. Kan interviewed by Wendy Barnes, Radio Hong Kong, February 1973.

own name was made up and without papers of any kind – was helped by other poor (Indian, Portuguese and Chinese) neighbours to start hawking goods from a suitcase on the footpath outside the British military barracks in Kowloon. Within one generation, second son Hari had led his siblings into billionaire status by transitioning through postwar tailoring (for British and US armies as well as fashion) into property and hotel ownership. Along the way, Hari and his family learned how to gain standing in society – joining Rotary and Freemasons, then local Kaifong community groups, and so into government advisory boards.[623] Hari's son Aron recently addressed the Belt and Road summit hosted by Chinese president Xi Jinping, having previously led Hong Kong's General Chamber of Commerce. Hong Kong was still a place where people with no past could build a future.

These in-between people might be impossible to categorize. Yet one clear thread throughout the myriad different war experiences, choices, and outcomes is that the core of people who saw Hong Kong as home before the war held on to that belief in the decades that followed. That belief was shared by a far wider group than imagined or allowed for by British (and Australian) bureaucracies when they made evacuation plans. It was far wider than imagined by the Japanese, for whom the logic of their Greater East Asia Prosperity Sphere implied that all 'Asians' would fall happily into their embrace. The 'Asians' did not, because that's not how they saw themselves, and because Japanese military governance was repulsive. Gerald Horne's *Race War!*[624] claims that European racism and colonialism were deftly exploited by the Japanese to create allies among formerly colonized people of colour, turning white racism on its head. However, his 'race', born in the American black struggle, lacks relevance to the more nuanced relationships existing in Hong Kong.[625]

Hong Kong's war years showed that ambiguity had advantages in situations where adaptation and negotiation were required. It was of little use in the face of military or other bureaucracies. Definitions of who was 'in' or 'out' carried high stakes. In addition, deciding who was 'British' was not just about passports, or even which side of the war one was fighting, but also how much support – during and after the war – would be on offer from the British government. We have seen that some pre-

[623] See England, Hari Harilela, Made in Hong Kong.
[624] Horne, *Race War!* A powerful riposte to his assumptions is found in the work of Brian Edgar.
[625] Edgar's blog http://brianedgar.wordpress.com/2013/02/05/gerald-hornes-race-war-1-the-eurasians. Also, Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race*. Also, Lambert and Lester, *Colonial Lives*.

war Eurasian networks were life-savers, such as the Portuguese; others showed their inner weakness, such as when the half-Parsi Sir Robert Kotewall was attacked by fellow Eurasians and side-lined by his British masters. War revealed the cracks that were always present in any community but which come to light under new stresses. Competition for post-war roles shaped some arguments, while great daring and self-belief solved others. New families, such as the Harilelas of Kowloon, would join the post-war boom and rise into high position alongside the older families.

Some Eurasians used the ambiguities of their mixed heritage to navigate war-time dangers with courage and style; others exploited the ambiguities in less edifying ways. We have also seen that, though often ignored, Eurasians would be central to the revival of post-war Hong Kong. British rule would let them down dramatically, but these people still saw their future in a Hong Kong that stood between empires, navigating a post-war Cold War era, jostling with China and wider Asia, and still offering a home. Hong Kong's Eurasian core outlasted the war's upheavals and regrouped both to their own, and to Hong Kong's, advantage.