

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

DIJ History and Humanities Study Group



FRIDAY, 17 May 2013, 18.30 h

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Another Part of the Axis? Japan's Wars and Spain, 1937-45

Relations between Japan and pro-Axis Spain increased in importance after the Sino-Japanese War erupted in 1937. Between 1937-39 the conflict coincided with the Civil War in Spain and Franco's rebels were recognized by Tokyo on December 1st 1937. Later, once the war in Europe had started, Madrid and Tokyo played a parallel role both to Axis and Allies since they were at the fringe of entering the war on the Axis side.

This led to political cooperation between both regimes. After the Pearl Harbor attack, Spaniards could fulfill the role of helping the Japanese empire in tasks such as espionage, representation of Japanese nationals in the Americas or selling of war-related minerals. Following the occupation of the Philippines in 1942, Spaniards, particularly the Catholic priests, also helped providing legitimacy to the Japanese Army. While Tokyo held the upper hand in the relations at the beginning, once the Pacific War advanced, Madrid grew more restive and counterbalanced its intimate relations with the Nazis by distancing from the Japanese. In early 1945, Madrid first renounced to the representation of Japanese interests, then broke diplomatic relations with Tokyo and finally even weighed up to declare war to the Japanese. The talk will focus on the role of Spanish war-time perceptions of Japan as the main reason to explain those policy changes.

Florentino Rodao specializes on Spanish interaction in Asia during the 20th century. He is tenured professor at Complutense University, Madrid and has received dissertation degrees from Complutense University (1993) and The University of Tokyo (2007). He has been visiting scholar at different universities. Among other publications, he published *Franco and the Japanese Empire* (translated as フランコと大日本帝国, Shobunsha, 2012), while his most recent book is *Francoists without Franco. An Alternative History of the Spanish Civil War from the Philippines* (Granada: Comares, 2012).

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum for young scholars and Ph.D. candidates in the field organized by Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, Susanne Klien and Torsten Weber. All are welcome to attend, but registration (iwata@diptokyo.org or weber@diptokyo.org) is appreciated.

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