

zusätzliche Erläuterung seiner Vorgehensweise dankbar sein, denn anfangs werden so viele Theorien und Meinungen anderer Experten so genau dargestellt, daß die Ansichten und kritischen Anmerkungen Krügers in den Hintergrund treten.

Erst nach einer gründlichen Einarbeitung in die Thematik - die auch wegen des engen und viel zu dünnen Schrifttyps nicht leicht fällt - bietet das Buch bei wiederholtem Lesen wegen seiner detaillierten Informationen eine zunehmend interessante Lektüre. Fachleute werden sich über das ausführliche Literaturverzeichnis freuen. Für Nicht-Fachleute ist Krügers Buch sehr anspruchsvoll, da es an Exkursen und Zahlen fast überreich ist.

Trotz dieser Einschränkungen gewinnt der Leser einen fundierten Einblick in die Entwicklung Malaysias und wird dazu angeregt, die weitere Entwicklung des Landes zu verfolgen.

*Dagmar Reimann*

*Edmund S. K. Fung*

**The Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat - Britain's South China Policy, 1924 - 1931**

Oxford University Press, Hong Kong / Oxford / New York, 1991, xi + 311 pp., US\$ 52.00, hardcover

Professor Fung traces the path of Britain's withdrawal from certain positions of imperialist dominance which she, as other Western countries and Japan, had won during decades of aggressive exploitation of the weaknesses and crises of the late Qing dynasty. The beginning of this withdrawal was prompted by the consolidation in the early 1920s of the Kuomintang's (KMT) revolutionary insurgent regime after the fall of the Qing in 1911. The KMT and other nationalist groupings would soon, through the Northern Expedition, overthrow the various warlord rulers and the nominal Peking government in order to establish an effective nationwide administration which rested on the broad support of the people rather than the narrow power interests of local militarists. The assertive momentum of this movement placed Britain precariously between official support for the nominal authorities in Peking, the need for prudent attention to the KMT effort to gain power throughout the entire country and the necessity to safeguard in the long term Britain's substantial commercial interests in China. In a wider international context, Britain found herself alongside those other foreign powers, notably the United States, Japan and, to a lesser extent, France whose privileges were similarly exposed to KMT and popular pressure.

The foremost target of Chinese nationalists among foreign, and in particular British, privileges in China were the territorial concessions in various commercial centres, most conspicuously at Shanghai, where foreign powers had wrested from the imperial Qing government autonomous rights to administer parts of the municipalities as extraterritorial

enclaves. Closely connected with these concessions were jurisdictional privileges removing foreign nationals and other foreign subjects from the authority of the Chinese judiciary to the consular jurisdiction of the representatives in China of their home governments. Lastly, China's tariff autonomy had been substantially eroded in the half century before the demise of the Qing dynasty both through preferential treatment accorded to foreigners and constraints placed on China's sovereign ability to set her own external tariffs.

British policy was first confronted with sustained and organised opposition to foreign rights and privileges by the strikes and boycotts of British goods and traders in Canton and Hong Kong in the wake of the "May 30th Incident" in 1925 when British police in the International Settlement in Shanghai opened fire on riotous protesters, leaving several dead and injured. The following years, until 1931, required Whitehall to negotiate a difficult course between changing constellations of co-operation, or lack of it, with other powers similarly affected, and the highs and lows of irredentist fervour within the KMT-led Nanking government dictated by the varying fortunes of Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition or, later, by series of factional alliances in the KMT itself. In addition, the London government had to contend with the diverse interests of metropolitan business and its long-term objectives and the British treaty port communities, especially in Shanghai, whose more immediate worries about loss of ground on the spot often produced widely differing advice, e.g., on the advisability to use military force in defence of acquired rights in China.

Professor Fung describes the unfolding Chinese nationalist pressure and the stages of Britain's response which consisted mainly of a clear, albeit cautious, retreat by negotiation from privileged positions obtained in the preceding century. The strategy was, in essence, to salvage what could be retained by common accord while avoiding to close doors to future relations and commerce by antagonising a rising Chinese nationalism Britain would be increasingly unwilling, and unable financially as well as militarily, to resist or subdue. The book's copious references and bibliography and index of names including Chinese characters will be most helpful to academic students; the clear exposition of the diplomatic and economic issues will be a valuable introduction to those not yet familiar with the subject.

Sino-British negotiations on step-by-step abolition of British privileges rode along slowly on the roller-coaster of internal instability in China which continued to provoke fears, by no means entirely groundless, on the part of British and other foreigners, that the writ of the KMT government would not run far enough in China to honour agreements through which previously foreign judicial machinery should be replaced by effective and impartial Chinese institutions. Accompanying these uncertainties was an increasing Japanese aggressiveness towards China which, when it erupted into the full military annexation of Manchuria in 1931, all of a sudden relieved Britain and the other foreign governments concerned of the political pressure of Chinese nationalism, now mortally threatened by further Japanese invasion. It took the war-time alliance of Britain, the United States and China against Japan to bring about the renunciation of all treaty privileges by Britain and the United States in

1943. Japan followed suit in the same year and remaining country privileges were renounced in negotiations between 1943 and 1947.

The contemporary reader cannot fail to associate the subject of Professor Fung's study with that ongoing, and final, retreat by imperial Britain from East Asia - the rendition of Hong Kong to Communist China, concluded by London and Peking in December 1984 to take effect in July 1997. The setting seems curiously similar, and starkly different at the same time: Now as then Britain, although no longer a Great Power, attempted to secure through negotiation what could not have been successfully protected by force in order to safeguard larger objectives. Again, perhaps more so this time, the "treaty port community" and their apprehensions at being turned over to an autocratic Peking would not deflect Whitehall from its pursuit of perceived bilateral priorities. On the other hand, while Chinese nationalism of every stripe during the Republican period was united in the quest to expunge from Sino-Chinese residents of Britain's last possession in China seem rather in two minds about reuniting with the People's Republic. More intriguingly still, modern Hong Kong, seen by official Peking as a lost sheep to be embraced back into the fold, has meanwhile blossomed into an economic powerhouse whose weak edition in neighbouring Shenzhen across the border is now being hailed as an exemplar of "socialist" reform. Another common aspect remains: In the twenties and thirties some sought transitional periods of several decades for abolishing gradually the treaty port regime in Shanghai. They would no doubt have been staggered to find themselves, after three or four decades, at the epicentre of Mao Zedong's "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution". Assurances have since been provided that no change towards communism should take place in Hong Kong for fifty years after 1997...

*Wolfgang Kessler*