

**There Were Children on the Battleground: Japanese and Filipino Youth in the Second
World War**

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Fernando G. Gatan Jr., a Filipino, shared his most vivid memory of World War II :

“I was a boy of, if I remember right, seven or eight. I was already going to school then. Dr. Suji [a Japanese medical doctor] always brought toys to our home. Sometimes he gave us very long pencils, and at other times candies. And each time, he carried me in his arms and cried. He had these sobbing spells almost every afternoon even as he sang or hummed a Japanese tune. As he cradled me, tears fell copiously down his cheeks. I was told that I looked like his son whom he left behind in Japan. He was very fond of me. There were even times that he’d toss me up in the air and catch me. He laughed and laughed and interspersed this laughter with his copious crying.”¹

War was a horrible experience for nearly everyone in the Pacific, regardless of nation, race, or age. This is why each Pacific nation created its own “victim” narrative. Many Western nations and Asian nations alike criticize Japan for maintaining a victim narrative when the Japanese were responsible for so many Pacific atrocities: The Rape of Nanjing, the Manilla Massacre, Unit 731, and many others. Justice is not an easy price to pay, and it is not uncommon for Japanese to mask the dark parts of their history. Still, Japan’s victim narrative is valid as many children and other civilians suffered from the war wrought by the hands of their superiors.

Yet other countries suffered at the hands of the Japanese. Before the war, the Philippines was a U.S. territory, yet Americans know little of Filipino suffering caused by both Japanese and American occupiers. As one Filipino author put it: “When American children were playing genteel parlor games amid dolls and tea sets, or baseball outdoors, Filipino children were dealing most intimately with the articles of war – foxholes and air raid shelters, bullets, bombs, and bayonets.”² When Americans do remember the Philippines, they talk about MacArthur, the

¹ Bernard L.M. Karganilla, “Witness,” in *Under Japanese Rule: Memories and Reflections*, ed. Renato Constantino (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1992), 254. Stories similar to this one appear in many Filipino personal accounts, but of course, there are many that illustrate the brutality of Japanese soldiers.

² Joan Orendain, “Children of War” in *Under Japanese Rule*, 125.

Bataan Death March, and the Fil-American guerilla fighters, rather than ordinary Filipino people who witnessed American bombs blowing up their homes and Japanese spearing bayonets through their countrymen and families.

This paper will place the experiences of Japanese and Filipino youth side by side to show that World War II in the Pacific was a similar experience for youth that transcends national borders. This is perhaps the best way to analyze the totality of war in the Pacific as the experiences of Japan and its occupied territories are intertwined: Japanese-occupied countries suffered because the Japanese squeezed them when Japan suffered. At the same time, this war is total because not even children, the ultimate civilians, could not escape its terrors. This paper examines three ways in which war affected both Japanese and Filipino youth: through indoctrination, violence, and food insecurity.

Indoctrination: The Public Education System in Japan and the Philippines During the Pacific War

During World War II, the Japanese government attempted to indoctrinate Japanese children mainly through education and propaganda. Both methods nationalized youth and encouraged them to support the war effort. Youth were expected to volunteer in factories and farms to replace the conscripted labor force.³ Leading up to World War II, Japanese schools became more militaristic and nationalistic. In 1940, elementary schools were renamed “Citizen’s Schools.”⁴ Textbooks became vivid, engaging, and militaristic picture-books. Classes became

³ David C. Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 199.

⁴ Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 188-191.

more military centered and emphasized spiritual training and physical education. Children practiced patriotic calligraphy and made patriotic art. For science, teachers trained children in agriculture so they could better assist in food production for the nation.⁵ Towards the beginning of the war, the Ministry of Education continued the creation and direction of educational curricula for children, but by the end of the war, the navy and the army replaced the Ministry and became directly involved with the schools. The army produced and distributed curricula to second and third grade classrooms that closely resembled military recruitment brochures.⁶ Youth helped raise war morale by sending comfort letters, drawings, and packages to soldiers.⁷ Some even participated in war by creating balloon bombs which would float over the Pacific and target the west coast of the United States.⁸

Another way indoctrination occurred was through the evacuation of Japanese elementary children in the Spring of 1944. The goal of this action was not only to protect children from air-raids, but also to make “splendid little children,” or good Japanese citizens.⁹ In the makeshift countryside schools, teachers taught children morals, military values, and how to best serve the nation, but education at the evacuee schools was even more nationalistic in nature than public schools. At the evacuated schools, children were separated from their homes and families and closely monitored by their teachers. The Japanese government intended these schools to keep children safe from American bombardment as well as to more strictly indoctrinate them.

⁵ Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 188-191.

⁶ Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 191.

⁷ Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 191.

⁸ Takamizawa Sachiko, “When I Made Balloon Bombs,” in *Sensō: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War: Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun*, ed. Frank Gibney and trans. Beth Cary (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 181-182.

These balloon bombs were designed to float on the air currents over the Pacific and target West Coast and were relatively ineffective as only a small portion landed on U.S. soil. Less than ten people died from the bombs most of which did not even explode on impact.

⁹ Samuel Hideo Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940- 1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015), 61.

Teachers asked children to keep diaries to record their impressions while at the schools. Children were inspired by the things they learned and bonded with their teachers. When the military conscripted Nakane Mihoko's teacher, Mihoko recalled that she was sad but had "happy feelings when [she] thought about Ishida-sensei's going to war for the sake of the country."¹⁰ Children were also trained in hand-to-hand combat and national values which consisted of putting the state above the individual.¹¹ These schools were not only preparing children to be citizens, but soldiers.

Part of the reason the Japanese government decided to incorporate children into the war effort is because they believed it would both inspire and shame adults to do the same. For this reason, young children commonly appeared in propaganda. One propaganda piece depicts a child in a military-style garb happily holding up bank notes saying, "Everybody, let's save money... we're going to save 12 billion yen—and do you know why? Because it's 12 billion Yen for New East Asia."¹² Children and adolescents also volunteered to collect metal for scrap drives and provided other forms of voluntary work. Later in the war, many adolescents spent their summers working on farms and in factories.¹³ The national government hoped that by using examples of children's sacrifices for the war effort, they could stimulate adult support for the war.

For the most part, children were compliant and embraced their education. Children had strong confidence in the strength of their country and national government during the war.¹⁴ By examining children's play, it becomes clear how much war participation became embedded in to

¹⁰ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940- 1945*, 80.

¹¹ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940- 1945*, 85-88.

¹² Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 190.

¹³ Earhart, *Certain Victory*, 190.

¹⁴ Simon Partner, *Toshié: A Story of Village Life in Twentieth Century Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 80.

children's character. It was common for boys to pretend to be soldiers or play war. In an oral history, Satō Hideo explains a game he would play as a sixth grader called "Destroyer-Torpedo." The boys would divide into two groups and each boy would be a naval watercraft such as light cruiser, heavy cruiser, battleship, destroyer, or torpedo. Basically, if the torpedo was tagged by the opposite team's battleship, that team would lose their torpedo and be unable to win the game until they rescued it.¹⁵ Boys, such as Satō, loved playing war.

Although Japanese youth could not be held responsible for the outbreak of World War II, for the most part, they believed the ideas that their parents, teachers, and leaders taught them. Sasaki Fumiko explains how she and other children bullied Korean children after the war was over. She then sorrowfully states, "The blank page of a child's heart can be dyed any color...I recall the days when we chased Korean children, stones in hand, and my heart is pained."¹⁶ Youth imitated the ideas that they learned both inside and outside of school, and over time, many who were youth when the war started became soldiers by the war's end.

Some youth even joined the military as adolescents. As the Japanese forces were fleeing as the American forces arriving, one Filipino youth remembered seeing a Japanese soldier that appeared no more than fifteen years old. The soldier was weeping and crying out "*Otosan*" (father). The Filipino realized he was looking for a surrogate father to comfort him. She recounts, "Speechless, I pointed to my father. Where upon the young soldier staggered towards my father, fell on his knees and cried on my father's lap. I held his head, for he was only a boy, and wept in pity."¹⁷ Rather than a ruthless occupier, in this account he is first and foremost a youth.

¹⁵Satō Hideo, "Playing at War," in *Sensō*, 239.

¹⁶ Sasaki Fumiko, "Throwing Stones at Korean Children," in *Sensō*, 277.

¹⁷ Helen Mendoza, "Looking Back: Day's of War" *Under Japanese Rule*, 186-187.

Indoctrination affected Filipino youth differently than it did Japanese youth. Most Filipino youth did not embrace the ideas that the Japanese occupation taught them because they had already been indoctrinated by the United States prior to the war. Before the war, much of the Filipino public-school curricula emphasized American history, culture, and literature. Filipino public schools used many American-created textbooks. These textbooks were written in English and contained many American historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.¹⁸ The United States had developed and implemented Filipino education curricula for over 35 years, while Japan only had three years to create and implement their own. As a result, neither Filipino youth or their parents responded positively to the new Japanese curriculum, but most who attended school were outwardly compliant.

On February 17, 1942, about a month after the Japanese captured Manila, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese army issued Order No. 2 which laid the foundation work for the new education program in six principles:

1. To make the people understand the position of the Philippines as a member of the East Asia Co Prosperity Sphere, the true meaning of the establishment of a New Order in the Sphere and the share which the Philippines should take for the realization of the New Order, and thus to promote friendly relations between Japan and the Philippines to the furthest extent
2. To eradicate the old idea of the reliance upon the Western nations, especially on the U.S.A. and Great Britain, and to foster a new Filipino culture on the self-consciousness of the people as Orientals.

¹⁸ Thelma B. Kintanar, Clemen C. Aquino, Patricia B. Arinto, and Ma Luisa T. Camagay, eds. *Kuwentong Bayan: Noong Panahon Ng Hapon: Everyday Life in a Time of War*, (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2006), 114-115.

This source is a compilation the excerpts of seventy-four personal accounts of Filipinos who lived through World War II, many of which were children. The author's name is not listed next to the excerpt, but there are a list of contributors at the back of the book.

3. To endeavor to elevate the morals of the people, giving up over-emphasis on materialism.
4. To strive for the diffusion of the Japanese language in the Philippines and to terminate the use of English in due course.
5. To put importance to the diffusion of elementary education and to the promotion of vocational education.
6. To inspire the people with the spirit to love labor.¹⁹

The Japanese were focused on creating a Co Prosperity [sic] sphere in Asia, which entailed removing Western influence and replacing it with Japanese influence. In the Philippines, Japanese occupiers were trying to make Filipinos more Asian and less American. The new official languages became Tagalog and Japanese, and schools focused on the development of Filipino and Japanese culture rather than the American democratic ideals. In essence, Japan simply replaced the United States as colonizer and began to impose its own values and ideas of success on the Philippines.

Japanese officials needed time to restructure the education program around Japanese values and the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, or “Asia for Asians.”²⁰ When Japan captured the Philippines in early 1942, most Filipino public schools closed. The Japanese attempted to eradicate all things Western from textbooks and other teaching material. The English language became *bawal*, or taboo, but the Japanese could not completely eliminate the language as most Filipino textbooks were in English, and the Japanese could not always provide new ones in Tagalog.²¹ English was also the language that the Japanese and Filipinos used to communicate with each other since the Japanese were more familiar with English than they were Tagalog and

¹⁹ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines, 1941-1945*, Vol. 2, (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia, 1965), 426.

²⁰ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 107.

²¹ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 115.

other Filipino languages.²² Instead, the schools reused the old English textbooks but pasted paper over all references and images of the United States and the West.²³

Still, the Japanese made their best efforts to discontinue American education in the Philippines. They either eliminated or closely monitored humanities, literature, and social science classes, which previously relied on English material. The Japanese had to create new classes to replace the old ones. A Filipino youth who stopped going to public school during the Japanese occupation because his rural school remained closed, recalled that his fellow classmates transferred to a city school where they took math, science, and Japanese language classes rather than humanities.²⁴ Another Filipino remembered that “there were not enough subjects to keep us in school so a lot of subjects never before taught like macramé, water coloring, concepts of design, etc., were taught.”²⁵ The new Japanese education program emphasized scientific and vocational education such as agriculture and handicraft because the Japanese believed would inspire a good work ethic among Filipino youth.

The Japanese believed younger children would be more malleable than adolescents as they spent more time revising secondary school curricula than they did primary school curricula. Elementary schools reopened in the summer of 1942, but many high schools did not open until the summer of 1943, over a year after the Philippines had been captured.²⁶ Logistically, the Japanese had more time to introduce younger children to Japanese culture and values, as these children had several more years before they finished the public-school program. Adolescents on

²² David Joel Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), 51.

²³ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 428.

²⁴ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 114.

²⁵ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 114.

²⁶ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 107-108.

the other hand, had only a few more years remaining before they graduated. Perhaps this is the reason why the Japanese decided to emphasize vocational education among adolescents as well as Japanese language and culture. If adolescents could not fully convert to Japanese values, then at least they could become better contributing members of the Co Prosperity Sphere.

Most Filipino youth were not receptive to the Japanese-created education program. Leonor Gavino who was a child during the occupation explained in a personal account: “Filipinos were too pro-American and their [the Japanese] efforts to ‘filipinize’ us more did not go very well.”²⁷ At the beginning of the occupation, some parents banned their children from attending the Japanese-controlled schools while other youth did not even have the option to even go to school as most rural schools remained closed.²⁸ Because of this, the Japanese efforts to indoctrinate Filipino youth were not wide-reaching. Most youth who did attend the schools did not easily sway under the Japanese teachings because they heard rumors and witnessed the violence of Japanese soldiers. One Filipino remembers that “school activities were as normal as they could be under the gun” and he and his friend would express anti-Japanese sentiments to themselves in private.²⁹ Similarly, another Filipino recalled making anti-Japanese comments in class. He did not understand the degree of control the Japanese had over the education system, so he made his disparaging remarks openly to the dismay of his Filipino teacher.³⁰ While the new Japanese-mandated education program had little effect on Filipino youth, not all youth were as vocally opposed to it.

²⁷ Leonor Gavino, “Cruel in Defeat,” in *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, eds. Ely Javillonar Marquez and F. T. Marquez, (West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2016), 165.

²⁸ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, .

²⁹ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 116.

³⁰ Kintanar, *Kwentong Bayan*, 117.

There were some Filipinos that believed that the Japanese phrases they learned at school were useful in avoiding dangerous situations with Japanese soldiers. Mercedes M. Blaquera claims that the word *Tomodachi* (friend), which she learned in her “Niponggo [sic]” class, saved her life. Some Japanese soldiers entered her home as she and her sister were organizing old editions of the English-Language *Tribune* newspaper. One of the soldiers saw an American flag printed on one of the covers and pointed his gun at Mercedes. She then exclaimed, “Tomodachi, Tomodachi!” and the soldier put his gun away. She concludes the story exclaiming “*Tomodachi*. What a precious word! It saved our lives during the war.”³¹ It might have not been just a simple word that saved her life, but she believed it was. For younger children, they were taught Japanese phrases through songs. Luz Villena Romey learned a Japanese song called “Mr. Soldier” which she remembers meaning “Mr. Soldier/ Where are you going/ I’m going to school/ Thank you”³² These lyrics imitate the conversation that a school child might have with a Japanese soldier, helping both individuals communicate with each other.

Public education was not the only way the Japanese attempted to indoctrinate Filipino Youth. One Filipino remembers the Japanese enlisting all of the youth in the town of Bigaa in a youth group called “*Seinendan*” (Young Person’s Association). The youth group would practice daily a form of calisthenics called “Radio Taisyo” in which they would listen to a radio playing “Japanese martial music” while performing the instructed movements broadcast over the radio.³³ Filipino youth and adults commonly practiced Radio Taisyo throughout the occupation. Youth in *Seinendan* also learned national Japanese songs such as the national anthem “*Kimigayo*” and

³¹ Mercedes M. Blaquera, “Tomodachi! Tomodachi!,” in *Childhood Memories*, 105-106.

³² Luz Villena Romey, in “Witness,” *Under Japanese Rule*, 232. The Japanese version of the song is written in the Latin alphabet (*Romanji*) next to the English version, but it appears the author could not remember the exact phrasing as some of the Japanese words she listed do not exist or are most likely spelled wrong.

³³ Also spelled radio taisho and radio taiso according to other personal accounts.

planted vegetables in food plots.³⁴ The anonymous author of this personal account indicates that the youth reacted positively to this youth group as they “responded [to the Japanese instructor] by making it easier for him to contain our boundless energy and exuberance” because the Japanese instructor was decent and kind.³⁵

Destruction: Rape, Torture, and Bombing Campaigns

During World War II, the United States implemented indiscriminate bombing tactics against the Japanese. American bombing tactics became more aggressive as the war continued. In the spring of 1945, the air force removed the guns of B-29s to allow room for more bombs. Three hundred and thirty-four B-29s dropped bombs over residential areas of Tokyo. Each plane carried around 20,000 pounds of gelled-gasoline bombs. When dropped, these bombs sparked firestorms that demolished Tokyo, which was especially prone to fire damage as most of the buildings were constructed out of wood.³⁶ The United States’ use of air power and indiscriminate bombing peaked in Japan, rather than in Europe.³⁷ The United States Air Corps justified its use of indiscriminate bombing because they believed it would end the war faster. The tactical goal was to decrease the enemy’s morale by destroying enemy infrastructure and military resources, but the bombs also destroyed civilians. According to Seldon, the United States intended to destroy entire cities.³⁸ By the end of World War II, U.S. incendiary bombs annihilated 168

³⁴ Helen N Mendoza, “Looking Back: Days of War,” in *Under Japanese Rule*, 181-182.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, s181-182.

³⁶ Mark Seldon, “A Forgotten Holocaust: U.S. Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities, and the American Way of War from the Pacific War to Iraq,” in *Bombing Civilians: A Twentieth Century History*, ed. Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young (New York: The New Press, 2009), 83.

³⁷ Japanese officials needed time to restructure the education program around Japanese values and the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, or “Asia for Asians.”³⁷

³⁸ Seldon, “A Forgotten Holocaust,” 82-83.

square miles of sixty-seven Japanese cities. Many cities were 50-60% destroyed, in seventeen cities 60-88% of the city was destroyed, and in Toyama, the city was 98.6% destroyed.³⁹

In Japan, the United States used indiscriminate bombing not only to inflict extensive amounts of damage, but also to damage morale. The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey explained that the purpose of indiscriminate bombing was “either to bring overwhelming pressure on [Japan] to surrender, or to reduce her capability of resisting invasion.”⁴⁰ The United States Air Force believed that they could win the war more quickly through indiscriminate bombing. In *Rhetoric and Reality*, Tami Davis Biddle argues that while the United States attempted to destroy Japanese morale, they also tried to use precision bombing tactics that targeted Japanese industrial structures. Most of the United States Air Force’s bombs, however, rarely hit their mark, destroying civilians’ structures instead.⁴¹ Biddle also claims that although the USAAF claimed that bombing campaigns led to a swifter end to the war, many of the reports state otherwise. After the war, Japan was virtually city-less as incendiary bombs had demolished most of the urban areas even before the two atomic bombs. Still, the Japanese did not surrender due to their devotion to the emperor, or so the USAAF claimed.⁴²

Although U.S. incendiary bombs had an enormous impact on Japanese cities, the bombs did not always damage morale. Instead, many people, including children, simply became desensitized to the destruction. As a young child, Shirai Naruo first witnessed the destruction of incendiary bombs while riding on a train passing the city of Kobe. When he looked out the

³⁹ Seldon, “A Forgotten Holocaust,” 86.

⁴⁰ Seldon, “A Forgotten Holocaust,” 81-82.

⁴¹ Tammy Biddle Davis, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The evolution of Britain and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 214-216.

⁴² Tammy Biddle Davis, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 226.

Japanese officials also feared the idea of unconditional surrender, which made them hesitant to concede.

window, he saw that the city was completely demolished. Despite his shock at the sight, he muttered “‘It doesn’t seem too bad.’”⁴³ Later in the account, he concluded that “war was what made a young boy say, ‘it doesn’t seem too bad’ when he saw a city turned into a scorched wasteland.”⁴⁴ This shows how accustomed some Japanese youth became to the destruction of war. After an air raid, Hiratani Yasuko recalls that the only building left standing in her hometown was a train station. She later explains that, “in one night the flames of war had eradicated not only my home but also the memories of my youth.”⁴⁵ During the war, many Japanese youth lost their innocence as they faced the same horrors that soldiers faced, the kind of horrors that caused grown men to cry.

While many Japanese youth became desensitized to destruction, others were traumatized by it. During a bombing raid in Tokyo, teenage Okubo Michiko encountered a sobbing five-year-old girl who had lost her parents in the chaos. Okubo grabbed the little girl’s hand and began to escort her out of the burning city. When Okubo saw an incendiary bomb descending from the sky towards her, she accidentally dropped the child’s hand and ran into a nearby house. When she turned around, the little girl was bathed in flames. Okubo later recalled, “I have never been able to forget the feeling of her soft, little hand, like a maple leaf, in mine.”⁴⁶ Children’s morale may have been affected by the incendiary bombs, but youth did not have any power to stop the war. Instead, the United States Air Force exposed Japanese children to man-made hellfire in hopes that the Japanese leaders would give in. But the Japanese military—Japanese adults—would not surrender, so children died for decisions they did not make.

⁴³Shirai Naruo, “Doesn’t Seem Too Bad,” in *Sensō*, 206.

⁴⁴ Shirai, “Doesn’t Seem Too Bad,” 207.

⁴⁵Hiratani Yasuko, “Memories of Youth Turned to Ash,” in *Sensō*, 205-206.

⁴⁶ Ōkubo Michiko, “Hand Like A Maple Leaf,” in *Sensō*, 207-208.

Faced with such violence, some Japanese youth attempted to be fearless, and at times foolish, when they encountered enemy airplanes. In an oral history, Satō Hideo describes how he and other sixth-graders would watch for fighter planes while they harvested fodder for military horses. They assigned one student to watch the sky while the others worked. When a fighter plane spotted them, the plane would begin to descend. Satō recalls, “Even a child instinctively knew who their targets were.”⁴⁷ Some youth would run into the forest to take cover while the fighter planes strafed the ground. Others turned the strafing airplanes into a game of bravery. The youth coaxed one another to stand their ground while the airplane shot bullets at them, and they would wait until the last second to get out of the way.⁴⁸ This shows that U.S. fighter planes commonly targeted children, most likely because they could not identify their targets from a long distance, and strafing occurred often enough for youth to make a game out of it.

Unlike the Japanese, who primarily experienced the destruction of war in the form of bombs, Filipinos experienced direct violence at the hands of Japanese occupiers. At the beginning of the occupation, the Japanese dropped bombs on U.S. military bases in the Philippines. Gradually, as Japan gained control of Filipino cities, Filipinos returned to their urban homes. While Filipino civilians did experience Japanese violence at the beginning of the war, the end of Japan’s occupation culminated with the Manilla Massacre as many exasperated Japanese soldiers raped, burned, pillaged, and killed civilians. Also at the end of the war, the United States, the Philippines’s ally, dropped bombs targeting Japanese-controlled areas. While these bombs may have frustrated Japanese personnel and supplies, the bombs also destroyed Filipino

⁴⁷Satō Hideo, “Playing at War,” in *Japan at War: An Oral History*, ed. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook (New York: The New Press, 1992), 236-237.

⁴⁸ Satō Hideo, “Playing at War,” 238.

homes and ended many Filipino lives. The situation was further complicated by the violence of the Makapili (Filipinos who collaborated with the Japanese) and certain guerilla troops who took advantage of the chaos and used it to get personal gain.⁴⁹

Many Filipino youth vividly remember cruel acts of Japanese soldiers that occurred throughout the occupation. Romey Zapata was six years old when Japanese soldiers killed half of his family. They arrested and killed his father and then proceeded to bayonet three of Romey's siblings all of whom were under ten years old. After the bloodshed, they then burned down the family's house.⁵⁰ Other Filipinos remembered being beaten by Japanese soldiers. One Filipino went to buy a coconut in the market one day when he came across an electrician's tool kit. He began picking the tools up because he thought they were toys when an angry Japanese electrician found him and slapped him. The Japanese soldier forced the boy, who was now crying, to work under him the rest of the day, carrying the electrician's ladder wherever he needed it. It was not until his mother came looking for him that the electrician allowed him to go.⁵¹

Out of all Filipino youth, child and adolescent comfort women had some of the most harrowing experiences. Throughout the occupation, Japanese soldiers often kidnapped and sexually assaulted young women. Dolores Pasaring Molina was only fourteen years old when Japanese soldiers abducted her. She recounts:

“At first I resisted. I struggled with two grown Japanese soldiers. But they only slapped me as they dragged me along the dirt roads. They threw me into a classroom.

⁴⁹ In most Filipino personal accounts, Filipinos deeply fear the Makapili referring to them as traitors. In Tagalog, *Makapili* means “prone to choose.” Makapilis were widely responsible for identifying individuals who were guerillas and/or providing the guerillas with support. The Makapili would then report their findings to Japanese officials who would arrest, torture, or kill the suspect. According to some accounts, Makapilis would at times directly participate in the violence. Some Filipinos who have confessed to being a Makapili often said that they cooperated because they had no other choice; if they did not cooperate, the Japanese would kill them as well.

⁵⁰ Maria Loreto Fontanilla, in “Witness,” *Under Japanese Rule*, 217.

⁵¹ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 220.

They hung clothing like curtains to divide seven girls and women. There were three soldiers—an old one, a young man, and the other my mind will not recall...

I wasn't awake with the third one.

Hours later, I woke up and found myself on the tiles of an unwashed bathroom floor, bleeding. Other female victims surrounded me. They soaked old rags in cool water, and they were bathing me. What I remember is the crying. They placed the rag there between my legs to bring the swelling down. Imagine, they just keep coming again and again, just as you are recovering from the previous assault. I think I was there for maybe one month."⁵²

Dolores Molina was highly traumatized by the event. After she escaped one month later, she reunited with her mother who did not recognize her. Hugging her mother, she told her "It's me, your child!" to which her mother responded "You are nothing...I have lost my child. You are nothing." Dolores explained that her mother had lost her mind after she was abducted, and she never regained her sanity even after the war was over.⁵³

Many young adolescents and their parents were very aware of the sexual assaults of Japanese soldiers, so they came up with ways to combat it. There are several accounts that describe how parents would have their fair daughters purposely mess up their hair, not bathe, and cover their faces with ash so that they would not appear desirable.⁵⁴ Some parents even put their teenage daughters under "house arrest" to protect them.⁵⁵ Perhaps one of the most unusual ways Filipino adolescents made themselves ugly was by smearing chicken blood on their skirts to imitate menstruation.⁵⁶ While many young women and adolescents took these measures to repel Japanese soldiers, Japanese soldiers were not the only ones who raped during the war.

⁵² Dolores Pasaring Molina, in *Lola's House: Filipino Women Living With War*, by M. Evelina Galang, (Evanston, IL: Curbstone Books/Northwestern University Press, 2017), 138.

⁵³ Galang, *Lola's House*, 143.

⁵⁴ Ligaya Mausig, in "Witness," *Under Japanese Rule*, 221-222.

⁵⁵ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 185.

⁵⁶ Primitiva P. Divina, "Witness," *Under Japanese Rule*, 222. This method was very effective.

During World War II, Filipino women also feared guerilla and American soldiers. Angelita F. Ildefonso, who was only six at the time, mentions how some guerillas would kidnap young women and girls from their town. She remembers how young women and adolescents would cover their faces with soot every time the guerillas came into their town, the same precaution that Filipinos took against the Japanese.⁵⁷ It is unclear how common guerilla kidnappings were throughout the Philippines, but it appears it was not as widespread as Japanese kidnappings. Some Filipino youth also had some close calls with American soldiers. One Filipino explains how her “most dangerous experience as a girl happened during the liberation.” When she was eleven, she used to go to the American camps to collect candy from the soldiers. One of the soldiers called her “his Mexican sweetheart” because she had “soulful eyes.” Later, she was invited to go into the tent to “keep the captain company.” She remembered seeing girls her age going in and out of the tent looking happy. She felt uneasy and said that she did not want to go inside the tent. Later in her life she recalled that “at eleven I had my first encounter with the male animal.”⁵⁸ While Japanese soldiers committed much of the violence against Filipino women, they also faced violence from American and Filipino soldiers who were supposed to be fighting to protect them.

Like Japanese youth, Filipino youth also experienced bombings, but theirs occurred at the very beginning and very end of the occupation. The Japanese primarily targeted U.S. military centers such as Clark Airfield, which practically destroyed the U.S. Airforce in the Philippines, but they also bombed residential areas causing many Filipinos to evacuate the cities.⁵⁹ This is visible in the personal account of Felisa R. Ticsay who remembers evacuating with her family

⁵⁷ Angelita F. Ildefonso, “Fear of the Guerillas,” in *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 155-57.

⁵⁸ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 187.

⁵⁹ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 69.

when they saw a nearby town in flames.⁶⁰ In many cases, after the Japanese captured the Philippines, the Filipinos who evacuated slowly moved back into the cities as things settled down.⁶¹

It was not until 1945 that the Philippines experienced bombings again, this time from the U.S. ‘liberators.’ Marcela Sayo Talusig was eight when the U.S. forces fought Japanese forces for control of Manilla. She recalls that “bombs fell all over the place” and that many of the houses, including her own, burned down.⁶² It is not clear if these bombs came from artillery weapons or airplanes, but both occurred. Still, in Marcela’s recollection, Filipinos did not seem angry at Americans for the bombings, as when she and her family encountered their first group of American soldiers they yelled “Victory Joe!”⁶³ Regardless of Filipinos’ positivity towards the Americans, Americans did kill Filipino civilians. Rogelio David was also eight when he experienced American bombs. He recalls “The Americans were hitting the highways, thinking that’s where the Japanese were, but they didn’t know that it was the civilians they were hitting.” Marcelo also explains that some of the bombs were parachute bombs, which starving Filipinos ran towards thinking they were a box of food.⁶⁴ In all of the chaos that ensued at the end of the occupation, U.S. shelling and bombs may have resulted in as much as 40% of Filipino civilian deaths during the Battle of Manilla, illustrating the complicated nature of liberation.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Felisa R. Ticsay, “The Japanese are Coming,” in *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 81-82.

⁶¹ Ely Javillonar Marquez, “Back in San Fernando Once Again,” in *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 31.

⁶² Marcela Sayo Talusig, in “Witness,” *Under Japanese Rule*, 260.

⁶³ Talusig, *Under Japanese Rule*, 260.

⁶⁴ Joan Orendain, “Children of War,” in *Under Japanese Rule*, 116.

⁶⁵ Nakano Satoshi, “The Death of Manilla in World War II and Postwar Commemoration,” ResearchGate, (August, 2018), 6 accessed November 11, 2018,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324079142_The_Death_of_Manila_in_World_War_II_and_Postwar_Commemoration.

Of course, most Filipino civilians faced more horrifying terrors from the Japanese soldiers at the end of the war than they did from U.S. soldiers. Anna P. Maynilad recalls fleeing Japanese atrocities during the Manila Massacre. She and her family stayed inside with the windows shut until the situation became too violent and they decided to evacuate the city. Amidst the tumult, she saw her brother fall face first, wounded by a bullet. Bullets also hit her mother and father, who were trying to shield their children. Each of her injured family members passed away at a hospital.⁶⁶ From this personal account, it appears that Anna did not see who shot her family members, but she does mention she was running away from Japanese and Koreans (who many Filipinos believed were more brutal than the Japanese).⁶⁷ Unsurprisingly, some children were extremely traumatized by the violence. After Japanese soldiers massacred his family Fernando Vasquez-Prada could not talk for two years. He recounts:

“One day, I was sitting on the stairs and cried and cried and then talked. But for seven years, a recurring nightmare was of me running down the street into a telephone booth and the Japanese would come in and kill me. When I was seven at La Salle, the year after I started schooling after I could talk again, they held a memorial mass every year on February 12, an open casket at the foot of the altar. The first two years of these annual masses, I fainted.”⁶⁸

Even years after the war many adolescents became shell-shocked by their experiences during the war, some of which plagued them for the rest of their lives.

⁶⁶Anna P. Maynilad, “I Survived the Manila Massacre,” *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 188-189.

⁶⁷ Several personal accounts mention fearing Koreans, describing them as more brutal than Japanese soldiers. Even today, some Filipinos believe this. Historians, such as Lydia N. Yu Jose, have looked into these claims and have concluded that they were for the most part false as there were only sparse numbers of Koreans in the Philippines during the war, most of which were laborers. Some historians have suggested that Japanese forces themselves had initiated the rumor, but this is unclear.

For more information see: Lydia N. Yu Jose, “The Koreans in Second World War Philippines: Rumour and History,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43, no. 2 (June 2012), 324-339.

⁶⁸ Joan, Orendain, “Children of War,” in *Under Japanese Rule*, 127-128.

Some youth did not directly experience violence in the Philippines, instead they heard violent stories about other people. The most horrific story that Fortunata M. Pecson remembers is not her own. She was eleven years old when the occupation began and explains that she didn't remember much about the war but she heard that that Japanese soldiers brutally raped a girl a little older than she was.⁶⁹ These kinds of reports of secondhand violence were common among Filipino youth. Not all youth had equally brutal experiences during the war, and some even managed to avoid violence altogether, but the stories that youth heard during war shaped their war experience.

Starvation and Food Insecurity

During World War II, starvation was common on the home front in Japan. The Japanese government created the food rationing system in 1940, but it was not until 1941 when certain foods like rice, meat, fish, soy, salt, and oil became strictly rationed. In September 1941, the daily amount of meat allotted for a single adult was around 1.3 ounces to 1.8 ounces. The monthly personal allotment for other foods included: 2.3 ounces of miso a month, seven ounces of salt, 3.2 ounces of oil, and eleven ounces of soy sauce.⁷⁰ In 1943, the government lowered the amount of fish and meat to less than an ounce per person. In 1944, the government replaced fresh fish and meat with dry anchovies (*niboshi*) and preserved fish (*tsukudani*), but once every six days, the government allowed one ounce of fresh fish per person. During the war, the

⁶⁹ Fortunata M. Pecson, "Rapes in the Barrio" *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 149-150.

⁷⁰ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, 37-39. Miso is a Japanese staple. It is salted, fermented soybeans, and it takes approximately 6 months to make. It is the main flavoring ingredient in miso soup, which is a common element to a Japanese meal, and is consumed nearly daily. Most recipes require approximately 1.5 ounces of miso paste for a soup that serves four. The amount rationed would allow one person to have regular miso soup 6-7 times before running out. However, less miso could be added to the soup, which results in a very watery, bland soup. During the war, there are many complaints about watery soup.

government continuously decreased the rice ration until it was 41% of the original eleven ounces.⁷¹ By the end of the war, the U.S. Strategic bombing survey reported that one-hundred percent of urban residents experienced weight loss with the average caloric consumption being 1,405 calories in Tokyo in 1945 and 1,354 calories in Nagoya in 1944.⁷²

In *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, starvation was more common in the city than it was in the country side. The larger cities such as Tokyo and Kyoto had the most severe food shortages and malnutrition. Unlike rural areas, cities had higher populations but less agricultural production. Large cities were also the primary targets for American bombing campaigns, which often destroyed the available food resources large cities had and made malnutrition even more common. Smaller cities and towns fared better than large cities.⁷³ In smaller cities, the majority of residents did not face food shortages until the autumn of 1944.⁷⁴ During the war, rural populations had more access to food resources because these societies were centered around a more agrarian economy. Japanese rural populations consisted mainly of farmers who lived self-sufficiently.

Two main problems rural communities faced were conscription and government food requisitions. Conscription made food production more difficult as the military sent more and more able-bodied farmers from their fields to the battlefield. The Japanese government also increased food quotas for rural communities. Farmers now had to grow more food with fewer people. Increased food quotas caused many farmers to resent the government.⁷⁵ Simon Partner also mentions food requisitions in *Toshie*. Some rural Japanese civilians expressed dissatisfaction

⁷¹ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940- 1945*, 39.

⁷² Junko Baba, "Discourse on Food in World War II Japan," *Japanese Studies Review* 21 (2017), 142.

⁷³ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan, 1940- 1945*, 44.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

for the war as well, but not enough to squash patriotism as many rural civilians still participated in the war effort.⁷⁶ Although some farmers would avoid meeting government rice quotas, the majority of farmers would meet the quotas even if they faced starvation as a result, causing many farmers to become ill and malnourished.⁷⁷ Rural communities suffered less than urban communities, but Japanese villages still confronted food insecurities.

Japanese youth responded to hunger in various ways. Some Japanese youth combatted starvation by foraging. During World War II, at the suggestion of the government, over one million children evacuated to the countryside. Most lived with relatives, but some parents sent their children to schools where teachers would take care of them, but food was very scarce at these schools. As a result, children began to gather a variety of foods to eat ranging from vegetables such as rhubarb, mug wort, and bamboo shoots to foods like freshwater shrimp, frogs, grasshoppers, ground beetles, pigeons, and snails.⁷⁸

In order to avoid starvation, some Japanese youth turned to thievery. Stolen goods were generally food, straw, money, and clothing. Thievery in Japan became more common as the war continued and food became scarcer. Although some adults stole, Samuel Yamashita argues that children and teenagers committed the bulk of the thefts.⁷⁹ Japanese children and adolescents were more likely than adults to take extreme measures to get what they wanted or needed. Some children stole because they knew they could get away with it. Aihara Yu recalled helping a fourth-grade boy who had rode the train to the countryside where he heard there were sweet potatoes. The boy, it appears, had stolen five or six kilograms of sweet potatoes and was looking

⁷⁶ Simon Partner, *Toshié*, 82.

⁷⁷ Partner, *Toshié*, 85-87.

⁷⁸ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, 120.

⁷⁹ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, 162-164.

for a route home where he did not have to pass a police box. Asking Aihara for directions, he explained that he came because his “mother said that if I was caught, they [the police] would let me go because I’m a kid.” Aihara then gave the child a ball of rice and millet and sent him on his way.⁸⁰

Starvation was so severe that some youth were desperate enough to volunteer as experimentation subjects in Unit 731 in exchange for food and a healthier diet. Unit 731 was the Japanese army’s biological warfare research unit which experimented on several enemy civilians and soldiers, injecting subjects with certain diseases and then studying them under a variety of (usually cruel) conditions. Japanese boys who volunteered as subjects did not experience the same level of cruelty as enemy subjects, but the experiments were still harsh. In one case, the experimenters asked boys to put their hands in freezing cold water to see how much cold they could bear until the pain was too intense. Other boys consumed a *manju* (Japanese sweet made with a bean jam) that was injected with typhoid fever which the experimenters used to try to create a vaccination for the illness.⁸¹ It is unclear how much foreknowledge on the nature of these experiments the Japanese boys had, or if they even regretted their decision. They only did so because there was the promise of good food and sugary treats.

U.S. incendiary bombing had a direct effect on Japanese food securities, further exacerbating the situation. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese lost their homes to incendiary bombs and would relocate to other cities or the countryside where other family members resided. Aoki Kii recalls how evacuees in her village were treated. Some villagers would call the evacuated children “hanger[s]-on.” One family refused to share their food with the evacuees they

⁸⁰ Aihara Yu, “Show Me a Road Without a Police Box,” in *Senso*, 192-193.

⁸¹ Junko Baba, 139-140.

were housing. Some evacuees, both children and adults, were housed in storage sheds, wood sheds, and even a night soil shed where human excrement was stored.⁸² Not all of the villagers treated the evacuees with disdain. Some, like Aoki's mother, prepared good meals for the evacuees rather than simply giving them vegetable scraps as other villagers did.⁸³ At times, farmers employed children and evacuees to help on their farms in exchange for food.⁸⁴ For evacuated children and for those displaced by fire bombings, the food situation was not much better in the countryside than it was in the city.

Similar to Japan, most Filipinos faced starvation as a direct result of the war. Before the war, despite being an agriculturally productive society, the Philippines did not produce enough food to feed its own population. Foreign powers such as the United States and China invested heavily in luxury items such as sugar, rather than rice and other grains, and thus the Filipino economy became centered around sugar and coconut production.⁸⁵ Rice was still a major industry, but not large enough to supply the population, so the Philippines imported food from other Southeast Asian countries. During the Japanese occupation, Filipino trade was cut off by U.S. blockades which were preventing Japanese forces from transporting resources to their own country.⁸⁶ This damaged the food situation in the Philippines drastically, as not only was the Philippines responsible for feeding itself but Japanese occupation forces were also leaching off the Philippines and its people.

⁸² Aoki Kii, "Evacuees and Mean-Spirited Villagers," in *Sensō*, 172.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁴ Yamashita, *Daily Life in Wartime Japan*, 119.

⁸⁵ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 514.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 535-536.

The Japanese occupation forces did make some efforts to make the Philippines more self-sustainable, but they were only truly molding Filipino agriculture to suit Japanese interests. Japanese occupation forces created a five-year plan to increase food production between 1943 and 1947. The Japanese expected to increase rice, corn, cassava, and sweet potato growth by around 30 percent.⁸⁷ At the same time, the Japanese reallocated sugar production lands for cotton production, because cotton sustained the Japanese textile industry which was central to their economy.⁸⁸ Both Japanese agricultural plans failed for a variety of reasons, the main ones being that the Japanese implemented the plans too late in the growing season, Filipinos did not have the expertise or resources to grow these new crops, and weather was not cooperative.⁸⁹ The plans were very ambitious, but wartime is a difficult time for an agricultural overhaul.

Due to the expected food shortages, in 1942 the occupational government instituted a rationing program that rationed food and other necessities such as matches and cotton. Access to rice was limited so much by the end of the year that Filipinos were eating rice mixed with ground corn. The Japanese took control of the food situation. They directed farmers to sell their rice directly to the NARIC (National Rice and Corn Corporation) who would then sell it at a fixed

⁸⁷ Ibid., *The Fateful Years*, 534.

⁸⁸ Ibid., *The Fateful Years*, 529.

Before the war, Japan had imported around fifty percent of its cotton from the United States, with nearby countries such as India and Burma supplying the rest. During the war, the Japanese had to find a new source of cotton, so they began cotton production in South East Asia. In the Philippines, cotton production failed drastically with the first harvest producing only twenty-five percent of the cotton needed for the Philippines alone.

See Francis K. Danquah, "Reports on Philippine Industrial Crops in World War II from Japan's English Language Press," *Agricultural History* 79, no. 1 (Winter 2005) 74-96.

⁸⁹ Other reasons include that by the end of the war Japanese forces, American and Filipino guerilla forces, and starving farmers killed nearly seventy percent of the Kalabaw (Water buffalo used as plow animals and beasts of burden) population.

See Larry S. Schmidt, "American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement on Mindanao During the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945," master's thesis, The John Hopkins University School of Advanced international Studies, 1970, 33, accessed November 20, 2019 <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/b068659.pdf>.

price to Filipinos. The Japanese also used NARIC to confiscate food items for themselves, angering Filipino city dwellers and farmers alike.⁹⁰

In addition to Japanese officials, some Filipino guerilla forces also took food away from civilian populations. During the war, there were several guerilla factions. While they often fought Japanese soldiers, they also commonly fought and killed other guerillas with opposing viewpoints.⁹¹ Most guerilla groups were located in rural areas where the Japanese had little control. Many rural civilians happily gave a regular quota of food to guerillas who they believed were opposing the tyrannical and torturous rule of the Japanese. Some groups merely called themselves guerillas, although they were no more than local brigands.⁹² Angelita F. Ildefonso recalls that her family disliked and feared these guerillas so much that they made a parody of an official army song. Instead of “*hukbo ng bayan, laging Kalayaan*” (Army of the land, forever freedom) they changed it to “*hukbo ng bayan, laging kahirapan*” (Army of the land, forever suffering), which they sang in the guerillas absence.⁹³ In order to fight a war, food is needed by both the occupying army and the local resistance, which civilians had to provide at the cost of their own malnutrition and starvation.

Like Japan, starvation was much worse in Filipino cities than it was in the countryside. Agricultural families generally had enough to feed their families. Many urban families relocated to the rural areas just before the Japanese occupation started, where they had more room to grow vegetables and other food stuffs.⁹⁴ Agricultural families still suffered food shortages, but city life

⁹⁰ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 540-542.

The NARIC was created before the war by the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines to stabilize grain prices, but it was reincorporated during the Japanese occupation with the Japanese overseeing its functions.

⁹¹ See James A. Villanueva, “Awaiting the Allies’ Return: The Guerilla Resistance Against the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II,” PhD Diss., (The Ohio State University, 2019).

⁹² Romualdo Pimentel, “Executed by Guerillas,” *Childhood Memories of a War Torn Philippines*, 160.

⁹³ Angelita F. Ildefonso, “Fear of the Guerillas,” *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 155-156.

⁹⁴ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 42-43.

was much worse due to its concentrated nature. Teodoro A. Agoncillo gives this image of an urban area towards the end of the war:

“Along vast stretches of dust-covered streets, the dead could hardly be counted. Some were covered with newspapers, others less fortunate were with the rubbish, almost naked, eyes staring at the skies, limbs broken and faces showing traces of agony. All, however, had thin faces as weird as masks... Those who could move about ambled to the pile of garbage rummaged through it for any rotten banana, mango or tomato. Children, dark, unkempt, and undressed, with bulging stomachs, ransacked overflowing garbage cans for anything they could eat.”⁹⁵

Agoncillo further explains how children were so hungry they fought over eggshells which a seven-year old had found and was licking “with much gusto.”⁹⁶

Because of malnutrition, children and youth were more susceptible to tropical diseases such as malaria and jungle rot. Ely Javillonar Marquez describes how she and other children developed “scary” boils on their feet that were crater-like and filled with pus.⁹⁷ This was most probably tropical ulcer, more commonly known as jungle rot, which is more likely to occur when a person is malnourished and walks barefoot.⁹⁸ In *The Fateful Years*, Teodoro A. Agoncillo also mentions how tropical ulcer plagued young, starved children.⁹⁹ This condition did not seem to affect adults as much as it did children. Malaria was also common, but medicine was in short supply. Lilia Verano Brewbaker explains that she and her family all contracted malaria, but her parents only used the quinine tablets on the children, electing to take the full impact of the

⁹⁵ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 549.

Although this source is a secondary source, Agoncillo lived through World War II in the Philippines. This paragraph is from his own experience.

⁹⁶ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 549.

⁹⁷ Ely Javillonar Marquez, “Boils and Bites,” *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 57.

⁹⁸ In addition to lack of food, most civilians did not have access to cloth or clothing material, so many children went barefoot or had poor footwear.

⁹⁹ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 546-549.

sickness themselves so they could heal their children. Sickness had a profound impact on Filipino civilians because it made it impossible for them to work, thus increasing the effect of starvation.¹⁰⁰ While Japanese children did experience sickness as a result of malnutrition, they did not suffer from the same tropical diseases that Filipino youth had to face.

Filipino youth responded to starvation similarly to Japanese youth by scavenging, thieving, and looting. Filipino youth scavenged for food on the streets, picking up individual grains of rice that fell out of supply trucks.¹⁰¹ In cases where there were no conventional food items available Filipinos gathered and consumed items such as tree bark, roots, and even tree leaves.¹⁰² Stealing and looting was common as well. Just before the Japanese arrived in 1942, a 15-year-old boy stole two large bundles of *bihon* (noodles) and stuffed his pockets with American candy he had looted from local stores.¹⁰³ To keep order, the Japanese occupation forces punished looters and thieves, including children. Dario Bautista Alampay recalls watching the Japanese parading thieves around the town plaza with their stolen goods such as chickens hanging from their necks. Then the Japanese tied them to a post and anyone who passed the town plaza would have to slap the wrongdoers, even though one was a young boy.¹⁰⁴

One of the biggest ways Filipino youth counteracted starvation was by working to get more money for their families. Children as young as seven years old worked jobs such as shoe shining, working at the family business or local farm, selling homemade food products such as coconut jelly and soap, and even selling scavenged items like bails of grass and *camote* (sweet

¹⁰⁰ Lilia Verano Brewbaker, "Battling Disease and Starvation," in *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 120.

¹⁰¹ Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years*, 547.

¹⁰² Bernard LM Karganilla, "Witness," *Under Japanese Rule*, 211.

¹⁰³ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Dario Bautista Alampay, in "Witness," *Under Japanese Rule*, 200.

potato).¹⁰⁵ One Filipino “became an entrepreneur at the age of ten.” They began renting out American comic books such as Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman for ten centavos each. A customer would be able to select a magazine and read it in a designated chair, almost like a library.¹⁰⁶ Although they do not mention whether or not this was illegal, it most likely was as it was going against the goals of the Japanese occupation forces by promoting American media. Overall, Filipino youth were very innovative in the ways they could make money.

Although some Filipino youth became entrepreneurs, many also worked for the Japanese during the war and the American “Joes” after the war.¹⁰⁷ For most jobs, the Americans and Japanese paid the youth in food. In Lupit, on the island of Panay, a Japanese foreman hired Filipino boys from ages eight to twelve to help clear grass and brush from an airfield. F. T. Marquez and his friends decided to join the work group because the Japanese payed 5 pesos a day with a ration of rice.¹⁰⁸ Work like this was not uncommon. Praxedes Valdez remembers watching Japanese as they “forced the children to... load their [Japanese] chromite (chromium) for them in their ships” for a ganta (3 liters) of rice, a pack of cigars, and some sugar.¹⁰⁹ After the United States army retook the Philippines, children began working for them instead. Oscar Ocampo worked as a messboy for the Japanese when he was eleven and as a messboy for the Americans when he was fourteen.¹¹⁰ Because of war children and youth in the Philippines had to assume the same responsibilities as adults.

Conclusion:

¹⁰⁵ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 120-122.

Milagros J. Cortez, “Muffled Sounds in the Night,” *Childhood Memories of a War-Torn Philippines*, 130.

¹⁰⁶ Kintanar, *Kuwentong Bayan*, 123.

¹⁰⁷ Joe is the word Filipinos used (and still use) to refer to U.S. soldiers and white men. Comes from G.I. Joe.

¹⁰⁸ F.T. Marquez, “Child Labor,” in *Childhood Memories of a War Torn Philippines*, 279.

¹⁰⁹ Praxedes Valdez, in “Witness,” *Under Japanese Rule*, 220.

¹¹⁰ Joan Orendain, “Children of War,” *Under Japanese Rule*, 116.

Comparing two opposite sides of the Pacific war, it becomes clear that World War II affected Filipino and Japanese children in three similar ways. Not all children on both sides always experienced the same level of indoctrination, starvation, or violence, but they were still affected by all three directly or indirectly. Violence and bombings worsened food insecurities as food stores were destroyed and trade and travel were disrupted caused civilians to starve. But starvation also wrought violence. As Japan began to starve, they squeezed their occupied countries in Asia for what little food they had. But this food that Japan stole, rarely made its way to Japanese civilians as much of it was lost in the depths of the Pacific. In the Philippines, Japanese soldiers as well as Filipino guerillas confiscated food from resident villages while raping their women. As for indoctrination, it fanned the flames of war. The Japanese youth who played soldier at the war's start had become soldiers fighting abroad by the war's end. For Japanese youth who resisted indoctrination and war, the punishment was beatings and starvation. Filipino youth were not reciprocal to Japanese indoctrination, but they also received the same punishments when they were unruly, and even when they were not.

Both Japanese and Filipino youth could not escape the effects of the war, illustrating that World War II in the Pacific was a total war. In Japan and the Philippines, many children were directly involved in the war effort and at times even died a soldier's death.

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