

## CONSERVATISM AND ITS ENEMIES IN PREWAR JAPAN: THE CASE OF HIRANUMA KIICHIRO AND THE KOKUHONSHA\*

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### 1. *Relevance of the Study of Conservatism*

This paper deals with conservative reaction in Japan in the years 1918–1926, a topic largely neglected by historians. To my knowledge, there is no major historical study that traces Japan's prewar conservatism.<sup>1</sup> Yet there is no doubt that conservatism, in its diverse manifestations, was a powerful and influential political force in prewar Japan, much in the same way that it remains a powerful and influential force at present.

The focus of the debate may have shifted; the themes and issues certainly have. Conservatives now worry about the separation of state and religion, which senior politicians and bureaucrats apparently have no stomach for challenging; they rail against the foreign-imposed constitution, in particular, Article 9; they condemn the present system of education, which they consider short on patriotism and morality. They usually dwell on the cultural decline and decadence of the younger generation. Some may, as a prominent Japanese intellectual did in a TV debate a few years back, voice concerns over the miscegenation of the Japanese racial stock through the influx of foreign guest workers. Others may deplore the distortion imposed on Japanese history by "American information space," as does, for example, Ishihara Shintarô. According to Ishihara, this "American information space" includes such distortions as the Rape of Nanjing and even the Holocaust. Misled by Americans, Ishihara apparently had to read David Irving to discover "Hitler's anguish" over the mass murder of Jews.<sup>2</sup>

The ongoing assault on the way Japanese history is taught in schools is a conservative reaction against what Ishihara describes as "American information space," or what others label the Tokyo Tribunal View of History.<sup>3</sup> In the vanguard of this conservative reassessment of history are Professors Fujioka Nobukatsu, Nishio Kanji, Nakamura Akira, Hata Ikuhiko, cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori, and many others. Some of these men, like Kobayashi and

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<sup>1</sup> The only notable exception is Hashikawa Bunzô, "Nihon hoshushugi no taiken to shisô," in Hashikawa Bunzô (ed.), *Hoshu no shisô* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô 1968), pp.3–43.

<sup>2</sup> Ishihara Shintarô, "Nihon o ochiireta jôhō kūkan no kai," *Bungei shunjū*, vol.69 No.2 (February 1992), On "American information space," (the term apparently coined by the literary critic, Professor Etô Jun), p.94. On Hitler, Himmler, David Irving and the Jews, p.100.

<sup>3</sup> The current phrase is *jigyaku shisô*, translatable into English as "self-victimization" or "self-immolation" ideas.

Nishio Kanji, are well-known, prominent figures. Others, such as Nakamura Akira, author of the revisionist *Dai Tō-A sensō e no michi*, had been obscure until recently.<sup>4</sup> Some may go about their business of revising history in a rather crude manner. Others do it more subtly, as historian Professor Hata Ikuhiko does, by relativizing the question of Japan's war guilt.<sup>5</sup> But such differences are not important. After all, these conservatives share an underlying assumption about the role of history. To them, it seems, history's goal is not to gain a better understanding of the past. Rather, they regard history as a tool to instill certain values in a nation. From this perspective, truth is always subordinate to a higher goal: national edification.

This conservative lament over cultural decadence and moral turpitude, over pernicious foreign influences, over the meaning of the Constitution and the way history should be understood and interpreted, is not a new phenomenon. It has clear prewar antecedents. Like today, in the prewar period, there was also a prevalent belief among conservatives that history should serve and be subservient to the state. Swift punishment awaited transgressors. Witness the fate of Kume Kunitake who challenged the imperial myths with his historical research; the 1911 suspension of Kida Sadakichi at the Ministry of Education in the wake of the South-North Courts controversy (*Nanboku chō seijunron*) and the 1939 attacks on Waseda professor Tsuda Sōkichi. Like today, there was a debate about the Constitution (not about how to rewrite it but about how to interpret it), namely, the debate between Uesugi Shinkichi and Minobe Tatsukichi. Like today, there were then endless laments over social corruption, immorality, the inadequate education system, and pernicious foreign, American or Russian influences. The present-day conservative opposition to allowing wives to bear different surnames from their husbands<sup>6</sup> has a clear antecedent in the prewar wrath at demands for emancipation of women and the social behavior of the so-called new women. Even that most absurd phenomenon, Japanese anti-Semitism or, more accurately, the fairly widespread belief in a Jewish conspiracy to rule the world expressed in many books, frequently published by reputable presses, had its counterparts in prewar Japan, and that long before Hitler's coming to power.<sup>7</sup>

The decade immediately after WWI was a period of rapid political and social change in Japan. The rule of party cabinets was established; universal manhood suffrage introduced. Japan was seemingly set to follow a course of domestic democratization and peaceful cooperation with the Western powers. Scarcely a dozen years later Japan was bogged down in a full-scale war in China; the political parties were out of power; and liberals were being

<sup>4</sup> See Nakamura Akira, *Dai Tō-A sensō e no michi* (Tokyo: Tentensha, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Hata Ikuhiko, "Raabe nikki no kōka," *Shokun* (February 1998), pp.81-89. See p.89 for Professor Hata's attempt at relativization.

<sup>6</sup> the so-called *fufu bessei*.

<sup>7</sup> It would be impossible to give a complete list of such books. The gem of the genre is surely Ishii Izumi's *Sekai o ugokasu Yudaya-kyō no himitsu* (Tokyo: Daiichi kikaku shuppan, 1995). The author argues that the Great Kōbe Earthquake of January 1995 was the result of a conspiracy, pp.4-6. A "progressive" slant to this conspiratorial view of history can be found in numerous works by a highly popular writer, Hirose Takashi, who blames Chernobyl, the Holocaust, Belgian atrocities in the Congo, etc., on a huge conspiracy by an alliance of Jewish (e.g., Rothschild) and Wasp (e.g., Morgan) financiers and industrialists. A good example is his *Akai tate: Rosuchairudo no nazo* (Tokyo: Shūeisha 1991). For a recent foray into this field by a well-known Sophia University professor, see Watanabe Shōichi, "Minpu no susume: doru ni taikō suru yuitsu no shudan," *Shokun*, vol.30, no.7 (July 1998), where he recommends enticing rich Jews to live in Japan. "If Jews owned the *Asahi shinbun*, as they do the *New York Times*, then," Watanabe hopes, "dreamed-up stories like that about the Nanjing Massacre would not spread to the United States." Ibid., p.133.

hunted out of their jobs. By the end of 1941, Japan, by then ruled by a de facto military dictatorship, was at war with the United States and Britain. What followed turned out in the end to be an unmitigated disaster for Japan. Tracing the origins of this catastrophe is understandable as well as necessary. Quite naturally, historians have studied the causes of the Pacific War from many angles. None, however, to my knowledge, has addressed the contribution of conservative reaction to the rise of Japanese militarism of the 1930s. Yet this neglected contribution, as I argue below, must be understood in order to grasp the deeper causes of the tragedy of the Pacific War.

## 2. Two Strains of Japanese Conservatism

Karl Mannheim defined the conservative style of thought as a reaction to the Enlightenment with its universalistic ideas and its insistence on liberty, equality, fraternity.<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, the Meiji State, which clearly rejected the values of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, was a supremely conservative entity. For the founders of the Meiji State deliberately cast aside individualistic liberty in favor of subordination of the individual to the state. They purposely rejected equality in favor of a hierarchical system with the emperor as its apex, with an artificially formed aristocracy and antiquated court ranks that measured the position of an individual within the society by his/her degree of proximity to the emperor. And, with equal forethought, they repudiated the concept of universal brotherhood (fraternity), electing, instead, to promote the notion of the uniqueness of the Japanese people.

Paradoxically, however, the embodiment of conservatism that was the Meiji State managed to pass itself as a bearer of progress and enlightenment.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, it is the opposition to the Meiji government (more strictly, some sections of that opposition) that historians conventionally brand as conservative. This opposition, which had its heyday in the 1880s and 1890s, was represented by Kuga Minoru (Katsunan)'s *kokuminshugi* and Miyake Setsurei and Shiga Shigetaka's *kokusui hozon*.

In short, there were (at least) two currents of conservatism in the Meiji period: one, the generally recognized variety of the likes of Kuga and Miyake; the other, the conservatism of the Meiji government itself,<sup>10</sup> which as a rule is not regarded as conservatism. The former was conservative because it challenged the government's more extreme efforts at Westernization, the latter conservative by virtue of the fact that it consciously rejected the values of the Enlightenment and the French revolution.

In the Taishō period, these two currents of conservatism converged when, in the face of perceived ideological, political, economic and social crisis, conservatives in and out of power formed an alliance. This was an alliance of strange bedfellows, with diverse, sometimes even contradictory, ideas. Nevertheless, for all their differences, the conservatives agreed on a

<sup>8</sup> "Conservative Thought" in Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology*, ed. by Paul Kecskemeti, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), p.79. Karl D. Bracher makes the same point in his *Zeit der Ideologien: Eine Geschichte politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: DVA 1980), p.30.

<sup>9</sup> Hashikawa observes that in Japan conservatism usually is not associated with exercise of state power, p.20.

<sup>10</sup> There was, of course, a liberal side to the Meiji system as, for example, George Akita eloquently shows in his *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967). But the fact that the Meiji constitution was capable of diverse interpretations made the ideological struggle all the more intense.

number of crucial points. They certainly agreed that the imperial institution must be preserved at all costs and that the pernicious ideas of the Enlightenment be kept at bay. All were believers in a strong centralized state and adamantly opposed any move that, in their judgement, might weaken the state. They were all, almost without exception, social Darwinists, even if they saw no contradiction between their espousal of social Darwinism and their rejection of the universalistic claims of the West. Japan, they insisted, was a special case. What was the alternative? To concede that universal laws (and social Darwinism claimed to be a scientific universal law) applied to Japan would have meant acquiescing in the inevitable and thorough Americanization of Japan.<sup>11</sup>

As statists, the conservatives naturally opposed individualism, which they identified with selfishness and unwillingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of the nation. They opposed freedom and equality: freedom in as much as it conflicted with the interest of their state; equality because individuals should know their place within the hierarchy of society and state. Manifestations of individualism, freedom, and equality, they automatically denounced as signs of social corruption and decay. The conservatives categorically rejected pluralism as manifested in party politics and parliamentarianism. Such pluralism they regarded as divisive and therefore harmful to the state. Instead of untidy and inefficient pluralism, with its endless debates and tergiversations, they believed in unity of thought and action. Instead of a government by electorate, they advocated the rule of an anointed elite, even if they frequently disagreed on who those few philosopher-kings were or should be. The above views, which constitute the very core of their conservatism, bear a striking similarity to the views of Plato as described by Karl Popper.<sup>12</sup> Indeed the similarity is so striking that it is tempting to describe these conservatives as Platonists. It is unclear whether they arrived at this Platonic position by instinct and intuition, or whether they reached it with the help of Western philosophy, which many of them studied at the Imperial University or during their tours overseas.

It was this striking similarity between the views of the Japanese conservatives and the views that Popper ascribes to Plato that prompted Japan's preeminent political scientist Maruyama Masao's endeavor to analyze Japan in terms of an open and closed society. According to Maruyama, there were two openings (*kaikoku*) in Japanese history; the first in the Muromachi period; the second after the arrival of Perry in 1853. Japanese society failed, however, to open due to powerful conservative opposition, which culminated in the Tokugawa policy of isolation (*sakoku*) in the first instance and in the formation of the authoritarian Meiji State in the second.<sup>13</sup> In each case, Maruyama notes, Japanese history could have taken a more liberal path than it actually did. Each time, however, the conservatives prevailed. Analysis of Japanese history in terms of a struggle between the advocates of the open society and its conservative enemies would have been fascinating, but Professor Maruyama did not follow it through. Had he done so, he would have no doubt expanded his list of *kaikoku* to include the period of and immediately after WWI. For, surely, the sweeping transformation of Japan in

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<sup>11</sup> On this point, see Mitani Taichirô, "Taishô demokurashii to Amerika" in *Taishô demokurashii-ron: Yoshino Sakuzô no jidai* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai: 1996), p.67.

<sup>12</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> Maruyama Masao, "Kaikoku," *Maruyama Masao zenshû* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997), vol.8, pp.45-86. The essay was first published in 1959. According to Maruyama, the third opening of Japan took place in 1945. He believed that the outcome of this last opening was still undecided, but it was up to the Japanese people themselves to choose between an open society and a closed one.

the Taishō era matched the dramatic events to which Professor Maruyama refers. As in the Muromachi and the Meiji periods, so in the Taishō period, conservatives prevailed (in the end) over the proponents of open society. The sad results of this conservative triumph are too familiar to repeat here. But the process by which the conservatives achieved this victory has not been told yet. This paper is an attempt to fill this historiographical gap.

Before discussing the conservative reaction, however, it is first necessary to examine the great transformation Japan underwent during the Taishō era. It was, after all, this dramatic change that brought on the conservative reaction discussed below. Without grasping the scale and extent of the change, no proper understanding of this reaction will be possible.

### 3. *The Great Taishō Transformation*

During the years 1914–1926 Japan underwent a remarkable change. This change was the outcome, more or less direct, of the First World War. In the long run the war proved to be a mixed blessing for Japan. More immediately, however, it turned out to be a godsend. Japan avoided the crippling human and material losses which her European allies suffered. Territorially, at a relatively insignificant military cost, Japan took over the German possessions in northern China and the Pacific. She also expanded her political and economic influence elsewhere in China mainly at the expense of the British and the French distracted by their struggle for survival in Europe. By the end of war, Japan's army, taking advantage of the revolutionary turmoil in Russia, even overran a large section of Siberia.<sup>14</sup>

Japan's economic benefits were every bit as impressive as her territorial gains. Japan, with a foreign debt of 100 million at the war's outbreak in 1914, had become, by 1920, a creditor nation with reserves of 2.7 billion yen.<sup>15</sup> Her GNP more than trebled during the war, while real per capita income rose by over 30% from 106 yen to 139 yen in the same period. Japan's current account, in the red to the tune of 107 million yen in 1913, had reached, by 1918, the dizzying heights of 799 million. The tonnage of Japanese shipping more than doubled over that period from 150 million tons to 310 million tons.<sup>16</sup> It would be tedious to multiply such statistics. They all confirm a spectacular growth of Japan's economy during WWI.

The conservatives watched some of the consequences of this prosperity with unease and dismay. The surging economy accelerated a migration from the countryside to the cities, which had already been proceeding at a steady pace between 1890 and 1914. The most striking

<sup>14</sup> The Siberian expedition is treated extensively in English by James Morley, *The Japanese Thrust into Siberia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957). A more recent study (in Japanese) is Hara Teruyuki, *Shiberia shuppei* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Umezu Kazuo, *Narikin jidai: Dai-ichi sekai taishen to Nihon* (Tokyo: Kyōikusha rekishi shinsho, 1978), p.12.

<sup>16</sup> GNP in market price terms grew from 4.7 million to 15 million yen between 1914 and 1919; in real terms it grew over the five year period by 42.3%, i.e. at an impressive annual rate of 8.5%); Japan enjoyed surplus on its current account between 1915–1919. Current account was -107 million yen in 1913, -17 million in 1914, 216 million in 1915, 605 million in 1916, 937 million in 1917, 799 million in 1918, 333 million in 1919, and -111 million in 1920. Kazushi Ohkawa and Miyoshi Shinohara, *Patterns of Japanese Economic Development: a Quantitative Appraisal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), table, p.267; on per capita income, see the statistical tables on pp.1294 and 1298 in Takayanagi Mitsutoshi and Takeuchi Rizō (eds.), *Kadokawa Nihonshi jiten* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1981). On Japan's transformation into a creditor nation see also table on p.31 in Nakamura Masanori, *Shōwa kyōkō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan 1986). On rapid urbanization, see Takeuchi Tamio, *Taishō bunka* (Tokyo: Kōdansha), 1980, pp.47–8.

urbanization took place in Tokyo, where population grew from 2 million (1902) to 3.4 million (1920). The combined effects of urbanization and wartime prosperity produced a sizable middle class (white-collar workers, etc). The new urban classes read more, tended to be better informed, and were certainly more assertive of their political rights than the previous generations. They formed an eager audience for all kinds of new fashions and ideas, including American culture. Indeed, some conservative observers detected with horror what they regarded as Americanization of Japanese social behavior.

While contributing to the growth of a new urban middle class, wartime prosperity also gave rise to another social phenomenon: the appearance of the so-called *narikin*, a group of ostentatious *nouveaux riches*, mostly war profiteers. At the opposite pole to these wartime tycoons, there were a growing number of people whose incomes failed to keep up with rising prices and who suffered therefore increasing hardships. The growing disparity between rich and poor was one of the factors that brought about the well-known Rice Riots of August 1918, in which urban populace all over Japan protested against rising food prices.

Social tensions and other problems resulting from the wartime economic expansion were only exacerbated by the sudden (if inevitable) downturn in the Japanese economy when, after the end of war, the English and French trade and shipping reappeared in East Asia. By 1920, amid a spate of bankruptcies and escalating industrial and rural unrest, Japan's current account reversed to its disastrous prewar level of 111 million yen in the red.

The economic slowdown had serious domestic implications. But, from the conservative perspective, the most alarming changes took place abroad, when, in the last stages of the war, revolutions swept away the imperial governments of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany. The rapid collapse of the German Empire and its replacement by a republic seemed particularly ominous as it was after the Hohenzollern Empire that the Meiji founding fathers modelled their imperial state.

The collapse of the three European authoritarian empires coincided with the emergence of the United States as a great international power. The United States entered war against Germany in 1917. Although the presence of American troops on the Western front decided the outcome of the war, it had no direct impact on Japan. But President Woodrow Wilson's claim that this was the war of democracy against autocracy, as well as his Fourteen Points, had serious consequences for Japan.

Wilson's Fourteen Points inspired fear and loathing among the conservatives. By proposing a League of Nations, a body to settle disputes between nations in peaceful ways, Wilson in effect delegitimized further territorial expansion by an ambitious imperial power like Japan and called into question Japan's most recent territorial gains. By enunciating his principle of national self-determination, he spread mischief throughout Japan's colonial empire. Japanese officials were not amused, especially when in March 1919 Korean protesters appealed to Wilson for help.<sup>17</sup>

Conservative dismay was made more acute by the fact that Japan's own opponents of autocracy, notably Professor Yoshino Sakuzô, took up Wilson's ideas and propagated them within Japan, finding a receptive audience among the nascent white-collar class. It was then that Yoshino wrote his celebrated *minponshugi* essays; it was then that liberal, pro-democracy, anti-absolutist, anti-militarist organizations, such as the Reimeikai (composed of established

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Kano Masanao, *Taishô demokurashii* (Tokyo: Shôgakkan 1976), p.260.

scholars) and the Shinjinkai (a Tokyo University student organization under the patronage of Yoshino), came into being (both in December 1918).

This great transformation with all its ramifications formed a setting for conservative reaction.

#### 4. *Baron Hiranuma Kiichirô*

The Japanese conservatism of those days was so pervasive and so multi-faceted, that it would be impossible to give even a cursory survey of the complete phenomenon in a brief paper. For practical purposes I shall narrow the discussion down to one person who represented in a significant way this kind of conservatism, specifically Hiranuma Kiichirô. By focusing on this one man and his associates, it should be possible to obtain a fairly good understanding of Japanese conservatism during the Taishô period.

Baron Hiranuma Kiichirô had a spectacular career.<sup>18</sup> Born in a minor samurai family in Okayama prefecture in 1867, he graduated from the Law Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University in 1888 and entered the Justice Ministry the following year. Steadily climbing up the bureaucratic hierarchy, he first came to public notice in 1910, when he played a leading role in the successful prosecution of Kôtoku Shûsui (1871–1911) and other anarchists on charges of conspiracy to assassinate the Meiji Emperor.<sup>19</sup>

During his unprecedented nine-year term in the office of procurator general (1912–1921),<sup>20</sup> Hiranuma enhanced his reputation as a vigilant guardian of the national polity against any heterodox ideas. At the same time, he transformed the post of procurator general into the most powerful position in the Justice Ministry and established his own faction within the ministry. In this way he ensured that his influence over the judiciary would continue long after his retirement from the bureaucracy. After serving as President of the Great Court of Cassation,<sup>21</sup> Hiranuma left the bureaucracy to become Minister of Justice in the second Yamamoto Gonnohyôe Cabinet (2 September 1923–27 December 1923). After the fall of that short-lived cabinet, he was appointed to the Privy Council (1924) and made a baron (1926).

<sup>18</sup> Richard Yasko in "Hiranuma Kiichirô and Conservative Politics in Pre-War Japan," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1973, examines Hiranuma's life and career in some detail, but, in my opinion, takes a rather benign view of Hiranuma's conservatism. Incredibly, there is no full-scale biography of Hiranuma in Japanese. A prewar study, Iwasaki Sakae, *Hiranuma Kiichirô den* (Tokyo: Kaiseisha, 1939), is a hagiography of little scholarly value.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the accused in this "Grand Treason Trial" were sentenced to death and executed. Japanese historians have long insisted that the unprecedented harshness of the sentences had a chilling effect on radical thought in Japan for many years, but they have never studied and analyzed Baron Hiranuma's role in the prosecution of Kôtoku Shûsui and his fellow prisoners. Outline of this celebrated case in Matsuo Hiroya, "Taigyaku jiken" in Wagatsuma Sakae et al. (eds.), *Nihon seiji saiban: Meiji, Vol.2*. (Tokyo: Dai-ichi hōki, 1969), pp.544–71. On Hiranuma's role as he remembered it, see Hiranuma Kiichirô kaikoroku hensan-iinkai (ed.) *Hiranuma Kiichirô Kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Gaiyô shobô, 1955), p.57–62.

<sup>20</sup> This record still stands. The runner up was Koyama Matsukichi who served for eight years between 1924–1932.

<sup>21</sup> The highest court of the land. The timing of this "promotion," one month before the assassination of Hara Takashi, gave rise to accusations that Hiranuma was privy to and, together with Suzuki Kisaburô, his successor as procurator general, suppressed the evidence of a successful conspiracy to assassinate Hara. See Chô Fumitsura, *Hara shushô ansatsu no shinsô* (Tokyo: San-ichi Shobô, 1973). Such accusations are sheer speculation unsupported by any hard evidence. As such they are of little historical value.

Hiranuma served in the Privy Council until 1939; first as a plain privy councillor, then as vice-president from 1926 until 1936, and finally as president. Throughout these years, Hiranuma, with support from segments in the bureaucracy and the military, made several attempts to become prime minister. These attempts failed only because of the determined opposition of the liberal oligarch, Prince Saionji Kinmochi. Hiranuma eventually overcame this opposition and was appointed prime minister (5 January 1939). His term in office, however, proved disappointingly short. After the unexpected-- to the Japanese -- signing of the Russo-German Non-Aggression Treaty, Hiranuma commented, "the situation in Europe is bewilderingly complex," and resigned (28 August 1939). Despite this setback, Hiranuma remained in the forefront of Japanese politics until the end of the Pacific War. As a former prime minister he became one of the elder statesmen (*jūshin*), who, after 1937, had the important role of choosing prime ministers. He also served as minister of the interior in the second Konoe Cabinet (July 1940-July 1941) and as a minister without portfolio in the third Konoe Cabinet (July 1941-October 1941). In the last days of the Pacific War (February 1945), Hiranuma resumed the Presidency of the Privy Council and played an important backstage role in the formation of the first postwar cabinet of Prince Higashikuni.

After Japan's defeat, the American occupation authorities were quick to identify Baron Hiranuma as the civilian *eminence grise* of the interwar years. Arrested and convicted as a class A war criminal by the International Military Tribunal of the Far East, he received a life sentence and died in prison in 1952.

Throughout his life Hiranuma consistently showed concern about subversive ideas and took a leading role in their suppression. I have already noted his role in the Grand Treason Trial of 1910-1911. This trial, historians have noted, effectively silenced socialist opposition for many years.<sup>22</sup> But when by 1918, as part of the great transformation I have described, socialists had begun to recover their voice, Hiranuma was concerned. In July 1919 the usually taciturn Hiranuma gave a lecture in which he reflected on the recent situation.<sup>23</sup> His tone was profoundly conservative.<sup>24</sup> There were, he said, "obvious reasons to be gravely concerned about the future of our country," because of the impact of the war. "Inevitably," he noted, "there will be changes as regards material aspects of life, and in ideas." Since it was impossible "to go against this relentless current," it was important "to design countermeasures" [and] "necessary to strengthen the foundation of our state." So what was this national foundation? For Hiranuma it was the "one single family composed of the Emperor and his subjects," "one happy family circle" (*shison danran*) with the emperor as the father, in accordance with the principles of "the Kingly Way" (*ôdô*).<sup>25</sup> "The existence of the imperial family made Japan's state organization (*waga kokka soshiki*) superior to that of any other nation." What kept this magnificent emperor-subject relation in place was, Hiranuma pointed out, Japan's ancient "family system."<sup>26</sup> Since it was impossible to keep foreign ideas out of Japan, every effort

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Matsuo Hiroya, p. 554.

<sup>23</sup> "Hôgaku hakase Hiranuma Kiichirô kun kôen," A lecture delivered on 5 July 1919 at the general meeting of the Nihon-kai, pamphlet, 8 pp., dated 15 July 1919, Hiranuma Kiichirô kankei monjo, Kensei shiryôshitsu, National Diet Library (hereafter Hiranuma monjo), #816/942

<sup>24</sup> In spite of his assertion in the lecture that his ideal was not conservatism, but "a fusion between conservatism and progress." Ibid., p.3.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.5.

should be made to “fuse and harmonize them with our unique Japanese way,” i.e., “they must be consistent with the Imperial Institution; they must not weaken the family system.”<sup>27</sup> The Imperial Institution, the family system, hierarchical society made up the essence of Hiranuma’s conservatism.

### 5. *The Kōkoku Dōshikai*

Let us see how Procurator General Hiranuma went about “fus[ing] and harmon[izing] foreign ideas with our unique Japanese way.”

Terrified by the foundation of the liberal Shinjinkai, he decided to sponsor a rightist student organization at Tokyo Imperial University<sup>28</sup> that would challenge the liberalism of the New Men’s Society. Hiranuma’s dismay over the propagation of liberalism at Tokyo University was, as well, informed by his awareness of Professor Uesugi Shinkichi’s (1879–1929) unsuccessful efforts to combat liberal influences at that university.

As early as 1912, Professor Uesugi, a disciple and intellectual successor of the conservative nationalistic constitutional scholar Hozumi Yatsuka (1860–1912), had launched an attack upon the liberal constitutionalism of his Tokyo University colleague, Professor Minobe Tatsukichi (1873–1948). Whereas Minobe’s “Emperor-Organ Theory” asserted the Emperor’s power was limited by constitutional constraints, Uesugi argued that the Emperor, whose will represented the will of the state, ruled Japan directly and absolutely. The celebrated Uesugi-Minobe debate was closely intertwined with the history of Hiranuma Kiichirō and the Kokuhonsha. Hiranuma would ultimately savor Minobe’s humiliation in 1935, when a notorious rightist attack engineered in large measure by the Kokuhonsha forced Minobe to recant his constitutional theory and to retire from public life.<sup>29</sup> In 1918–1919, however, this outcome hardly seemed obvious when, to all intents and purposes, Minobe’s theory was gaining ascendancy.

Hiranuma’s position on the Uesugi-Minobe debate was consistent from beginning to end. In 1912, at the outset of the controversy, Hiranuma branded any supporter of Minobe’s organ theory “a disloyal and treacherous subject.”<sup>30</sup> He had, as well, been watching with dismay Professor Uesugi’s inept efforts to bridle the growing faculty-student support for party politics within Tokyo University. In 1913, for example, Uesugi founded, with the financial backing of Prince Yamagata Aritomo, the Tōka Gakkai to facilitate “the destruction of political parties.”<sup>31</sup> Although the Tōka Gakkai boasted an impressive membership of senior bureaucrats

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp.7–8.

<sup>28</sup> For brevity’s sake, I shall refer to “Tokyo University,” when I should, strictly speaking, say “Tokyo Imperial University”.

<sup>29</sup> For Minobe’s biography and an outline of “the Emperor as an Organ Theory” (*Kikansetsu*) debate, see Frank O. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi, Interpreter of Constitutionalism in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965). In Japanese, see brilliant essays by Nagao Ryūichi, “Uesugi Shinkichi den” and “Minobe Tatsukichi no hō tetsugaku,” *Nihon kenpō shisōshi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha gakujutsu bunko 1996), pp.60–141 and pp.142–194 respectively; Ida Terutoshi, *Uesugi Shinkichi: tennōsei kokka no benshō* (Tokyo: Sanrei shobō 1989).

<sup>30</sup> *Hiranuma Kiichirō kaikoroku*, p.34.

<sup>31</sup> Shakai mondai shiryō kenkyūkai (ed.), *Iwayuru “tennō kikansetsu” o keiki to suru kokutai meichō undō* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunkasha, 1975), p.51. See also Kōan chōsachō (ed.) *Senzen ni okeru uyoku dantai no jōkyō* (Tokyo: Kōan chōsachō, 1964), vol.2, p.263; hereafter referred to as *Uyoku dantai no jōkyō*. For Yamagata’s support, see Nezu Masashi, *Nihon gendaishi*, 7 vols., (Tokyo: San’ichi shobō, 1966–70), vol.1, p.96.

and academics,<sup>32</sup> it proved to be a short-lived organization, due largely to its blatant anti-party platform and its close connections to the bureaucratic cliques associated with Prince Yamagata. The press derided the Tōka Gakkai as “the running dogs” of Yamagata and the bureaucracy.<sup>33</sup> These public sneers were accompanied by harassment from Seiyūkai partisans. At least on one occasion, the then Interior Minister, Hara Takashi, who resented Uesugi’s anti-party orientation, instructed the police to look the other way as Seiyūkai thugs assaulted Professor Uesugi in his home in an attempt to persuade him to abandon his anti-party views. The Agency report attributed the rapid disintegration of the Tōka Gakkai to this public ridicule and intimidation.<sup>34</sup> Undeterred by this failure, Professor Uesugi followed the ill-fated Tōka Gakkai with another ephemeral group, the Mokuyōkai. This study group, composed of a handful of Tokyo Imperial University students, had no discernible impact on campus affairs.

By 1918, Uesugi’s campaign against liberalism had more or less collapsed. Given Uesugi’s dismal performance, Hiranuma evidently concluded in the fall of 1918 that he would have to play a more active role in mobilizing rightist students at Tokyo University. Tokyo University was important because it provided education for the nation’s bureaucratic elite. If that elite were corrupted, Japan’s national foundation could no longer be protected. Since, as a bureaucrat, Hiranuma could not overtly engage in political activities, he delegated the task of setting up an organization to the lawyer Takeuchi Kakuji.<sup>35</sup> The latter in turn coopted Professor Uesugi Shinkichi. With Hiranuma behind the scenes, Takeuchi and Uesugi, in February 1919, founded a new student organization: the Kōkoku Dōshikai.

The Kōkoku Dōshikai, however, was much more than a student organization. Its dazzling array of academic patrons matched the prestige and reputation of the academic supporters of the Shinjinkai. In addition to the already mentioned Uesugi Shinkichi, senior faculty included Kakehi Katsuhiko (1872–1961, Tokyo, law), Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944, Tokyo, philosophy), Kuroita Katsumi (1874–1946, Tokyo, history), Kawazu Sen (1875–1943, Tokyo, economics), Kihira Tadayoshi (1874–1949, Gakushūin, philosophy), Sugimori Kōjirō (1881–1968, Waseda, philosophy) and Endō Ryūkichi (1874–1946, Waseda, literature). Junior faculty patrons included Imai Tokirō (1889–1941, Tokyo, history) and Fukasaku Yasubumi (1874–1962, Tokyo, philosophy). Other patrons included prominent intellectuals without academic affiliation: the Tokyo University-educated man of letters, Mitsui Kōshi (1883–1953) and Dr. Kanokogi Kazunobu (1884–1949, after 1925 professor of philosophy at Kyūshū Imperial University).

These distinguished men not only endowed the Kōkoku Dōshikai with social prestige; they often personally recruited new students to the organization. For example, in 1919 Professors Uesugi Shinkichi, Sugimori Kōjirō and Endō Ryūkichi toured Japan in search of prospective new members.<sup>36</sup> On another occasion, the philosopher Professor Kihira went recruiting at the Eighth Higher School in Nagoya. There he invited the fourth-year student

<sup>32</sup> See “Tōka Gakkai kiji,” *Sekai*, No.123 (10 October 1913), p.80, and No.125 (10 December 1913), pp.73–7.

<sup>33</sup> See *Uyoku dantai no jōkyō*, vol.2., p.263.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Takeuchi was a graduate of the Military Academy with extensive military connections, which he put to full advantage in the Kokuhonsha; the close relationship between him and Hiranuma continued until the end of the Pacific War. For a detailed account of the life of Takeuchi, one-time chairman of the 2nd Tokyo Attorneys’ Association and President of Hōsei University, see Takeuchi Kakuji sensei denki kankōkai (ed.), *Takeuchi Kakuji den* (Tokyo: Takeuchi Kakuji sensei denki kankōkai, 1960).

<sup>36</sup> Hyō Shitō (pseudonym), “Teikoku daigaku no shisō dantai,” *Kokuhon* (January 1921), p.162.

Nakatani Takeyo (1898–1990) to join the Kôkoku Dôshikai, marking the beginning of Nakatani's life-long career as a right wing activist.<sup>37</sup> Such faculty recruitment proved highly effective. By the end of the summer of 1919, that is, within five months from its inception, the Kôkoku Dôshikai had 300 student members.

Among them were also students who would subsequently gain fame as mainstream conservative politicians or notoriety as right wing activists. The former category included Kishi Nobusuke (1896–1988), Nanjô Tokuo, (1895–1974),<sup>38</sup> the prominent Liberal Democratic Party dietman Shiohara Tokisaburô (1895–1964) and Morishima Morito (1896–1975), a leading diplomat in the 1930s who after the war represented the Socialist Party in the Japanese Diet.<sup>39</sup> In the latter category were, for example, Minoda Muneki (1894–1946), who would posthumously earn the sobriquet of “the Japanese McCarthy” for his fanatic attacks on Japanese liberals<sup>40</sup> and Amano Tatsuo (1892–1974) who was involved in a number of political conspiracies in the 1930s.

If academic patronage was one factor which attracted new members to the organization, another was the association's clearly articulated call for a radical rejuvenation of Japan's domestic and foreign policies based upon the central role of the Imperial family in Japanese society. To this end, the Kôkoku Dôshikai, in December 1919, set out to publish the monthly journal *Senshi Nihon* (Warrior Japan), intended as a statist counterpart to the Shinjinkai's journal *Demokurashii*.

The first issue of *Senshi Nihon* (to appear in February 1920) carried contributions by a diverse group of authors. They included established stars of the academic world (e.g., Japan's foremost historian Professor Kuroita Katsumi, 1874–1946, the philosopher Kihira Tadayoshi, the economist Takahashi Seiichirô, 1884–1982), members of the right wing Yûzonsha (Ôkawa Shûmei, 1886–1957, and Kanokogi Kazunobu), journalists (e.g., Itô Masanori, 1889–1962), the feminist-turned-nationalist Kamichika Ichiko (1888–1981, just out of prison for stabbing her former lover, the anarchist Ôsugi Sakae), and a number of students (e.g., Minoda, Tachibana, Ôta Kôzô). All would have no doubt agreed with Itô Masanori (later to become the doyen of Japanese journalism specializing in military affairs), just back from Paris, that the Peace Conference turned Japan into a second rate power, “another Belgium.” They would also agree with his assertion that foreign policy was too important to leave to “elderly diplomats” and “party politicians,” who accepted the Versailles treaty and the League of Nations. Far from ensuring permanent peace, Itô warned, Wilson's League of Nations would prevent Japan from becoming “the leader of the East.”<sup>41</sup> While Itô condemned the foreign policy ramifications of Wilsonianism, Professor Kihira concentrated on its domestic implications. He rejected the hypocritical universalism of Wilson's thought in favor of an authentic Japanese value system, noting that an individual could realize himself only as a member of the state.

<sup>37</sup> Nakatani Takeyo, *Shôwa dôranki no kaisô* (Tokyo: Tairyûsha, 1989), vol.1, p.5. Nakatani subsequently contributed copiously to *Kokuhon*.

<sup>38</sup> Nanjô was the construction minister in the Kishi cabinet and agriculture minister in the Ikeda cabinet.

<sup>39</sup> Shimonaka Yasaburô den kankôkai (ed.), *Shimonaka Yasaburô jiten* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1965), p.1. For a reference to Shiohara, see Nakatani, vol.1, p.5.

<sup>40</sup> For Minoda's career and views and (comparisons to Senator McCarthy), see Hosokawa Takamoto, “‘Nihon Makkashi-’ shimatsuki,” *Bungei shunjû* (June 1964), pp.14–29.

<sup>41</sup> Itô Masanori, “Aa, waga Nihon no kokusainan (dokuritsu gaikô no zento nashi),” *Senshi Nihon*, vol.1 No.1, (February 1920) pp.12–22. References to “the leader of the East” on p.14 and 17, to “turning Japan into a Belgium” on p.22; to the elderly diplomats and party politicians on p.19.

Kihira's ideal state had no place for cosmopolitan intellectuals who espoused foreign ideas.<sup>42</sup>

*Senshi Nihon* rejected Wilsonianism and the new world order formed by the Paris Peace Conference; it lambasted domestic advocates of liberalism, pacifism and socialism (Yoshino Sakuzō, Yosano Akiko, Kawakami Hajime, Sakai Toshihiko, etc.), it castigated Japan's fledgling trade unions,<sup>43</sup> it condemned the weakness of Japan's effete diplomats and the incompetence of party politicians. Such words and arguments subsequently would become familiar tunes in the Kokuhonsha's conservative repertoire. Yet some articles contained a few radical tones that could not have pleased Hiranuma. Kanokogi Kazunobu, for example, praised the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>44</sup> The magazine's overall emphasis on youth and rejuvenation, its emphasis on *elan vital* bore close similarity to the European radical thought of that time (and was probably influenced by it).<sup>45</sup> It is impossible to say to what extent Hiranuma endorsed such views, but it is certain that they contributed to his reputation as a leader of the reformist right.

## 6. The Morito Incident and the Dissolution of the Kōkoku Dōshikai

By December 1919 it seemed that the association had largely succeeded in achieving its stated objectives. It had acquired a large membership and enjoyed considerable academic patronage. It had moreover a solid financial foundation thanks to Hiranuma's support. There was every reason to expect that the forthcoming inaugural issue of *Senshi Nihon* (11 February 1920) would introduce the Kōkoku Dōshikai's statist views to a wider public. Such hopes, however, were dashed when the unintended consequences of the Morito case politicized the Tokyo University student body in a manner that thoroughly discredited the Kōkoku Dōshikai. As the Morito incident has been studied at length, I will give a brief resume of this incident only in as much as it relates to the activities of Hiranuma Kiichirō and the Kōkoku Dōshikai.<sup>46</sup>

Morito Tatsuo was a member of the Reimeikai, a patron of the New Men Society, and a young assistant professor at the newly established Economics Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>47</sup> His scholarly but sympathetic introduction to Kropotkin's anarchism entitled "A Study of Kropotkin's Social Thought" (*Kuropotokin no shakai shisō no kenkyū*) appeared in the first issue of the Faculty's new academic journal *Keizaigaku kenkyū*, which went on sale on

<sup>42</sup> Kihira Tadayoshi, "Kojin to kokka," *Senshi Nihon*, pp.22-33. For example, "Those who do not know that the justice and humanity advocated by the United States are American are not intellectuals, but fools." (p.28); "A man who loses his state is like a dog without a master" (p.32).

<sup>43</sup> In an editorial, "Senshi Nihon" K.M. (most probably Minoda) attacked liberals, etc. on pp.3-4; S.T. (most probably Tachibana Sadamu) dismissed the League as useless, denounced "foreign-worship thought" and took to task trade unions, pp.7-8. The writer Iwano Hōmei (1873-1920) singled out Kagawa Toyohiko, Yoshino Sakuzō, Kuwaki Gen'yoku, Anesaki Masaharu, Fukuda Tokuzō, Ukita Kazutami, Kawakami Hajime, and Nitobe Inazō, as uncritically regurgitating foreign ideas. "Gendai ni taisuru Nihonshugi sōgōkan," *Senshi Nihon*, p.64.

<sup>44</sup> Kanokogi Kazunobu, "Sekaiteki Nihonshugi," *Senshi Nihon*, p.109.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, K.Y., "Junshin no Chikara," *Senshi Nihon*, p.1.

<sup>46</sup> For an outline of this incident Miyachi Masato, "Morito Tatsuo jiken," in Wagatsuma Sakae et al. (eds.), *Nihon seiji saiban: Taishō* (Tokyo: Dai-ichi hōki, 1969), pp.228-272. See also Ōuchi Hyōe et al., *Takano Iwasaburō den* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1968). *Kokumin shinbun*, 20 January 1920, gives, from a conservative perspective, a contemporary version of the incident, unsympathetic to Morito. In English, see Byron Marshall's *Academic Freedom and the Japanese Imperial University, 1868-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp.124-28.

<sup>47</sup> In April 1919; until March 1919 it had been a part of the Law Faculty.

24 December 1919.

At this time, Interior Ministry officials obviously had not considered the article dangerous to the general public. Vice-Minister Ôhashi retrospectively attributed this misreading to a preoccupation with the propaganda of anarchists and communists. Censors, he added, had just not paid attention to the scholarly writings of a professor who "did not aim at propagating his ideas widely." Or as Interior Minister Tokonami Takejirô explained in the Diet, Morito "was a university assistant professor and readership was limited..."<sup>48</sup>

In contrast to the censors and the politicians in charge of the Interior Ministry, Hiranuma Kiichirô immediately perceived Morito's essay as a golden opportunity "to define the borderline of the thought problem"<sup>49</sup> and to enhance the Justice Ministry's role in enforcing "thought unity" within state universities. Historians have long suspected Hiranuma's behind-the-scenes involvement in the affair. The evidence in Hiranuma Papers proves this beyond any doubt. On 27 December, the procurator general gave two Kôkoku Dôshikai activists, Amano Tatsuo and Tachibana Sadamu, a large sum of money (1000 yen) which, the association's accounts indicate, were used to stage "a press campaign in connection with the Morito case."<sup>50</sup> While secretly stirring students to action, Hiranuma began preparations to prosecute Morito Tatsuo, as well as of the editor of the journal, Assistant Professor Ôuchi Hyôe. The two were to be charged with the violation of the Newspaper Law. The university authorities also took action. On 10 January President of Tokyo University Yamakawa Kenjirô convened an extraordinary meeting of the Economics Faculty Council which immediately suspended Morito and Ôuchi, ostensibly because of their refusal to apologize for their violation of censorship regulations.

Tokyo University officials and the Economics Faculty hoped these actions would end the University's formal involvement in the Morito Incident. But, at this juncture, Amano Tatsuo, Tachibana Sadamu, and Minoda Muneki of the Kôkoku Dôshikai deliberately inflamed the situation. These Kôkoku Dôshikai activists went directly to the Education Ministry. Presenting themselves as a delegation of Tokyo University students, they were granted ready access to Vice-Minister Minami Hiroshi, who apparently sympathized with their demands for more forceful measures against Morito. The following day, 11 January, the Kôkoku Dôshikai delegation called upon Hiranuma, who confessed that "the decision had already been made to prosecute Morito."<sup>51</sup>

By this time, Morito's indictment and trial were assured. Morito and Ôuchi were put on trial and, after an appeal, found guilty (on 22 October 1920) of disturbing the Constitution under Article 42 of the Newspaper Act. Morito was sent to jail for three months, and Ôuchi received a suspended one-month prison sentence. Both were fined.<sup>52</sup> Morito's banishment from Tokyo University proved permanent. Ôuchi, however, was later reinstated.

The off-campus activities of the Kôkoku Dôshikai had no real influence on the legal process; but, by going directly to the Education and Justice ministries, these student activists had attracted a great deal of press attention, which, to their delight, transformed the Morito

<sup>48</sup> Watanabe Osamu, "1920 nendai ni okeru tennôsei kokka no chianhō saihensei o megutte: chian ijihō seiritsu shiron," in *Shakai kagaku kenkyū*, vol.27, No.5 and 6 (March 1976), pp.153-237. The above quote is on p.185.

<sup>49</sup> Hiranuma quoted in Tanaka Sôgorô, *Yoshino Sakuzô* (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1958) p.256.

<sup>50</sup> Hiranuma monjo, #117/2 and #4.

<sup>51</sup> *Takeuchi Kakuji den*, p.67. Hyô Shitô in *Kokuho* (January 1921), refers to the incident, but, perhaps not surprisingly, omits to mention the students' visit to the Justice Ministry.

<sup>52</sup> After the prosecution's appeal. The court of first instance had sentenced Morito to two months in prison and fined Ôuchi 20 yen.

incident into a public affair. What they did not expect was that the newspaper articles about their behavior would enrage most Tokyo University students, who called for an apology and the disbanding of the association.<sup>53</sup>

The Morito Incident involved an array of issues and perspectives. To Professors Morito and Ôuchi, the matter was a straightforward case of academic freedom. By contrast, President Yamakawa, university officials, the Economics Faculty and most students preferred to regard the behavior of Morito and Ôuchi as a serious blunder, which had jeopardized university autonomy. The Education and the Interior ministries viewed the affair as an embarrassing revelation of their lack of vigilance in enforcing the laws of the Japanese Empire. To Procurator General Hiranuma (and Prime Minister Hara Takashi),<sup>54</sup> Morito's essay offered a fine opportunity to deal a decisive blow to liberal professors in academia. Almost everyone at the beginning of the Morito Affair, however, had seriously underestimated the influence and reaction of the popular press to the arrest and trial of Morito and Ôuchi.

Pro-Morito newspapers and periodicals defended his academic freedom and denounced the intensifying governmental censorship. In effect, they linked academic and press freedom. Some even initiated a direct confrontation over the Press Law and the Kropotkin article. In January 1920, the *Tôyô keizai shinpô* published Ishibashi Tanzan's analysis of Kropotkin's thought which was, at the least, as sympathetic to anarchism as Morito's had been.<sup>55</sup> In March 1920, the influential *Kaizô* published a series of articles on anarchism. Both of these discussions of Kropotkin and anarchism literally challenged the Justice Ministry and elevated the Morito Incident to a cause celebre on behalf of freedom of the press.

Prior to this press outcry, Tokyo University authorities had sought to put as much distance as possible between the University and Professors Morito and Ôuchi. In so doing, they upheld the sacrosanct principle of university autonomy, patterned upon that of German universities. Under this principle, university professors were ostensibly free from direct governmental interference; and individual faculty councils made up of full professors had the "autonomous" power to appoint or dismiss professors. This academic autonomy, however, depended entirely on the willingness of the faculty to preclude any legal pretext for direct governmental interference. This self-policing dimension of university autonomy may have averted any blatant governmental interference but, as the dismissal of Morito and Ôuchi demonstrated, it also produced an academic unwillingness to defend any professor charged with official violations by press censors. This defense of university autonomy severely restricted the scope of academic freedom, as Morito and Ôuchi discovered.

The Economics Faculty of Tokyo University readily agreed that Morito and Ôuchi had jeopardized university autonomy by publishing the article on Kropotkin. Although Professor Yoshino Sakuzô, Tokyo University's preeminent liberal, would later step forward to defend Morito in court, even he had, at the outset, found Morito's essay "full of danger" and fully supported the Faculty Council's decision to suspend Morito and Ôuchi.<sup>56</sup> Tokyo University's foremost constitutional authority, Professor Minobe Tatsukichi, had more consistently voiced legalistic reservations about the propriety of prosecuting Morito under the Newspaper Act and

<sup>53</sup> Hyô Shitô, p.162.

<sup>54</sup> Hara Keiichirô (ed.), *Hara Takashi nikki* (Tokyo: Fukumura shuppan, 1981), vol.5, p.201, 9 January 1920; pp.201-202, 12 January 1920.

<sup>55</sup> Sharon Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 197.

<sup>56</sup> Interview, *Yomiuri Shinbun*, 14 January 1920, as quoted in Miyachi, p.238.

condemned "the unprecedented abuse of the judicial prerogative (*shihôken*)... [which is] intended to unify national thought."<sup>57</sup> Minobe, however, recognized no violation of academic freedom in this instance because legally, he reasoned, the faculty council had dismissed the young professors "without external pressure."<sup>58</sup> Other, far less liberally inclined professors essentially agreed with the central contention of Professor Abe Jirô, that, in as much as Tokyo University had been established by the State, it was only "natural to expel a scholar who advocates the destruction (*vernichten*) of the State."<sup>59</sup>

The Morito Incident demonstrated the real limits to academic freedom within the context of university autonomy. Unfortunately, postwar Japanese historians have so far shunned any detailed study of the Morito Incident in terms of university autonomy and academic freedom. They have, as well, glossed over Hiranuma's active involvement in the affair. Clearly, Hiranuma did not conduct his official duties in a disinterested way. Hiranuma's conspiratorial involvement with the Kôkoku Dôshikai had compromised his official position as procurator general. Even within the Japanese context of university autonomy, President Yamakawa Kenjirô's role in the Incident is also open to question. Yamakawa was closely associated with Hiranuma and would subsequently be a preeminent member of Hiranuma's Kokuhonsha. His copious contributions to the monthly *Kokuhon* showed a marked hostility toward liberalism,<sup>60</sup> which retrospectively cast a shadow over his eagerness to dispose of the Morito Incident in the quickest possible manner.

Hiranuma may have savored his triumph in the courtroom, but he could not have been satisfied with the turn the Morito affair had taken on campus. The procurator general's covert financing of the Kôkoku Dôshikai's campaign against Morito proved to be a major blunder. Moreover, student and faculty anger over the open involvement of the Kôkoku Dôshikai in the incident was directed not only against Amano Tatsuo, Tachibana Sadamu, Minoda Muneki, and other Kôkoku Dôshikai agitators, but also against the entire organization. In a vain attempt to defuse this hostility, the Kôkoku Dôshikai expelled Amano, Tachibana and several other of its most intransigent students. But it was too late. By this time, wholesale student resignations had brought about the Kôkoku Dôshikai's rapid disintegration. All the hopes, which had been invested in the organization and *Senshi Nihon*, had been extinguished as well.<sup>61</sup>

The affair did not, however, extinguish rightist influences at Tokyo University. The formal demise of the Kôkoku Dôshikai prompted some former members to establish the Hi-no-kai (The Sun Society) under the joint patronage of the philosopher Kanokogi Kazunobu and the pan-Asianist Ôkawa Shûmei. Others would subsequently form the Shichishôkai (Seven Lives' Society) under the auspices of Professor Uesugi Shinkichi.<sup>62</sup> Several former students would, in later years, become regular contributors to the official organ of the Kokuhonsha, the monthly *Kokuhon*.

<sup>57</sup> See Minobe Tatsukichi, "Morito Ôuchi ryôkun no mondai ni tsuite", *Taiyô* (March 1920), pp.73-76. The above quote is on p.76.

<sup>58</sup> quoted by Miyachi, p.238.

<sup>59</sup> quoted in Funayama Shin'ichi, *Taishô tetsugakushi kenkyû* (Tokyo: Hôritsu Bunkasha, 1965), p.73.

<sup>60</sup> For Yamakawa's life, see Hanami Sakumi (ed.), *Danshaku Yamakawa Kenjirô sensei den* (Tokyo: Ko Danshaku Yamakawa Sensei Kinenkai, 1939). His activities on behalf of the Kokuhonsha are described on p.395.

<sup>61</sup> Hyô Shitô, pp.166-7. Also *Asahi shinbun*, 20 January 1920.

<sup>62</sup> The latter association was officially formed in March 1925. Ogawa Heikichi and Tokonami came to give lectures. Law Faculty students predominated in the society. Nakatani Takeyo, vol.2., pp.15-22. See also Nezu, *Nihon gendaishi*, vol.5, p.70.

Although the Tokyo press, by and large, had sympathized with Morito, there were notable exceptions. Among these were the original patrons of the *Kôkoku Dôshikai*. Since the prosecution and trial of the anarchist Kôtoku Shûsui, a self-censoring press had steered clear of any discussion of anarchism. In this historical context, criticism of Morito as an advocate and propagator of a morally indefensible anti-state political philosophy is understandable. But judging by the diatribes of the patrons of the *Kôkoku Dôshikai*, Morito's detractors were less concerned with condemning anarchism than with attacking liberal ideas and the two organizations with which Morito was associated, namely, the *Reimeikai* and the *Shinjinkai*.

The literary critic and expert on Shinran, Inoue Ukon, for example, directly linked Professor Morito's discussion of Kropotkin's anarchism to the "bizarre ideas" of the *Shinjinkai* and the "sphinx-like thought" of the *Reimeikai*. As far as Inoue was concerned, Morito was just one representative of the growing academic reluctance to affirm the superiority of Japanese thought over foreign ideas. In this respect, he considered Dr. Yoshino Sakuzô, the foremost academic adviser to the *Shinjinkai*, far more dangerous than Morito because Yoshino did not recognize that "service to the State is always morally good." Inoue no less indignantly assailed another young academic, Professor Kawakami Hajime of Kyôto University. Although Kawakami would soon become Japan's leading Marxist, at this time he, too, was associated with the pernicious influence of American liberalism. Inoue went so far as to suggest that Kawakami really should leave Japan and "become a naturalized citizen of the materially rich America because we, the Japanese, cannot permit in our midst [his] materialistic Jewish thought."<sup>63</sup>

Takeuchi Kakuji, writing in a semi-official *Hôritsu shinbun*, agreed with the thrust of Inoue's contention that the greatest threat to the Japanese state and society came more from Wilsonianism than from anarchism. In the face of this threat, Takeuchi deplored the impotence and lack of character of Japanese academics as epitomized by Morito. Instead of such weaklings, Japan needed brave and strong scholars like the "courageous poetic scholar D'Annunzio" and "those German scholars, who ducked bullets on the battlefield" to advance Germany's cause in the recent war.<sup>64</sup>

The evil ramifications of the Morito Incident, Takeuchi noted, went far beyond questions of academic duty and legal obligations. Regarding the affair as symptomatic of the broader subversive influence of postwar Anglo-American ideas in Japan, he claimed that the League of Nations was designed to preserve the Anglo-American domination of the world<sup>65</sup> and impede Japan's social progress and development.<sup>66</sup>

Takeuchi deplored the ways in which the International Labor Organization legitimated unions and strikes in Japan. The Anglo-Saxon powers, he concluded, had put the labor question on the agenda at the Paris Peace Conference for two reasons; first, they aimed to reduce Japan's economic competitiveness by increasing the wages of Japanese workers; and secondly, they wanted to halt Japanese immigration to the United States, which had been caused by wages higher in America than in Japan. While Takeuchi acknowledged class conflict in Europe, he denied the existence of such conflict in Japan, where workers and capitalists were

<sup>63</sup> Inoue Ukon, "Morito mondai to daigaku kaizôkan," *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin*, No. 776 (11 February 1920), p.58.

<sup>64</sup> Takeuchi Kakuji, "Morito mondai no kenkyû," *Hôritsu shinbun*, No.1663 (8 March 1920), p.8.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, No.1666 (15 March 1920), pp.6-7.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, No.1665 (13 March 1920), p.8.

“part of the same organism” and “relied on each other.” Japan’s so-called labor question, he charged, had been fabricated by agitators like Morito who acted as agents of “Wilson and Lloyd George.”<sup>67</sup>

The Morito Incident confirmed the obvious vitality of the new liberalism within Japan, not its demise at the hands of its critics. The disintegration of the Kōkoku Dōshikai in the face of the Morito affair, however, only strengthened Procurator General Hiranuma’s determination to stem the tide of liberal and democratic ideas. No sooner had the outcry over the Morito Incident quieted down than Hiranuma, together with his amanuensis Takeuchi Kakuji, began laying plans for a new, more durable anti-liberal organization that would focus on broad social concerns from a purportedly non-partisan basis. He set out to form the National Foundation Society (Kokuhonsha), which would become, thanks to his efforts, the most prestigious and influential rightist organization in the Japan of the interwar years.

### 7. The Foundation of the Kokuhonsha

The collapse of the Kōkoku Dōshikai necessitated a replacement by more effective organizations. To this end, Hiranuma sponsored in 1920 two influential associations, one public (the National Foundation Society, or the Kokuhonsha) and the other secret (the Shin’yūkai). The secret nature of the Shin’yūkai was no doubt dictated by the legal restrictions, which strictly forbade bureaucrats and military personnel to engage in political activities. But the name of the organization itself, “Shin’yūkai,” revealed its political intentions, which in the best Japanese reformist tradition looked forward to the restoration of true imperial virtue as it had existed in mythical times. Deriving its name from the Chinese sexagenary cycle, the Shin’yūkai designated the *shin’yū* year 1921 as the opportune moment to initiate a renewal of the realm, because it was in the *shin’yū* year, 660 BC, that the Emperor Jinmu had founded the Japanese Empire.<sup>68</sup>

The veil that surrounds the network of personal ties and the machinations of the Shin’yūkai has yet to be lifted by Japanese historians. Still, there is no disputing the importance of its members or their commitment to radical reforms in defense of the Imperial Meiji State. They constituted part of the inner elite which Professor Maruyama Masao and other Japanese historians hold responsible for “fascism from above” — i.e., a fascist movement within the highest echelons of state power, in the government, bureaucracy and the armed forces.<sup>69</sup> The initial 58 members of the Shin’yūkai, for example, included five future prime ministers (Hirota Kōki, Baron Hiranuma Kiichirō, Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa, General Tōjō Hideki, and General Koiso Kuniaki) and a dazzling array of generals and admirals who held numerous cabinet positions during the 1920s and 1930s (e.g., Generals Ugaki Kazushige, Araki Sadao, Ninomiya Harushige; Admirals Ōsumi Mineo, Toyoda Teijirō, Nomura Kichisaburō).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., No.1666 (15 March 1920), p.5.

<sup>68</sup> On the Emperor Jinmu and the *shin’yū* year see, for example, Gari Ledyard, “Gallop with the Horseriders: Looking for the Founders of Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol.1, No.2 (Spring 1975), pp.217–54.

<sup>69</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics* (Ivan Morris, ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp.25–83.

<sup>70</sup> Initial members are listed in *Takeuchi Kakuji-den*, pp.70–71; see also Itō Takashi, *Shōwa shoki seijishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1969), p.356.

Its field-grade ranks included several prominent future generals and admirals (e.g., Generals: Obata Toshishirô, Nagata Tetsuzan, Furusho Motoo; Admirals: Katô Kanji, Hyakutake Gengo, and Kobayashi Seizô). Shin'yûkai bureaucrats provided 10 future cabinet ministers — i.e., three justice ministers (Ohara Naoshi, Shiono Suehiko, Iwamura Michiyo) three interior ministers (Gotô Fumio, Tanabe Harumichi,<sup>71</sup> Horikiri Zenjirô<sup>72</sup>), and one finance (Kawada Isao), foreign (Tôgô Shigenori) and agriculture minister (Yamazaki Tatsunosuke). Although there were several lawyers and businessmen in the Shin'yûkai, the private sector was relatively under-represented. The only businessman in the organization who subsequently reached ministerial rank was a prominent member of the Mitsui *zaibatsu*, Ikeda Seihin (1867–1950), who served as finance minister in the first Konoe cabinet (1937–1939).<sup>73</sup>

At the outset, General Araki recalled years later, the Shin'yûkai's political concerns had focused on the problem of "how to deal with party politics" that had been remiss in domestic affairs and "negligent in foreign relations." Although Araki remembered "the emergence of the communist party" as another major subject of conversation,<sup>74</sup> this retrospective contention projected the fear of the communist threat of the late 1920s onto the earlier years. In actuality, the Japanese Communist Party did not even exist in 1920–1921 and the Kokuhonsha's official manifesto of 1921, for compelling reasons, designated communism and anarchism as secondary to the more significant ideological influence of liberal *minponshugi*.<sup>75</sup>

Araki not only overstated the concern over communism. He also failed to recall the Shin'yûkai's political agenda. Takeuchi Kakuji later acknowledged that the organization had sought to "achieve Baron Hiranuma's greatness."<sup>76</sup> Its members associated his cause with theirs. While it is difficult to judge to what degree their subsequent careers benefited from their membership of the Shin'yûkai, its secretive personal networks functioned throughout the 1920s and 1930s and its members continued to enjoy considerable influence.<sup>77</sup>

The Shin'yûkai members naturally shared conservative hostility toward Taishô liberalism and party politics. But in light of the rice riots of 1918 and the widespread condemnation of the transcendental Terauchi cabinet, Hiranuma and his associates had resigned themselves to accept the Hara cabinet as a lesser possible evil under the circumstances. Hara, for his part, had offered Hiranuma the post of justice minister, which the procurator general declined perhaps less due to his fundamental abhorrence of party cabinets than to his reluctance to leave his secure senior bureaucratic position for what he anticipated would be a short-lived administration.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, Hiranuma and Hara enjoyed a good working relationship

<sup>71</sup> Tanabe Michiharu also served as posts minister (in the Hiranuma cabinet).

<sup>72</sup> Horikiri Zenjirô (1884–1979) educated at the Law Faculty of Tokyo University, entered the Interior Ministry, City Planning Bureau Director, Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture; retired in 1929; subsequently Mayor of Tokyo, member of the House of Peers, Interior Minister (Oct. 1945–Jan. 1946).

<sup>73</sup> Ikeda Seihin (Shigeaki), educated Harvard, had a brilliant career in business as director of the Mitsui *zaibatsu*. He served a short term as President of the Bank of Japan (February–July 1937); in the first Konoe cabinet, Ikeda headed the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Trade; subsequently he pursued his political career as an advisor to the cabinet and a privy councillor (October 1941–December 1945).

<sup>74</sup> Araki Sadao quoted in Itô, *Shôwa shoki*, p.356.

<sup>75</sup> For the Kokuhonsha manifesto, see "Kokkashugi no kôchô," *Kokuhon* (January 1921), p.1. The Communist Party of Japan was founded on 15 July 1922; Imai Seiichi, *Taishô demokurashii* (Tokyo: Chûô kôronsha, 1974), p.365.

<sup>76</sup> *Takeuchi Kakuji-den*, p.71.

<sup>77</sup> See the Shinyûkai's membership list dated December 1931, Iwamura Michiyo kankei monjo, Kensei shiryôshitsu, National Diet Library, #34.

<sup>78</sup> See "Hiranuma Kiichirô," *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* (20 September 1921), p.128.

primarily because they both profoundly disliked liberalism, universal suffrage, and the middle class endorsement of Wilsonian principles.<sup>79</sup>

Hara symbolized, nonetheless, the growing ascendancy of party politics that had dictated the reactive formation of the Kokuhonsha in the autumn of 1920. Unlike the secretive Shin'yūkai, the Kokuhonsha publicly presented itself as an apolitical cultural organization committed to the reaffirmation of Japan's basic ideals and values. Since this first Kokuhonsha did not include prominent bureaucrats or military officers (they were in the Shin'yūkai), its membership was dominated by well-known conservative academics and intellectuals, many of whom had participated in the now defunct Kōkoku Dōshikai, dominated its membership. They included Professors Inoue Tetsujirō, Kakehi Katsuhiko, Kihira Tadayoshi, Hiranuma Yoshirō, Fukasaku Yasubumi, Imai Tokirō, the poet Mitsui Kōshi, and "Japan's McCarthy" Minoda Muneki. They were joined by Dr. Yamakawa Kenjirō (the recently retired President of Tokyo Imperial University and now a privy councillor), and Dr. Ueda Mannen (1867–1937, at that time the Dean of the Faculty of Letters at Tokyo Imperial University).

Equally formidable representatives of the legal profession included Takeuchi Kakuji, Hara Yoshimichi (1867–1944, future president of the Privy Council), former Kōkoku Dōshikai member Ōta Kōzō (the education minister in the 1945 Suzuki Kantarō cabinet and postwar president of Asia University), as well as Uzawa Fusaaki (1872–1955) and Hanai Takuzō (1868–1931).<sup>80</sup> Former Kōkoku Dōshikai student activists, Mochizuki Shigeru, Tachibana Sadamu, and Amano Tatsuo staffed the administrative office of the Society: Mochizuki also served as the official editor of the organization's official publication, the monthly *Kokuhon*. If the Kokuhonsha represented a reconstitution of the Kōkoku Dōshikai as a more powerful organization, *Kokuhon* essentially assumed the tasks that had been envisaged for the ephemeral *Senshi Nihon*.

*Kokuhon* quickly provided what *Senshi Nihon* had not: a viable conservative alternative to *Chūō kōron* and *Kaizō*, the leading general-interest magazines of the day. *Kokuhon*'s success was apparent in the first (January 1921) issue's circulation of 5,000 copies -- a respectable figure by contemporary standards. For example, the subsequently prestigious *Bungei shunjū*, launched in 1923 by the novelist Kikuchi Kan, began with a circulation of 3,000 copies.<sup>81</sup> The importance of *Kokuhon*, moreover, was far greater than implied by its circulation figures because its readership included the highest ranks of Japan's bureaucracy and the armed services. The steadily increasing circulation by 1930 reached 25,000 copies a month,<sup>82</sup> The

<sup>79</sup> Hara, the great party politician, is sometimes represented as a liberal and a democrat. His involvement in the Morito Incident seems to contradict this reputation as do some other of his pronouncements. Hara, for example, hoped Westerners would set aside their misplaced notions about Japan and understand that "[a]ccording to Japanese ethics, loyalty to the sovereign and patriotism are of the same principle as freedom and equality, while independence and obedience are manifestations of the same spirit." Given these Japanese "principles of independence, freedom and equality" and the fact that the country and its people were "one and the same organism," Hara insisted that "the state of Japan can do no wrong." Takashi Hara, "The Harmonization of Oriental and Occidental Cultures: an Essential Concomitant to the Maintenance of Peace," *Asian Review* (February 1921), pp.117–21. Hara wrote this article for an English-language Kokuryūkai publication.

<sup>80</sup> In the 1930s Uzawa, President of Meiji University and an imperial appointee to the House of Peers, would act as a defense counsel for several notorious rightists, including Inoue Nishō of the Ketsumeidan and Lieutenant-Colonel Aizawa Saburō, the assassin of General Nagata Tetsuzan. Ishikawa Masatoshi, *Uzawa Fusaaki: sono shōgai to tatakai* (Tokyo: Gihōdō, 1956).

<sup>81</sup> Kaneko Katsuaki, *Rekishi to shite no Bungei shunjū* (Tokyo: Nihon Editor School Shuppanbu, 1991), p.99.

<sup>82</sup> Kōan chōsachō (ed.), *Uyoku dantai no jōkyō*, vol.2, p.523.

publication of *Kokuhon* came at a considerable expense. The first six months of 1921 alone cost a hefty 18,162 yen.<sup>83</sup> With time, such expenditures were largely offset by advertising revenues from leading Japanese companies such as Mitsui Bank, Tokyo Light Company, Mitsukoshi Department Store, the Bank of Japan, Sapporo Beer, Tokyo Gas, Sankyô Pharmaceuticals, etc. In the beginning, however, Hiranuma Kiichirô supplied the necessary cash to keep the magazine afloat by discreetly funnelling it through Takeuchi Kakuji.<sup>84</sup>

Like the inaugural issue of *Senshi Nihon*, the first issue of *Kokuhon* included an oracular manifesto and an assortment of essays by prominent contributors. These intellectual notables included Professor Kozai Yoshinao (president of Tokyo Imperial University), Professor Kamata Eikichi (rector of Kei'ô University), Professor Hiranuma Yoshirô (rector of Waseda University and the procurator general's brother), Professor Kihira Tadayoshi (a leading philosopher of the day and future president of the Peers' College [Gakushûin]), Kôda Rohan (a best-selling novelist) and Tsubouchi Shôyô (Waseda's renowned scholar and translator of Shakespeare). They were joined in this and subsequent issues by some of the most prominent right wing activists of the 1920s, such as Ôkawa Shumei, Mitsukawa Kametarô, Minoda Muneki, Kasagi Yoshiaki, Ayakawa Takeji and Nakatani Takeyo.<sup>85</sup>

From the first issue, *Kokuhon* provided the most prestigious and influential platform for the expression of conservative and rightist thought. After the Manchurian Incident in 1931, prominent rightists retrospectively hailed the first issue as a watershed in the struggle against deviant foreign thought and "a return to the Japanese spirit."<sup>86</sup> Although the conservative mentality of the 1920s triumphed in the 1930s, its success had by no means seemed inevitable at the time of the Kokuhonsha's foundation.

At this time, the Kokuhonsha confined its activities to propaganda. The journal may have been a success but otherwise the organization achieved little. In the meantime, the popular demands for reforming the elitist structure of the government, for a political party government and universal suffrage intensified. A vocal minority even campaigned for political and social rights for women, while the long-oppressed *burakumin* were beginning to organize politically.<sup>87</sup> All this only added to the conservative sense of crisis.

Two major events, the Tora-no-mon Incident and the formation of the Kenseikai-Seiyûkai coalition of January 1924, revealed in particularly stark terms the ineffectiveness of an organization based only on propaganda and made up mostly of scholars. These two events, Baron Hiranuma would subsequently recall, prompted a thorough reorganization of the Kokuhonsha.<sup>88</sup> The timing was especially opportune because the resignation of the 2nd Yamamoto (Gonnohyôe) cabinet in which Hiranuma had served as justice minister gave him a five-week period of freedom from official service — on 2 February 1924, Hiranuma became

<sup>83</sup> These figures are based on a financial statement in Hiranuma Kiichirô kankei monjo, #588. By comparison, a Tokyo University professor at that time earned 2,500 yen a year.

<sup>84</sup> See financial statements addressed to Hiranuma Kiichirô, Hiranuma monjo, #586, 587, 588.

<sup>85</sup> With the exception of Mitsukawa, who attended Waseda, they were all graduates of Tokyo Imperial University; with the exception of Kasagi, all held academic positions at one time or another.

<sup>86</sup> Takasu Yoshijirô, "Saikin Nihonshugi jûnenshi" *Keizai ôrai* (January 1932), p.176.

<sup>87</sup> The inaugural meeting of the Suiheisha took place on 3 March 1922. See, for example, Kano Masanao, *Taishô demokurashii*, p.327.

<sup>88</sup> *Takeuchi Kakuji den*, pp.74–75, Ôta Kôzô, "Kokuhonsha undô to jittai," *Keizai ôrai* (January 1933), pp.180–182, stress the Tora-no-mon Incident. Some scholars erroneously claim that the Kokuhonsha was founded in 1924. See, for example, Robert Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p.360.

a privy councillor — which enabled him to concentrate on transforming the Kokuhonsha.

### 8. *The Reorganization of the Kokuhonsha*

In consultations with an inner circle of associates, who included military and bureaucratic notables such as Admiral Katô Kanji, General Araki Sadao, Shôda Kazue, Gotô Fumio, Tanabe Michiharu, Ohara Naoshi, Iwamura Michiyo and Shiono Suehiko, as well as the lawyer Hara Yoshimichi, Hiranuma made plans to restructure the Kokuhonsha.<sup>89</sup> The revamped Kokuhonsha came into being officially on 24 May 1924, when Hiranuma Kiichiro formally assumed the Presidency (*kaichô*).<sup>90</sup> Senior councillors (*komon*) included the hero of the Russo-Japanese war, Admiral Count Tôgô Heihachirô, Admiral Viscount Saitô Makoto, and Field Marshal Viscount Uehara Yûsaku, as well as Privy Councillor Baron Yamakawa Kenji-rô.<sup>91</sup>

The directors (*riji*), only a touch less prominent, included representatives of the armed services (Generals Ugaki Kazushige, Araki Sadao, Matsui Iwane; Admiral Katô Kanji), the bureaucracy (Gotô Fumio of the Interior Ministry, Kawada Isao of the Finance Ministry, Ohara Naoshi of the Justice Ministry, Tanabe Michiharu of the Posts Ministry, Kabayama Sukehide), the financial world (Ikeda Seihin of the Mitsui Zaibatsu, Yasuda's Yûki Toyotarô), academia (Professor Kozai Yoshinao of Tokyo University).

While the core membership came from the old Kokuhonsha and the Shin'yûkai, military men dominated the directorships numerically. Their initial preponderance, increased over time as new directors were recruited chiefly from the services, i.e., Admiral Arima Ryôkitsu, Admiral Ôsumi Mineo, Admiral Viscount Ogasawara Naganari, General Koiso Kuniaki, General Masaki Jinzaburô, and General Baron Kikuchi Takeo. In contrast to the original Kokuhonsha, academics, with the exception of Baron Yamakawa, Professor Kozai, and Professor Satô Shôsuke,<sup>92</sup> were conspicuously absent from senior positions. But they were no less active. Baron Yamakawa, the preeminent philosopher Kihira Tadayoshi, two Tokyo University historians Murakawa Kengo and Imai Tokirô, Fukasaku Yasubumi and many others frequently contributed to the monthly *Kokuho*n; and they travelled extensively throughout Japan on the Kokuhonsha lecture circuit.<sup>93</sup>

The reorganized Kokuhonsha affirmed one main objective: "the promotion of an intellectual enlightenment movement against the torrent of frightening foreign ideas" and it equated

<sup>89</sup> For a full list of Hiranuma's associates, see *Takeuchi Kakuji den*, pp.74–75.

<sup>90</sup> Hiranuma had unofficially assumed his duties as president on 26 March, Itô Takashi, *Shôwa shoki*, p.353.

<sup>91</sup> In 1926 Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijirô also joined the Kokuhonsha. He remained, however, a nominal member. Nezu Masashi claims that in a misguided attempt to stop Kokuhonsha intrigues, Wakatsuki offered Hiranuma a barony (November 1926). Although Hiranuma accepted the title, Kokuhonsha attacks on the cabinet continued unabated; Nezu, *Nihon gendaishi*, vol.5, p.152. After his appointment as vice-president of the Privy Council (April 1926), Baron Hiranuma's potential to create problems for the Kenseikai administration increased dramatically. Admiral Saitô Makoto had the title of senior councillor to the Kokuhonsha, but his, like Watatsuki's, nominal association with the Kokuhonsha did not stop Kokuhonsha intrigues against his cabinet.

<sup>92</sup> Dr. Satô Shôsuke, (1854–1939), Johns Hopkins-educated agricultural expert, after 1918 president of Hokkaidô Imperial University, made a baron in 1928.

<sup>93</sup> Hanami, *Yamakawa-den*, p.395, for Baron Yamakawa's unsparing activities on behalf of the Kokuhonsha.

the “intellectual enlightenment movement” with “the glorification of the national polity.”<sup>94</sup> To this end, the members proposed to “1. investigate all matters pertaining to the state and the life of the nation; 2. encourage moral conduct, 3. publish and promote periodicals and [other] meritorious works, 4. hold lectures, and 5. engage in other matters as deemed necessary.”<sup>95</sup>

The new Kokuhonsha manifesto consciously emulated the classical style of Imperial rescripts.

We believe that the prosperity of the State and the welfare of the Japanese people (*minzoku*), inseparably linked together, depend upon the promotion of the national spirit and the advancement of knowledge and virtue. Although civilization has made great strides since the Restoration and there has since been significant progress in the arts and sciences, an atmosphere of self-indulgence and frivolity is gradually replacing the spirit of simplicity and vigor, and aberrant and extreme theories are destroying the customs of gentility and modesty. Public morality is disintegrating and the character of the Japanese people is deteriorating daily. Imitation and falsity have finally become the nature of the people while the original spirit of self-reliance is on the verge of extinction.

To make matters worse, a great earthquake struck last year, destroying most of the nation’s resources and greatly reducing national strength. If at this time we do not foster the national spirit, strengthen the national foundation, endeavor to achieve the advancement of knowledge and virtue, and extol the quintessence (*seika*) of the national polity, the future of the State and of the nation will be uncertain. With reverence and respect, we recite the Meiji Emperor’s last injunctions and follow the sage words of the present Emperor [and] hereby seek comrades throughout the Empire. Wishing to devote ourselves to the pressing needs of the State and the nation, we earnestly pray that all the heroic men and their trusted friends who put their country first should rise as one and support us.<sup>96</sup>

The manifesto ignored one of the primary reasons for the Kokuhonsha’s existence: the growing power and prestige of the party political movement. The centrality of this concern, however, is evident in the unpublished plans of the organizational structure of the society. According to these plans, the research division would concentrate on the study of: 1. “the [adverse] consequences of the introduction of universal manhood suffrage;” 2. “all domestic matters pertaining to national defense;” 3. “the maintenance of internal public order,” and “the political education of the nation,” while the operations division, these plans reveal, concentrated on “propaganda and indoctrination” to foster “morally commendable conduct” and “character building.”<sup>97</sup> This propaganda included not only the publication of *Kokuhon*, but also the promotion of the martial arts, especially kendo and judo.<sup>98</sup> The latter were prized for their emphasis on discipline, absolute obedience, and anti-individualism. By 1924, Hiranuma had developed a close relationship with Kanô Jigorô (1860–1938), the conservative

<sup>94</sup> *Takeuchi den* p.75; also quoted by Itô Takashi, *Shôwa shoki*, p.353. For a prewar view to the same effect, see, for example, “Kokuhonsha, Hiranuma-dan, gunbu, Adachi, Kuhara, Mori,” *Kaibô jidai* (June 1932), p.8.

<sup>95</sup> Kokuhonsha genkyô jikô, Araki Sadao kankei monjo, Kensei shiryôshitsu, National Diet Library #429, (hereafter Araki monjo).

<sup>96</sup> Kokuhonsha File, Ôhara shakai mondai kenkyûjo, Hôsei University. Itô Takashi, *Shôwa shoki*, p.354, has a full Japanese text. For a different translation of this manifesto, see Richard Yasko, pp.94–5.

<sup>97</sup> Kokuhonsha genkyô, Araki monjo, #429.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

educator, who had received an imperial appointment to the House of Peers, among other things, for his invention of judo.<sup>99</sup>

These general goals assured the editorial continuity of the magazine *Kokuhon*, whose format remained essentially the same. But the reorganized Kokuhonsha recognized the need to reach a wider and less educated audience. To this end, in May 1925, it launched a new publication: a four-page fortnightly newsheet entitled *Kokuhon shinbun*. If the monthly *Kokuhon* represented "a high culture" approach to propaganda,<sup>100</sup> *Kokuhon shinbun* epitomized a decidedly "low culture" angle. It consisted of a crude mixture of short reports and essays, which publicized the achievements of the Kokuhonsha movement and viciously denounced the political parties, America, the new China policy of Baron Shidehara (Japanese Foreign Minister in the Katô and Wakatsuki cabinets), and everything else not to the Kokuhonsha's liking. The circulation of this newsheet soon exceeded 30,000 copies.<sup>101</sup>

The reorganized Kokuhonsha also embarked upon an ambitious plan to establish a network of domestic and international branches. The establishment of provincial branches by recruitment drives and lecture tours required considerable sums of money and the reorganized Kokuhonsha significantly expanded its list of contributors. According to one senior Kokuhonsha member, regular corporate donations from Mitsui, Mitsubishi, as well as some other major companies, totalled 10,000 yen a month.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the Army provided an unspecified amount of covert financial support from its secret funds.<sup>103</sup>

These new organizational endeavors paid off handsomely. By the end of 1925, there were 15 domestic branches<sup>104</sup> and membership rolls had tripled to well over 10,000 members. This included 452 members in Korea, 163 in China, 72 in Taiwan, and 51 in the Pacific Islands. In its heyday in the early 1930s, the Kokuhonsha comprised 95 branches, with an estimated 200,000 members and could rightly claim a grassroots membership as large as any major political party.<sup>105</sup> At that time, it also had branches in Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, and even in the United States.<sup>106</sup>

In 1934, the Seattle Branch of the Kokuhonsha, for example, celebrated Japan's National Foundation Day by distributing one thousand copies of Baron Hiranuma's essay, "Japan's

<sup>99</sup> On Hiranuma's links to Kanô Jigorô, as well as their shared preoccupation with thought unification, see Ishikawa Masatoshi, *Uzawa*, pp.180–1.

<sup>100</sup> The Kokuhonsha was aware that "yellow journalism" could be counterproductive. A proposal for discussion at a directors' meeting on 16 March 1925 stated: "Blatant attacks on individuals and groups should be avoided as much as possible," Araki monjo, #429.

<sup>101</sup> Kôan chôsachô, *Uyoku dantai no jôkyô*, vol.2, p.523.

<sup>102</sup> Shiono Suehiko kaikoroku kankôkai (ed.), *Shiono Suehiko kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Niikura Tôbundo, 1958), p. 349.

<sup>103</sup> For secret funding of the Kokuhonsha by the Army, see Kido nikki kenkyûkai, *Nihon kindai shiryô sôsho* B4 (Tokyo: Social Division, Tokyo University, 1974), vol.2, p.121. For another reference to army donations, Itô Takashi et al. (eds.), *Masaki Jinzaburô nikki* (Tokyo: Yamakawa kôbunkan, 1982), vol.1, p.249, entry for 12 July 1934, hereafter referred to as *Masaki nikki*.

<sup>104</sup> Chiba (15 February), Tsuyama (20 March), Okayama (23 March), Saitama (24 May), Ôsaka (14 June), Nara (19 July), Kôji machi (12 September), Nagano (13 September), Matsumoto (15 September), Shizuoka (27 September), Hiroshima (11 October), Yamagata (7 November), Yonezawa (8 November), Kure (15 November) Miyagi (29 November).

<sup>105</sup> Kinoshita Hanji, *Nihon kokkashugi undôshi* (Tokyo: Iwasaki Shoten, 1952), vol.1, p.150, gives 195 branches and 200,000 members. The Kokuhonsha File, Ôhara shakai mondai kenkyûjô, Hôsei University, gives 200 branches in one estimate, and 95 in another. The latter figure seems more realistic.

<sup>106</sup> Kokuhonsha kankei shorui, Araki monjo, #431.

Radical Movement.”<sup>107</sup> Every Japanese association in America received a copy of this exposition of the Empire’s moral “mission” to build a new Japan by “the perfection of national strength;” and the Seattle Branch provided an English translation in order “to promote the understanding of the Japanese spirit” among Americans.<sup>108</sup>

By the end of 1925, the expanding network of branches, as well as the extensive ties with the bureaucracy and the armed services, had transformed the Kokuhonsha into a powerful nationwide organization, which, at the local level, rivalled the political parties. Takeuchi Kakuji, who was in charge of day-to-day operations, played a central role in coordinating these efforts, which drew effectively on the influence and prestige of its members in the military, bureaucracy, and business. Generals, admirals, and Justice Ministry officials served as network organizers and recruitment officers.<sup>109</sup> District judges and procurators often headed local branches and, on occasion, even turned official court premises into Kokuhonsha branch offices.<sup>110</sup> Local army commanders, no less than local judges and procurators, frequently served as presidents of local Kokuhonsha branches. In Akita, for example, where the local brigade commander, General Isome Rokuro, became the branch president, a crowd of 1,500, many of whom were “volunteers” from his 17th Regiment, attended the opening branch ceremony.<sup>111</sup> The Kokuhonsha typically packed their branch opening ceremonies with celebrities who vested local branches with considerable prestige and publicity. In Nagano Prefecture, in September 1925, for example, the Kokuhonsha delegates included Baron Hiranuma, Generals Araki Sadao, Mutô Nobuyoshi, Matsui Iwane, and Hirose Toshisuke, Admiral Saitô Shichigorô, Baron Yamakawa Kenjirô, and Professor Murakawa Kengo.<sup>112</sup> These luminaries induced local aristocrats to join the Kokuhonsha. In Kagawa, Ishikawa, and Fukui, for example, the scions of the local daimyô families held leading posts in the local branches.<sup>113</sup> The 104 members of the Nagoya branch included three Seiyûkai dietmen, six judges, three procurators, three representatives of the local Sumitomo Bank, two stationmasters, five educators, seventeen army officers, and fifteen military policemen.<sup>114</sup> This strong military police presence was no isolated aberration.

<sup>107</sup> *Taihoku nippô*, 20 February 1934. Such celebrations were held every year. See, for example, *Taihoku nippô*, 20 February 1933.

<sup>108</sup> “Nihon kakushin undô.” See “Shatoru shibu no Nihon seishin kôyô undô,” *Kokuhon shinbun*, 20 March 1934. For the text of the essay, see *Kokuhon* (May 1932), pp.2–4. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate the English translation.

<sup>109</sup> Several Justice Ministry officials, for example, Shiono Suehiko, Iwamura Michiyo, Ohara Naoshi, and Wani Teikichi (except Wani all would reach the rank of cabinet minister) acted as network organizers and recruitment officers; *Shiono Suehiko kaikoroku*, p.349.

<sup>110</sup> For example, Shigemi Yoshio, the Chief Procurator of the District Court in Ishikawa, became President of the Ishikawa Branch of the Kokuhonsha. *Asahi shinbun*, Ishikawa edition, 24 September 1926. In Kyôto, the Kokuhonsha branch was located in the Procurator’s Office of the Kyoto District Court. See Enomoto Katsumi, “Kokuhonsha shiron” in Imai Seichi et al. (eds.), *Nijûnendai no Nihon no seiji* (Tokyo: Ôtsuki Shoten 1984), p. 265.

<sup>111</sup> *Akita sakigake shinpô*, 31 May 1926.

<sup>112</sup> Two new branches, at Nagano City and Matsumoto were opened at that time. See Kokuhonsha Matsumoto shibu setsuritsu shiki and Kokuhonsha Nagano ken shibu setsuritsu shiki tô nittei, Kokuhonsha kankei shorui, Araki monjo, #431.

<sup>113</sup> In Kagawa, Count Matsudaira Yoriyoshi attended the opening ceremony of the local branch on 7 April 1926. Ôsaka *Asahi shinbun*, Shikoku edition, 7 April 1926. In Ishikawa, Marquis Maeda Toshinari was the honorary president and attended the opening ceremony together with Baron Hiranuma. Ôsaka *Asahi shinbun*, Ishikawa/Tôyama edition, 24 September 1926; in Fukui, Marquis Matsudaira was a branch adviser. Ôsaka *Asahi shinbun*, Fukui edition, 9 April 1929.

<sup>114</sup> Kokuhonsha kaiin meibo, Aichi-ken, Araki monjo, #434

tion. Upon his promotion to commander of the Kempeitai in 1924, General Araki Sadao ordered every military policeman in Japan to join!<sup>115</sup> On the national level, the Kokuhonsha focused its recruiting activities on talented bureaucrats and officers. It especially targeted the most promising students in the War College, where, in the late 1920s, the then Major Suzuki Teiichi served as the official Kokuhonsha secretary-coordinator (*kanji*).<sup>116</sup> Many of these officers regularly visited the Kokuhonsha's Tokyo Headquarters, where they chatted with Baron Hiranuma.<sup>117</sup> These selected recruits included future generals (e.g., Major Suzuki Teiichi, Captain Katakura Tadashi, Captain Imada Shintarô, and Captain Yamaoka Michitake), who subsequently pursued distinguished careers in the War Ministry and the General Staff.

These handpicked student-officers attended Kokuhonsha summer camps. In July 1926 in Kanazawa, for example, the Kokuhonsha played host to nine cadets from the War College.<sup>118</sup> The cadets were treated to a daily routine of lectures by prominent Kokuhonsha civilian and military figures (e.g., Baron Hiranuma, Ambassador Honda Kumatarô, General Matsui Iwane, Admiral Katô Kanji).<sup>119</sup> At the 1927 camp, Captain Katakura Tadashi met the then Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan, himself a Kokuhonsha councillor, who would become his mentor in the army. Little wonder that in his postwar reminiscences General Katakura looked back at this Kokuhonsha summer camp experience "as extremely meaningful."<sup>120</sup>

The Kokuhonsha no less aggressively established its presence in institutions of higher learning. Many members served as university presidents, i.e., Kozai Yoshinao (Tokyo Imperial University), Araki Kôzaburô (Kyôto Imperial University), Hiranuma Yoshirô (Waseda University), Matsumoto Itaru (Hôsei University), Hara Yoshimichi (Chûô University), and Uzawa Fusaaki (Meiji University).<sup>121</sup> Hiranuma Kiichirô himself became president of Nihon University, where he recruited prominent Kokuhonsha members as guest lecturers (e.g., Suzuki Kisaburô, General Araki Sadao, General Matsui Iwane, Admiral Nomura Kichisaburô, Hara Yoshimichi, and Professor Fukasaku Yasubumi). In October 1926 he founded a Kokuhonsha branch there.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Itô Takashi, *Shôwa shoki*, p.368.

<sup>116</sup> See Katakura Tadashi's contribution to Nagata Tetsuzan denki kankôkai (ed.), *Hiroku Nagata Tetsuzan* (Tokyo: Fuyô shobô, 1972), p.83. Suzuki Teiichi served as Director of the Planning Board in the third Konoe and the Tôjô cabinets and, after the war, received a prison sentence at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East. In a postwar interview, Suzuki denied "any connection with the Kokuhonsha." He had merely had, he recalled, "personal relations" with Baron Hiranuma, Ôta Kôzô, and other Hiranuma followers, since "it was necessary to inform them about the Army." See *Suzuki Teiichi danwa sokkiroku*, vol.1, p.283.

<sup>117</sup> Katakura, p.83

<sup>118</sup> In addition to Katakura, Imada, and Yamaoka, Takashima Tatsuhiko, Kosekie Kunio, Ôta Kinhide, Kôhira Masatake, Hamada Sueo, and Nakai Chimaki, who would become general officers. For these names, *Nihon daigaku shinbun*, 5 October 1926.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Katakura, p.83. Nagata became a Kokuhonsha councillor in June 1925. See the chronological table at the end of *Hiroku Nagata Tetsuzan* (unnumbered page).

<sup>121</sup> Some continued in these positions even after the war. Uzawa Fusaaki continued as the President of Meiji University until his death in 1955. Ishikawa Masatoshi, p.233. Ôta Kôzô, who served as Education Minister in the wartime Suzuki Kantarô cabinet, became President of Asia University after the war.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, *Nihon daigaku shinbun*, 5 December 1926. Shiono Suehiko, Suzuki Kisaburô, Mizuno Rentarô and Yamaoka Mannosuke served as trustees of the university. See also *Nihon daigaku shinbun*, 20 October 1926. Yamaoka succeeded Hiranuma as the University's president in 1933. Branches were founded in other universities. See Tanaka Sôgorô, "Hiranuma Kiichirô to Kokuhonsha," *Nihon hyôron* (August 1936), p.326.

In 1923, Hiranuma also served as the first President of Daitō Bunka Gakuin (Greater East Culture Academy, later chartered as a university). This academy was founded to promote Eastern culture and to provide an alternative to the so-called Western-style higher education, which had corrupted Japan's morality.<sup>123</sup> There, Hiranuma recruited several prominent scholars, including Tokyo University Professor Emeritus, Inoue Tetsujirō, the doyen of Japanese philosophers. Inoue's impeccable rightist credentials remained unchallenged within the Kokuhonsha until he engineered a political coup at the school, displacing Hiranuma as president. Baron Hiranuma, in turn, waged a successful counter-campaign of vilification against Inoue, which quickly resulted in the ouster of the venerable professor from the Academy, and ultimately deprived him of his seat in the House of Peers.<sup>124</sup>

Kokuhonsha members were only slightly less prominent at Hōsei University. The President, Privy Councilor Matsumuro Itaru had, as a procurator in 1910, prosecuted Kōtoku Shūsui and subsequently served as justice minister in the third Katsura (December 1912-February 1913) and Terauchi (October 1916-September 1918) cabinets. A Hōsei University trustee, Koyama Matsukichi, subsequently became Justice Minister in the Saitō Makoto cabinet (May 1932-July 1934). Kokuhonsha advisors at Hōsei included General Araki Sadao, Tanabe Michiharu, Iwamura Michiyo, Ōta Kōzō, and Tachibana Sadamu.<sup>125</sup> In addition, two foremost rightists of the interwar years, Ōkawa Shūmei and Nakatani Takeyo, at one time associated with the Kokuhonsha, served as professors at Hōsei in the 1930s. Takeuchi Kakuji (Hiranuma's closest associate) subsequently took absolute control of the university, first as director in charge of scholastic affairs (1937), then as rector (1942), and, ultimately, president (1943).<sup>126</sup>

Consistent with these efforts to gain influence in higher education, the Kokuhonsha invited potential recruits from Tokyo's foremost universities to meetings at its Tokyo headquarters. The most promising of these attended the Kokuhonsha's summer camps together with War College officers.<sup>127</sup> Nor were middle and higher schools neglected. The organization actively recruited local headmasters and teachers and sent complimentary copies of the

<sup>123</sup> *Daitō bunka daigaku gojūnenshi*, p.167. For the regulations of the Academy, see *ibid.*, pp.175-179.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p.217. This affair is described *ad nauseam* in "Daitō bunka gakuin funjō no tenmatsu," undated anonymous pamphlet by "concerned former professors of Daitō bunka gakuin;" "Daitō bunka gakuin gakusei dōmei kyūkō no shinsō" by "a former Daitō bunka gakuin secretary" (*kanji*); July 1928; Mishio Kumata ("a former Daitō bunka gakuin secretary"), "Mitabi Daitō bunka gakuin no genjō o ronjite dōyū no sho kunshi ni uttau" June 1927. Some years later in a sequel to this campaign, rightist thugs manhandled Inoue so hard that he ended up in hospital, blinded in one eye. For a description of this gruesome incident, see *Asahi Shinbun*, 20 February 1929.

<sup>125</sup> On the Kokuhonsha and Hōsei, see Matsuo Shōichi, *Nihon fuashizumu-shi ron* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppanyoku 1977), pp.97-112. Nakatani became a professor at Hōsei in 1932. In 1939, Ōkawa became chairman of the newly established Continental Department, whose main task was to provide training for Japan's aspiring empire builders. Also see Hōsei daigaku hyakunen-shi henshū iinkai (eds.), *Hōsei daigaku hyakunen-shi* (Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku shuppanyoku, 1980), pp.460-461. Much earlier, in 1922, Amano Tatsuo, too, had for some time taught at Hōsei; *ibid.*, p.400.

<sup>126</sup> Matsuo Shōichi, p.112. Also see *Hōsei daigaku hyakunen-shi*, pp.243-253 and p.407.

<sup>127</sup> In 1926 summer camps were attended by a handful of students from Nihon University (3), Chūō University (2), and Tokyo Imperial (1), Tokyo shōka daigaku (1), and Taishō University (1). *Nihon daigaku shinbun*, 5 October 1926. Items to be discussed at the Directors' Meeting dated 16 March 1925 also puts stress on students in elite institutions. It even proposes the construction of a Kokuhonsha dormitory. This idea was not put in practice. See Kokuhonsha kankei shorui, Araki monjo, #431.

monthly *Kokuhon* to every Japanese educational institution above the primary school level.<sup>128</sup>

In effect, they established a new outlet for the latest ideological preoccupation of the reorganized Kokuhonsha: the advocacy of "national totalitarianism" (*kokumin zentaishugi*), meaning the "inclusion of all sections of the Japanese state and society in one embracing whole."<sup>129</sup> National totalitarianism, *Kokuhon* editorially asserted, suited "the mentality of the Japanese" better than any Western-style democracy because, "in contrast to Jews or Chinese," the Japanese were allegedly "incapable of living without a state."<sup>130</sup> While *Kokuhon*'s editors despaired over the development of parliamentary politics in Japan, it heaped accolades upon Mussolini's fascist government, "the pride of Southern Europe."<sup>131</sup> The editors, in particular, admired Mussolini's "ardent statist spirit"<sup>132</sup> because the Italian dictator had repudiated the International Labor Organization, proclaimed his loyalty to the Italian monarchy,<sup>133</sup> and restored "the atrophied [Italian] national polity."<sup>134</sup> The Kokuhonsha found the Italian solution better than any parliamentary system because, as General Hata Eitarô noted, the national interest required "discipline, industry" and a "total mobilization" of all Japan's resources.<sup>135</sup> Takeuchi Kakuji even alluded to the need for a Japanese equivalent of Mussolini, some unnamed "great man" who would lead in the construction of "a new Japan"<sup>136</sup> by eradicating the postwar impurities of liberalism and individualism. Shortly after being personally introduced to the pro-fascist ideas of Baron Hiranuma (2 December 1926), Prince Saionji sardonically remarked that "Japan is not yet ready for her Mussolini."<sup>137</sup> This marked the beginning of Saionji's hostile relationship with Hiranuma that would become an important factor in Japanese politics between 1927 and 1936.

The reorganized Kokuhonsha also discovered other affinities between fascist Italy and imperial Japan. Both nations, Shimoi Shunkichi reasoned, confronted the same enemies, "the free masons," that is, the international "stateless" capital which had made its headquarters in the United States.<sup>138</sup>

This allusion to the "stateless" Jewish problem was no idiosyncratic concern. By October 1927, *Daitô bunka* published a comprehensive chart, which attributed all "thought confusion" of the 1920s to an "immense Jewish conspiracy." Its manifestations included, among other things, the cinema, free love, strikes, republicanism, the Third International, crime, pacifism and women's emancipation.<sup>139</sup> Japan's leading "expert" on the subject and a Kokuhonsha

<sup>128</sup> Enomoto, p.257.

<sup>129</sup> "Henshûshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (June 1924), p.140.

<sup>130</sup> "Henshûshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (March 1925), p.136.

<sup>131</sup> "Henshûshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (December 1922), p.136. See also Ôta Kôzô, "Nan-Ô ni tatsu Mususorini," *ibid.*, pp.29-35.

<sup>132</sup> See also, for example, Ishiyama Iwao, "Mususorini no kokka-kan," *Kokuhon* (September 1924), p.61.

<sup>133</sup> Nagai Zenzô, "Fuashisuchi shûseika no Itari rôdô kumiai," *Kokuhon* (March 1924), pp.58-66. See also "Henshûshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (September 1922), p.138.

<sup>134</sup> "Henshûshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (December 1922), p.136.

<sup>135</sup> Hata Eitarô, "Kokka sôdôin no hitsuyô," *Kokuhon* (December 1925), pp.11-17.

<sup>136</sup> Takeuchi Kakuji, "Mondai no kenkyû," *Kokuhon* (June 1925), p.34.

<sup>137</sup> On 2 December 1926. See Oka Yoshitake et al. (eds.), *Taishô demokurashii-ki no seiji: Matsumoto Gôkichi seiji nishshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1969), p.544.

<sup>138</sup> Shimoi Shunkichi, "Warera no teki furii-meeson," *Kokuhon* (March 1925), pp.78-93, especially p.78. See also Shimoi's "Kokui saishô Mussorini-shi," *Kokuhon* (October 1925), pp.13-31.

<sup>139</sup> "Waga kuni ni okeru bôkoku undô no keitô," Hiranuma monjo, #1155, published as an appendix to *Daitô Bunka* (October 1927).

activist, Lieutenant General Shiôden Nobutaka (who often published under the pseudonym of Fujiwara Nobutaka) frequently wrote and lectured on the Kokuhonsha's behalf. Hiranuma, in turn, reciprocated with an enthusiastic preface to one of Shiôden's anti-Semitic tracts.<sup>140</sup> Other Kokuhonsha proponents of the Jewish conspiracy, Generals Hata Shinji and Masaki Jinzaburô, together with Shiôden, belonged to a Minzoku Kenkyûkai. This small group, which devoted itself almost exclusively to the Jewish question and its alleged impact on Japanese thought, was still active in the 1930s.<sup>141</sup>

Mitsui Kôshi, among others, relentlessly excoriated Japan's "Judaized" intellectuals for their promotion of liberalism, capitalism, and parliamentary democracy.<sup>142</sup> Professor Suehiro Izutarô's "Jewish ideas" about land reform and Yoshino Sakuzô's "Jewish" advocacy of democracy, he contended, had turned Tokyo University into a hotbed of "Jewish thought," which had to be destroyed for the sake of a powerful Japan.<sup>143</sup> Mitsui's inflammatory statements presaged the academic witch-hunts of the thirties against Professor Suehiro and other "Jewish thinkers."

In a related manner, Admiral Katô Kanji described party politics as incompatible with Japan's national polity and condemned the immorality of politicians and cabinet ministers, who cared "only for their party's interests." They, he claimed, exemplified the agents of Japan's "Judaized society," the Jewish "enemy in our hearts," who had become the chief obstacle to the realization of "a new Japan."<sup>144</sup> Hiranuma, too, believed that Jews had utilized their financial power to spread the confusion of liberalism throughout the world. In Japan, he claimed, this Jewish influence had gained control of the nation's "politics and finance" during the era of imported "capitalism and liberalism" that was the Taishô period. Towards the end of World War II he attributed the coming of the Pacific War to the Jews' "devilish hand behind everything."<sup>145</sup>

This praise of fascism and condemnation of the Jewish menace were an integral part of the Kokuhonsha's campaign to "to smash dangerous thought" within Japan.<sup>146</sup> Representatives of this "dangerous thought" were numerous. They included Christian liberals such as Yoshino Sakuzô, Anesaki Masaharu, Kagawa Toyohiko, Suzuki Bunji, and Ebina Danjô, whom *Kokuhon* regarded as "advance agents" of "American capitalist aggression;"<sup>147</sup> they included

<sup>140</sup> Shiôden Nobutaka, *Yudaya shisô to undô* (Tokyo: Naigai Shobô, 1941). For Shiôden's analysis of the Jewish problem written in the mid-1920s, see, for example, Fujiwara Nobutaka (pseud.), *Yudaya minzoku no kenkyû* (Tokyo: Naigai Shobô, 1925).

<sup>141</sup> See Shiôden Nobutaka, *Kaikoroku*, p.141. This group was founded even before the Tora-no-mon Incident. General Masaki gives a list of members in *Masaki nikki*, entry for 5 March 1935, vol.2, p.33. Hata was the Chairman. Non-Kokuhonsha members of the association included former Tokyo police chief and imperial appointee to the House of Peers Akaike Atsushi, and Wakamiya Unosuke (1872-1938), the editor of *Nihon shinbun* and a prolific anti-Semitic writer.

<sup>142</sup> Mitsui Kôshi, "Yudaya-teki Marukusu shisô gekimetsu hôhō," *Kokuhon* (November 1925), pp.17-23.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>144</sup> See Katô Kanji (Hiroharu), "Kokka minjin no seishinka," *Kokuhon* (January 1926), p.11.

<sup>145</sup> Hiranuma Kiichirô, *Kaikoroku*, pp.129-40. The book was published in 1955, but Hiranuma had dictated most of it, including the words quoted above, during the latter stages of the Pacific War. See Introduction, p. 2. Hiranuma thought it incontestable that "a Jewish conspiracy was the main factor" in making the world go around. He noted that "Hitler saw [the Jewish danger] and tried to eliminate it and that is why the Anglo-Americans hate him". But he also admitted that he did not know either how the Jews came to have the power they had or "what their ultimate goal is." All these quotes are on p.129.

<sup>146</sup> As reported by *Otaru shinbun*, 27 May 1924.

<sup>147</sup> See, for example, Nagai Zenzô, "Beika seru shisô oyobi jinbutsu," Part I, *Kokuhon* (November 1921), p.67. Mitsui Kôshi, "Fukuda, Yoshino hakase no shisô hihan," *Kokuhon* (June 1921), p.140.

such writers as "the sadistic" Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, "sex-crazy" Murō Sōsei, "the masturbator" Satomi Ton<sup>148</sup> and violators of Japan's sacred family system, Yanagihara Akiko (Byakuren) and Arishima Takeo;<sup>149</sup> For good measure, they also included anarchists such as Ōsugi Sakae and Itō Noe.<sup>150</sup>

Jews, liberals, anarchists, proponents of free love and feminists, above all, America — those were Baron Hiranuma and the Kokuhonsha's enemies, the enemies of conservatism. Words used to describe these enemies may have been extreme, but as the popular daily *Kokumin shinbun* noted, the Kokuhonsha's "educated class" shunned direct acts of violence, in contrast to other "reactionary" organizations.<sup>151</sup> And to my knowledge, there is only one documented case of a direct Kokuhonsha involvement in violence, namely, the strike busting incident at the Hamamatsu Musical Instruments Factory (the precursor of today's Yamaha) in April 1926.<sup>152</sup>

Largely for this reason, Professor Itō Takashi's pioneering analysis has established a sharp distinction between the traditional conservative status-quo-oriented restorationism of Baron Hiranuma and the Kokuhonsha and the more radical renovationist (*kakushin*) right.<sup>153</sup> But this distinction is more blurred than Professor Itō suggests. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Hiranuma, along with most other Kokuhonsha members, closely associated himself with radical ultranationalist organizations and offered moral support for the terrorism of their

<sup>148</sup> Itō Ken, "Gen bundan no byōsei o shindan su," *Kokuho* (June 1922), p.116–7.

<sup>149</sup> Takeuchi Kakuji, "Mondai no kenkyū," *Kokuho* (November 1922), p.59. Yanagihara (1885–1967), a famous poet, was a daughter of a count and a relation of the Emperor. A married woman, she caused a scandal by eloping with a Shinjinkai member, Miyazaki Ryūsuke. The novelist Arishima (1878–1923), who committed love-pact suicide with a Mrs Hori shortly after this article was written, happened to be "the masturbator" Satomi Ton's brother. That suicide provoked a new wave of indignation in *Kokuho*. See, for example, Imai Tokirō, "Nihirisuto no shi," pp.2–13 and Takeuchi Kakuji "Mondai no kenkyū, pp. 50–51, "Henshūshitsu yori," p.136; all in *Kokuho* (August 1923).

<sup>150</sup> On the Kokuhonsha's condemnation of Ōsugi Sakae and Itō Noe and the praise of their murderer Captain Amakasu Masahiko, see, for example, Takeuchi Kakuji, "Mondai no kenkyū," *Kokuho* (November 1923), p.70 and (January 1924), pp.62–64. On the defense of earthquake vigilantes who massacred innocent Koreans, see, for example, "Henshūshitsu yori," *Kokuho* (September 1924), p.136. Such defense was by no means limited only to the Kokuhonsha. On 22 October 1923 the Second Attorneys' Tokyo Association, presided over by Takeuchi Kakuji, publicly accused Koreans of committing acts of violence and strongly condemned the blackening of the character of "self-sacrificial vigilantes," who had manifested "our Japanese spirit." Quoted in Yamazaki Kesaya, *Jishin, kenpei, kaji, funsa*, ed. by Morinaga Eisaburō (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1973), p.230.

<sup>151</sup> *Kokumin shinbun*, 27 May 1924. Consistent with this abstention from violence, Hiranuma became Director (*danchō*) of the Shūyōdan (29 April 1924), a paternalistic labor organization, designed to preempt a more genuine labor movement. On this see Saitō Ki'ichi, "Shūyōdan no zenbō," *Shakai hyōron* (January 1935), pp.43–6, and (February 1935), pp.63–9. Saitō describes the Shūyōdan as a "reactionary" body which "has points in common with the totalitarian philosophy of fascism."

<sup>152</sup> Nezu, *Nihon gendaishi*, vol.5, pp.88–91. The Kokuhonsha intervened in this isolated case because the owner, Amano Chiyomaru, was the father of Amano Tatsuo, a Kokuhonsha activist. Amano's penchant for direct action ultimately led to his resignation from the organization. In the 1930s, he spent some time in prison for participating in terrorist activities and even was involved in an (unsuccessful) attempt to assassinate Baron Hiranuma in 1941 for his alleged betrayal of radical nationalistic principles. For details of this assassination attempt, see, for example, Otto D. Tolischus, *The Tokyo Record* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1943), pp. 226–7.

<sup>153</sup> See Itō Takashi, *Shōwa shoki*, passim, especially pp.8–10; also *Shōwa-shi no seiji* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1983), pp.19–21; and *Taishōki "kakushin" ha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Haniwa Shobō, 1978), pp.6–11. Historians, including Professor Itō, sometimes classify the Kokuhonsha as *kannen-* (idealistic) or *seishin-* (spiritual) *uyoku* (right wing). For an example of the first, see any work of Kinoshita Hanji, for the other, see for example Itō Takashi, *Jūgonen sensō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1976) p.229, which describes Hiranuma as a "leader of the spiritual right wing."

members. *Kokuhon*'s enthusiastic approval of fascist ideas and practices, its rejection of the League of Nations and the International Labor Organization, its vehement castigation of parliamentarians and their "Jewish" tricks placed the Kokuhonsha firmly in the radical rightist camp. And even though the Kokuhonsha may have eschewed direct action and mass politics, it certainly endorsed the thought and behavior of the radical right by publishing the essays of some of the most notorious right wing activists of the 1920s and 1930s (e.g., Tōyama Mitsuru, Nakatani Takeyo, Mitsukawa Kametarō, Ayakawa Takeji, Kasagi Yoshiaki and Minoda Muneki).

Baron Hiranuma's own close ties with extremists are attested to by his association with Kita Ikki, the so-called father of Japanese fascism,<sup>154</sup> and Iwata Ainosuke, a convicted assassin and the man who, in 1930, incited Sagōya Yoshiaki (Tomeo) to shoot Premier Hamaguchi.<sup>155</sup> In 1926, Hiranuma became an advisor to Akao Bin's Kenkokukai, which resorted to numerous acts of violence, including the notorious strike-breaking at the Noda Soy Sauce Factory in 1927 and a bungled attempt to set fire to the house of the well-known socialist Ōyama Ikuo.<sup>156</sup> Baron Hiranuma, together with other Kokuhonsha members (Takeuchi Kakuji, Yamaoka Mannosuke, Hara Yoshimichi, and General Araki Sadao), also joined the Sentenkai, a rightist organization established by the pan-Asianist politician Ogawa Heikichi, and patronized the *Nihon shinbun*, the extreme right wing newspaper Ogawa published after 1925.<sup>157</sup> The Kokuhonsha's web of relationships, no less than its ideology, shared much in common with radical extremists. And like all extremists, Kokuhonsha conservatives contested the growing ascendancy of political parties, especially the Kenseikai, led by Katō Takaaki and Wakatsuki Reijirō. Indeed, Baron Hiranuma and the Kokuhonsha participated in every attack against the Kenseikai and its successor, the Minseito.<sup>158</sup> They were involved in all kinds of intrigues against the (relatively moderate) cabinets of Admiral Viscount Saitō Makoto and Admiral Okada Keisuke. The list is long: the 1926 Pak Yol affair; the 1927 Taiwan Bank crisis; the 1930 debacle over the London Naval Conference, which culminated in the shooting of Prime Minister Hamaguchi; the Teijin Incident of 1934; the so-called 1935 "National Polity Clarification Movement," better known as the Minobe Incident, etc., etc.<sup>159</sup> In so doing, they played a leading role in bringing about the collapse of party political governments in prewar Japan and undermining the power of moderates centered on Prince Saionji. In the wake of the February 26 Incident, Prince Saionji's resistance to Hiranuma broke down.<sup>160</sup> He now agreed

<sup>154</sup> See Hayashi Shigeru et al. (eds.), *Niniroku jiken hiroku* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1971), vol.1, p.282; Itō, *Shōwa shoki*, p.370.

<sup>155</sup> Itō, *Shōwa shoki*, p.370.

<sup>156</sup> See Kinoshita Hanji, *Shintaisei jiten*, (Ōsaka: Asahi shinbunsha, 1941), pp.54–5. See also *Aikoku undō tōshi retsuden* (Tokyo: Kei'ō shobō, 1939), p.3.

<sup>157</sup> Oka Yoshitake et al. (ed.), *Ogawa Heikichi kankei monjo* (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1973), vol.2, pp.280–2. Itō, *Shōwa shoki*, p.400–2.

<sup>158</sup> Writing before the war, Tanaka Sōgorō, after the war a left-leaning authority on Japan's right wing noted the Kokuhonsha's (and Hiranuma's) bias in favor of the Seiyūkai and against the Kenseikai/Minseitō. See Tanaka, "Hiranuma Kiichirō to Kokuhonsha," *Nihon hyōron* (August 1936), p.325.

<sup>159</sup> On Minobe, see, for example, "Rakugosha no hiai: Minobe shi no han-gunbu senden o mite," Editorial, *Kokuhon shinbun*, 10 November 1934; "Tennō kikanetsu o haisu" Editorial, *Kokuhon shinbun*, 10 March 1935.

<sup>160</sup> Ichiki, forced to step down as President, proposed Hiranuma as his successor on 2 March, but the Prince would not have it. Kido Kōichi, *Kido Kōichi nikki* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1966), p.471, 2 March 1936. See also Harada Kumao, *Saionji-kō to seikyoku*, 8 vols., (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 1951), vol.5, pp.12–4, 3 March 1936. Saionji was still adamantly opposed to Hiranuma's appointment on 3 March. *Kido nikki*, vol.1, p.472, 3 March 1936.

to have Hiranuma promoted to the Presidency of the Privy Council, on condition that Hiranuma sever all connections with the Kokuhonsha.<sup>161</sup>

Hiranuma's formal resignation from the Kokuhonsha occasioned no immediate dissolution of the organization. No new president was appointed, but nothing indicated that its end was imminent. But, on 15 June 1936, three months after Hiranuma's appointment to the Presidency of the Privy Council, *Kokuhon shinbun* abruptly announced that the Kokuhonsha had been dissolved on 10 June. The motives behind this decision are unclear, though the army crackdown in the aftermath of the February 26 rebellion may have been an important factor.<sup>162</sup> One thing is clear enough, however. The decision to disband the organization was so sudden that the monthly *Kokuhon*, which went to the press at the end of May, made no reference to it.<sup>163</sup>

The Kokuhonsha did provide reasons for its dissolution. In the last issue of *Kokuhon shinbun*, Hiranuma explained that "our mission has been accomplished."<sup>164</sup> The directors of the Kokuhonsha collectively expressed their satisfaction over "the elevation of the Japanese spirit" that had come about in the aftermath of the Manchurian incident; and *Kokuhon shinbun* gloated over the fate of the three leading currents of thought that had dominated world affairs between 1919 and 1931, i.e., "Lenin's communism, Wilson's democracy, and Mussolini's dictatorship." *Kokuhon shinbun* dismissed Wilsonianism as "a form of utopia, without the slightest practical value," and it considered communism as "yet another term to disguise Russian aggression." Although it praised fascism, it considered that ideology specific to Italian conditions and irrelevant to Japan's unique national polity and mission. Finally, it linked the dissolution of the Kokuhonsha to the salutary outcome of the Manchurian Incident that had rendered "the decline of communism and liberalism (in Japan) inevitable."<sup>165</sup>

In the most basic sense, Baron Hiranuma and the Kokuhonsha correctly judged the importance of the Manchurian crisis. After the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo and the February 26 incident, the stated objectives of the Kokuhonsha had been accomplished. To all intents and purposes, parliamentary politics had been destroyed; liberalism and academic freedom had been suppressed.<sup>166</sup> Japan had left the League of Nations and her pan-Asian mission had placed China and Japan on the threshold of a major war. Domestically, Japan had rejected parliamentary politics, liberalism, and individualism, and, internationally, she had repudiated the conciliatory diplomacy based on the ideals of Wilsonianism, the League of Nations, the Versailles, and Washington treaties. The final issue of *Kokuhon shinbun* revealed no anxiety for the future. The Japan desired by its contributors seemed closer at hand than at any time in history.

If the suddenness of the dissolution of the Kokuhonsha astonished its rank-and-file members, it occasioned no evident dismay among the upper echelons of the military and

<sup>161</sup> *Kido nikki*, vol.1, p.477, 11 March 1936, a conversation between Kido and Lord Privy Seal Yuasa. See also Shôda Tatsuo, *Jûshintachi no Shôwa shi*, 2 vols., (Tokyo: Bungei shunjû, 1981), vol.1, p.364.

<sup>162</sup> Matsumoto Seichô, *Nini-roku jiken, kenkyû shiryô* (Tokyo: Bungei shunjû, 1986), vol.3, p.269.

<sup>163</sup> The issue dated June 1936.

<sup>164</sup> *Kokuhon shinbun*, 15 June 1936.

<sup>165</sup> "Kokuhonsha no kaisan," *ibid*.

<sup>166</sup> After the Minobe affair, liberal academics were cowed into passivity. Any criticism of the political situation or any work offensive to the official orthodoxy and to its self-styled protectors resulted in instant dismissals, public humiliations and even criminal trials (e.g., Tsuda Sôkichi in 1939, Kawai Ejirô in 1941, etc.).

bureaucracy. Japan's generals, admirals, and bureaucrats no longer perceived the Kokuhonsha as useful in promoting their careers, nor did they agree upon a specific agenda for the future. The Kokuhonsha dissolved quietly for the most satisfying of reasons: its goals had been achieved.

## 9. Conclusion

After recounting their anti-Semitism, their admiration for Mussolini, their countenance of violence against their political enemies, their hankering after a great man to take matters in hand and get Japan out of the impasse, the question may well be asked what kind of conservatives were Baron Hiranuma and the Kokuhonsha. As I have said at the outset, the essence of their conservatism was to preserve the imperial institution and the elitist hierarchical Meiji system against liberalism, pluralism, and democracy. The rise of liberalism and pluralism in Japan after WWI inspired them with a sense of crisis and despair. Their world, it seemed to them, was crumbling to pieces around them. Desperate times called for desperate measures. To defend the old order they cherished against encroachments by liberals, party politicians, and trade unionists, they did not shrink from advocating radical policies (even if they did not think those policies through to their logical conclusions). Baron Hiranuma repeatedly called for a rejuvenation of government and the realization of Japan's divine mission. In doing so, he did not neglect the latest technological inventions. He was one of the first Japanese politicians to use the radio to put his views across to the general public.<sup>167</sup> Yet he always looked back in time to a mythical golden age: the age of the Confucian sages, the age of Shintoist ideals. In this he was no different from numerous conservatives before and after him, no different indeed from Popper's Plato. Like Popper's Plato, Hiranuma also wanted to arrest social change. Like Popper's Plato, he too, wanted to rule over a completely docile and totally controlled society, where not the slightest change could place without the approval of the authorities. It was perhaps less of a realistic goal than a dream, a dream of the epitome of the conservative bureaucrat. It was above all a totalitarian dream. Luckily for Japan, it was never fully realized, even at the height of the Pacific War.

Among the prewar prime ministers Hiranuma cuts an unusual figure. In the early Shōwa period, some men became prime ministers because of their party affiliation (e.g., Inukai) or because they represented the military services; others (e.g., Prince Konoe Fumimaro) became prime ministers thanks to their noble birth; because the genrō (Saionji) thought they would be a moderating influence (e.g., Viscount Saitō Makoto), or because they (e.g., Hirota Kōki) were preferable to the alternative (i.e., Hiranuma). Neither a party man nor a soldier, and certainly not a moderating influence, Hiranuma alone became prime minister solely due to his own efforts. Remarkably, he achieved this success in spite of the genrō Prince Saionji's determined opposition. The struggle to become prime minister cost Hiranuma much time and energy. By the time he had become prime minister, he was already 72, "iron that has cooled off."<sup>168</sup> It is idle to speculate what kind of policies he would have pursued had he reached his

<sup>167</sup> "Our Leader, Baron Hiranuma, appeals to the whole nation," reported *Kokuhon shinbun*, 20 October 1934.

<sup>168</sup> Yamaura Kan'ichi, *Mori Kaku* (Tokyo: Mori Kaku denki hensankai, 1941), p.820.

goal in 1932, the first time he was a contender.<sup>169</sup> It is true that without the Kokuhonsha behind him Hiranuma would not have encountered Prince Saionji's hostility that delayed his career. But it is also true that without the Kokuhonsha behind him Hiranuma would most likely have had no career worth talking about after his retirement from the Justice Ministry. He would have probably lingered on as yet another obscure member of the Privy Council. Certainly, no other Justice Ministry bureaucrat came closely to matching Hiranuma's political success. With the Kokuhonsha squarely behind him, Hiranuma presented himself and was perceived as a formidable political player. Quite apart from what his real views were, some regarded him as a fascist. This was sometimes an obstacle as Saionji's dogged opposition to Hiranuma's promotion shows. But the same fascist image, which was a detriment with Prince Saionji, could also work in his favor as when various radical figures, who themselves had no slightest chance of ever forming a government in their own right, threw in their lot with his and supported him as their candidate.<sup>170</sup>

The behind-the-scenes intrigues as well as overt propaganda by the Kokuhonsha and other conservatives undermined the position of the political parties and in the end led to their political demise. This resulted in a political vacuum, which was filled by the radically minded militarists and authoritarian bureaucrats.

At all stages of this process, the Kokuhonsha and other conservatives played a role analogous to that of the likes of Hugenberg in Germany, who by undermining the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic paved the way for Hitler's rise to power. Like Hugenberg in Germany who thought he would be able to control Hitler, Baron Hiranuma, too, deluded himself that he would be able to control Japan's radical bureaucrats and soldiers. And like Hugenberg in Germany, who was discarded once he was no longer useful to Hitler, so were Baron Hiranuma and his fellow conservatives rendered largely irrelevant by the policies and actions of military men and bureaucrats who came to power in the late 1930s. Paradoxically, these bureaucrats and military men, whom the conservatives supported (both in Germany and in Japan) out of fear or contempt for liberalism, transformed their respective countries much more drastically than those, whom the conservatives identified as their enemies, would have ever contemplated.

It is something today's conservatives should reflect on, for surely the policies they propose may ultimately lead to the destruction of the Japan they profess to love so much, just as their prewar predecessors' policies brought about the destruction of the conservatives' beloved Meiji state.

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<sup>169</sup> To judge by the content of *Kokuhon*, his policies would have been likely to be radical in 1932. One editorial, for example, called for an urgent creation of an Asian economic bloc and immediate introduction of planned economy, without which, it claimed, the empire could not assume its leadership position among the Far Eastern peoples. "Henshūshitsu yori," *Kokuhon* (June 1932), p.136.

<sup>170</sup> E.g., Mori Kaku.