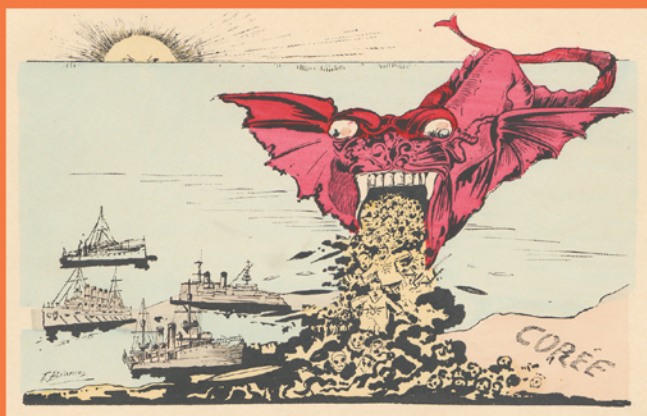


Monster of the Twentieth Century

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KŌTOKU SHŪSUI AND JAPAN'S
FIRST ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT



INCLUDES THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION
OF KŌTOKU SHŪSUI'S *IMPERIALISM*

Robert Thomas Tierney

Monster of the Twentieth Century

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First Anti-Imperialist Movement*

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Following East Asian practice, Japanese surnames precede given names. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Japanese are the work of the author.

Introduction

Anti-Imperialism in Japan: From Theory to Social Movement

*O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle
. . . O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our
shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot
dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their
wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a
hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows
with unavailing grief.*

—MARK TWAIN, “THE WAR PRAYER”

Monster of the Twentieth Century is an analysis of Japan’s first anti-imperialist movement and centers on Kōtoku Shūsui, its intellectual leader and the author of *Imperialism* (1901).¹ Kōtoku’s book was among the first general studies of imperialism to be published anywhere in the world, preceding J. A. Hobson’s *Imperialism: A Study* by one year. Unlike Hobson’s study and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin’s *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Kōtoku treats imperialism primarily as a pathology of the nation-state, a “plague” caused by patriotism and exacerbated by militarism. He also offers the contemporary reader a fresh view of imperialism from the perspective of an observer situated in a peripheral nation then emerging from semicolonial dependency to imperialist world power. *Imperialism* is virtually unknown in the English-speaking world because, until recently, Japan has occupied a marginal and barely visible place in general histories of empire. As a non-Western empire, Japan was “unmarked as a colonizer in Euro-American eyes,” although East Asians have long perceived it as a major imperialist power.² Accordingly, it is not surprising to learn that a Chinese translation of *Imperialism* came out in 1902, a year after its publication in Japanese, and that a partial translation into Korean appeared in 1906. Recently, the book has been translated into French.³ In the third part of this book, I have made available to the English reader an annotated translation of Kōtoku’s work.

Besides authoring the main analysis of imperialism, Kōtoku was the undisputed leader of the political movement to oppose it, particularly during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) when he coedited with Sakai Toshihiko the *Heimin* (Commoners') *Newspaper*, Japan's first radical, pacifist newspaper.⁴ His 1901 book marks the start of a cosmopolitan and democratic anti-imperialist movement in Japan and his editorship of the *Heimin Newspaper* the peak of that movement's sway. Notwithstanding his role as a leader of Japan's first anti-imperialist movement, Kōtoku is best known today as a radical anarchist who was executed after the High Treason incident.⁵ In this book, I focus on his role as the major thinker on imperialism rather than on his advocacy of direct action and his translations of Marx or Kropotkin.⁶ I do not play down his important role in the early Japanese anarchist and socialist movement, but suggest that his most enduring legacy was his leadership role in the movement to oppose imperialism and his status as a forerunner of the modern Japanese pacifist movement. Kōtoku was not the only Japanese writer to write a study of imperialism, but his theses on its causes and his courageous leadership had the greatest influence on the anti-imperialist movement.

Kōtoku also wrote one of the earliest introductions of socialism (*Essence of Socialism*, 1903) in Japan, but he conceptualized socialism first as the "solution" to the problem of imperialism. During the first decade of the twentieth century the socialist movement encountered many obstacles that stymied its efforts to gain adherents and organize workers within Japan. Provisions of the 1900 Public Peace Police Law prohibited the recruitment of students, teachers, and women, while others rendered the organization of trade unions all but impossible. When a group of six Japanese socialists launched the Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshutō) in May 1901, the party was outlawed the same day. While the party platform called for public ownership of industry, its founders included not a single representative of a workers' movement, but only intellectuals who were concerned with worsening inequality in Japanese society and favored a redistribution of wealth. Asukai Masamichi claims that the socialist movement essentially died out for a time with the banning of the party.⁷ Even after the government of Saionji Kinmochi briefly legalized the Japan Socialist Party (Nihon Shakaitō) in 1906, it failed to elect a single diet representative, enjoyed negligible influence among the Japanese working class, and, within one year, returned to illegality.

Kōtoku initially expected that socialists could achieve their goal of ending imperialism if they followed a parliamentary strategy modeled after the German Social Democratic Party, the most successful socialist party in the world. He switched to anarchism and advocacy of direct action as a means of struggle after his imprisonment in 1905, his exile to the United States, and his encounter with the works of Kropotkin. In "The Tendencies of the Worldwide Revolutionary Movement," one of his first speeches upon returning to Japan in 1906, he urged the socialist party to adopt the general strike as a weapon "to strike terror into the rul-

ing class,” while he criticized the fragility of electoral and parliamentary gains that could be easily reversed by government diktat.⁸ In a speech before the Second Congress of the Japan Socialist Party, he advocated that the party support direct action as the most effective method to achieve its goals of “fundamental revolution in economic organization: the abolition of the wage system.”⁹ His championing of direct action led to a split in Japan’s nascent socialist party in which a minority faction continued to support a legal, parliamentary strategy and a larger group favored more radical tactics of anarcho-syndicalism. The government cracked down on both factions from 1907 and effectively drove the entire socialist movement underground during the High Treason incident (1910–11), an alleged plot to assassinate the Meiji emperor. Without denying Kōtoku’s importance as an early Japanese socialist or anarchist (the *Heimin Newspaper* is, among other things, the first socialist newspaper in Japan), I believe that a study of this figure as the leader of the anti-imperialist movement is warranted and long overdue.

Like contemporary anti-imperialist movements in Europe or the United States, the Japanese movement introduced into contemporary discourse a new understanding of the global system and a new social project. It was a heterogeneous coalition of different social groups that united in condemning imperialism on largely moral grounds. Like its counterparts, it suffered from shortcomings that greatly limited its potential effectiveness. To understand both its strengths and weaknesses, one must place Kōtoku’s analysis in the discursive context of debates on imperialism not long after the term “imperialism” (*teikokushugi*) and its cognates entered the Japanese language and Japanese political debate. On the one hand, Kōtoku crafted a cosmopolitan critique of imperialism that differed radically from prevalent nationalistic anti-imperialism in Japan that opposed only Western varieties of imperialism. On the other hand, he made only limited gestures to create a wider anti-imperialist front with the colonized. Postwar critics have argued that he misunderstood the economic underpinnings of imperialism and he underrated the importance of ethnic nationalism as the inspiration for anti-imperialist struggles. In general, socialists were unsympathetic to patriotic movements against Japanese imperialism in Korea, Japan’s most important colony, and Korean nationalists returned the favor, entertaining few ties with the socialists.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, I believe that a study of principled opposition to imperialism will deepen our understanding of Japan’s modern history. Scholars of Japanese history and literature have written important studies of Japan’s culture of empire. Although there has been some interest in individual critics of empire, there exist no general studies of the anti-imperial movement within Japan. Historians have neglected the movement because it was a small effort of intellectuals, writers, and journalists, had little impact on Japanese foreign policies, and failed to achieve any of its goals before it was decimated by repression. However, the significance of this movement should not be evaluated solely on the

basis of its size or efficacy. The *Heimin Newspaper* had a modest readership and did not shorten the Russo-Japanese War even by a day; its significance lies in the fact that it existed at all and continued to publish throughout most of the war. In the same way, the significance of the early anti-imperialist movement far exceeds the limited range of its activities or the number of its adherents.¹⁰

KÔTOKU SHÛSUI'S IMPERIALISM

Kôtoku was thirty years of age when he published *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century*. He was already a rising star in the world of journalism, best known for his editorials on current affairs or investigative studies of social problems in the popular newspaper *Yorozu Chôhō* (The morning news), but he contributed to other journals of opinion, including *Nihonjin* edited by Miyake Setsurei, and wrote humorous pieces in the satirical journal *Dandanchinbun* under the pen name Iroha-an. *Imperialism*, his first book, is a short, polemical work that consists of a preface by Uchimura Kanzō and five chapters. Prior to publishing the book, Kôtoku wrote a series of forty articles between November 24, 1900, and February 14, 1901, in the *Chiyoda Maiyū Shinbun* (Chiyoda evening news), in which he rehearsed the main arguments of his book.¹¹ The article “Records of Treason and Immorality” (Taigyaku mudōroku) is a draft of his chapter on patriotism. “His Sword Will Crumble into Dust” (Tojindandanroku) is an early version of his chapter on militarism.¹² Finally, “Imperialism” (Teikokushugi) is a forerunner of chapter 4. In addition to reworking these articles into a book, he added a synopsis, an introduction, and a conclusion. Uchimura, his colleague at *Yorozu Chôhō*, hailed the appearance of the book in a short preface. In effect, the famous Christian allied himself with the atheist Kôtoku, and the latter benefited from having a well-known figure patronize his first book. Keiseisha Shoten, a publisher of works on social problems and Christianity, published *Imperialism*.¹³

The book is an important intervention in Japanese debates on imperialism that began only in the 1890s. Kôtoku argues that the popularity of imperialism is tied to the ideologies of the modern Meiji nation-state. He famously states that patriotism and militarism “are the woof and the warp from which the whole cloth of imperialism is woven.” He also contends that the state channels popular affect to support expansion overseas by manipulating the bogeyman of foreign enemies but also to divert the attention of citizens from domestic injustice and inequality. Although nation-states proclaim that imperialism benefits all, the real beneficiaries are members of the political elite, businessmen, financiers, and military officers. For this reason, Kôtoku denounces imperialism as the hijacking of politics by small economic and political cliques.¹⁴ In general, he lays stress on the political, ideological, and psychological causes of imperialism rather than its economic causes.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, *Imperialism* was printed in several editions; the third edition was preceded by sixteen different reviews that appeared in major periodicals, suggesting that the study was widely read and had a significant impact on its readers. However, the author was arrested in 1910 and later tried and convicted for participating in an alleged conspiracy on the life of the Japanese emperor. After Kōtoku's execution in 1911 under the High Treason statute, the government banned *Imperialism* along with his other works. This ban restricted the circulation of Kōtoku's works until 1945, but it was not strictly enforced during the late 1920s, when various anthologies of his works appeared in print. By that time, readers, who were separated from Kōtoku by a full generation, became interested in him as an early Japanese socialist and rebel who resisted the absolutism of the Meiji state.¹⁵

At the end of the Second World War, the emperor declared that he was “only a human being” and became a symbol of “the unity of the Japanese people” under the terms of the 1947 Japanese Constitution. From this point, the High Treason statute under which Kōtoku and others had been convicted ceased to exist. With the postwar democratization and legalization of socialist and communist parties, writers began to unearth new information about the High Treason incident that suggested the trial was not held to punish a conspiracy to kill the Japanese emperor but rather was itself a government strategy to crush the nascent Japanese socialist and anarchist movements by eliminating their most important leaders. Fifty years after the trial, Sakamoto Seima, the last living prisoner, and the wife of Morichika Unpei, one of those executed, launched a legal motion to demand a retrial and overturn the original verdict.¹⁶ In 1965 the Tokyo High Court dismissed the case on the grounds that there was not sufficient evidence to determine whether the defendants were innocent, a decision upheld by the Japanese Supreme Court two years later. In 1975, the Ministry of Justice affirmed that the written records of the High Treason case had vanished either in the 1923 earthquake or during the 1945 fire bombings of Tokyo, making any further appeal of the case impossible. In effect, the guilty verdict against the twenty-six stood in perpetuity.

In the absence of judicial remedies, scholars and citizens' groups have pursued different avenues to win public vindication of the convicted in the 1911 trial, including lobbying municipal assemblies. In December 2000, the assembly of Nakamura (now part of Shimanto City) in Kōchi Prefecture “commended” their native son Kōtoku in a resolution intended to dispel the shadow of suspicion that hovered over his name.¹⁷ “Over the past ninety years, Kōtoku Shūsui's name has been shrouded in darkness as the mastermind behind the alleged High Treason incident. During this final year of the twentieth century, we must understand the actions of Kōtoku and of all others connected in the case . . . and act to restore their honor. Accordingly the city council of Nakamura passes this resolution praising and honoring the great accomplishments of its hometown pioneer, Kōtoku Shūsui.”¹⁸

Similarly, the assemblies of Shingū City and Tanabe City passed resolutions to honor the so-called Shingū group and the brothers Naruishi, respectively.¹⁹ However, the failure to reverse the verdict in the High Treason case and the continuing reverence for the Japanese emperor ensure that their names remain “shrouded in darkness.” Newspaper reporters today refer to the 1911 trial as one based on “false charges” (*enzai*) in a bow to postwar scholarship but they invariably hedge their bets with the caveat that “it is generally thought so” (*to omowareru*). It is inconceivable that the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) would produce a historical drama consecrating Kōtoku as it has recently done with Sakamoto Ryōma, his fellow revolutionary from Kōchi, who is now ubiquitous as a mascot for Kōchi Prefecture and has given his name to its major airport.

In the postwar period, scholars began to assess the significance of Kōtoku Shūsui’s writings, leading to a “Kōtoku boom” in publications that lasted from 1945 to 1955. Just as he enjoyed a reputation as a rebel against state absolutism in the 1920s, he gained popularity as a writer by his status as a martyr murdered by the Meiji government after the war.²⁰ At the same time, a group of scholars planned to publish a complete edition of his works. An early version of the first volume in this series would have included *Imperialism*, but U.S. Occupation censors wrote “forbidden for publication” on its cover. On the interior of the cover, editors wrote by hand: “The contents of the first volume of the complete works of Kōtoku Shūsui cannot be authorized for publication by the GHQ, so we will preserve them in the state of galleys in the expectation that they will see the light of day at a future date, August 1947.” This volume was also to have included *The Essence of Socialism* (Shakaishugi shinzui) and the joint translation of the *Communist Manifesto* by Sakai Toshihiko and Kōtoku Shūsui, in addition to *Imperialism*. As the first two works were already available in paperback format in 1947, it is reasonable to conclude that the volume was banned because of the third work. In his introduction to the 2004 edition of *Imperialism*, Yamaizumi Susumu speculates that U.S. Occupation authorities might have vetoed the planned publication since Kōtoku unequivocally condemned U.S. imperialism and his critique was not welcome as the Cold War was already underway. Wittingly or not, the U.S. authorities extended the prewar ban on Kōtoku’s book by a further seven years.²¹ As soon as the American Occupation of Japan ended in 1952, *Imperialism* saw the light of day, and it is now available in a cheap, well-annotated Iwanami paperback edition.

KŌTOKU’S IMPERIALISM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

From the early part of the twentieth century, anti-imperialist thinkers have proposed different explanations of the causes of modern imperialism. The theories of J. A. Hobson and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin stressed economic determinants that led

nations to acquire colonies. Hobson held that under-consumption and excess savings led capitalists to pursue profits in foreign markets, resulting in an imperialist struggle to control markets and territories overseas. While imperialism harmed the welfare of the nation's citizens because of its military and administrative expenses, "strong organized industrial and financial interests that stand to gain from imperialism find ways to charge this expense to the general public."²² More than a decade later, Lenin blamed imperialism on the monopoly (i.e., the "highest") stage of capitalism itself: concentration of industrial production, merger of banking and industrial capital, export of capital overseas, and division of the world into spheres of influence by the great capitalist powers.²³

By contrast, Joseph Schumpeter, the third major figure in the early critique of imperialism, stressed the political and social causes of imperialism. Imperialism, he held, was an atavism that reflected the emotional disposition of earlier historical periods, but served no useful purpose in the modern world. Warrior castes are the key champions of imperialist policies, which in turn express "the inherited disposition of the ruling class rather than the immediate advantages to be derived from conquest"; as capitalism develops, he predicted that there would be less energy available for imperial conquest.²⁴

Both of these approaches seem questionable when applied to the case of Japan's early imperialism. Theories of economic causation hardly seem relevant to Japan's case. In 1901 Japan had no advanced industrial sector or surplus capital available for export.²⁵ Indeed, the nation needed to borrow vast sums from the United States and England to finance its industrialization and to pay for its foreign wars. Contrary to Lenin's thesis, monopoly capital, epitomized by the *zaibatsu* (family-owned industrial and financial conglomerates), was still in its infancy in the early twentieth century. Indeed, Japanese imperialism preceded the development of a strong capitalist sector or the accumulation of surplus capital, reversing the order of the Hobson/Lenin hypothesis. As Japanese capitalists were at first reluctant to invest in colonies overseas, small and middle merchants constituted the vanguard of the nation's advance into colonial markets.²⁶ By contrast with theories of economic causation, Schumpeter seems to overlap with Kōtoku when he stresses the political and social causes that lead nations to embark on imperialism. However, his argument that imperialism is an atavism tied to a dying warrior caste fails to offer a satisfactory explanation for Japan's modern imperialism. Japan became an imperialist state only after it established a modern army and navy, whereas it pursued a policy of national isolation during two previous centuries of rule by a warrior caste. In addition, the growth of modern capitalism in Japan, far from serving as a brake on Japan's expansionism, actually accelerated it during the later stages of the empire.

Where are we to situate Kōtoku's book in this general intellectual context and particularly in postwar Japanese scholarship? Although scholars have done much

to burnish Kōtoku's reputation as a major twentieth-century thinker, they have generally tended to dismiss *Imperialism* as a flawed and limited work. Invariably, they have criticized Kōtoku for condemning only military imperialism and ignoring the economic causes of the Japanese imperialist push into Asian countries, which is inimical to orthodox Marxist approaches to the subject. While making Kōtoku's theory the ostensible target of their criticism, they have indirectly taken Japan's imperialism to task for failing to abide by Leninist norms.²⁷ In his afterword to *Imperialism*, Ōkōchi Kazuo writes that Kōtoku identifies imperialism with "patriotism and militarism" but fails to treat it as the latest stage of capitalism, an omission that reflects the "limitations of the time in which he lived." In addition, he calls on a small group of intellectuals to launch a socialist revolution from above, but ignores the fact that only an organized proletarian movement can defeat capitalism.²⁸ Itoya Toshio also writes that the book fails to understand that imperialism is a particular stage in the development of modern capitalism but praises Kōtoku for his "transcendent" foresight in pointing out the "backwardness of Japanese capitalism" and the particular traits of its "military imperialism." Nevertheless, Kōtoku overlooks the fact that "imperialism results from the expansion of monopoly capital by means of the acquisition of colonies, the securing of sources of raw materials, the exercise of military force, and the attendant changes to the domestic political and economic system, including the development of military industry and increased centralization of power."²⁹

These writers rely on Lenin's later work as an evaluative yardstick to measure Kōtoku's study, an approach that limits the questions they ask of the work and the answers they can obtain. Since Kōtoku does not trace imperialism back to the expansion of Japanese monopoly and finance capitalism, his *Imperialism* is "immature." While they refer to Lenin's thesis, however, they do not engage with Lenin's arguments; rather, their reference to Lenin has more to do with the acceptance of Lenin's established authority in doctrinal matters than with the cogency of his theories or their specific pertinence to Japan. At this time, Lenin's thesis was widely accepted as the definitive work on imperialism; in addition, imperialism was viewed as a closed subject after World War Two had, for all practical purposes, effectively ended it.³⁰

For a reader today, Leninist dismissals of *Imperialism* are the curious relics of a bygone time. While critics insist on the book's limitations to a particular period and to the case of Japan, these limitations paradoxically constitute the book's forte: Kōtoku offers a non-Eurocentric account of imperialism at a time when Japan was establishing colonies in East Asia and renegotiating the unequal treaties that joined it to the West. Kōtoku lays great stress on political factors precisely because he was writing from the perspective of a citizen of Japan, where such factors had a preponderant influence on government decisions.³¹ That said, however, the sharp distinction between the economic and the political is simplistic since the two were

inextricably intertwined. Much like the British East India Company, the Oriental Development Company or the Manchurian Railroad (Mantetsu), both of which served as a spearhead for the invasion by Japanese economic interests in Korea and Manchuria respectively, were at once quasi-governmental organizations and profitable business enterprises; they symbolized Japanese political and economic control.

While critics accuse Kōtoku of laying too much stress on patriotism and militarism, forces that are merely “symptoms” of imperialism, one could counter that these ideologies were blind spots for the European socialist movement. Despite its opposition to war and imperialism, the Second International dissolved at the start of the First World War when separate workers’ parties failed to maintain a unified front against the war and, instead, rallied to the flag and the cause of their respective nations. The splintering of the working class rendered the socialist movement impotent throughout the war. By contrast, Kōtoku consistently held to an antiwar position throughout the Russo-Japanese War in part because he understood the intoxicating power of patriotism and had a clear grasp of the dire effects imperialism had on the domestic society of the imperialist metropole, including costly arms budgets, tax increases, growing indebtedness, worsening inequality, and oligarchic rule.

If Marxists have by and large rejected Kōtoku’s thesis in *Imperialism*, members of the peace movement in postwar Japan have hailed the book and rediscovered its author as a forerunner who introduced pacifist thought in Japan and led the first important antiwar movement in Japanese history. In “A Sketch of Japan’s Antiwar Literature,” Odagiri Hideo wrote: “One can find many superlative examples of antiwar prose in the essays of Kōtoku Shūsui, Sakai Toshihiko, and Uchimura Kanzō.”³² In particular, writers associated with Shin Nihon Bungakukai (New Japanese Literature Association) were among the first to rediscover Kōtoku and his 1901 *Imperialism* in the context of their campaign to condemn the war complicity and moral responsibility of writers in the prewar period. Kōtoku’s condemnation of militarism and aggressive expansionism in *Imperialism* ensured him a permanent place in the pantheon of the later Japanese peace movement.³³ Ienaga Saburō, editor of the twenty-volume series *Nihon heiwaron taiki* (The compendium of Japanese pacifism) devotes most of the second volume to the writings of Kōtoku, including the entire text of *Imperialism* and editorials from the *Heimin Newspaper*.

In addition, Kōtoku’s book seems less dated today than when it was rediscovered after the Second World War. Since 9/11, American politicians and journalists no longer hesitate to call the United States a global empire and to extol its “benevolent hegemony.” Indeed, imperialism has made a spectacular comeback as a geopolitical reality and as a conceptual frame of analysis for international politics. In his theory, Kōtoku demystifies the ideology of patriotism by showing how governments use it to manufacture consent to policies that actually harm the interests of

the overwhelming majority of the population. His critique seems startlingly prescient and relevant for our times. It offers a cogent explanation for the 2003 invasion of Iraq under President George W. Bush and for the recent posturing by China, Korea, and Japan over uninhabited islands of no intrinsic value to anyone. As in the early twentieth century, imperialism offers a tool that governments use to unify citizens against rivals overseas and to distract them from growing inequalities and social divisions at home. In addition, most earlier studies of Kōtoku were written before the establishment of postcolonial studies and do not problematize empire and imperialism, colonies and nations. Just as postcolonialism has allowed us to reread long-forgotten texts by writers in the West, it enables a fresh approach to Kōtoku's *Imperialism*.³⁴ In this study of *Imperialism*, I offer an analysis that relates Kōtoku's work to our current highly ambivalent relationship with empire.

CHARTING THE COURSE OF JAPAN'S EARLY ANTI-IMPERIALISM MOVEMENT

Imperialism foreshadows Kōtoku's later views and the evolution of the movement he led. After arguing that only a socialist revolution could save humankind from disaster, Kōtoku became a founding member of Japan's first Socialist Party and an important theorist of socialism. He played a central part in the *Yorozu Chōhō*'s press campaign against the Japanese army's plundering of Chinese treasures in the Boxer Rebellion and later led the anti-imperialist and socialist movement as it developed into a movement of national scope during the Russo-Japanese War. Both his conversion to socialism and his rejection of militarism and war are pre-figured in *Imperialism*.

In addition, the Japanese anti-imperialist movement has a significance that transcends the nation of Japan or the Japanese Empire. The movement was an integral part of a global crusade that sought to reform modern capitalism and the international state system. From 1898, following the U.S. colonization of the Philippines, the Anti-Imperialist League in the United States organized chapters in major American cities, held hundreds of public meetings, and launched a campaign to pressure the U.S. Senate to veto the annexation of the Philippines. In England as well, socialist and liberal parties mobilized against the Boer War; Hobson's 1902 book and J. M. Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire* (1899), both classical studies of imperialism, date from this time. The coeval Japanese movement remained in close dialogue with similar movements overseas and Kōtoku adopted an idiom shared by anti-imperialist thinkers in Europe and the United States when he penned his critique.

For Kōtoku, who translated *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels and Peter Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread* into Japanese, the encounter with European thinkers and political movements was a crucial factor in his intellectual develop-

ment. In addition, the significance of his translations into Japanese transcends the national boundaries of Japan. Most of Kōtoku's works, including *Imperialism*, were written in *kundokubun*, an adaptation of classical Chinese, the lingua franca of Japanese intellectuals and accessible as well to literate East Asians because of the classical Chinese grammatical structures and allusions to Chinese history. Since his Sino-Japanese translations of canonical socialist and anarchist works were the first to appear in any East Asian language, they exerted a strong influence on Chinese and Korean intellectuals as well. Paradoxically, the same linguistic factors that made the book accessible to educated Chinese in 1901 render it difficult to negotiate for contemporary Japanese readers. Endō Toshikuni recently translated *Imperialism* into colloquial Japanese.³⁵

However, one should not reduce Kōtoku's intellectual contribution to his role as a conveyer of Western ideas to Japanese or other East Asian intellectuals. When Kōtoku and Sakai Toshihiko cofounded the Heiminsha (Common Man's Association), they inaugurated a new type of political organization in Japan. The Heiminsha was a decentralized organization that established local associations and branches and continued to be active after the newspaper disappeared. It was also a global organization with a branch in San Francisco, which continued after the parent organization was forced out of existence by the Japanese government.

For most historians, the main significance of Japan's victory in the war with Russia was that Japan became one of the five great powers in the international imperialist system. Yet, for the Japanese associated with the pacifist movement, the same war represented an enormous step backward for human progress and justice. By pitting the people (*heimin*) against the state-centered citizens (*kokumin*), the editors of the *Heimin Newspaper* introduced a new historical agent and new social project into contemporary discourse. Appealing to people outside the framework of the nation-state, they articulated a vision of justice and international peace that offered an alternative to world imperialism. Not long after the *Heimin Newspaper* folded, it inspired others to continue the experiment of a radical opposition press for the next several years. In the longer run, its vision of a society beyond the nation has continued to influence political and cultural life until the present.

Furthermore, Kōtoku cultivated ties with Asian revolutionary movements after the Russo-Japanese War, the first major victory by a non-Western power over a putatively Western one, when thousands of Asian students and revolutionaries flocked to the Japanese capital. At this time, Japan's socialist movement had split into two separate groups, with Kōtoku leading the faction rejecting parliamentary tactics and embracing a strategy of direct action. Socialists close to the Kōtoku faction established ties with Asian students, intellectuals, and revolutionaries and lectured to Chinese students in Tokyo as part of the Socialist Lecture Series. They were also among the founding members of the Asian Solidarity Association, organized in Tokyo in 1907 by Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Philippine, and Indian anticolonial activists.

Although the activities of this latter organization were short-lived, it represented an unprecedented attempt to create a concept of anti-imperialist Asia that was based on solidarity among colonized peoples. Breaking with long-standing pan-Asian organizations, this movement was neither state-centered nor based on cultural essentialism or racial identity.³⁶

While one should not underestimate the historical importance of the first anti-imperialist movement, one must acknowledge that it constitutes only the prehistory of socialism in Japan. The early socialist party established by intellectuals, the antiwar movement of the *Heimin Newspaper* (1903–5), and the later adoption of the strategy of direct action all ended in failure. In his early career, Kōtoku was mistaken to believe that the Japanese government would accommodate a socialist party and countenance a radical press. Later, he grossly overestimated the effectiveness of direct action as a strategy to bring down capitalism in Japan and end imperialism. In the end, the Japanese state staged the High Treason trial to eliminate the leaders of radical left and tightened censorship to stop the spread of their “dangerous” ideas. With its principal leaders in prison or dead and the rank and file scattered and leaderless, the anti-imperialist movement entered a long period of hibernation, known as the “winter period,” until it reemerged as a broader social movement several years later. Immediately after the end of the First World War, tenant and labor protests multiplied in Japan, culminating in the Rice Riots of 1918, which involved nearly one million protestors and led to the start of party politics in the country.³⁷ In 1920, socialists and labor leaders founded the Socialist League (Shakaishugi Dōmei) to transform the working class into a political force, and two years later, the Japan Communist Party was established illegally with Sakai Toshihiko as its first chairman.

Japan’s first anti-imperialist movement planted the seeds for later anti-imperialist movements, but the latter have tended to overshadow the former in historical memory. Like the Russo-Japanese War, Japan’s Twenty-One Demands on China in 1915 and her dispatch of troops to Siberia in 1918 awakened Japanese intellectuals to the dangers of militarism and imperialism. Globally, the imperialist system lost its legitimacy throughout the world after Wilson’s Fourteen Points and Lenin’s appeals to national liberation movements, ushering in a sustained period of anti-colonial activism around the world.³⁸ In East Asia, the movement against imperialism was symbolized by the March 1, 1919, Independence Movement in Korea, when millions of Koreans demonstrated against Japan’s colonial rule, and the May 4 Movement in China, in which Chinese students protesting the government’s weak response to the Treaty of Versailles and Japan’s seizure of Shandong Province gave birth to modern Chinese nationalism.

Kōtoku Shūsui and
Anti-Imperialist Thought

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In the Shadow of Revolution

*The old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum,
a great many morbid symptoms appear.*

—ANTONIO GRAMSCI

The Japan of Kōtoku's youth was a land of far-reaching changes and impending dangers. In 1868, the Meiji Restoration swept away the feudal institutions of the Tokugawa period (1600–1867), abolished the castes into which members of society had been divided, established a compulsory system of universal education and a conscript army, and launched deep reforms of all the nation's social, political, and economic institutions. Many young Japanese were attracted to new universalist notions of political freedom, democracy, and popular sovereignty. Kōtoku, who belonged to the first generation to come of age after 1868, was educated in the new school system and infused with new political ideals of the age. The radical Meiji reforms opened up hitherto inconceivable possibilities of advancement and social mobility for him and for the young men of his generation. They also impelled people to reflect on the social changes that they had experienced and to condemn the “morbid symptoms” of the new society being born. Some viewed the faction-ridden Meiji regime and its pursuit of empire as a betrayal of the Meiji Restoration's promise to institute a just society in conformity with universal ideals.

In his “Letter from Jail to Three Lawyers,” Kōtoku provided a revealing analysis of the significance of the Meiji Restoration and the meaning of his own life within the vortex of history:

The word “revolution,” written with two kanji *kakumei* [革命] is a Chinese term that signifies that the mandate of heaven of a reigning sovereign passes to his successor. In this sense, it only signifies a change in the person of sovereign, but we use this term now to translate the word “revolution” [*revōrūshon*]. We only speak of revolution in the case of a radical transformation of the political and economic order. If power simply passes from the hands of the Ashikagas to Oda Nobunaga, from the

Toyotomis to the Tokugawas, it makes no sense to speak of revolution since the feudal military system of government remains unaltered despite these substitutions. In contrast, the Meiji Restoration was a revolution even though it reinstated the ancient power of the emperor. It was not a revolution because the emperor of the Chōshū and Satsuma clans seized power from the Tokugawa, but because all of the forms and customs of our everyday life were transformed from top to bottom. . . .

In the strict sense, a revolution is an event that arrives spontaneously and that does not depend on a single individual or political party. Kido or Saigō or Ōkubo did not cause the Meiji Restoration. The feudal system and social classes established at the beginning of the Tokugawa period had not kept pace with progress of the human sciences or the development of society over the previous three centuries. Undermined from within, the entire system proved insolvent and eventually collapsed. Even a hundred Kidos or Saigōs or Ōkubos would not have been able to accomplish anything if it had not been for this tendency of a rotten social order and political organization to break down. If they had been born twenty years earlier, they might have been beheaded like Yoshida Shōin, or they would have died without having achieved anything. Every revolution is the accomplishment of a general social trend.¹

For many Japanese who lived through it, the Meiji Restoration was a revolution that overturned the existing social order and changed everyday life, but this revolution was no sooner accomplished than it was betrayed by the new ruling elites. Condemning the new oligarchical order, the young Tokutomi Sohō in *The Future of Japan* (*Nihon no shōrai*) predicted that a second restoration would need to be led by “country gentlemen” who had the necessary qualities for independence, self-respect, and self-government to complete the transformation of Japan from a military aristocracy to an industrial society.² Kōtoku compared the Meiji Restoration to the French Revolution that had set out to realize freedom, equality, and brotherhood (*hakuai*).³ However, Japan’s political leaders, attached to the old regime and blinded by a narrow attachment to their clans (*hanbatsu*), “forgot and betrayed the purpose and the spirit of this revolution.”⁴ While he had initially harbored high expectations that a coalition of opposition political parties could revive the revolutionary spirit of the Restoration, he was ultimately disillusioned when Japan’s opposition political cabinets took control of the diet, noting bitterly that “it is pointless to pin one’s hopes on the corrupt and decadent politicians of the present day.”⁵ Besides betraying the promise of the Meiji revolution, the oligarchical regime also endeavored to recast the historical remembrance of the revolution. Rather than a revolution, it was a mere restoration (*fukko*) of an ancient past, whose primary achievement was to restore the emperor to his rightful position as center of power. Elaborating an ideology centered on the imperial family and the body of the nation (*kokutai*), the Japanese oligarchy embarked on a course of domestic repression and overseas expansion that eventually led Japan to cataclysmic wars and ruin.⁶

Kōtoku's generation was assigned the task to return to first principles, to complete the revolution, and redeem those martyred by its violence. Without the sense of betrayed promise and the moral imperative addressed to future generations, the memory of revolution, with its pantheon of heroes and martyrs, would be nothing more than a substitution of new leaders for old ones and a gratuitous episode of bloodletting.⁷ The notion of revolution as an uncompleted task and an unrealized promise plays an important role in the memory of revolutions in general, and especially of the French Revolution. Thus, European socialists in the nineteenth century held that the French Revolution failed to fulfill its promise of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and that it was left to the urban proletariat to carry it to completion. In an analogous way, Kōtoku first placed his faith in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement to carry out a second revolution that would base government on popular sovereignty.

Growing up in the first generation of the Meiji period, Kōtoku started as a militant (*sōshi*) in the Liberal Party, the more radical faction of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. The Liberal Party was established to rescue smaller landlords who went bankrupt and were forced to sell their lands during the *bakumatsu* period (1853–68). The *sōshi*, as the younger political activists were called, wanted to find places for themselves as members of the Liberal Party either as representatives of local assemblies or of the national diet. Like many of his peers, Kōtoku came from a similar background and harbored ambitions to be elected as a party representative in the diet during his early career to rebuild his family fortunes.

However, eventually the opposition parties reached an accommodation with the government dominated by the Satsuma and Chōshū domains. In 1900, a new political party called the Rikken Seiyūkai (Association of Friends of Constitutional Politics) banded together under the presidency of Itō Hirobumi and recruited its members from the former opposition parties, such as the Liberal Party and the Constitutional Reform Party. For Kōtoku, the establishment of this party did not signify the realization of the dream of party politics, but rather the capitulation of the former opposition and the co-optation of their leaders to the absolutism of the Meiji government. On August 30, 1900, he wrote a passionate eulogy for the Liberal Party titled "In Mourning for the Liberal Party" (*Jiyūtō o matsuru bun*) in the *Yorozu Chōhō*, which is among his finest texts. Recounting its past glories and lamenting its present betrayals, he concluded: "The Liberal Party has died but its glorious history can never be eliminated."⁸ This article, written at the request of Nakae Chōmin, consecrated Kōtoku as a leader of radical opponents of the government. The Rikken Seiyūkai went on to dominate Japanese politics for the next two decades, ensuring a long period of stable, conservative rule.

Kōtoku vowed to continue the struggle of the Liberal Party, but within a new political organization uncompromised by its betrayals; namely, the socialist movement. Not long afterward, he joined with others to create the first socialist party of

Japan. He believed that the triumph of socialism, which would complete the Meiji Restoration, was ordained by the laws of history and evolution, a view he expressed in his primer to “scientific” socialism, *Essence of Socialism* (Shakaishugi shinzui; 1903):

In matters of revolution, man proposes but the heavens dispose. Humans can only lead and guide a revolution, but they do not create it in the first place. They lack the ability to determine when a revolution will occur or when it will end. However, as long as humans desire continuous progress and development, they cannot escape the necessity of revolutions, even if they inspire fear and loathing. We must lead and help the revolution when it occurs, so that we can enjoy its fruits as soon as possible and by peaceful means. This is what is demanded of the Socialist Party, which has no need of murderous violence, but simply rides the wave into the future.⁹

Since revolution would arrive automatically through the play of evolutionary forces, the socialist movement should prepare the public for the inevitable by engaging in electoral activity and pursuing parliamentary power. It had no need for recourse to violent or extraparliamentary action. It should also educate the general public about socialism, promote universal suffrage, and try to elect as many socialist representatives to parliament as possible. At the time he wrote these words, Kôtoku was also active in the movement for universal suffrage and supported the referendum and ballot initiative as methods to expand the democratic spaces within Japanese society.

If the ironclad laws of evolution shaped the course of events, they presided over powerless human lives, arbitrarily apportioning success and failure. Chōmin, an intellectual leader of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, failed to unify the opposition and sweep away clan government, whereas his fellow Tosa man Sakamoto Ryōma succeeded in unifying the Chōshū and Satsuma clans in opposition to the *bakufu* (the feudal military government of the Tokugawa period).¹⁰ Kôtoku poses the rhetorical question, “Should we attribute success or failure to fate or to the individual?”¹¹ Unlike history in the larger sense, individual lives resemble rolls of the dice. Kôtoku clearly identified himself not with the lucky few such as Sakamoto Ryōma or Kido, who lived when historical time was ready for them, but rather with failed heroes like Chōmin and Yoshida, men born before the time was ripe. If he discovered a precedent for his own historical failure in the lives of these predecessors, he also retained hope that history would eventually vindicate his efforts.

Not long after he wrote his letter from jail to his three lawyers in the High Treason trial, Kôtoku reflected on the significance of his imminent execution in his final written work, “Facing the Death Penalty” (Shikei no mae), an incomplete draft that reflects the nocturnal world of prison and the bleak prospect of impending execution. Even before his physical death, he realized that he had already ceased to exist as an

historical actor able to influence or alter the course of events. In that respect, his execution by hanging was redundant: “For me at this moment, the death penalty means nothing. Obviously, I do not have the freedom to speak today about my role in the affair and the trial held behind closed doors. A hundred years from now, someone may speak out on my behalf. Whatever the case may be, the death penalty is nothing at all. These are not empty or idle boasts, but simply the plain unvarnished truth.”¹² Entirely deprived of freedom, Kōtoku knew he had already been “executed” as an historical subject by the state and wisely left his vindication to future generations.

Facing the death penalty in 1911, Kōtoku thought of himself as a second Yoshida Shōin, born before the time was ripe for social revolution. Indeed, the history of his reception in the century after his death underscores the validity of this self-identification. Regarded as a “terrorist” until 1945, he is now considered a martyr of Meiji period absolutism. Without a doubt, he was an untimely man, born either too early or too late to receive the honors he deserved.

GROWING UP

Kōtoku’s leadership of the anti-imperialist movement and his enthusiasm for revolutionary politics owe much to his birth in Tosa (now Kōchi Prefecture). He spent his formative years in this politically and intellectually turbulent region, the vortex of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. Besides Sakamoto Ryōma (1835–67), Tosa produced many revolutionary figures including Gotō Shōjirō and Itagaki Taisuke, leaders of the Liberal Party, and Nakae Chōmin, the “Rousseau of Japan” and eventually Kōtoku’s mentor.

Kōtoku Denjirō was born on September 22, 1871, in Nakamura, a small village in Tosa. Nakamura, known as the Kyoto of Tosa, had been founded during the Heian period (794–1185) and had once been a fief with four hundred samurai. The town was laid out in imitation of Kyoto and had once housed a retired emperor and one of the capital’s noble families. Until 1689, it had been a castle town. However, this fief was destroyed by the *bakufu* after its ruler turned down an appointment to an office on the Tokugawa Junior Council. Kōtoku’s father, a wealthy pharmacist by trade, owned a sake shop in Nakamura as well as small landholdings, and his ancestors had served as village heads for generations and been granted the privilege of carrying swords. The father died within a year of his son’s birth, leaving his wife alone to raise their four children. Denjirō’s mother, Taji, of samurai extraction, managed the family business by day and took in sewing jobs at night, but, in spite of her exertions, the family endured great privations.

From his childhood, Denjirō suffered from bad health and contracted tuberculosis and intestinal catarrh. He began his studies of the Confucian classics at a private academy but he also attended public school. Though he was an excellent

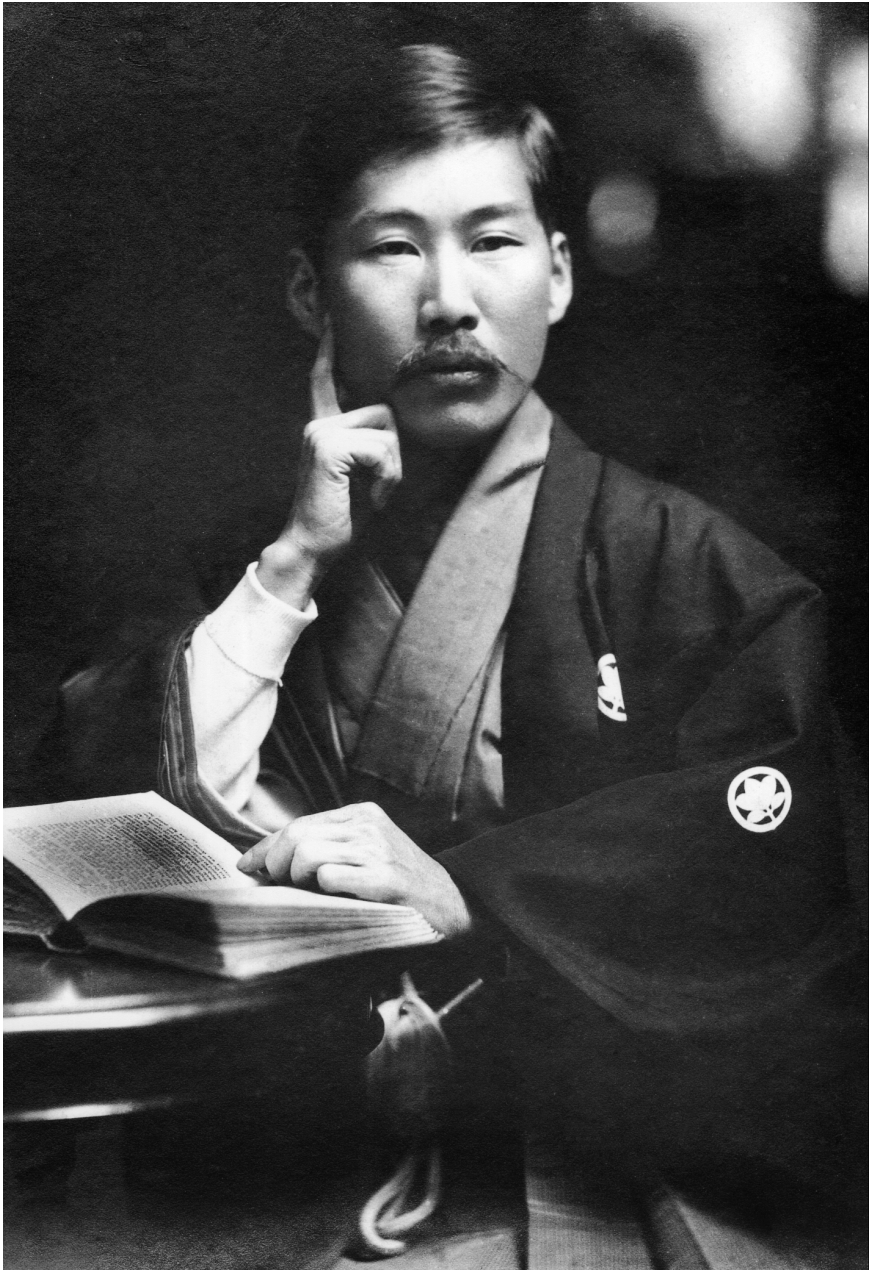


Photo of Kōtoku Shūsui in 1909. Image provided by the Shimanto City Public Library.

student, he had to give up his formal schooling at the age of fifteen because the middle school in his district was damaged by a typhoon and then not reopened for financial reasons. Even at this precocious age, he organized fellow students unable to pursue their studies into an association of studies and discussions (*danseikai*) at a temple in Nakamura.¹³ He later wrote that his childhood experience of privation and injustice played a determining role in his conversion to socialism: “Born in Tosa and intoxicated by the thought of freedom and popular rights from my youth, I could hardly help but feel pity for my family and relatives, whose business declined after the Restoration, and experienced the bitterness and injustice of fate when I had to end my schooling due to a lack of money.”¹⁴

In 1886, a reinvigorated Freedom and Popular Rights Movement led by Gotō Shōjirō (1839–97) and Tani Kanjō (1837–1911) united all antigovernment groups into a single body called the Grand Alliance (*Daidōdanketsu*).¹⁵ The Grand Alliance demanded that the government renegotiate treaties with Western powers, pursue a more aggressive diplomacy on the Asian continent, reduce the land tax, and grant greater freedom of speech and assembly. As this list of demands suggests, opponents of the regime saw no contradiction between greater liberty for the Japanese people and the submission reserved for Japan’s neighbors, since both served the goal of the nation’s consolidation. In December 1887, thousands of activists flocked to Tokyo to organize protests and assemble in front of the homes of government ministers and elder statesmen. The leaders of the movement, Hoshi Tōru and Kataoka Kenkichi, were promised a meeting with the head of the government, Itō Hirobumi, on December 26, but the latter reneged on this promise. On December 25, 1887, the government passed the Chian Jōrei (Peace Preservation Ordinance), an ordinance that not only restricted freedom of speech and assembly but also ordered the expulsion of 570 opposition politicians and activists from the capital, including Nakae Chōmin.

In 1888, Kōtoku ran away from home and became a *shosei* or household student of Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901). His encounter with Chōmin, the first Japanese translator of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the intellectual leader of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, decisively influenced his later development. Chōmin thought of him as his most talented disciple, and he in turn revered Chōmin as his master. In later years, he described Chōmin as a “promoter of civil liberties and rights by eliminating the privileged class and the nobles whom he regarded with hatred because he deeply admired the ideals of democracy after his time in France.” However, he noted that Chōmin was a “propagator [*kosuisha*] of revolutionary thought” and a sower of the “seeds of revolution,” rather than a successful revolutionary activist (*sakushi*), and this description could easily be applied to Kōtoku as well.¹⁶ In 1889, Chōmin was elected to a seat in the national diet from Osaka’s fourth district (with 1,352 out of 2,041 votes cast), a district with a large outcast (*burakumin*) population. Ultimately, he stepped down from his seat in Japan’s

first national assembly after falling out with his fellow opposition deputies who voted in favor of the government budget. Besides giving his student a taste for radical thought, his teacher bestowed on him his pen name (*gō*) of *shūsui*. Chōmin had originally given him the pen name *shunai*, which implied vagueness, but the student complained that this name did not suit him. By contrast, *shūsui* combined the characters of autumn and water (this compound was the title of the seventeenth chapter of the *Zhuangzi* and the name of a famous sword in the Edo period). With its connotations of clarity and melancholy, the pen name suited both the style and the character of the young writer.¹⁷

Chōmin had his students read Mencius and Zhuangzi: “Unless one understands the rules of Chinese writing, how can one compose a text? One who aspires to write well needs to read many Chinese texts.”¹⁸ He himself had translated Rousseau into classical Chinese, and he influenced the literary style of his student, who wrote *Imperialism* in an adaptation of classical Chinese. In addition, he helped him to launch his career in journalism, notably by recommending him to Itagaki Taisuke as a translator for the *Jiyū* (Liberal) *Newspaper* and later securing him a position at the *Yorozu Chōhō*, where he became a prominent columnist.

Toward the end of his life, Chōmin chose Kōtoku to edit his literary testament: *Another Year and a Half to Go* (Ichinen yūhan) and *Sequel to Another Year and a Half to Go* (Zoku ichinen yūhan). These titles were based on his doctor’s verdict that Chōmin had at most a year and half to live (in fact, he lasted only nine months) after being stricken with cancer of the larynx. Kōtoku also wrote an elegiac memoir dedicated to his teacher shortly after his death, titled *Chōmin sensei*, one of his most popular books. This portrait of Chōmin is not an objective biography, but rather a homage that focuses on the period when Denjirō lived with him and records the words of the teacher; it aims to justify Kōtoku’s claim to be the legitimate disciple of the master. Like other disciples of Chōmin, including Sakai Yūzaburō (1859–1900) and Kojima Ryūtarō (1849–1913), Kōtoku traced his own conversion to socialism to Chōmin, even though the latter had always stressed the priority of establishing democracy and political equality in Japan to social and economic reform. By contrast, his young disciples devoted their energies to solving the nation’s social problems and tackling the social inequality caused by rapid industrialization.

Like many young men in the Meiji middle period, he was strongly influenced by the nationalism of the group centered around the publication *Japanese* (Nihonjin), including Miyake Setsurei and Kuga Katsunan, and by the social idealism and support for democracy associated with Tokutomi Sohō and his *Friend of the People* (Kokumin no tomo).¹⁹ Indeed, many of Kōtoku’s most important articles appeared in *Japanese* and his friendship with Miyake lasted until his death.²⁰ Although Tokutomi later became an important supporter of Japanese imperialism, Kōtoku regarded him as the principal intellectual source of the Japanese socialist movement.

Although he still had aspirations to become a politician in the Liberal Party, he began to make his living as a journalist. In fact, he began his journalistic career as a translator of the English press articles and cables for the *Liberal Newspaper*.²¹ In the 1890s, the growth of the international wire services such as Reuters and transoceanic cables fostered the creation of a global information network that linked imperial centers to peripheries, a forerunner of today's information society. Newspapers competed with one another to introduce new technologies and expand their access to overseas wire services.²² Thanks to these technological developments, the world became an increasingly unified but also decentered place in which every event was linked instantaneously to every other event. In this world, discrete occurrences—say, the Boer War, the Boxer Rebellion, Philippine resistance to American imperialism—could only be understood by being placed side by side and linked in a common international framework. Through his activities as translator and journalist, Kōtoku acquired a ready understanding of the world imperial system that served him well when he wrote *Imperialism*.

Reflecting the fluidity of the notion of “literature” at this time, Kōtoku also authored novels and plays during his early career. He wrote scripts for the new militant theater (*sōshi shibai*) in collaboration with his friend Kurihara Ryōkichi (1855–1911) that were first published in *Shinome Shinbun* (The dawn). Chōmin directed this journal and served as an advisor to the earliest militant theater troupe of Sudō Sadanori, Theater for Reform in Japan (Nihon Kairyō Engeki). Initially, this agit-prop theater was performed in the streets and aimed to change the views of the audience by spreading the notions of freedom and popular sovereignty. In addition, under the pseudonym Iroha, Kōtoku published his first fictional works in 1894, including *The Veil* (Okozukin), a short novel that revolves around a woman's vengeance against her brother-in-law, who discovers that his father had hidden the identity of his *burakumin* mother. He also published two short novels about the late nineteenth-century political milieu in Russia: *Tragic Wind and Sad Rain* (Sanfū hui), which first appeared in the *Liberal Newspaper* between April 7 and May 25, 1894, and *The Nihilistic Student* (Kyomutō shosei), which suggests that he had sympathy for this movement. The former is an account of a terrorist attempt on the life of the Russian tsar by populists (*narodnik*), as told by the Russian woman Marii Varaskii.²³ The populist milieu in Russia was a favorite theme for Japanese political novels written after 1881, the year of the assassination of Tsar Alexander the Second, and inspired thirty-one literary works that very year. In one of his final works, Kōtoku praises the populists, who often came from privileged backgrounds, for their sincerity, their refusal to abide by social conventions, and their willingness to live in the countryside as teachers, doctors, or ordinary workers. He also argues that they were driven to adopt terrorist methods because of the repression of any form of political activity, suggesting that similar tactics might be used against the Japanese state.²⁴

On August 1, 1894, Japan dispatched seven thousand troops to Korea, demanding that China withdraw the troops it sent to help the Korean government crush the popular Tonghak movement. As this conflict expanded into full-scale war, the Japanese government stirred up patriotism to unify the population in favor of war, although Nakae Chōmin was one of the few prominent thinkers to dissent from the prowar consensus. In contrast, Kōtoku was a stalwart backer of the war with China.²⁵ After the *Liberal Newspaper* went bankrupt at the end of 1894, Kōtoku left for Hiroshima to work for the *Hiroshima Newspaper*, but he only stayed there briefly and soon returned to Tokyo. Hiroshima had been the site of the imperial headquarters and the news center of Japan during the war, but this situation came to an end with the conclusion of the Shimonoseki Peace Treaty of 1895.

Through his friend Koizumi Sakutarō, he found employment in the *Chūō (Central) Newspaper* as journalist and translator. After publishing a eulogy following the death of the Meiji emperor's mother-in-law on February 3, 1897, he was promoted within the journal by the publisher Ōoka Ikuzō. Kōtoku earned his reputation mainly for his critical and satirical articles, but he retained a deep respect for the imperial institution throughout most of his life. When a cabinet official in the government of Itō Hirobumi purchased the newspaper, Kōtoku, who resented Itō for his role in expelling political activists from Tokyo in 1887, resigned from his job.

Kōtoku called his mother to join him in Tokyo and, with her encouragement, he married Asako, a young woman from a traditional warrior family in Fukushima. However, disappointed by her looks and lack of education, he divorced her within two months, sent her home to visit her parents, and, hours later, mailed her a letter of divorce.²⁶ In 1899, he wedded Morōka Chiyoko (1875–1960) in a marriage arranged by Chōmin. The daughter of a renowned *kokugaku* scholar (“national study,” a school of Japanese thought and philology during the Tokugawa period), she had mastered *kanbun* (classical Chinese), and was conversant with English and French as well as in traditional Japanese arts. Despite his abstract belief in equality between the sexes, he had patriarchal ideas regarding women, whom he treated mainly as sexual objects, and he was a great frequenter of brothels.²⁷

In 1897 he started to work as a journalist at the *Yorozu Chōhō*, a newspaper founded in 1892 by Kuroiwa Ruikō.²⁸ Kuroiwa, a Tosa man who had taken part in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement but then became disillusioned with the Liberal Party, started the newspaper to criticize the government. An innovator in the press, Kuroiwa placed scandalous stories on the third page of the paper, giving birth to the expression *sanmen-kiji*, the Japanese term for human-interest story. Indeed, its exposés of various government scandals resulted in the dismissal of important figures from their posts. Kuroiwa also assembled the most talented journalists of the day, including Naitō Konan (1866–1934), later founder of the school of Japanese Sinology at Kyoto University; Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930), an

early Japanese Christian and philosopher; Morita Shiken (1861–97), an important translator of French literature; Taoka Reiun (1870–1912), a prominent Meiji literary critic; and of course Kōtoku. The *Yorozu Chōhō* gained fame for its social commentary and criticism during the interwar years when its circulation rose from 42,000 in 1895 to 150,000 in 1903. It became the best selling newspaper in Japan and played an influential part in setting the agenda for public discussion.

While he was a journalist in the paper, Kōtoku met Sakai Toshihiko (1870–1933), a writer with whom he later collaborated closely. He studied the life of Japan's urban residents and published a series of studies on working conditions in the textile industry, poverty, and corruption, including one called "The Degeneration of Society: Its Causes and Cures" in which he blamed the corruption of Japanese society on the political environment and social system in which Japanese lived.²⁹ While he did not yet advocate socialism, he supported a radical reconstruction of society as a solution to social corruption and decadence. From his time as a journalist at the *Yorozu Chōhō*, Kōtoku emerged as a public intellectual and leader of the radical opposition to the Meiji regime.

THE IMPERIALIST WORLD ORDER AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST CURRENTS IN JAPAN

Besides offering unprecedented opportunities for Japanese of all walks of life to rise and achieve success (*risshin shusse*), the Meiji Restoration formally incorporated Japan into the new world imperialist order and the capitalist world market. Commodore Perry's "black ships" forced Japan to open itself to international trade and to surrender crucial bits of sovereignty in so-called unequal treaties.³⁰ While the black ships had administered a symbolic blow to the Tokugawa *bakufu*, hastening its fall, the rapid encroachment of Western imperialism posed the direct threat of colonization to Japan. The unequal treaties engendered in politically aware Japanese an abiding resentment toward foreign interference and a strong will to protect the nation's independence. Whereas Fukuzawa Yukichi had observed in his 1873 *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* that "Japan has a government but no nation" (*Nihon ni wa seifu arite kokumin [nēshon] nashi*), Meiji leaders encouraged the population to identify with the nation-state as *kokumin* through the development of the school system, the creation of a national ideology, and the conscription system.³¹ "Not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did all the people living in 'Japan' realize that it was commonsensical and natural to possess a national identity and to feel a sense of responsibility to the national collectivity."³²

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Western powers continued to expand into Asia and the Pacific region. Russia advanced into northeastern China, France seized Indochina, British took over Burma and the Malay Peninsula, and the Kingdom of Samoa was divided into three zones of influence by Great Britain, the

United States, and Germany. In a memorandum from 1887, Inoue Kaoru summed up the common view on the imminent Western threat: “The continents of Africa and Asia are about to become the cockpit of conflict among the Europeans.”³³ This new imperialism differed in one important respect from the earlier treaty port system. The former system was based on the principle of “most favored nation” that ensured that any benefit won by one power would be extended to others, but the new one pitted imperial powers against one another to acquire exclusive territorial or economic enclaves. Japanese leaders were most worried about the indirect threat that Western struggle for imperial domination in East Asia would pose to Japan, a concern that deepened when the Russians began to construct the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1891.³⁴ In addition to strategic anxieties, Meiji businessmen sought to win government support for expanded commercial ties with, and profitable investment in, Korea and China.

Partly because of this international environment, Japan’s national identity was from the start tied to questions of imperialism and colonialism. Even before it expanded overseas, Japan colonized Hokkaido, the northernmost island. It encouraged large-scale emigration by farmers and samurai to settle the “empty” lands, and heeding the counsel of the American Horace Capron, who had helped to overpower native resistance to the settlement of the American West, it accelerated efforts to assimilate the indigenous Ainu population. In 1879, it deposed the king of the Ryūkyū Islands, which had long had a tributary relation to Japan and China, and renamed these southern islands Okinawa Prefecture. In short, Japan annexed territories to its north and south to create clearly demarcated and secure international boundaries, a *sine qua non* of the modern nation-state. Both acquisitions offered Japan valuable precedents and models for colonial development of the land and assimilation of the population that it would put to use in Korea and Taiwan.

Besides establishing secure boundaries that delimited the nation, Japanese leaders viewed the acquisition of external colonies as a prerequisite for attaining the status of a civilized nation in an imperialist world system.³⁵ Emulating the “civilized” West, Japan dispatched a military expedition to colonize Taiwan and civilize the “savages” on the island in 1873.³⁶ In 1876, it used gunboat diplomacy to open Korea and foisted on its neighbor its own version of unequal treaties. In 1884, it attempted a coup in the Korean capital and engaged in armed clashes with both Korean and Chinese detachments in and around Seoul.

In addition, influential thinkers argued that Japan needed to become an imperialist power to protect its independence. While some called for territorial aggrandizement, others argued that Japan should expand commercially rather than territorially, by encouraging commerce, sending immigrants abroad, and establishing Japanese enclaves around the world. From the 1880s, writers “discovered” Nan’yō, a region to the south of Japan that was relatively unpopulated and rich in resources. The liberal economist Taguchi Ukichi urged his compatriots to emigrate to Nan’yō

and develop trading companies there, while Shiga Shigetaka urged in 1890 that the Japanese “seize an unoccupied island [in the South Seas], and hoist their flag over it.”³⁷ In 1894, Tokutomi Sohō, founder of the journal *Kokumin no tomo*, argued that the emigration of Japanese individuals overseas and their creation of commercial enterprises were metonymic for the expansion of Japan in general. In “Expansionism in Greater Japan” (*Dainihon bōchōron*), he argued: “Proactive expansion must start with the activities of private individuals.” The Japanese should emulate the British by establishing settlement communities and developing enterprises overseas, thereby contributing to the strength and prosperity of the Japanese race.³⁸ After the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), the trickle of emigrants to Asia and North America turned into a flood, and Tokutomi became a strong advocate of military strengthening and expansionism.

The incorporation of Japan in a world imperial system also generated an early anti-imperialist current of thought that advocated the revival of Asia. The call for the revitalization of Asia (*kōa*) threatened by the West was a powerful force from the *bakumatsu* to the Meiji period. Ueki Emori, an important figure in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, proposed the formation of an Asian Federation (*Ajia Rengō*) to revitalize Asia. Tarui Tokichi founded the Far Eastern Socialist Party (*Tōyō Shakaitō*) in Shimabara in Nagasaki Prefecture on May 5, 1882, which championed Asian solidarity and egalitarianism in Japan. Sakai Toshihiko later described this party as the origin of the Japanese socialist and anarchist movements.³⁹ As in the case of the French and Russian revolutions, these thinkers urged Japan to export its “revolution” to nearby Asian countries, because Japan’s revolution would likely fail without a similar transformation in China and Korea. In later years, activists affiliated with the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement such as Miyazaki Tōten, who shared this worldview, played an active role in bringing about a revolution in China. However, by the early 1880s the important enlightenment figure Fukuzawa Yukichi became disillusioned by Japanese failures to “reform” Korea and called for Japan to abandon such dreams, to leave Asia (*datsua*), and adopt policies toward its neighbors similar to those of Western powers.

Indeed, many supporters of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement later shifted away from this notion of Asian confederation to a call for Japan to be the leader of East Asia, as it was the most advanced and civilized nation in the region. While they vehemently opposed Western imperialism, they became outspoken champions of the Japanese variety, often basing their appeals on the Social Darwinist doctrine of the “survival of the fittest,” which became a hegemonic ideology in the late nineteenth century, supplanting the popular rights doctrine that had prevailed earlier in the Meiji period. Similarly, if Ueki and Tarui had viewed an Asian Federation as an extension of the struggle for popular rights to the international domain, later writers supported Japanese expansion in Asia as an application of Darwinism to global politics. They described Japan’s role to its neighbors in highly

stratified pedagogical (as teacher or mentor) or chivalric terms (upholder or defender), and tended to justify Japan's special mission on the grounds of a presumed racial or cultural similarity, claiming that, as an Asian nation, it had a far greater understanding of China and Korea than Western powers. While continuing to advocate the liberation of Asia from Western imperialism, they argued that Japan, as the most advanced Asian nation, must confront the West with the combined strength of Asia behind her.⁴⁰

In fact, government leaders and opponents alike borrowed their rhetoric toward Western imperialism and toward Japan's Asian neighbors from this early anti-imperialist current of thought. They specifically insisted that Japan had a duty to protect the territorial integrity of China (*Shina hozen*) and to preserve the independence of Korea (*Chōsen dokuritsu*). While these slogans were ostensibly altruistic, in practice they meant nothing more than that Japan would resist the attempt by any third party (especially Russia) to seek hegemony in Japan's East Asian neighbors. Eventually, with the creation of Pan-Asianist groups such as the Gen'yōsha (Dark Ocean Society) and the Kokuryūkai (Black Dragon Society), Pan-Asianists became the shock troops of Japanese imperialism on the continent, while they continued to call for the expulsion of Western imperialism from Asia. In short, the earliest anti-imperial movement in Japan was opposed to Western imperialism but tended to countenance Japanese imperialism as a form of protection of Asian neighbors.

Precisely as activists in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement were evolving toward the assertion of national rights, Chōmin published *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* (Sansuijin keirin mondō), an open-ended debate between different currents of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. The central problem in this work was to chart the future course for Japan and preserve its political independence. The "drunkards" shared a common starting point: weak and backward, Japan was threatened by the looming confrontation between the principal European powers in Asia.

Simply put, the dialogue pitted an advocate of people's rights against a supporter of the rights of the nation personified, respectively, by a "gentleman of Western studies" and a "swashbuckler." The gentleman, an idealist who defends the enlightenment values of political democracy, believes that human society moves on a linear path of progress toward an ever more perfect state. The establishment of democracy in nations will lead to world peace, the abolition of the state, and the unification of all humankind into one vast family.⁴¹ The Westernized gentleman rejects the idea that Japan must become a military power and proposes that it pursue the policy of small-countryism and nonresistance in case of foreign invasion.

If the gentleman embodies an idealistic view of "evolution," the swashbuckler attacks the weak point of his opponent's argument. If one nation neglects to build up its defenses and renounces the right to wage war, what will prevent its neighbors from launching an armed invasion against it? If the notion of evolution

undergirded an optimistic view of history as linear progress, it also provided the basis for a far less hopeful notion of the “struggle for survival.” The swashbuckler argued that the fastest way for Japan to develop as a modern nation was to pursue an aggressive policy of expansion by invading a country “somewhere in Asia or Africa, and I forget its name,” “vast in size and rich in treasures, but extremely weak,” “to take over a third or even half of its territory.” By seizing it, “we would change our nation from small to large, from weak to strong, and from poor to rich.”⁴² The swashbuckler favors an aggressive policy of expansion on the Asian continent to counter the Western threat and ensure Japan’s survival.

A third party, Dr. Nankai, referees the debate and offers his own views at the end. Chōmin, beguiled by both visions of the future, ended his book on an ironic note: “Master Nankai keeps drinking, while the Western gentleman is rumored to have left for the U.S. and the warrior departed for Shanghai.” This ending is both fitting and ironic, since the gentleman no doubt despairs of his ability to realize his ideals of democracy in Japan, while the warrior goes to China to carry out his plan of colonization, foreshadowing the later continental adventurers (*rōnin*) in the early twentieth century. In his concluding words, Dr. Nankai refuses simplistic Westernization, explores correspondences between Western ideas and those of ancient China, and wants to believe in a future in which Japan becomes more democratic while maintaining peace with its neighbors. Scholars have argued about which point of view represents that of Chōmin, with some contending that Master Nankai is Chōmin’s spokesman and others arguing that each of the three represents at best a partial view of this multifaceted author.⁴³

When *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* was published, Japan’s future was open to alternative scenarios. Indeed, Chōmin predicted with astounding accuracy the broad outlines of the next century of Japanese history. From 1894 to 1945, the government pursued a policy of territorial expansion and imperialism as recommended by the swashbuckler. After the catastrophic defeat of 1945, the positions expressed by the gentleman of Western studies resonated deeply with postwar proponents of pacifism and democratic policies that dominated the intellectual and political life of Japan. In addition, the U.S. Occupation authorities encouraged opposition to war as part of their reform program, notably by including article 9 in Japan’s 1947 Constitution whereby Japan renounced “war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.”

Nevertheless, Chōmin’s views of Japanese expansionism were decidedly ambivalent. While he had once been partisan of a “small Japan” (*shōkokushugi*) and proposed that Japan base its diplomacy on the defense of democracy and the equality of all nations, big and small, he also had a long friendship with Toyama Mitsuru, the founder of the Gen’yōsha (Dark Ocean Society), an ultranationalist group that pressed for military expansion on the Asian continent.⁴⁴ Toyama had earlier taken

part in the revolt of the samurai in 1876 and then, after his liberation from jail, was an activist in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. In *Another Year and a Half to Go*, he describes Toyama as “a man of noble demeanor, the last true follower of the way of the warrior in our society today. He knows but he prefers to keep silent. He is truly one whose wisdom is based on humility.”⁴⁵ After the Sino-Japanese War, he rallied to the prowar position of the government and, in the late 1890s, he took part in the National Alliance (Kokumin Dōmeikai), a right-wing group established by Konoe Atsumaro (1863–1904) that advocated a more aggressive Japanese policy toward Russia, particularly in Manchuria, a position that Kōtoku criticized as a betrayal of his earlier ideals. Kōtoku records a conversation in which he criticizes Chōmin, while the latter replies laughingly: “I favor war with Russia. If Japan wins, it will expand onto the continent and uphold peace in East Asia. If it loses, the regime will face a crisis and the people will awaken from their dreams. Taking advantage of this situation, we will be able to overthrow the clan government and reform Japan’s policies.” In effect, Chōmin saw Japanese expansionism as a means for achieving greater democracy in Japan.⁴⁶

However, Kōtoku also stated that Chōmin’s *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* gave the fullest expression to Chōmin’s political views and influenced his embrace of socialism.⁴⁷ In a sense, his later *Imperialism* continues the debate that Chōmin opened up with his 1887 work in the changed geopolitical situation of the early twentieth century, but he does so in the monologic form of a political tract.⁴⁸ The swashbuckler, who supports military expansionism, has, in the meantime, become the policy of the government of Japan backed by all major parties: this is the position that Kōtoku makes the target of his polemic. He also takes up where the gentleman of Western studies who had ridiculed the arbitrary notion of nationality had left off: “Because we live today in country A, we are of that nationality. However, if we live in country B tomorrow, we will be of that nationality. . . . Isn’t every nation on earth our homestead?”⁴⁹ In 1887, the future of Japan was still open and a radical change of course was conceivable; by 1901, the window of opportunity had closed and Japan’s future course of action was set. For that reason, *Imperialism* marks a decisive break with the positions Kōtoku articulated as a militant in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. To understand the political context that determined his conversion, we must consider the context against which Kōtoku wrote his book, Japan’s rapid urbanization and industrialization and the global diffusion of intellectual currents that opposed imperialism.

JAPAN’S EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

After experimenting with state-directed industries in the early Meiji period, the government sold off public enterprises to businessmen in the 1880s, favoring the

emergence of conglomerates (*zaibatsu*) able to compete with Western corporations. These conglomerates provided an important source of funding for Japan's political parties and shaped its foreign policy as well, through both their ties with politicians and their lucrative contracts with the military. Japan had one of world's fastest growing economies in the interwar period between 1895 and 1905 when it began to emerge as a manufacturing power. It relied on foreign loans, the land tax, and the war indemnity following the Sino-Japanese War to finance industrialization and the diffusion of advanced technology.⁵⁰

In the early period of capitalism, Japanese employers enjoyed unlimited freedom to exploit their labor force, not restricted by any laws governing the age of workers, working hours, pay, or working conditions. Women from the countryside, lured by recruiters to work in the textile factories, were the first industrial workers in Japan, and they worked long hours and lived in prisonlike dormitories. In 1891, they received only 10 percent of the wages of their British counterparts, a policy that industrialists justified by claiming that it was necessary for them to compete with more technologically advanced countries.⁵¹ Subjected to these conditions, many workers absconded, breaking their contracts within six months, despite "barbed wire, high walls, guarantee deposits, and company regulations," and the hardships they might cause their families who depended on their income to pay down their debt.⁵² Notwithstanding the opposition of bosses, Japanese workers began to organize and to stage strikes in the period of rising inflation that followed the Sino-Japanese War. From 1897, the Japanese government began to collect statistics on strikes.⁵³

With the growing industrialization of Japan, reporters began to focus attention on the formation of an underclass (*kasō shakai*) in cities. Many migrants to the cities lived in slums, where families of four shared a three-mat room without cooking facilities or toilets; they were hit hard by rising prices and periodic recessions. Yokoyama Gennosuke (1871–1915), a reporter for the *Mainichi Newspaper* published the masterpiece of this genre, *Japan's Underclass* (*Nihon no kasō shakai*) in 1899, one of the earliest studies of Japanese capitalism. In this book, Yokoyama argued that after the Sino-Japanese War, the capitalist economy had become the heart and soul of Japanese society, bringing in its wake enormous increases in material productivity and "social problems that reflect flaws in the economic organization of society, as in Western countries," most notably a large underclass in Japanese society.⁵⁴

In 1897, Takano Fusatarō and Katayama Sen, two Christian intellectuals motivated by humanitarian concern for workers, established the first labor organization in Japan, the Association for the Formation of Labor Unions, on the model of the AFL (American Federation of Labor). They quickly organized metal workers, railway workers, and printers in the Tokyo area.⁵⁵ Despite their early successes, the Public Order and Police Law in 1900 tightened earlier laws restricting freedom of

assembly, speech, and association and specifically targeted the labor movement by making it all but impossible to form unions and organize strikes (article 17 defined “organized action on the part of workers to be a disturbance to public peace”). This new law further limited the public sphere in which labor unions, socialist parties, and new feminist groups could legally act to change Japanese society and was often invoked to interfere with the activities of these groups. In the editorial “Public Order and Police Law,” Kôtoku writes that the purpose of the law is to “protect capitalists and landlords” and torment workers and tenant farmers.”⁵⁶

At this time, Kôtoku gained a reputation as an influential public intellectual and came to associate with radical Christian socialists.⁵⁷ In 1898, he was invited by Katayama Sen and Murai Tomoyoshi to participate in the Socialism Research Society (Shakaishugi Kenkyūkai). This organization, which met at the Unitarian Church in Tokyo, was established to study social problems and the application of socialism to Japan. Members met to discuss the writings of European pioneers such as Saint Simon, Fourier, and Marx, as well as Henry George, William Bliss, and Richard Ely. The study group laid the basis for Japan’s first socialist movement, which came into being when Abe Isō, Katayama Sen, Kinoshita Naoe, Nishikawa Kōjirō, Kawakami Kiyoshi, and Kôtoku Shūsui established the Socialist Party in Japan (the Social Democratic Party) on May 18, 1901.⁵⁸ In its manifesto, authored by Abe Isō (1865–1949) and modeled after the Erfurt declaration of the German Socialist Party, the party called for universal brotherhood, disarmament and international peace, the abolition of political and economic distinctions, public ownership of land and capital, public ownership of communication and transportation infrastructure, an equitable distribution of wealth, equality of political rights for all, and free state-supported education for the people. The day after the new party published its manifesto, the government, which feared that it would become a branch of European social democratic parties, moved to outlaw it under the provisions of the Public Peace Police Law. In fact, the party had no contact with any foreign organization and lacked any clear notion of the social stratum to which it should address itself. Denied the right to publish its own newspaper or any materials espousing its views, the group was forced to disband and members turned to public education by giving lectures and writing journal articles and books.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM IN A GLOBAL FRAME

Unlike the “scramble for Africa” that began in the 1880s, the turn of the twentieth century imperialism triggered global movements of resistance by intellectuals. Anti-imperialists in Europe and the United States included many representatives of elite groups skeptical about the merits of imperialism. Thanks to their endeavors, the nominal “imperialist” survives today almost exclusively as a pejorative term.

Anti-imperialists were a heterogeneous coalition. In the United States, the American Anti-Imperialist League included Samuel Gompers, a prominent labor leader, but also Andrew Carnegie, members of the business elite, clergymen, the writer Mark Twain, and the president of Harvard University. These men opposed the American annexation of the Philippines and Hawaii on the grounds that imperialism violated the fundamental principle of republican government: that it should derive from “the consent of the governed.”⁵⁹ The group appealed to owners of small businesses and professionals and most of its leaders were from New England. To be sure, the league failed to build a broad-based coalition or movement, or block the Senate approval of the Treaty of Paris that made the United States a sprawling empire. In addition, support for anti-imperialism plummeted after the movement backed William Jennings Bryan as the Democratic candidate in the 1900 presidential election. Gompers and Carnegie both left the U.S. Anti-Imperial League by 1900, while those remaining turned to the less popular stance of supporting the independence struggle in the Philippines. In the early decades of the twentieth century, imperialism became a popular cause in the United States after the election of Theodore Roosevelt.⁶⁰

In general, the same can be said of anti-imperialist movements in England and the European continent. In England, the Boer War (1899–1902), a war launched by the British Empire against the independent settlers of Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic, turned many former imperialists against imperialism and triggered a social movement to oppose imperialism.⁶¹ While proponents of the Boer War supported it with nationalist rhetoric, critics denounced it as a cynical use of the British state to support the interests of a narrow financial elite. The war unleashed outrageous violence against Boer civilians who were herded into concentration camps, where many died of disease or starvation. In addition, the Boer War had a decisive impact on Hobson’s *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), doubtless the most famous British denunciation of imperialism. Hobson went to South Africa in 1899 to report on the war for the *Manchester Guardian*, and was quickly convinced that a “small international oligarchy of mine owners and speculators” had pushed Britain to fight in defense of their investments.

Kōtoku acknowledges international criticism of imperialism in the preface to his book. If imperialism was a transnational power game in which Japan became a player in 1895, he situated his own theory within this transnational discourse of opposition to imperialism: “The theories of imperialism developed in this book have already been set forth in insightful analyses by intellectuals in Europe and the United States. I have taken up progressive theses developed by some of the most esteemed thinkers of our time, such as Tolstoy, Zola, John Morley, Bebel, and Bryan, who hold to the highest ideals. For that reason, I have not signed this work as the author and consider myself rather to be a mere commentator on the ideas of other men.”⁶²

Kôtoku describes himself as a “commentator” on the “advanced” theses of a cosmopolitan group of writers that spanned a spectrum from the religious anarchism of Tolstoy to the racism of William Jennings Bryan. Tolstoy, Zola, John Morley, Bebel, and Bryan comprise an interesting roster of names from the five leading imperial powers of the day (Russia, France, England, Germany, and the United States). Neither Zola nor Tolstoy was a principled consistent anti-imperialist. Zola attacked German militarism and expansionism, but did not denounce French colonialism in Africa and Indochina. Tolstoy is better known for his advocacy of nonresistance to violence and pacifism than for his anti-imperialist stances. While Bebel, the historic founder of the German Socialist Party, opposed German imperialism, Morley and Bryan were liberal politicians not remembered today as critics of imperialism. John Morley (1838–1923) supported home rule for Ireland and opposed the Boer War, but later, as secretary of state for India, he became famous for the repression he carried out against the anticolonial movement. William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925), a leader of progressive wing of the Democratic Party and presidential candidate, opposed the annexation of the Philippines on racial grounds and later campaigned for the expulsion of Chinese and other Asian immigrants from the United States.⁶³ The five men share little besides their purported opposition to war, but Kôtoku mentions them to situate himself within a global and eclectic current of ideas and to give his theses greater legitimacy. In addition, he later cites a resolution adopted by the Social Democratic Party of Germany condemning the German intervention in the Boxer Rebellion in China and a resolution by the Democratic Party in the United States excoriating American policy toward the Philippines.

If he apparently acknowledges his intellectual debts, he significantly omits mention of the most important source for his book, namely John MacKinnon Robertson (1856–1933) whose *Patriotism and Empire* served as a model for parts of Kôtoku’s analysis. He refers to Robertson by name in the article “On the Literature of War” (1900), in which he argues that great literature cannot be created by exalting “animal instincts that have no place in a civilized life.”⁶⁴ Like Kôtoku, Robertson was a largely self-educated man who began his career as a journalist. In the late 1890s, he was active in the Rainbow Circle, a political discussion group that included progressive intellectuals ranging from socialists to members of the Liberal Party, and he published his early articles in *Progressive Review*, a publication closely connected with the Rainbow Circle. A believer in *laissez faire*, Robertson held that the fundamental problems of the English economy were caused by overproduction of capital and under-consumption by the general population. His thesis anticipated and doubtless influenced the theories of John Hobson, who held that “imperial expansion is substantially a device on the part of the moneyed class primarily to further their own chances and . . . to put off the day of reckoning between capital and labor.”⁶⁵ In contrast with Hobson, Robertson saw

capitalist speculators as one among several groups promoting imperialism. Robertson's book remains largely forgotten today, while Hobson's still survives in part because Lenin refers to Hobson in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916).

Like Kōtoku, Robertson gave priority to the political causes of imperialism when he criticized patriotism as a shallow ideology that legitimized expansion and denounced large military budgets and military conscription. Rather than promote the emigration of poor people to colonial possessions, he supported welfare state policies to palliate social problems, including pensions, health insurance, legislation on working conditions and wages, and free higher education.⁶⁶ Following in Robertson's footsteps, Kōtoku argued that governments use imperialism to postpone dealing with grave social problems. Rather than conquer foreign territories to sell products overseas that domestic consumers cannot afford, they should "greatly [boost] the purchasing power of the vast majority of people in their own countries" and restrict the exorbitant profits of the capitalists. Whereas new radicals in England proposed a reform of the social structure to stave off a revolution, Kōtoku argues that imperialism cannot be altered by reforms, however well intentioned. To wrest power from the economic oligarchy in a revolution and to redistribute national wealth, one must fundamentally change the present order of society by launching a revolution and establishing a socialist system. "We must launch a great cleansing of the state and society, or in other words, start a revolutionary movement worldwide in scope. Let us transform the few nations of the present into a vast number, free the nation from the grip of the army and navy and transfer it to the peasants, workers, and merchants, reform our society where an aristocracy rules autocratically into one where the common people rule themselves, change our economy, now monopolized by capitalists, to one in which the workers own all in common."⁶⁷

In the end, his book stands in an ambiguous and contradictory relationship with its principal sources. He borrowed many of the ideas of English neoradicalists who attacked imperialist policies, but he rejected their belief that imperialism could be reformed.

What Is Imperialism?

THE TRAVAILS OF A TRANSLATOR

Kōtoku Shūsui played an important role as the translator of *The Communist Manifesto* (with Sakai Toshihiko) and essays by Lev Tolstoy, Piotr Kropotkin, and many others.¹ In “The Travails of the Translator” (Hon’yaku no kushin), he recommends that aspiring writers master one or two foreign languages, since “if one cannot read foreign journals or papers, one lacks the qualifications to be a Japanese writer in the future.”² He describes his early experiences as translator of English press articles and cables for the *Liberal Newspaper* as follows: “I greatly humiliated myself by mistranslations of telegrams. . . . No matter whether one read carefully or not, an amateur finds it difficult to abstract the main points. This work required a lot of experience. After doing this type of work for a year or two, I gained confidence in my ability to read newspapers and magazines somewhat better.”³ Besides noting the dangers of mistranslation, he also criticizes the view of a translator as a machine that “sets down in writing or merely records the thoughts and sentences of another like a court stenographer or a telephone.” Indeed, he held that “translating is a far more difficult literary form than composing an original work. Any writer with a sense of responsibility must acknowledge the exceptional degree of care he must devote to both the author and reader.”⁴ In the first place, the author must clearly understand the meaning of the original text, “which is no small feat especially in the case of a foreign language,” in the second, there is the difficulty of choosing words in one’s own language that capture the meaning of the original text. This second problem is especially evident when the translator is forced to invent new words because ready-made equivalents do not exist in the target language.

During the Meiji period, translators often coined neologisms and assigned new meanings to existing Chinese compounds to introduce foreign political concepts.

Indeed, in considering Kōtoku's work as a whole, one cannot draw a clear boundary between "original" works and translations. *Imperialism* is not strictly speaking a translation, but in it Kōtoku self-consciously set out to introduce and explain foreign concepts to the Japanese public, starting with the term "imperialism." He devoted much of the book to translating these lexical newcomers. In addition, he readily acknowledged his intellectual debts to and reliance on European and American predecessors. Besides those he acknowledged, Japanese scholars have noted that he depended most of all on J. M. Robertson's 1898 *Patriotism and Empire*. Indeed, *Imperialism* is, in some respects, "a very accomplished translation" in which Kōtoku adopted Robertson's main argument and examples supplemented by his own arguments about Japan to develop his own theory of imperialism. Miyamoto Moritarō cites six passages from *Imperialism* that are verbatim translations from *Patriotism and Empire*, including extended passages on England's war with France, General Moltke's views on peace, an analysis of English emigration, and long citations from Admiral Mahan and Thucydides. In his view, Kōtoku's book shares the defects of the model on which it is based since it "fails to derive imperialism from the fundamental features of modern capitalism."⁵ Yamada Akira also stressed Kōtoku's reliance on Robertson and suggested that his dependence on English sources serves as the starting point for future research: "In order to assess the originality of Kōtoku's *Imperialism*, we must first ascertain to what extent he surpassed or failed to surpass Robertson, and to undertake a comparative analysis of their respective works."⁶

Treating a translation as a simple import of a foreign work, however, overlooks both the violence inherent in any translation and the actual work of a translator; it also ignores the fact that a translated term in a host language intervenes in a different context from that of the source language. In his book, Kōtoku transplants ideas first articulated by Western critics of imperialism into the Japanese context by paraphrasing, if not plagiarizing, their writings. To be sure, writers in the Meiji period had different notions of intellectual property and lived under a copyright regime different from the one we know today. In addition, translation is rarely if ever an untroubled passage of wordless and disembodied ideas from one linguistic zone to another. Rather, it is a complex translation that involves both a network of communication (a medium of exchange among languages) and also the possibility of borrowing/transferring meaning into the target language (a certain acceptability of the term in the new context). Thus, imperialism entered Japanese domestic debates in part because the linguistic and political conditions were right for the introduction of the new term. Kōtoku's book was also an intervention in contemporary debates that not only aimed to influence Japanese readers, but also aimed to inflect their understanding of imperialism and to define the term.⁷

DEFINING IMPERIALISM

Kôtoku describes modern imperialism as a planetary phenomenon that shaped an earlier age of globalization and anticipates the neoliberal reglobalization of the world today. Born early in the Meiji period, Kôtoku witnessed the rapid transformation of Japan from semicolon to imperial power within his lifetime. In the preface to *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century*, he writes that the fashion for imperialism “spreads like a wildfire in an open field”:

In England, both the government and the citizens have all become fervent acolytes of imperialism. In Germany, the belligerent emperor loses no opportunity to extol its virtues. As for Russia, imperialism has long been the traditional policy of the regime. France, Austria, and Italy are all happy to join the fray. Even a young country like the United States has shown an eagerness to master this new skill in recent years. And, finally, this trend has reached our own nation, Japan. Ever since the great victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese from all walks of life burn with fever to join the race, like a horse suddenly freed from its yoke.⁸

As this whirlwind tour of geopolitics suggests, imperialism is at once a geopolitical “trend” and a popular ideology with millions of “acolytes.” However, it is also a “skill” that can be mastered and a “race” that new participants can join. In short, it is a mimetic phenomenon in which young empires learn from more established ones, sometimes beating them at their own game or displacing them from their paramount position. This global dynamic of rival empires that expand at one another’s expense and claim to base themselves on the will of a mobilized citizenry inaugurates a new, perilous phase of human history. Kôtoku not only describes the perils caused by imperialism, but he explicitly situates himself within a transnational movement to end it.

From the outset, Kôtoku writes as though he is introducing the Japanese reader to a foreign term that needs to be defined. In the preface, he provides phonetic glosses (*rubi*) when he first uses *daiteikoku* (greater empire) and *teikokushugisha* (imperialist), an indication that these words were not yet naturalized in the Japanese language.⁹ His contemporaries followed a similar practice and endeavored to give these terms an authoritative definition. At the same time, he writes that Japanese “of all classes burn with fever to join the race for empire.”¹⁰ In these formulations, imperialism enjoys a contradictory status: it is at once an unfamiliar term and a ubiquitous fad. Kôtoku purposely exaggerates popular enthusiasm for imperialism in Japan, but he correctly acknowledges that the term had sparked a debate in Japan.

He also offers his own definition for what imperialism is and what it is not. Imperialism is a policy of “territorial expansion,” “the annexation of territory by military force or by diplomacy backed by military force.”¹¹ Later, he describes imperialism in negative terms: “The building of an empire would be a wonderful thing

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Title page of third edition of Kōtoku Shūsui's *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century* (Teikokushugi: Nijūseiki no kaibutsu). This edition included sixteen recent reviews of the book in the contemporary press, an index of the book's impact on contemporary opinion. Image provided by the Waseda University Library.

if it consisted merely in the settlement and cultivation of unexploited, uninhabited, and wild territories. However, are there truly any such uninhabited and unused territories that remain to be discovered in the world now that the rapid development in the means of transportation has made it possible for man to reach every part of the globe? If every corner of the world has an owner and is inhabited, how could one occupy even a square inch of territory without resorting to violence, declaring war, or employing trickery and deception?"¹² In the densely populated world of the early twentieth century, imperialist powers can no longer claim to send pioneers to settle barren lands. Instead, they must wrest already settled territories from their rightful owners or dupe them into accepting colonial tutelage.

In effect, Kōtoku praised the pioneers who settle in newly "opened" land, such as the New World in the sixteenth century or Hokkaido in the late nineteenth century, but condemns territorial aggrandizement by military force. In drawing this distinction, he follows the accepted rhetorical conventions of early twentieth-century discourse with its own judgments of value. By contrast, a reader today, more cognizant that settlement colonies involved land theft and the expulsion of indigenous people in both the New World and Hokkaido, might have difficulty understanding why settler colonialism is superior to territorial expansion.

If the readers of *Imperialism* agreed upon anything, they generally shared the author's view that imperialism denoted forcible seizure of land. When the third edition of *Imperialism* appeared, it included reprints of sixteen book reviews from prominent journals such as *Yomiuri Newspaper*, *Yorozu Chōhō*, and *Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper*. These reviews offer an index to the importance readers accorded the work and clues as to how they construed the author's arguments. Whether or not they agreed with Kōtoku's opinions, reviewers shared his assumptions about what "imperialism" was. A reporter in the *Mainichi Newspaper* wrote that the work spreads the "glad tidings of pacifism and one-worldism by refuting their main enemy, imperialism." In the *Jiji Newspaper*, another noted: "The *Yorozu Chōhō* reporter Kōtoku Shūsui examines the current state of world affairs from a socialist perspective and argues that the current trend of imperialism is merely a weapon that politicians use to stir up belligerent feelings and to ruin the peace and happiness of the masses." Both readers viewed the author as a socialist espousing a humanistic pacifism and an opponent of territorial conquest. A critic in the magazine *Nihonjin* (Japanese) added that imperialism is the theft of land from one nation by another: "Imperialism is just a euphemism for belligerence and expansionism in which one nation steals land from another . . . the theft is carried out by a nation, not by an individual."¹³

"Imperialism" was in fact a recent coinage that only entered the English popular discourse toward the end of the nineteenth century. It denoted both a government policy and an ideology. It was this historically specific "monster" that Kōtoku set

out to slay, and he was joined by many thinkers around the world. If we are to understand Kōtoku's critique, we must first consider the global discourse on imperialism, the debate on the topic in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, and lastly, Kōtoku's theory in *Imperialism* and other writings.

EMPIRE AND IMPERIALISM

Empires have existed for millennia and will doubtless continue to exist in the future. Arguments to support or oppose empire also have an ancient history, one that certainly preexists the term "imperialism." For that reason, many scholars, who believe that the phenomenon of imperialism existed long before it acquired a name, assign a different starting date to the age of imperialism than the late nineteenth century. Edward Said claims that it started in 1800 and Immanuel Wallerstein traces it back to the sixteenth century in his "world system" theory.¹⁴ While each of these periodizations has its merits, we must still consider why many late nineteenth-century writers distinguished imperialism from earlier phases of empire building.

Hannah Arendt argues that the global system of imperialism was consolidated between 1884 and 1915 when "about one-quarter of the globe's land surface was distributed or redistributed as colonies among a half-dozen states."¹⁵ She subdivides this period into two shorter phases: the scramble among European nations for territory in Africa inaugurated by the Congress of Berlin in 1884 and a later competition for colonies in East Asia and the islands of the Pacific that began at the turn of the twentieth century. This period separates "the nineteenth century, which ended with the scramble for Africa and the birth of the pan-movements, from the twentieth, which began with the First World War." Arendt argues that imperialism was "the first stage in the political rule of the bourgeoisie rather than the last stage of capitalism"; here she explicitly takes issue with Lenin's theory that imperialism was the "highest stage" or "the monopoly stage of capitalism," by emphasizing the fundamentally "political" nature of modern imperialism.¹⁶ In the late nineteenth century, imperialism became the official state policy of numerous nations, which mobilized their military and bureaucratic resources to acquire colonies and spheres of influence abroad.

To follow Arendt's argument, there was an essential difference between the age-old pursuit of empire and modern imperialism. Britain had no need of the term "imperialism" or the ideology when it colonized most of North America, Oceania, and all of India. In the 1870s, opponents of the British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli (1874–80) employed the term "imperialist" to attack his policies.¹⁷ Thereafter, imperialism "became part of the political and journalistic vocabulary during the 1890s in the course of arguments about colonial conquest."¹⁸ In words that resemble Kōtoku's observations the following year, the liberal writer J.A. Hobson noted in 1900 that the word was "on everyone's lips and was used to denote the most powerful

movement in the current politics of the Western world.”¹⁹ In addition, whereas imperialism began its career as a term of abuse, it later acquired a more neutral resonance so that politicians even labeled themselves as imperialists at least until the First World War.²⁰ Besides offering definitions of the term, writers distinguished different types of imperialism and proposed taxonomies for overseas colonies.²¹

Likewise, the first global anti-imperialist movement targeted new imperial policies rather than earlier phases of empire building. The new imperialism resulted from a military struggle among the major powers to seize “unclaimed” territory. Opponents viewed this policy as pernicious because it placed the state apparatus at the service of private interests, corrupted politics, and encouraged thoughtless jingoism among the general public. In practice, they distinguished between imperialism and settlement colonies, reserving their condemnation for the former. Thus British anti-imperialists condemned British policy in South Africa rather than its policies toward Canada or India. In the case of the United States, the Anti-Imperialist League denounced the annexation of Philippines and of Hawaii but not the earlier seizure of territory in the Mexican–American War or the wiping out of Native American peoples who stood in the way of “manifest destiny.” Mark Twain, who served as president of the Anti-Imperialist League, ridiculed the hypocritical rhetoric on the white man’s “civilizing mission” by juxtaposing it with U.S. atrocities in the Philippines in his celebrated “To The Person Sitting in Darkness.”²² However, he was not opposed to indirect forms of imperialism, which he viewed as a natural and benign trend of demography and economic expansion. For example, the “Declaration of Principles and Preliminary Organization of the Anti-Imperialist League” states: “Expansion by natural growth in thinly settled contiguous territory, acquired by purchase for the express purpose of ultimate statehood, cannot be confounded with or made analogous to foreign territory conquered by war and wrested by force from a weak enemy.”²³

In the late nineteenth century, the ideology of imperialism emerged triumphant in Europe and United States with its separate religious, strategic, and racial strands. In 1890s, the U.S. missionary Josiah Strong published *Our Country*, in which he argued that the Anglo-Saxon races had the mission to civilize the world. Admiral Mahan developed his ideas on sea power and the necessity of American expansion in the Pacific, and his ideas soon influenced Japanese naval circles.²⁴ In 1899, Rudyard Kipling published “The White Man’s Burden,” summoning the United States to fight the “savage wars of peace” and face its responsibilities toward the people of the Philippines, “half-devil and half-child.”

THE JAPANESE DEBATE ON “IMPERIALISM”

The Japanese debate on “imperialism” started with the partition of China in 1897, rather than with Japan’s acquisition of Taiwan in 1895. Although the Qing dynasty

had ceded Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan under the Shimonoseki Treaty, Germany, France and Russia successfully pressured Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. Two years later, however, Germany seized the Bay of Jiaozhou in response to the murder of two German missionaries and leased a naval base in Shandong Province for ninety-nine years. In response to this unilateral action, Russia sent warships to Port Arthur and Dalian and forced the Qing regime to sign a twenty-five-year lease agreement, thereby gaining the very territory that Japan had returned to China after the so-called Triple Intervention. In addition, Britain occupied Weihaiwei, opposite Port Arthur, as a counterweight to Russia, and France took over Guangzhou. The United States opposed the expansion of European powers into China, but it entered the imperialist scramble by seizing the Philippines. The Japanese government adopted a policy of noninterference toward these aggressive moves by Western powers. While it proclaimed its friendship for China, sending military instructors and welcoming Chinese students to Japan, it took no firm measures to support the Chinese government.

Public intellectuals denounced the predatory partition of China by Western powers and the expansion into the Pacific by the United States. Often associated with the political opposition to the Meiji government, they regarded imperialism as a Western phenomenon and denounced Germany and Russia for their invasions of Asia. In reaction to government inertia, they excoriated Japan's weak foreign policy and its passivity in the face of aggression. The Taigai Kōdōshikai (Society for a Strong Foreign Policy) emerged as a powerful voice in Japanese politics at this time, taking the government to task for its weak foreign policy and urging Japan to rescue China. This anti-imperialist current long remained an important part of Japanese discourse on empire and gained institutional expression through the Tōa Dōbunkai established by Konoe Atsumaro in 1898 to foster Japanese interests on the continent. Strong in both the media and the parliamentary opposition, this influential current provided crucial support to the government's massive build-up of Japan's military forces and later pushed the government to pursue an expansionist agenda overseas.

In essays published in 1898, Tokutomi Sohō and Takayama Chogyū for the first time employed the neologism *teikokushugi* in newspaper articles, although they attached slightly different readings to the term (*imuperiarizumu* and *imupiriari-zumu*).²⁵ Both sought to define the term, to classify its types, and to advance suggestions on future Japanese policy. From this time, imperialism became a fashionable buzzword, although writers could not agree on its meaning. Over the next several years, journalists wrote over thirty articles or books on the subject in major journals of opinion.²⁶ Japan joined the ranks of the colonial powers in 1895, but it took a few more years before it became an active contributor to the discourse on imperialism.

Takayama Chogyū (1871–1902), editor in chief of *The Sun* (Taiyō), published a short article, “The Sinful Year 1898,” in which he denounced the global spread of

imperialism and warned of “racial war” over the partition of China.²⁷ The following year, he wrote in “Imperialism and Colonies” (Teikokushugi to shokuminchi): “I must define ‘imperialism,’ which many praise today but which is an ambiguous term. I would define it as the annexation or colonization of people belonging to a foreign race or different ethnicity without granting them rights equal to members of the nation. This is a doctrine that justifies discrimination and subordination of these foreigners to the people in the home country in what is essentially a relationship of domination.” As examples, he cited England’s policies toward its colonies or the U.S. annexation of the Philippines.²⁸ After having proposed this stark definition, however, Takayama paradoxically supported Japanese imperialism as a strategic response to developments in world politics.

In “The Real Meaning of Imperialism” (Teikokushugi no shin’i), Tokutomi Sohō took issue with Takayama’s argument that imperialism is by definition aggressive and immoral. He first noted that the term, first popularized in England, was becoming a naturalized compound (*jukugo*) in Japanese politics but that it still lacked “a clear and precise meaning.” He characterized it first as a “proactive foreign policy” but also took pains to distinguish it from “military expansionism, exclusivism, dictatorship, or economic waste.”²⁹ Instead, he described it as a form of “peaceful expansionism” that “contributes to the development of the ethnic nation and offers great benefits to the nation through trade, production, increased interaction and colonies/emigration [*shokumin*]. In order to carry out imperialism, one must develop and expand in all directions—in production, in education, in military weapons.” In short, he understood imperialism to signify that the Japanese as an ethnic people (no longer simply individual Japanese) should spread throughout the world and establish trading or business enterprises in a peaceful manner.³⁰

Tokutomi distinguished between “good” and “bad” (or “true” and “false”) forms of imperialism. While he opposed military imperialism, he advocated that Japan build up its military power to underwrite its economic expansion and considered military armaments as a means (*hōben*) that would enable peaceful imperialism. In “The Reverse Side of Imperialism” (Teikokushugi no rimen), he wrote: “Each nation seeks victory in this peaceful competition and invests its resources and strives to develop business enterprises,” however such expansionism requires control of foreign territory because, “one will not be able to guarantee the safety of the territory when one invests capital abroad unless one possesses the territory.”³¹

Kuga Katsunan (1857–1907) immediately attacked Tokutomi’s thesis in “Understanding Imperialism: A Critique of an Article by a *Kokumin Shinbun* Reporter” (Teikokushugi kai: Kokumin kisha no setsu o yomu). He contended that imperialism is necessarily a form of territorial aggrandizement by military force: “Imperialism is the handmaiden of militarism. The essence of imperialism consists in the fact that trade, industry, exchange, and colonies develop after the national flag is flown over new territories.” Accordingly, Katsunan held that “peaceful” imperial-

ism was an oxymoron, an ideological smokescreen for aggressive expansionism, and he accused Tokutomi of hypocrisy since he disguised his support for the “might makes right” system of international relations as a form of pacifism.³²

In response to Kuga, Ukita Kazutami (1859–1946) developed a defense of an ethical imperialism that complemented Tokutomi’s advocacy of economic expansionism in his 1901 “Imperialism and Education” (Teikokushugi to kyōiku).³³ Imperialism is an evolutionary trend that resulted from the transnational spread of civilization and global politics. “Imperialism does not necessarily mean military invasion: in my view, it is an ideology that not only allows nations to protect their independence but also to play active roles in world civilization and geopolitics.” At the same time, Ukita believed this trend manifested the Darwinian principle of “survival of the fittest” that enabled strong nations to expand and weak ones to contract. In both senses, he stressed the spontaneous and inevitable nature of imperialism and contrasted it to the arbitrary violence of military expansionism.

Ukita’s main conceptual innovation was to introduce ethical values into imperialism. He distinguished between a primitive struggle for survival that occurred between animals and a rational and ethical struggle that took place only among human beings in accordance with legal norms. In the latter case, civilized powers overpower others in order to shower upon them the benefits of civilization or protect their “independence” from other predatory powers: “Civilized countries conquer primitive and barbaric races or annex weak countries that are unable to ensure their own independence, thereby promoting world civilization and advancing the well-being of humanity.” While he championed peaceful, commercial, and business expansion, he also recognized the role of military force in “protecting Japanese” and “putting a stop to the oppression of other races, but only in accordance with international law.”³⁴ As part of his advocacy of ethical imperialism, Ukita held that Japan should eschew the dangers of military imperialism and instead follow the path of peaceful and gradual expansion by colonizing “Korea, Manchuria, North America, and the South Seas.” In joining together these four destinations under the rubric “colonization,” Ukita was simply following the prevalent usage in Japan in the first decade of the twentieth century.³⁵

Indeed, just as writers debated the definition of imperialism, they also engaged in heated discussions about colonialism. If they divided imperialism between military and economic expansionism, they tended to conflate immigration and colonization as related modes of expansionism. In effect, “colony” entered Japanese discourse long after imperialism had found a niche in contemporary debate, but the term was rarely used to refer to Japanese colonies. Nitobe Inazō, Japan’s first professor of colonial studies (*shokuminchi seisaku*), wrote that Japanese did not officially call Taiwan a colony in Japanese until 1911. In “About The Term ‘Colony’” (*Shokumin naru meiji ni tsuite*), he proposed to his compatriots that they standardize the term by adopting a similar word in European languages and thereby replace the

linguistic anarchy then prevalent. “Whenever names of places like Korea, Taiwan, and Karafuto are mentioned, they are referred to as ‘new additions to the empire [新版図]: Does it suffice to name these newly occupied territories with old expressions? Wouldn’t it be better to use the new term for colony [*shokuminchi*]?”³⁶ Besides urging the adoption of an equivalent of the Western term for colony, Nitobe also called for standardizing the graphs used to write this word. At the time, this term was commonly written with two different but phonetically identical characters: the first signified to “plant people” and the second to “increase people.”

Nitobe’s proposal offers a useful framework to understand why Ukita linked immigration to the United States with the colonial implantation of people in Korea. The United States and Korea were alternate destinations for *shokumin* (emigrant/settler and colonist), who were the personification of Japan’s urge to expand and a symbol of its ethnic vitality. To be sure, Korea differed from the United States because it was a semicolonized territory in which immigrants could rely on the military and political influence of their home country while residing abroad. Reflecting prevalent linguistic usage, the journal *Shokumin Sekai* (Colonial world, published in 1908) carried stories about Japanese emigrants to Hawaii and South America alongside articles on career prospects in Korea and Taiwan.

In August 1901, Kinoshita Naoe (1869–1937) wrote a stinging rebuttal of Ukita called “Ukita Kazutami’s New Book *Imperialism and Education*” (Ukita Kazutami no shinsho Teikokushugi to Kyōiku) in the *Mainichi Newspaper*. A cofounder of Japan’s first socialist party, Kinoshita attacked Ukita’s defense of imperialism, not from the point of view of the welfare of the working class, but rather from a pacifist perspective. In particular, he denounced international law, which countenanced the rule of force, and proposed world unification as a solution to imperialism.³⁷ Kinoshita posed his argument in the form of a rhetorical question: “What is left of imperialism in the end if we strip it of the notion of military invasion? . . . Once you subtract military invasion from imperialism you are left with pacifism.”³⁸ In addition, he disputed Ukita’s arguments in defense of military expansionism to bring civilization to the backward or to “protect” the independence of weak states, since both cases contradict Ukita’s claim to favor peaceful expansionism.

However, while he attacked Ukita’s ethical imperialism, Kinoshita accepted the necessity of peaceful economic expansion at a time when nations were locked in a struggle for survival. Lamenting the shortage of opportunities in Japan, he urged Japanese to seek their fortune overseas. In a time of “racial competition,” he asked: “Can the Japanese race survive the maelstrom of racial competition and be among the victors?” Kinoshita was optimistic because the Japanese people had a strong reproductive power and could compete with workers overseas so well that they provoked exclusion movements.³⁹

To summarize, Takayama supported “territorial expansion and the acquisition of colonies,” but almost all later Japanese writers on the subject rejected aggressive

imperialism and supported peaceful expansion because it “serves the interests of the nation and furthers the development of the people.”⁴⁰ Tokutomi also held that Japan might rightfully employ military force as a means (*hōben*) used to achieve this goal but not as an end in itself.⁴¹ Ukita added that advanced nations practice ethical imperialism when they employ force to advance the cause of civilization or to protect weak nations unable to ensure their own independence. While some writers objected to the employment of military force, they generally accepted the distinction between aggressive military expansion and peaceful expansion and treated the latter as the natural expansion of the people and the economy.

KÔTOKU AND THE DEFINITION OF IMPERIALISM

Following Tokutomi, Kôtoku defined imperialism as military occupation of foreign nations and seizure of their lands. He drew most examples from recent European imperialism but included Japanese cases as well, thereby breaking with anti-imperialist thinkers who treated imperialism as a monopoly of the West. To begin with, he stressed that imperialism, which makes territorial expansion the aim of national politics and treats the world as an arena for permanent competition, threatened world peace.⁴² Competition over finite territory was fraught with dangers unknown in the economic world because it was a zero-sum game. Rival empires established exclusive economic and political enclaves, thereby ensuring that one nation's gains necessarily came at the expense of another's loss. Eventually, the major imperialist powers must collide where their empires overlap. These collisions had the potential to lead to a systemic, worldwide conflict, a prophecy realized in 1914. Like many Japanese, Kôtoku supported international endeavors to limit the growth of military armaments and to create a court of arbitration to settle international disputes.

Besides analyzing the general phenomenon of military imperialism in Europe and the United States, he also clearly recognized the special role that the military played in the genesis of Japanese imperialism. A latecomer to imperialism, Japan mimicked earlier empires, but differed from them in that Japanese proponents of imperialism emphasized strategic concerns and national prestige rather than commercial advantage. Indeed, this military-driven imperialism resulted in a diversion of capital away from productive activities and was a net drain on the economy. Further, Kôtoku leveled a stinging critique at the upper ranks of the military for their corruption, domination of the national budget, blatant interventions in politics, and ideological glorification of militarism and war. I need hardly mention the importance that all these factors played in the subsequent history of the Japanese empire and their contribution to the disastrous wars and the destruction of millions of lives in the 1930 and 1940s.

Besides arguing that imperialism threatened peace, Kôtoku took issue with a key premise invoked by the imperialists of his day: that modern imperialism

differed radically from its forerunners. “Some imperialists concede that the great empires of the past were established just to satisfy the private interests and the vanity of kings and their political advisors. However, they argue, territorial expansion today expresses the irrepressible need for expansion of the citizens. In the past, imperialism was a private matter but today it is a popular and national cause.”⁴³ According to this view, modern imperialism represented the will of the people as a whole and conferred benefits on ordinary citizens.

Indeed, some argued that imperialist policies would facilitate social reforms at home, thereby increasing even further the popularity of imperialism. For example, Ukita Kazutami wrote: “When the day arrives that we understand ethical imperialism and apply it to the solution of economic problems, we will see that it is possible to reconcile imperialism and socialism. Not only will imperialism and socialism be reconciled, but no country will be able to survive in the twentieth century except by following imperialism as foreign policy and socialism as domestic policy.”⁴⁴ This position represents an extreme version of what Kôtoku calls popular imperialism. In effect, Ukita held that expansion overseas could buy domestic peace by offering new funding sources for economic improvements and social reforms. In *Imperialism*, Kôtoku argued that this notion is illusory. Far from representing the expansion of the “citizens,” imperialism conferred all of its benefits on “a small number of politicians and military leaders and the interests of a few capitalists and speculators,” while it exacerbated poverty, “leads to widening inequality, and causes a variety of social ills.” Even if such a policy actually gained popular support, it “would still not represent any real progress, since it is nothing more other than a subtle manipulation of their bestial love of war and an exploitation of their jingoistic feeling, superstition, and fanaticism.”⁴⁵

Thirdly, Kôtoku took issue with the Social Darwinist premises of Tokutomi and Ukita: that expansion of national territory was necessary in a world governed by the principle of the survival of the fittest. When imperialist powers obtained their new lands by violence, they had to rule them tyrannically, since they were unable to base their rule on the consent of the original inhabitants they despoiled. In addition, once they acquired new territories, nations needed to expand further to protect these acquisitions and defend their new borders, giving rise to a paradoxical “siege mentality” among mature imperialist powers: the more lands one controls, the more vulnerable one becomes.⁴⁶

For these reasons, Kôtoku argued that territorial expansion served neither the interests of the colonizer nor of the colonized. Indeed, it threatened the future prosperity of the major imperial powers such as the United States and England. “I believe that if the United States faces a crisis that threatens their national survival in the future, this crisis will not be caused by the smallness of their territory, but rather by their unlimited territorial expansion. It will result not from their failure to exercise their political power in the world, but rather from the corruption and

decadence that has infected their own society, not from the small size of their market, but rather from the unfair distribution of wealth, from the destruction of freedom and equality, and from the rampant spread of imperialist and expansionist ideologies.”⁴⁷ American prosperity rests more upon the strength of the American economy than on its military strength, more on the “diligence of its entrepreneurs” than on “the vanity of its expansionists.”⁴⁸

Since Kōtoku excluded peaceful economic expansionism from his definition of imperialism, he did not criticize the great economic powers of the day for exercising their economic, political, and cultural domination of other regions of the world. In his newspaper article “Imperialism,” he welcomed the expansion of capital and increase in trade in the United States, which he describes as a form of popular expansionism that benefited “all the major world powers.”⁴⁹ “Popular expansionism does not need to employ military force and to invade and plunder, but only consists of the production of coal and steel, the expansion of capital and of manufacturing industry.”⁵⁰ In short, he did not recognize the investment of U.S. capital in overseas regions as a form of imperialism since it was not accompanied by the deployment of military force or territorial annexation. The expansion of trade and capital were, to the contrary, happy developments that other nations ought to welcome.

Similarly, he argued that advocates of imperialism in England, who claimed to ensure the defense of the home country by territorial expansion, mistook the cause of a problem for its solution. England’s concerns about defense resulted from the fact that “their territory has grown so large that it has become indefensible,”⁵¹ whereas a smaller nation without colonies is less vulnerable to attack: “To develop an adequate defense of the country and to deter an enemy from attacking, a nation does not need to control a vast territory or to build a huge empire.”⁵² By upholding “little England” as a model for his own nation, Kōtoku argued that Japan should eschew a costly arms race and reject imperialism as a strategy of national survival. Just as America’s true strength lay in its army of entrepreneurs and the size of its markets, he wrote that “the prosperity and development of England do not result from the power of its arms but rather from the number of its coal and iron ore mines, not from its military aggression and plunder of foreign lands, but rather from the peaceful development of its industries and commerce.”⁵³

Furthermore, Kōtoku distinguished late nineteenth-century imperialism from the earlier English dominion or commonwealth: “England does not . . . constitute an ‘empire’ in the sense that imperialists tend to use this word. Rather, since the English are linked to their former colonies by ties of blood, language, and culture, they remain bound together by sentiments of mutual sympathy. Since both sides benefit from commerce, their community will likely last forever, bringing limitless prosperity to all.”⁵⁴ Kōtoku praised the free trade system linking Britain to its colonies as beneficial to all parties, whereas he condemned British military expansion

into Africa, epitomized by the Boer War.⁵⁵ His attitude toward India, Britain's largest and richest colony, was ambiguous: he praised Thomas Carlyle for saying that Shakespeare is worth more than the colony of India, but he never explicitly condemned Britain's policy toward its most important colony.⁵⁶ Kôtoku, who later had contact with Indian revolutionaries in Tokyo, wrote several years later with great hope about the potential for a revolution in India and in other parts of colonized Asia, but at the time he wrote *Imperialism*, he did not condemn the British colonization of India or express support for Indian independence.⁵⁷

IMPERIALISM AND THE REALITIES OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE

In *Imperialism*, Kôtoku argued that all the problems of imperialism in general are magnified in Japan's case. Unlike the economically advanced nations, Japan lacked "a surplus of capital" to invest overseas and an "abundance of manufactured products" to sell abroad. Instead, it depended only on "military force to plant its flag in territories far from its shores" and to govern these new possessions. Furthermore, expenses entailed by imperialism "impose an increasing burden on the Japanese people, the amount of capital available to support economic growth diminishes, and the production of goods withers."⁵⁸ For that reason, the "foolishness of the Japanese imperialists exceeds that of all their rivals."

For Kôtoku, then, Japan epitomized the pitfalls of military imperialism but possessed none of its advantages. If one accepts this argument, one is left with the question of whether Japan should pursue a policy of imperialism after it attained a higher level of economic prosperity. Like his counterparts in the United States and Europe, Kôtoku condemned imperialism primarily because it had perverse domestic consequences and jeopardized world peace. Like them, he omitted practically any reference to the effects of imperialism on the colonized. In fact, Kôtoku never once set foot on the Asian continent nor did he cultivate ties with Korean and Chinese opponents of imperialism until long after he wrote *Imperialism*. In chapter 4, he mentions the historical invasions of Korea under the Empress Jingū and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, but never alludes to the fact that contemporary Korea was the central focus of Japanese imperialism at the time he wrote his book.⁵⁹ He also mentions the colony of Taiwan in passing to deplore the high costs of colonization borne by the Japanese taxpayer. In chapter 2, he criticizes the jingoistic contempt toward the Chinese during the Sino-Japanese War, but he does not otherwise consider the point of view of those on the receiving end of Japan's "civilizing mission."

In his articles on Japan's relations with East Asia, Kôtoku was a strong proponent of the expansion of Japan's economic and commercial influence. In 1903, in "Japan's Policy in the Far East" (*Nihon no Tōyō seisaku*) published in the *Yorozu*

Chōhō on May 17, he cites the view of a certain “foreigner” (a Russian with a rational viewpoint) to the effect that “Japan’s most urgent problem is the management of Korea.” Rather than complain about the threat posed by Russia, Japanese should bemoan the insufficiencies of their own administration of Korea, and in particular, the failure to expand the nation’s railroad network. The most effective way to expand Japan’s influence in Korea is, he suggests, to expand economic penetration of Korea. “Since Japan has too many people, I wish Japanese farmers would cultivate the boundless and fertile fields of Korea. If many Japanese settled in Korea, the natural resources and agricultural potential of the land would fall into the hands of Japan, and Korea would become in fact the protectorate of Japan just as Hawaii is for the United States and Egypt is for England. The Transvaal and Cuba were both acquired at first by similar policies. If Japan truly resolves [to develop] Korea and single-mindedly pursues that goal, it will soon draw near to Manchuria. Then it is possible that they will clash militarily with Russia, and compete over commercial profits . . . but now is not the time to stir up trouble.” The same foreigner suggests that the Japanese government should avoid squeezing Japanese capitalists with higher taxes and raising its foreign debt to finance the war with Russia; instead it should “invest the 300 to 500 million yen in the development of Korea to ensure itself long-lasting profits.”⁶⁰

In effect, he sometimes viewed Korea as a “wild, uninhabited” space, sparsely populated and blessed with rich resources, where Japanese enjoyed a right to expand their economic influence as they saw fit. Yet this discursive construction of Korea as an empty space was a fantasy that Kōtoku rightly dismissed in his definition of imperialism. In addition, he viewed Korea as a backward state that Japan must guide to modernity and civilization rather than a nation whose independence should be respected. Kōtoku occupied the extreme left of the Japanese political spectrum, but he unwittingly recycled the basic tenets of Japanese colonialism, illustrating Gramsci’s insight that hegemonic ideas become the unquestioned common sense of their time.

Indeed, an important reason why Kōtoku later opposed the Russo-Japanese War was that entering a war would weaken Japan’s economic power. In “On Opposition to Starting War” (*Hikaisenron*), he opposed war with Russia to expel it from Manchuria but at the same time he promoted Japan’s large-scale economic advance into Manchuria. “Today the most urgent task facing Japan is not fighting with Russia. The only alternative is to go to Manchuria and develop its economy. The best way to accomplish this is to encourage many people to emigrate there, invest capital, acquire land of one’s own and hold onto it, and pump wealth from the land. Only in this way will Japan’s peace and security be upheld.”⁶¹

Like most of his contemporaries, he viewed the building of a railroad network as an index of a nation’s economic power. “During the time that Russia has laid two thousand seven hundred miles of tracks for the Great Trans-Siberian Railroad, the

fact is that Japan has not yet completed the two-hundred-mile railway connecting Seoul and Pusan.”⁶² Given this difference in economic potentiality, “even if Japan succeeded in expelling Russia from Manchuria” it would not be able to keep Russia from reentering the country by economic means. Indeed, as war with Russia would be much more costly than the Sino-Japanese War, it would need to be paid for through vast tax increases or by increasing the nation’s foreign debt. Due to these economic burdens, Japan would lack the wherewithal to develop the territories of Manchuria even if it won a decisive military victory. In that event, Britain and America would reap the benefits of Japan’s military victory. “Even if Japan succeeds in expelling Russia from Manchuria, how would it develop the enormous territory? Will it launch some mammoth enterprise? There is little prospect of a nation that has become impoverished by fighting a war undertaking anything of the sort. Then, in place of Russia, America and England will launch their enterprises to develop Manchuria, and Japan will have been used for the purposes of these countries.” In short, he condemned the war effort as merely redounding to the credit of capitalists outside of Japan, just as Japan’s sacrifices in the Sino-Japanese War had mainly benefited Germany and Russia, who went on to claim exclusive concessions in the provinces of Shandong and Liaodong in China.⁶³

Kôtoku applied a similar economic logic to his refutation of the claim that war with Russia would consolidate Japan’s position in Korea. After condemning Japan’s inability to develop adequate railway lines in the previous seven years, he wrote that Russia was not the primary obstacle to Japan’s building a modern transportation system that could serve as the “foundation of our management of Korea.”⁶⁴ The real obstacles lay in Japan’s general poverty and a lack of government determination. The solution he proposed was to

complete the railroad from Seoul to Pusan, and expand it to Pyongyang, encourage a large number of farmers and merchants to emigrate to Korea, develop the land and natural resources of the country, and eventually consolidate our position there so that Korea lies firmly under Japanese control. Just as Russia is doing in Manchuria, by strengthening our position in [Korea], we can further expand into Manchuria, and potentially we can occupy the position that Russia now has there or even change places with it in the future. If we fail to strengthen our foothold there and expand our territory in pursuit of our true interests, what difference does it make that our army and naval forces make an impressive show of force? In the end, we will be condemned to failure in the postwar settlement, as was the case with Liaodong.⁶⁵

While Kôtoku opposed only military imperialism, he supported economic imperialism based on the control of railroads, exploitation of natural resources, and promotion of emigration. Historians have long noted that railroads were an essential vector for the expansion of influence overseas. They also illustrate the inextricable connection between political control and economic expansion: rail-

roads facilitated the export of capital, commercial ties, and the settlement of people, but they also aided the deployment of military force. For that reason, imperial powers competed to control such vital infrastructure by offering promises of financing on favorable terms. Due to financial constraints, Japan had difficulty carrying out these big projects, as is illustrated by the fact that the Seoul–Pusan line was not completed until 1905 after the Japanese army had evicted its only serious rival and the government took over the project.⁶⁶

In addition to financing railroads, sending settlers to Korea was an important method to foster tighter integration of the economies of Japan and Korea. While the socialist Katayama Sen had studied in the United States and wrote a bestselling guidebook introducing young Japanese to opportunities in that country, Kōtoku was lukewarm about emigration to the United States but he favored emigration to Manchuria and Korea as an alternative to war. Shortly before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Kōtoku argued: “Today what Japan needs most is not to go to war with Russia. There is no other practical course than to advance economically into Manchuria. In other words, we should move a large number of people to Manchuria and invest capital there; there is no better way to create wealth than to take over and settle densely on the land. This is the path to peace for Japan.”⁶⁷ Economic expansion through immigration and the export of capital were a peaceful alternative to “the invasion and rule of other countries” and a form of “expansion of the Japanese race.”⁶⁸

Advocates of immigration to Korea distinguished between transients (*imin*) who went abroad to earn money, and long-term settlers (*shokumin*) interested in developing the land and settling permanently. The former contributed to the economies of their host countries but were a net drain on their own, whereas the latter represented an expansion of the race. While Kōtoku did not employ these terms in his writings, he viewed emigration as a form to advance national policy and to promote national goals whereas Katayama, for example, considered it as a means that individuals use to advance personal goals such as financial success and education. He differed most from Katayama in his rejection of an ethics of individualism. In another article dating from the same time, he strongly criticized a new ethics (*shūshin*) textbook by Fukuzawa Yukichi in which the latter upheld individual self-respect and independence (*dokuritsu jison no shugi*) as the foundation for an ethical life in society. Kōtoku argued that promoting individualist ethics would lead to selfishness and an intensified struggle for survival, thereby pouring fire on social conflict and endangering society as a whole. To remedy this situation, he proposed an ethical teaching that instills into individuals a sense of “duties and responsibilities” toward society based on principles or righteousness (*kōgi kōtoku*) and benevolence.⁶⁹ In short, because of his rejection of an ethics of individualism, Kōtoku tended to view emigration through the lens of national policy rather than adopt the perspective of the individual emigrant.

Likewise, his advocacy of emigration to Korea has an opportunistic tinge: the Russo-Japanese War had removed Japan's last rival from the Korean peninsula, while the United States had begun to pressure the Japanese government to restrict emigration due to the racist movement against Japanese on the West Coast.⁷⁰ In effect, since Kôtoku supported economic expansion and emigration as an alternative to military expansion, he adopted views that were nearly indistinguishable from outright advocates of Japanese imperialism, who favored the settlement of regions where the government was weak. Thus, the prominent colonial scholar Tôgô Minoru wrote, "the future colonies of the empire must be sought nowhere but on the Asian continent" and recommended that the government distribute unowned or uncultivated land to settlers as an incentive to settle in continental Asia.⁷¹ To be sure, these Japanese settlers enjoyed a privileged position in the colony since they benefited from the protection of the Japanese army and formed an enclave of expatriates with special privileges and rights denied to Koreans.

KÔTOKU AND THE CRITIQUE OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

While Kôtoku viewed peaceful expansionism as an alternative to military imperialism, he occasionally expressed a more critical view of natural economic expansion. Just as peaceful expansion into "wild, uninhabited places," was no longer a practical possibility in the contemporary world, immigration and trade were not the solution to domestic economic problems. In a short chapter of *Imperialism*, he noted that the European poor prefer to emigrate to North America rather than to European colonies. After observing that "since the Industrial Revolution, the population of the world has been multiplied several times over, but at the same time, the productive wealth of the world has been increased several thousand times," he rejected the claim that poverty is caused by increasing population and can be reduced by having surplus population emigrate overseas.⁷² Instead, poverty was the "result of flaws in our social organization and economic system," exploitation, and the uneven distribution of wealth. Since people emigrated because of poverty in their home country, political parties should work to alter the social and economic system that results in poverty by expanding domestic demand through increasing the purchasing power of the masses and ending social inequalities.

Similarly, in his chapter on the "need for new markets" he refuted the claim that territorial expansion creates new markets for a nation's commercial products. Though the capitalists and industrialists complained of "overproduction" and surplus of capital, the masses lacked "adequate supplies of basic necessities such as clothing and food and complain, with tears in their eyes, of their destitution. . . . This lack of demand is due to the lack of purchasing power of the majority of the population, the unjust distribution of income, and the growing divide between the

rich and the poor.”⁷³ In short, imperialism was best seen as the by-product or result of an unjust society in which income is unequally distributed and poverty is widespread. For that reason, he concluded that “the economic problems in the countries of Europe and the United States today will not be solved by oppressing the population of underdeveloped societies and making them buy their manufactured products, but rather by greatly boosting the purchasing power of the vast majority of people in their own countries.”⁷⁴ In both of these passages, Kōtoku assumed a critical position toward economic imperialism because it externalizes the social problems of the home country and diverts the masses from changing the domestic order.

Nor did Kōtoku’s views of imperialism remain frozen in subsequent years. Rather, they evolved in response to changing historical circumstance, particularly after launching the *Heimin Newspaper* in 1904. While he had implicitly praised economic expansionism into Korea and Manchuria as an alternative to war in his articles in the *Yorozu Chōhō*, he subsequently came to see the two forms of expansion as complementary and causally related. In “The Real Truth of the War among the Powers” (*Rekkyō funsō no shinsō*), he attacked the popular slogans of the war such as “civilized diplomacy, the just war, the glory of the empire” as illusory. Underneath this rhetorical gloss, the Russo-Japanese War was a struggle for hegemony in a global market:

Overall, the so-called Far Eastern problem is a struggle by the great powers of England, the United States, France, Germany, and Russia to grab and exploit the great natural resources of China [*Shinkoku*]. In other words, [they] seek to preserve the political integrity of Korea and China, but to divide it up economically. They are competing over the size of their respective stakes. . . . The diplomacy of the great powers goes beyond the purely political relations of the past and is now based on economic interests. Accordingly, the real powers operating behind the scenes are not the political leaders, but rather the capitalists.⁷⁵

In effect, the Russo-Japanese War was a war by competing imperial interests “to grab and exploit the great natural resources of China [*Shinkoku*],” which is at once the principal battlefield and the great prize of the war. In this case, the imperialists were less interested in seizing Chinese land than in directly exploiting its resources and people. In addition, the nonbelligerent countries of France, England, and the United States played an important part in the war. If war was caused by economic competition in China, it also mirrored the hierarchical order among capitalist powers. If Japan ranked among the top military powers, it was a subordinated country among the dominant capitalist powers that called the shots. In this scenario, Japan served as a proxy for Great Britain in its competition with Russia over railroads and resources. In this analysis, Kōtoku treated economic expansionism and military aggression not as opposing or contrary forces, but rather as complicit

partners that work hand in glove in pursuit of world domination. Just as he dismantled the distinction between political and economic policies, he also deconstructed the distinction between diplomacy and war. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, as an exemplary case of diplomacy among the powers, created the conditions for both war with Russia and the economic partition of China. In short, he offered an economic analysis of the war, much as he would later do in 1906 when he predicted that Japan's expansion into the Pacific after the Russo-Japanese War would lead eventually to a clash between American and Japanese commercial and imperial interests in the Pacific region.⁷⁶

What Causes Imperialism?

Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious.

—OSCAR WILDE

The feeling of hatred gives off a bad odor. If we were to name that odor, we would call it patriotism.

—KÔTOKU SHÛSUI

Neo-nationalists in Japan, who support a revival of patriotic education in schools, commonly confide that they “dislike” or even “hate” South Koreans or Chinese. They usually confess to these emotions after hearing South Korean or Chinese leaders publicly criticize Japan for forgetting its wartime or imperial past. Although they especially resent national leaders who are critical of Japan, they do not hesitate to broaden the target of their resentment to encompass entire populations. Rather than a natural upwelling of national pride, Kōtoku argued more than one century ago that patriotism is essentially a reactive emotion in which hatred of other nations is a vital constituent. Besides discovering that negative affect was a key component of so-called patriotism, he also identified the latter as a principal cause of imperialism.

In the first chapter of *Imperialism*, Kōtoku analyzes the forces that give rise to imperialism: “Is not the policy of imperialism composed of patriotism [*patariochizumu*] and militarism [*miritarisumu*]? These are the woof and the warp of imperialism. Without any doubt, they constitute the foundation upon which the imperialism practiced by the great powers of the present day is based.”¹ In addition to identifying these two terms as recently naturalized words by his use of *furigana*, he offers a rationale for the overall structure of the book, which devotes extended chapters to patriotism and militarism before tackling imperialism itself. He apparently assigns equal weight to both causes when he calls them the warp and woof of imperialism. However, toward the end of the book, he likens the popularity of imperialism to the spread of the plague in which “so-called patriotism is the microbe that causes the disease while militarism is the means by which it is

transmitted.”² In the latter metaphor, he subordinates militarism to patriotism as means to an end. Following his later analysis, I will focus primarily on his discussion of patriotism, his most innovative and influential contribution to modern theories of imperialism.

When Kôtoku argues that modern patriotism “causes” imperialism, he links the latter to the institutions of the modern Meiji nation-state that replaced local and regional attachments with national allegiances. And in fact, loyalty to the throne and love of nation in Japan were contemporaneous with calls for expansion overseas. However, Kôtoku does not simply point to the temporal coincidence of empire and nation, but sets out to expose the mechanisms by which popular love of nation is channeled toward overseas conquest. By contrast with John A. Hobson, he does not view imperialism as a direct consequence of the overproduction of goods or surplus savings. Rather, he treats capitalism as a form of expansionism subordinated to the form of the nation-state in which the capitalist class is one interest group pushing the state in the direction of imperialism. In addition, by the term “patriotism,” Kôtoku means modern ethnic nationalism or the emotional sense of belonging to the nation. Indeed, through his critique of patriotism, he extends his purview beyond love of nation to include the system of nation-states and the imperial world system as a whole.

Kôtoku begins his analysis of imperialism by spelling out the purposes of the nation-state, which exists “to ensure continual social progress and to better the welfare of humanity.” In addition, “social progress must be based on true scientific knowledge and human happiness and well-being must be founded on civilized morality.” By contrast with wise government that aims for the “continual progress over the long term” and leads to the “happiness of all,” imperialism only generates a “brief show of prosperity” and “simply secures the privileges of a small minority.” Kôtoku contrasts statecraft with imperialism in a series of binaries: “scientific knowledge” versus “rank superstition,” “civilized morality” versus “fanaticism,” “despotism, injustice, narrow-mindedness, and conflict” versus “freedom, justice, universal love, and equality.” By linking patriotism to imperialism, he identifies love of nation with animal instinct, superstition, fanaticism, vanity, and belligerence.³

But why does patriotism cause imperialism? Kôtoku first draws an invidious comparison between patriotism and Mencian empathy, posited as the spontaneous, basal emotion that links one human being to another: “I am as convinced as Mencius that any man would rush without hesitation to rescue a child who was about to fall into a well. If the feeling of patriotism were truly like the sympathy one naturally feels for the child that motivated this generous gesture, if it were a spirit of empathy [*sokuin no nen*] or philanthropy [*hakuai*], then patriotism would be a beautiful and glorious thing.”⁴ The nature of human beings and their capacity to feel emotion dictates that everyone come to the aid of another in distress.⁵ Empathy is “glorious” and “beautiful” because it is a spontaneous, unre-

flective reaction to the plight of a helpless child in danger. In addition, it is “generous” since it is an expression of the ineradicable sociality of the human being, which explains why “any man” would rush to aid “any” vulnerable child, without pausing to reflect whether or not the child is a family member or relative. By equating empathy with “philanthropy,” he suggests that empathy is in essence a universal claim that involves a responsibility toward all human beings.

While Mencius offers only one example of empathy, his concept is not exhausted by this singular case. Rather than being limited to individual conduct in an emergency, empathy applies to all relationships and to every kind of situation, as is shown by the continuation of this famous passage: “From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of empathy is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human.”⁶ Rather than an “emotion” that an individual feels in the privacy of his soul, it is a summons or call to action that must be obeyed. It is accordingly realized and completed in actions that result in benevolence and moral goodness. Furthermore, Kōtoku expands the notion of empathy to include commitment to abstract principle or political engagement to advance the cause of justice. Just as Mencian empathy creates the basis for moral community among sentient human beings, these commitments to moral principle lay the foundation for justice and universal values in political communities. Consistent with this view, he holds up British who pray for the victory of Boers as contemporary examples of empathy and praises the anticolonial fighters in the Philippines and South Africa as fighters for justice.⁷ In these cases, men are led by transnational principles of justice to oppose the policies of their own government or to resist those who oppress their people. Empathy serves as the natural ground for values such as benevolence and charity and offers a foundation for human perfectibility.⁸

By contrast with empathy, patriotism is a discriminating and arbitrary sentiment confined to those who belong to a single nation-state or live together within common national borders. “A patriot who does not care for the people of other countries and only loves his fellow countrymen is like a man who only loves members of his own family and immediate relatives and is indifferent to everyone else. . . . How can we speak of public interest in such a case when only a person’s private interests are at stake?”⁹ Patriotism is a narrow love, inherently exclusive and partial, capriciously granted to some but deliberately withheld from others. In that respect, Kōtoku’s definition of the patriot resembles that of his American contemporary Ambrose Bierce: “one to whom the interests of the part seem superior to those of the whole. The dupe of statesmen and the tool of conquerors.”¹⁰ Consequently, he describes patriotism as private (*shi*) and empathy as public (*oyake*), a distinction with deep roots in Neo-Confucian philosophy. For both reasons, he judged patriotism as morally inferior to empathy.

Furthermore, he contends that patriotism (*aikoku*, written with the characters “love” and “country”) is not based on love, but rather on primitive hatred that, through a mysterious alchemy, is transmuted into love—or that hides behind the deceptive mask of love. Though patriotism appears to be “love one feels toward one’s country, it derives from an original and primary hatred of foreign peoples and countries.”¹¹ This is the case as well with more attenuated forms of patriotism like nostalgia and longing for one’s homeland. “What makes men nostalgic for their native land is not so much love or respect for their country but rather their hatred of other countries.”¹² By an unexpected reversal, the hatred one feels toward a common enemy becomes the affective glue that binds the members of a nation together, moderates their conflicts, and sustains an illusion of fellow feeling among people who are, by and large, total strangers.

Kōtoku traces the origins of patriotism back to “primitive” or even animal societies and construes modern patriotism as a reactivation of primitive emotion, an atavism. “Primitive” people shared a common hatred of the unfamiliar and the unknown, which in turn generated a sense of unity among members of a group. In the modern period, however, this group identification assumes a new guise as a result of capitalist development and the global system of nations:

As society has gradually evolved in accordance with the principle of survival of the fittest, as the means of communication and transportation have unified the world, the members of other races and other villages who used to constitute a common enemy have decreased in number and the hatred that united men against them has started to lose its object. If they lose a common object of hatred, then they also become unable to find a cause for uniting with their neighbors. At this point, their love for their country, their community, or their village undergoes a change and simply becomes a feeling toward themselves, their families, and their groups. At the same time, the warlike instinct that governed relations between different communities or villages of barbarians also changes into competition among individuals, rivalry among political parties, and struggle among the different classes of society.¹³

Modern nationalism reunites the members of the nation separated by economic changes such as the division of labor, the cleavages of social classes, and political differences. While material progress attenuates the hatred people feel toward the foreign and weakens the bonds of community that united them, Kōtoku allows for periodic regressions, particularly war in which hatred of the enemy helps to reunite the dispersed atoms of society and create an organic community unified in spirit and acting as a single body. This hatred plays a critical constitutive role since it provides the grounds for a cohesive human community.

If patriotism is a regression to a dark past, it also serves a new function in modern societies.¹⁴ Kōtoku draws his best examples from wars, including the Sino-Japanese War, when nationalist ideology and media propagated “contempt, envy and hatred” toward the Chinese people, emotions fanned by popular songs

such as “Strike and Punish the Qing.” Subjected to this media barrage, Japanese “were prepared to massacre 400,000,000 Chinese down to the final white-haired, elderly man and the tender babe barely three feet tall out of hatred of the enemy.”¹⁵ Thanks to the active propagation of hatred of the other, masses are not only mobilized to kill and give up their lives in the name of the nation but also to sacrifice their well being in peacetime by supporting growing military expenditures.

At the same time, he rejects patriotism as a bogus substitution (*ersatz*) that needs to be roused by highly artificial means:

Unscrupulous politicians, taking advantage of every opportunity, adventurers in search of glory, and capitalists greedy for profits proclaim in unison: “Look at the borders of our nation. Powerful enemies threaten us on all sides. The people must end their squabbles and join forces on behalf of the nation.” In fact, they seek to divert the hatred that individuals feel toward one another onto foreign enemies in order to derive profit for themselves. They reproach anyone who refuses to go along with this project by saying: “You are an enemy of the nation, a traitor.” The popularity of imperialism . . . depends ultimately on the incitation of a patriotic spirit of the people, that is to say, on the deliberate provocation of animal instincts.¹⁶

Kōtoku argues that imperialism depends first on the “incitation” or “provocation” of the “animal instincts” of fear and hatred. Second, the hatred of the citizens “toward one another” is “diverted” toward foreign enemies. And third, elite groups that benefit from imperialism—members of the political elite, businessmen, and military officers—use this emotion to “achieve their own unscrupulous ends.” In general, Kōtoku denounces imperialism as the commandeering of politics by small economic and political cliques.¹⁷

Kōtoku further compares this artificial emotion to a night of excessive drinking, which induces ephemeral excitement followed by a loss of memory. Explaining how Bismarck stirred up the passions of the German peoples in support of “useless wars,” he writes: “The inebriation of a people with the glory and prestige of the nation is like that of an individual who has had too much alcohol to drink. Drunk, red-eyed, hot behind the ears, and over-excited, people do not pay the slightest attention to the horrible piles of corpses they tread over or notice the filth of the river of blood they wade through.”¹⁸ Kōtoku found an echo of this patriotic intoxication in the hysteria whipped up by the press at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. “Ever since war [with Russia] broke out, they have done nothing but extol the war, slander Russia, suck up to the military, and appeal for public contributions. . . . They have stopped being single newspapers, and been transformed collectively into a Record of the Russo-Japanese War, The Saga of the Conquest of Russia. Or perhaps a war song. Or a military bugle.”¹⁹ If compassion provides a sound foundation for the development of enlightenment and social progress, the bounded, distorted emotion of patriotism offers an *ersatz* intoxication leading to

imperialism and war. However, Kōtoku also believed that patriotism could be “cured” precisely because it is an artificial emotion fabricated and inculcated by nation-states.

While Kōtoku ties manipulation of patriotism to war, he also argues that modern states sometimes designate internal enemies to awaken patriotic identifications. Patriotism is both an internal boundary marker that separates fellow countrymen and anticountrymen (*hikokumin*), and an external border that divides nationals and nonnationals. By ostracizing internal enemies, the nation-state reinforces homogeneity among members of the national group. This is notably the case when individuals dissent from patriotic consensus in times of war. However, patriotism serves this disciplinary function in peacetime too, as shown by “manifestations of patriotism in this holy period of Meiji Japan.” “When Kume Kunitake wrote an article in which he held that the Shinto religion derived from ancient sky worship, he was forced to resign from his university post.”²⁰ In 1892, Kume, founder of the Japanese school of historiography, was forced to resign from his chair at the Imperial University of Tokyo for publishing the article “Shintō wa saiten no kozoku” (Shinto is merely old customs for worshipping the heavens) in which he analyzed Shinto as a primitive religious cult. The forced resignation of Kume offered an important precedent for the suppression of historical research by government intervention. By punishing the historian for submitting national myth to inquiry, the government enforced national taboos and strengthened national myth. To be sure, in order to be an anticountryman, it was in the first place necessary that the individual in question be a fellow countryman. A foreigner, no matter how ill-disposed toward another nation, could never “betray” his or her *kokumin*. Whether by enforcing taboos on scholarly inquiry, punishing dissent, or interfering with individuals’ private beliefs, patriotism ensures that those who “challenge the conventional wisdom of the day [are] muzzled and forcibly restrained.”²¹

In Kōtoku’s view, the true face of patriotism is revealed when, in the aftermath of war, the state turns its weapons against the lower strata of society who served as cannon fodder throughout the conflict: the peasants of ancient Rome fell into slavery after returning from wars, and the English peasants who fought against Napoleon in the nineteenth century were plunged into destitution after winning glorious victories for the nation. Once peace was restored, the upper classes of society showed no “patriotism” for their compatriots and certainly felt no “sacred national unity with them.” In the aftermath of war, the chimera of “patriotism” dissolves back to ordinary class hatred and the oppressions of everyday life.

Moreover, Kōtoku seeks to understand why the masses adhere to patriotism even though they are its victims. He argues that while leaders of the ancient world (Egypt, Greece, Rome) tapped into the primitive emotions of the masses to establish their power, they had not yet perfected this ruse into an authoritative science. In particular, they lacked the powerful apparatus of modern media and the potent

political institutions that allow nation-states to mobilize huge populations and resources for the prosecution of war. The soldier-citizens become willing executioners of state policy when they internalize the cult of patriotism and discover within it a basis for their sense of personal identity.

However, patriotism is not merely a deceptive ideology that the rulers use to make the masses act against their true interests. It draws its strength from deeper emotions that are inscribed in the human sense of identity and the need for community. In modern war, governments stimulate these feelings when they invoke the need for unity against the enemy or summon all citizens to serve the nation's expansion.²² Patriotism posits a sacred unity among the people, but this is a false community that only displaces the conflicts that develop within the nation onto other countries. Patriotism serves only the interests of the few (capitalists and speculators, suppliers of the military, militarists, and imperialists) who incite people to act against their true interests by stimulating their instincts of hatred and pride.

While he first describes empathy as the natural state and patriotism as its test-tube double, he often argues that empathy is less a fact of human nature than a value to be realized, the goal of "true civilization." This goal will be reached only through moral cultivation, education, and a radical transcendence of "nature." "Human beings have made progress because they have striven to remedy the evils of nature. The people who have achieved the greatest progress in morality are those who are best able to control their natural desires. The people who have attained the highest level of material progress are those who are able to transform the natural products of nature. One who wishes to enjoy the benefits of civilization must not simply blindly follow the course of nature."²³ By positing universal empathy as an ideal to be attained in stages, he effectively removes the notion from its original philosophical context and re-creates it as a historical goal. Over the long span of time, human beings develop more universal bonds of empathy with their fellows; as social identifications widen, human communities evolve from the local to the national level and finally to the global community.²⁴ Kōtoku was optimistic that nation-states would give way to world government and perpetual peace. In an article comparing the nineteenth century and the twentieth: "It is absolutely clear that just as politics evolves from liberalism to nationalism, then from nationalism to imperialism, and then from imperialism to the doctrine of world peace, society and the economy evolve from the doctrine of free competition to capitalism, then from capitalism to worldwide socialism."²⁵

If patriotism is the microbe that causes people to act against their interests and support imperialism, militarism is the vehicle that facilitates its spread. After they conquer new lands, nations devote increasingly large budgets to maintain standing armies, develop new weapons for "defense," impose their rule on recalcitrant populations, and ward off threats from rival empires. First of all, he argues that,

notwithstanding its rhetoric of defense, modern militarism is offensive as he illustrates with the case of Germany, which became a modern nation by provoking wars with its neighbors. Germany's military successes made it a model for Japan to follow at the turn of the twentieth century: "The most decorated members of the Japanese nobility vie with one another to imitate this model, each one striving to become the Bismarck of the Orient."²⁶

As in his theory of patriotism, he traces the origins of war back to a regressive past in which rival tribes settled their conflicts by small-scale war. By debunking war as a regression, he attacks the ideological glorification of the Japanese warrior spirit in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War. In his exemplary *Bushidō* (The way of the warrior), Nitobe Inazō explained the rise of modern Japan and its victories in war by arguing that Japanese of all classes had internalized the code of honor and ethical values of the former samurai class. By contrast, Kōtoku held that warfare has nothing to do with honor and ethics. Rather than the honorable duel, warfare has always been based on trickery, deception, and treachery:

No matter how ignoble the objective pursued and however vile the means used, planners of war strategy have never wasted their time submitting either ends or means to the tests of ethics. How can one seriously speak of war as having anything in common with the individual duel? How can one claim that it resembles a contest in which two individuals match their strength, endurance, and force of character, all considered to be manly virtues. Whereas a private duel comes to an end when one of the parties defeats the other, war is simply an ongoing disaster in which vengeance leads to more vengeance.²⁷

In his argument, militarism signifies not merely wars of conquest and the glorification of the warrior, but also the ideology of national security and the conscription system. Whereas Admiral Mahan had extolled the benefits of military service as a school in which youth are trained in the ways of democracy and autonomy, Kōtoku argues that such training simply indoctrinates soldiers with a respect for the strong and a contempt for the weak, blind obedience, and moral cowardice. Rather than favoring democratic society, this schooling encourages antidemocratic tendencies and sows the seeds of corruption, a lesson epitomized by the Dreyfus Affair in France. Kōtoku held to this antimilitary stance throughout his life and relentlessly attacked government efforts to glorify war and military service during the Russo-Japanese conflict, notably by denouncing the jingoistic press and school indoctrination.²⁸

Lastly, he undertakes a critique of realpolitik in his discussion of European politics. Noting that, in recent years, the number of wars among European nations has diminished, he disputes the claim that this is the result of a balance of power and the maintenance of strong military forces by every nation. The relative peace in Europe is based on the fact that war had become so costly that nations realize

how “frightful the consequences of war have become” and are “aware that war is a murderous form of madness.”²⁹ Kōtoku exposes the underside of the realpolitik theories of balance of power when he points out that this period of “peace” in Europe has seen numerous wars of conquest in Africa and Asia. While the great powers avoid coming into conflict with one another from a healthy fear of the consequences, they avail themselves of their superior force to defeat much weaker nations in colonial conflicts, whether in Abyssinia, Manila, or Beijing. These “savage wars of peace” are not initiated with a declaration of war and do not conclude with a peace treaty. Conflicts between unevenly matched sides, they have been especially notable for their grotesque disparity in terms of weapons and casualties.

In his critique of both patriotism and militarism, Kōtoku reflects the strong influence of Social Darwinist beliefs in the historical inevitability of progress, even though he rejected its corollary: the “struggle for survival.” To be sure, writers from widely opposing viewpoints invoked historical inevitability in favor of their theories. In “The Theory of Evolution and Socialism,” he specifically attacks Katō Hiro-yuki’s conservative interpretation of Darwinism and his defense of the struggle for survival (*seizon kyōsō*) as an ideology that treats social inequality and political oppression as a reflection of the natural order. However, he goes on to claim that “socialism is fully compatible with the theory of evolution since it teaches the evolution of society. . . . We socialists struggle to make our unjust and unequal society evolve toward a more harmonious and less flawed society.” Accordingly, he saw the world of nation-states and military empires giving way to socialism, mutual aid, and universal peace.³⁰ Whatever the merits of these theories, Kōtoku was correct in pointing out the close relationship between imperialism and nationalism in Japan. In many European countries, patriotism came into being as an aspiration toward universalism and a transcendence of local identification; this form of patriotism preceded imperialism, and in most European languages, patriotism is distinguished from its pejorative double, jingoism, although the gulf between the two was often bridged by racism, the civilizing mission, and religious messianism. By contrast, nationalism and modern militarism in Japan developed concurrently with the growth of imperialism, and are therefore inseparable from notions of hatred of the enemy. Turned toward the future, Kōtoku held that patriotism and militarism could only be an atavism that forces human society to regress to earlier periods and inhibits further progress.

TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN KŌTOKU’S ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Marxist scholars have criticized Kōtoku’s neglect of the economic causes of imperialism, but F.G. Notehelfer, author of *Kōtoku Shūsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical*, the main English work of reference on the subject, dismisses

Imperialism as “the work of a Confucian moralist and not of a political economist.” The book is a product of the inner conflicts in the writer’s personality in which Confucianism battles with, and finally triumphs over, Western modernity. Notehelfer writes: “In a modernizing society in which the process of modernization is not the product of its ‘own internal logic,’ but is carried out as a result of outside pressures, as was the case in Meiji Japan, the individual is all too often not innerly ready to give up traditional patterns of social behavior and traditional ways of thinking.”³¹ But should we regard this book as a Confucian tract and its author as a conservative nostalgic for tradition?

Notehelfer treats Confucianism as an ossified dogma that interferes with and distorts Kōtoku’s reception of Western thought. Beyond the individual case of Kōtoku, he posits Confucianism as a metonym for the Eastern heritage that retards Japan’s progress in modernization. His modernization argument ultimately rests on a framework of civilizational hierarchy in which the West represents the liberal and universal and East Asia stands for the illiberal and particular. However, Notehelfer overlooks Kōtoku’s creative engagement with Confucianism, evident in his interpretation of the Mencian notion of empathy or benevolence (*hakuai*). In these cases, Kōtoku successfully incorporates Western ideas into a Confucian intellectual tradition that is treated as universal rather than particular. Rather than attempting to understand the Meiji thinker on his own terrain, Notehelfer dismisses him as the schizophrenic intellectual torn between tradition and modernization: “On the one hand, he was tied to the traditional ethic; on the other, he had come to admit that modernization through ‘scientific knowledge’ was inevitable.”³²

Such an interpretation is premised on a teleological view of history in which the historian knows the direction toward which the train of history is moving and is an expert in gauging its tempo. By assuming a standpoint that claims to know that history’s endpoint is Western modernity, the historian can place early stages in a linear narrative. Kōtoku’s *Imperialism* is, accordingly, an “immature” work scarred by a vestigial Confucianism and hobbled by anachronistic references. In short, the historian adopts the privileged perspective of an eavesdropper who is able to assess Kōtoku’s relation to his own tradition(s). To make sense of Kōtoku’s project, I will seek to comprehend the conceptual world he inhabited in all its complexity and unrealized possibility and eschew the false dichotomy of modernity and tradition in judging his accomplishments. Modernities can become ossified and traditions can be highly scientific, although the teleological view discounts such possibilities.³³

In 1904, Kōtoku mentioned his study of Mencius as a cause of his decision to become a socialist, and he later wrote about the similarities between Taoism and anarchism. His closest collaborator, Sakai Toshihiko, mentioned both Mencius and Confucius as formative influences, but he also referred to his encounter with Rousseau.³⁴ For both men, the Chinese classics offered a vehicle to understand, appropriate, and advance socialist thought. In fact, they were hardly unique in their

respect for the Chinese classics. Confucianism constituted the core learning of any educated person in the early Meiji period. To be sure, not everyone educated in Mencius later decided to become a socialist: rather there were as many forms of reception of this heritage as there were individuals. Some schooled in the Confucian classics later preached nationalism and emperor worship; others became expansionists and imperialists, and yet others adopted forms of fascist thought.

Kōtoku did not simply recycle the words of Mencius as a venerable tradition but actively used and appropriated them in his interpretation of modern ideologies such as nationalism. His views reflect the influence of Nakae Chōmin, who regarded Mencius as the East Asian democratic thinker par excellence. As Kōtoku's views represented a further refinement of his teacher's insights, I will briefly outline Chōmin's unorthodox views. After returning from his studies in France in 1875, Chōmin became principal in the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, but he resigned within three months after the Ministry of Education, influenced by Fukuzawa Yukichi's view that education in Confucian classics would stifle the intellectual independence of the Japanese, opposed his plan to introduce Confucius and Mencius into the school's curriculum. For Chōmin, *kanbun* (classical Chinese) learning played a crucial role in Japanese thought analogous to that of classical Greek in Western thought, not only because it offered masterpieces worthy of prolonged study, but also because it constituted the most promising vehicle to introduce radically new political ideas of Western derivation into Japan.³⁵ In short, his choice of *kanbun* resulted not from unquestioning loyalty to tradition, but rather from his conviction that *kanbun* offered a universal medium for translation and understanding. It is entirely in character with his beliefs in the essential correspondence between Western and Chinese thought that, according to Kōtoku, Chōmin planned to translate Mencius and other Chinese classics into French while he was a student in Paris and Lyon.³⁶

Chōmin's insistence on *kanbun* also reflected an early Japanese struggle with and resistance to Western domination and colonization of Asia. On his return trip from France, he witnessed conditions in Egypt and Vietnam, which he later commented on in his "Theory of Foreign Policy" (Rongaikō):

If in the near future, the Western peoples plant the seeds of hatred in the hearts of the people of Asia, the root cause will be their attitude of arrogance, contempt for weakness, pride in one's civilization, and disdain for the barbarity of others. During my crossing of the Indian Ocean, I stopped in Port Said and Saigon and went ashore and wandered about the cities. There I was shocked to see how the English and French are so full of themselves and without a second thought treat the Turks and Indians worse than pigs or dogs: with blows and kicks.³⁷

As a result of his exposure to colonization, his faith in the superiority of Western civilization was shaken to the roots, but Chōmin did not abandon his belief in

universal principles of freedom and equality. Instead, he argued that principles such as freedom and popular rights are not the possession of people in the West or the monopoly of Western thought. “A king will not command respect himself unless he respects these rights. Mencius and Liu Zongyuan understood this.”³⁸ By arguing that democracy was not an inherently Western notion, Chōmin sought to relativize the Western Enlightenment and also to universalize traditional East Asian thought. After the death of his teacher, Kōtoku recognized the connection between Chōmin and Confucianism and its influence on his own thinking:

What I have found most important is that our teacher placed great emphasis on ethical education based on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. I share his view completely . . . I do not mean to say that their writings are perfect and flawless. However, their teaching on benevolence and ethics [*jingi dōtoku*] are superior . . . to the doctrines of different religions. We should not allow conservative and conventional Confucianists to monopolize classics for mere rote learning and textual analysis. Rather we should follow Chōmin in approaching them with the dynamic perspective and wide knowledge of one versed in Eastern and Western knowledge. In this way, it still fully deserves to be the basis for ethical education of our citizens.³⁹

When Kōtoku cites Mencius, he offers an interpretation of Mencian ethics that derives from Chōmin’s heretical view of Mencius as the first democratic thinker of East Asia. I have already mentioned his use of the Mencian notion of empathy to attack patriotism, but Kōtoku also implicitly contrasted patriotism with *hakuai* (compassion or benevolence), another term with rich Confucian connotations. Whereas the term expressed the social responsibility of the elite in traditional society, it acquired a new meaning of universal humanitarianism that transcends all barriers of classes, nations, and race during the Meiji period. Besides being contrasted with patriotism, this term from East Asian philosophical tradition later became part of the vocabulary of socialism, pacifism, and Christian humanitarianism. Sakai and Kōtoku chose *hakuai* to translate brotherhood or fraternity (one of the three key terms of French revolutionary thought) in the declaration of *Heimin Newspaper*. I would note that the term *hakuai* was also an important term in the lexicon of Christians such as Abe Isō or Uchimura Kanzō.

THE JAPANESE EMPEROR IN KÔTOKU’S THEORY OF IMPERIALISM

Significantly, Kōtoku exempts the Japanese emperor from his critique. He contrasts the Japanese emperor with the kaiser, the personification of German militarism: the emperor “prefers peace to war and values freedom over oppression. He takes no pleasure in the barbarian vanity of his own nation, but desires to spread the benefits of civilization to all nations. He is different from the so-called patriots

or imperialists.”⁴⁰ If Japanese politicians stirred up patriotism and war fever in the name of the emperor, they slandered him since he stood for universal values of civilization and peace.

Therefore he carefully separates the emperor as universal value from his exploitation and manipulation by venal politicians. When he argues that patriots manufacture “internal enemies” to unify the population, he mentions Uchimura Kanzō, a nonconformist who was accused by his enemies of “disrespect toward the emperor” (*fukeizai*).⁴¹ As principal at the Middle School of the First Higher School, Uchimura had refused to bow before a copy of the Imperial Rescript of Education since such a gesture would be an act of idolatry.⁴² Journalists and others took up these charges to drive him from his position and to suggest that Christians are dangerous and foreign enemies to the throne. While Kōtoku condemns the persecution of Uchimura, he does not call into question the imperial institution. Just as the emperor is an enemy of patriots and imperialists, he is an ally of the scholars who stand for universal values and a champion of intellectual honesty and freedom of thought.

While Kōtoku absolves the emperor of responsibility for persecution of scholars or militarism, he argues that Japanese elites have controlled the emperor to buttress their own authority:

Looking back at the history of our country, the deeper cause for violent and disrespectful acts toward the emperor is to be found, at various times, in the special class constituted by the aristocrats and powerful ministers and other court officials. This social class has interposed itself between the emperor and the people, and has worked to obstruct the communication of feeling and thought between them. Since they treat the imperial institution as their own special monopoly, they react with fear when ordinary people attempt to approach the emperor, and indeed regard such an action as a sacrilege and desecration of their private monopoly.⁴³

Like earlier ruling elites, the Meiji oligarchs monopolize the symbolic power of the emperor, “interpose themselves between the emperor and the people,” and “obstruct the communication of feeling and thought between them.” By elevating the emperor to a transcendent position, they also create an environment in which the emperor will become the target of disrespectful acts. In short, Kōtoku suggests that the oligarchy seeks to deflect popular anger against itself by appropriating the symbolic capital of the emperor and hiding behind his imperial aura.

Besides separating the emperor from the actions carried out by officials acting in his name, Kōtoku often invoked the emperor as a strategic ally against the regime, much as heroes of the Meiji Restoration acted in the emperor’s name when they overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate. In *Imperialism*, he argues that soldiers would manifest their loyalty to the emperor by opposing the values of militarism and patriotism inculcated by the government. “I am convinced that if our soldiers

proclaimed that they were fighting for humanity and justice, rather than merely in service to the emperor, the emperor himself would approve of their statement. In this fashion, they would manifest their true loyalty toward the emperor.”⁴⁴ Later, he held that there was no inherent contradiction between Japan’s emperor-centered nationalism and socialism:

In Japan, we call the body of the nation the political system centered on the monarchical system. Rather than call it the monarchical system, it is better to speak of a single line of emperors that has ruled for 2,500 years. The Japanese take great pride in this system that has no equivalent in any other country, in the East or West, in the past or present. . . . But does the doctrine of socialism conflict with or contradict the so-called body of the nation or the existence of a single line of emperors that has lasted 2,500 years? In reply to this question, I must answer firmly in the negative.⁴⁵

Just as Japanese soldiers who reject militarism stand closer to the emperor than militarists, Japanese socialists are potential allies of the emperor who seek to realize in modern society the sage rule of past emperors.⁴⁶ To be sure, Kōtoku was well aware that the government branded socialists as enemies of the *kokutai* (national essence), but he dismissed this reasoning as the worst kind of sophistry: when an “ignoble person who runs out of logic or arguments wants the easiest and fastest way to crush his opponent, he will brand him an enemy of the *kokutai*.”⁴⁷

However, the clan-based autocratic Meiji state justified imperialism and repression of socialism by reference to the emperor, who constituted the foundation of the legitimacy of the government. Particularly during the Russo-Japanese War, the emperor was the grand patriarch of the nation who united the people in support of patriotic wars and imposed social homogeneity in the face of growing class differences in domestic society. While Kōtoku is regarded in retrospect as a sworn enemy of the modern emperor system (*tennōsei*), he did not live long enough to witness the full-fledged system since this assumed its ultimate form only after his death. Indeed, it was the High Treason trial and the executions of twelve Japanese anarchists that proscribed criticism of the Japanese emperor, as noted by the jurist Nakamura Kisaburō: “Through this affair . . . the emperor or the emperor system became absolutely taboo. . . . The people gradually lost the courage to insist on their rights, the power to stand up against the authorities, and the spirit of resistance. They became obedient servants.”⁴⁸

To be sure, the High Treason incident did not bring about or “cause” Japan’s modern emperor system but it served as the key catalyst for the expansion and institutionalization of the system. The crime of high treason (*taigyaku*) formally entered the Japanese legal code in 1908 and the 1910–11 trial was the first case to invoke the statute in Japanese history.⁴⁹ The trial reinforced state power and made any attack on the imperial institution, even verbal or conceptual, taboo. This

taboo not only prevented people from examining the verdict of the High Treason case until 1945, but it also made any critical discussion of the emperor and the imperial institution all but impossible.⁵⁰ Lastly, the government used the imperial taboo to proscribe any socialist or anarchist thought as dangerous and foreign. By presenting socialists as un-Japanese (*hikokumin*), the regime discursively fashioned an internal enemy that could be expelled from the national community.

Besides using the High Treason statute to crush the socialists, the Japanese government prosecuted six cases of *fukeizai* (lèse majesté, article 74 of the Criminal Code), between September 1910 and January 1911. In these cases, prosecutors did not distinguish between public and private actions, as is illustrated by the case of Hashiura Tokio. Hashiura, a young man of nineteen years of age, had written a letter to a provincial journal denouncing the secrecy surrounding the High Treason trial, which resulted in the seizure and prohibition of the journal. In 1911, he was condemned to five years of hard labor for having written in his diary words that attacked the dignity of the emperor and expressed sympathy for Kōtoku Shūsui. The incriminating document was discovered in the possession of Hashiura's elder brother during a search of his home. In a *compte rendu* of the judgment, he is accused of "becoming a believer in extremist ideologies of communism and nihilism, under the influence of the socialist Kōtoku Denjirō" and of consequently losing his respect toward the imperial house, including using in his diary "words that insult the dignity of the emperor" in a description of the emperor's attendance at a Tokyo military academy's graduation ceremony.⁵¹ In later years, this case would serve as a precedent in other cases of lèse majesté involving the seizure of private diaries and prosecution of their authors for writing critical comments about the emperor in the prewar period.

In 1911, the government established a special police force (*tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*) to keep watch over those with "dangerous thoughts." To counteract the latter, it also organized the Military Reserve Associations (*Zaigōgunjinkai*) into a national hierarchy under the auspices of the military command as a new means of ideological suasion of the population.⁵² But it employed carrots as well as sticks to ensure that the socialist movement remained in dormancy. In 1911, to respond to growing labor unrest, it passed a set of factory laws known as the Factory Act (operative in 1916) which set a minimum age for employment and limited the maximum number of daily work hours.⁵³ It also expanded social welfare schemes affiliated with the imperial household such as the *Saiseikai* to operate clinics and provide drugs and medical care to indigent Japanese.⁵⁴ The announcement of an imperial donation to this foundation, made on February 11, the most important date of the imperial calendar, stated that "as economic conditions change, the hearts of the people are apt to err in their direction," thereby hinting that philanthropy would be used to guide the erring away from socialist thought.

PATRIOTISM, ANTICOLONIAL NATIONALISM,
AND THE KOREA PROBLEM

Kôtoku rejected nationalism altogether, whether in Japan or in the colonies. He wrote that the purpose of socialism “is to completely eliminate the religion of patriotism and the evils that it has wrought.”⁵⁵ He stressed that the *heimin* (common people) of all countries had no interest in the nation-state form, and that their interests would be best served by the eventual elimination of nation-states. Accordingly, it made little difference to Russians or Japanese who won the Russo-Japanese War. Likewise, it hardly mattered to the people of Manchuria whether they were ruled by Japan or Russia.⁵⁶ The historian Ishimoda Shō, who praised him as a “Meiji period thinker and political leader in whom we take pride,” nevertheless wrote “in his haste to preach socialist revolution within Asia, he did not understand that for Asian ethnic peoples [*shominzoku*] under colonization or in semicolonized circumstances . . . ethnic liberation and national independence were the decisive issues and the top priorities. For that reason, one cannot doubt that the proper course for them to follow was unification and joining forces.”⁵⁷ Ishimoda leveled a similar charge against Ōsugi Sakae, a later leader of the anarchist wing of the socialist movement, because he had ridiculed the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods on the grounds that it made no difference whether the people purchased goods made by Japanese or Chinese capitalists.⁵⁸

Holding overhasty expectation of socialist revolution, these thinkers did not see the strategic importance of a nationalist awakening in opposition to imperialism or realize that broad alliances would be needed to achieve national independence. Indeed, they displayed a similar political blindness in their reports from other colonized regions of the world. In an article published in the *Heimin Newspaper*, one writer noted approvingly that while the anticolonial movement in Poland had formerly been a “purely patriotic movement” that sought to win freedom and independence from Russian control, it has recently shed its “patriotic character [*kifū*] and adopted true world socialism.”⁵⁹ In an analysis of Ireland published in 1905 in *Chokugen*, a writer offered the following evaluation of Irish nationalism:

Oh the pitiable Irish people, when you give up your false patriotism and administer a deadly blow to the very heart of the capitalist system . . . then you will finally escape from the unhappiness shaped by the long history of your country and advance triumphantly on the true path. This is not simply a matter affecting others. [In Japan] isn't the absentee landlord system taking shape right before your eyes? Peasants and sharecroppers, open your eyes! See what has happened to your lands after you become the slaves of the landlords and your corpses are left to rot in Manchuria.⁶⁰

In this passage, nationalism in Ireland is a form of false consciousness that distracts people from the battle against capitalism, while Japanese patriotism in the

Russo-Japanese War leads peasants to enslavement by landlords and to death on foreign battlefields.

Ishimoda explains that the Japanese socialist movement was a direct “importation” from the West and that Japanese socialists grew estranged from the colonized Koreans and Taiwanese and identified closely with the Western worker’s movement. Perhaps most importantly, they were strongly influenced by notions of evolution and progressive unfolding of history through stages of development. Since they viewed Japan as standing at a more advanced stage, they doubtless viewed Japanese influence in other parts of Asia as a force for progress, much as Marx thought that “whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution [in India].”⁶¹

Ishimoda believed that the struggle for independence must be the top priority for the colonized rather than a radical reconstruction of class society. Under colonial conditions, the recognition of the colonial power as enemy prompts self-consciousness and nationalism, rather than simply belligerence and blind hatred, as Kōtoku held. Ironically, Egyptian and Indian nationalists were widely inspired by Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War to assert nationalism and to press for independence in the aftermath of the war. They almost universally attributed Japan’s military victory over Russia to its promotion of patriotism and national unity, and sought to emulate Japan and learn from its success.⁶² Ishimoda voiced this criticism of Kōtoku after the 1955 Bandung Conference and the worldwide decolonization movement that swept through Asia and Africa. In addition, his support for anticolonial ethnic nationalism resonated with the ANPO movement of the 1950s that aimed to restore Japanese independence from United States military and political control. His distinction of progressive and regressive types of nationalism derives from Lenin’s distinction between nationalism of colonized peoples and that of imperialist powers.

Ishimoda is not the only historian to have criticized Kōtoku’s positions toward Korea. In his early articles in the *Yorozu Chōhō*, Kōtoku parroted government slogans that Japan had a mission to preserve Korean independence, but like other critics of the government, he condemned the government for not doing enough to “protect” its interests in Korea. “Ever since the Sino-Japanese War, the great responsibility of Japan has been to lead Korea to the attainment of independence . . . but now Japan’s political influence in Korea will be totally swept away.” Sometimes he dropped even the pretense of supporting Korean independence, as when he wrote: “if Russia does not immediately withdraw from Korea and hand it over to Japan, I cannot see any satisfactory solution to the problem. Discussions on partition of the territory will only lead to bigger conflict another year.”⁶³ If another country gained control of Korea, he advocated that Japan intervene militarily in Korea’s domestic affairs, even without consulting the Korean government. “If even a chunk of Korean territory falls into the hands of a foreign power, such a

situation would represent a grave crisis for the future of our empire and a threat to peace in the Far East. In such a crisis, we must be prepared to preserve the peace and protect [Koreans] with our full support even if the government of Korea does not desire us to do so.”⁶⁴

Kôtoku wrote these articles early in his career, but he continued to view Korea as part of Japan’s sphere of influence. After the Russo-Japanese War, he wrote in a letter to Sakai Toshihiko dated June 25, 1905, that he dreamed of “founding an agricultural commune by buying land in Hokkaido or Korea and starting a new life with hundreds of agricultural colonists.” This letter suggests that Kôtoku regarded Korea as virgin land, waiting for Japanese colonists to develop it under the recently established Japanese protectorate. “While they were highly enthusiastic and respectful of China, one of the greatest faults of Meiji period socialists is that they were unable to deal with the Korean problem, even though Korea was their closest neighbor.”⁶⁵

However, Kôtoku’s writings merit a more nuanced judgment. First of all, during the Russo-Japanese War he attacked Japanese policies on the grounds that the colonization of Korea would bring no benefits to the Japanese people. “Should Japan seize Manchuria, Korea, and even Siberia, what benefits would these lands bring to the *heimin* of Japan?” In this article, he distinguished between the interests of the rich and powerful and those of the *heimin*, for whom colonial conquests would only mean bigger foreign debt, higher taxes, and a higher cost of living.⁶⁶

Secondly, he denounced the contempt with which ordinary Japanese people tended to regard the Koreans and the ill treatment meted out to them by Japanese settlers: “Based on my personal knowledge and what I have seen, I believe that Japanese treatment of the so-called *shinheimin* [outcastes] shows the ill will they bear toward members of other ethnicities [*iminzoku*]. Is it not a fact that any sensitive person finds the way the Japanese look down on and mistreat Koreans appalling? There may be some Koreans who hope to join forces with the Japanese, but this union is merely an annexation that will turn the Koreans into objects to be used by Japan.”⁶⁷

Thirdly, the *Heimin Newspaper* reported regularly on financial maneuvers by Japanese capitalists and the government to seize Korean assets, especially land, generally by force or fraudulent means. It covered the case of Nagamori Tōkichirō, who with the full backing of the Japanese government and the Japanese settler community in Korea, petitioned the Korean authorities for special privileges to “cultivate barren lands throughout the country.” By designating such land as wasteland, this plan would help to bring uncultivated land under Japanese management. When the Korean government refused to approve this plan, the Japanese threatened reprisals. The article concludes: “Generally war is robbery. . . . We think it would be more frank and innocent if the Japanese people were to say they are

fighting for the acquisition of Korea as well as Manchuria. This exploitation of Korea exposes the clear nature of the war more clearly than anything else.”⁶⁸

Lastly, Kōtoku denounced the hollowness of official rhetoric in favor of Korean independence since the real aim of Japanese policy was to make Korea a protectorate: “We are accustomed to use the expression ‘fostering independence.’ . . . During the past decade this term has lost all its meaning. The problem today is not whether to foster independence in Korea . . . in Hawaii, independence was not fostered, nor was it fostered in the Philippines, Ryūkyū, or Taiwan.”⁶⁹

Though Kōtoku speaks here of fostering independence, it is not clear how he viewed the possible independence of colonized nations such as the Philippines, Taiwan, or Korea. On the one hand, he seems to have shared the common view that Korea became a dead country (*bōkoku*) through the irresponsibility of its leaders and fecklessness of its people because of its history of subordination to other powers. In one of his final writings dated December 18, 1910, he has cold words about Korea shortly after it has been formally annexed by Japan: “Japan might have met a fate similar to that of Korea today. I believe that the reason that Korean society lost its independence in the end is that it lacked the ability and thought to shake off the corruption and decline that have festered for years and to renew itself by establishing a new society and new way of life.”⁷⁰

The most famous article in the *Heimin Newspaper* devoted to Korea was written not by Kōtoku but rather by Kinoshita Naoe. In “Beloved Korea” (*Keiai naru Chōsen*) which appeared on the front page on June 19, 1904, he denounced foreign interference in Korean affairs. “Politicians claim that formerly we fought the Chinese and are fighting the Russians to ensure Korean independence. We tend to think of ourselves as the political saviors of Korea. . . . From the viewpoint of the Korean common people, China, Russia, and Japan merely treat the Korean peninsula as an empty arena to compete for power and influence.” Besides condemning foreign interference in Korea, he denounces the Korean ruling class as a “poisonous, bloodsucking snake” that lives from the sweat and tears of the Korean people. Japanese may ridicule the Koreans for lacking “a sense of the nation and patriotic feeling, but given their history, Koreans have good reason to view the nation as the source of, rather than the solution to, their misfortunes.” He explicitly rejects nationalism and the nation form as a possible solution to Korea’s problems: “There is only one possible way for Korea to escape from this eternal insult forever, namely to reject the idea of the nation-state [*kokkateki gainen*].” Only by renouncing the principle of the nation-state will Korea “free itself from the disaster of being the backdrop for collisions among the powers and break the mold of international morality [*dōtoku*] that merely ratifies the authority of the strongest countries.” What “Korean intellectuals need to aim for is not the vain goal of winning a nation, but rather that of convincing the powerful nations to give up this vanity and spreading the gospel of world peace.” As Koreans have suffered enormously from foreign

invasions and the class system, they are best suited to lead the entire planet toward the ideal of universal brotherhood and transcendence of the nation-state.⁷¹

Kinoshita held that Koreans had the mission of ensuring the world's salvation by renouncing the principle of nationhood. He implicitly shared the colonizer's view that Koreans lacked the capacity to seek an autonomous future and saw his own role as that of "guiding and educating" the Koreans who had "degenerated as a result of invasions." In the end, he advised the Koreans to seek salvation by rejecting the nation-state altogether, that is, by refusing to be historical subjects. While Kinoshita only refers in a cursory manner to the international order that "ratifies the authority of the strong," Kôtoku developed a more fundamental critique of the system of intellectual law that legitimated imperialism in several articles written after the Russo-Japanese War. He was particularly conscious of the important role that the modern nation-state and the Western system of interstate relations played in sustaining a system of oppression by authorizing the use of violence. "As a small example, there is Yanakamura [site of the Ashio Copper Mine] and as a big one, there is Korea [Chôsen]. Laws and treaties follow the logic of violence."⁷² Kôtoku enlarged his analysis to encompass the system of international relations as a whole. Most interestingly, he questioned the hierarchical system of international law and the nation-state system that constituted its essential framework and divided the world's peoples into legal subjects or objects to be acted upon.

In the early stages of its empire-building, Japanese leaders carefully adhered to the letter of international laws, which authorized the Japanese colonization of Korea as a fully legal endeavor.⁷³ Ukita Kazutami, a proponent of ethical imperialism, insisted that Japan adhere closely to the letter of international law in its competition with other empires and its policy toward its neighbors in Asia. "The only form of imperialism that Japan should advocate today would be in accordance with the tenets of international law and would aim to expand the interests of the people of one's own country in competition with Western countries, to foster the independence of Asian countries, and to promote and guide reform in Asian countries in order to guarantee their independence." As the last part of this sentence suggests, Ukita believed that Japan had a special mission to fulfill in East Asia both because it had successfully modernized (unlike other Asian nations) and had a better understanding of Asian customs (unlike Western countries): "Japan is truly suited to the mission of preventing any further disasters . . . by leading China and promoting gradual reforms."⁷⁴

In moving beyond his critique of nationalism to a critique of the system of nation-states and the international system, Kôtoku offered a fundamental critique of the legal system that authorized imperialism. In that respect, his articles offer a foretaste of his later views on world order, in which he rejects the institutions of the nation-state itself. Kôtoku held that international law was a tool in the hands of the strong to oppress the weak, a view doubtless shared by Koreans for whom

Japan was an invader. Whereas he condemns the immorality of the struggle among the major powers that transforms Korea into “barren space,” he offers different recommendations for what Koreans should do to fight back.

In effect, he held that the Korean people have a right as a people (*jinrui*) to benefit from the resources of their country, if not a right to national independence.⁷⁵ Accordingly, he advocated rights for a people that could survive outside the framework of the nation-state. He pronounces himself agnostic on Japan’s policy toward the so-called Korean (Chōsen) problem, arguing that the “standard for solving the ‘Korean problem’ will not be whether it benefits the Korean aristocracy and government officials. . . . When all is said and done, Korea’s political affairs, economy, and natural resources exist for the benefit of the Korean people [*Chōsen jinrui*]. Should they do anything but profit from the civilization of the Oriental races [*Tōyō jinrui*] and of the people of the world [*sekai jinrui*]?” Mencius said that the people’s needs must be met first, that of their rulers second.⁷⁶ Kōtoku criticizes the system of international law that protects imperialist powers that compete to expand their territories and governments and the elites whose interests they serve, but contains no provisions granting rights to the “people.”⁷⁷ By contrast, he proposes that the Korean people should be granted rights to benefit from their nation’s resources and economic development and that their rights be recognized in international law. It is worth noting, however, that he conflates the Koreans with the Oriental races or the human race in general, thereby denying any inherent conflict in pitting Koreans against Japanese as colonized and colonizer.

While accusing Japan of hypocrisy, he also treats the Koreans as bystanders in the contest that will decide their fate. Ultimately, the Japanese must solve the Korean problem and decide whether “to abandon or to annex”: “Will the Korean people be able to look one morning into the bright light of constitutional politics or will they forever be enslaved by writhing barbarians? Shouldn’t the development of Korea’s heavenly endowed natural resources benefit the people’s livelihood? Will they be forever left in the middle of wild desolation? Heaven has presented *us* with a stark dilemma, put it on the shoulders of the *Japanese people*, and now the time has come for the Japanese people to resolve this matter [emphasis mine].”⁷⁸

In fact, Meiji socialists seem to have shared with most of their countrymen the self-serving stereotype that Koreans lacked a “spirit of independence” because of its long “history of subordination” to foreign countries. After the annexation of Korea in 1910, the *Shakai Shinbun*, the last socialist newspaper to be published during the Meiji period, published the following editorial:

The merger of Japan and Korea has taken place. The time has passed to debate the pros and cons of this development. Our urgent duty is to adopt wise methods to rule our Korea [*ware Chōsen*]. It is not a matter of whether or not they will assimilate to our ways. There is one thing that we must absolutely grant to the Koreans. If we fail

in this endeavor, they may cause disaster to us, or they will become a burden to us. That one gift is none other than the spirit of independence as subjects of the Japanese Empire. To be sure, Korea is a country with a history longer than that of our country and it has been a civilized country for ages. However, for thousands of years, the people have never been able to secure the independence of their nation, they have lost a spirit of independence. . . . Their history is only a series of spineless subjections to foreign rulers, to China, to Japan, or to Russia. In the end, the annexation that occurred today was fated to happen. However, Japan must do its best to educate the Koreans to become splendid subjects of the Japanese Empire. They are still a backward [*mikai*] people today and our responsibility is to lead and to educate them. As their rulers, all the Japanese people, whether in their capacity as individuals or as members of social groups, should lead and educate them to be excellent subjects. These are our sincere feelings regarding the annexation of Korea.⁷⁹

Japan's first anti-imperialists handed on a legacy of skepticism regarding nationalism in general and Korean nationalism in particular to later generations. When socialist militants established the Socialist League in 1920, they became involved with the emerging Japanese labor movement and broke free of the constraints of the winter period (*fuyu no jidai*) that followed in the wake of the High Treason trial. Nine years after the annexation of Korea, the March First Korean Independence movement, extensively reported in the Japanese press, had shown that millions of Koreans resisted Japanese colonial rule and supported independence. In addition, thousands of Korean workers had emigrated to Japanese cities, creating a Korean working class within Japan proper. Whereas earlier Japanese socialists had criticized the Koreans as unable to maintain their nation's independence, their successors feared competition from ethnic nationalist movements in winning over Korean adherents to the worker's and socialist movement. On the one hand, they stressed that Korean and Japanese workers should form a united labor movement and socialist party to combat Japanese capitalism and imperialism. On the other, they held that victory in the anticapitalist struggle would ultimately solve Korea's problems, whereas ethnic nationalism was only a diversion of energy from this task. While Koreans and Japanese both participated in protests against a 1922 massacre of Korean workers at the construction site for the Shinano Electric Power Plant, the attitude of Japanese socialists toward Korean nationalism proved to be an enduring obstacle to cooperation. In April 1923, the journal of the Japanese Communist Party, *Sekki* (Red flag), surveyed twenty-nine socialists (including two Koreans) on "their views toward the problem of the liberation of Korea from the point of view of the proletariat." Kazama Jōkichi, of the Kantō Tekkō Kumiai (Kantō Steelworkers Union) wrote, "I think that the problem of the liberation of Korea must be the problem of liberating the Korean proletariat. It is obvious that as long as the capitalist system continues to exist, the human race will never be freed from oppression and exploitation. As both Korean and Japanese workers are

the victims of the same violent system, I think they must unite and cooperate to the utmost in their efforts to destroy the dictatorial rule of Japanese invaders and bourgeois imperialists.” Akamatsu Katsumaro of the Rōdōsōdōmei (Workers General Union) offered a typical Japanese view of the liberation of Korea: “The so-called Korean independence movement is behind the times. We are certain that the only true solution to the problems of self-determination for the people and the liberation of the proletariat in the Far East lies in the collapse of Japanese imperialism and capitalism. Accordingly, we believe the wisest policy for the Korean proletariat is to create labor unions and political parties and unite with Japanese labor unions and parties.”⁸⁰ In retrospect, one can only concur with Ishimoda that early Japanese socialists misunderstood that colonized Koreans prioritized independence and ethnic nationalism in their struggle against Japanese colonialism and they did not merely want to serve as cogs for a future Japanese revolution. While the views of later Japanese socialists toward Korean nationalism lies outside the scope of this study, the examples above suggest that, long after the demise of Japan’s first anti-imperialist movement, they tended to view ethnic nationalism and the Korean independence movement as an obstacle to the worker’s revolution.⁸¹

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Japan's First Anti-Imperialist Movement

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The Boxer Rebellion and the Band of Idealists

Not long after he published *Imperialism*, Kōtoku led a press campaign in the columns of the *Yorozu Chōhō* denouncing the looting of China's treasures by Japanese troops during the Boxer Rebellion. The xenophobic rebellion by the Righteous Harmony Society (the Boxers) began in Shandong Province, a German sphere of influence ravaged by famine and drought, but it later spread rapidly throughout north China.¹ Initially, the Qing dynasty tried to crush the Boxers with force, but it later decided to use them as a proxy to expel Western influence from China. Under the slogan "Support the Qing, destroy the foreign," the Boxers killed diplomats and missionaries and laid siege to legations in the cities of Tianjin and Beijing, in some cases joined by soldiers of the imperial army. As the situation inside foreign legations worsened in Tianjin, a small multinational naval force including two infantry battalions from Japan was sent to relieve them in June 1900.

Contrary to initial expectations, however, this contingent encountered fierce resistance. To avert certain defeat, the great powers decided to dispatch a considerably larger military force to China, but major powers such as England and the United States were already bogged down in other colonial wars in South Africa and the Philippines. English diplomats pressured reluctant Japanese officials to send a large force as a proxy for England and as a counterbalance to Russia in Manchuria.² In the end, the government dispatched the Fifth Division under Lieutenant General Yamaguchi Motoomi and thereby furnished nearly half the soldiers in the eight-nation force.³ By becoming the largest contributor to the multinational force, Japan also became, in the words of Prime Minister Katsura Tarō, "a major shareholder in the pacification enterprise" and a protector of Western interests in China.⁴

After capturing Tianjin on July 14, the multinational forces entered Beijing in August and occupied north China for a year. Once taking control of the cities, soldiers from the coalition nations engaged in an orgy of destruction, killing, and looting, in a display of violent retribution that belied their much-trumpeted claim to represent "civilization."⁵ The punitive Boxer Protocol, signed on September 7, 1901, ordered the punishment of officials responsible for encouraging the Boxers, authorized the powers to station troops in the Beijing-Tianjin region to protect diplomatic personnel, and saddled the Qing regime with an enormous indemnity of 450 million taels to be paid in reparations to the victors.

At the start of the Boxer Rebellion, Kōtoku supported the multinational intervention and denounced both "bandits" and the Qing dynasty in the same breath. In "Cooperation among the Great Powers," he wrote, "With well-armed troops, it will not be hard to defeat these primitive bandits and destroy their bases. Given the superior weapons of the great powers, they will make short shrift of the resistance of this weak, defeated country and punish the foolish, misguided Qing court."⁶ In "Japan's Resolute Policy," he equated the Boxers with xenophobia, violence, backwardness, and superstition. Unlike Western observers, however, he noted the similarities between the Boxers and Japanese antforeign movements in the *bakumatsu* period. In this war, Japan was fighting not only the Boxers, but also the ghosts of its feudal past. By the same token, he held that Japan was qualified to guide China in reforming its government since it had already successfully carried out the Meiji Restoration.⁷

A week later in "Global Trends," he praised Japan's participation in the multinational coalition as a chance to assert itself as a modern nation: "By employing force, the great powers will restore peace in China and, as one of the powers, Japan should cooperate with the powers . . . for the sake of humanity and civilization, as well as to support each nation's interests and rights in China."⁸ Indeed, Kōtoku's main concern was that Japan would place its commercial interests in China in jeopardy if it acted too slowly or sent too small a force, and that it would subsequently lose out in any postwar settlement, notwithstanding its unique strengths: "Among the great powers, only Japan has the qualifications to protect and preserve the interests of China, to prevent a breakdown in the balance of power, and to serve effectively as a mediator between China and the foreign countries in defense of peace and civilization in the Far East." To act as an effective mediator, Japan would need to be on the one hand an "advisor of Qing China [on domestic matters] . . . while on the other, it would interpose itself as peacemaker between the West and China." In short, Kōtoku viewed Japan's role in utterly altruistic terms.⁹ Japan would be a model for China, guide its neighbor, preserve its territorial integrity (*Shina hozen*), and mediate its disputes with Western powers. However, he also spoke of the Boxer intervention in terms borrowed from the anti-Western nationalists in Japan: "In the end, was this [intervention] not the purpose of our *gashin shōtan* [literally,

sleeping on brushwood and licking bile] after the Sino-Japanese War?"¹⁰ If *gashin shōtan* expressed Japanese resentment against the Triple Intervention of 1895 and rationalized the postwar military buildup, the Boxer intervention represented the expected reward for Japan's resolute military and patient diplomatic posture.

Notwithstanding his early support for the intervention, Kōtoku questioned the legitimacy of the war as he observed the fierce resistance put up by the Boxers and Qing soldiers while noting the negative effects of imperialism on Japan, notably tax increases to pay for the war.¹¹ He was not an eyewitness to the battles, but he presumably read the detailed war reports and private letters from Sakai Toshihiko and Taoka Reiun, both special correspondents for the *Yorozu Chōhō*, who observed Chinese resistance and detailed the hardships of war.¹² In response to reports of strong Chinese resistance, Kōtoku wrote "Prospects for China" where he predicted a glorious future for the Chinese in the realms of diplomacy, manufacturing, and warfare, and denounced the oppression and division of China by the great powers.¹³

Without repudiating his support for Japan's participation in the coalition, Kōtoku published several articles attacking imperialism in general, abstract terms. The first indication of his change of heart is the signed editorial, "Against War," published on August 7, 1900, which anticipates his later stance toward the Russo-Japanese War. "In the near future, I realize that it is inconceivable that the great powers will prohibit war and stop or limit the arms race. . . . The tragedies of war and the arms race have now invaded East Asia." After describing the hardships and sacrifice of the Japanese soldiers sent to fight in Tianjin, he refers to the sufferings of the Chinese civilians, the main victims of the war. "Pacifists, have you written of the unhappiness of civilians in the battlefield? Thanks to the demon of war that is suddenly unleashed upon these pitiable people, they suffer the destruction of their homes, the rape of their wives and children, and in many cases, they are killed in droves just as weeds are mown down." Besides evoking the sacrifices of widows and orphans, he writes of the hardships of a people whose country is a battlefield and for whom invading armies are "flying demons who burn their homes, rape their wives, and kill their comrades."¹⁴ Three months later, on November 17, 1900, he published "Rejecting Imperialism," in which he rehearsed the main arguments of *Imperialism* and condemned Japanese imperialism as an ersatz form:

Imperialism in European nations is the expansion of national power and the extension of capitalism. Whatever the rights and wrongs . . . [of their policies], these nations clearly deserve to be described as imperialist. But Japan has an ineffective diplomacy, its public finances are a mess, its capitalists and markets are withering and shrinking. Proponents of imperialism and an arms buildup are not to be found among the people or among the bourgeoisie but only among the military. I cannot but shudder when I think of the future of the nation whose people are intoxicated with empty bombast and deluded by the imperialism of a small shop owner.¹⁵

In short, he explicitly condemned Japanese imperialism as backward and unsound both for its excessive reliance on military force and its neglect of the nation's economic interests.

The Boxer Rebellion was arguably the catalyst that explains Kōtoku's adoption of an anti-imperialist stance that differs from his earlier anti-Western nationalism. In *Imperialism*, he refers to the Boxer Rebellion when he criticizes Japan for joining the Western powers in "the race for empire."¹⁶ This was the quintessential "imperialist war" precisely because no one called it a war. It lives on as the Boxer Rebellion in Western histories, but for Japanese historians, it is the North China Incident (*Hokushin jihen*), an interlude between the two interstate wars when Japan acquired its colonies.¹⁷ Japanese newspapers also avoided the term "war" in their reports.¹⁸ Calling this war an "incident" underscores the definition of war in the age of imperialism, one which Kōtoku stressed in his analysis of imperialism: "Even if the great powers of Europe endeavor to preserve the peace by maintaining sufficient forces to preserve a balance of power, they abruptly change and act to destroy peace in the name of imperialism once they encounter a weaker and less populous nation in Asia and Africa. It suffices to look at what they have done in China and South Africa."¹⁹

Secondly, the Boxer Rebellion was a turning point for Japan, which joined the ranks of the imperialist powers in an attack on its semicolonized neighbor. For the first time, Japan aligned itself with Western nations acting in defense of "civilization and law" against a China equated with barbarism and lawlessness. By providing the largest contingent of troops to the multinational intervention, Japan's leaders profited from the war and secured a foothold to expand Japan's interests on the continent. The year after this intervention, Japan entered into a military agreement with Great Britain in which the two sides recognized each other's interests in China, affirmed Japan's special interests in Korea, and provided for joint action if Russia attacked either one.

Thirdly, the war was imperialist because of the absence of any recognized enemy or any declaration of war. If this full-scale conflict was not called a war, the main reason was that China was not a "regular subject" of international law or a "competent" government. Kōtoku's teacher, Nakae Chōmin, made this point in one of his final articles: Japan and China were not in a state of war (*kōsenkoku ni arazaru nari*); the multinational intervention was a humanitarian (*jindōteki*) one to protect Western legations in China and put down the Boxer Rebellion. Western armies fought the rebels in lieu of the Qing regime, and the latter were reduced to guerrilla tactics and melted away after surrendering their strongholds.²⁰ While the armies in the coalition did not explicitly target nonrebel Chinese on the battlefield, they killed thousands of Chinese civilians. Indeed, it was the civilians who bore the brunt of the imperialist intervention, particularly in the orgy of looting, raping, and murder that followed the capture of Beijing, but these victims were not accounted for on the balance sheets of the war.

For Kōtoku, the great shame of the government in the Boxer Rebellion was not Japan's passivity, but rather its participation as full partner of the West in a predatory intervention in China best exemplified by the looting scandal that followed the Boxer protocol and the return of Japanese troops to Japan. Besides leading a campaign of denunciation of the Japanese military, Kōtoku developed a cosmopolitan anti-imperialism that explicitly broke with the traditional nationalistic anti-imperialism in Japan. With his inclusion of Japan in the imperialist camp, he inaugurated a crucial split within the anti-imperial movement in Japan.

THE CASE OF THE HORSESHOE SILVER INGOTS

Besides opposing war and imperialism in the abstract, Kōtoku played a key role as investigative reporter in the campaign, spearheaded by the *Yorozu Chōhō*, to expose the scandal of Japanese officers who enriched themselves by looting Chinese treasures during the Boxer incident. Campaign journalism was a key component of the editorial strategy of the *Yorozu Chōhō* that exposed scandals and corruption in society. Prior to leading the campaign on the looting, Kōtoku played a central role in the newspaper's campaign to expose the pollution problem caused by the Ashio Copper Mine.

The Japanese and other military forces making up the allied expedition distinguished themselves by their wholesale killings and plunder that rivaled that of the conquistador Francisco Pizarro.²¹ While eyewitnesses described atrocities committed by invading armies in their memoirs, the governments concerned took no punitive action against those responsible. Indeed, during the military operation, the military commands making up the multinational force openly countenanced looting by their troops. Since the Western powers had justified their intervention in China in the name of civilization, they had trouble reconciling their noble mission with their side activities as a plundering horde stripping China of its riches.²² To the extent that they did comment on looting, it was only to condemn the disgraceful behavior of troops from nations other than their own. Thus, Japanese newspapers directed their barbs at the conduct of Russian forces, while British observers censured Japanese troops.²³ Curiously, historians of the Meiji period have largely forgotten this episode, with Marius Jansen contrasting the proper conduct of the Japanese forces with the barbaric behavior of other allied forces: "In 1900, Japan had strengthened its image of modernity by playing a major role in the relief of the missions in Peking from Chinese 'Boxer' fanatics. In contrast to the looting by other elements of the allied force, Japanese troops behaved in 'exemplary fashion.'"²⁴

Between December 1, 1901, and January 19, 1902, however, the *Yorozu Chōhō* launched a press campaign to denounce the looting of Chinese treasures by officers of the Japanese army during the Boxer Rebellion under the title "The Scandal

of Looting of North China.” In general, the affair is best known today as the case of the horseshoe silver ingots (ingots in the form of a horseshoe or *bateigin*) or the looting (*bundori*) incident.²⁵ In addition to publishing fifty articles on the scandal, *Yorozu Chōhō* printed more than twenty letters to the editor from readers. Although most of these articles were unsigned, Kobayashi Kazumi has plausibly argued that Kōtoku played the leading role in the campaign, and that Sakai Toshihiko, Taoka Reiun, Uchimura Kanzō, and Kobayashi Tenryū also participated.²⁶ A large-scale campaign directed against corruption in the military, the Horseshoe Affair resembles the Dreyfus Affair in which journalists attacked systematic corruption in the French army and its interference in the judiciary system.

Rumors of looting circulated in letters from readers reporting on the “extravagant” lifestyle of returning officers or reports of unusual “souvenirs” that they brought back from the battlefield. In addition, lower-ranking soldiers served as conduits of information to *Yorozu Chōhō* journalists on the misdeeds of their superiors. On December 1, 1901, the newspaper confronted the government with allegations of large-scale, organized looting and urged Prime Minister Katsura Tarō to investigate and punish those responsible, but the government refused because such an investigation would “harm the prestige of the state.”²⁷ The newspaper decided to expose the truth of the affair because the government attempted to cover-up the looting scandal.

Most articles focused on specific charges against senior Japanese army officers, starting with Lieutenant General Yamaguchi Motoomi, although lower-ranking Japanese troops were also implicated.²⁸ The press campaign had reverberations in the Japanese diet where members of the Progressive Party (Shinpotō) urged the government to either force the newspaper to retract their accusations against the officers or to try the accused. In late January, one article reported that the chief command had secretly melted down and sent to Japan eight million taels of silver (twelve million yen) where their sales proceeds enabled officers to lead extravagant lives, while converting a smaller portion into currency with the help of brokers such as Jardine Matheson.²⁹ In addition to looting public treasuries, Japanese troops pillaged private homes and buildings in the Chinese cities, walking away with gold, ornaments, jewelry, precious artworks, calligraphy, and tea implements. Furthermore, Japanese diplomats and businesses in China were also accused of taking part in the looting and the transport of proceeds back to Japan. Finally, about a third of the looted silver ended up in the government treasury, probably turned over by offending officers to indemnify themselves against prosecution. The discovery of looted silver in the treasury induced the journalists to widen the campaign against corrupt military officers to include corruption at top levels of the government as well the failure of the Japanese judiciary to take action.

These crimes were committed during the first days that Japanese army units entered Beijing on August 15, 1900, that is to say, more than one year before the

press campaign started. While General Yamaguchi banned looting, these orders were easy to evade and rarely enforced. Indeed, the *Yorozu Chōhō* ridiculed the ban: “Thieves being punished by one who rakes off a percentage from the thieves is a unique occurrence in all of history.”³⁰ In fact, the looting did not result from a breakdown of military command: it was rather the official policy, openly countenanced by senior officers who sold the loot in public auctions. In addition, the reporting on the scandal “focused rather narrowly on looting and other property crimes” and “overlooked physical violence that the Imperial Army perpetrated on Chinese civilians.”³¹

In the course of the campaign, Kōtoku shifted from a moral condemnation of looting to a radical critique of military corruption and of the complicity of government institutions in its crimes. In “Touchstone” (Shikinseki), he appealed to the army to conduct an impartial inquiry and purge those responsible to restore its sullied reputation. Since the army represented the honor of the Japanese people as a whole, the conduct of the authorities would be a touchstone for its future: “We cannot but realize that the reputation of our army has been sullied and the people of our country have suffered an unprecedented humiliation. . . . To dispel this shame, to wash it out, is, first of all, the responsibility of the army and, in the second place, it is the responsibility of the entire nation.”³² Because of the implication of the army and the treasury in the looting, he called not only for the punishment of guilty individuals but also for institutional reform so that such crimes would not be repeated in the future.³³

In the “Looting Problem and the Diet” (Bundori mondai to gikai), Kōtoku dismissed the intervention of the parliament as a formality (*gishikiteki*): “Officers of the imperial army have caused unprecedented shame to the nation by their thefts. In former times, it was considered a sign of national disaster when statesmen loved money and warriors held their lives dear. Now it has reached the point that our soldiers not only hold their lives dear, but they also love money. Nor does it end there: it has reached the point that they stoop to theft. Is that not an unparalleled shame for the nation, and an unprecedented danger as well?”³⁴ In addition to condemning the looting as shameful, Kōtoku also condemned it as a breach of law and a transgression that would irreparably damage ties between Japan and China. In “My Views on the Looting” (Bundori ni tai suru shokan), he notes that: “International law governing wars [*bankoku senjihōki*] authorizes the taking of the spoils of war in a few cases, such as seizing materials necessary to the enemy’s fighting power, or weapons abandoned on the battlefield, or the transport of prohibited items in wartime.”³⁵ He noted, however, that the “dispatch of troops to north China was not taken to wage war against China, but to assist China in pacifying a rebellion by bandits. Thus we may tolerate the confiscation of material and supplies belonging to the bandits. Since China was the country we were aiding, it is spoliation to break open the safe and steal its riches.”³⁶ Thus he called for the government

to punish those responsible and repatriate the stolen loot to China. If the government only punished the guilty parties, without making restitution of the goods to China, then the crime committed by individual soldiers would become a national crime. In effect, by not returning the stolen goods to China, the government became complicit in the theft.

Although the press campaign brought this scandal to wide public attention, neither the army nor the courts launched a full-scale investigation of the scandal, purged those guilty of theft or corruption, or made restitution of the stolen goods to the victims.³⁷ Instead, the *kenpeitai* (military police corps) cracked down on informants who had tipped off the press and charged them with slander rather than pursue officers guilty of looting. In addition, the government made some effort to recuperate the pillaged goods in exchange for the impunity of the officers involved. With few exceptions, the principal officers accused of these crimes, notably Yamaguchi Motoomi, commander of the fifth division of the Japanese army, did not sue the paper for libel or demand that the charges against them be retracted. In the end, Yamaguchi resigned from his post, and a handful of other soldiers and officers were condemned to light sentences. Although the press campaign did not force the government to punish those responsible or return the looted treasures to China, it left a stain on the military's reputation and challenged the military's power within the state. Indeed, Kobayashi Kazumi argues that Kōtoku virtually signed his own death warrant by writing these articles, which sparked the fury of the elder statesman Yamagata Aritomo, founder of the Japanese army.³⁸

THE BAND OF IDEALISTS, REFORMISM, AND "RIGHTEOUS MEN"

One might characterize Kōtoku's stance in his campaign against army looting in China as abstract, legal, and ethical. He does not attack the multinational intervention in China per se or condemn Japan's participation in it, but instead targets the Japanese officers who profit from the war for their violations of national law and moral principles. At the time he took part in this campaign, Kōtoku played a key role in organizing the Band of Idealists (*Risōdan*), an important but overlooked social movement of the early twentieth century. Asukai Masamichi argues compellingly that the *Risōdan* had a far greater significance for Kōtoku than his participation in the Social Democratic Party, a group made up of six intellectuals, and that it had a much greater impact on society.³⁹ As his interventions in the looting scandal were shaped by his general political stance at this time, it will be useful to consider this group in greater depth.

Kuroiwa Ruiko, the editor of the *Yorozu Chōhō*, offered the following rationale for establishing the group:

Many recognize and lament that the hearts of our fellow countrymen have fallen into corruption and decadence that grow ever more extreme with each passing year. The only way to rescue society is for men to exert their influence on others by the example of their virtue. While many understand this truth, they are unable to resist the general tendency of our times because they are isolated and scattered. Our most urgent task is to get these solitary individuals to join forces and form a powerful association. . . . Men who deplore our current plight, I appeal to you to step forward and join with us to become a force for the salvation of our society.⁴⁰

In an article on the purpose of this association, the Christian Uchimura Kanzō stressed that ethical reform was the indispensable condition for social reform: “Let us reform ourselves and then society as a whole.”⁴¹ Kōtoku doubtless shared Uchimura’s belief that individual moral development was linked to social improvement, as shown by his editorials castigating the lack of ethics in Japanese society, such as the “The Concept of Duty” (*Gimu no nen*).⁴² On this point, Christians and anti-Christians could find common cause because they shared a common ethical training in Confucianism.

Rather than a political party, the Band of Idealists was a nonparty movement linked to a newspaper, and in that respect it anticipated the later *Heiminsha*. The *Yorozu Chōhō*, a popular newspaper known for its oppositional stance toward the government, publicized and supported the activities of the band. The band established an advisory council of sixteen members to oversee its strategy, which included Kōtoku and Uchimura, as well as ecological activists, lawyers, and representatives of other movements. Thanks to the nationwide outreach of the newspaper, the band counted more than two thousand members within months of its founding, organized into more than eighty branches located throughout the country.⁴³ While its statutes specified that it would sponsor meetings and promote the exchange of ideas, the band played a key role in social and political reform movements at the time. Members of the band championed the introduction of secret ballots in elections and backed reform candidates in urban districts. Thanks in part to their efforts, voters did not have to affix their seals to the ballot.⁴⁴ In 1902 and 1903, reform candidates won many seats in elections in Tokyo and Yokohama, while candidates supporting government policy lost theirs. At this time, Kōtoku wrote several editorials in the *Yorozu Chōhō* to support the anonymous ballot, proportional representation, the election of nonpartisan candidates, and the movement for universal suffrage (*futsū senkyō*). Besides promoting progressive political reforms, members also played an important part in movements to control the sale of alcoholic beverages, outlaw prostitution, and other endeavors to reform everyday life.

The *Risōdan* also played a central role in early ecological battles against polluting industries, particularly the struggle by poor farmers along the riverbanks of the Watarase River against Furukawa Ichibē’s Ashio Copper Mine. The Ashio

Copper Mine symbolized the callousness of the central government willing to sacrifice the lives of thousands of poor farmers for the well being of a single capitalist.⁴⁵ Furukawa's mines produced 40 percent of Japan's total copper output by the turn of the century, but pollution generated by the mines harmed the livelihood of many thousands of fishermen and farmers in the Kantō agricultural plain. The band organized a tour of inspection of the Ashio Copper Mine and established a branch located near the mine, which attracted the attention of students and intellectuals sympathetic to the farmers, while Kōtoku Shūsui also led the press campaign in the *Yorozu Chōhō* against the pollution caused by the mine. After Tanaka Shōzō, a diet member who represented farmers in the area, resigned from his seat because of government inaction, he decided to launch a direct appeal to the Meiji Emperor and asked Kōtoku, who was trained in the Confucian classics, to write the petition for him. The petition included the statement that the government should "protect the farmers' rights by applying the Imperial Constitution and law to prevent an immeasurable loss of people and wealth that could otherwise constitute the basis for future national strength."⁴⁶

On his deathbed, Nakae Chōmin, former intellectual leader of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, expressed unqualified support for the Band of Idealists whom he viewed as a hopeful sign for future change:

According to what I have been able to discern, the aims of this group are to encourage each individual to pursue moral perfection and . . . to realize the ideals of the gentleman . . . at a time when political parties issue resounding declarations of their political views, which are often nothing more than a string of empty words. We can expect that an ideal such as true justice, even if it is far from being realized in our lives, will become a reality tomorrow because men defend it in their speeches and writing. . . . I appeal to the members of the group of idealists to take good care of themselves. I will continue to salute their health from the grave.⁴⁷

Kōtoku shared his teacher's view that Japan's various social, economic, and political ills were rooted in a moral crisis and that they could only be resolved by an elite of righteous men. The popular masses could perform extraordinary deeds of valor and self-sacrifice in war because of their narrow allegiance to the nation but they became lethargic and were corrupted by the inexorable pressures of the social system in peacetime. In "Paralysis of the Citizens," he wrote: "The regime undermines our constitutional system with gold. Diet members only pretend to represent the people while they are amassing a fortune and seeking more power. The honor of victory [in the Sino-Japanese War], which was the product of people's sacrifice of their lives and possessions, has been squandered; and a civilized nation has been transformed into a land of barbarians. . . . Yet the people seem indifferent, almost as if they were unaware of this danger. Truly one can say that the paralysis of the people has reached its limit." Kōtoku offered two reasons for

the paralysis of ordinary citizens. On the one hand, he stressed the role of external circumstances. During wars or revolution, citizens could be mobilized by appeals to patriotism, but they fall into spiritual lethargy when peace returned, like the “people of ancient Rome and the present-day Qing Empire.” On the other hand, he distinguished between two types of people that entertain essentially different relations to the nation and politics. “Thirty years ago in Kyoto, Sakamoto Ryōma and Nakaoka Shintarō were cut down by assassins in a guest house in Pontochō. Shortly after, others city dwellers happened to pass under the eaves of the guest-house, singing a popular love song. Pressing his hand to stanch his wound, Nakaoka lamented: The world consists of many types, but it is the gentleman [*shishi*] alone who suffers while everyone else goes about their pleasures gaily. What will be the future of this world if the people do not quickly awaken from their stupor?”⁴⁸ Kōtoku implied that in 1897, only a small elite of righteous men (*shishi*) would pay with their lives for their commitments, while the vast majority was dedicated to the ephemeral pleasures of life and blissfully unaware of the sacrifices and the brave deeds that underwrote their pursuit of pleasure.⁴⁹

In “The Degeneration of Society: Its Causes and Cures” (1898), Kōtoku attributed the paralysis of the citizens to the political environment and social system in which they lived: the people have reached an “utter nadir of corruption and decadence” because of

social order and organization today that forces people to fall into these evil ways. . . . Our present social system does not permit people to earn a living through regular means whereas it permits a few people to earn large amounts of money easily by corrupt and criminal practices. . . . Therefore if we wish to stop the corruption and decadence of society, we must fundamentally reform our current social system. . . . And this great reform can only be carried out by the *jinjin gishi* [benevolent and righteous men], who have the interests of all the people at heart.⁵⁰

From around this time, Kōtoku began to publish many studies on working conditions in the textile industry, urban poverty, and political corruption that appealed to the same moral elite to bring about reforms.

Three years later, Kōtoku concluded *Imperialism* by calling for “a great cleansing of the state and society . . . a revolutionary movement worldwide in scope” that would “free the nation from the iron grip of the army and navy and transfer it to the peasants, workers, and merchants, reform our society where an aristocracy rules autocratically into one where the common people rule themselves, change our economy, now monopolized by capitalists, to one in which the workers own all in common.”⁵¹ While he describes this future revolution as “scientific socialism,” he directs his appeal to a small group that are immune to the imperialist “plague.” “The time has come for righteous and honorable men [*gishi jinjin*], who remain healthy and untainted with illness, to mobilize their numbers and to minister to the

sickness of their nation by undertaking social reforms.”⁵² In fact, “righteous and honorable men” are both the intended audience of Kōtoku’s book and the anticipated agent of the “socialist revolution.” That ethical men of good will would transform Japanese society based on loyalty to higher values was not an idiosyncrasy of Nakae or Kōtoku nor was it the monopoly of the left. Kōtoku compares his saviors to the imperial loyalists who led the Meiji Restoration. In the 1930s, another such group, drawn from the ranks of the military, attempted to restore the popular symbol of the emperor, to institute a just society, and to root out corruption and social decadence.

If Kōtoku refers to the heroes of the Meiji Restoration in his 1897 article as *shishi* (men of high purpose who sacrifice themselves for the good of society or the nation), he draws on a different vocabulary to describe the “righteous and honorable men” who will rescue the nation in the early twentieth century. While he admired the leaders of the Restoration as men of high purpose, they did not measure up to his ideal of benevolence and righteousness. Indeed, in the opening of *Imperialism*, he refers to the “most fervent patriots of our nation” as *shishi* and treats them as his primary opponent. In his writings from 1901 to 1903, he addresses himself to the *gishi* (man of virtue who is willing to sacrifice his life) *jinjin* (a person who embodies benevolence or moral superiority). He also uses the phrase *shakai senkaku no shi* (militants with advanced social views) in *Imperialism* to refer to a person who possesses an awareness of what the future holds in store and understands the path that people need to follow in order to bring about a desirable state of affairs. These new gentlemen, possessing both political vision and moral virtue, will sacrifice their lives to reform society.⁵³

Much as he extended the Mencian empathy to criticize patriotism, he creatively invokes Confucian tradition of “righteous and honorable men” to define a new agent of revolution. He cites the example of Emile Zola, who attacked the French military in his defense of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, as the modern avatar of the man of conscience. The new men of conscience, unlike the imperial loyalists who led the Meiji Restoration, would constitute the revolutionary cadre of intellectuals committed to socialist principles. Again, he cites Mencius: “I refuse to yield even if millions oppose me if to yield is to betray my conscience.” The modern hero who refuses to betray his conscience and yield to the authorities is the man of letters Emile Zola, who defended the innocence of a single man—Alfred Dreyfus—and the cause of justice against the power of the French state and the institution of the French army.⁵⁴ Forced to flee France to protect his life, he created the persona of the modern intellectual who follows his own conscience and uses his authority as a writer to attack powerful institutions in the name of universal values. Zola was both a “socialist” who sought to solve social problems using scientific principles and a benevolent man who sacrifices himself so that benevolence is realized (*sasshin jōnin*). By standing up for Dreyfus, an innocent victim of the corruption of the French army, and combatting a million “demons” in defense of

simple righteousness, “he not only saved the life of one man but he also rescued the reputation of France from a terrible humiliation.”⁵⁵

Kōtoku played such a role during the campaign against corruption in the Japanese army in the horseshoe ingots affair. However, he embodied the modern intellectual most famously two years later during the Russo-Japanese War. Until 1903, the *Yorozu Chōhō* had published antiwar articles by Sakai, Kōtoku, and Uchimura Kanzō alongside prowar pieces. On October 8, 1903, the deadline for Russia to withdraw its troops from Manchuria, the editor Kuroiwa relented under financial and governmental pressure and adopted a prowar stance toward Russia.⁵⁶ In response, Kōtoku Shūsui, Sakai Toshihiko, and Uchimura Kanzō resigned from the paper rather than toe a prowar line.⁵⁷ On the day of their resignation, Kōtoku and Sakai published the following letter of resignation:

Unfortunately, the two of us have arrived at a different view of the Russian problem than that of the *Chōhō* paper. Readers of our articles have long known that, from the perspective of socialism, only a small elite of aristocrats and military find profit in war between nations, while the immense majority of the people are offered up as sacrifices in war. Our readers are also well aware that even the *Chōhō* paper, which allowed us to express our views in its columns, has decided that it must support the government in its blind course and strive for national unity as the crisis in foreign policy becomes imminent and war seem inevitable.⁵⁸

Adopting a radical antiwar position within a nation at war, Kōtoku and Sakai went on to establish the *Heimin Newspaper*, a paper that began with a circulation of 8,000 but only sold 1,700 after the outbreak of war.⁵⁹ As though unaware of the radical step they had taken, Kōtoku and Sakai expected to make a living from sales of the newspaper if they were able to reach 10 percent of the circulation of the *Yorozu Chōhō*. In the first issue they announced, “We hope to live from the income from the *Heimin Newspaper*. At present we have to divert half of our energies to other work in order to eat.”⁶⁰

While the Band of Idealists offered a model and precedent for the Heiminsha, the organization that published the *Heimin Newspaper*, it also differed from it in fundamental ways. Like the Heiminsha, it was made up of members joined by a common moral consciousness and sense of responsibility toward society, was linked to a newspaper, and had a decentralized structure in which local branches possessed great autonomy. At the same time, the Heiminsha broke with the moderate reformism of the band and the *Yorozu Chōhō*. By opposing the government on a vital question, it collided with state power and challenged the government’s very legitimacy.⁶¹ While *Heimin Newspaper* had an actual readership that was a tiny fraction of that of the *Yorozu Chōhō*, it appealed to a potential readership that extended far beyond the “righteous men” for whom Kōtoku had written all his previous works.

Heiminism and the Russo-Japanese War

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Newspapers are an advertisement for war.

—KÔTOKU SHÛSUI, 1904

The Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) was the first modern war of the twentieth century: all the fighting, whether on land or sea, took place outside the territorial limits of the two belligerents.¹ Nevertheless, for Japan, it was a total war that mobilized the entire resources of the nation and a war of attrition in which battles lasted a long time. Just as the Russian setbacks eventually led to the Russian Revolution of 1905, Japan's victory defined its global role and shaped its national identity during the first half of the twentieth century, when it became one of the five major world powers. For Japan, the war required the mobilization of one million soldiers, nearly 2 percent of the country's population, and caused ninety thousand Japanese deaths, a scale of warfare not exceeded until the Second World War. The total cost of the war came to the colossal sum of 1,986,127,000 yen (direct military expenditures were 1,508,472,000 yen), half of which was covered by bond sales raised in London and New York.² In addition, the government increased land, consumption, and business taxes and created new taxes, cutting the living standards of the poor, who were already squeezed by war-induced inflation. The Russo-Japanese War was much larger in scale than the Sino-Japanese War, costing 7.6 times as much and involving five times as many soldiers.³ In spite of its high cost, the war enjoyed broad popular support at least until the conclusion of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, which many Japanese judged to be a paltry reward for such a costly conflict.⁴ This support was fueled partly by the unabashedly chauvinist and triumphalist stance taken by the press in 1903, when all major newspapers began to back war with Russia and then to feed unrealistic expectations about the anticipated rewards of a peace settlement.

Unlike the Sino-Japanese War, this war sparked an antiwar movement led by socialists and pacifists.⁵ Belonging to a transnational movement, socialists defended

solidarity across national borders and the common interests of the masses in all countries, both of which led them to repudiate war. On October 8, 1903, Sakai and Kōtoku, together with former *Yorozu Chōhō* reporter Ishikawa Sanshirō and former *Niroku* reporter Nishikawa Kojirō, established the Heiminsha (Society of the Common Man) with financial support from Kojima Ryūtarō, a former student of Nakae Chōmin, and from Katō Tokijirō, a physician.⁶ On November 15, 1903, they launched Japan's first socialist newspaper, the *Heimin Newspaper*, which appeared every Monday from November 15, 1903, to January 29, 1905, with occasional periods of enforced silence. In the initial issue, the editors wrote in a manifesto (*sen-gen*): "We advocate pacifism because we strive to better the welfare of humanity. For that reason, we look forward to the day when the nations of the world, without regard for differences of race or political systems, will agree to prohibit and abolish military armaments."⁷ Prior to the outbreak of the war, the *Heimin Newspaper* tried to persuade the public to reject the prowar arguments advanced by the quasi-totality of media outlets. After the outbreak of war, it appealed to the Japanese and Russian governments to cease fighting and conclude a peace treaty: "At last war has broken out. Peace has been destroyed. . . . According to the Japanese government, the responsibility lies entirely with Russia, while the Russian government insists that all the blame lies with Japan . . . both governments seem to realize the horrors of war and the importance of peace. Or at least they seem to want to escape from blame for having destroyed the peace. . . . However all the blame lies with the governments rather than with the people."⁸

Just as it had done during the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese government censored all news connected with the military campaign, but it allowed the weekly *Heimin Newspaper* to appear in print without impediment at first. Historians have offered various hypotheses for why it allowed the *Heimin Newspaper* to be published for more than a year whereas it outlawed the Social Democratic Party within hours of its formation a few years before. Arahata Kanson argues that the government countenanced the publication to demonstrate to Western countries that, unlike Russia, Japan was a "civilized" constitutional government that guaranteed freedom of expression and protected human rights.⁹ By contrast, Tsujino Isao argues that the government followed different rules in regulating the press than it applied to political associations. Whereas the Police and Public Order Act had been invoked to outlaw the Japan Socialist Party in 1901, the press fell under the provisions of the Newspaper Regulations (*Shinbun Jōrei*), which required newspapers to register and pay a security deposit of 1000 yen. The deposit for the *Heimin Newspaper* was provided by Kojima Ryūtarō, a businessman from Kōchi who also provided the publication an operating budget of 750 yen. The fact that Heiminsha was a business association meant that it continued to exist after the *Heimin Newspaper* was discontinued and published *Chokugen* (Straight talk), its successor until the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War. This legal structure initially shielded the paper from cruder forms of

censorship, if not from attempts to intimidate readers or place journalists under surveillance.¹⁰

Despite legal protections, the newspaper clashed repeatedly with the Japanese authorities, issues were seized, large fines were assessed against its owners, and its editors were imprisoned. Editors had their first major clash with government authorities after publishing an article by Kōtoku on March 28, 1904, that attacked the government's plan to raise taxes in support of the war. The government cracked down by imprisoning the editor Sakai Toshihiko for three months and by banning the paper, but the Higher Court shortened Sakai's sentence and overturned the ban. Subsequently, the police carried out a campaign of systematic harassment against newspaper dealers who carried the paper on their stands and made door-to-door visits to stop people from reading it. When these measures failed to yield the desired results, the government used police raids, court appearances, fines, and long prison terms to intimidate journalists and editors of the paper into silence. On November 6, 1904, the battle between the government and the newspaper came to a head when the paper published an editorial, "To Elementary School Teachers," that called for primary school teachers to become socialists and promote social reform, and promised a translation of the *Communist Manifesto* by Kōtoku and Sakai.¹¹ The Home Ministry forbade the sale of the former issue for corrupting the morals of young people and it initiated new legal action to shut down the paper after the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* on November 13 on charges of violating the press laws. Kōtoku, Sakai, and Nishikawa were sentenced to prison and fined and it was clear that the government planned to close the paper down. After battling with the government for nearly fifteen months, the editors decided to disband the paper themselves. The final issue appeared on January 29, 1905, and, borrowing a ploy from Marx's journal *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, it was printed in red, bold type, which began with Kōtoku's lament, "Shedding tears, we now declare the discontinuation of *Heimin Newspaper*." Kōtoku entered prison on March 28, 1905, for five months while Ishikawa Sanshirō, the author of the article who had urged schoolteachers to embrace socialism, was sentenced to a term of seven months in jail.

After the *Heimin Newspaper* folded, it inspired others to continue the experiment of a radical opposition press for the next several years. When Kōtoku was jailed, the Heiminsha regrouped and published *Chokugen* (Straight talk) from February 5 to September 10, 1905. When the government prohibited this publication, the Heiminsha was dissolved on October 5, 1905. However, in 1906, the Heiminsha was reestablished and began to publish the *Heimin Newspaper*, a daily newspaper from January 15, 1907, but it had numerous problems with censors and was forced out of existence by April 14, 1907 (the seventy-fourth issue), not long after the interdiction of the Socialist Party. After that, Morichika Unpei launched the *Osaka Heimin Shinbun* that appeared until late 1907.¹²

While the *Heimin Newspaper* was a small-scale operation that operated on a shoestring budget, it had a revolutionary significance entirely out of proportion to the number of its readers. First, it disseminated antiwar views in the midst of the Russo-Japanese War, notwithstanding extreme measures to prevent its circulation and to restrict its activities on the part of the Japanese government. Arahata Kanson stresses that the publication of the newspaper during a largely popular war was unprecedented in Japanese history, but it was also exceptional in world history, and particularly in the history of the world's worker's movements.¹³ Hyman Kublin praises the cooperation between Japanese and Russian intellectuals during the war as "the crowning success of socialist internationalism during the twenty-five-year life span of the Second International."¹⁴ The paper articulated a vision of a society free from war that has continued to influence Japanese political and cultural life until the present. Indeed, with the adoption of the peace constitution of 1947, the Japanese nation as a whole committed itself to a policy of pacifism.

Notwithstanding the revolutionary nature of the Heiminsha, it did not encourage an active movement of opposition to the war through mass demonstrations or acts of civil disobedience. Rather than end the war, Japan's first antiwar movement sought mainly to promote pacifism and change people's convictions. In part, its cautious approach was a response to government repression and surveillance of dissent, but it also reflected the thinking of the leaders of the movement. Unlike Tolstoy, Kōtoku did not urge drafted soldiers to refuse induction into the army or to disobey orders of their commanding officers. After the outbreak of the war, one soldier wrote to the *Heimin Newspaper* describing his dilemma of being both a soldier in the Japanese military and a pacifist opposed to war, but the editors of the newspaper offered no solution to his personal dilemma.¹⁵ In Kōtoku's writing from this time, he did not consider the possibility that a pacifist would actively refuse the draft call or resist military orders after being drafted. Instead, he treated soldiers as passive victims of the governments that initiate wars and supported relief to succor the victims of war. Much as Kōtoku's critique of imperialism belongs to the imperialist discourse of the early twentieth century, his antiwar movement must also be seen as the by-product of the Meiji period, at once a source of inspiration for later generations and a mirror of its times.

THE 99 PERCENT AND THE MOVEMENT TO END WAR

The editors of *Heimin Newspaper* drew a clear distinction between their antiwar position and that of pacifists such as Uchimura Kanzō who opposed the Russo-Japanese War on moral or religious grounds. Unlike Uchimura, Kōtoku did not oppose war per se and, to adopt the classification of Kagawa Toyohiko, he was a rational pacifist.¹⁶ Indeed, he cited struggles by the people of the Republic of Transvaal or the Philippines for independence and the U.S. civil war to end slavery

as examples of just wars.¹⁷ Rather, his opposition to the war grew from his denunciation of imperialism and his analysis of patriotism as an exclusive emotion based on hatred. While the *Heimin Newspaper* regrouped under a single banner all anti-war groups, Sakai and Kōtoku, both non-Christians, assumed the leading position in the socialist movement.

In his opposition to the war, Kōtoku articulated a more general critique of Japanese politics in which most people were denied any meaningful voice. The editors wrote in the first issue of the newspaper: “The *Heimin Newspaper* was established as a press organ to contribute to the eventual realization of the ideals of heiminism [*heiminshugi*], socialism, and brotherhood [*hakuai*] embracing all of mankind.” These three terms corresponded to the trinity of ideals (*liberté, égalité, and fraternité*) proclaimed during the French Revolution, with heiminism associated with liberty. In the manifesto of the newspaper, the editors offered the following definition of heiminism: “We uphold heiminism in order to realize the freedom of the human race. Therefore, we wish to abolish all distinctions of lineage, inequalities of wealth, social classes based on distinctions of gender, and to eliminate all forms of oppression and restrictions on freedom.” Heiminism aimed to restore freedom to the people by abolishing the special privileges, whether based on lineage, wealth, or gender, that allowed a small minority to oppress the overwhelming majority of the people and deprive them of their rights.

What then were the intellectual sources of heiminism and what was its function in the pacifist movement? During the Meiji period, Tokutomi Sohō, editor of the progressive journal *Kokumin no Tomo*, coined the term “heiminism” to express the views of the new generations of the Meiji period who favored a new Japan based on equality of opportunity and political freedom as realized in the industrial societies of the West. Strongly influenced by Spencer’s notion of social evolution, he held that Japan must advance along the path of progress from a militarist society, dominated by aristocratic values and ruled by violence, to an industrial, democratic society. He contrasted the Japanese *heimin* [common people], who support this vision of the new Japan, to the aristocracy committed to the social stratification and military values of the past. While Tokutomi employed these two terms to describe the lines of fracture within Japanese society, he essentially treated these groups as belonging to different generations. *Heimin* and aristocrats were certainly at odds with one another, but they were not distinguished as exploited and exploiters in class conflict or as oppressed under tyranny and oppressor; the former had a clear stake in the new Japan whereas the latter were partisans of the old regime.¹⁸

Nakae Chōmin contributed further to the development of heiminism in writings such as *Awakening the Common Man* (*Heimin no mezamashi*) or *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. In the former, written shortly before the establishment of a constitution and the representative assembly, Chōmin appealed to the *heimin* to learn about representative government and to involve themselves

in politics.¹⁹ In the latter, he staged a debate between militarist and democrat that Tokutomi saw as central to Japan's future course. However, Chōmin called into question Tokutomi's opposition of militarist and productivist societies and cast doubt on his evolutionary framework. In Chōmin's *Discourse*, the swashbuckler advocates military expansion into China not because he is attached to feudal values but because territorial conquest will yield economic advantages to Japan and increase its commercial strength. The moderator of the dialogue also questions the notion of historical evolution, a central premise of Tokutomi's argument: "The God of evolution is not enshrined solemnly above the head of society, nor is he hiding under society's feet. Instead, he crouches in the public mind of men. He is an amalgamation of people's ideas."²⁰ Chōmin did not believe that social progress was built into the very nature of things and deployed in historical time; human beings created social progress through the struggle to liberate themselves from oppression. In Chōmin's view, heiminism would not achieve its goal when proponents of democracy eliminated the clan government, but would continue in new struggles that would free outcastes (*shinheimin*) from discrimination by *heimin*. He wrote: "Public intellectuals attack aristocracy in the name of democracy [*heiminteki shugi*], but I will attack democracy in the name of the *shinheimin* democracy." To distinguish his position from advocates of heiminism, he proclaimed himself a supporter of *shinminism* (new people-ism) that would uproot prejudice and discrimination by the *heimin* against excluded groups in Japan.²¹

Chōmin aimed at a political equality in which every member could participate in the political life of the nation. However, he was not scandalized by social inequalities or urban poverty. He thought of poverty in national rather than class terms, treating Japan as a poor nation in an international order dominated by wealthy, Western nations. He supported state-led modernization as a long-term solution to social problems while advocating expanded philanthropic activities as a short-term palliative. Later in his life, he was mainly concerned with building up Japan's economic and military strength as a means of resisting Western hegemony and he criticized younger writers like Kōtoku and Yokoyama Gennosuke for their preoccupation with social inequalities.

By contrast with Tokutomi and Nakae, Kōtoku redefined heiminism as a social and economic ideal that challenged the governmental discourse on citizens (*kokumin*) and the nation. In championing the cause of *heimin*, he supported the liberation of the masses from distinctions of lineage and inequalities of wealth as well as from political oppression. Above all, he used the term to counter a favorite theme of government and nongovernment propaganda: that unlike previous wars, this conflict was a war in which every Japanese citizen (*kokumin*) had a vital stake and in which the national unity of all citizens would lead to military victory. The *kokumin*, a product of the modern nation-state and of its institutions, was the ready-made target of government appeals to unify on the basis of patriotism.²²

In his earlier writings as a journalist, Kōtoku had regularly condemned the moral paralysis of the *kokumin* in the face of injustice and corruption.²³ During the Russo-Japanese War, the *heimin* served to detach the *kokumin* from the nation and to create a new basis for individual and group identification. While *heimin* and *kokumin* were more or less identical in terms of their membership, they were divided by an essential difference. Whereas the citizen was defined primarily by his property of having a nationality and a nation, the *heimin* had neither. Just as Mencian empathy was an advance over patriotism, *heimin* were superior to *kokumin* because they were linked to all other human beings in the world by empathetic feeling and solidarity. By contrast, the *kokumin* drew a boundary between friends and enemies, whether internal or external, as defined and determined by the state.

To the extent that they were *kokumin* or members of the nation, the Japanese were constantly interpellated to support the nation at war, to form a sacred union, to sacrifice, and to pray for victory. “They say ‘for the sake of the nation,’ but what is the nation? Without the people, can there still be a nation? In the past, nations have existed without kings, and even without soldiers, but there never has been nor will there ever be a nation without people.”²⁴ Before people belong to a nation, they are, in the first place, vulnerable bodies and, perhaps more importantly, social beings. “The *heimin*, the *shinheimin*, do not depend on force, or wealth, or lineage. They stand merely as people, as members of society, and that is the most sacred part of our comrades. The *Heimin Newspaper* has a deep respect for them.”²⁵ This bare sociality, the most “sacred” part of the people, represents then the original and prenatal form of identification, much as in his theory of patriotism natural empathy was the foundation of human feeling. In the same way that the feeling of patriotism was a manipulation of human feeling, the identity of *kokumin* was a falsification of human sociality. For that reason, “national unity is the enemy of the *heimin*.”²⁶

To win their support, the government interpellated the *kokumin* and appealed to their loyalty to the nation, but it also disposed of the coercive conscription system: “For the *heimin*, the worst imposition is compulsory military service. The vast majority of those who advocate war never find themselves on any battlefield. They merely instigate others to fight. Using constraint as well as appeals to patriotic honor, they drag the children of the *heimin* off to the barracks, send them to fight on the battlefields of Korea and Manchuria, leave them to die under a storm of cannon smoke and a rain of missiles; and they risk losing their heads immediately if they do not follow these orders.”²⁷ Although the conscription system nominally applied to everyone, it was especially unfair to the poor, since educated and wealthier Japanese could escape military service through special exemptions unavailable to the poor. To the mythical *kokumin* summoned to unite for the nation and sacrifice their lives on the battlefield, Kōtoku opposed the real *heimin* that was neither represented by the nation nor bound by its territorial boundaries. Besides

deconstructing the national subject, he created an alternative subject to serve as the standard bearer of the pacifist movement, which enjoyed only one significant advantage over its enemy: “The *heimin* are unable to deploy military force and lack the power of great wealth. . . . They have only one very powerful weapon, namely, their great number.”²⁸

The *Heimin Newspaper* spoke then to the *heimin*, rather than to the *kokumin*, and it spoke in their name.²⁹ But who were they? The Meiji Restoration did away with the castes of Tokugawa society and replaced them with a division between a multitude of *heimin* and a numerically small aristocracy (*shizoku*). While *heimin* may be rendered as “commoners,” a more accurate translation would be the nonelite, since the *heimin* included individuals from practically every social group.³⁰ Citizens of the nation, the *heimin* were disenfranchised and unrepresented within the nation-state. In particular, they had no real stake in war with Russia or the capitalist system that depended on war, even though they were expected to pay heavily in blood and treasure for the prosecution of war. Kōtoku’s notion of the *heimin* was inclusive and, in some ways, anticipated the slogan “We are the 99 percent” popularized by the Occupy Wall Street movement, an international protest movement that emerged after 2008 against social and economic inequality. Just as 99 percent of the world population has no stake in the present capitalist order and imperialist wars, the *heimin* had no interest in the Russo-Japanese War. In addition, his notion differed from the Marxist view that urban industrial workers would be the motor of revolution. The *heimin* constituted a united front that encompassed artisans, farmers, merchants, and members of the middle class as well as factory workers: its membership included virtually everyone. By contrast, Marx held that the revolution would be led by a vanguard group, those who “having no means of production of their own are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live.”³¹

Kōtoku had earlier written in *The Essence of Socialism* that “the goal of socialism [is] to aim to lift the entire society and to make everyone a member of the middle class” and he imagined this “middle class” on the model of the samurai class in the Edo period.³² “Members of the samurai class in feudal society were able to maintain high moral standards, develop noble characters, and exercise strong willpower. Is this not due to the fact that, not needing to trouble their minds with matters of food and clothing, they were a group with the leisure to study and compete with one another for fame, ethics, truth, and the perfection of skill?”³³ Needless to say, the *heimin* were not restricted to a middle strata free of the constraints of status and economic deprivation. Kōtoku addressed some of his most famous articles to workers, rickshaw drivers, or the members of the police force.

The *heimin* were most pointedly contrasted to the small elite that had a direct material interest in imperialism. This ruling elite was not to be confused with the middle class or the capitalist class, but was rather a national elite, the *shinshibatsu*,

the term that Kōtoku and Sakai chose to translate Marx's bourgeoisie. Kōtoku referred to this group as a society of cliques (*batsu no shakai*) who controlled the state and resembled other national elites making up the international system of nation-states. The Japanese ruling class was not only small, but it was also highly factionalized, which explains the use of the term *batsu* (clique) to define it. Referring to the Kōtoku-Sakai translation of Marx's term bourgeoisie as *shinshibatsu* (clique of gentlemen), one journalist in *Chokugen* divided the Japanese society of cliques into six distinct factions that were interrelated and overlapped, through family relations, marriage, and school ties: the political party clique (*tōbatsu*), the capitalist industrial clique (*zaibatsu*), the scholars-intellectuals clique (*gakubatsu*), the religious leaders clique (*shūbatsu*), the aristocratic clique (*monbatsu*), and the Satsuma-Chōshū clan clique (*hanbatsu*). It will be noted that the Japanese emperor was conspicuous for his absence from the six cliques, just as Kōtoku had earlier absolved him from any responsibility in Japanese imperialism.³⁴

The cliques making up the society of cliques not only had powerful material motives to fight wars, but they also exercised the crucial power to decide on whether and when to go to war. In "Who decides to go to war?" (*Wasen o kessuru mono*), Kōtoku noted that monarchs in Russia and Japan declare war on the advice of cabinet ministers, bureaucrats, aristocrats, bankers, and capitalists. In the case of an inter-imperialist war fought over economic stakes in Northeast Asia, the capitalists and the bankers played the crucial determining role. "Politicians, scholars, and journalists" might call passionately for war, but their voices would fall on deaf ears in the absence of the financial means to wage war. By contrast, the capitalists and the bankers decide on "war or peace, imperialism or isolationism" based on real economic interests. "For that reason, Prime Minister Katsura and Finance Minister Sono Arasuke needed to curry favor with bankers every day."³⁵

By contrast, no one consulted with the *heimin* on such weighty matters. According to the Meiji constitution, the Japanese people were represented in parliament, but only 2 percent of the population, mainly "landowners and capitalists," had the right to vote. "In the case of this imperfect representative government, the Japanese people can have no awareness of taking part in national politics; furthermore, the diet has no power to move the government, which does not depend on the shifting majorities in parliament, and so what relation does the government have to the people?"³⁶ Just as Kōtoku had attacked the concept of "popular" imperialism, he denounced the imposture of describing the Russo-Japanese War as a popular war. In "The Popularity of Starting War" (*Kaisenron no ryūkō*) he wrote: "Among our countrymen, the subjugation of Russia is extremely popular and can be mistaken to represent public opinion as a whole. However, in reality it is not public opinion at all. It is nothing but a trend stirred up and provoked by numerous advocates of war. If one were to oppose this trend, he would be treated as a coward or lacking in patriotic spirit."³⁷ Here his analysis dovetails with his argument in *Imperialism* that

prowar patriotism is an artificial emotion stoked by the media, while opponents of war are attacked as cowards.

Whereas the *heimin* excluded the national elites that profited from war, it included the enemy, the Russian people who were tied to the Japanese by bonds of empathy that took precedence over patriotic ties. “The *heimin* of Russia and Japan are both members of the human race and comrades, who should love and respect one another. They should shake hands, unite, and form an alliance for the sake of their fellow human beings in the world, for peace, and for freedom.”³⁸ The *heimin* in both nations were not at war, even when they were sent off to battle. In his article “Sending Soldiers Off to Fight” (Heishi o okuru), he writes:

Oh soldiers sent to the front, your rice fields will go to waste. Your businesses will be ruined. Your elderly parents will lean forlornly by the gate, your wife and children will weep from pangs of hunger. What’s more, you can hardly expect to come back safe and sound from the war. But you must do your job, fulfill your duty, and move your body as if it were a piece of machinery. But the Russians soldiers are also children, husbands, or fathers, and they are all your brothers and compatriots. You should give some thought to this and take care not to treat them cruelly.³⁹

Like their Japanese counterparts, the Russian *heimin* had to shoulder the burdens of war but would be denied a share in the fruits of victory. To both, it made no difference which nation won the war. By including the purported foreign enemy among the *heimin*, Kōtoku defined a transnational subject of history that resembled but was nevertheless distinct from the Marxist notion of proletarian internationalism.⁴⁰

On the first day of 1904, Kōtoku offered a view of the ideal society of freedom, equality, and brotherhood through the metaphor of *uta karuta*, a popular pastime in which players match the two parts of a poem belonging to a classical anthology of one hundred poems. Recalling the pleasure he felt as a youth, he argued that this simple, social game offers a prefiguration of life in an ideal society:

The traditional Japanese word game is a competitive game, but this competition realizes the highest ideal of human life, freedom, equality, and brotherhood. . . . The competition in *uta karuta* is free. No one is forced by circumstance to serve at the beck and call of another. One may move about as one pleases, and is free to quit any time one desires. . . . It is equal. Once one takes a seat at the table, each player is granted equal rights and status, without differences of lineage, wealth, power, or class or distinctions between parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and employers . . . the game also fosters cooperation among many people. All players are united in spirit, without exclusions or divisions into separate ranks. . . . The game is a fair and honest one in which the strong help the weak, the wise assist the ignorant, and, when the game is over, everyone joins in laughter.⁴¹

As envisioned by Kōtoku, the card game prefigures a future society in which the ideals of heiminism, socialism, and pacifism would be realized. Every player would

enjoy equal rights, but would also retain absolute freedom to decide whether to participate in the game. Above all, the game would foster interdependence and cooperation among all players, rather than divide them into separate groups locked in conflict. As such, the game was the antithesis of a capitalist society of economic struggle, in which differences of wealth, birth, and power determine an individual's place in the hierarchy, discourage cooperation, and encourage war. In this game, the fittest players would survive not through fierce competition, trickery, or violence, but rather through mutual assistance and spontaneous cooperation. For that reason, each game of cards represented a repudiation of the society of economic struggle and the violence of war.

The game thus served as a metaphor for social progress and world peace. Far from being the natural state of mankind, the struggle for survival and domination were self-defeating and antithetical to civilization and progress. Indeed, *uta karuta* suggested that mutual aid and self-organization offered a more promising path to progress than the struggle for survival. It was, of course, a competitive game in which each participant sought victory, but "when the game is over, everyone joins in laughter." In all these respects, *uta karuta* captured metaphorically the universalism of heiminism and its vision of an alternative to war and economic struggle. It also offered a model for the organizational structure of the Heiminsha, an informal network of free associations that was open to all and accommodated many intellectual currents.

GLOBALISM FROM BELOW

The editors of the *Heimin Newspaper* stressed the breach that separated the overwhelming majority of Russians and Japanese from the elites that ruled them. To oppose the first global war of the twentieth century, they adopted a policy of "globalism from below." Heiminsha had its main office in the Yurakuchō district of Tokyo, but it was not a centralized organization and did not impose a rigid ideology on its followers. Rather, it was composed of some twenty autonomous, smaller organizations with local roots and separate aims. Some were situated in major cities such as Yokohama, Osaka, and Kobe, but others were established in rural areas from Hokkaidō to Kyūshū, often led by educated members of society such as doctors, lawyers, students, and business leaders who met to read and discuss writings by the antiwar movement.⁴² Rather than local offices established by a national organization, these branches coalesced and came into action through the initiative of local actors and only later entered into a larger, national network. Ideologically, the Heiminsha group was a movement of movements that accommodated a wide variety of causes just as it welcomed people from all walks of life. Though it was established to end the war, members were active in the movement for universal suffrage, for women's rights, in movements for rights of tenants and workers, environmental issues, and so on.

In northern Nagano Prefecture, the Black Tide Society (Kokuchōkai) was formed after hosting Kinoshita Naoe, himself a native of the region, on a speaking tour in the summer of 1904. Early leaders of this group included Tachikawa Unpei, a politician and the founder of the Hokushin English school; Marushige Tenrei, a writer who won the *Heimin Newspaper* literary award for his short story “Snow in the Countryside” (Yuki no inaka); and the journalist Satō Ōsei. They hosted Kinoshita, but they later developed an autonomous organization.⁴³ When Kōtoku went into exile and the national socialist movement split, a new local group including Yamaguchi Koken, Niimura Tadao (arrested in the High Treason case), Buddhist priests, teachers, and farmers established the literary journal *Kōgen Bungaku*, which was published between 1908 and 1910. It served as a counterpart to the better known *Kumamoto Hyōron*, a local journal that outlasted the socialist press in Tokyo.⁴⁴

From the inaugural issue, the editors of the *Heimin Newspaper* announced: “We do not consider [the newspaper] to be our own personal property, but hope to make it the public organ of all socialists throughout the country.” To further this objective, the editors published many letters from readers under rubrics like “letters from the provinces,” “reader and writer,” “landowners and sharecroppers,” or “the movement of our comrades.” At times, reporters responded to comments or questions from readers, but other times it was the readers who answered the questions of the editors or reported on local activities, announcing public meetings or reading groups. In this way, the paper served as an information hub for different groups situated throughout Japan. Furthermore, the newspaper sponsored more than a hundred public meetings (one held in Kanda on November 11, 1904, had more than 1,000 attendees), offered English conversation classes, arranged speech tours, and held socialist women’s lectures.⁴⁵ For that reason, every issue contained an extensive listing of speeches or public meetings held throughout the Japanese archipelago and a directory of educational events.

Under the rubric “Why I became a socialist,” the *Heimin Newspaper* also published seventy-eight accounts by men who recounted their conversion to socialism.⁴⁶ This column contributed to fostering a new awareness of Japan’s social ills and to establishing a new community among readers. These conversion narratives included people from all walks of life and all regions of Japan, some signed but others identified only by profession (farmer, pastor) or as “reader.” They ranged in length from a few pages to a single sentence. Almost all respondents mentioned formative experiences of exploitation, injustice, or discrimination, whether directly experienced or witnessed, or their participation in a social movement such as that to outlaw brothels, or religious beliefs such as Buddhism or Christianity. One traced his conversion to the discovery of “the extremely simple concept of society,” while another dated his to a traumatic experience in Japan’s first modern war: “During the Sino-Japanese War, (I was fifteen years old), my wet nurse went insane

and died after her only son was drafted and then died in battle.” One told the following anecdote: “Once I turned to a rickshaw driver and admonished him, ‘If you worked like an honest man, you could become rich.’ He replied, ‘No. To become rich honestly is the one forbidden thing.’”⁴⁷

If the *Heimin Newspaper* served as a bulletin board for sharing ideas, these conversion narratives fostered the growth of a new community of protest among readers. Precisely because they were so varied, they offered models of identification to other readers about the meaning of socialism and examples of conversion. In his “The Three Necessary Elements of Composition” (1907), Kōtoku held that writing should not aim to change the opinions of readers but to transform them and rouse them to action. By reading, people can create communities that previously did not exist among the atomized and dispersed readership. *Heimin Newspaper* offered concrete illustration of writing as a means of creating communities of insurrection.⁴⁸

The Heiminisha also established Heimin Bunko to publish books and pamphlets and raise funds to support its varied activities. In addition to the *ABCs of Socialism* (Shakaishugi nyūmon), it published *Portraits of Revolutionary Women* (Kakumei fujin), Kinoshita Naoe’s popular novel *Pillar of Fire* (Hi no kashira; 1904), and Kōtoku’s pamphlet on Ferdinand Lasalle.⁴⁹ It released the first translations of utopian socialist classics such as William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (Risōkyō) and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (Hyakunengo no shinshakai), both translated by Sakai Toshihiko.⁵⁰

Furthermore, activists crisscrossed the country as socialist “missionary peddlers” to win public support for peace and socialism in rural areas. According to Nishikawa Kōjiro, eight young socialists, most of them students and often devout Christians, served as “missionaries” peddling the *Heimin Newspaper* and books and pamphlets on socialism in 1904 in Chiba Prefecture, along the Tokkaido and Sanyō highways, as well as in Gunma, Nagano, Wakayama, Ibaraki, and Tochigi Prefectures.⁵¹ The term “missionary peddlers” (*dendō gōshō*) indicates the dual nature of the movement: as missionaries, these students sought to convert people to socialism throughout the country, but they also supported themselves and the movement by selling the *Heimin Newspaper* and pamphlets on socialism.⁵² From October 1904 to January 1905, Oda Raizō and Yamaguchi Yoshizō, two young socialists from Yamaguchi Prefecture, traveled along the Tōkaidō and Sanyō highways all the way to Shimonoseki selling 1,097 pamphlets, giving dozens of speeches, and recruiting socialists and supporters for the movement for universal suffrage. In issue 47, published October 2, 1904, they announced their mission as follows:

We will travel westward on the old Tōkaidō highway lugging behind us a cart filled with socialist pamphlets and will stop in cities and villages along the way to propagate socialism and peddle our goods. We have not set in advance any exact number of days for our trip. To proclaim the good tidings of socialism to as wide an audience

as possible, we plan to leave the main roads and go to isolated villages several miles away to help the people there and teach them about socialism. We know that we will suffer countless troubles and bitter experiences along the way, but will try our best to keep our spirits high and withstand these troubles, and we also appreciate the sympathy of our comrades and the support they have offered to make this venture a success. As we are poor students, we must support ourselves by whatever profits we make through selling ideological pamphlets.⁵³

As the government tightened its surveillance of the *Heimin Newspaper* and its successor *Chokugen*, it also cracked down more and more on the activities of itinerant peddlers by having an officer trail after them, calling them to police headquarters for questioning, and prohibiting their sale of socialist literature.⁵⁴

Besides its branches in Japan, the Heiminsha was an organization of international scope, with a branch in San Francisco established by Oka Shigeki. After Kōtoku went into exile in California in December 1905, he wrote to his Tokyo comrades: "The Heiminsha has been forced to disband and *Chokugen* has been silenced. I, who arrive in this foreign land as an exile and member of the defeated side, cannot describe my joy upon seeing the sign Heiminsha San Francisco Branch, written in both English and Japanese in gold letters at the entrance to a magnificent Western style building. I thought, Heiminsha has not been disbanded; it continues to exist and to grow in a place where it is protected from those that would seek to harm it." He expresses the hope that the overseas branch of the Heiminsha will serve as a "command [*sakugenchi*] center or logistics unit [*heitanbu*] for the Japanese socialist movement, in the same manner that Switzerland offered a base for Russian revolutionaries in exile."⁵⁵

Furthermore, in accordance with its transnational definition of the *heimin*, the *Heimin Newspaper* consistently placed people above nations and opposed national borders as artificial barriers that separated the people of the world. Besides attacking racism in Europe and the United States, particularly during the anti-immigration movement of the first decade of the twentieth century, they called for a new world order that would transcend the nation-state.⁵⁶ In "A Small Japan?" an anonymous journalist set forth a credo that was later shared by many Japanese socialists: "We believe that military forces should be eliminated as soon as possible since national borders have become meaningless. . . . Educational institutions, means of transportation, forms of entertainment constitute a common patrimony of the world. They also contribute to the unification and the true autonomy of people living in local communities." These local autonomous communities, unified in consciousness through globalizing trends, will not need police forces, courts, and prisons, which have "reduced our ethical standards to the lowest possible level so that we are able to watch our neighbor starve to death without feeling anything." "Since public opinion would acquire an overwhelming power in a community that truly treasures freedom, it would stimulate the spirit of mutual assistance that lies

deeply buried in human beings even after armed forces, the police, courts, and prisons were abolished. For the first time, human beings would know true happiness.” While the author first interprets “small-countryism” in terms of autonomous local communities that establish linkages of mutual aid with one another, he later goes on to defer any hope of realizing this utopia to the indefinite future. Instead, Japan should emulate Switzerland and “content itself with being a small country” and cooperate with other small countries to realize world peace, a proposal that recalls Chōmin’s earliest advocacy of small nationism in the 1880s. Nevertheless, this journalist anticipated later views of Japanese anarchists in calling for a new world order in which self-ruling communities would form a global commons that did not depend on the nation-state.⁵⁷

Nor were such appeals for the transcendence of national borders merely dreams. The editors of the *Heimin Newspaper* reached out to similarly minded groups in Russia in the midst of the war to demonstrate that the Russian people and the Japanese people were not at war. After Tolstoy’s famous article “Bethink Yourselves” appeared in the *London Times* in June 1904, Sakai and Kōtoku immediately translated it into Japanese and published it in its entirety in the *Heimin Newspaper* on August 7, 1904, under the title “Tolstoy’s View of the Russo-Japanese War.” This issue was so popular that it had to be reprinted after selling out its first print run of eight thousand copies.⁵⁸ Rejecting the authority of the church and state over the individual’s moral sense, Tolstoy denounced the war as sinful and urged Russian soldiers to disobey their superiors’ orders to kill. In “A critique of Tolstoy’s Pacifism,” published in the next issue of August 14, 1904, Kōtoku praised Tolstoy as a prophet but criticized his position on the causes of war. “According to Tolstoy, the main cause of war is that people have lost their religious faith” and that the solution is to convince them to “repent and follow God’s way,” by loving their neighbors and practicing charity. By contrast, Kōtoku writes:

We socialists in the antiwar movement are not vague about our purposes or the way to put an end to war. On this point, we have a clear logic and a practical plan. In our view, wars between nations are not simply caused by people forgetting the teachings of Jesus, as Tolstoy claims, but rather by the intensifying economic competition among the major powers. And the reason for intensifying economic competition among the major powers is that the foundation of our present social system is capitalism. . . . Accordingly, . . . If we wish to eliminate wars between nations and avoid the ravages they cause in the future, we must overthrow the capitalist system and put a socialist system in its place.⁵⁹

Tolstoy’s reply to Kōtoku’s article was eventually published in *Chokugen* after Kōtoku had been imprisoned. In a letter addressed to Abe Isō, Tolstoy thanks the writers in the Heiminsha for publishing his article and for their solidarity in opposition to the war. However, he writes: “I must tell you that I do not approve of

socialism and am sorry to know that the most spiritually advanced part of your—so clever and energetic—people has taken from Europe the very feeble, illusory, and fallacious theory of socialism, which in Europe is beginning to be abandoned. Socialism has for its aim the satisfaction of the meanest part of human nature—his material well-being, and by the means that it proposes can never attain them.”⁶⁰

In “A Letter to Russian Socialists,” Kōtoku also reached out to socialists in Russia with the message that Russian and Japanese people were not enemies:

Your government and ours have plunged into fighting at last in order to satisfy their imperialist desires, but to socialists there is no barrier of race, territory, or nationality. We are comrades, brothers, and sisters, and have no reason to fight each other. Your enemy is not the Japanese people, but our militarism and so-called patriotism. Nor is our enemy the Russian people, but your militarism and so-called patriotism. Yes, patriotism and militarism are our common enemies; nay, all socialists in the world look upon them as common enemies. We socialists must fight a brave battle against them. Here is the best and the most important opportunity for us now.”⁶¹

Referring to Marx’s call to the proletarians of the world, he added, “please remember that several thousand brothers, sisters, and comrades, filled with full-hearted sympathy, pray for the health and success of their comrades three thousand *li* distant who are persecuted because of their political beliefs, pursued by government spies, and harassed by a despotic government.”⁶²

As soon as this article and its English translation appeared, it aroused great enthusiasm in Europe and America and was published in the press organs of overseas socialist parties. In this roundabout manner, the letter happened to come to the attention of Russian Social Democrats in Switzerland, who wrote a reply in English, which was translated and published in issue 37 of the *Heimin Newspaper* on July 31, 1904. “This manifesto is a document of historic significance. If we Russian Social Democrats know only too well with what difficulty we are confronted in time of war when the whole machinery of government is working to the utmost to excite ‘patriotism’—difficulties that we meet at every step, notwithstanding the utter unpopularity of the present hazardous career of the despairing absolutism—we must bear in mind that far more difficult and embarrassing is the position of our Japanese comrades who, at the moment when national feeling was at its highest pitch, openly extended their hand to us.”⁶³

The *Heimin Newspaper* endeavored to reach out to public opinion beyond the two belligerents in the war, particularly through its English language column. Whereas it published a wealth of reports from the overseas press to keep Japanese readers abreast of the latest developments in the world socialist movement, its English language column served to communicate with socialist parties overseas.⁶⁴ The editors appealed to comrades in socialist parties overseas to pressure their governments to stop the Russo-Japanese War. At times, these editorials took on a shrill,

exasperated tone, reflecting the dissatisfaction with solidarity from overseas socialists. As one editorial on June 6, 1904 (issue 30), put it: “We are preaching the gospel of peace all the time but our efforts will be fruitless unless our comrades in Europe and America give us their assistance by urging their governments to take proper steps and put an end to the War.”⁶⁵ Other editorials compared the Japanese repression of socialists and the antiwar movement to that of the despotic Russian regime: like the latter, it did not hesitate to ban newspapers, fine writers, and throw its editors into jail: “Our government does not like to be placed in the same class as the Russian government, but is it not dragging itself down to the level of semicivilized countries by putting rigid constraints on freedom of speech and freedom of the press.”⁶⁶ The paper published numerous articles on government repression particularly in the issues around the time of the International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam, in which it hoped to influence the policies of Western socialist parties.⁶⁷

While Japanese socialists sought to influence the position of socialist movements in Europe and America toward the war, most foreign socialists actually hoped that Japan would defeat Russia. The socialist press in Europe and the United States was impressed by the show of “proletarian internationalism” that Japanese and Russian socialists had made in their exchange of letters and by the fraternal handshake between Katayama Sen and the Russian delegate Gyorgi Prejanov at the sixth general meeting of the Second International held in Amsterdam in August of 1904.⁶⁸ But these were symbolical gestures with little practical effect.

In an article in the World Press column of the *Heimin Newspaper* (issue 34), one journalist notes the ambivalent position of prominent Western socialists, such as August Bebel, Kōtoku’s hero at the time he wrote *Imperialism*. Bebel stated: “If our country goes to war with Russia, we members of the socialist party will gladly take part in the fight. In whatever case, we socialists have been doing our utmost to destroy the despotic regime of Russia.”⁶⁹ The same article cites the anarchist-inclined *Domela Nieuwenhuis* in Holland saying that if Japan won, it would—unwittingly—be performing a great service for humankind in defeating Russia.⁷⁰ Gently chiding the socialists in Europe, the editor noted:

Although socialist parties throughout the world are all opposed to war and firmly committed to peace . . . there is a common tendency among socialist parties in Europe to feel sympathy for Japan from their excessive hatred for the despotic regime of Russia. For instance, the German Social Democratic Party [SPD] is outraged that the German government is secretly offering assistance to Russia and intervening in the war in the Far East and has fiercely attacked its government. . . . Whether the European socialists admire the prowar parties in Japan or not, they clearly hope that Japan will prevail in the end.⁷¹

Henry Hyndman, a social democrat who opposed the Boer War, hailed Japan as the “yellow hope” in Asia and hoped that its victory over Russia would further

the destruction of absolutist and reactionary Russian tsarism and embolden Indians and Chinese to oppose the designs of Western colonialism.⁷² Prominent socialists in Europe held that a Russian defeat would hasten the revolution throughout Europe. In both France and Germany, socialists attacked the government for secretly aiding Russia in the war by supplying weapons, despite protestations of neutrality. Karl Liebknecht, one of the two founders of the SPD, wrote in 1905, "until a few years ago, the vanguard of Russian revolutionaries said that it would take a few decades of work before the Russian people are ready for a revolution. . . . Last February, the Japanese bombardment of Port Arthur has brought about a new situation. . . . This bombardment, like the cannon fire that announces the birth of a Prussian Prince, announces the birth of a revolution. Japan has carried out a great mission of civilization and enlightenment. No longer is the Russian movement a movement that can be totally destroyed by firing squad."⁷³ Indeed, Lenin also described the Japanese occupation of Port Arthur as a "blow to all of reactionary Europe" and especially "a humiliating defeat for the absolute monarchy of Russia," but added that the Russian people have won as a result of this defeat.⁷⁴ In its propaganda effort to enlist foreign backing for the Japanese cause, the Japanese government did not court socialist parties in Europe, but it was pleased to find support from such unexpected fellow travellers. On May 1, 1904, the *Heimin Newspaper* reported with dismay that the Japanese emperor expressed appreciation for the splendid attitude of the European socialist press toward the war.⁷⁵

The Asian Solidarity Association and the High Treason Case

After the Russo-Japanese War, Kōtoku held that a socialist revolution in Japan was inconceivable without simultaneous revolutions in China and Russia. In particular, Japanese socialists should form a transnational alliance with Chinese revolutionaries. “The time when Japanese socialists unite and cooperate with Chinese revolutionaries is not far. Just as all the socialist parties of Europe have joined forces and work together, the socialist parties of East Asia [Tōyō] must one day unite in a single body and expand their influence throughout the world.”¹ Modeling this Asian alliance on the Second International, Kōtoku began to establish direct links with Chinese and other Asian revolutionaries resident in Tokyo. His enthusiasm for an imminent Chinese Revolution was the obverse of his disillusionment with the strategy of the German Social Democratic Party and the lukewarm support of European socialists during the Russo-Japanese War. His high expectations that Russia or China would be the vanguard of revolution reflected a revolutionary romanticism that contrasted with the views of earlier socialists.²

After the Russo-Japanese War, seven to ten thousand Chinese students came to Japan and enrolled in Japanese schools and universities. Many aspired to master the technologies of civilization and to learn political theories from this modern Asian power.³ In addition, prominent opponents of the Qing dynasty, including both constitutionalists and anarchists, flocked to Tokyo, where Japanese sympathizers offered them moral and financial support. Tokyo was fast becoming the center of the Chinese revolution: “A large number of revolutionary party members have been arrested in the Wuchang uprising, including many who studied in Japan. Now Tokyo has become the recognized headquarters of the revolutionary

party . . . although the Qing regime has tried to crush it by repression, the revolutionary movement is expanding quickly.”⁴

By far the most famous Chinese revolutionary in Tokyo at this time was Sun Yat-sen, who enjoyed close relations with Uchida Ryōhei, the founder of the Kokuryūkai, and with members of the Genyōsha, both Pan-Asianist associations that favored military expansionism on the continent, as well as with members of the Japanese government.⁵ On December 25, 1904, Kōtoku had translated Sun Yat-sen’s “For a True Resolution of the China Problem” in which Sun appealed to the Americans for help in overthrowing the Manchu domination of China.⁶ Zhang Binglin (better known by his pen name Taiyan), an erudite scholar of Chinese classics and the teacher of Lu Xun, China’s most famous modern novelist, also went to Japan after his release from prison for his involvement in the Wuchang uprising. In addition to these commanding figures of the older generation, numerous younger revolutionaries congregated in Tokyo and associated with Japanese socialists and anarchists, as well as with revolutionaries from other countries including India, Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam.⁷

In 1907, the direct action faction of the Japan Socialist Party launched the *Osaka Heimin Newspaper* (later the *Nihon Heimin Newspaper*), a bimonthly publication that appeared twenty-three times between June 1, 1907, and May 5, 1908, until government pressure forced it to close down. In July 1907, the Korean Emperor Kojong dispatched three secret emissaries to the Second Hague Peace Conference in the Netherlands to protest Japanese encroachment on Korean sovereignty, but the emissaries were unable to take part in the conference. After this so-called Hague Incident, the Japanese government deposed the emperor and decided to annex Korea. On August 1, 1907, both the *Osaka Heimin Newspaper* and the *Social Newspaper* (*Shakai shinbun*), associated with the parliamentary branch of the Socialist Party, published the following resolution that had been adopted on July 21: “We respect the rights of the Korean people to freedom, independence, and self-government and consider the policies of imperialism to be against the common welfare of the *heimin* class [*heimin kaikyū*] in all countries. For this reason we hope that the Japanese government will faithfully carry out its promise to guarantee the independence of Korea.”⁸ As previously noted, Kōtoku and other socialists expressed skepticism toward Korean independence and even rejected the notion of Korea as a nation-state. This resolution, representing the unified view of both branches of a divided Socialist Party, supported Korean self-determination because it served the interest of the vast majority of Koreans.

Rather than simply representing an internal policy shift by Japanese socialists, this resolution reflects sustained contacts between Asian revolutionaries and Japanese socialists in the fluid international space of Tokyo after the Russo-Japanese War. These contacts took place during a period when Japanese foreign policies toward colonized Asia underwent an important change. In “The Significance of

the Agreements” (Kyōshō no igi), Kōtoku offered a sarcastic commentary on the raft of commercial agreements between Japan and Western powers regarding China: “After proclaiming that the great Russo-Japanese War was fought to protect territorial integrity and to maintain an open door to China, our government is now cooperating with other powers to divide up China’s natural resources. In effect, under the name of ‘preservation of peace,’ the great powers are partitioning the markets of weaker countries among themselves.”⁹

These treaties were not, however, limited to China nor restricted to commercial matters. The same year that Japan forced the abdication of Emperor Kojong of Korea, the French compelled the Vietnamese king Than Thai to step down. In June 1907, Japan and France affirmed mutual recognition of the protectorate status of Vietnam and Korea. Not long after, Japan broke up a Vietnamese political group in Tokyo and deported a Vietnamese revolutionary leader at the request of the French government.¹⁰ In 1908, the United States formally recognized Japan’s special interests in Manchuria and, in exchange, Japan acknowledged the American hegemony in Hawaii and the Philippines.¹¹ Japan and Russia signed an agreement in which they mutually recognized their spheres of influence in northern China. In effect, Japan made practical accommodations with Western colonial powers to obtain international recognition for its own imperial holdings. It no longer offered encouragement, even verbal, to fellow Asians seeking independence from European domination.

Reacting to these global agreements, Liu Shipei, editor of the *Minbao*, wrote in “On the Present Situation of Asia”: “In Asia, Japan is not merely the enemy of Korea but is also the *common enemy* [my italics] of India, Vietnam, China, and the Philippines.” In addition to calling Japan a common enemy, he excoriated Japanese Pan-Asianist groups that cooperated with Chinese revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen: “All of the different parties and groups making up the Japan-China, Japan-Korea, and Japan-India Associations or public entities exist solely for the purpose of expanding the influence of Japan and they are also our common enemy.” In the same article, Liu called upon all weaker Asian countries “to exclude great powers from the region.”¹²

At the time Liu wrote this article, Chinese students and revolutionaries had begun to associate with Indians, Vietnamese, and Filipinos in Tokyo. In 1902, the intellectual Ma Junwu discovered in Jose Rizal an Asian identity that transcended ethnic differences and an anti-imperial patriot who represented a common Asian resistance to oppression. In addition, Chinese students established ties with Vietnamese students opposed to French colonization and with Indians involved in the independence struggle. After attending a function to commemorate Shivaji in Tokyo, Zhang Binglin, who had championed Pan-Asian unity between Japan and China ten years earlier, came to see the Sino-Indian alliance as the pivot for the revival of Asia, and to view Japan’s imperialist ambitions as the biggest threat to East Asia.¹³

Zhang Binglin's denunciation of Japanese imperialism and Liu Shipei's attack on Pan-Asianist organization reflected a split within the Chinese revolutionary movement after Sun Yat-sen's expulsion from Japan in 1905. Reacting to rumors that Sun had accepted money from the Japanese government, Liu and Zhang accused him of accepting funds from tainted sources. They sought out Japanese interlocutors who were not chauvinistic or funded by organizations that promoted Japanese hegemony in Asia. Like the Chinese revolutionary movement, the Japanese Socialist Party was also divided into two factions after its Second General Meeting in February 1907. The direct action wing led by Kōtoku deepened its ties with Chinese revolutionaries. In a sense the contacts between these individuals owes much to the existence of splits in their respective movements as well as to common persecution by the Japanese state.

In his memoirs Takeuchi offers valuable testimony about the complicated political situation in which Japanese and other Asian revolutionaries came into contact:

At this time, [Chinese revolutionaries] did not yet have an adequate understanding of socialist thought. But in 1907, two young geniuses, Zhang Ji and Liu Shipei—both about twenty-four or twenty-five years old at the time—were stimulated by socialist thought. They desired a truly principled revolution based on scientific and philosophical reason and rejected the earlier approach of depending on Japanese activists for support and money. In my view, they turned to the study of socialism because they wanted to awaken the masses and rely on their own efforts rather than depend on external aid. I believe that this is the cause of the rift that developed between these young revolutionary party members and the older generation. As Kita Ikki has written in his *Unofficial History of the Chinese Revolution*, in 1907 Sun Yat-sen . . . received 5,000 yen from an organ of the Japanese government and I think for that reason had to leave Japan. The people at *Minbao* claimed he was bought off by the Japanese government. However, I think that Sun Yat-sen could not endure the change that had taken place in the thinking of young students in Japan. For that reason, I think that the study of socialist thought became the cause of a division among Chinese revolutionaries. The same causes led to the division between Japanese socialists. Let us say that for thought to develop, it sometime creates rifts among people and later this is accompanied by emotional friction.¹⁴

From 1906, Asian revolutionaries in Tokyo cultivated personal contacts with Kōtoku, Ōsugi Sakae, Sakai Toshihiko, and others through meetings of research groups and public lectures. Shortly after Kōtoku returned to Japan in 1906, Kita Ikki introduced him to Zhang Ji, one of the earliest Chinese advocates of anarchism. According to the memoirs of Sakamoto Seima, in April 1907 Zhang brought Liu Shipei and Zhang Binglin to Kōtoku's residence in the Okubo district of Tokyo.¹⁵ Chinese students participated in Kōtoku's Socialist Lecture Group (Shakaishugi Kōshūkai). After Zhang Ji and Liu Shipei began their own Socialist Study Group in June 1907, which met eight times between August 31 and December 22, they invited

Japanese socialists as lecturers.¹⁶ Speaking through the interpreter Zhang Ji, who later translated *The Essence of Socialism* into Chinese, Kōtoku gave the opening lecture for the Socialist Study Group held on August 31, 1907, on the theme of anarchism before an audience of ninety people, and his speech appeared in the sixth issue of the Chinese journal *Tianyi*.¹⁷ At the time, it would have been impossible to address such a large group of Japanese. Sakai and Ōsugi offered speeches in subsequent meetings.

SAME BED, DIFFERENT DREAMS

If the Socialist Study Group provided Chinese and Japanese socialists a venue where they could get acquainted and share ideas, the Asian Solidarity Association (Ashū Washinkai, referred to as the Tōa Washinkai in Vietnamese documents) was a transnational organization in which Japanese and other Asian peoples would combat imperialism.¹⁸ It was set up in Tokyo by intellectuals including Zhang Binglin, Zhang Ji, Liu Shipai, and He Zhen from China and Takeuchi Zensaku, Sakai Toshihiko, Yamakawa Hitoshi, Morichika Unpei, and Ōsugi Sakae, on the Japanese side. The first meeting took place in the summer of 1907 at the Indian House in Aoyama, a residence for Indian students in Tokyo. The second occurred at the Unitarian Church (also referred to as the Universalist Church) in Kudanshita, a venue frequently used by Japanese socialists, and this time participants from the Philippines and Vietnam also took part. Some scholars have argued that Korean representatives “harbored ill feelings toward Japanese, even those from revolutionary organizations, and went so far as to refuse to participate in the group if Japanese were also members.”¹⁹ However, there are conflicting accounts on whether Koreans participated, with some remembering the names of Koreans present at the second meeting of the organization.²⁰

The statutes (*kiyaku*) of the association were written by Zhang Binglin and were printed in classical Chinese and English for distribution in socialist circles in Tokyo. Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese would have been able to read classical Chinese while Filipino and Indian members (and eventually Burmese and Malays) could read English. In this document, the author offers the following rationale for creating the association: “For the past century, Europeans have advanced toward the East and the Asian continent has weakened. Asia has not only lost political influence and military power, but its different peoples have become servile, arts and letters have declined, and people only think of their narrow selfish interests.” The Asian Solidarity Association will “oppose imperialism and protect our peoples. In the future, we will expel the foreign invaders, win independence, and stand together like the trees of the forest. The countries of the East and South will join forces, support one another, and form a union strong as a bundle of reeds. We will form a confederation of many different ethnic groups and recover the friendship that

used to bind us in the past but from which we have grown estranged." The association was open to all Asians regardless of political affiliation, excluding only those who advocated expansionism. Among other articles of faith, the group recognized Jose Rizal as "the quintessential Asian patriot, from which China and other Asians must learn."²¹

Kōtoku, who returned to Nakamura for health reasons in late 1907, did not participate in any association meetings. However, he continued to write about his high hopes for a progressive Pan-Asian alliance, and especially for the Chinese revolution. In one article, he compared the Chinese revolutionaries to Russians of an earlier generation and expressed his hope to be an intellectual mentor for Chinese students in Tokyo:

China is the Russia of East Asia. Just as Switzerland was the classroom where young members of the revolutionary party of Russia were educated, Japan is a classroom for young members of the revolutionary party of China. Like the young Russian revolutionaries, Chinese revolutionaries are filled with passionate intensity. Like Russia, China is vast, its government despotic, the overwhelming majority of the population uneducated and the few who are educated are extremely progressive; there is a vast gulf between the educated few and the uneducated many. I have no doubt that in the not too distant future a Nihilist party will come into being in China.²²

He ventured to predict a glorious future not only for the Chinese but for all Asian revolutionaries assembled in Tokyo:

China is certainly not a "sick patient on the verge of death" but rather a "sleeping lion" that is truly starting to awaken. The importation of [Western thought] has been a powerful spur for awakening the people's consciousness and fostering the growth of democracy, natural right philosophy, and revolutionary thought. When young men from the middle classes in China today teach each other and join forces in the revolutionary movement, it recalls the Russian revolutionary movement in the 1860s. Also many young students have gone to France or Japan to study and members of the revolutionary movement have gone into exile in the same places. These men are no longer satisfied with the slogans about expelling the Manchus, restoring China, establishing a constitution, or founding a republic. Some have started to advocate democracy and socialism, and the most advanced sectors of the movement are enthusiastic partisans of either communist anarchism or individual anarchism. They are constantly smuggling magazines and pamphlets into their own country. For people with foresight, there is not the slightest doubt that China will soon be a second Russia in the history of world revolution.

According to the British press, the Indian independence movement has flared up over the past few years and is causing a major headache for the British politicians. I have met many young men from India in Tokyo and found them to be revolutionaries with character, spirit, and knowledge. They are not content with expelling the English and creating an independent country, but are fired up with socialist and anarchist thought. They read and use English well, and have a wide culture of revo-

lutionary thought. Compared to the Chinese students, they have much greater access to newspapers and magazines. From the point of view of revolution, the future of India is bright indeed.

Among Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Koreans there are many revolutionaries with firm convictions and knowledge. Their movements do not go beyond demands for national independence and ethnic unification and they have not acquired much visible influence. However, if the different revolutionary parties of Asia start to look beyond differences of race or nation they will form a grand confederation under the banner of socialism and one-worldism. The East Asia of the twentieth century will be the land of revolution.²³

As these statements suggest, Kōtoku hoped to create a common Asian organization to promote anarchism, rather than simply an association in support of national independence. In that respect, he had a different goal than the founders of the Asian Solidarity Association, who aimed only to “expel the foreign invaders, win independence, and stand together like the trees of the forest.” While Kōtoku also supported independence for colonized peoples, he viewed this goal as ancillary to the fundamental aim of revolution. In his view, true revolutionaries would never be satisfied with ethnic unification, but would create a great coalition that would transcend national origin. “I believe that the socialist movement includes all nations, and is not divided by race or national borders. The relationship between Japan and China is very similar to that between Germany and Russia. For that reason, the day is not far away when the Chinese revolutionaries will join hands and cooperate with those involved in the socialist movement in Japan.”²⁴

Besides having a different goal from the Asian Solidarity Association, he also recommended a distinct strategy. The Asian Solidarity Association sought to unify a highly diverse and plural group of members, whether ethnic nationalist, republicans, socialists, or anarchists, who could come together in a transnational coalition on a common platform of anti-imperialism and ethnic independence. By contrast, Kōtoku pursued a divisive strategy that excluded those who did not share his vision of anarchism or direct action. Lastly, he saw Japanese socialists as playing a leading role in the Asian revolution, as teachers and mentors, much as Germany had for Russians. For all these reasons, the proverb “one bed, different dreams” captures well both the fragile sense of unity and the hidden divisions that separated Asian revolutionaries from Japanese socialists.

In the end, Japan never became a classroom for the Asian revolutionaries and Kōtoku did not become their “mentor.” The tentative encounters between Japanese socialists and Asian revolutionaries, which were facilitated by the transnational space of Tokyo in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, did not survive the governmental repression directed at both groups. The contacts between Asian revolutionaries and their dream of a Pan-Asian revolution proved both short-lived and chimerical. As its empire expanded, Japan cooperated with other imperial

powers to deport revolutionary students and anticolonial activists. At the same time, it adopted ever more stringent and repressive policies toward Japan's left-wing movements. Japan's annexation of Korea and the first Chinese Revolution of 1911 also splintered the Pan-Asian anti-imperialist movement, which died almost as soon as it was born.

Consequently, Japanese socialists influenced their Chinese colleagues primarily through their writings. Kōtoku's best-known works, *The Essence of Socialism* and *Imperialism*, were translated into Chinese almost immediately after they were published. Zhang Ji worked from Kōtoku's earlier translation when he translated Malatesta's *Anarchism and Direct Action* into Chinese. Chen Wangdao's Chinese version of the *Communist Manifesto*, published in 1922, was also based on the Kōtoku-Sakai translation.²⁵ While Kōtoku's speeches and articles had a deep impact on Chinese revolutionaries at this time, political repression ended relations between Japanese and Chinese anarchists for almost a decade until Ōsugi Sakae reestablished contact with Chinese anarchists.

These early efforts to create a common front among Asian revolutionaries, transcending differences of language and ideology, nevertheless represent an important development and a final chapter in the first anti-imperialist movement.²⁶ By disavowing ethnic differences among Asian peoples, the association was an unprecedented first step in the creation of a united front of Asian peoples opposed to a Western-dominated world system. "The brief Asian Solidarity Society episode explicitly demonstrates that there was a time when non-Western peoples' perceptions of shared experiences of oppression led them to construct for themselves global blocks that were independent of existing states and incipient national formations, and that allowed them to link up for radical political purposes and to construct regional solidarities out of their perceived global structural communality."²⁷

THE AFTERMATH OF THE ASIAN SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION

There is substantial evidence that the Asian Solidarity Association held two meetings, but it is uncertain whether a third or later meetings ever took place. According to Takeuchi, the organization came to an end after Zhang Ji fled Japan to escape arrest in February 1908. His departure dealt a severe blow to this "endeavor to establish a unified Asian revolutionary party since his successor Liu lacked organizational talents and charisma."²⁸ However, Ōsugi Sakae claims that the group continued to meet until the arrest of its most prominent Japanese members after the Red Flag incident of June 22, 1908:²⁹ "But because of the so-called Red Flag incident, most of our comrades were thrown into jail. At the same time, the members of the . . . Solidarity Association were placed under strict surveillance by the authorities and

almost all of them could no longer remain in Japan. After that, there was the . . . High Treason case. And after that, for a very long time, it was impossible to continue our own political movement or to maintain any verbal communication with our comrades overseas.”³⁰ We will probably never know whether the Asian Solidarity Association met more than twice, but arrests of prominent socialists and expulsion of Asian revolutionaries from Japan clearly dealt a fatal blow to its inchoate activities.

After the Red Flag incident, the Saionji cabinet was forced to resign for its excessive leniency toward the socialist movement. With the return of Katsura Tarō to power, the regime adopted a draconian policy toward socialism, which it regarded as public enemy number one: “Although socialists at the moment are said to constitute little more than a thin thread of smoke, if we overlook this thread of smoke, it will someday develop the force of a wildfire and then it will be too late for anything but regrets.”³¹ I will note that, according to an estimate by the Japanese Home Ministry in 1909, there were only 532 socialists in Japan in 1909!³² To prevent the spread of this “wildfire,” the new regime launched a campaign to drive socialist newspapers out of business, banned socialist meetings of any kind, and enforced a ban on words such as “strike,” “labor union,” “socialism,” and “revolution.”³³ In this endeavor, it mobilized the judiciary to persecute the socialist movement, just as it had to harass the editors of the *Heimin Newspaper* during the Russo-Japanese War. In 1907, the editors of the *Osaka Heimin Shinbun* denounced this strategy as judicial harassment (*saiban zeme*), noting that “we cannot have the slightest trust in the courts or the legal system and realize that it would be useless to file an appeal.”³⁴ From this time, police surveillance, a stint in prison, the assessment of fines, and interruption of political meetings constituted the ordinary course of education for socialists, in the same way that shipwrecks and storms are the school for the practiced sailor. Almost all major socialists published prison memoirs, a new genre that described state persecution and reaffirmed the writer’s commitment to his beliefs. About this new literary genre, Sakai Toshihiko noted: “Samukawa Sokotsu wrote a work called ‘The New Prisoner.’ Taoka Reibun wrote ‘Record in Jail.’ When a writer is sent to jail, as a general rule, he has to write a volume as a souvenir of his experiences. So I have to write something now.”³⁵ While these writers suffered harsh prison conditions, they nevertheless enjoyed greater freedom and less oppressive routines than their successors in the 1920s and 1930s. Kōtoku brought a virtual library of left wing works with him to jail in 1905 and Ōsugi Sakae discovered Kropotkin during his imprisonment in 1906.

To disrupt meetings and impede organizing efforts, the government placed known socialists under intensified surveillance. Katayama Sen describes the measures applied to Kōtoku: “Comrade Kōtoku was weak in health, but his house was guarded by four policemen, two in front and two in the rear. . . . Everyone who visited him was forced to give his name, and then this person was also followed by

a detective.”³⁶ In *And Then* (*Sore kara*), a novel serialized in the *Asahi Newspaper* by Natsume Sōseki in 1909, one of the characters refers to the surveillance of “a socialist named Kōtoku Shōsui” as the epitome of “the absurdity of modern life.”³⁷ One of his colleagues at the *Asahi Newspaper* explained that the police divided the socialists into three groups and calibrated the intensity of its surveillance to the perceived “danger” represented by each, with Kōtoku falling into the most dangerous category.³⁸

In late 1907, Kōtoku returned to his hometown of Nakamura to convalesce and to complete his translation of Kropotkin’s *Conquest of Bread*, but he returned to Tokyo to assume the head of the socialist movement after the arrest of socialist leaders in the Red Flag incident. Around this time, he divorced his wife and lived openly with Kanno Suga (1881–1911), an early Japanese feminist and socialist who was one of Japan’s first female journalists.³⁹ Since Kanno had been the wife of his comrade Arahata Kanson, then in jail, his former comrades accused Kōtoku of betraying his comrade Arahata and ostracized him. Besides being subjected to intensified police surveillance and shunned by society, he was prevented from earning an income since no journal would publish his writings. He attempted to establish a new journal called *Jiyū Shisō* (Free thought) with Kanno Suga, but continual harassment by the authorities made publication impossible. After the first two issues were banned, both editors were assessed large fines of over one thousand yen. Unable to publish and earn a living, he was forced to sell his books and other possessions, and eventually his property in Nakamura.

THE HIGH TREASON INCIDENT AND THE END OF THE FIRST ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT

In 1910, suddenly the whole society was shocked by the so-called High Treason incident. As for what happened in the High Treason incident, we have no way of knowing clearly and are in no position to speak about it.

—SAKAI TOSHIHIKO

In June of 1910, following the arrest of a young worker accused of manufacturing explosives, Kōtoku was apprehended at the Yugawara Hot Springs Resort near Tokyo and charged with involvement in a dastardly plot to assassinate the Meiji emperor.⁴⁰ Following the uncovering of this “plot,” the police rounded up hundreds of socialists throughout Japan and cracked down on all radical activism and publications. Eventually, twenty-four people were accused of violating article 73 of the 1908 Japanese criminal code, an article known as the High Treason Statute; two others were charged with violating the Explosives Control Law.⁴¹ The trial was carried out in such haste and secrecy that defense attorneys had little time to prepare their cases or question witnesses. On January 18, 1911, the Japanese Court of Cassation (*Daishin'in*), Japan’s highest court, handed down death sentences for all

twenty-four defendants and long prison terms to the two others, but the following day the Meiji emperor commuted twelve of the death sentences to terms of life imprisonment. On January 24, eleven defendants, including Kōtoku, were hanged, and Kanno Suga, the only woman in the group, was executed the following day.

During the prewar period, Japanese generally regarded the High Treason incident as a plot by socialists and anarchists to kill the emperor. However, the consensus of most historians since 1945 is that the incident was a government-concocted plot to eliminate leaders of the socialist/anarchist movement.⁴² After the executions of Kōtoku and his colleagues, the radical movement entered its “hibernation” (*fuyu no jidai*), which only came to an end after the Russian Revolution and the Taisho democratic opening in the early 1920s.⁴³ When they reemerged after the hibernation, however, socialists avoided associating with Kōtoku’s earlier movement, widely regarded as a group of traitors.

When the police arrested Kōtoku, they found in his possession, among other compromising documents, a leaflet printed by Japanese anarchists in the United States in honor of An Jung-geun, the Korean patriot who assassinated Itō Hirobumi (a former Japanese prime minister and resident-governor of Korea) in Harbin on October 26, 1909.⁴⁴ Kōtoku thought of An Jung-geun as a *gijin*, a martyr who sacrificed himself for the good of his country, and he penned the following *kanshi* (Chinese-style poem) in his honor on his photo:⁴⁵

By throwing away your life, you took the path of righteousness.
 By sacrificing yourself, you embodied benevolence with your one
 action.
 By your action, An, you make the heavens and earth shake.

This photo, ostensibly printed in California, is a complex artifact consisting of three elements: a frontal photo of An; Kōtoku’s *kanshi*; and a commentary under the photo explaining Korean customs of regicide and explaining Kōtoku’s poem. While Kanzaki Kiyoshi identifies the original as a postcard, I would argue that it more closely resembles a leaflet or flyer, based on an inspection of the document in the Okino Iwasaburō Archive at the Meiji Gakuin University Library.⁴⁶ The existence of this artifact hints at secret but regular exchanges between socialists in Japan and radical groups in the United States.⁴⁷ It also led Japanese prosecutors to search for a Korean connection to the High Treason case.

But did the High Treason incident, which ended the anti-imperialist movement, have any relation to the colonization of Korea that occurred the same year? With respect to the 1909 Itō assassination, it is clear that An Jung-geun had no contacts among socialists in Japan, who in turn were not acquainted with him.⁴⁸ In addition, the government did not crack down on Japanese socialists and anarchists because they were opposed to the colonization of Korea but rather because they were considered dangerous radicals who wanted to overturn the existing social,



JUNG-KEUN AN

The Korean Martyr who killed Prince Ito at Harbin. As seen in this picture, the cut off Ring-Finger of the left hand represents the oath of a regicide, according to the old custom of the Koreans.

The characters of the upper corners of the picture is facsimile of the Poem written by D. KOTOKU, a prominent Japanese Anarchist, praising the brave conduct of the martyr.

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Photo of An Jung-geun, a Korean patriot who assassinated Itō Hirobumi, the first Japanese resident-governor of Korea, in Harbin in 1909. Kōtoku wrote a Chinese-style poem in praise of An directly on the top of the photo. The photo, with Kōtoku's poem, was published in the U.S. with an English language caption. Kōtoku had a copy of this document in his possession when he was first arrested in Yugawara in connection with the High Treason case. Image and permissions provided by the Okino Iwasaburō Archive at the Meiji Gakuin University Library.

political, and economic order. Lastly, the decision to annex Korea had been taken well before the High Treason case.⁴⁹ In short, the destruction of Japan's first anti-imperial movement might be described as "collateral damage" from the High Treason case, but was not its intended result.

In the absence of a causal connection, there is nevertheless an important discursive link between the annexation of Korea and the High Treason case. In the first place, the case against Kōtoku was first introduced in print media not as high treason but rather as a terrifying conspiracy or plot (*inbō*), a term that was repeatedly used during the early period of Japanese rule in Korea. The notion of conspiracy offered the Japanese state an important weapon to discredit its enemies: it required only acts of narration, rather than the production of material evidence, to produce its effects, and it was easily and efficiently disseminated through a cooperative press to the entire Japanese population.

The poet Ishikawa Takuboku was first to describe the High Treason incident as an act of narration, that is, a joining of distinct stories (*monogatari*) that centered on the person of Kōtoku Shūsui.⁵⁰ One might distinguish between a juridical story constructed by prosecutors and judges directly involved in the trial case and a separate one intended for popular consumption and transmitted by the newspapers. The juridical narrative specifically tied together three distinct "plots," of which only one was an actual conspiracy. In the bomb plot, the worker Miyashita Daikichi made and tested an explosive device with the intention of assassinating the Meiji emperor. He discussed his plan with others, but they were soon apprehended by the authorities and jailed.⁵¹ Peripherally involved in the bomb plot, Kōtoku was central to the so-called November plot. In a conversation that supposedly occurred in the offices of the Heiminsha in November 1908, he is alleged to have proposed recruiting dozens of militants (*kesshi no shi*), who would burn down government buildings, assassinate top leaders, and "commit High Treason." Most defendants in the trial were implicated in this plot, which was fabricated from a "confession" given by Oishi Seinosuke.⁵² Lastly, the monk Uchiyama Gudō, a Soto Zen priest at the Rinsenji temple in Hakone, is alleged to have called for the assassination of the crown prince in May 1909 on the grounds that it would be easier to kill him than to assassinate the emperor.

By combining these different plots, prosecutors in the High Treason trial fashioned a scenario of hazy but imminent terror attacks that aimed to overthrow the Japanese state. The motive of the plotters was their belief in anarchism and Kōtoku was therefore the intellectual author of the plot. "The defendants in this court, in their vast majority, believe in anarchism. Because of their beliefs we may surmise that they planned to carry out their crimes. Their chief motivation was belief."⁵³ Besides arguing that the conspirators were motivated by beliefs, the court elaborated a novelistic scenario involving the motive of revenge, the complicity of a femme fatale, and seduction:⁵⁴

The accused Kōtoku Denjirō has long been engaged in research on socialism, but he developed close contacts with ideologues in the United States and converted to the doctrine of anarchism when he traveled there in 1905. . . . The accused Kanno Suga has been an adherent of socialism for several years, but she recently converted to anarchism and began to entertain plans for a revolution. In 1908, she was imprisoned as a result of the Red Flag incident and, although she was cleared of any charges, she was filled with irrepressible rage and a secret desire for revenge. One night, she confessed her feelings to Denjirō and he promised that he would do his utmost to cooperate with her and exchanged vows of marriage with her. The others accused are on the whole believers in the doctrine of anarchism, or even if they are not believers, they are tainted by association. Among them, many worship Denjirō and have established close relations with him.⁵⁵

Kanno Suga later wrote: “The public charges and the truth of the matter were totally unrelated, like a novel written by a third-rate writer.”⁵⁶ This elaborate narration only became public knowledge after the trial concluded, but from this time it strongly influenced fictional portrayals of the High Treason case.⁵⁷

When the court delivered its verdict on January 19, 1911, the conspirators were for the first time referred to as a band of traitors (*taigyakuzoku*) and their crime was named high treason (*taigyaku*). Prior to that, however, the newspaper reporters conjured up a hazier and perhaps more terrifying scenario in the minds of their readers: the criminals were engaged in a vast terror conspiracy that sought to destroy Japan. The conspiracy narrative fanned the fear of the conspirators and justified state repression of their actions. Employed as a proofreader at the *Tokyo Asahi*, Ishikawa Takuboku blamed the press for fanning belief in a terrifying conspiracy to overthrow the emperor: “The blame for spreading the idea among the general public that [socialism] is a frightful ideology that cares nothing for the nation and seeks to overthrow the imperial house is to be attributed to ignorant and overzealous newspapers and their reporters.”⁵⁸ To be sure, newspaper reporters were totally dependent on government officials to obtain information about the case and censorship meant they were tightly restricted in what they could write. Consequently, they tended to write reports that reflected state narratives, that circulated rumors, and hinted at far-reaching, terrifying conspiracies.

After the initial news reports in early June 1910, there is a measured but discernible escalation in the language reporters used to refer to the “plot” (*inbō*). On June 5, the *Tokyo Asahi* published a report headlined “The Anarchist Party Conspiracy” (Museifutō no inbō) with the subheadings “Reckless Crime” and “The Truth of Shūsui’s Turn.” Kōtoku and six other co-conspirators “had manufactured a bomb and were plotting extremist actions,” a plot that public prosecutor Kobayashi described as “truly frightening” (*jitsu ni osorubeki*).⁵⁹ This early report offered few details on the plot, but emphasized the dangerous anarchist beliefs of the conspirators. By September 22, however, a reporter for the *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun*

described the conspiracy as a “serious incident concerning the imperial household” and, by December 11, it had metamorphosed into a crime of “great disloyalty and great rebellion” (*daifuchū daihangyaku*).⁶⁰

The media production of conspiracy also followed a general pattern: newspapers would first circulate information from unnamed official sources on the plot, but would also reassure the public that the plot had been uncovered and stopped. In the June 5 article mentioned earlier, the prosecutor, besides stressing the “frightening” nature of the plot, also sought to reassure the public that the police had apprehended all the conspirators. The media coverage of the terrorist plot was from the start a joint construction at the nexus of journalism and politics.⁶¹ As the terrorist plot overlapped chronologically with the annexation of Korea, reporters sometimes speculated on the collusion of domestic and foreign terrorists, with Koreans a particular focus of suspicion. On August 24, 1910, shortly before the treaty of annexation went into effect, the *Tokyo Asahi* ran a report titled: “13 Socialists Arrested . . . No Connection with the Issue of Annexation [*gappō*].”⁶² However, a week later, the same paper published an article titled: “Annexation and the Anarchist Party: Arrests on the Day of Annexation’s Announcement, Activities of the Kobe Prosecutor’s Office.” This article mentioned the arrest and interrogation of “certain socialists [in the Kansai region] colluding with the anti-Japanese faction in Korea.”⁶³ Although reporters revealed no further details on the collusion between socialists and anti-Japanese Koreans, they put into circulation rumors that conflated those opposing the empire with radical socialists. Whether by denegation or by insinuation, reporters thus gave shape to the nightmare scenario of Japanese authorities: that the conspiracy was a joint action involving coordination between Japanese socialists and colonized Koreans.

I have already noted that the Japanese government sought to nip in the bud ties between anticolonial revolutionaries in Asia and the socialists in Japan, such as the Asian Solidarity Association, which it viewed as obstacles to the normalization of Japan’s empire. When it dealt a crushing blow to Japan’s small socialist movement, which had opposed Japan’s expansion, it presented the socialists as non-Japanese (*hikokumin*) and enemies (*gyakuto*) of the emperor. As such, they became an internal enemy that could be expelled from the national community. To follow Kōtoku’s analysis of patriotism, the government fabricated an internal enemy that followed a foreign ideology and conspired against the emperor system in order to strengthen the bonds linking Japanese together. The expulsion of socialists from the national body and the reinforcement of the taboo on the emperor also served the purpose of preparing the people for the new borders of the nation and new definitions of Japanese nationality caused by the annexation of Korea.

In an interesting analysis of reporting on the An Jung-geun assassination of Itō, Umemori Naoyuki has argued that elite and mass media were far softer and more conciliatory in their responses to the Korean assassin than they were to the

Japanese defendants in the High Treason case.⁶⁴ At the time of the trial, An was a foreign national rather than a Japanese subject, and accordingly he could not be a traitor or anti-Japanese (*hikokumin*). After the annexation of Korea, figures of the Korean resistance were identified as *futei senjin*, an epithet that designated Korean terrorists and plotters, and the colonial analogue to the bomb-making terrorist in Japan.⁶⁵ Consequently, the media construction of terrorist plots developed in the High Treason case offered a template for the later construction of anticolonial plots after Korea had been incorporated into the empire, starting with the “discovery” of a series of conspiracies to assassinate the first general-governor Terauchi Masatake, which culminated in the mass arrest of hundreds of alleged Korean plotters.⁶⁶ Nearly a decade later, when millions of Koreans marched in the nationwide March 1 Korean independence movement, the Japanese media treated this repudiation of annexation as a sinister “conspiracy” to deny its status as a legitimate movement. Particularly after 1919, warnings about the bombings, assassination, armed robbery, arson, and attempts at insurrection by Korean independence activists became an ongoing preoccupation of the Japanese popular media.

If the plots involving *futei senjin* can be seen as a colonial variant of the High Treason Incident, the 1911 trial also set the tone for later judicial cases invoking the same statute. In two of these cases, the accused explicitly invoked Kōtoku as a precedent and model; all three had a Korean connection.⁶⁷ In the Toranomon case (1923), Nanba Daisuke was condemned and executed for an attempted assassination of the crown prince (later the Shōwa emperor) as he was on his way to a session of the House of Peers to attend the forty-eighth session of the diet. Unlike the alleged co-conspirators in the 1911 case, he actually fired a shot at the prince’s motorcar, shattering the car’s window and slightly injuring the grand chamberlain. In his interrogation, he mentioned the massacre of Koreans after the Great Kantō Earthquake and the killing of socialists in the Kameido incident.⁶⁸ Namba is quoted as saying: “After seeing the dates for the trial in the High Treason incident, I went to the library in Ueno to read some articles about it. . . . I thought it regrettable for Kōtoku and the others that, despite having resolved to die, they ended up dying on the scaffold not having accomplished what they set out to achieve.”⁶⁹

Similarly, in the Park Yeol incident, Park Yeol and his partner Kaneko Fumiko were arrested at the Yodobashi police station in Tokyo on the suspicion of plotting “an uprising by Koreans” and terrorist bomb attacks after the Great Kanto Earthquake. Under interrogation, Park admitted to planning an attack on the Taisho emperor and the crown prince, on the occasion of the planned wedding ceremony, but claimed that he could not execute the plan because of the earthquake. Park was charged on May 2, 1925, and Kaneko Fumiko on May 4, and both were sentenced to death on March 25, 1926, but their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment, reminiscent of the High Treason case of 1911. Park also mentioned being inspired

by Kōtoku Shūsui and others in the High Treason case because they “aimed at something great” (*erai koto o neratta*).⁷⁰ By its policies of implacable repression, the Japanese government eventually succeeded in accomplishing something that the first anti-imperial movement had failed to do: forging links between Japanese socialists and Korean anti-imperialists.

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Imperialism

Monster of the Twentieth Century

Kōtoku Shūsui

All footnote annotations of Kōtoku Shūsui's *Imperialism* are by the translator.

PREFACE

FROM ITS INCEPTION, human history has always been a struggle between faith and power. Sometimes faith defeats force, but force wins out at other times. When Pilate ordered Jesus Christ to be crucified, force triumphed over faith, but when Bishop Ambrose of Milan forced Emperor Theodosius to make a public act of contrition, faith subjugated force.¹ If faith governs force, the world is bathed in light, but if force oppresses faith, the world is plunged into darkness. We live in a dark age when force oppresses faith.

Throughout the Japanese Empire, there is not a single philosopher who teaches the principle of world harmony, yet we maintain an army of thirteen divisions that flaunts its weapons on every occasion. There is not a single poet in our society to offer consolation for the distress of the people, but we possess a fleet of warships of 260,000 tons constantly prowling the coasts of our country and ready for war. Disorder reigns in families, father and child are at daggers drawn, brothers engage in bitter rivalry, and mother and daughter-in-law hold each other in mutual contempt. At such a time, our country, dubbed the land of the cherry blossoms in the Far East, takes imperialism as its emblem and fancies itself a nation of gentlemen.

My dear friend, Kōtoku Shūsui, author of *Imperialism*, you have raised your banner aloft in the literary world, although you are still a young man. While you do not profess belief in the Christian faith, you hate the charade that passes itself

1. Emperor Theodosius (346–395) submitted to Bishop Ambrose's (332–397) order in 390 and proclaimed Christianity the state religion of Rome in 392.

off as patriotism in our times. Although you have never traveled to a free country, you are a fervent socialist. I consider it an honor to count you among my friends and thank you for granting me the privilege of introducing your original work to the general public.

April 11, Meiji 34 (1901)
*Uchimura Kanzō, Tsunohazumura, Tokyo*²

2. Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930) was a Japanese religious philosopher and colleague of Kōtoku at the newspaper *Yorozu Chōhō*.

THREE PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

1. Storm clouds gather over the Eastern Sea and the winds blow more strongly every day. I alone calmly preach justice and virtue whereas the most fervent patriots of our nation, their hair standing on end and their eyes burning with hatred, strive for great feats of conquest. I know that I will be treated as the butt of mockery, like the Chinese sage who rescued the Confucian classics from the waves during a great naval battle.³ Nevertheless, I knowingly undertake this task because I shudder to think of the horrors the next century holds in store for our country. I ask both those who understand me and those who curse me to read this book.
2. The theories of imperialism set forth in this work were first developed in insightful analyses by Western intellectuals. I have taken up the most progressive theses propounded by renowned thinkers who hold to the highest ideals, such as Tolstoy, Zola, John Morley, Bebel, and Bryant.⁴ For that

3. Yasan (Gaisan in Japanese) was the site of a great naval battle in 1279 C.E. in which the Mongols defeated the Southern Song dynasty. The minister Liu continued to instruct the young Song emperor in the commentaries on the *Great Learning* (one of four Confucian classics) even during the famous battle. In the end, when the Song forces were on the verge of defeat, he drowned himself along with the eight-year old emperor.

4. John Morley (1838–1923), a leader of the liberal party in England, opposed the Boer War (1889–1902) and later Britain's entry into the First World War. August Bebel (1840–1913), one of the historic founders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, was jailed for opposing the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine during the Franco-Prussian War. William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925) a leader of the Democratic Party in the United States, opposed the annexation of the Philippines.

reason, I do not consider myself an original author but rather a commentator on other men's ideas.⁵

3. Although I could not elaborate on these ideas in this short booklet, I am confident that I have set them down in broad strokes. If, upon reading this book, uninstructed people open their eyes to the current state of affairs and if this book makes a small contribution to the establishment of truth and justice, I will have achieved my goals.

*April, Meiji 34 (1901), the cherry blossoms in full bloom,
at the editorial office of the Yorozu Chōhō⁶
Shūsui, a disciple.*

5. Kōtoku distinguishes between author (著) and commentator (述). Scholars have noted that he paraphrases and translates from J. M. Robertson's 1899 *Patriotism and Empire*.

6. The *Yorozu Chōhō* was an extremely popular and influential daily newspaper established by Kuroiwa Ruikō in 1892 at which Kōtoku and Uchimura both worked until 1903.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Imperialism: A Wildfire in an Open Field

Imperialism spreads like a wildfire in an open field. All nations bow down to worship this new god, sing hymns to praise it, and have created a cult to pay it adoration.

Look at the world that surrounds us. In England, both government and citizens have become fervent acolytes of imperialism. In Germany, the war-loving emperor never loses a chance to extol its virtues. As for Russia, the regime has long practiced a policy of imperialism. France, Austria, and Italy are all delighted to join the fray. Even a young country like the United States has recently shown an eagerness to master this new skill. And, finally, this trend has reached Japan. Ever since our great victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese of all classes burn with fever to join the race for empire, like a wild horse suddenly freed from its harness.

What Virtue, What Power?

Long ago, Taira no Tokitada haughtily proclaimed: “Anyone who is not a Taira cannot be considered a human being.”⁷ At present, no politician, of whatever stripe, can hope to be appointed as cabinet minister in any national government unless he agrees to serve the cause of imperialism. And no government that renounces imperialism will gain the respect of other nations. But, in the final analysis, what

7. Taira no Tokitada was a great counselor of state in the twelfth century and younger brother of the wife of Taira no Kiyomori. This is a citation from chapter 4, book 1 of the classic *Tale of the Heike*.

virtue, what power, and what value does imperialism possess, that it is able to inspire such fervent devotion in its acolytes?

The Purpose of the Nation-State

Ultimately, the main purpose of the nation-state is to ensure continual social progress and to better the welfare of humanity. A state should not aim just to create a brief show of prosperity but rather pursue policies that result in continual progress over the long term. In addition, it must adopt policies that lead to the happiness of all and not simply secure the privileges of a small minority. In what way does imperialism, now supported by all political leaders and nations, contribute to the progress and the happiness of the human race?

Scientific Knowledge and Civilized Morality

I believe social progress must be based on true scientific knowledge and human happiness and well-being must be founded on civilized morality. I support the ideals of freedom and justice for all and the goals of universal love and equality. Throughout history, statesmen who have adhered to such principles have ensured that the prosperity of their nation outlasted the pine and the oak tree.⁸ However, those who have ignored them have seen their nation perish as quickly as the dream of a nighttime in spring.⁹ If imperialism were truly based on a solid foundation and served the cause of human progress, men would welcome it as the glad tidings of heaven on earth. I would gladly become its advocate and even its watchdog.

But, what if, to the contrary, the growing craze for imperialism is based not on scientific knowledge but rather on rank superstition? What if it derives from fanaticism rather than from civilized morality? And what if it results in despotism, injustice, narrow-mindedness, and conflict instead of freedom, justice, universal love, and equality? And what if all nations of the world are ruled by these evil feelings and embrace this vicious morality, in both the material and the spiritual domains? How can one not shudder to think of the ravages that this poison is spreading in the world today?

Angels or Devils

Oh, imperialism! Will you lift the world of the twentieth century to the eternal light of the Pure Land, or will you plunge us into the hell of no respite?¹⁰ Do you

8. Both were symbols of longevity.

9. This image is taken from the opening *Tale of the Heike* in reference to the Taira clan, whose precipitous decline is the central theme of the epic. The proud are as ephemeral as “the dream of a nighttime in spring.”

10. In Buddhist iconography, the deepest hell is called *muken no jigoku* or the hell of no respite. It is “an unremittingly scorching abode reserved for individuals who have committed the most heinous offenses, such as killing their parents or injuring a Buddha.” Hirasawa 2008, 10.

represent progress or corruption, well-being or catastrophe? Are you angel or devil?

Our Most Urgent Duty

The most urgent duty of thinkers called on to lead our twentieth century is to expose the imminent perils of imperialism.¹¹ Notwithstanding my own shortcomings, I have decided to undertake this mission on my own since I can no longer afford to wait any longer as danger approaches.

11. Literally, “to singe one’s hair and burn one’s face in order to put out a fire,” an expression from the *History of the Han Dynasty* (Hanshu).

Chapter 2

On Patriotism

PART 1

The Battle Cry of the Imperialists

“Let’s increase our population, expand the size of our territory, build a great empire, raise the national prestige, and bring glory to our flag.” This is the battle cry of the imperialists of every nation. The imperialists have a deep, abiding love for their country.

England battles with South Africa, the United States invades the Philippines, Germany seizes the region of Jiaozhou, Russia annexes Manchuria, France conquers Fashoda, and Italy makes war on Abyssinia.¹² These are the most striking manifestations of imperialism in recent years. In every case, the advance of imperialist nations has been accompanied by the deployment of military force and by aggressive diplomacy backed by the threat of force.

12. The Boer War (1899–1902) was the longest and most expensive of Britain’s colonial wars against the Dutch settlers of South Africa. Britain crushed the guerrilla resistance after herding Boer women and children into concentration camps, where 28,000 of them died of starvation and disease. After winning the Philippines in its war with Spain, the United States fought Filipino nationalists in a guerrilla war. After the murder of a German missionary, Germany seized the port of Qingdao and pressed for other concessions in China’s Shandong Province in 1897. In 1898, the Russians obtained a twenty-five-year concession on Port Arthur and Dalian to complete the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

In the diplomatic crisis of Fashoda (1898), France and Britain almost came to war over competing claims to African territory. General Marchand conquered this military base in southern Sudan for the French side, but within a short time the British under General Kitchener forced the French to evacuate the base.

The Warp of Patriotism, the Woof of Militarism

However, let us look at the consequences of these invasions. Isn't imperialism derived from patriotism and militarism? These constitute the warp and woof from which the fabric of imperialism is woven. Without a doubt, patriotism and militarism constitute the foundation upon which the imperialism practiced by the great powers of the present day rests. Accordingly, before we judge the merits of imperialism, we must first examine the nature of patriotism and militarism.

What Is Patriotism?

In fact, what is "love of country"? What does "patriotism" really mean? Why do people feel an emotional attachment to their native land and their country? Why do they have to love their nations?

PART 2

Love of Country and Human Compassion

I agree with Mencius that any human being would, without hesitation, rush to rescue a child about to fall into a well. If patriotism were nothing more than the natural empathy that motivated this generous act, and if it were an emotion filled with the spirit of charity and love, then it would be a beautiful and glorious thing. I would have nothing more to say on the topic.

On second thought, however, a human being moved by such selfless love and charity does not pause to think whether the child is a family member or a close relative. When he rescues the child from danger, he does not even ask himself whether the child is his own or belongs to another. For the same reason, righteous and benevolent men in every nation in the world pray that the people of the Transvaal will win their freedom and that the people of the Philippines will gain their independence. There are many such men even in England and the United States, even though their countries are belligerents in these wars. How is it possible for a patriot to adopt such a stance?

At present, nationalists and patriots in England denounce their fellow countrymen who pray for their nation's defeat in the Transvaal and decry their lack of patriotism.¹³ In America, patriots revile fellow citizens who hope for the independence of the Philippines and condemn their hatred of their own country. But even if these people are lacking in love for their country, they are certainly filled with compassion, charity, and generosity. For this reason, we can conclude that patriotism is an emotion far removed from the profound feeling that leads a human being to rescue a child from impending danger.

13. Transvaal and the Orange Free State were republics established by Dutch settlers in South Africa.

I am saddened that patriotism has nothing to do with compassion and charity. In fact, the love a patriot feels for his country stops at national borders. He only cares about the human beings who live in his own country. A patriot who does not care for the people of other countries and only loves his fellow countrymen is like a man who only loves members of his own family and immediate relatives and is indifferent to everyone else. He only seeks superficial glory and the satisfaction of his material desires. How can we speak of public interest in such a case when only a person's private interests are at stake?¹⁴

Nostalgia for One's Hometown

In addition, love of country can be likened to the nostalgia that men feel for their hometowns. The nostalgia that fills a man's heart when he misses his hometown is a noble thing, but, at the same time, it is base and contemptible.

Hatred for the Other

A little boy mounts his hobbyhorse at a time when hair still covers the nape of his neck, but does he really understand that he should love the mountains and rivers of his country?¹⁵ Is not the exact contrary true? A man only longs for his homeland and the place of his birth after he learns that there are foreign towns and countries. After he has wandered around the world, experienced setbacks to his ambitions, and endured the coldness of strangers, he fondly recalls the days of his boyhood and youth and yearns for bygone times and familiar places. People nostalgically recall their native land when they have trouble adjusting to a different climate, getting used to exotic food, expressing their thoughts in a foreign tongue, or living apart from their parents and family members who might have soothed their pain.

Men become nostalgic not because they have love or respect for their native land but because they hate other countries, especially when they have been exiled from their homes due to circumstances beyond their control. This nostalgia is not pure sympathy and compassion for their own nation, but instead a hatred that they come to feel toward foreign places. After seeing their dreams shattered or their hopes dashed, many people begin to hate foreign countries and to long for their native land.

Some assert that men who have met with adversity and disappointment abroad are not the only ones to feel the love of country and that patriots are also to be

14. In traditional Confucian terms, Kōtoku condemns patriotism as a narrow, personal and private "interest" rather than a broad, public concern. Traditional morality stipulated that a man's public duties should take precedence over his private interest.

15. In traditional society, it was customary for young boys to grow their hair down to their neck collar.

found among those who have been successful and even built a fortune overseas. In fact, this is certainly the case. But the feeling of nostalgia that successful people feel is especially contemptible. All that they really want is to show off their success to their family members, friends, and acquaintances in their hometown. This spirit of ostentation merely reflects their vanity, pride, and competitive spirit, and has nothing whatsoever to do with compassion and sympathy for their homeland. People in ancient times said, “To become rich and famous without returning to one’s hometown is like wandering around in the pitch darkness wearing brocade robes.”¹⁶ This saying exposes the petty and shameful motives that lie hidden under their pompous attitudes.

The citizens of a particular town demand that the government found a university in their hometown or build a railway line that passes through their district. Some even insist that the ministers and officials of the national government must be from their own prefecture. Does such selfish behavior have anything to do with sympathy and compassion for their homeland, as opposed to personal interest and vanity? How can a man of intelligence or moral probity feel anything but scorn for such ignoble sentiments?

The Pettiness of War

If patriotism and love for one’s homeland came from the same source or were based on the same motives, then the rivalry between the Yu and the Rui would offer the perfect model for the patriot to follow in the settlement of disputes. And the fable of the warring kingdoms on the horns of a snail would offer the patriot valuable lessons on the pettiness of human war!¹⁷

Vanity and Love of Glory

One must not laugh when Mr. Iwaya, who boasts of his “great services to the nation,” promises a donation of a thousand yen to build a memorial to commemorate the marriage of the crown prince but then forgets to carry out his promise. There is only a minuscule difference between Mr. Iwaya’s patriotism and that of

16. The expression is from a passage in the *Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji) of Sima Qian (145–86 B.C.E.) in the chapter on Xiang Yu.

17. According to the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian, the Yu and the Rui fought over the ownership of arable land situated at their border. They traveled to the country of Zhou to request the king to arbitrate their dispute, but they were so impressed by the high morality of the inhabitants of Zhou that they felt ashamed, ended their quarrel, and left the disputed land fallow. The fable of the warring kingdoms is mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*. Two countries situated on different horns of a snail fought a war for two weeks at the cost of many thousands of lives. The lesson of this fable is that, just as a war between nations on the horns of a snail is a trivial matter for human beings, human conflicts are insignificant when viewed from the higher perspective of heaven.

other so-called patriots of the realm. They only trumpet their love of country to better serve their own selfish interests, pride, and vanity.¹⁸

PART 3

Patriotism in Ancient Rome

“At that time not a single man stood for the interests of his party. All men united in support of the state.” A poet of ancient Rome, carried away by his emotions, once penned this panegyric to patriotism. But perhaps the poet did not realize what he was saying. Perhaps the men he referred to lacked the intelligence to organize a party and advance their cause. Perhaps what brought them together and caused them to feel unified was not their common membership in a nation, but rather the existence of enemy nations. In the end, their unity probably resulted from the superstition that drives men to hate adversary nations and the enemies who inhabit them.

The Poor People of Rome

Consider the following: poor peasants of ancient Rome were mobilized along with a small minority of rich patricians, who served as their commanders, to fight in wars on behalf of the nation. These soldiers demonstrated exceptional bravery on the battlefields: they advanced fearlessly upon the enemy, fought with outstanding courage, and risked their lives without a second thought. How can one not be moved by their great show of loyalty and righteousness? But observe what happened after the wars ended. When they returned to the safety of their homes after winning a military victory for their nation, they quickly fell into slavery because they had incurred large debts during their time of military service. While the rich were off busy fighting wars for the nation, they had slaves and servants tend to their fields, but the poor had no choice but to let their fields go to waste. Upon their return, they fell deeply into debt and were forced to sell themselves as slaves. Who is to blame for such a catastrophe?

They hated the so-called enemies of the Roman nation. But these enemies surely caused them no more harm than their rich fellow-citizens. During the war, they faced multiple dangers: the enemy would deprive them of their freedom, steal their property, or capture them, and sell them as slaves. But how could they have guessed that their fellow citizens would be the cause of their downfall? They could never have imagined such an outcome was possible.

18. Iwaya Shōhei (1850–1920), a businessman born in Kagoshima, established a textile business in the Ginza district of Tokyo and a tobacco company known for its Tengu brand of cigarettes. Faced with a competitor in the latter business, he defended a state monopoly in the production and sale of tobacco. The expression “great services to the nation” was an advertising slogan for the cigarettes he sold.

Why Are People So Foolish?

When the rich go to war, they increase the amount of their wealth and add to the number of their slaves and servants. In contrast, the poor draw no benefits from war; they fight only for so-called national honor. After they have fallen into slavery, they console themselves by recalling the heroic battles in which they defeated the enemy and the services they rendered to their nation. They are filled with pride and self-satisfaction when they recall these events. What foolishness! Such was the patriotism of ancient Rome.

The Slaves of Ancient Greece

Let us next consider the condition of the slaves in ancient Greece, the Helots. Depending upon circumstance, they either fought as soldiers or worked as slaves. Their masters often massacred them if they grew too strong or if they increased too rapidly in number.¹⁹ But when they fought for their masters, they were incomparable in their loyalty and exceptional in their bravery; they never thought of turning their weapons against their master to win their freedom.

The Superstitions of Patriotism

Why did they behave in this way? They believed that the highest honor and glory was to defeat the enemies of their nation whom they hated. They failed to become aware of their own vanity and stupidity. Their so-called patriotism was a hollow, vulgar superstition even more incurable than that of the faithful of the Tenri sect, who drink putrid water because they believe that it has mystical powers. In fact, their superstition had far direr consequences.²⁰

The Two Feelings of Love and Hatred

You should not be surprised that they feel such a deep hatred of their enemy. These primitive creatures live lives that are close to those of animals and cannot understand the noble ideals of universal love and humanity. Since the earliest period of history, love and hatred have been joined together like the threads of a rope or the links of a chain. Look at the beasts. They are suspicious of one another and even devour members of their own species; when they happen to meet a creature they do not know, they are filled with terror and panic, which quickly turn to envy and hatred. This hatred and envy give rise to growling and lead them to attack the intruder. While they previously devoured animals of their own species, now they join together with others to fight against a common enemy. Once they face a common enemy, they start to feel a bond of sympathy with their own species that holds

19. The Helots were a serf class who worked for the free citizens of Sparta and belonged to the state. Thucydides recounts an episode when 2,000 Helots were massacred in this way.

20. A religious sect founded by Nakayama Miki (1798–1887).

them together. Do these animals really feel a sentiment that we can call patriotism? People of ancient times were not so far removed in their way of life from these beasts.

Barbarians are tied closely to one another in their groups, unite in their struggle with the forces of nature, and fight wars with the members of different tribes. And they have a feeling that resembles what we call patriotism. In fact, we must acknowledge that their unity, friendship, and sympathy only derive from the existence of a shared enemy and is merely an ancillary reaction to their hatred of the enemy. Their compassionate feeling resembles the sympathy that patients who suffer from the same sickness tend to feel for one another.

Love of War Is an Animal Instinct

Following this chain of reasoning, so-called love of country is a war-like feeling that incites those who feel it to consider it an honor to subjugate foreigners and foreign countries. The love of war is an animal instinct. For this reason, both the Buddha and Christ condemned animal instincts and love of warfare, and all civilizations are united in rejecting them as unworthy ideals or aims of human life.

How appalling! The people of the world, after spending the nineteenth century competing with one another in accordance with their animal instincts, are getting ready to enter the new world of the twentieth century with exactly the same frame of mind.

The Principle of the Survival of the Fittest

As society has gradually evolved in accordance with the principle of survival of the fittest and the means of communication and transportation have unified the different regions of the world, the members of other races and other villages who used to constitute a common enemy have decreased in number and the hatred that united men against them has started to lose its object. If they lose a common target of hatred, then they can no longer find a common cause to unite with their neighbors. At this point, their love for their country, their community, or their village undergoes a change and simply becomes a sentiment that they feel toward themselves, their families, and their groups. At the same time, the war-like instinct that governed relations between different communities or villages of the barbarians also changes into competition among individuals, rivalry among political parties, and struggle among the different classes of society. As long as we fail to realize pure ideals and a noble morality [in our society], as long as we fail to extirpate this animal instinct, then the people of the world will be unable to live without having an enemy, without hating one another, and without fighting wars. And they will dignify this atavism with the name of “patriotism” and consider it to be honorable behavior.

Free Competition

Consider the nineteenth-century civilization of the countries of the West. On the one hand, human beings have become cold and vicious as a result of the prevailing cutthroat competition that sets them against one another; on the other, they proclaim their faith in the highest ideals of justice and endeavor to free the world of evil. How can one not tremble from fear when one considers the future prospects of our civilization? Unscrupulous politicians taking advantage of every opportunity, adventurers in search of glory, and capitalists greedy for profits proclaim in unison: "Look at the borders of our nation. Powerful enemies threaten us on all sides. The people must end their squabbles and join forces on behalf of the nation." In fact, they seek to divert the hatred that individuals feel toward one another onto foreign enemies in order to derive profit for themselves. They reproach anyone who refuses to go along with this project by saying: "You are an enemy of the nation, a traitor."

Inciting Animal Instinct

The popularity of imperialism in the world today is really based on the manipulation of such feelings. It depends ultimately on the incitation of a patriotic spirit of the people, that is to say, on the deliberate provocation of animal instincts.

PART 4

Hatred of Western Barbarians

One must love one's family and hate all others, love one's fellow countrymen and hate those that live in other lands, love the country of gods [Japan] and China and hate Westerners and barbarians.²¹ For the sake of those whom one loves, one should attack those one hates. In a nutshell, this is the logic of patriotism.

A Useful Tool for Tyrants

Indeed, if patriotism were not a pitiful superstition, then it would be a spirit of belligerence. If it were not a spirit of belligerence, it would be an ostentatious display of vanity, like an advertisement for a commercial product. In addition, this ideology offers a useful instrument that enables authoritarian leaders to achieve their ambitions and acquire fame.

Ancient Greece and Rome enjoyed no monopoly on these worn-out and empty dreams. The manipulation of popular patriotism in modern society is even more outrageous than that of antiquity and the medieval period.

21. The movement to restore the Meiji emperor and overthrow the Tokugawa *bakufu* was launched under the banner of expelling the barbarians (that is, people from Western countries) from Japan.

Patriotism in the Holy Period of Meiji

Recall the article of the late Morita Shiken in which he suggested that the mysterious eagle discovered over the Yellow Sea was not a living spirit of the emperor.²² For this offense, he was widely reviled and attacked as a traitor. When Kume Kunitake wrote an article in which he held that the Shinto religion derived from ancient sun worship, he was forced to resign from his university post.²³ When Count Saionji tried to introduce a cosmopolitan curriculum to the public schools, he was nearly fired from his position as minister of education.²⁴ When Uchimura Kanzō refused to bow in worship before the Imperial Rescript of Education, he was dismissed from his job as teacher.²⁵ When Ozaki Yukio pronounced the word “republic” in a speech, he lost his post as government minister.²⁶ All of these men were condemned for the crime of *lèse majesté* and antipatriotism. So much for the manifestations of patriotism of the Japanese people in this holy period of Meiji Japan.

This is what the patriotism of the people leads to: anyone who challenges the conventional wisdom of the day is muzzled and forcibly restrained. Patriots even

22. Morita Shiken (1861–97), journalist and translator, ridiculed war hysteria in a poem written in 1894. During the war, an eagle flew to the mast of the warship *Takachiho*, named after the mythical place where the first Japanese emperor descended to earth. Sent as an offering to the Meiji emperor, the eagle was taken care of and given the name of *Takachiho*. This incident inspired several Chinese-style poems about the eagle being a spirit of the imperial family, a notion that Morita ridiculed.

23. Kume Kunitake (1839–1931), a secretary during the Iwakura Mission, became a founder of the school of historiography at Tokyo University. In 1892, he had to resign from his professorial chair after he published the article “Shintō wa saiten no kozoku” (Shinto is merely old customs for worshipping the heavens) in the history journal of record, *Shigakkai Zasshi*. Adopting the methodology of the new discipline of comparative religion, he analyzed Shinto as a primitive form of nature worship that had not developed religious importance in the Western sense. Eventually, under pressure from Shinto organizations and imperial loyalists, he recanted and was dismissed from the university by government order. The Kume case, which occurred shortly after the adoption of a Japanese constitution vesting sovereignty in the emperor, was the first instance of the suppression of historical research by government intervention.

24. Prince Saionji Kinmochi (1849–1940) was a Japanese statesman and served twice as prime minister. After spending several years in France, he founded the Meiji Law School (later Meiji University). A close friend of Nakae Chōmin, he is considered the most liberal Japanese political figure of his time. As minister of education under Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909) and Matsukata Masayoshi (1835–1924), he tried to reform the Japanese school curriculum, bringing it more in line with international (Western) standards.

25. Uchimura Kanzō, a Christian teacher at the Imperial First Higher School, was forced to resign from his position for refusing to bow to a portrait of the emperor in a school ceremony on the grounds that such an act of worship constituted idolatry. Journalists accused Uchimura of disloyalty to the throne.

26. Ozaki Yukio (1858–1954) was a liberal politician who served in the Japanese Diet for sixty-three years. He was forced to resign from his position as education minister in 1898 after he gave a speech in which he was accused of advocating republicanism.

try to put the private thoughts of people under surveillance, to interfere with their religious beliefs, to forbid historians from conducting research, to prevent scholars from examining sacred texts, and they are determined to destroy any science that stands in their way. Such behavior is an insult to the morality of a civilized society, but the patriot considers it to be his pride and glory.

Patriotism in England

Such patriotism is not unique to Japan. In modern times, England claims to be the freest nation in the world and a beacon of peace and humanity. However, even in England, when patriotism has been aroused among the people, those who demanded freedom or proposed social reforms or defended universal suffrage were all attacked as rebels and traitors to their country.

The Sacred Union of the People

In the modern period, the best example of the ravages of patriotism is the attitude of the English during the war against the French. This war began in 1793, at the time of the French Revolution, and then, with a few minor interruptions, stretched on until the fall of Napoleon in 1815. The period in question is close to our own and the mentality of the people is not very different from that of people today. In addition, the patriotism of the English closely resembles that of people today, both in its wide popularity and in the particular forms in which it manifested itself.

“The War against France.” This was the only thing that mattered and the term became the catchphrase of the times. It was impossible to probe impartially into the causes of the war, to consider its consequences, to debate its costs and benefits, to discuss its rights and wrongs; anyone who attempted to do so was immediately branded a traitor. For a period of time, the will to reform, the motivation to oppose the government, and the critical spirit all went on vacation, or rather they were banished, while all debate among political parties within the country came to an abrupt halt. Even a man like Coleridge, who had criticized the war at the beginning, ended up praising God for using the war to forge a spirit of unity among the English people.²⁷ In spite of this atmosphere, Charles James Fox remained intransigent in his support of the principles of peace and freedom.²⁸ Realizing that he could not sway other members of parliament to his side, he refused to take his seat in the chamber. Even though there were other men who opposed the war, the members of the parties in parliament engaged in no political debate on the matter. At that time, England truly experienced a sacred unity of the people, such as

27. Samuel Coleridge (1772–1834) was an English poet and critic.

28. Charles James Fox (1749–1806), a prominent Whig statesman in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whose parliamentary career spanned thirty-six years. He supported the French Revolution and became an outspoken opponent of Prime Minister Pitt’s policies toward France.

Japanese politicians are so fond of acclaiming today, and the words of a Roman poet, "all were for the state," captured the popular mood.

But behind this mobilization of the English people, what ideal, what morality, what emotion, and what "nation" lay concealed? What mobilized the English, what made them fanatical was only a hatred of France, a hatred of the revolution, and a hatred of Napoleon. They began not merely to hate any form of the revolutionary spirit and any thought connected to French ideals, but vied with one another to insult and vilify them and poured all their energy into repressing any expression of such ideals.

The High Tide of Patriotism

Let me note that when patriotic mobilization against foreigners reach this level of intensity, the evils that it causes in the internal politics of a nation also reach their zenith. We need only look at what happens once war ends and the tide of patriotic fanaticism begins to ebb.

Postwar England

After the war ended, the hatred that many felt toward France lost some of its sting and the government cut its military expenses. During the conflict, demand for English products had fallen because business in the countries on the European continent had suffered from the turmoil. As a result, both English industry and agriculture fell into a sharp recession, leading to impoverishment and famine among the lower classes of English society. At this moment, did the wealthy and the capitalists prove they were true patriots? Did they show any mercy or compassion to their fellow citizens, or experience a sacred unity of the people? They were hardly more moved at seeing their fellow citizens die of starvation than they had been at seeing enemy soldiers fall on the battlefields. Indeed, the hatred they felt toward the poor people of their own country surpassed in intensity anything that they had felt toward the French revolution or Napoleon.

Peterloo

How can one keep silent in the face of the outrageous Peterloo incident? Only a short time after they defeated Napoleon's army at Waterloo, the English army massacred a large group of workers assembled in St. Peter's Field to demand a reform of parliamentary representation. The massacre was named Peterloo in ironic reference to the Battle of Waterloo. The patriotic troops, who had defeated the enemy army at Waterloo, now turned their arms against their own people and massacred them at Peterloo.²⁹ Is such patriotism truly a love of one's fellow citizens? What benefits do the sacred union and great patriotic concord of the nation confer upon

29. This massacre occurred at St. Peter's Field in Manchester in August 1819.

the citizens once the foreign enemy has been defeated? The blade of the bayonet that cuts off the enemy's head serves just as well to spill the blood of one's fellow countrymen.

What Hypocrisy!

Coleridge thanked God for unifying the nation to wage war, but in the final analysis, what happened to those who were joined together in warfare? The emotion of hatred can only give birth to more hatred, hatred of the foreign enemy is an animal instinct that changes into hatred of one's fellow countrymen, the heart that produced Waterloo quickly becomes the heart that leads to Peterloo. What hypocrisy this so-called patriot unity is!³⁰

PART 5

Turning to the Case of Germany

Let us put England aside and consider the case of Germany. The late Prince Bismarck was the personification of the patriotic spirit and the German Empire is the Mecca of patriotism. If one wishes to commune with the luminous spirits of the patriotic cult, one must undertake a pilgrimage to Germany.

Patriots of every country in the world, including members of the aristocracy and teachers in Japan's military academies, take German patriotism to be the standard and the model to be imitated, but is German patriotism any less superstitious and vacuous than that of ancient Greece and Rome or that of modern England?

Bismarck

The late Bismarck was truly a genius in the art of political oppression. Before his rise to power, the disunity of the states of northern Germany was the source of despair to every imperialist, who held that a people who spoke a common language ought to be united in a single nation. Because he succeeded in forging the different states of Germany into a unified nation, Bismarck enjoys an enormous prestige that continues to shine throughout the world even today. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the imperialists did not forge these different states into one nation simply to bring peace and well-being to their citizens. Rather they sought first and foremost to make Germany a militarily powerful country. Heroes who embraced the principles of liberty and equality looked with envy at the splendid spectacle offered by the French Revolution and hoped to unify the different states of Germany in order to end their petty squabbles, bring peace and well-being to

30. The discussion in this entire part is closely based on pages 18–21 in Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire*.

their people, and defend them against foreign invasion. Nevertheless, the real history of German unification was a total betrayal of their hopes and desires.

The Unification of Germany

If the unification of Germany truly served the interests of the different states of northern Germany, then why did they not also unite with Austria, where the majority of the people also spoke German? The real motives for unification were different. Bismarck sought to increase his personal power and glory and that of Prussia, not to establish a brotherhood of all the Germanic peoples or to create a peaceful confederation of states.³¹

Men of a belligerent turn of mind not infrequently resort to tactics of union and cooperation to satisfy their ambitions. Let us say that one is the friend of A but the enemy of B. Perhaps the reason why one courts A's friendship is from hatred of B. Similarly, if a nation cultivates friendly relations with another, it may do so not because it is genuinely interested in establishing a lasting peace, but because it desires to increase its own hegemonic power. Prince Bismarck was a brilliant strategist who thoroughly understood human psychology. He stirred up the animal instincts of his own countrymen and manipulated them with great skill and mastery. In other words, he roused the patriotism of the people, sent them to fight in wars against foreign enemies, and crushed any expression of opinion in his own country that opposed his policies. In order to create this patriotic cult that he desired, he provoked a series of senseless wars.

Provoking Senseless Wars

This unifier of Germany, the apostle of bestial violence, the ideologue of "iron and blood," deliberately launched a war against his nation's weakest enemy as a way to accomplish his plans. Victory in this war induced a state of euphoria among the people and whipped up their superstition, vanity, and animal spirits; people vied with one another to join his political party. This was the cause of the unity of the new German Empire and the starting point of the new patriotism of Germany.

In a subsequent stage, he started a second war with another neighboring country. This time he picked a fight with an opponent much stronger than the first one, but he was able to take advantage of his enemy's lack of preparedness at the time of the war.³² Once again, patriotism and the spirit of national unity flourished on this new battlefield. Bismarck used and directed this movement skillfully in order to expand the power of his own country, Prussia, and that of its king.

31. "Brotherhood" appeared in the original using the borrowed term *burazaafudo*.

32. The two earlier wars were the Danish-Prussian War (1864) and the Austro-Prussian War (1866).

Prussia

He did not unify the states of northern Germany simply to further the cause of justice and humanity. He did not permit his own state of Prussia to be swallowed up and to disappear in the new unified country. What he sought was simply a unification that would take place under the leadership of Prussia and a merger of German states that would make Prussia's king the kaiser of the glorious German Empire. While some contend that a popular movement of the German people caused the unification of Germany, I would argue that it came about because an ambitious man skillfully manipulated the patriotism of his people and channeled their superstition and vanity in order to establish his own name.

Feudal Ideals

The ideals that Bismarck stood for are not really different from the primitive ideals of feudal times. And he owed his success in carrying out his barbaric and corrupt plans simply to the fact that the majority of the people were not able to free themselves from the mentality of this bygone period, either ethically or psychologically. In other words, the morality of the majority of the population is still the morality of the feudal period and their mentality is still primitive. They hypocritically conceal their primitive mentality under a thin veneer of modern science in order to deceive themselves and others.³³

The Franco-Prussian War

Bismarck had already provoked two useless wars and won spectacular victories in both. To prepare for the third, his military sharpened its claws and bided its time, waiting for a favorable opportunity to present itself. When the opportunity came, he attacked a strong country that was not militarily prepared for battle. This was the Franco-Prussian War. This war was a dangerous gamble and the stakes were high, but for that very reason, Bismarck's victory was all the more spectacular.

The Franco-Prussian War was fought by a confederation of northern German states placed under the boot of Prussia and led by the king of Prussia, whom all states venerated as the emperor of Germany. It benefited the king of Prussia and served the interests of Bismarck, but it did not bring any happiness to the German people. Consequently, I assert that the unification of Germany was not founded on compassion for fellow human beings or on a demand for justice. If the German people succeeded in the great task of unifying the nation by piling up mountains of corpses and shedding rivers of blood, it was thanks to the mobilization of hatred toward enemy nations and the vain self-intoxication with its war victories. Are these sentiments what one would expect from a gentlemen and a great man?

33. The analysis of the unification of Germany follows Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire*, 22–28.

In addition, the majority of the Germans proudly proclaimed that Germany had won its victories through the grace of God and imagined that Germany was far superior to the other nations in the world. Many people in other countries in the world started to admire Germany's greatness and to take it as a model to follow. The most decorated members of the Japanese nobility vied with one another to imitate this model, each one striving to become the Bismarck of the Orient.³⁴ The great prestige that England enjoyed in the world because of its constitutional government was supplanted suddenly by the military power of the Prussian army.

The Brandy of Patriotism

The inebriation of a people with the glory and prestige of the nation is like that of an individual who has had too much alcohol to drink. Drunk, red-eyed, hot behind the ears, and over-excited, they do not pay the slightest attention to the horrible piles of corpses they trod over or notice the filth of the river of blood they wade through. Confident of themselves and arrogant, they are not even cognizant of the evil they have caused.

Disciples of Jujitsu and Sumo Wrestlers

In addition, nations that strive to achieve fame by their superior military power and battlefield victories are like people who seek to master and earn a rank in the martial arts. They are like the sumo wrestlers who strive to reach the top rank of *yokozuna*. The martial arts disciple and the sumo wrestler can only show off their technique by defeating their rivals; if they lacked opponents, what gain or fame would they obtain from fighting? The pride of German people is based only on winning victories over their enemies; if they lacked enemies, what gain or fame would they obtain from fighting wars?

When we see a martial arts disciple or a wrestler who has had a drop too much to drink and boasts of his technique and his strength, is it possible to have confidence in his talent, his understanding, or his virtue? When the people of one nation, inebriated with their military victories, brag of their great glories and successes, should people in other countries believe that their political, economic, and educational systems are an index of their civilization and well-being? I have the deepest respect for German philosophy and literature, but I cannot sing the praises of German patriotism.

The German Emperor

Today, both Bismarck and the German emperor he faithfully serves are already creatures of the past. Nevertheless, this emperor still has the ideology of "blood and steel" lodged in his head and continues to stupefy himself with the brandy of

34. A likely reference to the Japanese statesman Itô Hirobumi.

patriotism. Fond of war, oppression, and vainglory, he is far worse than Napoleon I and even inferior to Napoleon III. The vast majority of the great German people continue to shed their blood in the name of national unity and to submit themselves to the exactions of this young oppressor. Today, this patriotism remains a powerful force. But will this phenomenon last forever?

Consider that the evils caused by patriotism are also at their height. But just as the Birnam Wood moves toward Dunsinane Castle in which the tyrant Macbeth is hiding, a strong enemy that strikes terror into the heart of present-day world leaders is already on the move in our countries.³⁵ This dangerous enemy is not superstition but reason; it is not tradition but modernity; it is not fanaticism but organization. And its aim is to completely eliminate the religion of patriotism and the evils that it has wrought. This enemy is called modern socialism.

Modern Socialism

The fanatical, barbaric patriotism of the ancient world has gained a new lease on life and is sapping the moral foundations and undermining the noble ideals of modern civilization. We must wait until the middle of the twentieth century to see whether Bismarck's successes will endure. Thanks to the sudden rise of the socialist movement in Germany and its fierce resistance against patriotism, we realize clearly that a patriotism based only on an empty pride in military victory and a hatred of enemy nations can only be a hindrance to the mutual respect and spirit of brotherhood among the different peoples of the world.

A Philosophical Nation

Not the least of the great crimes committed by Bismarck is that of making this most philosophical of nations enact the most antiphilosophical policies in his name, as if there were not far worthier political ideals! If only Bismarck had never existed! Who knows what great progress Germany might have accomplished and what noble ideals it might have realized; and not only Germany would have benefited, but all the other nations of Europe, which worship everything German in literature, the arts, philosophy, and ethics. How is it possible that at the dawn of the twentieth century we still live in a world in which the different nations devour one another mercilessly like wolves and wild dogs?

PART 6

The Emperor of Japan

The emperor of Japan is different from the callow German emperor. He prefers peace to war and values freedom over oppression. He takes no pleasure in the

35. A reference to the downfall of the tyrant Macbeth in act 5 of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

barbarian vanity of his own nation, but desires to spread the benefits of civilization to all nations. He is different from the so-called patriots or imperialists. However, in present-day Japan, any man who is not a patriot is as rare and solitary as the last star shining in the sky at dawn.

Since I cannot bring myself to extol the love of country that arises when men are led to hate and attack their enemies, as is the case with the patriotism of all times and places, I also reject the patriotism of the Japanese people.

The Late Count Gotō

The late Count Gotō once rallied the Japanese people and called upon them to confront the imminent perils that threatened their survival and awaken their patriotism. In response to his call, patriotic men throughout the nation, as numerous as a field of grass bending to the wind, raced to gather by his side. However, the count suddenly decided to join the government and his call for a grand coalition of the people vanished like the dream of a spring night.³⁶ Was the patriotism of the Japanese at that time actually nothing more than a love for the person of the count?

No, it was not a love for the count, but rather a hatred for the government by the Satsuma and Chōshū clans. Their love of country was really just a form of hatred. On board a ship in a storm, even sworn enemies act like brothers, but who would think to praise them as models of brotherhood?

The Sino-Japanese War

The patriotism of the Japanese rose to fever pitch during the Sino-Japanese War, and this patriotism had no precedent in the past. No words can do justice to the contempt, envy, and hatred that the patriots felt toward the Chinese people. They were prepared to massacre 400 million Chinese down to the final white-haired, elderly man and the tender babe less than three feet in height. What is one to think of their hearts filled with vanity? Is this emotion not a form of fanaticism and cruelty? In what way does it differ from bestiality?

The Superiority of Bestial Force

In the final analysis, were they truly motivated by a desire to bring happiness and advantages to the Japanese nation and people? Were their hearts filled with compassion and pity for the Japanese people? No, they only took pleasure in killing as many of their enemies as possible and in seizing as many treasures and lands as

36. Gotō Shōjirō (1838–97) was a member of the early Meiji regime who cofounded the Liberal Party along with Itagaki Taisuke in 1881. In 1886, 204 members of the party met in Tokyo to create a grand coalition (*daidō danketsu*) to press for political change, but the coalition was dissolved in 1889 when Gotō reentered the government.

they could get their hands on. They sought to show off the superiority of their bestial natures before the eyes of the entire world.

When our emperor led his troops into battle in ancient times, he truly aimed to subdue barbarian peoples and to serve the cause of world peace, humanity, and justice. The true nature of the patriotism that was mobilized to achieve these ends in our times, however, was hatred, contempt, and vanity. It is likely that the leaders of Japan did not give a thought to the material and spiritual effects that the Sino-Japanese War would have on the general population.

Canned Food Tainted with Sand

On the one hand, millionaires make huge donations of money to support soldiers on the war front, but, on the other, they sell them canned goods tainted with sand. While military leaders exhort the soldiers to sacrifice their lives on the battlefield, they regularly receive bribes from merchants. This is what they dare to dub “patriotism.” How can one be surprised that such bestial and murderous instinct, given free reign, inevitably brings a flood of crimes and misdemeanors in its wake? Is this the will of the emperor?

The Japanese Soldier

It is praiseworthy that the Japanese soldier is imbued with feelings of loyalty and respect toward the emperor. However, the real issue is whether his loyalty and respect for the emperor contribute in any way to the progress of civilization and the welfare of humanity.

During the rebellion of the Boxers, our soldiers suffered great hardships on the dangerous route from Dagu to Tianjin.³⁷ Some men, shedding tears, said that they would prefer to die than endure such suffering if it were not for the sake of the Emperor. No one who heard these words could restrain his tears. I also wept for them.

“For the Sake of the Emperor”

How can one utter a word of reproach to these pitiful soldiers who are fighting in the name of the emperor for justice, humanity, and their fellow citizens? Indeed, from their most tender years, whether at home, at school, or in the barracks, they have been indoctrinated with the teaching that they must lay down their lives in service to the emperor and they know no other perspective. The Helots of Sparta were ignorant of freedom, human rights, or happiness. Whether they were whipped by the master, sent to die in wars, or simply massacred if they survived

37. The Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901) is generally referred to as the North China Incident (*Hokushin jihen*) in Japanese language sources. Dagu (a military fort) and Tianjin (a treaty port) were focal points of growing competition among European powers for the control of China.

the wars, they proudly thought that they were serving their country. When I read accounts of their history, I cannot restrain my tears, just as I shed tears when I think of the fate of our soldiers today.

However, we are no longer living in ancient Sparta. How could our emperor, who values freedom, peace, and humanity, want his subjects to receive the same treatment meted out to the Helots of ancient times? I am convinced that if our soldiers proclaimed that they were fighting for humanity and justice, rather than merely in service to the emperor, the emperor himself would endorse their statement. In this fashion, they would manifest their true loyalty toward the emperor.

Prostitution as an Expression of Filial Piety

Some people go so far as to commit theft or prostitute themselves to provide for their poor parents or to help their brothers and sisters. They run great dangers and destroy their reputation but they succeed in supporting their family and protecting the lives of its members. Since ancient times, such conduct has been upheld as a model of morality. The standard bearers of morality and civilization do not condemn this conduct: instead they praise the state of mind that motivates it and express compassion for the foolishness of those who practice it. People who claim that they act from a spirit of loyalty and for the sake of the emperor but know nothing of justice and humanity display the patriotism of a barbaric country and a superstitious loyalty. It is not unlike the filial piety that leads others to theft and prostitution.

I am greatly saddened that the feeling of loyalty and love of country of our soldiers is far from being a civilized and noble ideal and is no better than the mentality of people in the ancient world.

The Army and the War Correspondents

If one wants proof that the feelings of loyalty and patriotism that the military takes pride in are far removed from the basic humanity that one owes to fellow human beings, one only needs to consider the fashion that they treat war correspondents. During the Boxer Rebellion, the military authorities dealt with journalists attached to the army with great cruelty. The soldiers did not give a thought to the fact that journalists lacked food, lodging, or medical care when they fell ill. Not only did they insist that the journalists were no concern of theirs, but they insulted them and reprimanded them, treating them as if they were servants or enemies.

Soldiers claim that they are fighting for the nation. But are not the journalists also members of the same nation? Are they not fellow citizens? Why do soldiers lack any sense of duty to offer them care and protection? They seem to think that the nation consists only of the emperor, the soldiers themselves, and of nobody else.

As forty million of their fellow citizens followed the progress of the army and waited impatiently for every piece of news and every report of victory from the

front, the journalists who covered the war at great risk to their own lives sought to satisfy the thirst for information of forty million people rather than simply to increase the circulation of their newspapers. The military authorities that consider this type of work useless do not feel a speck of sympathy for their forty million fellow citizens.

Indifference toward the People

The warriors of the feudal period thought the nation was their own private property. They used their power to shape the nation in their interests while they considered that other classes of society—farmers, artisans, and merchants—had neither rights nor duties. Today, the military thinks of the nation as belonging to the emperor and to the military itself. Although they claim to love their country, they have no concern for any compatriots who do not belong to the military. Consequently, one can say that their patriotism is a blend of hatred for the enemy and an absence of love toward their fellow citizens.

The Consequences of Patriotic Hysteria

They increase the military budget by sacrificing the blood and tears of the masses, dilapidate the productive capacity of the nation in wasteful expenses, and exacerbate the rise in prices by their excessive imports. And they do all of this for the sake of the nation. And these are the result of their glorious patriotism!

They kill many of their enemies, seize their enemies' property and land for their own use, but they also double and triple the expenses of the government. And they do this for the sake of the nation. And these are the fruits of their glorious patriotism!

PART 7

What Is the True Nature of Patriotism?

From my foregoing explanation, I believe that the reader will have gained a general idea of so-called patriotism and love of country. In brief, it is an animal instinct, a kind of superstition, a sort of fanaticism, a type of vanity, and a belligerent posture.

The True Reasons for Human Progress

One must not view patriotism as an ineradicable instinct and part of human nature. Consider that the true reason for human progress is that man can protect himself against the various poisons produced by nature.

Water goes bad when it stops moving and stays in one place: that is nature. Should we reproach those who launch public works to make water flow and prevent such stagnation because they are going against the course of nature? People naturally age and fall sick: that is nature. Should we prohibit the dispensing of

medicines that cure illness because they violate the natural way of life? The beasts, birds, and plants all entrust their lives to nature and they die in accordance with natural law. Whether they progress or regress, they do not do so through their own efforts, but they simply abandon themselves to the flow of nature. If man had simply followed the course of nature throughout history, he would not be any different from the beasts, the birds, and the plants.

Human beings have made progress because they have striven to remedy the evils of nature. The people who have achieved the greatest progress in morality are those who are best able to control their natural desires. The people who have made the greatest material progress are those who can transform the products of nature. One who wishes to enjoy the benefits of civilization must not blindly follow the course of nature.

The Royal Road of Progress

Know that we must give up superstition and acquire knowledge, renounce fanaticism and perfect our ability to reason, free ourselves from vanity and search for truth, abandon all thoughts of war and attain universal love. This is the royal road to progress for the human race.

Know as well that nations that fail to free themselves from this bestial instinct and submit to manipulation by patriotism have a vile and constricted nature and do not deserve to be called a highly civilized people.

Know at last that those who strive to sacrifice politics, education, and industrialization on the altar of patriotism are traitors to civilization and enemies of progress and one should consider them as criminal offenders against the human race. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, they have not only attempted in the name of a blind patriotism to enslave anew the majority of humanity, who had only recently thrown off their shackles, but they have also reduced humanity to the condition of bestiality.

Civilization of Justice and Humanity

Consequently, I assert that the justice and humanity of world civilization must not permit patriotism to spread and should do all that is necessary to extirpate this evil. Moreover, this contemptible patriotism has given rise to militarism and to imperialism, and is spreading throughout the world. I will next consider how militarism is destroying world civilization and constitutes an obstacle to the happiness of humanity.

Chapter 3

On Militarism

PART 1

The Trend of Militarism

In the entire history of mankind, the trend toward militarism has never been as strong as it is at present. Militarism is truly at its zenith. It is impossible to calculate the expenses, whether in treasure or in lives, that the great powers devote to the expansion of their military power. Why are these military efforts not confined to what is required to defend the nation against the usual foreign threats or to prevent internal conflicts, and why do they vastly exceed what is strictly necessary? The defense budget imposes an enormous burden, at once material and moral, on the entire nation in order to allow the expansion of the army. The causes and objectives of this expansion must be sought for outside the usual reasons of defense or self-protection that are generally invoked.

The Reason for the Expansion of Armaments

The real motives for military expansion are to be found elsewhere. They are none other than fanaticism, vanity, and a belligerent love of country. However, the expansion of armaments is also promoted by military officers who amuse themselves dreaming up new stratagems and new military gadgets and by the greed of capitalists who seek to gain a monopoly on the enormous profits that accrue to suppliers of weapons and provisions ordered by the armed forces. In the case of England and Germany, these latter factors play an especially important part in bloated military budgets. However, what enables military men and capitalists to gratify their greed is the possibility of stirring up a jingoistic and arrogant patriotism among the vast majority of the population.

The people in country A say, “We desire peace, but the people in country B want war.” The people in country B say, “We desire peace, but the people in country A want war.” What are we to make of such reasoning? Nevertheless, the people of every country in the world delude themselves with this nonsense.

Childish Games

In this way, the citizens of every country in the world compete to build the most elaborate weapons and the biggest warships just as little girls and boys vie to assemble the most beautiful dolls and toys for the festivals of March 3 and May 5.³⁸ They compete with each other not because they believe they face an imminent danger of being invaded by their enemies or because they must prepare for a sudden dispatch of troops overseas. Superficially, this competition resembles a game of children, but what can we say of the terrible tragedies that lurk beneath the surface?

General Moltke

The late General Moltke said, “World peace is only a dream, an illusion, and it is not even an especially beautiful dream.”³⁹ The general may think that the dream of peace is ugly, but he is nevertheless just as much a dreamer as those he criticizes. Even though he defeated France and was rewarded with an indemnity of five billion francs and the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, the business enterprises of France have since enjoyed great prosperity while victorious Germany has been plunged into economic depression. This economic situation is the clear realization of the general’s beautiful dream. The results of such dreaming have been quite sobering.

The Sociology of Barbarians

In retaliation, General Moltke plans to use his great army to administer a crushing defeat on France and plunge her into a decadence from which she will not soon recover. This is a political ploy in which the general hopes to bring economic prosperity to his fellow citizens by winning another military victory. If we adopt this way of thinking as a twentieth-century ideal, how can we escape from an archaic ethics or free ourselves from the sociology of barbarians?

38. March 3 (3/3) and May 5 (5/5) are two traditional public holidays devoted to children. The former, which used to be known as Girl’s Day, is today known as the Doll Festival (Hinamatsuri) during which many families display *hina-ningyō* on a five or seven-tiered stand covered with a red carpet. The latter, formerly known as Boy’s Day, was renamed Children’s Day after the war. On this day, families with boys fly huge carp-shaped streamers (*koinobori*) outside the house and display dolls of famous warriors and other heroes inside.

39. Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke (1800–91) was commanding general of the Prussian and later of the German armies and led Germany to victory in its foreign wars. A disciple of the great military thinker Clausewitz, he wrote many works on strategy and military history.

The Proliferation of Little Moltkes

However, General Moltke has become a model and an ideal figure in an age of rising militarism. All over the world, little Moltkes have hatched, just like spring shoots proliferate after a rain shower. Little Moltkes are already on the march in this small nation of East Asia.

People mock the emperor Nicholas II, who has called for restrictions on military spending, by labeling him a dreamer, and they ridicule Peace Conferences. While they usually claim to desire peace, they also promote military preparedness and proclaim the necessity of war. I will not harp on the contradictions in their arguments, but what reasons do they give for claiming that armaments and war are necessary?

PART 2

Admiral Mahan

Currently, there is no greater authority on military matters than Admiral Mahan.⁴⁰ He is the recognized expert among the militarists and imperialists of England and the United States, his writings are widely circulated, and he has avid readers in Japan as well, as can be seen by the spate of advertisements for translations of his books. Consequently, all supporters of imperialism cite his views and believe they must read him.

The Virtues of Military Conscription

No one has made a stronger and more eloquent case for the virtues of military preparedness and conscription than Admiral Mahan. He says:

Everyday, our ears are assailed by speakers pointing out the shortcomings and damage caused by the build-up of military forces: it wrecks the economy by cutting the production of goods and imposes a harsh burden on the lives and the time of human beings. I have nothing new to add on this score.

However, if we look at this issue from a different point of view, can we not reply that these disadvantages are more than compensated for by the benefits it confers? At a time when authority is weakening and morals are in decline, can we say that the youth of our country are wasting their time to learn order, obedience, and respect in the school of the army, where they develop their physiques systematically and

40. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914), author of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*, was a naval officer, military strategist, and educator. His views on the importance of sea power influenced naval policy throughout the world, prior to the First World War. Kōtoku likely encountered the passage cited in the next section in Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire* (83), which cites Mahan's *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Past and Present* (232–34).

are inculcated in the basic virtues of the soldier, such as courage, self-control, and firmness of will? Many young men leave their villages and towns and form a single mass, where they associate with elders who have received a higher education. By joining their spirits together and acting as one, they learn to respect the nation's constitution and imbibe political principles that remain with them after they return to their hometowns. At a time when religious belief is in rapid decline, is this not a valuable thing? If you compare fresh soldiers who have not experienced conscription with a company of veterans who have completed their training, you cannot fail to be impressed by their difference in demeanor and attitude. The superiority of the latter to the former is so great that no one can help but notice it. Military training is not harmful to young men in later years when they lead active lives and become the breadwinners of the family and it is certainly no more wasteful of time and money than a university education. Since nations of the world respect each other for their military power, they are able to preserve peace and to cut down on the number of wars. When, occasionally, a war suddenly breaks out, it is generally of short duration and easily brought to an end. Can we say that this is without benefit? In the past century, war was more like a chronic illness, but today it is fairly rare, and, when it does occur, it assumes the form of a sudden and acute attack. In the case of a sudden and acute outbreak of war, soldiers who are well prepared, and confident that they are fighting for a just cause, will be far more effective in battle and have higher morale than an army of mercenary soldiers who lack a noble reason to fight. In short, the soldiers in a modern army are the soldiers of the people rather than the slaves of a despot or king.

Admiral Mahan is a clever writer who sets forth arguments in support of his position in a plausible way, but I have noticed that the reality is quite different from what he claims in his theories.

War and Sickness

If we look closely at the theses of Admiral Mahan, we observe that he asserts that young men learn respect for order and the virtue of obedience by military training. He stresses the necessity of such training at a time when political authority is weakening and moral constraints are being relaxed. Furthermore, he argues that war is a kind of illness, that it was chronic a century ago, but has become rare in recent years now that all young men serve in the armed forces. Consequently, when a war breaks out today, it is like an acute ailment. In a period of general health one needs to pay attention to and be prepared for the sudden outbreak of illness. The admiral argues that the time when war was a chronic illness from which people suffered was also a time when order was upheld and moral constraints were binding on people, whereas he states that the period that we live in is a healthy one in which "political authority is weakening and moral constraints are being relaxed." Is this not a strange way of reasoning?

*The Weakening of Political Authority and
the Relaxation of Moral Constraints*

When the admiral speaks of the weakening of authority and the loosening of morality, he specifically pins the blame for this state of affairs on the birth of the socialist movement. Such ignorant rambling hardly merits refutation. However, even if I were to concede, purely for the sake of argument, that the restraints of morality have been weakened over the past century and that present-day socialists work to undermine so-called order and political authority in their societies, and that the results of their activity are sapping the foundations of morality and destroying religious faith, is he correct to argue that universal conscription and military training constitute the most effective way to cure these problems? Let us look at the facts.

Propagators of Revolutionary Thought

Is it not true that the soldiers of the French army who fought on the side of the Americans in the War of Independence found a powerful motive to take part in the destruction of order during the French Revolution? Did not the soldiers of the German army that invaded the city of Paris become powerful agents for the spread of revolutionary thought throughout the different city-states of Germany? Is it not a remarkable phenomenon that the barracks of the European countries that have adopted the system of universal conscription are a perfect breeding ground for socialist ideas and an ideal school for the cultivation of rebellion against present-day society? Since I favor the propagation and spread of socialist thought and support institutional settings that serve this purpose, I do not back the abolition of the barracks. However, I must note that it is mistaken to think, as Mahan professes, that the barracks are only a setting where soldiers are trained in obedience to their superiors and in the beautiful virtue of respect.

The army of Caesar apparently had a measure of respect for the order of the state. The army of Cromwell, who at the start brandished his sword in the name of Parliament, later overthrew this same assembly. The soldiers certainly recognized the authority of Caesar and Cromwell, but they did not necessarily recognize the founding principles of state order.

The Outbreak of Illness

Do soldiers simply receive military training for the noble purpose of fighting on behalf of the good? Are they simply applying their training to the treatment of acute illness? If this were indeed true, will they be content to continue their training patiently from start to finish, and wait even if it takes a hundred years for a chance to bring their remedy to bear on the acute illness? On the contrary, I believe that they will be inclined to provoke the outbreak of illness in order to exercise their own role as doctors.

Universal Conscription and the Frequency of War

Certainly, it is better for citizens to become soldiers rather than servants of the kings and nobility. However, it is wrong to suggest that the number of wars will decrease if the different countries of the world respect one another's military power. In the case of ancient Greece and Rome, all the citizens were soldiers and not merely the servants of the aristocrats, but that did not prevent the outbreak of war from becoming a chronic condition. Since an army of mercenary soldiers proved adept at conquering weaker countries, mercenaries have sometimes been preferred over an army of purely conscripted soldiers. However, it is false to claim that a system of universal conscription will effectively eliminate war or reduce the frequency of its occurrence. The army of Napoleon was an army of conscription, and in modern European history the wars between Austria and France, the Crimean War, the war between Austria and Germany, the Franco-Prussian War, [and] the Russo-Turkish War were all tragic conflicts fought by conscripted armies.

The Reason Why There Are Fewer Wars

The wars of modern times tend to end quickly not because all the citizens in the nation receive military training, but rather because the damages caused by war are too great and people are quicker to come to their senses and reflect on the principles of human morality.

If the major powers, evenly matched in military power, have fought almost no major wars since 1880, the reason is not that the people of these countries respect the military power of their neighbors, but rather because people reflect on the frightful consequence of war and have become aware that war is a murderous form of madness.

France and Germany realize that they would both be ruined if a war were to break out between them. Russia knows that it would fall into decay and ruin if it fought a war with another great power.

This is the real reason why the great powers do not fight wars with one another. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the spirit of respect inculcated to soldiers by military training under a system of universal conscription. It suffices to look at the ostentatious military power that great powers flaunt in Africa and Asia. In short, military training does much to rouse a soldier's love of vainglory, belligerent spirit, and animal instincts.

PART 3

War and the Fine Arts

The militarists claim that just as steel must be tempered by fire and water to make a sharp blade, a people will not become great until it has been forged in the crucible of war. They also assert that the arts, the sciences, and the manufacturing

industry rarely attain a high level of development unless they have been stimulated by war. They argue that the periods in which the arts flourished since ancient times belong, by and large, to the aftermath of military strife. Such was the case with the age of Pericles, the epoch of Dante, or the Elizabethan period in England. During the time of the Peace Conference, an influential militarist from England defended this theory.

It is true that the people of the times of Pericles, Dante, and Elizabeth all knew the experience of war. In fact, the history of the world is filled with wars and the periods of great cultural flourishing are far from being the only ones to have known war. However, most periods that experienced war did not later go on to develop brilliant literature: how, then, can one conclude that literary achievement is a legacy of war?

It is a gross distortion to claim that literature began to flourish in the aftermath of war and flawed logic to argue, based on a handful of cases, that there is a causal relationship between war and literature.

Among the city-states of ancient Greece, Sparta was the one fondest of war and had the greatest experience of fighting. Yet who can recall the name of a single outstanding individual in the fields of science, literature, or philosophy from ancient Sparta? During the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, England was embroiled in a violent civil war, but there was no particular development in the fine arts worth mentioning. Since the literary revival during the Elizabethan period was already well underway before the defeat of the Spanish armada, one can hardly argue that Spencer, Shakespeare, and Bacon appeared thanks to war.

The Fine Arts and Sciences in Europe

The 'Thirty Years' War caused cultural decline and destruction in Germany. Whereas the arts and sciences in France flourished after Louis XIV acceded to the throne, they later fell into decline as a result of his military adventures and revived only toward the end of his reign. Is it not the case that French letters have tended to flourish more after the nation's military defeats than after its war victories? The assertion that the literature of Tennyson and Thackeray and the scientific theories of Darwin were the result of England's victory in the Crimean War would rightly be met with mockery. In modern Russia, who would not laugh at the claim that the literature of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev was the product of Russia's defeat in the Crimean War? The great writers of Germany produced their works before the Franco-Prussian War, not in its aftermath; the great period of American literature occurred prior to the Civil War, not afterwards.⁴¹

41. Kōtoku's analysis of militarism and the fine arts borrows liberally from Robertson's similar discussion in *Patriotism and Empire*, 71–76.

The Fine Arts in Japan

As for the literature of Japan, it flourished during the peaceful Nara and Heian periods and declined after the Hōgen and Heiji disturbances.⁴² While literature experienced a short revival during the serene reign of the Hōjō regents, it fell off once again when they lost power in 1333, and for all intents and purposes it virtually disappeared from the period of the Northern and Southern Courts, through the Ōnin disorder, until the early sixteenth century.⁴³ During this period, only the Zen monks of the Five Mountains kept a faint glimmer of light alive, as anyone who has read the history of our country can attest.

If the arts flourish after a war ends, the reason may be that artists are able to lift up their heads once peace is restored whereas they are oppressed and inhibited during the actual prosecution of war: it is certainly not that they are stimulated by war itself. What did the achievements of Murasaki Shikibu, Akazome Emon, or Sei Shōnagon have to do with war? What inspiration did Sanyō, Bakin, Fūrai, and Sōrin derive from military victories? What relation can one draw between warfare and the works of Ōgai, Shōyō, Rohan, and Kōyō?⁴⁴

I believe that war is only an obstacle to the progress of the arts and of society and has never made a positive contribution to them or furthered their development. Can we dignify with the name of art and culture “Strike and Punish the Qing,” a famous war song that appeared during the Sino-Japanese War?⁴⁵

42. The Hōgen (1156) and Heiji (1160) disturbances were military skirmishes that signaled the collapse of the Heian period and the beginning of a new feudal era.

43. The Hōjō family controlled the post and hereditary title of *shikken* or regent, who in fact wielded governmental power during most of the Kamakura period (1185–1333).

44. Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon are the authors of *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*, the two most famous masterpieces of the Heian period (794–1185), while Akazome Emon was a prominent poetess. Rai Sanyō (1786–1832) is best known for his *Unofficial History of Japan* (*Nihon gaishi*). Takizawa Bakin (1767–1848), a great Japanese writer of the later Edo period, is best known for the multivolume novel *Nansō satomi no hakkenden*. Fūrai Sanjin (1729–80) is the pen name of Hiraga Gennai, a scholar and *gesaku* writer. Sōrin is the pen name of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724), the author of many plays for the puppet and kabuki theaters. Besides pursuing a career as the surgeon-general of the Japanese army, Mori Ōgai (1862–1922) was a prominent writer and literary critic of Meiji period. Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859–1935) was a professor of literature at Waseda University, critic, dramatist, and the first to translate the plays of Shakespeare into Japanese. Koda Rohan (1867–1947) and Ozaki Kōyō (1868–1903) were both important novelists of the Meiji period.

45. The song in question is “Ute ya korase ya” and goes as follows: “Strike and punish the Qing. It is the enemy of our sacred country, the foe of peace in the Far East. Strike it to make it a proper country. An obstacle to our country’s rights, strike this arrogant and rude enemy. Ignorant of peace in the Far East, strike this ignorant and stubborn foe . . .” The song and lyrics are reprinted, along with those of three Sino-Japanese War songs, in Eastlake and Yamada 1897, 535.

The Improvement of Weapons

Whereas some writers have attributed the progress in the power and accuracy of munitions and armaments to the requirements of warfare, I would counter that such improvements owe much more to general scientific and technical advancements that are the product of peaceful times. But even if it were true that these improvements were the consequences of war, how would such inventions contribute in any way to elevating the level of knowledge and the morality of the people?

Political Abilities of Military Heroes

Indeed, militarism is certainly not an appropriate means to improve society or to raise the level of civilization. Military maneuvers and the military way of life do not increase a man's intelligence or foster virtues that can later be applied to the social and political spheres. In order to offer evidence to prove this point, I will show that the greatest military heroes throughout history, notwithstanding their outstanding feats on the battlefield, have proved to be deficient as political leaders and have few cultural accomplishments to their credit.

Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar

In ancient times, the three leaders Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar are the most prestigious of all military heroes and every schoolboy learns their names. However, while these men were true geniuses when it came to destruction on the battlefields, they failed to leave behind a stable foundation on which to build a new society. Looked at from a geopolitical point of view, the empire established by Alexander was a phenomenon that never should have come into being in the first place. It was the product of a paroxysm of short-lived conquests and, as such, it vanished just as quickly as it was created, in accordance with the course of nature. Through a combination of military strategy and wise planning, Hannibal subdued Italy in fifteen years, but he failed to establish his authority over the people of Rome and, in the end, was unable to save Carthage from the madness of corruption. As a military commander in the field, Caesar could be compared to a hungry tiger, but as a politician mounting the podium, he was closer to an unseeing viper; he only succeeded in pushing the Roman government into decadence and in making it an object of contempt for the Roman people.⁴⁶

Yoshitsune, Masashige, Yukimura

Minamoto Yoshitsune was gifted in the ways of war, as were Kusunoki Masashige and Sanada Yukimura, but who would dare to argue that they excelled as political

46. This passage is a paraphrase of Robertson 1899, 96–97.

leaders? If they had become leaders of the nation through their military exploits, would the Hōjō regents have held on to power for nine generations? Would the Ashikaga have survived for thirteen generations and the Tokugawa for fifteen?⁴⁷

Xiang Yu and Zhuge Liang

Xiang Yu won victory in seventy-four battles, both great and small, but how can he be compared with Liu Bang who founded the Han dynasty and codified the law in three chapters?⁴⁸ The eight divination techniques of Zhuge Liang are not worth the first writings of the Emperor Wu on the way of virtue.⁴⁹ The way that binds together the hearts of men living in society and realizes peace on earth is not to be found in the power to seize enemy banners or to defeat generals in battle. It must be looked for elsewhere.

Frederick the Great and Napoleon

In the modern period, Frederick the Great and Napoleon were the two military men who acquired the greatest political power. However, Frederick from the start heartily detested the soldier's life. He also had the greatest difficulty learning how to fight wars and can hardly be thought of as a suitable embodiment of the militarist ideal. Moreover, after his death, he was unable to leave behind a solid foundation for the state. As for the empire of Napoleon, while it glittered for a moment like fireworks seen from the top of Ryōgoku Bridge, it soon faded away and disappeared.

Washington

Washington was a wise man. He began his career as a military general but he ended it as a statesman. However, we should not regard him as a pure specimen of the warrior type. He only waged war when he was compelled to do so by the force of circumstances and he had no other alternative, not because he took pleasure in fighting battles.

47. In suggesting that these legendary heroes lacked political sense, Kōtoku seeks to dissipate the aura that surrounded them. Kusunoki Masashige, a loyalist and fighter for the restoration of the emperor during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts, was the object of a cult on the part of nationalists during the Meiji period.

48. The founder of the Han dynasty established a legal code in three chapters, covering the crimes of murder, injury, and theft. This legal code was simple and easy to understand and was contrasted with the complicated code established by the earlier Qin dynasty.

49. Zhuge Liang (181–234) was one of the greatest Chinese military strategists; his achievements have been immortalized in the novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Emperor Wu (also known as Cao Cao) laid the foundations for the kingdom of Wei and was famed both for his military achievements and his patronage of the arts (155–220).

U.S. Politicians

It is a noteworthy fact that, in the history of the United States, many individuals with a military background are ranked among the finest politicians of the past. Andrew Jackson was not the first soldier to become president of the United States nor was his term as president the first in which there was struggle for the spoils of political office. General Grant is certainly one of the most highly respected of military leaders in modern times. However, since the members of his party fell to quarrelling among themselves, he did not make any great accomplishments when he became president. He possessed great powers of endurance, plain honesty, and a flair for war, but he was unable to apply these estimable qualities to the tasks of running a civilian government.

Lincoln knew a great deal about military affairs and his understanding of strategy and tactics compared favorably with that of the military officers who served him, but this simply goes to prove that a truly outstanding politician is just as capable of managing military matters as he is of deciding political issues. As Confucius put it, an educated man will necessarily be prepared to lead a military force. In fact, Washington and Lincoln both provide examples of this general rule. However, an excellent general will not necessarily prove to be a competent politician, as is shown by the case of General Grant.

Nelson and Wellington

In the history of modern England, Nelson and Wellington are models of the professional soldier on sea and on land, and are the objects of a worshipful cult on the part of militarists throughout the world due to their glorious achievements. While Wellington possessed political talents that slightly exceeded those of the average politician, he did not have the makings of a great leader who could inspire the masses and resolve the great problems of his epoch. He opposed the creation of a cheap class of service on the national railways because, as he argued, it would only allow the “people from the lower classes to make unnecessary trips throughout the country.” With respect to Nelson, there is practically nothing to say about him since, apart from his skills as a naval officer, he had nothing in particular to recommend himself as a human being.⁵⁰

Yamagata, Kabayama, Takashima

Looking at our own country, why should we praise the talents of military men? Admirers of Duke Yamagata, Baron Kabayama, and Count Takashima worship them as the Moltke, the Nelson, and the Wellington of East Asia, but what have they accomplished that deserves honorable mention in the political and social

50. Paraphrase of Robertson 1899, 97–100.

annals of the Meiji period? Are they not guilty of interfering in elections, buying off deputies, and plunging our society into an abyss of corruption and decadence?⁵¹

You must not think that I am trying to place unfair blame on soldiers and the army. Just as intelligent and wise men exist in other classes of society, they are to be found among military men as well. I am more than ready to pay my respects to such men.

Military Intelligence

However, these men do not acquire their wisdom and intelligence through military training or the experience of war. Even without weapons, epaulettes, or medals on their chest, a wise man is a wise man. Yet no matter how intelligent or wise an individual officer may be, the military profession and military form of training do not bring any particular benefit to society as a whole.

We should not call for training in the spirit of unity. What is there to admire about a unity that murders people? Nor should we call for mere obedience to rules—what is there to respect about rules that dilapidate our wealth? We should not call for the testing of bravery. What is there to hope for from a bravery that only destroys civilization? Once the soldier steps outside of the barracks, all of these things—unity, obedience to rules, and bravery—vanish into thin air and leave no trace behind. In their place we find only the evil customs of blind obedience to the powerful and the humiliation of the weak.

PART 4

The Poisons of Militarism

Militarism and warmongering are not the only obstacles that block social progress and civilization, but they are terrible poisons that bring about great destruction and misery.

Ancient Civilization

Militarists claim there is no distinction between the role of citizen and soldier in the earliest civilized societies. To support this argument, they adduce examples from ancient Egypt and Greece and contend that military preparedness leads to advances in civilization. However, they are mistaken. I believe that Egypt's pros-

51. Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922) was an important Meiji statesman and founder of the Japanese Imperial Army. Kabayama Sukenori (1837–1922), a general in the Japanese Army and admiral of the Japanese Navy, led the Japanese invasion force of Taiwan and served as Japan's first governor-general of Taiwan. Takashima Tomonosuke (1844–1916), a lieutenant general of the Japanese army, later served as minister of war and colonial affairs in the late 1890s. After the Japanese Diet was established in the 1890s, bureaucrats and military officers attempted to bribe diet members to pass legislation and interfered in elections.

perity might have lasted for centuries and its empire continued to exist for millennia if it had refrained from military conquests and had avoided the decadence of the military way of life. As for ancient Greece, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on its history.

Alexander the Great

Not all of the city-states in ancient Greece had the same views on military matters. Sparta was a thoroughly militarized society, military training shaped its everyday life, and its economy was organized around the prosecution of war. As for the contributions that Sparta made to civilization, I have already noted that there is nothing worth mentioning on that score. The city-state of Athens is a completely different case. Pericles promised that he would show his mettle in the case of a real emergency although he did not have to endure the hardships of military training. He did not suffer by comparison with men who devote their entire lives to military training to prepare for war, a fact that proves that such training offers no great benefit. Do the militarists of our time choose Sparta as their model or do they prefer Athens?

No matter how ignorant or obstinate, they would hardly dare to praise the barbaric militarism of Sparta and reject the economic prosperity and civilization of Athens. However, if one looks closely at their pet theories, it is clear that Sparta, rather than Athens, more closely corresponds to their highest ideal.

The militarists will doubtless reply, "We do not wish to fall into the excesses of Sparta, but we want to imitate the militarism of Athens and learn from its noble qualities." In comparison with Sparta, the superiority of Athens is undeniable. But even in the case of Athens, in what way did its military preparations contribute to the improvement of its political life? In what way did they help to better the social life and improve the moral character of the people? Aside from urging the citizens to fight in wars, what advantages could military readiness possibly bring?

The Peloponnesian War

Athens fought in the Peloponnesian War for three decades. If militarism truly had positive effects on the nation, one would expect that these effects must have been at their peak during the Peloponnesian War. However, contrary to expectations, the consequences of this war were wholly negative ones, consisting mainly of corruption and decadence. If one wishes to understand how the Peloponnesian War swept away the morality of the Greek people, destroyed their religious beliefs, ruined their rationality, and in general created a catastrophic situation, one must read the account given by Thucydides in his great history of the Peloponnesian War.⁵² He writes as follows:

52. Thucydides wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a work that recounts the fifth-century B.C.E. war between Sparta and Athens.

Revolts broke out in the different city-states and the spirit of rebellion spread with the force of life itself throughout the land, destroying everything that existed. Men's projects became ever more violent and their acts of revenge ever more atrocious. The meaning of words no longer corresponded to the reality of things and men simply assigned them the sense that accorded with their desires. Impulsive violence was praised as fearless, prudent and careful thought was condemned as cowardice, moderation was treated as the mask of weakness, and the sage who understood everything was unable to accomplish anything. Manliness was thought to consist of fanaticism and violence . . . Those who were most enamored of violence won the trust of other men, but those who opposed it earned the suspicions of their fellows. Those who did not wish to participate in the plots of the political factions from the start were ostracized by the others, and were treated as poltroons who feared the enemy . . . Those who deceived the others with criminal schemes were admired and those who incited them to commit crimes were venerated . . . Taking vengeance against the enemy became more important than protecting one's own life. Many of the different parties came together to form a vast alliance in order to wield enough influence to crush the other parties and to impose their draconian policies and violence. A frightful spirit of vengeance gave birth to other acts of vengeance in an endless cycle . . . In these ways, all the vices of the Greeks fermented amid these political revolutions. Candor, a great element making up a noble disposition, was ridiculed and all but disappeared, while an ugly spirit of contention and dispute thrived everywhere. No one could pronounce a single word that would restore harmony and no one could swear an oath that would win trust among the people. The people who won the greatest success were those with the fewest scruples.⁵³

And these are the consequences of war, in a society where every citizen was given military training, in ancient Greece, the most civilized country of the ancient world, and also the results of the preparation for war that our militarists glorify. Militarists in our own country of Japan can discover the same state of mind among citizens of our society in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War. What satisfaction can they derive from it?

Looking at Rome

Let us look at the case of Rome. What sort of moral disposition did the citizens of Rome acquire when they were robbed of their freedom and persevered in war? What great virtues did they perfect? The country was transformed into a slaughterhouse in which the worst massacres were perpetrated, a Marius appeared on the scene of history, and then a Sulla.⁵⁴ The civil republic degenerated into a regime of

53. This citation from Robertson 1899, 93–94.

54. Gaius Marius (157–86 B.C.E.) was a Roman general and Lucius Sulla (138–78 B.C.E.) a leader of a political faction and a subordinate under the command of Marius. Sulla later opposed Marius, began civil war, punished his enemies, and seized their properties. This civil war set a precedent for the civil wars to come that led ultimately to the destruction of the Republican form of government and the establishment of the Roman empire.

aristocratic despotism and the citizens of Rome, who had prided themselves on their self-rule, fell to the condition of miserable slaves.

The Dreyfus Affair

The accusations of treason brought against Dreyfus in France, which have aroused the conscience of people around the world, offer a compelling example of the corruption that military interference in politics causes in the life of civil society.

The trial was held in conditions of secrecy, the verdict was excessive and cruel, and the rumors propagated during the affair were preposterous and libelous. Because of legal irregularities, the public could hardly help but wonder whether the top command of the French army was filled with knaves and fools. There is no room to doubt that the organization of the army offers an ill-intentioned man ample opportunity to work mischief. What's more, it has the perverse effect of causing men who support justice in civilian society to be treated as fools. This is far truer of the military than it is of any other institution in society. The reason is that the internal organization of the army is a world of oppression, a world where might makes right, a world of rigid hierarchy and blind obedience. Those who enter this world must leave all thoughts of righteousness and morality behind.

With the exception of the countries of the Far East, in which the independence of the judiciary is incomplete, one can only find examples of such corrupt proceedings and such a miscarriage of justice in the trials of military tribunals. These procedures have nothing whatsoever to do with usual judicial process or with the ordinary penal code.

Zola Steps Forward

However, many tens of thousands of brave fighters for justice stepped forward to defend Dreyfus, to clear his name of the slanderous charges leveled against him, and to demand a retrial. They insisted that one innocent man should not become a scapegoat to conceal the ugly corruption of the armed forces. And the writer Emile Zola came to the fore and, in words that dazzled like a display of fireworks, led 40 million of his compatriots in a passionate and courageous battle to rectify this miscarriage of justice.

If Zola had held his silence, the French army would never have budged from its position and the retrial of Dreyfus would never have taken place. However, in the end the determination of a single man of letters overpowered the shamelessness, injustice, and cowardice of the army. Does the training that soldiers receive include any moral instruction?

Splendid Soldiers and a Man of Letters

Mencius writes: "I refuse to yield even when millions oppose me if to yield is to betray my conscience." Why is it that one never encounters such a courageous

spirit, epitomized by the man of letters Zola, among the splendid and imposing soldiers of the army?

Certain writers argue that soldiers in the army enjoy no freedom of choice and must obey their superiors. With such reasoning, they seek to justify the blind obedience that the soldiers of the French army showed in the Dreyfus affair. I do not know if this is really the case, but if they are right, it offers excellent proof of the moral corruption rampant in the military.

Field Marshal Kitchener

Field Marshal Kitchener, who commands the British army at war in the Transvaal today, is worshipped as a god by English militarists and imperialists.⁵⁵ But he also took pleasure in desecrating the tomb of the chief of the Mahdi during the battle to conquer the Sudan.⁵⁶ More than two thousand years ago, when Wu Xiwu ordered the dead body of his father's enemy whipped to avenge his father's death, he was condemned by the thinking men of the time. What can we say about it when the same thing happens at the end of the nineteenth century, in our civilized period? To exhume the body of a great man called the "savior" or the "barbarian saint" by the indigenous people is an unacceptable action on the part of a commander who acts under the protection of the British flag, a military man who, according to Admiral Mahan, should be inculcated with the virtues of endurance and courage. What a frightful picture: rousing the citizens of a nation, making them believers in the cult of militarism, worshipping as an ideal the profanation of the tomb of the Mahdi, and entrusting to the hands that committed such atrocities the destiny of a nation.

The Cruelty of the Russian Army

Consider the cruel violence committed by the soldiers of the Russian army sent to north China in recent days. In the region of Tongzhou alone, they threatened and drowned over seven hundred women.⁵⁷ The only possible purpose of this action

55. Horatio Kitchener (1850–1916) led the British forces that conquered the Sudan, where he ruled between 1892 and 1899. He was also commander in chief of the British forces in the South African War (1899–1902).

56. Mahdi means redeemer. It was the religious title of Muhammed Ahmad (1844–85), a Sudanese leader who declared a holy war against Egyptian rule in 1881, defeated the Egyptian army in 1883, and later captured the city of Khartoum and killed the British general Gordon. In the Battle of Omdurman, Kitchener retook the city and desecrated the tomb to avenge the death of Gordon. Robertson (1899, 109) mentions the desecration of Mahdi's grave in his *Patriotism and Empire*.

57. This is likely a reference to an alleged massacre committed by Russian Cossacks in the town of Blagoveshchensk, a city located at the confluence of the Amur and Zeya rivers. According to a Japanese intelligence report on July 16, 1900, Russians massacred 3,000 Chinese civilians immediately after the occupation of Manchuria. This "Amur massacre" became the symbol of Russian barbarism in newspapers. See Kobayashi 2008, 226–27.

was to terrify the innocent. If it is true that military training and war preparations improve human character and elevate the moral sense, then the Cossacks who have lived and died in battle since the thirteenth or fourteenth century should be paragons of morality and models of human character. However, the facts show that the contrary is true.

The Politics of Turkey

If militarism truly fostered the wisdom and the virtue of the people of a country and had the potential to improve its moral character, then Turkey should occupy the first place among the European nations.

The government of Turkey is a military regime and its budget is a military budget. If we consider its military power, then Turkey is certainly not a weak country even though its hegemony has begun to decline since the start of the nineteenth century. The Turkish army has fought bravely at Nawalino, in Crimea, at Plevna, and Thessaly, and it has never proved a pushover.⁵⁸

In addition, the Turkish take pride in their military power, but are they correct to do so? When one judges the corruption, violence, poverty, and ignorance in this country according to the criteria of civilization, then Turkey occupies the lowest rank among the nations of Europe. The fate of this country, which Tsar Nicolas I has called the Sick Man of Europe, can rightly be compared to that of a precarious thread about to be cut off.⁵⁹

Germany and the Sources of Ethical Ideals

Germany claims that, just as in the past, it remains a country in which people have acquired a high level of education and in which the arts and sciences flourish. But now that the militaristic policy of “iron and blood” has swept away everything else in its path, what place is left in this nation for noble thinkers and philosophers?

The nation of Germany was once the source of the highest ethical ideas in Europe. The names of Kant, Schiller, Herder, Goethe, Richter, Fichte, Marx, Lasalle, Wagner, and Heine are famous throughout the civilized world, the influence and the authority of their thought can be described as limitless, but where are their successors today? Many of our artists and scientists have traveled to Germany to study

58. These place names were the sites of battles between the Ottoman Empire and the powers of Europe during the nineteenth century. A great naval battle at Nawalino pitted the Ottoman Empire against France, England, and Russia during the Greek War of Independence (1821–29). The Crimean War (1853–56) was fought on the Crimean Peninsula between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Plevna was the site of a famous battle in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78). Thessaly was a battlefield in northern Greece during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897.

59. Tsar Nicholas I of Russia is said to have used the phrase “sick man of Europe” to refer to the Ottoman Empire because it was falling under the financial control of other powers and losing control of its territories.

philosophy and ethics or reflect on the great problems of justice and morality, but are there today any noteworthy figures among the Germans in literature or religious thought?⁶⁰

The Phoenix and the Qilin

There is nothing mysterious about this. The phoenix and the *qilin* do not thrive behind barbed wire.⁶¹ In the world today, which idolizes Prince Bismarck and General Moltke, it is pointless to expect that a Goethe or a Schiller will be reborn. Pathetic militarists, how can you advance the cause of civilization with figures like Wilhelm, von Bülow, and Waldersee?⁶²

Therefore I say that a day spent carrying out military policy means a day of moral degeneration for the people. A day devoted to the exercise of violence is a day in which theoretical thought goes extinct. Ever since Germany became the Germany of Bismarck, it has given up the moral influence that it used to exert throughout Europe in the past. In the ten years that have passed since Wilhelm II acceded to the throne, several thousand people have been punished for the crime of *lèse majesté* and among those arrested are many adolescents. And this is the nation that the good people of Japan idolize and seek to emulate. The militarists still hope to take Germany as a model, but how could one find anything to admire in the politics of a militaristic country?

PART 5

Dueling and Warfare

Among other tributes that militarists pay to the glories of war, they say that the history of nations is a history of warfare. Just as duels were formerly the final court of appeal in which disagreements between individuals were settled, warfare now renders the final verdict that resolves the disputes between different nations. As long as there are different nations on earth, they will inevitably fight wars and therefore need to build up their defenses as a preparatory measure. They also state that military training helps people to develop strong bodies, to learn the virtues of endurance, and to build firmness of character. Wars develop boys with strong wills and high spirits. If war were abolished, the world would become weak and effeminate. Is there any truth to this argument?

60. Discussions of Turkey and Germany have close counterparts in Robertson 1899, 110–17.

61. Both are mythical Chinese creatures that are said to appear with the arrival of a sage.

62. Wilhelm II (1859–1941) was the final German emperor and king of Prussia who ruled from 1888 to 1918. Bernhard von Bülow (1849–1929), a German statesman, served as foreign minister in the 1890s when he was responsible for carrying out Germany's policy of colonial expansion and later as chancellor of the German Empire from 1900 to 1909. Alfred von Waldersee (1831–1904) was the chief of the German general staff and leader of the allied forces during the Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901).

Strategy of Mutual Deception

I do not have time here to address the pros and cons of the duel as a means to settle private disputes. But it is thoroughly illogical to compare war that pits one nation against another with a duel between two individuals. Whether it is a matter of duels in the nations of the West or of personal vendettas in Japan, the objectives of such contests of will were always to preserve the honor of the individual, to save face; an exchange of arms between men took place on equal terms, and in broad daylight. In addition, if one of the two combatants happened to be wounded or killed in the fight, the dispute ended then and there. There was no room left for the slightest resentment in the heart of the other. In the case of war, however, the exact opposite is true. No questions of honor are involved, the objectives are evil, and the means used base and loathsome.⁶³

The Gradual Development of Warfare

In the past, war resembled dueling between individuals since it consisted of a series of engagements between evenly matched warriors, mounted on horseback, who announced their names before they started to fight. However, it would be ridiculous to treat such cases as typical of warfare in general. Wars inevitably involve guile and trickery. Wars organized on equal terms and fought in broad daylight have been the butt of laughter for the military since ancient times, as is proven by the expression the “benevolence of Duke Xiang of Song.”⁶⁴

In short, war is merely a contest in stratagems of cunning and the development of war is the development of such stratagems. Barbarians in primitive societies made great use of cunning: they struck at the enemy when he least expected it, launched ambushes, attacked in the middle of the night, cut the enemy’s supply lines, and set traps. In such fights, those who have not developed the art of deceit to the requisite degree are sure to lose their lives, have their goods stolen, and their lands taken away. In this struggle for survival, only the craftiest and trickiest contestant will survive. When ordinary machinations no longer worked, the belligerents were faced with the necessity to train harder and to develop more sophisticated weapons and stratagems. This has been the general trend in the development and progress of military techniques since ancient times.

Each and every step in the development of warfare has consisted only in devising new ways of tricking and ensnaring the enemy. No matter how ignoble the

63. The Prussian thinker Clausewitz had defined war as a form of dueling in *On War*.

64. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 B.C.E.), Duke Xiang of Song spurned the advice of his subordinate who recommended that he take advantage of the enemy’s lack of preparation to launch a surprise attack. Xiang replied, “A gentleman must not inflict suffering on another person when that person is in difficulty.” Xiang, who waited for the enemy to assemble his troops before attacking, ended up losing the battle. The expression *sōjō no nin* has the meaning of “misguided or useless benevolence.”

objective and however vile the means, planners of war strategy have never wasted a moment submitting either ends or means to the tests of ethics. How can one seriously speak of war as having anything in common with the individual duel? How can one claim that it resembles a contest in which two individuals match their strength, endurance, and force of character, all considered to be manly virtues? Whereas a private duel comes to an end when one of the parties defeats the other, war is simply an ongoing disaster in which vengeance leads to more vengeance.

Ultimately, war consists of plots, of dirty tricks, of effeminate behavior, of crafty stratagems: it is not a fair or open contest at all. For as long as society needs to indulge in and to prize warfare, mankind will never be able to free itself from a crafty and effeminate morality. In addition, in all the nations of the world, the vast majority of young men are dragged off and thrown into the hell of military barracks where they are taught to develop their animal nature so that they can take part in contemptible and evil wars.

“A Young Conscript Leaves His Beloved Village”

Look at the young conscripts as they leave their beloved villages and part, in tears, from their beloved parents and families. Watch them weep as they leave their farm animals and pets behind. They enter the barracks far away from the lovely mountains, streams, and the peaceful fields of their villages. Night and day, all they hear is the scolding voice of their superior officers; the only sight they see are the cruel and vicious faces of the veteran soldiers. Carrying heavy packs on their backs, they race to the west and to the east. Enduring their great fatigue, they turn to the left and march off to the right. Three monotonous and painful years are wasted in such maneuvers.

The Misery of Hungry Demons

They earn the daily pittance of three *sen* for their labor, an allowance that is equivalent to the sum earned by a beggar. They can hardly afford to pay for a pack of cigarettes or even a postal stamp, and on top of that, they are regularly subjected to cruel and degrading treatment from the veteran soldiers. They are unable to obtain money to purchase food and drink and are not allowed to carry around with them the smallest amount of spending money.

Even those from a wealthy background endure such treatment, but for those who come from poor families, military service means three long years of hunger and privation and the humiliation of being constantly reprimanded by their superiors. In many cases, the wealthy can win exemptions from military service in order to pursue higher education or because they have frail and sickly constitutions. But the children of the poor have no alternative other than to endure this cruelty and suffering. The unfairness of the conscription system is public knowl-

edge. When I hear that a conscripted man has skipped his induction calls, or fled the barracks, and then, driven to desperation by the cruel treatment he received, ended up killing himself, I cannot blame such a man for taking his life and feel the deepest sympathy for his plight.⁶⁵

After they spend three years in this way, what is left for them when they return to their homes? Their parents have grown older and weaker, their fields have been left untended, and they themselves have become depraved by their experiences. How can one affirm that the nation genuinely needs this system or speak of the call of duty?

Let's Stop Glorifying Military Weapons

We must stop glorifying military weapons and venerating the system of military conscription. I have learned that the system of conscription produces a wave of vagabonds and squanders the productive capacities of the nation, and that many promising young lives are ruined by their experiences in the military. The morality and the traditional customs of regions of the country are corrupted when military barracks are built in their proximity and the good citizens that live in the path of military maneuvers often have to endure the excessive demands of the military. Neither the building of weapons nor the system of conscription adds even a single grain of rice to our food supply or contributes even a trifling sum of money to the national income. Not only do they do nothing positive to favor the sciences, the arts, or the noble ideals of religion and morality, but they cause great harm and destruction to all of these.

PART 6

Why Keep Provoking Wars?

Ah, politicians and citizens of every country in the world, why do you mobilize so many troops, deploy so many weapons and battleships, and why have you for so long issued challenges to one another? Why don't you hurry to abandon this game in which you deceive one another like foxes and devour one another like rabid dogs, and endeavor to reach the higher realm of civilization and morality?

Even though men are well aware that war is a criminal act that causes great hardships, they have no desire to see it disappear once and for all. They are cognizant of the justice and the advantages that peace and universal love would bring, but they have no wish to see these hopes realized in the near future. Why do they hesitate to take decisive action to abolish war preparations once and for all and enjoy in return the benefits of peace and humanity?

65. Kōtoku's teacher, Nakae Chōmin, had argued that the conscription system favored the rich, who were able to obtain exemptions, and that it was too costly. Nakae 2001, 263–64.

People wish to increase the production of manufactured products at affordable prices and to stimulate the growth of commerce with other nations. And they know perfectly well that the military budget consumes enormous amounts of capital and is an immense drain on the nation's productive capacity, that wars interrupt the smooth flow of commerce and cause economic stagnation. Why do they not decrease military spending and cut back on their armaments, using the money they save to invest in industry and domestic enterprises?

A Resolution at the Peace Conference

Two years ago, the emperor of Russia proposed that a peace conference be held to limit military expenditures; none of the great powers of the world voiced the slightest objection to his proposal.⁶⁶ Representatives of twenty countries participated in the conference, including England, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, Japan, and China. They issued a final resolution at the Peace Conference that stated: "We recognize that it would be most desirable to limit the crushing burden of military expenditures in today's world in order to advance the material and spiritual welfare of mankind." Furthermore, they also agreed on the criteria for the creation of a court of arbitration to settle disputes between nations in a peaceful manner: "We sincerely hope to act in cooperation with other nations to maintain world peace and to work together to settle international disputes in a peaceful manner. . . . Since we hope to establish a firm international order founded on principles of justice, we recognize the need to establish impartial and just rules by international agreement in order to ensure the peace and welfare of the people of the world" (Treaty for the Peaceful Resolution of International Conflict). However, why do they not expand this resolution to include the abolition of land and naval military forces throughout the world?

Just One Small Step and the World Will Change

Needless to say, governments would reply to my argument that the present level of military expenditures is necessary to uphold world peace. But, in light of their lust for fame and vanity, politicians and military officials do not intend to allow their cannons to rust from lack of use or to permit their warships to fall into disrepair. They are simply waiting for an opportunity to put these weapons to use. They are like drunken bullies, holding a sword in one hand and on the lookout for someone to persecute. Only a thin line separates peace preservation from disrupt-

66. At the suggestion of Emperor Nicolai II of Russia, the First International Peace Conference took place in The Hague in the Netherlands in 1899. Some twenty-six countries participated, including China, Japan, and the major powers of Europe. In their closing resolution, these nations pledged to ban the use of poison gas and to resolve international conflicts through peaceful means. A Second International Peace Conference was held in 1907.

tion of peace, and they are always ready to cross it. Even if the great powers of Europe endeavor to preserve the peace by maintaining sufficient forces to preserve a balance of power, they abruptly change and act to destroy peace in the name of imperialism once they encounter a weaker and less populous nation in Asia and Africa. It suffices to look at what they have done in China and South Africa. They have made inconsequential and half-hearted gestures in favor of world peace but they have hardly reduced the number of their weapons at all. How can they hope to enjoy the fruits of peace unless they do away with their armies?

Not only are they unwilling to contemplate dismantling their military forces, but they devote great efforts to exhausting all the resources and treasures of the country to reinforce them. Their conscience is completely smothered by a desire for fame and material gain, a belligerent spirit, and animal instincts. A spirit of empty ostentation snuffs out their feelings of humanity, their sense of justice and morality, and their reason is darkened by the powers of superstition.

A Jungle of Wild Beasts and Poison Snakes

While individuals in our societies have been deprived of weapons, states remain armed to the teeth. Individuals are not permitted to settle their conflicts by violence, but states retain the right to provoke wars. The civilization of the twentieth century has transcended the morality in which the strong prey on the weak. But the nations of the world are still subject to the law of the jungle, with its wild beasts and poison snakes. Is it not a bitter shame and a disgrace that people cannot live in peace and security? Is this something that men of advanced social views can afford to overlook or ignore?

Chapter 4

On Imperialism

PART 1

Wild Beasts in Search of Prey

The wild beast polishes its claws and nails and roars because it must seek its prey to survive. Unable to free themselves from their bestial nature, patriots bolster the military power of their nation and increase its arsenal of weapons to satisfy their own vanity, belligerence, and superstition. And they, too, must constantly search out new victims. For that reason, it is hardly surprising that the policy of territorial expansion assumes its full dimensions when patriotism and militarism reach fever pitch. The end result is the popularity of the policy of imperialism today.

Territorial Expansion

Imperialism means the construction of a great empire, and the construction of a great empire implies the acquisition of far-flung territories. However, I am pained to note that the acquisition of new territories can only take place at the cost of numerous crimes and injustices, widespread corruption and degradation, and all kinds of destruction and decadence. On what evidence do I base this judgment?

The building of an empire would be a wonderful thing if it consisted only in the settlement and cultivation of virgin, empty, and wild territories. However, are there truly any such empty, unused, and undiscovered territories left in the world today when the rapid development in the means of transportation has made it possible for man to reach every part of the globe? If every part of the world belongs to someone and is inhabited, how could one occupy even a square inch of new territory without resorting to violence, declaring war, or employing trickery and

deception? The policy of territorial expansion, whether practiced by the Europeans in Asia and Africa or by the Americans in the South Seas, is always accomplished by the deployment of militarism and the use of armed force.

In order to carry out this policy, the imperialists must spend millions of dollars each day and lose hundreds of lives each month. In order to implement their military strategy year by year, they fan the flames of bestial patriotism among the masses, who are nevertheless the first victims of these policies.

Think about it: in order to expand their military power and satisfy their private interests, they invade foreign territories at will, plunder the wealth and resources of these lands, and either massacre their people or reduce them to a state of servitude. And then they proudly proclaim before the world: "We are building a great empire." However, how does the building of a great empire differ from theft and plunder?

Building a Great Empire Means Theft and Plunder

Politicians advocating imperialism, lacking in any sense of justice or righteousness, claim that this policy of theft and plunder is simply the way of the samurai and they take pride in these actions. Many of the actions committed by heroes and adventurers of the previous century and earlier were hardly different from those of present-day conquerors. But it is time for us to open our eyes. The heavens cannot help but be angered by such injustice and villainy. What could prevent the fall of empires in the past that were based on military expansion? The imperialists stir up the bestial nature of the populace to invade and conquer foreign countries in order to enrich themselves and to uphold unity and social peace in the home country. But once they have seized foreign lands and built a great empire, the people are deluded with pride, the military gain influence and the new territories are plundered and oppressed, the tax burden increases, and the finances of the colony are ruined. Ultimately, in every case, the results are the devastation of the new territories, growing poverty, inequality, and rebellion; in the home country, the fruits are greed, corruption, and decadence. After falling into decline, this old empire will in turn become the prey of another rising empire. Without exception, the military empires of the past have suffered this fate.

The Rise and Fall of Military Empires

Gazing at the ruins of Carthage, Scipio the African lamented, "Some day Rome will endure the same fate," and history later proved him right. What has become of the great empire founded by Genghis Khan? Or of Napoleon's empire? What about the lands annexed by the Empress Jingu? Or the great plans of conquest of Toyotomi Hideyoshi? All these empires have vanished like the morning mist, without leaving a trace behind. One should not assert that the empires of Christian countries will last forever: remember that in its final years the Roman Empire was Christianized. One must not say the empires will not decline if they liberate their

slaves, since the great Spanish Empire fell after it abolished the system of slavery in its territories. One must not say that the industrialized empires will not in the end decline. Weren't the Moors and the Florentines industrial powers of their times?

The prosperity of the nation must not be based on theft and pillage, and the greatness of a people can never be built on a foundation of plunder and invasion. The progress of civilization will not occur under the despotism of a single ruler and the welfare of society will not be brought about by unification under a single flag. These goals can only be achieved by peace, freedom, universal love, and equality. Consider that the people of our country benefited from the peaceful rule of the Hōjō and compare their fates to the soldiers of Kublai Khan. Today, the people of Belgium enjoy more peaceful lives than the people of Germany or Russia.

“Ruin Follows in the Wake of the Flag”

There is a famous slogan that “trade follows in the wake of the flag.” The lessons of history show us clearly, however, that ruin follows in the wake of the flag. Even though the cart in front has been overturned in its tracks, the other carts behind follow in the same path. And the lights of the revolving lantern turn endlessly. Today, I fear that the present empires of Europe and the United States will meet the same fate that Scipio lamented in ancient Rome.

PART 2

Expansion of the People?

Some imperialists concede that the great empires of the past were established just to satisfy the private interests and the vanity of kings and their political advisors. However, they argue, territorial expansion today expresses the irrepressible need for expansion of the citizens. In the past, imperialism was a private matter but today it is a popular and national cause.

Is this really the case? Does imperialism today truly represent the expansion of the people? Or does this expansion only serve the desire for fame of a small number of politicians and military leaders and the interests of a few capitalists and speculators? Consider that the reverse side of this so-called expansion of the people is that the struggle for survival grows more difficult every day for the vast majority of people. Isn't there a widening gulf between rich and poor, a worsening of poverty and hunger, an increase in the number of anarchists, and a worsening toll of crimes and other social ills? What benefit do the masses derive from unlimited expansion?⁶⁷

67. Prior to 1905, Kōtoku often treated anarchism as equivalent to poison and identified anarchists with fomenters of social chaos. In *Shakaishugi shinzui* (Essence of socialism), he wrote: “Scientific socialism is not anarchism. Desperate acts of violence by a militant few are senseless. In order to achieve our goals, constructive political action is necessary. Nor is scientific socialism to be confused

A Small Clique of Military Officers, Politicians, and Capitalists

A small minority of military officers, politicians, and capitalists block any improvement in the livelihood of the vast majority of the population, destroy their meager savings, and even take their lives in order to build their great empire. Not only do they sacrifice the progress and welfare of the vast majority of their citizens, but they also threaten and murder the poor and defenseless people in Asia, Africa, and the Philippines. And they have the cheek to call this the “expansion of the people.” Even if the majority of the people benefited from such a policy, it would still not represent any real progress, since it is nothing more than a subtle manipulation of their bestial love of war and an exploitation of their jingoistic feeling and superstition and fanaticism. This policy causes damage and injustice today much as the ancient empires did.

The Conquest of the Transvaal

England conquers the Transvaal, deprives the Boer people of their independence and freedom, takes control of their gold mines, seeks to unify Africa under the British flag, and builds train lines across the continent in order to allow capitalists, industrialists, and speculators to satisfy their greed for profits, fulfill the ambitions of Cecil Rhodes, and gratify Chamberlain’s desire for glory. For the attainment of these useless objectives, how many horrible and astonishing sacrifices have been made!⁶⁸

Immense Sacrifices

In the nearly five hundred days that have elapsed between the outbreak of the war in the Transvaal in October 1899 and my taking up the pen to write this manuscript, the number of British soldiers killed has reached thirteen thousand and the number of wounded is even higher. In addition, some thirty thousand soldiers have been released from military service and returned to their homes as cripples. As for the number of the indigenous dead, there is no way to calculate the real toll.

The Economic Costs

Moreover, think of the economic costs of war. In order to transport two hundred thousand soldiers to distant battlefields, the nation dispatches countless ships to places thousands of miles away, costing an estimated two million yen per day. England has already squandered more than one billion yen of its wealth to spill

with nihilism. Riots and destruction are not the answers. In order to achieve our goals nonviolent action is necessary.” Kōtoku, “Shakaishugi shinzui,” KSZ 4:514.

68. Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) was a legendary British businessman and champion of imperialism. He founded the diamond company, De Beers, which still markets more than a third of the world’s diamonds, and became the founder of the state of Rhodesia. Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) was a British statesman and colonial secretary during the Boer War.

the blood of both peoples. In addition, it has had to halt the extraction of gold from the mines because of the war, costing an additional two hundred million yen in lost production. This war has not only brought misfortune to the two belligerent parties but has also had severe repercussions on the welfare of the entire world.

The suffering of the indigenous people is truly to be pitied. The English have taken countless prisoners and have deported some six thousand to the island of Saint Helena, another two thousand four hundred to Ceylon, while General Kitchener is about to send a further twelve thousand to India. Both countries have almost run out of young people to send to the battlefield, the fields are untended, and crops no longer grow where the engines of war have passed. What blame do these people bear for this war?

Considering these facts, how can one claim today that imperialism has not resulted in injustice and corruption? How can one say that it has not caused violence and destruction? How could a people with a high moral sense permit it? How can the lands of civilization in the twentieth century accept it?

The Policies of Germany

If even England, a nation that cherishes liberty and loves peace, behaves as I have described, then how can anyone be shocked that Germany, the very incarnation of militarism, sacrifices untold wealth to expand its army and navy? Last year, during the Boxer Rebellion, the kaiser of Germany dispatched General Waldersee to East Asia and he publicly proclaimed his intention to seek vengeance.⁶⁹ The Social Democratic Party of Germany, at its congress in September the same year, passed a resolution that unmask the reality of German imperialism.

Resolution of the German Social Democratic Party

Adopted at the congress in Mainz:⁷⁰

The policy of intervention in China adopted by the German imperial government is the result of the frenetic pursuit of profits by capitalists [and] militarist vanity to build an empire and a greed for plunder. The aims of this policy are to occupy foreign territories by force and to oppress their people. As a result of this ideology, plundering armies have employed violence and war to inflict destruction on foreign countries and satisfied their greed by annexing territories by illegal and unjust means. The victims who have suffered from these policies have inevitably been led to resist the aggressors. Furthermore, these policies of plunder and aggression have roused envy

69. Alfred von Waldersee (1832–1904) succeeded General Moltke as chief of Imperial German General Staff.

70. At the 1900 Congress in Mainz, the German Social Democratic Party adopted resolutions opposing increases in military spending and the German military intervention in China.

and heightened rivalries among the major powers. As a result, spending for naval and land forces has imposed an intolerable burden on these countries. This has heightened the danger of international conflict and the threat of global chaos.

Since the Social Democratic Party is firmly opposed to the exploitation and oppression of man by man, we strongly protest against these predatory and aggressive policies. The aim of our party is to respect and preserve human rights, freedom, and independence and to promote the development of peaceful relations and exchanges among the countries of the world based on the principles of modern civilization. The principles that have been adopted by the bourgeoisie and the military powers of these countries are a great disgrace to civilization, etc.⁷¹

Do not these just and impartial words rival the sun and stars in illuminating our troubled world?

American Imperialism

The imperialism of the European countries, which aims for territorial aggrandizement through conquest and plunder, is truly a great insult to civilization and humanity. However, I must acknowledge that U.S. imperialism is also following the same iniquitous and immoral path.

The United States helped the Cuban rebels free themselves from the yoke of Spain in the name of the principles of freedom and humanity. Some people admire the justice and righteousness of America's actions in this case. Indeed, if the Cuban people had wanted to be placed under the rule of America as an expression of its gratitude for America's support, we would have no reason to object to this annexation. We do not mean to imply that Americans used deception to instigate the Cubans to rebel against the Spanish. However, we cannot accept their conquest and annexation of the Philippine archipelago.

Conquest of the Philippines

Did the United States sincerely fight for the freedom of the Cuban rebels? Why then have they cruelly suppressed the freedoms of the Filipino people? If they really supported the independence and sovereignty of Cuba, then why have they intervened to prevent the independence of the Philippines? Against the will of the Filipino people, they have invaded the country with military force, confiscated their lands, and seized their resources. This action is the greatest blemish on the glorious history of the United States since the founding of its republic, which was based on the principles of freedom and civilization. While the United States has earned profits from annexing the land and the wealth of the Philippines, in what way do their actions differ from those of military bands that pillage to enrich

71. Here Kōtoku uses the term *chūryū shakai*, now used to designate the middle class of Japanese society, to mean the capitalist class.

themselves? What have they done to the achievements of their forefathers, their Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Monroe Doctrine?

*What Happened to the Declaration of Independence
and the U.S. Constitution?*

How can one assert that a nation must expand its territories to survive in today's world? While the founders of the nation established the nation in the name of freedom and humanity, why have they turned their backs on this past and degenerated to the point that they allege that territorial expansion is necessary for the existence of the nation?

Let us grant for the sake of argument that the United States would fall into economic crisis if it did not continue to expand territorially. Even if this were the case, the wealth and the profits that they gain from the annexation of the Philippines would hardly suffice to overcome such a crisis; it might allow them to improve the situation for a day or so, but their ultimate collapse would only be postponed for a short time. With their population and vast territory, their limitless supply of capital and the power of their business enterprises, how can they take seriously such imaginary dangers and fearful scenarios without fear of becoming the butt of the world's ridicule?

The Crisis of the United States

I believe that if the United States faces a crisis that threatens their national survival in the future, this crisis will not be caused by the smallness of their territory, but rather by their unlimited territorial expansion. It will result not from their failure to exercise their political power in the world, but rather from the corruption and decadence that has infected their own society, not from the small size of their market, but rather from the unfair distribution of wealth, from the destruction of freedom and equality, and from the rampant spread of imperialist and expansionist ideologies.

Why Is America Prosperous?

Consider for the moment the reason for the present prosperity and wealth of the United States. Is it based on freedom or oppression? Reason or violence? The strength of its economy or the power of its weapons? The vanity of its expansionists or the diligence of its entrepreneurs? Liberalism or imperialism? At the moment, the nation is starting to head down an evil path, driven by a desire for glory and profits and a fanatical nationalism. I not only fear the dangers that their future holds in store, but I also feel deep anguish for the future of freedom, justice, and morality.

Resolution of the Democratic Party

Last fall, the Democratic Party of the United States passed a resolution during a meeting held in the state of Iowa. I was deeply moved by the following passage:

“We are opposed to the conquest of the Philippines. In general, imperialism implies militarism, militarism signifies a government by force, and a government by force in turn means the death of representative government, the destruction of economic and political freedom, the murder of human rights and equality, and the abolition of the democratic system of government.”

In short, throughout the world, imperialism has brought in its wake a host of injustices and disasters.

PART 3

The Need for Emigration

Imperialists in England and Germany both justify the need for the construction of empire on the grounds that it permits people to emigrate overseas. They argue that the population of their countries is growing every year and that the number of the poor is constantly increasing. The only way that this surplus population can hope to survive is to move overseas through the expansion of territory. At first glance, such an argument seems very reasonable.

Population Growth and Poverty

I will concede that the population of England and Germany is increasing and that the number of the poor is growing. However, is it true that the growing number of the poor is caused by the increase in population? Is there no other solution to the problem of poverty than to promote the emigration of people to lands overseas? This is a question that deserves a closer look. If we follow the reasoning of the imperialists to its logical conclusion, then the more populous a country is, the poorer its people will be, and inversely, the fewer people that live in a country the richer it will be. However, this is an absurd argument. This completely contradicts the great principle of social progress, the conclusions reached by the social sciences and economics.

In a society based on hunting and fishing, people have to consume the food that they find in nature. If the number of people increases, then the amount of food per person will diminish following the unbending laws of nature. However, man is also a productive animal who has the knowledge and capacity to produce his own food and clothing by utilizing the forces of nature. In addition, human beings improve their abilities and increase their knowledge with each passing year, and from one generation to the next, they make enormous strides. Indeed, ever since the Industrial Revolution, the population of the world has been multiplied several times over, but at the same time, the productive wealth of the world has been increased several thousand times. And England and Germany are two countries that monopolize the greater share of the world's wealth.

Causes of Increasing Poverty

Since the riches of the world have grown enormously, the constant increase of poverty in modern societies cannot be caused by the growth in population, but must rather be attributed to some other factor. Indeed, the increasing number of the poor is the result of flaws in our social organization and economic system. It is due to the fact that capitalists and landlords use their power to extort extraordinary profits and rents from others, and because of the uneven distribution of wealth in our societies. For that reason, I affirm that if we fail to eliminate these evils by applying a truly civilized morality and scientific knowledge to the problems of our society, then emigration can be no more than a temporary salve that palliates the problem while failing to deal with its root cause. Indeed, even if all the people in the country were to move overseas, the problem of poverty would not disappear.

For the sake of argument, I will concede that emigration is the only effective solution to the problems of overpopulation and poverty. But why would this fact justify the expansion of the nation's territory? Why would nations find it necessary to build great empires? Are those who leave their country unable to live in any place except one in which the flag of their mother country flies? Let us take a look at the facts.

Statistics on Emigration from England

It is said that the territory controlled by the British Empire grows a bit larger with each passing day. Nevertheless, between the years of 1853 and 1890, a total of 8.5 million Irish and English emigrated from their motherland to lands overseas. Out of this total, fewer than 2 million moved to territories controlled by their mother country, whereas more than 5.5 million headed to the United States of America. Here is the statistical breakdown of English emigrants by country of destination for the single year 1895:

The United States of America	195,632
Australia	10,809
Canada	22,357

The proportion of emigrants to lands that are controlled by the home country is less than one-sixth of that to lands not controlled by the home country.

Emigration and Land

The emigrants choose to move to lands of freedom and they do not give a thought to whether the land where they emigrate is a colony of their homeland. From this example, you can see that when imperialists speak of the needs of emigrants, they are merely creating vain excuses that are not supported by a shred of evidence.

I do not think that emigration is to be condemned. By comparison with the Helots of Sparta, who were killed by their masters when their numbers grew too

quickly, the fact that the poor today have the option of emigration certainly represents progress. However, there are limits in the extension of available territories in the world, whereas the growth in population is limitless. If emigrants claim that the land they emigrate to ought to belong to their homeland, should we just sit back and let them do as they please?

Consider the reasoning of the imperialists: England and Germany at first set out to search for unclaimed territories in Asia and Africa. They then divided the lands among themselves and colonized them. However, as emigrants settled in these lands and occupied all of them, they then began to feel the need for other lands and they set off to expand their territory once again. If this process continues, the people of different countries will seize land from their neighbors and kill one another, until at last, the country that possesses the strongest military power takes control of and colonizes all the land. After another number of years go by, this territory will also be filled with people as other poor and desperate people from the home country settle there. This process is the reasoning of the imperialists. The end they see in emigration has no scientific basis.

Let us consider the case of France. France is truly relentless in its campaign to expand the territory of the nation, but the population of France is not growing at all. If we consider the fact that the proportion of poor is relatively low in France, how can one argue that France is extending its territories in order to promote the emigration of its people?

Now the United States is also demanding to expand its territory. It is evident in this case that its imperial expansion is not driven by the needs of emigration. The land of the United States is vast in size, it possesses great wealth of resources, and emigrants from all over the world flock to it in an endless flow. Not only do vast numbers come from England, but some 195,000 out of the 224,000 emigrants that left Germany between 1893 and 1897 also went to the United States. In addition, large numbers of emigrants from Switzerland, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries head to the United States. Why would a country like the United States, which welcomes emigrants from every country in the world, find the need to encourage emigration to other lands?

In order to take over the resources and land of Abyssinia, Italy squanders its wealth and the lives of its people in the hope of adding to its colonial lands.⁷² In spite of this, the vast majority of Italian emigrants prefer to live under foreign flags in North and South America.⁷³

72. In 1895, Italy invaded Ethiopia (Abyssinia) to strengthen its foothold in East Africa, but it suffered a military defeat at the battle of Adowa in 1896 and was forced to recognize Ethiopia's independence. This military defeat of a European power punctured the myth of the white man's invincibility in Africa.

73. Kōtoku borrows these statistics from Robertson's discussion of emigration (1899, 173–77).

An Erroneous Notion

In fact, I can affirm, without the slightest hesitation, that the claim by imperialists that they support territorial expansion to provide lands for people driven by the need to emigrate is a totally erroneous notion. In this case, they are merely using emigration as an excuse to deceive themselves and to pull the wool over the eyes of other people. It is hardly worth taking the time to refute their theories.

PART 4

The Need for New Markets

With a single voice, all imperialists proclaim that “trade follows the flag” and assert the urgent need for territorial expansion to create new markets for their nation’s commercial products.

I welcome the further development of the means of transportation throughout the world and the future growth and prosperity of the trade among the great powers. But must British merchants trade in markets under the control of the British flag, or do German traders have to do business only where the German flag flies? For what reason do nations seek to impose their trade by violence and military power?

The Dark Age of the Economy

In the dark ages of history, the great military heroes would ordinarily invade other countries, plunder their resources, and impose heavy taxes upon their people in order to enrich their own country. The economic policies of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane were of this type. When the imperialists subjugate barbarian tribes, seize their lands, reduce their people to servitude, and force them to purchase manufactured products from the home country, how does their economic policy differ in the slightest from that of the dark ages? How can modern civilization and science permit such a system to exist?

The Overproduction of Goods

Why is it that they must exploit new markets? They argue that their economies suffer from a surplus of capital and an overproduction of goods. Even though the capitalists and industrialists complain that they suffer from so-called overproduction, their impoverished compatriots, by the tens of millions, lack adequate supplies of basic necessities such as clothing and food and tearfully bemoan their terrible destitution. If it were not for the lack of demand, how could one speak of excessive production? This lack of demand is due to the lack of purchasing power of the majority of the population, the unjust distribution of income, and the growing divide between the rich and the poor.

Today's Economic Problems

Consider that the growing disparities between rich and poor in the Western countries have led to great concentration of wealth and capital in the hands of a small minority and the severe reduction of the purchasing power of the vast majority of the people. Both are the results of the system of free competition in which a small group of capitalists and industrialists enjoys a monopoly over capital and earns excessive profits. In reality, the economic problems in the countries of Europe and the United States today will not be solved by oppressing the population of underdeveloped societies and making them buy their manufactured products, but rather by greatly boosting the purchasing power of the vast majority of people in their own countries. Boosting the purchasing power of the masses can only be achieved by prohibiting the excessive and monopolistic profits of the capitalists and by establishing a fair distribution of income that will benefit the general interests of the laboring classes. To create a just distribution of income, we must radically reform the present system of free competition and establish a socialist system.

The Establishment of a Socialist System

If we succeed in establishing such a system, we will put an end to competition among capitalists and eliminate monopolistic profits. When these monopolistic profits no longer exist, then it will be possible to make a fair distribution of the necessities of life to the masses and to guarantee that they do not lack clothing and food. In that case, no one will be able to speak of overproduction or to complain of its pernicious effects. Also, there will be no need to plant the national flag in overseas territories or to apply the rapacious principles of Tamerlane to the management of the economy. This will be the triumph of civilization and science as well as of morality.

Only Bankruptcy and Decadence

However, since the politicians and capitalists in the Western countries reject this project, they boast about their ephemeral victories and seek to prolong their monopoly forever. They squander enormous sums of money to steal vast new territories overseas from their rightful owners in an insatiable quest for new conquests. And what are the consequences of this policy? The national budget grows ever more bloated, more and more capital is diverted to fund these ventures, capitalists become ever more greedy for excessive profits, and the distribution of income ever more skewed toward the rich. As the size of the empire and the volume of goods traded increases, the number of poor people in the country swells with each passing day. In the end this can only lead to bankruptcy and to decadence.

An Economy of Nomadic Tribes

Even if the imperialist powers succeed in staving off financial crisis and bankruptcy brought about by their profligate spending for territorial expansion, how

will they manage to keep their frantic competition within bounds when they run out of new lands and new markets to capture? When they lose any room to maneuver, they will not be content to stop and starve to death. Instead, the great powers will attack and seize territory from one another. Nomadic tribes move from place to place in accordance with the availability of water and pasture but they cannot hope to survive when these resources disappear. If they lack water and pasture, they kill one another in order to appropriate the means of survival. Is not the economy of the imperialists similar to that of nomadic tribes?

Anglo-German Trade

In fact, the new markets they crave have already started to become few and far between and the great powers are starting to fight over these few remaining spoils. The English claim that the Germans are the great enemy they face in their markets and that they must crush them to survive. The Germans reply that the English are their great competitors and that they must be defeated. In the meantime, both sides hardly miss a day when they do not add to their arsenal of weapons. How is it possible that trade and commercial ties do not result in mutual benefits, but instead make both sides seek to harm each other for the sake of petty profits? Instead of competing peacefully in production, these powers vie with one another in the exercise of military power.

Killing One's Best Customer

Is not England already the largest commercial client of Germany, while Germany is the third-largest customer of England? In the past decade, bilateral trade between the two countries has grown by millions. The total amount of the trade between England and Germany has already attained a level equivalent to that between England and Australia, and is far larger than the combined totals of its trade with Canada and South Africa. In addition, Germany imports a very large amount of capital from England and uses it to fund its own economic development. If one of these two countries were to attack the other in order to eliminate a potential rival, it would end up destroying a large proportion of total world trade. In addition, the relations between the other great powers resemble those between these two nations. If someone were to speak of a businessman who planned to increase his sales by killing off his largest client and stealing that client's property, everyone would find such an idea preposterous. But the great powers of the world today practice exactly such a policy, inflicting pain on their rivals in order to protect their own nation's profits.

I am appalled to note that competition among nations for the capture of new markets has degenerated into competition in the building of armaments and that quarrels over tariffs and trade have resulted in open military clashes. Intending to inflict great suffering upon others, they end up hurting themselves. In order to

ensure that others are deprived of profits, people in many countries are willing to suffer from poverty, hunger, corruption, and eventually death. For this reason, I denounce the economy championed by imperialism as a barbaric economy on the model of Tamerlane for its injustice, iniquity, and fundamentally uncivilized and unscientific nature.⁷⁴ The politicians only pursue their vain desires for glory and serve the desire of speculators for extravagant and short-term profits.

The Japanese Economy

Let us look now at the situation of the Japanese economy. The Japanese economy is far worse than those that I have already described. Japan uses military force to plant its flag in territories far from its shores, but the Japanese people do not have a surplus of capital to invest in these new territories or an abundance of manufactured products to sell to these new markets. As the territories under Japanese control grow in extent, so does the power of the military, which makes the law there. The expense of ruling colonies imposes an increasing burden on the Japanese people, the amount of capital available to support economic growth diminishes, and the production of goods withers. Rather than leading to progress, the imperialist policies of Japan cause the country to regress in the ways that I have described.

The Utmost Foolishness

Imperialists in Europe and the United States speak of surplus capital and overproduction of goods as reasons to acquire colonies. But Japan is in a completely different economic situation than these other nations. Even though Western nations merely hasten their decline when they build great empires, they still have the wherewithal to persist in this foolishness for several more years and can take pride in the size of the empire placed under their flags at least temporarily. However, as far as Japan is concerned, can the nation seriously expect to maintain the empire it builds any longer than a single day? Nevertheless Japan maintains a huge army and an impressive navy in order to become an imperialist nation. The foolishness of the Japanese imperialists exceeds that of all their rivals.

PART 5

The Unification of the British Colonies

An imperialist in England has said: "If we wish to build up impregnable defenses to protect the homeland, we must unite all of our colonies into a single community." This notion enchants war-mongering imperialists but it is thoroughly absurd.

74. Tamerlane (1336–1405), also known as Timur, was a Turko-Mongol ruler who conquered much of western and central Asia and founded the Timurid dynasty (1370–1405) in central Asia, which survived until 1857 as the Mughal Empire in India.

The reason why some English people are so frantically worried about the deficiencies in the military defense of the nation is that their territory has grown so large that it has become indefensible. Consider that the people who have emigrated to the different colonies, unable to make ends meet in the nation of their birth, moved to lands thousands of miles away to live in freedom and to secure an adequate livelihood. In each of these territories, they have succeeded in realizing prosperity and attaining happiness. Why must they acquiesce to bearing the oppressive yoke of the motherland or countenance its political interference just to ensure the unification of the empire? Why must they bear the extravagant costs of England's military defense or be forced to fight in its wars? Must they be drawn into the whirlwind of conflicts of the great Western powers just because England happens to be embroiled in them? The disadvantages and the dangers of such a course are great.

Useless and Dangerous

I have already explained why the exercise of armed power is useless and immoral. But let us assume that military power is necessary to defend the independence of one's own country. In order to develop an adequate defense of the country and to deter an enemy from attacking it, a nation does not need to control a vast territory or to build a huge empire. Consider that the England that defeated the great Spanish Empire at the time of Philip II was still known as "little England." The England that trounced the great French Empire of Louis XIV was also called "little England."⁷⁵

Military Strength and "Little England"

In fact, England dazzled the world with its military feats only when it was still called "little England." If imperialists today are so concerned about the shortcomings of national defense, why don't they grant independence to all of the British colonies? If they did so, they would be able to sleep more secure in the knowledge that they are well defended; what's more, inhabitants of British colonies would welcome such a move with joy and at last be able to enjoy freedom and happiness.

The Reasons for England's Prosperity

Consider that the prosperity and development of England do not result from the power of its arms but rather from the number of its coal and iron ore mines, not from its military aggressions and plunder of foreign lands, but rather from the peaceful development of its industries and commerce. In the course of its development, England committed the error of giving free rein to its animal instincts and following in

75. Philip II (1527–97) ruled Spain at the zenith of the absolutist period. Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, ruled France from 1643 until his death in 1715.

the path of the empires of antiquity by applying the ruinous economic policies of Tamerlane to rule its colonies. But such policies provoked the United States to rebel and break away from the mother country. Chastened by this experience, England later adjusted its policies and permitted self-rule in its colonies. As a result, England does not directly rule these vast territories, which do not make up an “empire” in the sense that imperialists tend to use this word. Rather, since the English are linked to their former colonies by ties of blood, language, and culture, they remain bound together by sentiments of mutual sympathy. Since both sides benefit from commerce, their community will likely last forever, bringing limitless prosperity to all.

The Fall of the British Empire—A Question of Time

Will England succeed in maintaining its greatness if it repeats its past exploits and, drunk with vanity in its military force, extends its influence on the European continent? England remains a great power today, but if it continues in the future to oppress its colonies and expose them to danger in the name of its national flag and the glory of its military, it will in short time forfeit their sympathy and consent. In that case, I believe that the break up of the British Empire will simply be a matter of time.

The ambition of the present Prime Minister Chamberlain, as the heir of the doctrines of Pitt and Disraeli, is to lead this great peaceful people into the abyss of imperialism and militarism.⁷⁶ I can hardly help but grieve for this honorable nation, which is set to follow earlier military empires along the path to inevitable decline and decadence.

To be sure, the military officers and politicians who seek fame and the speculators who pursue profits in unexpected places are the ones who deserve the blame for this situation. However, what is one to think of poets and men of letters, who bear a great responsibility for the spiritual education of the people. It is deplorable that many of these men of learning and education have betrayed their mission and become the champions of military expansion. In England, Kipling and Henley offer the worst examples.⁷⁷

Kipling and Henley

They praise the hunt for new prey by the bestial patriots of their country, the glory of the national flag, the merits of great men, and the rise of national thought.

76. William Pitt (1708–78), also known as Pitt the Elder, was a British statesman who contributed to the building of the British Empire, most notably during the French and Indian War in North America. Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), a political leader during the Victorian period, was an enthusiastic supporter of the expansion of the British Empire.

77. Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), English poet and novelist, was perhaps the most celebrated literary champion of British imperialism. William Henley (1849–1903) was a poet, novelist, and critic.

Some take pride in being citizens of the country that gave birth to Cecil Rhodes, while others pay homage to the great achievements of Kitchener. The former expanded the borders of the empire by a distance of several thousand leagues, while the latter wiped away the humiliation that the British army suffered in Khartoum. They justify these actions by claiming that these men implanted peace and civilization in the place of savage and barbaric customs. However, if the mission of imperialism were to institute peace and civilized rule by subjugating and annihilating the barbarians, then it would have no reason to last any longer than the period when barbarians ruled and would come to an end with them. The hunter only continues to make his living while there are animals and birds free to run and fly in the fields and mountains.

Imperialism and the Hunter's Way of Life

As soon as South Africa is conquered, won't Rhodes set off in pursuit of some other South Africa? Once Sudan is subjugated, won't Kitchener leave to chase after another Sudan? When they reach the point where there are no longer any barbarians to conquer, then the national flag will lose its glory, the national thought will disappear and the deeds of great men will go unrewarded and unrecognized. Is this the dismal fate that awaits imperialism?

I consider that men like Kipling and Henley, who rant and rave to stir up the belligerent feelings of the masses, are really just childish thinkers. Those who truly desire to advance the well-being and civilization of society will have to look elsewhere for their guiding ideas.

PART 6

The Present and Future of Imperialism

If we consider the foregoing analysis, it is easy to understand the present course of imperialism and to predict its future developments. Imperialism is just a name that is given to a policy based on a despicable patriotism and a reprehensible militarism. The predictable consequences of such a policy are decline and destruction.

The construction of a so-called empire is not based on any real necessity but simply on the free reign of greed, it confers no benefits but results in disaster, it is not an expansion of the nation's people but an expansion of a small minority's vanity and love of fame, it does not develop trade but only stimulates speculation, it does not encourage production but only pillage, it does not signify the implanting of civilization overseas but rather the destruction of other civilizations. Can this be the aim of a truly civilized society? Is this the real objective of national governance?

How can people say that imperialism serves the cause of emigration? Emigrants do not require that the national territory continue to expand in size. How can people claim that it advances the cause of world trade? The development of com-

merce does not depend on increasing the lands controlled by the nation. The only ones who really desire the expansion of national territory are the military caste and the politicians, who feed their vanity by such exploits, the speculators who chase after profits from gold mines and railroads, and the merchants who make their living from catering to military procurement orders.

The Prosperity and Happiness of the People

The affluence and the happiness of the people of a country bears no relation to the size of its territories, but depends instead on the nobility of its virtues; it is not decided by the strength of its armies, but rather by the righteousness of its ideals; it has nothing to do with the number of its warships and the size of its armies, but rather with the abundant production of foodstuffs and clothing. The prosperity and the well-being of England up until now were not caused by its control of the enormous empire of India. Carlyle has not deceived us when he asserts that a single line of Shakespeare is worth much more.⁷⁸

Germany: Great Nation, Small People

Sir Robert Morier has written of Bismarck that he made Germany into a great nation but that he made the German people small.⁷⁹ In fact, the greatness of a nation's territories is inversely proportional to the greatness of its people. The construction of a great empire is based on the expansion of its armed forces and the incitement of animal instincts among the masses. In order to make the country rich, Bismarck had to impoverish the people. In order to make the country strong, he had to make the people weak. To make the prestige and the influence of the nation shine far and wide, he corrupted and depraved the people. That is why Morier is correct to note that imperialism makes the nation look bigger but it also makes the people small.

An Ephemeral Bubble

How can a nation hope to maintain its grandeur when the people who inhabit it are diminished by the very policies that are intended to enhance its greatness? Such grandeur can only be ephemeral, like foam on the surface of the water, a tower standing in a void, a house built on shifting sands. At the first gust of wind, it will scatter and disperse like a cloud and it will vanish without leaving a trace behind. Since ancient times, history offers countless examples that prove this general rule. However, the great powers of the world today, which compete with one another to add to their ephemeral expansion, do not realize that they are thereby courting the danger of annihilation.

78. Thomas Carlyle, English poet and critic (1795–1881).

79. Sir Robert Burnett David Morier, English diplomat (1826–93).

Japanese Imperialism

Now our country Japan has lost its reason and turned into a fanatical adherent of this ideology. It already possesses an army of thirteen divisions and a naval fleet of three hundred thousand tons, which is certain to grow in the years ahead. It has recently annexed Taiwan to the nation's territory and dispatched an expeditionary force to repress the Boxer Rebellion in China. It has undertaken all these actions to raise the prestige of the nation, to project its power, and to decorate the chests of our military officers with ribbons and medals. The National Diet acclaims these actions and poets and men of letters sing their praises. But in what way do these actions add to the grandeur of our people? How do they contribute to the welfare and the well-being of the masses?

The Results

A national budget that stood at 80 million yen only a few years ago has since tripled in size, the expenses of ruling Taiwan have already cost our nation 160 million yen, while the 200 million indemnity received from China has already gone up in smoke. The finances of the nation are in a parlous state, foreign imports grow uncontrollably, and the government imposes one tax after another to pay for its current expenses. Our markets languish in recession, public morality is in sharp decline, and the number of crimes increases daily. In spite of this disastrous situation, proposals for social reforms are met with ridicule and dismissed with insults, and calls to expand the diffusion of public education are greeted with cynicism. The life forces of the nation are wearing out with each passing day while the life span of our people grows shorter. If we allow this state of affairs to continue and fail to reverse course, I firmly believe that this Eastern country, with a monarchy two thousand five hundred years old,⁸⁰ will vanish like the dream of Kantan.⁸¹ This is the fate that imperialism reserves for our nation.

Accordingly, I affirm that the policy of imperialism sacrifices the well being of the majority to satisfy the appetites of a small minority. It puts a brake on social progress by inciting barbarous emotions. It is a scourge that destroys the liberty and equality of the human race, flouts the justice and morality of society, and ruins the civilization of the world.

80. According to the early Japanese history *Nihonshoki*, the first Japanese emperor Jinmu descended to the Earth and acceded to the throne in 660 B.C.E. This date, marking the mythical start of Japanese history, acquired an official status during the Meiji period.

81. The "Pillow Tale" of Li Pi (722–89), better known as "Rose's dream" in Japan, is the story of a poor student who goes to the capital to make his fortune. He stops at an inn where he meets a sage, who gives him a pillow. As his meal is cooked, he dozes off on the pillow and dreams that he enters public life, is promoted, demoted, recalled to office, endures the hardship of distant campaigns, is accused of treason, condemned to death, saved at the last moment, and finally dies at a great old age. Awakening from his dream, he discovers that his meal is not yet cooked. Convinced that in the great world "honor is soon followed by disgrace, and promotion by calumny," he turns back towards the village from which he came.

CONCLUSION

Alas, the brave new world of the twentieth century! What can we do to reform this world? We aim to establish world peace, but imperialism provokes war between nations. We seek to foster a universal morality, but imperialism puts morality to death. We wish for the realization of freedom and equality, but imperialism destroys both. We hope for the fair distribution of the fruits of production, but imperialism exacerbates the inequalities in the world. There is no greater danger to civilization than imperialism.

This is not merely my own personal view. Last year, the *New York World* conducted a survey of thinkers in Europe and the United States on the dangers facing the twentieth century. Among those who responded, many denounced imperialism and militarism as the greatest peril of the day. Frederick Harrison wrote that the buildup of excessive military forces, whether on sea or on land, whether in terms of number of men or of armaments, represented a political danger for the future.⁸² He asserted that political leaders and the people they represented would be dragged into wars to establish hegemony in Asia and Africa as a result of this arms buildup. Zangwill noted that the upsurge of reactionary militarism, an ideology rooted in the archaic past, is the greatest danger for the twentieth century. Keir Hardie called militarism the greatest threat. Karl Blind stated that the greatest threat to the world is imperialism.

82. Frederick Harrison (1831–1923), a biographer and critic, established the English Positivist Association. Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) was a British author, poet, and member of the World Zionist Organization. Keir Hardie (1856–1915), a labor activist, founded an independent labor party in England. Karl Blind (1826–1907) was a German politician and writer who participated in the 1848 Revolution, was imprisoned, and later found refuge in England. He wrote an anthology of German folktales.

Like the spread of plague, imperialism is truly a horrible disease that infects everything that it touches. Indeed, so-called patriotism is the microbe that causes the disease while militarism is the means by which the microbe is transmitted. At the end of the eighteenth century, the French Revolution, like a great purifying torrent, drove this infection away from the lands of Europe and temporarily wiped it out. The revolutionary movement was prolonged in the 1832 Reform [Act] in England, the 1848 Revolution in France, the unification of Italy, and Greek independence, and all of these events served to check the spread of this epidemic.⁸³ However, this same historical period also produced men like Napoleon, Metternich, and Bismarck, who have all spread the microbe again and contributed to the outbreak that is occurring today.

The patriotic microbe today contaminates the government and the opposition and indiscriminately infects the humble and the mighty. An imperialist plague spreads throughout the entire world and is destroying the civilization of the twentieth century. The time has come for righteous and honorable men, who are still healthy and uninfected with the illness, to mobilize their numbers and to minister to the sickness of nation by undertaking social reforms.

But what are the projects and plans that will bring a remedy to our current crisis? There is only one solution. We must launch a great cleansing of the state and society, or, in other words, start a revolutionary movement worldwide in scope. Let us transform the few nations of the present time into a vast number, free the nation from the iron grip of the army and navy and transfer it to the peasants, workers, and merchants, reform our societies where an aristocracy rules autocratically into one where the common people rule themselves, change our economy, now monopolized by capitalists, to one in which the workers own all in common. The spirit of justice and humanity will overwhelm narrow chauvinism, scientific socialism will destroy barbaric militarism, and cosmopolitanism and universal fraternity make it possible to uproot and eliminate predatory imperialism.

Only by undertaking this task can we succeed in reforming our present world, which is unjust, immoral, barbaric, and unscientific, ensure the continual progress of society, and contribute to the general welfare of humanity. However, if we fail to eliminate this scourge, let it pursue its ravages, and do nothing to rectify it, then we face a future as bleak as the darkest circle of hell in which demons prowl by night.

83. The independence of Greece was officially recognized at the Conference of London in 1830.

The End

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Epilogue

The Monster of the Twenty-First Century?

One of the central themes of American historiography is that there is no American Empire.

—WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS

The war [on terror] will be won when Americans feel secure again.

—DONALD RUMSFELD, 2003

In the first months of 2003, more than 32 million people took part in global anti-war demonstrations on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.¹ These were the biggest peace demonstrations in history. However, they failed to prevent the invasion of Iraq or ward off the disasters that followed. Nevertheless, just as members of the United Nations Security Council refused to legalize the invasion, these massive demonstrations expressed a popular repudiation of the war; indeed, the biggest marches occurred precisely in “coalition of the willing” nations such as Italy, Spain, and Britain. The mass mobilization that preceded the Iraq war recalled an earlier period when people from around the world organized to fight against imperialist wars in the Philippines, South Africa, and Manchuria. At that time, too, writers and intellectuals argued that imperialism was morally bankrupt, that it caused social regression, undermined democracy, and threatened world peace.

Is Kōtoku’s *Imperialism* still relevant? I can hardly skirt the question when I recommend contemporary readers peruse this polemic against twentieth-century imperialism. After all, imperialism is a discredited ideology and colonial rule ended with the decolonization of Asia and Africa decades ago. Is the age of imperialism just a memory or are matters not so clear-cut? Like recent wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, the Boxer intervention was a multinational and humanitarian intervention in the affairs of a “failed state” rather than a conflict between sovereign states subject to international convention.² In the case of Qing China, “declaring war against an enemy . . . [was] replaced by issuing of an arrest warrant,” in the same fashion as the U.S. Army has treated military resistance to its invasions.³ And much as the Boer War was fought to secure the diamond and gold mines of South

Africa, was there ever any doubt that, as Alan Greenspan puts it, “the Iraq war is largely about oil”?⁴

The age of imperialism, with its countless colonial conflicts, was, until 1914, a time of relative peace among the world’s great powers. In the same fashion, present-day wars have been waged against a backdrop of peaceful daily life and flourishing commerce in affluent nations. Kōtoku held that peace among the imperialist centers meant that more wars would be fought on the soil of Africa and Asia. Unlike wars among the “civilized” countries, these conflicts were not subject to international laws, did not end in clear-cut military victory, and had few heroes. In the nuclear age, the great powers wisely avoid interimperialist wars since the consequences of war are immeasurably more frightful than they were a century ago. Yet the absence of head-to-head war among the great powers has not meant peace. From Vietnam to Afghanistan, the U.S. empire has continued in the tradition perfected by earlier empires: that of using superior military force to fight weaker nations, “lesser breeds without the law,” in colonial-style conflicts, wars that in their ferocity recall Kipling’s “savage wars of peace.”

Imperialism lives on in the tropes and figures that statesmen employ to justify empire, even when they take pains to fit their language to contemporary sensibilities. No one has the bad taste to evoke the “white man’s burden” today. Our interventions are noble, humanitarian endeavors to spread the rule of law and human rights. Or, as President Obama recently said about the Iraq War: “Over the past decade, American troops have made extraordinary sacrifices to give Iraqis an opportunity to claim their own future. . . . We gave Iraq the chance to have an inclusive democracy.”⁵ “Our” troops offered this gift graciously to the people of Iraq, but the intended recipients unfortunately spurned the “opportunity to claim their own future.”

We have also resurrected an older rhetoric without bothering to adapt it to contemporary sensibilities, thereby giving our contemporary imperial rhetoric a retro or archaic tinge. Over the past decade or so, there has been a subtle but pronounced shift in the usage of terms such as “the West” and “civilization.” In an influential article published in 1993, Samuel Huntington revived the rhetoric about civilization when he predicted that future military conflicts would occur on the fault lines separating different civilizations. However, Huntington explicitly employed civilization in the plural to indicate that humankind was divided among different civilizations (of which the West was one variety). Today, however, when journalists and politicians speak of the West or civilization, they consciously or not refer to those who stand at a higher level of human development than the peoples belonging to the non-West.⁶ This positing of civilization against savagery and the associated binarism of West and non-West remains as widely accepted and disseminated today as it did during the age of imperialism, in which it has its roots. In its cruder version, this rhetoric dehumanizes non-Westerners by treating them

as savages and barbarians; lurking underneath this rhetoric is an implicit call to “exterminate the savages” by unleashing our superior technological power.⁷

In the brave new world of the twenty-first century, Kōtoku’s work still has lessons for those willing to learn, but we need to attend to the new costumes worn by imperialism. Imperialism reemerged as a key term in contemporary politics and an analytical tool to understand the world after the end of the cold war. In the 1980s, President Reagan wielded the term “evil empire” as an insult to discredit only the Soviet Union, in keeping with the Cold War taboo that ruled out any mention of America as an empire. Today, shorn of its evil connotations, the term has found its way back into civil discourse. In a comment to the *New York Times* in 2002, the conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer compared the contemporary United States to the Roman Empire: “People are now coming out of the closet on the word ‘empire’ . . . The fact is no country has been so dominant culturally, economically, technologically, and militarily in the history of the world since the Roman Empire.”⁸ American politicians and journalists no longer hesitate to call the United States an empire and to extol its “benevolent hegemony,” much as their counterparts did at the turn of the twentieth century.

Kōtoku’s critique of the military bias of imperialism, his dismissal of patriotism, and his analysis of the negative effects of imperialism on the domestic economy and democratic politics seems particularly relevant to the contemporary politics of U.S. imperialism. However, before I touch on each of these issues in turn, I will distinguish my argument from that of Hardt and Negri, who concur with Krauthammer’s view of the United States as the new Roman Empire. In *Empire*, they argue that the United States is not an imperialist power in the nineteenth-century sense, but rather the nerve center of a headless, sprawling, and supranational empire whose only historical precedent is ancient Rome. U.S. military invasions and operations uphold the global order and the world market rather than simply increase its power or serve its parochial interests. They cite the Gulf War (1990–91) as an example of the United States acting through the United Nations as an upholder of global order. However, the U.S. invasion of Iraq, which took place a decade later, is just as clearly a departure from this paradigm because the United States acted unilaterally and outside the framework of the United Nations. In fact, while the U.S. claims to uphold a global order and supports rules and treaties governing other nations, it also claims an exceptional status for itself and refuses to be bound by international rules, making its claim to be the world’s policeman contradictory.

Furthermore, U.S. military interventions since the end of the Cold War have compensated for the economic decline of the United States, a fact that was already evident at the time of the Gulf War, largely financed by Japan and wealthy oil-producing states. The value of the U.S. dollar has been falling in relation to the currencies of its trading partners for several decades, a result of U.S. trade deficits and indebtedness. At the same time, new powers such as Europe, Russia, China,

India, and Brazil have arisen to challenge the U.S. stewardship of the world economy. Emboldened by a series of American financial debacles, many African and Latin American countries have resisted the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through which America has traditionally exercised its hegemony. As a result, the imperial rhetoric that U.S. leaders habitually use to address foreign leaders rings increasingly hollow, whether it be finance officials lecturing Chinese administrators on how to run their economy or Pentagon spokespersons exhorting their Europeans counterparts to lavish more on defense spending.⁹ In that respect, the present international system already consists of a struggle among several competing powers, just as in the age of imperialism.

In his chapter on militarism, Kōtoku asks why nations “devote such vast wealth to the expansion of military power,” amounts far in excess of “what is required to defend the nation against foreign threats or to prevent internal conflicts.” One explanation, he argues, is that military spending is “promoted by military officers who amuse themselves dreaming up new stratagems and new military gadgets and by the greed of capitalists who seek to gain a monopoly on the enormous profits that accrue to suppliers of weapons and provisions ordered by the armed forces.”¹⁰ Is this diagnosis not particularly relevant to the United States today? Outspending every other nation, the United States lavishes as much money on “defense” as the next eight countries combined and leads the world in the research and development of the most expensive and futuristic weapons imaginable. Several decades after the Second World War, the United States stations tens of thousands of soldiers on the soil of former enemies and allies alike even as it busily constructs dozens of new bases throughout central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. At last count, it controlled 761 military bases in 151 countries, effectively garrisoning the planet. Besides these semipermanent bases, the United States deploys eleven aircraft carriers that patrol the world’s shipping lanes and keeps the global information networks under permanent surveillance.¹¹ It has also divided the entire globe into six regional “commands,” each covering a continent, effectively designating the entire world as its theater of operations. In the future, the United States plans to develop military capabilities in cyberspace and space, both envisaged as future domains of military conflict in which it prefers to see as little regulation as possible. Indeed, the American claim to be the world’s policeman is based on military bases, aircraft carriers, security treaties linking it to many other countries, and mastery of the most advanced weaponry and electronic surveillance technology.

The United States still enjoys military supremacy, but it needs to leverage these military assets to remain a world empire in the Negri/Hardt sense. By leveraging its military power, it has ostensibly used its strongest card to uphold its own interests and weaken rivals, as imperialist powers have traditionally done. Yet for all its military superiority, the United States has not won a decisive battlefield victory in

any war since the Second World War. In the most recent cycle of military adventures, it toppled the regimes that ruled Iraq and Afghanistan, but soon got bogged down in wars of attrition against small, nimble foes, whose effectiveness derived from their ability to hide among a supportive population. In the end, the United States was, if not defeated, forced to end these conflicts without being able to impose its will on the enemy. Yet in spite of these battlefield failures, U.S. military spokesmen so routinely exaggerate the efficacy of their weapons and the scope of their tactical victories that many Americans actually believe that we “won” our recent wars. Partly because of Orwellian debasements of the English language, many American citizens do not understand that people in invaded nations consider the U.S. forces to be a foreign army occupying their country.

Military intervention, notably by air strikes, has been not the final resort, but rather the default position of U.S. foreign policy in response to foreign crises at least since the Kosovo War (1998–99). Yet these interventions have invariably created many more problems than they have solved. While using military force to solve political problems may be what we do best, it is rarely the best thing to do. This fact was already evident with the war on drugs, launched with great fanfare in the 1970s. This war has eviscerated civil liberties by suspending Fourth Amendment protections, and targeted poor and vulnerable populations in both the United States and Latin America. Experts have long concluded that it failed to accomplish its objectives. Far from eliminating drugs, the war on drugs increased the quantity of narcotics in circulation and caused their prices to fall.¹² Likewise, the war on terror has increased the incidence of terror attacks and multiplied the number of terrorists. To take a specific example, the invasion of Iraq has clearly worsened the problem of terrorism and facilitated the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Its main long-term political result has been to place the reins of the Iraqi government in the hands of a corrupt, highly sectarian regime aligned to Iran, which was certainly not a war objective. Oil was a powerful motivation for the war, but ironically China has been the major beneficiary of Iraq’s recent oil boom. Michael Makovsky, a former Department of Defense official in the Bush administration who worked on Iraq oil policy, states, “We lost out. . . . The Chinese had nothing to do with the war, but from an economic standpoint they are benefitting from it, and our Fifth Fleet and air forces are helping to assure their supply.”¹³

Though unsuccessful in warfare, the U.S. national security apparatus has an unbeaten record at guaranteeing its own exponential growth. President Eisenhower’s warnings about the dangers of the military-industrial complex notwithstanding, huge outlays for defense survived the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union with only cosmetic adjustments. With the declaration of a war on terror, the Pentagon has discovered a new global mission and invented new reasons to claim its commanding share of the national budget.¹⁴ In 2008, Barack Obama came to the office of the U.S. president thanks in part to popular

repudiation of the disastrous wars initiated by his predecessor. But since his election he has refrained from any suggestion that the country shift its priorities away from “defense.”

Kōtoku’s critique of imperialism seems pertinent because he denies the ultimate economic rationality of such militarism. The United States has devoted astronomical sums to sustain its global empire, but these policies have resulted in growing foreign indebtedness. Far from being an exporter of capital, the United States depends on other nations to pay its bills; far from being a creditor, the United States is a huge debtor nation in which other nations park their surplus savings. In addition, the Americans that pay the steepest price for empire are those least able to afford it. Imperialist wars have resulted in a slow deterioration of living standards for most Americans and have exacerbated mass poverty and social inequality, but they have also served as an ongoing distraction from the search for solutions to these problems. The situation is especially dire today since many U.S. citizens believe that their lives are insulated from war because the U.S. government has refused to raise taxes and has thereby hidden the costs from view. As in early twentieth-century Japan, imperialism has assumed forms that obey no economic laws and defy economic rationality.

An important feature of global imperialism is that the stakes in global competition have shifted beyond the borders of the nation, which remains the only true foundation for democratic politics. John A. Hobson viewed the export of superfluous capital as the cause of imperialism, but the early twentieth century also saw the export of surplus labor from the metropole to the colonies. Under present globalization, capital without productive uses within the nation continues to be sent abroad, but jobs—and the factories—that once employed millions have also been exported to regions with lower wage rates, fewer regulations, and no trade unions. Notwithstanding repeated calls to stimulate growth in the wake of a massive recession in 2008, American leaders have done nothing to encourage multinational companies to reduce their export of millions of jobs abroad, let alone repatriate these jobs to their national homes. In this respect, Arendt’s analysis of imperialism as the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie retains its pertinence today:

The bourgeoisie had developed within and together with the nation-state which, almost by definition, ruled over, and beyond, a class-divided society. Even when the bourgeoisie had already established itself as the ruling class, it had left all political decisions to the state. Only when the nation-state proved unfit to be the framework for the further growth of the capitalist economy did the latent fight between the state and society become openly a struggle for power. During the imperialist period, neither the state nor the bourgeoisie won a decisive victory. National institutions resisted throughout the brutality and megalomania of imperialist aspirations, and bourgeois attempts to use the state and its instruments of violence for its own economic purposes were always only half successful.¹⁵

In the age of neoliberalism, the liberation of capital signifies that it will no longer submit to implicit demands for equal treatment of citizens within the nation-state; in the name of intensified international competition, the livelihood of people will henceforth be sacrificed to the needs of capital. It is hardly surprising that such policies have resulted in an ever more unequal distribution of income, the corporate financing of politics, and a diversion of public attention from both.

Equally relevant to today's world is Kōtoku's argument about the pernicious effects of patriotism. Patriotism is an artificial substitution (*ersatz*) for empathetic feeling that is based more on hatred of other nations than on a positive love of one's own. National governments incite this hatred to bind the atomized citizenry into a unity, to divert their hatred toward foreign enemies, to turn the attention of their citizens away from the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions that affect their everyday lives, a deterioration exacerbated by excessive defense spending. Consequently, Kōtoku denounces imperialism as the commandeering of patriotism by small economic and political cliques that serve the interests of the latter. In recent twenty-first-century wars, governments and media have also incited hatred of the adversary, blunting the moral sensitivity of our citizens to reports of war atrocities, the massive killing of civilians, kidnapping, targeted assassination, or the widespread use of torture. In the United States, the politics of hatred has entailed a demonization of Muslims who are seen as a horde of fanatical Islamists laying siege to the West. Such an image bears no relationship to reality but clearly presages future war.

In a development that Kōtoku could hardly have foreseen, the United States has relied more on the manipulation of fear than on the more volatile affect of hatred. Fear is, almost by definition, a demobilizing, paralyzing emotion, particularly when its object is a phantasm of otherness. When Rumsfeld claimed that victory in the war on terror would be proclaimed when Americans "feel secure again," he conceded that the war could never be won, if only because there is no way to determine that Americans actually feel secure. A victory over fear might be an achievable goal in psychotherapy but not on the battlefield. Furthermore, the stated goal of making Americans feel more secure conflicts with the crucial interest that the U.S. government has in sustaining fear among the general population. Lastly, it is apparent that all the security measures taken to date since 9/11, whatever their impact on terrorism, have done little to reassure people.

Except for occasional exhortations for Americans to "support our troops," patriotism today has nothing to do with mass mobilization. The government has never appealed to citizens to endure economic hardships in support of the troops nor has it glorified the thousands of dead soldiers or exalted their sacrifices on behalf of the nation. Indeed, since the start of the present wars, the Pentagon has banned the release of photographs of dead and wounded soldiers. Preferring to keep these disturbing images hidden from public view, spokespersons have argued

that they are too “personal” and “private” to be published. Rather than eliciting unbridled expressions of patriotic fervor, the near permanent state of war has doubtless fed a kind of patriotism or national belonging as a smokescreen to hide economic injustice much as the patriotism that Kōtoku condemned. The creation of an enemy—Islamic terror—and the specter of destruction that threatens the West since 9/11 have both heightened the priority of security issues over those of social justice and strengthened the president’s role as commander in chief. And above all, by being presented as a struggle for survival without any end in view, they have served to marginalize any opposition to growing social inequalities and injustice.

As the war on terror has extended into a second decade, the U.S. government has developed new tactics to fight the enemy and to keep the public acquiescent. Internationally, it has increased its reliance on targeted assassinations by computer-operated drones armed with missiles to attack “terrorists” in countries where the United States is not officially at war, such as Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen. Between 2005 and 2012, U.S. drone attacks killed 2,400 people in Pakistan alone, but resulted in zero U.S. casualties.¹⁶ These “covert” operations are invariably reported and are therefore not hidden at all from public view; however, they are not claimed or publicly acknowledged by the responsible agents. In the absence of such acknowledgment, they are the ultimate expression of America’s desire to fight a war at a distance, without dirtying its hands and without the slightest accountability. Within the United States, the drone attacks have been treated as a miraculously efficacious means to combat terror in the media, which invariably report the death of X number of “terrorists” or “militants,” terms that we might define as those who “may be killed without the commission of a homicide.”¹⁷ However, as reporters fail to question the official sources, to examine details, or to weigh the testimony of any on-site witnesses, readers cannot know whether these attacks kill their intended target, let alone who else is targeted by accident. Several years ago, David Kilcullen, who served as General Petraeus’s counter-insurgency advisor in Iraq, estimated that these attacks killed fourteen al-Qa’ida leaders at the expense of more than seven hundred civilian lives. He stated: “That’s a hit rate of 2 percent on 98 percent collateral. It’s not moral.” Recent studies by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch of drone attacks in Yemen and Pakistan have corroborated that a high proportion of their victims are likely civilians.¹⁸

A century ago, Kōtoku argued that the militarization of the Japanese government had a perverse effect on national politics and civil liberties. In early twenty-first-century America, too, the casualties of imperial wars have not been restricted to economic costs or death tolls. U.S. government agencies have kidnapped individuals on foreign soil and tortured prisoners; when held to account for these crimes, they have expressed contempt for global treaties. In the age of preemptive

war, successive presidents have vastly expanded their powers and privatized war by relying on corporations to send mercenaries to the battlefield and employing special units such as the CIA and Special Forces that are directly under the command of the executive.

Alexander Hamilton noted two centuries ago, “The violent destruction of life and property incident to war, the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations most attached to liberty to resort for repose and security to institutions which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To be more safe, they at length become willing to run the risk of being less free.”¹⁹ This prophecy has become a reality in the days of the war on terror and, since the war promises to last for years to come, it is difficult to predict its full impact on U.S. civil liberties. In the name of security, the government has abridged the rights and freedoms of American citizens, eroded due process of law and the protections of habeas corpus, and undermined the U.S. Constitution. It has faced little serious resistance from Congress or from organized political opposition, let alone from a distracted population. For this reason, democratic politics and civil liberties must be numbered among the most lasting and self-inflicted “collateral damage” caused by the war on terror.

In 2003, members of the administration of President George W. Bush spoke of Iraq as a laboratory of democracy in the Middle East. Ten years later, it is clear that the war served as a laboratory of a different type: for new techniques of killing, new ways to gain information, new methods of population surveillance, and militarized policing. Alfred W. McCoy notes that the Iraqi occupation has already proven a “crucible” for the development of “new surveillance technologies with possible domestic applications,” such as the widespread use of retinal scans to register inhabitants of cities. New surveillance techniques and biometrical measurements, perfected in the Iraq War, will likely find their way back to the United States, where they will be used by law-enforcement agencies to further curtail civil liberties. In fact, Salinas, California, has already begun to apply counter-insurgency methods to its own “war” on crime.²⁰ In addition, under a Department of Defense program, the military has transferred some \$4.3 billion in excess military property to law enforcement agencies, which has led to the increased militarization of police throughout the nation, erasing the difference between American urban neighborhoods and war zones. The result has been to increase the risk of violence to peaceful communities and to treat peaceful protesters as wartime enemies.²¹

In a videotaped message released to the Al Jazeera satellite network in November 2004, the late Osama bin Laden stated that his strategy was to “provoke and bait” the United States into fighting costly, interminable wars in the Middle East in order to bleed “it to the point of bankruptcy.” In fact, successive U.S. governments have taken the bait. The war on terror has not driven the United States to “the point

of bankruptcy,²¹ but it has cost the country trillions of dollars (\$4 to \$6 trillion if we include future medical care and disability benefits) and weakened its economy and its influence in the world.²² For terrorist groups, it has been a godsend that has enabled them to recruit members, to entertain the illusion that they dispose of forces beyond their actual numbers, and to aid the spread of terrorist ideologies.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: ANTI-IMPERIALISM IN JAPAN

Mark Twain's "The War Prayer" was dictated in 1904 in response to the Philippine-American War and published posthumously (www.antiwar.com/orig/twain1.html).

1. I use the term "first" in the same way that other scholars refer to the "early" socialist movement in Japan, but I end my account with the High Treason trial of 1911, whereas they conclude theirs with the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923.

2. Robertson 1998, 98.

3. In 1902, Zhao Bizhen (趙必振) produced the first Chinese translation of the book in Shanghai; Kawakami 1999, 81. On the first Korean translations, see Kwon Soon Chul 2013, 71–104. Christine Lévy published a French version with CNRS Editions in 2008.

4. *Heimin* is a compound consisting of the two characters "level" and "the people" and might be rendered as "commoner" in English. In chapter 5, however, I argue that the Japanese term is less restricted and has broader connotations than commoner. For that reason, I retain the Japanese term throughout this book.

5. By contrast, Notehelfer's pioneering study *Kōtoku Shūsui: Portrait of a Japanese Radical* (1971) highlights his importance as a radical anarchist.

6. As an example, I would mention Yamaguchi Koken's *Hateikokushugi* (1903).

7. Asukai 1978a, 133–35.

8. "Sekai kakumei undō no chōryū," KSZ 6:100–102.

9. "Yo ga shisō no henka," KSZ 6:134.

10. Print runs of the *Heimin Shinbun* began at about 8,000, but fell to 3,000 because of government interference and to about 1,000 copies after the outbreak of war. However, many copies circulated from hand to hand, so that the likely readership was considerably larger than these figures suggest. In addition, the Heiminsha published books and pamphlets and

sponsored speech tours by antiwar leaders through its local affiliates throughout Japan and reached many others who were not regular readers of the newspaper.

11. This was also the last newspaper edited by Nakae Chōmin before his death in 1901. As I note in chapter 1, Nakae was the teacher and intellectual mentor of Kōtoku.

12. “Even if you are handed over to the executioner and are about to be punished, when you give a thought to Avalokitesvara in your heart, at that instant *his sword will crumble into dust.*” From chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra, called the Kanzeon Bōsatsu Fumonbon (Universal Fate of the Bodhisattva Kannon), which also circulated independently as the Kannon Sutra. Kannon symbolizes the spiritual power to free all creatures from distress, and when suffering beings call upon his name, he instantly hears their cries and brings them deliverance from their torments.

13. Both were star editorialists at *Yorozu Chōhō* when the daily was rapidly expanding, growing from 48,000 readers in 1897 to 150,000 in 1903, the year they resigned from the paper.

14. Cf. David Harvey’s argument that the “territorial and capitalist logics of power . . . are tightly interwoven” in contemporary imperialism. Harvey 2005, 183.

15. Notwithstanding the ban, the publisher Kaihōsha released three anthologies of Kōtoku’s works in 1929: *Kōtoku Shūsui shisō ronshō* (An anthology of Kōtoku Shūsui’s thought), *Kōtoku Shūsui hyōronshū* (An anthology of Kōtoku Shūsui’s editorials), *Kōtoku Shūsui bungeishū* (An anthology of Kōtoku Shūsui’s writings on the arts) and an edition of his complete works in six volumes published in 1930–31. For more see Komatsu 1986, 53–67.

16. Morichika Umpei was executed in 1911, but Sakamoto Seima was sentenced to life imprisonment and paroled in 1934. He outlived all the others who were tried and became the last living witness in the case.

17. Tanaka N. 2010, 340.

18. The text of the resolution can be found at www.shuusui.com/doc/ketsugi.html.

19. In the cases of three Buddhist monks implicated in the High Treason case, the religious sects have since taken the initiative to rehabilitate the accused after initial harsh treatment. In the wake of the trial, the Sōtō Zen sect annulled the status of Uchiyama Gudō as abbot and Zen monk, the Shinshū Ōtani sect purged (*hinseki*) the priest Takaki Kenmyō from their ranks “eternally,” and the Rinzaï sect expelled Mineo Setsudō. In 1992, the Sōtō sect passed a special resolution restoring the honor of Uchiyama, one of the hanged, and reintegrating him into the sect. The Shinshū Ōtani sect repented its merciless treatment of Takagi Kenmyō, who had committed suicide by hanging in 1914, and posthumously restored his status as abbot in 1996. Mineo, who died of illness in 1919, was also posthumously rehabilitated in 1996.

20. Kō 2010, 25.

21. For a complete discussion, see Yamaizumi 2004, 173–80.

22. Hobson 1972, 46, 106.

23. Lenin based his 1916 study on the cases of United States and Germany and Hobson on Great Britain since she had “traveled so much faster and farther along this road as to furnish in her recent career the most profitable guidance and warning.” Hobson 1972, xvii.

24. Schumpeter 1951, 57.

25. Hobson’s theory is also untenable in the case of the United States and Russia, which were, like Japan, heavy borrowers and importers of capital when they expanded territorially. Even with Britain, most foreign investment at the time Hobson wrote was flowing into regions outside the formal empire. See Gallagher and Robertson 1953, 1–15.

26. See Uchida 2011, 36–95.

27. Kōtoku also criticized Japanese imperialism as the “imperialism of a small shop-keeper.” However, while his later critics agreed there was something “wrong” with Japanese imperialism, they based this conclusion on a normative concept of imperialism that did not yet exist in Kōtoku’s time.

28. Ōkōchi Kazuo, editor, *KSZ* 3:425–27.

29. Itoya T. 1973, 116; Ōkōchi 1972, 59–60.

30. After Japan’s Asian empire was dismantled, most Japanese writers viewed Japan as a semicolonial dependency and a U.S. pawn in the Cold War.

31. Along with many others, Myers and Peattie (1987) point to strategic anxiety as a driver of imperialism in their volume on Japan’s colonial empire.

32. Akahata, May 26–28, 1948; cited in *Kō* 2010, 23.

33. As I explain in chapter 2, Kōtoku supported peaceful economic expansionism, which he regarded as a natural, spontaneous, irresistible force. After 1945, Japan’s no-war constitution and its rapid economic development made it a model of peaceful expansionism. It is possible that this factor contributed to Kōtoku’s reputation in the postwar period.

34. Umemori Naoyuki’s collection of essays, *Attacking Empire* (Teikoku o ute), proposes a new approach to the historical signification of the *Heimin* [Commoners’] *Newspaper* on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary. Umemori 2005.

35. Kōtoku Shūsui 2010.

36. Karl 1998, 1111–17.

37. Though the government of Terauchi Masatake deployed the army to quell riots, he was strongly criticized for his actions and forced to resign. Hara Takashi became the new prime minister based on his party’s parliamentary strength. See Lewis 1990.

38. To be sure, Wilson’s Fourteen Points and denunciations of imperialism were made as he was dispatching U.S. forces to Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere.

IN THE SHADOW OF REVOLUTION

Epigraph: Antonio Gramsci 1971, 276.

1. Kōtoku, “Gokuchū kara sanbengonin ate no chinbensho,” *KSZ* 6:526–27.

2. Tsuzuki 2000; Pyle 1969, chap. 2. See also Irokawa 1988.

3. As for many militants in the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, France and the French Revolution offered the first model for transformation of Japanese society. After the Russo-Japanese War, Kōtoku saw Russia as the new model for the Japanese Revolution.

4. Kōtoku, “Genkon no seiji shakai to shakaishugi,” *KSZ* 1:297.

5. Kōtoku, “Shakai fuhai no gen’in to sono kyūsai,” *KSZ* 2:154–55.

6. While the notion of the *kokutai* was debated in the Tokugawa period, it later became the basis for a national ideology about the essence of the Japanese people founded on loyalty toward the emperor and patriotism.

7. I distinguish this concept from the later developments within Japanese Marxism. For Kōtoku, the Meiji Restoration was a failed revolution because it did not realize the universal ideals that it initially embodied. By contrast, the two major schools of Japanese Marxism regarded the Meiji Revolution as a necessary stage in a wider historical development. The Rōnō school dubbed the restoration a bourgeois revolution that ushered in capitalist development and liberal democracy, while the Kōza faction insisted that Japan was still

ruled by a feudal, militaristic system. Starting from these different premises, they counseled different strategies for Japanese socialism to carry out a socialist revolution.

8. Kōtoku, KSZ 2:423–25.

9. Kōtoku, KSZ 4:512.

10. A lower ranking samurai and imperial loyalist from Tosa, Sakamoto Ryōma (1836–67) played a central role in forging an alliance between the Satsuma and Chōshū clans to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate during the Bakumatsu period and to restore the emperor to power. He was assassinated in Kyoto in 1867. After a popular NHK drama on his life, he has become the most famous hero of Kōchi City, whose airport bears his name and where his image is ubiquitous.

11. Kōtoku 2001, 8.

12. Kōtoku, “Shikei no mae,” KSZ 6:543.

13. For an excellent account of Kōtoku’s antecedents, family background, and early years, see Notehelfer 1971, 1–54.

14. Kōtoku, “Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishi ka,” KSZ 5:68.

15. Tani Kanjō was a former army general who resigned from his position as minister of commerce and agriculture and led a vociferous campaign against Inoue Kaoru’s proposal to transform Japanese legal codes according to Western models.

16. Kōtoku 2001, 20.

17. Notehelfer 1971, 33.

18. Kōtoku 2001, 31–32.

19. For a discussion of both groups see Pyle 1969. It goes without saying that Kōtoku was a member of this new generation.

20. Miyake wrote a preface to his final work, *Kiritsutokyō massatsuron*, published after Kōtoku’s execution in 1911.

21. Kōtoku, “Hon’yaku no kushin,” KSZ 6:444.

22. Nishida 1961, 232.

23. *Okozukin*, reprinted in KSZ 1:81–126. The Russian Nihilist works are reprinted in KSZ 1:57–71 and 154–67. *Sanfū hīu* presents itself as a translation of Marii’s account as published in the American journal *Siberia*.

24. Yanagida 1935; Kōtoku, “Kyomutō no kan’i seikatsu,” KSZ 6:110–15.

25. Five years later, Chōmin and Kōtoku would reverse positions, with the former backing war with Russia, and the latter leading the antiwar movement.

26. Notehelfer 1971, 37.

27. Disappointed with his second wife’s looks, Kōtoku spent the night of his wedding in the licensed quarter of Yoshiwara and calmly announced where he had been to his wife and mother the following day. Notehelfer 1971, 49.

28. Kuroiwa is best known for his translations into Japanese of Western detective fiction. See Silver 2008, 58–97.

29. The phrase *shakai mondai* (social problems) entered the lexicon of government officials and politicians from the 1890s and was widely written about by journalists and novelists. Gluck 1985, 27–28.

30. The treaty port system is referred to as the “unequal treaties” (*fubyōdo jōyaku*) in Japan. These treaties were unequal in their provisions regarding extraterritoriality, tariff rates, and “most favored nation status.”

31. Fukuzawa 1973, chap 9.
32. Cf. Fujitani 1998, 147.
33. Duus 1995, 17.
34. This immense project was not completed until 1916.
35. Since Hokkaido and Okinawa remain part of Japan today, one may call them “internal” colonies, as opposed to “external” colonies such as Korea.
36. See Eskildsen (2002, 388–418) for an excellent study of this example of mimetic imperialism.
37. Shiga 1887.
38. Tokutomi 1974, 246–74; cited in Wada 1990, 70.
39. Nevertheless, in 1893 Tarui wrote *Daitō Gappeiron* (Union of the Greater East Asia) in which he advocated the unification of Japan and Korea by peaceful means and on the basis of equality. Notwithstanding his intentions, his text is used to justify Japanese expansionism. Ri and Suzuki 2007, 53.
40. For a thorough and highly nuanced discussion of Japanese discourse on Asia in the early 1880s, see Ueda 2007, 90–108.
41. Nakae critiques the views Tokutomi Sohō had expressed the previous year in *Nihon no shōrai*, notably his optimistic view that Japan would evolve from military despotism to industrial democracy, a view associated with the Western gentlemen. Thus, while the gentleman treats the regions of world as representing separate stages of the law of progress (Africa trapped in the “savage” past, Asia ruled by “despotic monarchy,” European nations either constitutional monarchies or democracies), Dr. Nankai criticizes theories of evolutionary stages and attaches more importance to the cultural diversity of nations. Nakae 1965, 131–35.
42. The implicit reference here is to China. Nakae 1965, 171–72.
43. Yonehara 2002, 116.
44. Nakae 1985.
45. Nakae 1995, 82.
46. Kōtoku 2001, 27.
47. Kōtoku, *KSZ* 5:68.
48. Nakae Chōmin’s final work, *Another Year and a Half to Go*, also published in 1901, reflects a much more bitter and hopeless political environment. If the world seems open to different possible futures in *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*, the future seems blocked or entirely absent in the later work, both inside Japan and in foreign policy.
49. Nakae 1984, 51.
50. Gordon 2002, 95; see also Jones and Ericson 2007, 183.
51. Hane 2001, 156.
52. Totman 2000, 336; Hane 2001, 156.
53. Takano 1997, 522.
54. Yokoyama 1985, 356–57.
55. Katayama later became an early founder of the socialist movement, while Takano is best known as the founder of consumer cooperatives. He was particularly influenced by the American Federation of Labor leader Gompers, and supported exclusion of foreign (especially Chinese) laborers from Japan, much as Gompers had supported the exclusion of Asian laborers from the United States. See, in particular, his essay “Shinkoku rōdōsha hizakkyo kiseidōmeikai no ensetsu ni nozomu,” in Takano 1997, 417–25.

56. Kōtoku, “Chian keisatsu hō,” KSZ 2:297.
57. Kōtoku himself was never a Christian and later identified as a militant atheist.
58. The early socialist movement was a confluence of three different influences: the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement (Kōtoku), the Labor Movement (Katayama Sen), and Christian reformism, particularly the Unitarian branch (including all but Kōtoku).
59. American Anti-Imperialist League 1976 [Oct. 18, 1899], 23.
60. Whether Kōtoku was familiar with the U.S. movement is uncertain. He refers to American opponents of the colonization of the Philippines and to William Jennings Bryan by name, but he does not mention others associated with this movement.
61. Bertrand Russell supported the war at first, but was so outraged by the atrocities against civilians that he later became a pacifist and opponent of imperialism.
62. The character *jutsu* (述) means following another, or, in the specific case of a writer, expressing the views of another person. Iguchi 2001, 32.
63. See Bryan 1976, 43–46.
64. Kōtoku, “Iwayuru sensō bungaku,” KSZ 1:329.
65. Hobson 1972, 187.
66. Yamada 1984, 37–60.
67. Kōtoku 2004, 117.

WHAT IS IMPERIALISM?

1. Since he read neither German nor Russian, he based his translations on earlier translations of these works into English.
2. Kōtoku, “Hon’yaku no kushin,” KSZ 6:352.
3. *Ibid.*, 444.
4. *Ibid.*, 439.
5. Miyamoto 1982, 271.
6. Yamada 1984.
7. Cf. Lydia Liu’s focus on the “manner of becoming” of new locutions. L. Liu 1995, 16.
8. Kōtoku 2004, 15.
9. He follows the same practice for other key terms in his book such as militarism (*miritarizumu*), patriotism (*petorochizumu*), and animal instinct (*dōbutsu tensei* or *animaru insuchinkuto*). Kōtoku 2010, 27.
10. *Ibid.*, 15.
11. *Ibid.*, 19.
12. *Ibid.*, 86.
13. These reviews were reprinted in the following: “Nijūseiki no kaibustu teikokushugi shohyō” 2001, 42–51.
14. Said 1993, 7–8; Wallerstein 1980.
15. Hobsbawm 1989, 59.
16. Arendt 2004, 167, 185.
17. Prior to that time, the French *impérialisme* was used to refer to internal policies of Napoleonic France. Proudman 2008, 397, 401.
18. Hobsbawm 1989, 60.
19. *Ibid.*

20. Britain and France, which colonized the former Ottoman territories after the war, rationalized these territorial acquisitions by using the instrument of the League of Nations Mandate rather than calling them colonies.

21. Hobson distinguished between Empire and Commonwealth settlement colonies such as Australia, colonies proper such as India, and maritime and military stations, which were acquired primarily to defend the colonies. See also Arendt 2004, 177.

22. Twain 1976, 209–24.

23. American Anti-Imperialist League 1976, 23; Takahashi 1999.

24. Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power on History, 1660–1783* (1890) was translated into Japanese under the title *Kaijō kenryoku shiron* by the Tōhō Kyōkai in 1896; his *Influences of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793–1812* (1892) appeared in 1900 under the title *Futsukoku kakumei jidai kaijō kenryoku shiron*. Mahan's works were used as textbooks in the military academies of the Japanese Imperial Navy.

25. Tokutomi Sohō used the term for the first time in *Gojin no shuchō* (*My opinion*) and Takayama in *Zaiaku no 1898 nen* (*Sinful year of 1898*), both from 1898. Shimizu 2000, 2.

26. In *Sengo to iu ideorogii*, Kō Youngran offers a comprehensive list of articles about imperialism from 1899 to 1910, but she notes that most appeared in the interwar period.

27. Cited in Yonehara 2003, 148.

28. Takayama 1899, cited in Shimizu 2000, 5.

29. Shimizu 2000, 4, 5.

30. Tokutomi Sohō 1899, in Sohō Bunsen, 480–82.

31. Tokutomi cited in Shimizu 2000, 5.

32. Kuga Katsunan, “Teikokushugi kai: Kokumin kisha no setsu o yomu,” *Nihon* (Mar. 25, 1899), cited in Shimizu 2000, 4.

33. This essay was first published in Tokutomi's *Kokumin Shinbun* (Citizen's newspaper); Tokutomi wrote a preface for this essay when it was republished. Like Tokutomi, Ukita was a charter member of the Captain Jane's Kumamoto band of student Christians. He later taught at Doshisha and Waseda, and became the editor of *Taiyō* (Sun) in 1909.

34. Ukita 1990, 292–94.

35. *Ibid.*, 297.

36. Nitobe 1969, NIZ 4:346–47.

37. Kinoshita, KNZ 12:11.

38. Shimizu 2000, 10.

39. Kinoshita 1996a, 77–78.

40. Takayama 1899, cited in Kō 2010, 32.

41. *Ibid.*, 33.

42. Cf. Hannah Arendt: “Expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics is the central political idea of imperialism.” Arendt 2004, 170.

43. Kōtoku 2004, 89.

44. Cecil Rhodes had observed that if one wanted to avoid civil war one must become an imperialist. Inoue 1976, 165.

45. Kōtoku 2004, 89.

46. *Ibid.*, 107–11.

47. *Ibid.*, 95.

48. *Ibid.*, 101.

49. This article was serialized from Jan. 19 to Feb. 14, 1901, in *Chiyoda Evening News* (Chiyoda maiyū shinbun) and later became chapter 4 of *Imperialism*.

50. Kōtoku, KSZ 3:98–102.

51. Kōtoku 2004, 107–8.

52. *Ibid.*, 108.

53. *Ibid.*, 108.

54. *Ibid.*, 109.

55. In his final work *Another Year and a Half to Go*, which was published the same year as Kōtoku's *Imperialism*, Chōmin also expressed great admiration for England, a small country that “has established colonies in the five continents” and saw England as a model of the first-class country that Japan aspired to become in the future. Nakae 1995, 70–71.

56. *Ibid.*, 112.

57. Kōtoku, “Byōkan hōgo,” KSZ 6:383–84.

58. Kōtoku 2004, 113.

59. In the first section of chapter 4, he notes that all former empires such as those of the Romans and Mongols “have vanished like the morning mist, without leaving a trace behind.”

60. Since he expressed similar views in other articles, one can conclude that Kōtoku uses this anonymous Russian as a spokesman for his own opinion; “Nihon no Tōyō seisaku,” KSZ 4:269–70.

61. Kōtoku, “Hikaisenron,” KSZ 4:419.

62. *Ibid.*, 420.

63. *Ibid.*, 420–21, see also 427.

64. For a discussion of Japan's railroad policies in Korea, see Duus 1995, 142–57.

65. Kōtoku, “Hisenron,” KSZ 4:426.

66. Uchida 2011, 54.

67. Kōtoku, “Hikaisenron,” KSZ 4:419.

68. Cf. “The history of the world proves amply that countries rarely (seize territory) by force of arms or strategy. In the end the hero of a nation will be the one who loves that nation most. In the end, the people who love Manchuria most will become the owners of Manchuria. We must plan a vast expansion within the limits of our capabilities.” Uchimura Kanzō, “The Spirit of Solving the Manchurian Problem,” *Yorozu Chōhō*, Aug. 25, 1903, cited in Kō 2010, 85.

69. Kōtoku, “Shūshin yōryō wo yomu,” KSZ 2:305–10.

70. Uchida notes that the number of Japanese settlers rose from about 16,000 in 1900 to 170,000 in 1910. Uchida 2011, 58.

71. Tōgō Minoru, *Nihon shokumin ron*, 377–80; cited in Duus 1995, 300–301.

72. Kōtoku 2004, 97.

73. *Ibid.*, 90.

74. *Ibid.*, 103.

75. Kōtoku, “Rekkyō funsō no shinsō,” KSZ 5:104–9.

76. Kōtoku, “Nichibeī sensō no shōrai,” KSZ 6:43–52. Later biographers of Kōtoku have seen this article as proof of the author's political acumen. In fact, books predicting a future war were a popular genre in both Japan and the United States, a reflection of growing friction over immigration after the Russo-Japanese War. Kōtoku's contribution to this genre lay

less in his expectation of a future war than in his insight that the clash of U.S. and Japanese imperialisms in the Pacific would result in an armed conflict.

WHAT CAUSES IMPERIALISM?

Epigraph: Kōtoku, KSZ 5:550.

1. Kōtoku 2004, 19.
2. *Ibid.*, 124.
3. *Ibid.*, 16.
4. *Ibid.*, 20.
5. This passage has been interpreted to signify the “innate goodness” of human nature, a notion that Chōmin viewed as common to Mencius and Rousseau.
6. Mencius 1970, 82–83.
7. Kōtoku praises the British and Americans who support the independence struggles of colonized peoples for placing devotion to moral principle above their loyalty to government policy. He might have treated them as patriots in the higher sense of the term rather than as exemplars of Mencian empathy. I mention this example to show that Kōtoku excluded the possibility of positive forms of patriotism. In effect, he considered patriotism and ethics to be mutually incompatible.
8. He does not mention Taiwanese who fought for independence in 1895 or Koreans in the Donghak rebellion, both colonized groups resisting Japan’s colonization.
9. Kōtoku 2004, 21.
10. Bierce 2000, 179.
11. Kōtoku 2004, 22.
12. *Ibid.*, 22.
13. *Ibid.*, 27–28.
14. Hobson also analyzes imperialism as a “perversion” of ordinary nationalism in which nations “transform the wholesome stimulative rivalry of various national types into the cut-throat competition of competing empires.” While acknowledging that the conduct of nations has always been “determined by selfish and shortsighted considerations,” he goes on to warn that this perversion of nationalism “at a time when the intercourse of nations and their interdependence for all essentials of human life grow ever closer, is a retrograde step fraught with grave perils to the cause of civilization.” Hobson 1965, 11–13.
15. Kōtoku 2004, 62.
16. *Ibid.*, 28–29.
17. *Ibid.*, 28–29.
18. *Ibid.*, 39.
19. Kōtoku, “Sensō to shinbunshi,” KSZ 5:90.
20. Kōtoku 2004, 30.
21. *Ibid.*, 30.
22. Cf. Arendt: “Expansion gave nationalism a new lease on life and therefore was accepted as an instrument of national politics.” Arendt 2004, 205.
23. Kōtoku 2004, 49.
24. In his positing empathy as both human nature and as moral goal, he is fully consistent with Mencius. On the one hand, Mencius held that humans are, by nature, good. On the

other, he insisted that humans must strive to develop their goodness by moral cultivation and education. Matsumoto Sannosuke refers to the combination of natural goodness and cultivation as the nucleus of Mencius's thought. See Matsumoto 1984, 259.

25. Kōtoku, “Jūkyūseiki to nijūseiki,” KSZ 1:338.

26. Kōtoku 2004, 39.

27. *Ibid.*, 79.

28. See Kōtoku, “Sensō to shinbunshi,” KSZ 5:90–93, and “Sensō to shōgaku jidō,” KSZ 5:97–99.

29. Notehelfer 1971, 59.

30. Kōtoku, “Shinkaron to shakaishugi,” KSZ 4:376–82, 378.

31. Notehelfer 1971, 2.

32. *Ibid.*, 83.

33. An indisputable merit of Edward Said's critique of Orientalism is to deconstruct the boundaries between modern and traditional and between the East and West.

34. While both Kōtoku and Sakai referred to the formative influences of Confucian thinkers in their conversion to socialism, Uchiyama Gudō, Sōtō Zen priest, based his radical anarchist opposition to Meiji imperialism on the teachings of the Buddha. For a recent study of Uchiyama see Rambelli 2013.

35. In his translation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, he deploys and reinvents Confucianist concepts to express Rousseau's notions as when he translates reason as *ryōchi* (良知, *liang zhi* of Mencius), rights as *ri* (利, more commonly rendered as interest) and duty as *gi* (義, justice or righteousness). In general, he viewed the thought of Rousseau and Mencius as compatible since both sought to integrate personal morality with political principle. See Bob Wakabayashi 1998, 428.

36. Nakae 1985, NCZ 14:125–36, 134.

37. Nakae 1985, “Rongaikō,” pp. 133–134.

38. Nakae 1995, 56.

39. Kōtoku mentions at the end of this article that he and Sakai had discussed coauthoring a book of commentary on Mencius. “Ko Chōmin koji tsuitokai no ki” (Record of a memorial service for the late Master Chōmin), *Heimin Shinbun* 6, Dec. 20, 1903, in Kōtoku 1948, 118–19.

40. Kōtoku 2004, 41–42.

41. In fact, Kōtoku mentions five cases in which thinkers and politicians were accused at once of *fukeizai* (lèse majesté) and lack of patriotism. Kōtoku 2004, 29–30.

42. The exact nature of his offense is a matter of speculation and interpretation. According to some accounts, Uchimura inclined his head slightly before the imperial rescript but neglected to make a deep bow.

43. Kōtoku, “Kōshitsu to jinmin,” KSZ 2:340–41. The elites prevent the emperor from carrying out his mission “to educate and cultivate the people as a parent does to a child.”

44. Kōtoku 2004, 45.

45. Cited in Shioda 1993, 37.

46. All of Kōtoku's works were banned after the High Treason trial, with the single exception his *Kirisuto massatsu ron* (On the eradication of Christ) because censors did not view this work as subversive. *Kirisuto massatsu ron* set out to expose the historical figure of Jesus Christ as a myth and the story of his life as a fiction. After reading Ernst Haeckel's *The*

Riddle of the Universe during his prison term in 1905, Kōtoku became convinced that Christianity was myth. He ostensibly began to write the work to convince Christians, his rivals within the socialist movement, to break with Christianity and adopt “scientific socialism.” However, Kinoshita Naoe interprets the work more allegorically as an examination and deconstruction of myth in general, and implicitly a rebuttal of the emperor’s divinity (“Yajingo” 1911 in KNZ 12). One might make a similar argument of his essay “Jiyū shisō,” June 10, 1909: “What is god, what is god after all? Things that are incomprehensible all become god, so god is the result of our ignorance. Things that are frightening all derive ultimately from god, so god is another word for our fear. When people want good luck, they pray to god, so god is an incarnation of our egoism.” Kōtoku, “Jiyū shisō,” KSZ 6:489.

47. Kōtoku, “Shakaishugi to kokutai,” KSZ 5:531.

48. Nakamura 1962, 120, 126.

49. Japanese statesmen resisted making this statute part of the legal code. Shimamura 2013, 42–43.

50. In 1912, a textbook dispute involving the split between the northern and southern courts in the fourteenth century touched off a major public controversy over a question that would ordinarily be decided by historians. Brownlee 1999.

51. For a description of all six cases, see Yamaizumi 2007, 12–24, esp. 19–20.

52. Local military reserve associations began after the Satsuma Rebellion (1878) as fraternal organizations for ex-soldiers.

53. Both were set at twelve.

54. The emperor contributed 1,500,000 yen to the government, which raised a further 24,000,000 yen by public subscription. Cited in Gluck 1985, 91.

55. Kōtoku 2004, 40–41.

56. Kōtoku, “Hōki ka heiton ka,” KSZ 4:338–40.

57. Ishimoda 1989, 192.

58. *Ibid.*, 195.

59. *Heimin Shinbun* 1954b, 3:267.

60. *Chokugen* 1905a, 245.

61. Marx 1973, 306–7.

62. See Marks 2005, 616–20.

63. Kōtoku, “Nichirō no kankei,” KSZ 2:379.

64. Kōtoku, “Chōsen no dōran to Nihon,” KSZ 2:415.

65. Critics are reading too much into this statement both because Kōtoku wrote it in a private letter, during his time in prison, and he mentions this “dream” as one of four possible alternatives. I would argue that it is broadly consistent with his overall views in favor of economic expansionism. Asukai 1978b.

66. Kōtoku, “Sensō no kekka,” KSZ 5:85.

67. This is also the gist of “Bunmei no Tokutaku,” KSZ 6:116–18; “Chōsen heidon o hyōsu,” KSZ 5:173.

68. From *Heimin Shinbun* 1954a, 286, 321.

69. Kōtoku, “Chōsen heidon o hyōsu,” KSZ 5:169.

70. Kōtoku, “Gokuchū kara san bengonin ate chinbensho,” KSZ 6:531.

71. Kinoshita 1954 [1904], 351.

72. Kōtoku, “Letter to Hayase Tsutomu,” KSZ 9:326.

73. Dudden 2006.

74. Ukita 2011, 297.
75. See discussion of Kōtoku in Dudden 2006, 89–91.
76. It is curious that he uses the term *jinrui* (mankind) rather than the more politically charged term of *heimin*, which he will specifically wield as a weapon to separate the masses from the nation and government that represents them. In Kōtoku, “Hōki ka heiton ka,” KSZ 4:339.
77. An Jung-geun, assassin of the first resident-general of Korea, Itō Hirobumi, in Oct. 1909, also criticized the usage of international law as an instrument to colonize Korea. “I know about international law and politics through reading Korean newspapers. I even know the reasons why the nations of the world countenance Japan’s ambition to annex Korea.” Cited in Ichikawa 1979, 333.
78. KSZ 4:339.
79. Sept. 15, 1910; *Shakai Shinbun* 1962, 507. A later successor of the *Heimin Shinbun*, this paper was run by Nishikawa and Katayama Sen, that is to say, the parliamentary faction of the socialist movement as opposed to the direct action faction. It was the last publication that served as the central organ of the Japanese socialist movement.
80. “Musan kaikyū kara mita Chōsen kaihō mondai,” *Sekki* 3, no. 4 (Apr. 1923): 38, 40.
81. For excellent studies of later views of Japanese socialists toward Korea, I would recommend Mizuno 1980, 75–82 and Ishizaka 1993, 155–60.

THE BOXER REBELLION AND THE BAND OF IDEALISTS

1. Shandong Province became the sphere of influence of Germany during the scramble for concessions in China in 1897 and 1898. Germany stationed troops, promoted investments, and supported missionary activities there.
2. Russia had 170,000 troops in China, mainly stationed in Manchuria. Nish 1985.
3. Britain also offered Japan 1,000,000 pounds to defray part of its military expenditures.
4. Cited in Lone 2000, 80.
5. The Hanlin Academy, the repository of scholarship during the Qing period, was pillaged, and thousands of books and documents stolen or destroyed.
6. Kōtoku, “Rekkyō kyōdō,” KSZ 2:351–53.
7. Japan might have faced a similar coalition of Western powers if the Sonnō Jōi faction had seriously attempted to expel Western barbarians from Japan by force. Kōtoku noted that his “blood runs cold at the very thought.” “Nihon kakugo hōshin,” KSZ 2:356.
8. Kōtoku, “Taisei undō,” KSZ 2:355.
9. This was a commonplace of Japanese public discourse at the time. Zachmann 2009, 58.
10. *Gashin shōtan*, a well-worn slogan in Japanese politics at the time, is based on a famous story in Sima Qian’s *Records of the Great Historiographer of China* (Shiji), which describes the sweetness of revenge after a long period of hardship and perseverance. Cited in Kōtoku, “Nihon no taido hōshin,” KSZ 2:378.
11. See Kobayashi 2008, 337–48.
12. Sakai offers the following account of the Tianjin campaign: “Leaving the fortress gate, I went to a village nearby and was shocked to discover many more corpses. There were children

lying face upward in ruined homes that lined both sides of the street. An old women covered in blood rolled on the ground. And a huge swarm of flies hovered over them.” Sakai 1970b, 61.

13. Kōtoku, “Shinkoku no zento,” KSZ 2:374.

14. Kōtoku, “Hisensōshugi,” KSZ 2:384.

15. Kōtoku, “Haiteikokushugiron,” KSZ 2:466.

16. Japan fought its earliest imperial/colonial war from 1895 to take over Taiwan and the Pescadores, ceded to Japan by the Qing dynasty. Kōtoku never refers to this war in these terms, although he does condemn the U.S. colonial war to annex the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.

17. This name reflects the fact that the conflict was confined to Beijing and Jilin. They also use the term Giwadan Jihen (Righteous Harmony Society Incident) or Danpi Jiken (Bandit Incident), much as in later years the expanded wars in Manchuria and China were also referred to as the Manchurian or China incidents (*jihen*).

18. Zachman 2009, 133–35.

19. Kōtoku 2004, 83–84.

20. Nakae 1993a, 387–88.

21. Del Mar 1902, 352.

22. For a general discussion of Western discourse on the looting see Hevia 2007, 93–113.

23. Kōtoku refers to the Russian massacres of thousands of Chinese civilians in *Imperialism*. The disgraceful behavior of the Russians was a staple of Japanese reporting of the Boxer Rebellion. For a British view of Japanese behavior, see Martin 1972 [1900], 133: “Of the public treasures, the Japanese, knowing the exact points to seize on, succeeded in getting the lion’s share.”

24. Jansen 2000, 487.

25. The term “loot” stems from the Hindi “lut,” meaning plunder, which gained wide acceptance between the Opium War (1841) and the Indian Mutiny (1857–58). It was “a term that grew out of the colonial experience of India and was then extended beyond the frontiers of the subcontinent through the culture of colonialism.” Yang 2007, 53.

26. Kobayashi 1985, 157.

27. “Hokushin bundori no kaishin,” *Yorozu Chōhō*, Dec. 1, cited in Middleton 2007, 118.

28. Others included major generals Manabe Bin and Tsukamoto Shōga, regimental commanders colonels Awaya Kan, Kobara Yoshijirō, and Nagata Hisashi. See Middleton 2007, 120–22.

29. Saitō 2006, 378.

30. Middleton 2007, 122.

31. *Ibid.*, 122.

32. On the morality of “looting,” see Kōtoku, “Seija no mondai,” KSZ 4:23. On the judiciary, see Kōtoku, “Shihōken no dokuritsu” KSZ 4:25; and Kōtoku, “Shikinseki” KSZ 4:28–30.

33. “Bundori ni tai suru shokan,” KSZ 4:363.

34. *Ibid.*, 31–32.

35. *Ibid.*, 363.

36. *Ibid.*, 361–65.

37. Middleton notes that the most serious political consequence of the scandal was to cast a blot on the Chōshū domination of the army and end its monopoly over the army high command. Middleton 2007, 128.

38. See Kobayashi 2008.
39. Asukai 1978a, 134.
40. Kuroiwa, 1961, 203.
41. Uchimura 1901.
42. “Gimu no nen” was published on July 11, 1901; KSZ 2:266–68.
43. 3,166 members in 1903. Ariyama 1980, 51.
44. Kōtoku, “Mukimei tohyō no kōryoku,” KSZ 4:218 and “Fukōsei naru daihyō,” KSZ 4:216–17.
45. Totman 2000, 327, 332–34.
46. See Asukai, 1978a, 135.
47. In *Another Year and A Half to Go*, Nakae denounces the Sat-chō clan government for its despotism and cronyism and the opportunism of the former opposition parties that have betrayed their principles by entering into agreement with the government. Nakae 1995.
48. Nakaoka Shintarō and Sakamoto Ryōma were both central actors in the forging of an alliance between the Chōshū and Satsuma clans that eventually carried out the Meiji Restoration. Both were *shishi* from Tosa. Kōtoku, “Kokumin no mahi,” KSZ 1:230–32. First published in *Chūō Shinbun*, May 17, 1897.
49. In 1888, Chōmin classified the people into four categories: the good (*ryōmin*), the seditious (*ranmin*), the brave (*yūmin*), and the inert (*damin*). In his view, it was thanks to the political activity of the “brave” that the “good” people could live lives of pleasure and play their role in economic society. “The good people constitute the flesh of society, but the brave make up its bones. The good are economic animals, the brave are political animals.” Nakae 1993b, 141–54.
50. Kōtoku, “Shakai fuhai no gen’in to sono kyūsai,” KSZ 2:149–55; first published in *Yorozu Chōhō*, November 18–19, 1898.
51. *Ibid.*, 117.
52. The term *gijin* appears in the *Analects* of Confucius: “A gentleman of virtue who understands the ultimate meaning of humanity will not seek to save his life at the expense of humanity, but is rather prepared to die to realize it.” Chapter 15, paragraph 9 (子曰。志士仁人、無求生以害仁、有殺身以成仁).
53. In this regard, Crump writes that early Japanese socialists “could envisage ‘socialism’ only as a gospel of elitist self-sacrifice, never as a means of working class self-liberation.” Crump 1984, 132.
54. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew, was falsely accused of selling French military secrets to the German General Staff. Zola interceded in the Dreyfus Affair by writing the article “J’accuse,” in which he accused the senior officers of the French army of fabricating the case against Dreyfus and covering up their plot.
55. Kōtoku, “Zora o nakasu” (In mourning for Zola), written shortly after the French writer’s death and published in *Yorozu Chōhō*, Oct. 3, 1902; KSZ 4:137.
56. The *Mainichi Newspaper* (under the editorship of Shimada Saburō) had also opposed the war at this time; it employed Kinoshita Naoe. Shimazu 2009, 33–34.
57. For an account of the formal resignation of the three from the *Yorozu Chōhō*, see Sakai 2002, 469–72.
58. Kōtoku and Sakai, “Taisha no ji,” KSZ 4:356.
59. Asukai 1978a, 139.

60. “Hakkan no ji,” Nov. 15, 1903, *Heimin Shinbun* 1.
 61. Asukai 1978a, 139–40.

HEIMINISM AND THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

Epigraph: Kōtoku, KSZ 5:530.

1. In a recent study, the war was referred as World War 0. See *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, ed. John W. Steinberg and Bruce W. Menning (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

2. Figures from Kowner 2006, 415.

3. Wilson 1999.

4. Under the terms of the treaty negotiated at Portsmouth (New Hampshire), Russia recognized Japan’s right to “guide, protect, and control” Korea, ceded to Japan control of territories around Port Arthur and Dalian and the railway joining Changchun and Port Arthur, and gave up the southern half of Sakhalin Island. However, Russia refused to pay Japan an indemnity. Tsuzuki 2000, 173.

5. Sho Konishi translates the Japanese term *hisen undō* as the “Non-War Movement” and argues that it was not directed “against a specific war or against violence in abstract terms,” but rather should be understood as “a construct of civilization and progress that was distinguished from Western modernity.” Konishi 2013a, 147. I refer to it as an antiwar movement both because the prefix *hi* generally means opposition (and not simply negation) and because, in the rhetoric surrounding the Russo-Japanese War, *hisen* signified opposition to war just as *shusen* meant advocacy of war.

6. Ishikawa Sanshirō was a Christian socialist who was active in the Congregationalist Church at Hongō presided over by Rev. Ebiina Danjō.

7. “Sengen,” *Heimin Shinbun* 1953a, 3.

8. Kōtoku, “Sensōrai,” KSZ 5:82–83.

9. Arahata 1977, 303.

10. Tsujimachi 1994, 305, 309.

11. “Shōgakkō kyōshi ni tsugu,” *Heimin Shinbun* 4:76–77.

12. Besides these national newspapers, local newspapers were launched by branches of the Heiminsha such as the bimonthly *Kumamoto Hyōron* in Kyūshū with a circulation of 1,500, which continued to appear until its thirty-first edition on Sept. 20, 1908. Okamoto 1986, 13–34.

13. Arahata 1977, 6.

14. Kublin 1950, 322–33.

15. In a letter published on March 13, 1904, a young man wrote to the *Heimin Shinbun* describing the dilemma he faced as an individual who sympathized with socialism but was about to be drafted. While Kōtoku responded in general terms in his “Heishi o okuru” (Sending soldiers off to fight), he did not offer any advice for the individual in question.

16. Kagawa distinguished between sentimental, moral, and rational forms of pacifism in a speech he gave in Hong Kong in 1934 titled “The Economic Foundations of World Peace.” In his later years, he emphasized the importance of a rational pacifism based on an understanding of economic realities over religious or emotional arguments against war. Ota 1978, 176.

17. Wilson 1999, 171.
18. Sakai Toshihiko identifies Tokutomi as a proponent of Christian heiminism (Sakai 1924, 4) but Yonehara Ken stresses the influence of social Darwinism on his thought. Yonehara 2003, 171.
19. This work, written in an unadorned and accessible style, was the first of his works he signed Chōmin, meaning “the people” or “the multitude.”
20. Nakae 1984, 128–29.
21. Nakae 2001b, 64–66.
22. After the resignations of Uchimura, Kōtoku, and Sakai, Kuroiwa Ruiko, editor of the *Yorozu Chōhō* wrote that “he enthusiastically cherishes peace as one of the our nation’s 50 million good citizens, but that if war is inevitable, one must do everything in his power to win the war and restore a glorious peace, since the war is not merely between two armies, but involves all citizens [*zenkokumin*].” Kuroiwa 1968, 283–84.
23. See notably Kōtoku, “Shakai fuhai no genin to sono kyūzai,” KSZ 2:149–55.
24. Kōtoku, “Imada kore arazu,” KSZ 5:538.
25. Kōtoku, “Mottomo shinsei naru mono,” KSZ 5:514.
26. Kōtoku, “Heimin no teki,” KSZ 5:541.
27. Kōtoku, “Heishi no shūsō,” KSZ 5:86–87.
28. Kōtoku, KSZ, 5:514.
29. This ancient term dates back to the *Nihon Shoki* (708 C.E.), in which it designates a person without court rank. In 1869, the government divided the population into three classes, with the samurai divided into *shizoku* (warriors of high rank) and *sotsuzoku* (warriors of low rank), with the rest of the population made up of *heimin*. Shortly thereafter it abolished *sotsuzoku*. Jansen 1986, 78.
30. The English term implies class difference and hierarchy whereas the *heimin* encompassed all but the elite. See Konishi 2013a, 161.
31. Marx 1947, 110.
32. Kōtoku, “Shakaishugi shinzui,” KSZ 4:501.
33. *Ibid.*, 501–2.
34. “Nihon shinshibatsu no kaibai” in *Chokugen* 1905b, 57.
35. Kōtoku, “Wasen o kessuru mono,” KSZ 5:79–82.
36. Kōtoku, “Heimin no mitaru sensō,” in *Heimin Shimbun* 1953c, 209–10.
37. Kōtoku, “Kaisenron no ryūkō,” KSZ 4:282–85.
38. Kōtoku, “Tatagau beki kotowari,” KSZ 5:529.
39. Kōtoku, “Heishi o okuru,” KSZ 5:84.
40. Cf. Konishi 2013b, 91–114.
41. Kōtoku, “Uta karuta,” KSZ 5:49–50.
42. Konishi 2013a, 190.
43. According to Kinoshita, 600 people attended this meeting. Matsumoto 1987, 122–23.
44. Literary journals fell outside the scope of the rules governing newspapers, including the requirement that a sponsor offer financial guarantees. Matsumoto 1987, 412.
45. Ōta 1991, 222–23.
46. *Chokugen*, the successor to *Heimin Shinbun*, published an additional four responses by women.
47. These accounts are reprinted in Yamaizumi 1990, 94, 102, 101, 99.
48. Kōtoku, “Ronbun no sanyōken,” KSZ 6:346–55.

49. This was a translation of four articles that first appeared in the *Seattle Socialist Newspaper* to educate the American public about socialism after the selection of Eugene Debs as candidate of the Socialist Party for the U.S. presidential election.

50. Ōta 1991, 380–416.

51. Cited Ōta 1991, 418, 422.

52. The peddlers were inspired by young Russian revolutionaries who conducted educational campaigns in the Russian countryside for socialism and against the war, as reported in “Rokoku shakaishugisha no dendō undō,” *Heimin Shinbun* 1954c.

53. Cited in Arahata 1977, 227.

54. Ōta 1991, 446–52.

55. See Kōtoku, “Letters from San Francisco” (originally in *Hikari*, no. 5, Jan. 20, 1906), *KSZ* 6:20–21.

56. Sakai Toshihiko and Nishikawa Kojirō also called upon the Socialist Party of America to adhere to international principles and denounce racial prejudice. “Letter from Japanese socialists to their American comrades,” in Crump 1983, 189.

57. “Shōnihon naru ya” (originally in *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 10, Jan., 17, 1904), *Heimin Shinbun* 1953b, 206–7.

58. The *Asahi Shinbun* also republished the essay during the war, contributing to its wide circulation. Konishi 2013a, 184.

59. “Torustoi ō no hisenron o hyōsu” (originally in *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 40, Aug. 14, 1904), *KSZ* 5:241.

60. Chokugen 1905c, 235. Written Oct. 24, 1904, at Yasnaya Poliana, published in *Chokugen*, no. 13.

61. Kōtoku, “Yo Rokoku shakaitō sho” (originally in *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 18, Mar. 13, 1904), *KSZ* 5:94–97.

62. The original article appeared in *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 18, Mar. 13, 1904, and was translated into English in the next issue (Mar. 20), and in that form eventually reached the eyes of Russian Socialists in Switzerland. See Crump 1983, 47.

63. Interestingly, the letter responds implicitly to the Japanese disavowal of terrorism. “We speak as neither Nihilists nor Terrorists. The Nihilist is merely a product of the vivid imagination of the novelist Turgenev and the fears of the European Bourgeoisie.” Kōtoku, “Rōkoku shakaitō yori,” *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 1, July 31, 1904, translated in *KSZ* 5:178–81.

64. The former column included articles not only about the socialist movement in Russia but also throughout Europe (England, Germany, France, Italy), the Americas (Argentina, the United States), East Asia (China), and Oceania (New Zealand, Australia).

65. *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 30, June 6, 1904, in *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* 2:16.

66. *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 31, June 12, 1904, in *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* 2:17.

67. *Heimin Shinbun*, nos. 30, 31, 54 (“Dissolution of the socialist meeting at the YMCA hall”), 55 (“Further persecutions”).

68. Katayama, who was abroad throughout the war, met and shook hands with the Russian Plekhanov in Amsterdam. Speaking before more than a thousand delegates, he also introduced an antiwar resolution. While he opposed the conflict, he also reasoned that a Japanese victory would be the lesser of two evils. Just as the government sought to win support for its position from governments in the West, the editors of the *Heimin Shinbun* sought to win support from socialist parties in Europe and America to condemn the war.

69. “Sekai no Shinbun” (originally in *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 34, July 3, 1904), *Shūkan Heimin Shinbun* 1954d 3:30.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. Hyndman, cited in Lehmann 1978, 156–59.
73. Cited in Sprotte 2005, 44, 46. Sprotte notes that Liebknecht and Luxemburg, who later opposed World War 1, were both arrested and executed in 1919.
74. Cited in Arahata 1977, 163.
75. *Heimin Shinbun* 1954e, 193.

THE ASIAN SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION AND
THE HIGH TREASON CASE

1. Cited in Itoya Hisao 1950, 191.
2. Like Marx, early socialists expected Germany or England, the most advanced capitalist countries, would be the first to undergo revolutionary change.
3. Some 100,000 Chinese studied in Japan between 1896 and 1938, the largest group of foreign students then in the country. For different estimates of the number after 1905, see Reynolds 1993.
4. *Osaka Heimin Shinbun*, Jan. 27, 1907.
5. Uchida established the Kokuryūkai or Amur River Society in 1901 and eventually recruited cabinet ministers and military officers. It pressured the Japanese government to annex the Korean peninsula and offered financial support to Sun Yat-sen.
6. *Heimin Shinbun*, no. 59, Dec. 25, 1904.
7. Many of these revolutionaries were inspired by Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Phan Boi Chau, a Vietnamese nationalist, came to Japan in 1905 to secure Japanese support for Vietnam’s proindependence movement. In subsequent years, he launched the Dong Du (Go East) program to support young Vietnamese studying in Japan. Rodell 2005, 649–51.
8. *Osaka Heimin Shinbun*, no. 5, Aug. 1, 1907, 66.
9. *Osaka Heimin Shinbun*, no. 1, June 1, 1907, 3.
10. Shiraiishi 1982, 339.
11. Japanese writers had earlier supported Philippine insurgents who opposed the American occupation of the Philippines. Kōtoku severely criticized the United States in *Imperialism* and Yamada Bimyō wrote a biography of Emilio Aguinaldo, hero of the Philippine Revolution (*Aginarudo*; 1902) and an adaptation of Jose Rizal’s famous *Noli me tangere* in 1904. After Japan’s victory over Russia, government officials refused to meet with Filipino nationalist leaders.
12. Liu Shipei in *Ajia genseiron*, Oct. 6, 1907, published in *Tengi*, nos. 11 and 12, and translated in *Ashū genseiron*, *Chūgoku*, no. 99 (1972): 56.
13. Karl 1998, 1107–10.
14. Cited in Ishimoda 1989, 197–99. Ishimoda argues that the Japanese socialists contributed to the split in the Chinese revolutionary movement because they failed to understand the significance of ethnic independence movements in colonized and semicolonized regions.
15. Kita 1959, 25; Sakamoto 1970, 86.

16. Zhang Ji was directly involved in the establishment of the two earliest Chinese anarchist associations, the group Tianyi (天義) in Tokyo and Xin Qiyuan (新起元) in Paris, and was known for his early translations of Western anarchist texts. See Murata 2011, 112–13.

17. While the article is a translation of Kōtoku's speech, the editors blacked out his name with *fuseji* (a form of censorship in which characters are replaced by blanks or circles). Otherwise, the publication would certainly have been prohibited. Itoya Toshio 1987, 234.

18. Takeuchi Zensaku and Sakai Toshihiko use the term “Ashū Washinkai” but speak of the Tōa Dōmeikai (East Asian Alliance) in their memoirs. Ashū Washinkai seems more appropriate than the latter since it was created by Chinese and Indian militants and not geographically limited to East Asia. Shiraiishi 1982, 335–72. Shiraiishi (346) mentions a third name: Tōa Bokoku Dōmeikai (East Asian Alliance of Lost Countries).

19. Takeuchi 1948, 76.

20. Yi 2005, 104–12.

21. “Ashū Washinkai Giyaku,” in Zhang Binglin 1990, 347.

22. *Osaka Heimin Shinbun, Meiji Shakaishugishi Shiryōshū, Rōdō Undō shi kenkyū kai*, 5:114, Meiji Bunken Shiryōkankōkai.

23. Kōtoku, “Byōkan hogo” (Wild words from the time of illness), KSZ 6:384.

24. Kōtoku, “Okubo yori,” KSZ 6:172–76.

25. Zhang Ji 1992, 44.

26. Both Ōsugi Sakae and Zhang studied Esperanto.

27. Karl 1998, 1106.

28. Takeuchi 1948, 79. Jansen claims the Japanese government forcibly disbanded the association in 1908. Jansen 1970, 124.

29. On June 22, 1908, a group of socialists gathered to greet Yamaguchi Koken upon his release from prison. Some unfurled red flags and placards with anarchist slogans, sparking a clash with a police. Sakai Toshihiko, Ōsugi Sakae, Yamakawa Hitoshi, and thirteen others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment at the request of the prosecutor who accused them of “spread[ing] poison in society” and demanded “the maximum penalty within the limits of the law.” Cited from *Kumamoto Hyōron*, Sept. 5, 1908, Ogino 2000, 11.

30. Ōsugi 2011, 284.

31. Notehelfer 1971, 160–61.

32. Matsuo 1984, 50.

33. Hyman Kublin, cited in Notehelfer 1971, 161.

34. *Osaka Heimin Shinbun*, April 14, 1907. Cited in Ogino 2000, 10. Ogino mentions that Koyama Matsukichi, prosecutor for the Tokyo Appellate Court, implemented this strategy.

35. Sakai 1970c, 46.

36. Katayama 1918, 134–35.

37. “Two or three policemen stood on guard at his house night and day. At one point they even put up a tent and watched him from there. When Shōsui went out, the police followed him. If they ever lost sight of him, it was a major event. He's showed up in Hongō, now he is in Kanda—the telephones rang all over Tokyo, and the commotion was enormous.” Natsume Sōseki 2011, 200.

38. In the case of the most “extreme, anarchist” socialists such as Kōtoku, the police assigned one or more agents to observe the suspect's action full time and to follow them

whenever they left their home. *Asahi Shinbun*, “Museifushugisha no zenmetsu” (The total eradication of all anarchists), June 21, 1910.

39. Kanno Suga was the only woman involved in the High Treason incident. She has been stigmatized in later writings by Arahata and other socialists as a sexually insatiable temptress and seductress of men doubtless because of her infractions against reigning gender hierarchies in Japan. If many Japanese thought of both Kanno and Kōtoku as “traitors,” they also considered Kanno a danger to Japanese morals and customs. For a recent study of reconstructions of her life, see Raddeker 2013, 91–102.

40. Epigraph from Sakai 1928, 28.

41. Article 73 of the 1908 criminal code states: “Every person who has committed, or has planned (or contemplated) to commit, a dangerous act against the person of the emperor, the emperor’s grandmother, the empress dowager, the empress, the emperor’s son, the emperor’s grandson, or the heir to the throne shall be condemned to death.”

42. Many prominent socialists were already in prison for their involvement in the Red Flag incident and, therefore, could not be charged in this case.

43. In a provocative book, Sho Konishi argues that the term *fuyu no jidai* lacks cogency as an interpretive schema both because networks of “anarchist cooperativism” continued to attract new adherents and their activities were displaced from politic activism onto cultural and scientific domains (for example the popular Esperanto movement in Japan), thereby expanding their influence within Japanese society. Konishi 2013a, 254–56, and 258–95.

44. An Jung-geun is commemorated as a hero of anti-Japanese resistance in Korea. Recently, a statue has been erected to him in Harbin, China, the site of the Itō assassination.

45. During his interrogation, An set forth fifteen charges against Itō, among them depriving Korea of its rights to diplomacy and defense, abolishing the Korean monarchy, and conducting repression against the Korean people. He told his captors that he regarded his assassination as a noble deed (*gikyo*) and as the first step in Korea’s war of independence from Japan. He was executed on Mar. 26, 1910, and Korea was annexed on Aug. 22 the same year. See Kamigata 2000, 9–13.

46. Kanzaki 1977, 3:156–58.

47. The leaflet must have been printed after Kōtoku obtained the photo and wrote his poem, but before his arrest, which is not mentioned in the caption.

48. In the conclusion to his dissertation, Andre Haag notes that these two groups did not actually establish formal ties until after the 1923 earthquake, particularly in the proletarian literature movement. Haag 2013, 333–34.

49. Duus 1995, 235–41.

50. Ishikawa 1970b, 275–76. See also Yamaizumi 2007, 42–44.

51. In addition to Kanno Suga, Niimura Tadao, and Koga Rikisaku, Kōtoku, Niimura Zenebi, and Nitta Tōru were also charged in this bomb case.

52. Ōishi later spoke of this confession as a “truth that emerged from a lie.” Satō Haruo cites this phrase in “Gūsha no shi” (Death of a fool), a poem he wrote shortly after the execution of Ōishi. See Tierney 2010, 101–2.

53. Hiraide 1969, 329–44.

54. Rubin 1984, 162–65.

55. Cited in Watanabe 2006, 67.

56. Hane 1988, 66–67.

57. In a popular novel based on the incident, Ike Setsurei, a strong defender of emperor ideology, depicts Kōtoku as a Hamlet-like character, who recites Shakespeare's "Conscience doth make cowards of us all," whereas Kanno is the villainess who uses her erotic charm to lure him into taking part in the plot. In her case, the motive is revenge, while Kōtoku's weakness of character explains his participation in a plot doomed to fail. Ike 2010, 124.

58. Cited in Takeyasu 1993, 128.

59. "Museifutō inbō: Mubō naru hanzai, Kōtoku Shūsui hensetsu no shinso," *Tokyo Asahi*, June 5, 1910.

60. Shimamura notes that the term "high treason" (*taigyakuzai*) makes its first appearance on January 19. Shimamura 2013, 40.

61. I am particularly indebted to Andre Haag for this idea and to his paper "The Age of Conspiracies: Imagined Terror from Kōtoku Shūsui to Pak Yōl/Kaneko Fumiko" at ASCJ, Sophia University, June 20, 2014.

62. "Shakaishugisha shūhaku: Jūsanmei ichimo ni tsumairu: Gappōmondai to kankei nashi," *Tokyo Asahi*, Aug. 24, 1910.

63. "Gappō to museifutō: Gappō happyō tōjitsu no kenkyō" (The annexation and the Anarchist Party: Arrests on the day of annexation's announcement), *Tokyo Asahi*, Aug. 31, 1910.

64. Umemori 2013.

65. "Before the Korean people could be considered disloyal or treasonous (*futei*), they first had to be constructed as (new) 'Japanese' subjects." Haag 2013, 20.

66. For an account of this conspiracy by a U.S. Protestant missionary in Korea, see Arthur Judson Brown 1912.

67. In addition to the two cases described here, in the Sakuradamon incident of 1931, the nationalist Lee Bong-chang threw a grenade at the horse-drawn carriage outside the Sakuradamon gate of the Imperial Palace in an attempt on the life of the Shōwa emperor. An assassin for the Korean Patriotic Legion, an anti-Japanese group organized by the provisional government of Korea, Lee was arrested, charged with high treason, sentenced to death and executed on October 10, 1932.

68. Thousands of Koreans were massacred in the Kantō region in the wake of the Sept. 1, 1923, earthquake. Local self-defense groups killed many after rumors circulated that Koreans were poisoning wells and planning rebellions. In the Kameido incident, Special Higher Police arrested and murdered ten labor leaders to prevent them from taking advantage of the confusion to foment revolution.

69. Shimamura 2013, 47.

70. Cited in Shimamura 2013, 48.

EPILOGUE

Epigraph from Williams 1955, 380; Rumsfeld quoted in Morgan 2004, 9.

1. The invading forces included soldiers from Britain and a number of smaller countries.

2. For an interesting analysis of humanitarian imperialism, see Bricmont 2006.

3. Cf. Sloterdijk 2009, 66: "Warfare becomes indissociable from an extra-judicial trial."

4. Alan Greenspan, cited in "Invasion of Iraq was driven by oil, says Greenspan," *The Guardian*, Sept. 16, 2007 (www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/sep/17/iraq.oil).

5. Barack Obama, “Statement by the President on Iraq,” www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/13/statement-president-iraq.

6. Huntington 1993.

7. In a recent editorial about ISIS, the editors of the *New York Times* write that ISIS has “horrified and dumbfounded the civilized world” by its “savagery” (www.nytimes.com/2014/08/25/opinion/a-necessary-response-to-isis.html).

8. Cited in Wyke 2006, 313.

9. In a speech at Beijing University in 2009, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner was met with gales of laughter when he assured the Chinese that their huge holdings of U.S. dollar assets were “safe.” Gold Antitrust Action Committee, June 1, 2009 (www.gata.org/node/7461).

10. Kōtoku 2004, 51–52.

11. Johnson 2008.

12. See Thomas Babor et al. 2010.

13. “China Reaps Biggest Benefits of Iraq Oil,” *New York Times*, June 3, 2013 (www.nytimes.com/2013/06/03/world/middleeast/china-reaps-biggest-benefits-of-iraq-oil-boom.html?hpw).

14. The same is true of the system of military alliances from the Cold War. NATO has acquired a new lease on life since 1990, but its geographical purview has shifted away from the North Atlantic and now embraces new regions such as Afghanistan.

15. Arendt 2004, 168.

16. McCoy 2012.

17. Cf. Agemben 1998.

18. Brown and Jaan 2009. See also *Washington Post* 2013b.

19. Alexander Hamilton in *The Federalist Papers*, cited in Bauman 2007, 8–9.

20. “Calif. City tries counterinsurgency to stem gang problem,” *The Washington Post*, Nov. 19, 2009 (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/14/AR2009111400915.html).

21. “Ferguson police: A stark illustration of newly militarized U.S. law enforcement,” *The Guardian*, Oct. 12, 2014 (www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/14/ferguson-police-military-restraints-violence-weaponry-missouri).

22. *The Washington Post* 2013a (http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-28/world/38097452_1_iraq-price-tag-first-gulf-war-veterans).

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