
Japan's World and World War II

The meaning of World War II is still elusive for the Japanese people. Even today, the war projects conflicting self-images of Japan in the various battlefields of Asia and the Pacific: friend, guardian, aggressor, conqueror, victim, superior, weak. At the same time, ironically, the war seems in the long run to have brought Japan unprecedented peace and prosperity. Defeated Japan was allowed to retain its nation-state under the imperial family, whose lineage spans the entirety of its history; and by the 1970s Japan had become the world's third largest industrial power, the only non-Western member of the G-7. And so one might think that the war was not a completely futile battle after all.

If the manner of remembering the war is not obvious, it is also the case that there is no single war to remember. On the contrary, one can understand Japan's war as a loose (though overlapping) sequence of different wars with different names fought in diverse geographical and cultural landscapes: the attack on China through "the Manchurian Incident" of 1931; full-scale war in 1937 with Jiang Jieshi's (Chiang Kai-shek) regime and soon also against Mao Zedong's (Mao Tse-tung) army; the advance into the European colonies in Southeast Asia in 1940 and the linking up with the European War via the Axis alliance; Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the war with the United States in the Pacific. There was also the often forgotten final act, the war with the Soviet Union, which lasted for three weeks until 30 August 1945, even as the U.S. Occupation force was establishing a military government in Tokyo.

This diverse thrust has given rise to diverse names, all of them heavily charged with meaning and often incommensurable: the Greater East Asian War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Pacific War, the Fifteen Years' War, World War II,

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Except for individuals better known by the Western form, Japanese names are given in traditional form, family name preceding given name. Only Japanese works are listed in the notes. To avoid lengthy citation of related works, I mention in several places titles of review articles from *Shigaku-Zasshi* (Journal of Historical Studies). Since 1950 the journal has published an annual comprehensive review of works published in each year under specific subjects and categories. Please refer to these review articles for a list of individual works.

the U.S.-Japanese War, the Far Eastern War, the Anglo-American-Japanese War, and so on. Those who want to focus on the continuous nature of Japan's aggression in Asia prefer the label "Fifteen Years' War" to emphasize its tragic scale. Those who favor dramatic emphasis on the war against the United States use the label "the Pacific War" to zoom in on the period between Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombs. Those who focus on Japan, Europe, and the Axis use "World War II" to put Japan's war in a global context. Since the mid-1980s, a new label, "Asian-Pacific War," has gained some support from historians because it reflects the multiplicity of Japan's war, though it leaves out the Japanese government's Eurasian links with Germany and the Soviet Union. The disagreement demonstrates the nation's torn allegiances and the difficulty of achieving a comprehensive world-historical narrative of Japan's war.¹

The Allies, it should be noted in passing, did not date Japan's original aggression to 1931. In the Cairo Declaration of 1943, the United States, Britain, and China located the beginning of the imperialistic war against China in 1894–95; and they demanded, accordingly, the restoration to China of Taiwan and the Pescadores. The Yalta Agreement of 1945 then demanded restoration to the Soviet Union of the war spoils from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. The Tokyo War Crimes Trial (May 1946–November 1948) created a new category, "conspiracy to commit aggression," to Japan's war crimes and expanded the scope of its investigation back into the 1920s. Finally, the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 conformed to these wartime statements and recognized the relinquishment of all territories seized after 1895.

With such loose boundaries, then, this has never been a shrinking war for Japan: it is everywhere and nowhere. This essay will first give an account of the general public and political context for the postwar understanding. I will then focus more extensively on the scholarly debates. Finally, I will offer some speculative remarks about the end game of World War II.

There were two issues Japan shelved after the war for strategic and tactical reasons: race and ideology. As for race, the two consecutive "magnificent" victories against China in 1895 and Russia in 1905 had instilled in Japan the pride of being the first and only Westernized (modernized) nation in Asia, superior to its environs. Until 1945, racial equality with the West was seen as a prerequisite for Japan's membership in the Great Powers. From the conflicts with the United States over immigration laws and the vain effort to incorporate a racial equality clause in the preamble to the Covenant of the League of Nations to the racial rhetoric of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan

1. Kisaka Jun'ichirō, "Ajaia-Taiheiyō Sensō no kōshō to seikaku" [The name and the character of the Asian-Pacific War], *Ryūkoku Hōgaku* [Ryukoku law review] 25 (March 1993): 386–434. Recently, a growing number of books use in their titles a simple name, "*sensō*" (the war) to refer to these battles that went parallel to Europe's World War II: for example, "the war and gender," "the war and citizens," "the war and local democracy," and so on. In this article, I also use the simpler term "the war" and "Japan's war" so as to cover all possible definitions in use among Japanese.

attempted assiduously to escape from the entrenched connection between Western modernization and Western concepts of racial hierarchy.

With the tacit approval of the U.S. Occupation authorities, however, the insistent language of Japan's racial equality with the West disappeared from the official agenda. The nation soon found that Japan fared well with the West without having any pronounced racial identity. Silence on this aspect served versatile functions when it came to defining the national mission in a world now replete with revolutionary race conflicts.² Yet, the erasure of Japanese racial identity also obfuscated the responsibility for being the "Asian" colonizer and aggressor. Defeat itself, then, did not compel the Japanese people to confront their racism against other Asian peoples. It only amplified their unspoken inferiority complex toward the United States, while putting in suspension the obverse sense of superiority toward Asia.

Under the U.S. Occupation, in a similar manner, the serious ideological dispute of pre-1945 Japan over capitalism and socialism was largely submerged. Since Marxism reached Japan in the 1890s, it influenced immensely the democratization movement as well as various academic circles, official suppression notwithstanding. Throughout the war, Japan's Marxists, both political and intellectual, remained the most eminent antiwar and anti-government force. After the war, under the close surveillance of the U.S. Occupation, serious prospects of Communist uprising in Japan disappeared. Yet, the ideological diversity – abstract if not political – survived substantially enough to secure a certain overall distance from Washington, Japan's new master, patron, or partner. This explains in part the Japanese government's successful all-around "equi-diplomacy" with Communist nations, even at the height of the Cold War. By discarding these two decisive aspects of the war, the Japanese could "peacefully" withdraw from the main current of world history, causing no international controversy while devoting their energy to national reconstruction in their own insular universe. But forgetting did not eliminate the war itself.

As independence was regained in 1952, the Japanese government announced in 1956 the end of "*sengo*" – the postwar period reflecting the direct result and impact of the war. The U.S. military presence went on, however, and so did *sengo*. It did not even conclude with the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989, the only individual who remained in the same crucial position throughout the war and after. In February 2000, the Japanese government's homepage was hacked into and replaced by a Chinese protest against Japan's denial of the Nanjing Great Massacre, forcing Japanese society to realize that the war would continue into the Internet age. As the debate continues today about the validity of the U.S.-sponsored postwar constitution, especially if the permanent disarming of Japan should be seen as a punitive measure, it is impossible for the Japanese to

2. Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York, 1999).

forget they still stand on the rubble of the war.³

The changing public mind set, then, has added to the blurring of the vision of the war. Regarding the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, there has always been open debate, even if it has not resulted in any consensus. Thus, there were overt expositions of Japan's war crimes, including the Nanjing Great Massacre, Unit 731 (biological weaponry lab in Manchuria), forced military prostitution, and other atrocities.⁴ In August 1993, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro almost set a new national tone by recognizing that Japan's war was aggressive and unjustifiable. At the same time, however, right-wing assertions to the effect that the war aimed to defend and liberate Asia from Western aggression persist on all levels, governmental, popular, and academic. In recent years, there has been a powerful backlash, promoted by journalists, writers, historians, and politicians. Putting forth (as the term goes) a "liberal historic view," they attack the "sado-masochist" approach to Japanese history and propose to establish a "proud" narrative of the "people's" history, including Japan's war.⁵

Given these public images of Japan's war, the scholarly efforts sometimes corresponded to them but often followed a relatively autonomous logic. After the war, emancipated from intellectual suppression, scholars began a critique of Japanese fascism. They did so with almost juvenile loyalty to the ideological axioms of either the United States or the Soviet Union, the two victorious powers. The Cold War, often taking the form of "hot war" in Asia, exacerbated this ideological split, which was in turn institutionalized by means of intellectual exchange programs operated by the two respective camps.⁶ Instead of

3. Note an irony that those Japanese who oppose Japan's continuing (reinforcing) military alliance with the United States are also those who vigorously support the spirit of Article 9. Inoue Hisashi and Higuchi Yōichi, *'Nihon-koku kempō' o yominaosu* [Reexamining the Japanese Constitution] (Tokyo, 1994), brings about the twisted nature of arguments over the 1946 constitution.

4. For literary works, Ishikawa Tatsuzō's *Ikiteiru heitai* [The living soldier], which first appeared in the March 1938 issue of *Chūō Kōron* [Central review], Japan's leading intellectual journal, and reemerged in the fall of 1945, attempted to report the killing rampage of Japanese soldiers in Nanjing, though in a severely censored form. Tanuma Taijiro's *Sbunpu-den* [The tale of prostitutes] (Tokyo, 1947) portrays the fate of the so-called comfort women in Korea and was later turned into a film. Gomikawa Junpei's six-volume masterpiece *Ningen no jōken* [Prerequisites for a human being] (Tokyo, 1956–58) confronts the Japanese military atrocities committed in Manchuria and became a national sensation. Morimura Seiichi's *Akuma no bōshoku* [Satan's delirious feast] (Tokyo, 1981) exposes the Japanese army's wartime experiment of biological weapons on Chinese and Russian POWs and became a best seller in Japan in 1982.

5. The group promoting the "liberal historic view" edited and published a four-volume series, Fujioka Nobukatsu et al, eds., *Kyōkasbo ga osbienui rekishi* [A Japanese history no textbook teaches] (Tokyo, 1996–97), which has thus far sold 1.2 million copies. Later, Nishio Kanji, a scholar of German literature and also a member of the group, published *Kokumin no rekishi* [The people's history] (Tokyo, 1999). For a concise critique of this latest trend by a Japanese historian see Ishii Norie, "1998-nen no rekishi gakkai – rekishi riron" [Historical studies in Japan, 1998 – theory of history], *Sbigaku-Zasshi* [Journal of historical studies] 108 (May 1999): 7–12.

6. A special issue of *Rekishi Hyōron* [Historical journal] (no. 143 [July 1962]), "Genjiten ni okeru rekishi-gaku no arikata" [Raison d'être of historical studies in today's Japan] questions the political nature of the U.S.-Japan Committee of Scientists and of grants provided by several U.S. foundations to Japanese students of contemporary Chinese studies (see pp. 1–26). As for historic studies

presenting Japan's deeds and mistakes as they really were in the pre-1945 context, Japanese academic circles reconstructed Japan's war in the light of the Cold War, appealing to the post-1945 bipolar historic norms of Moscow and Washington, a framework later expanded through the rise of the People's Republic of China to include the concept of the East (Communist Asia) vs. the West (capitalist/democratic Euro-America).

Thus, there was confusion when Cold War approaches came to an end along with the Cold War itself. The U.S. victory in the Cold War, notably, has not produced any retrospective consensus regarding the historic legitimacy (or inevitability) of Japan's defeat in 1945. Today's rise of the "liberal historic view" and the inability of its critics to refute it is indicative that the nation has not come to terms with the war in any constructive manner. Let us trace this trajectory in greater detail.

In December 1945, MacArthur's GHQ issued a directive prohibiting Japan from using the ultranationalistic (and racist) term "the Greater East Asian War" and instead imposed the label "the Pacific War," which was already commonly used in the United States. In the same month, the GHQ also ordered leading Japanese newspapers to print, as an educational campaign, a history of the Pacific War. The story began with Japan's aggression in Manchuria and the resulting Anglo-American opposition, then moved quickly to battle episodes in the Pacific and the atomic bombs, all highlighting U.S. scientific and quantitative supremacy.⁷ The single most important lesson the GHQ wanted to inculcate among the Japanese was Japan's complete surrender to the United States.

But there were rival accounts to such Washington-sealed histories, above all strongly Marxist ones.⁸ Rewarded after the military collapse for its antifascist and antiwar stance, the Japan Communist Party was legalized in December 1945 for the first time. Leftist politicians also did well in the first election in April 1946, in which women also gained suffrage. The Japan Socialist Party won the majority vote and its party president, Katayama Tetsu, became the first postwar prime minister (May 1947–March 1948). In such a milieu, critical scholars

of Japan's foreign relations, a survey of writings published between 1955 and 1964 indicates a predominance of Marxist works, especially on Sino-Japanese relations. In that period, while a total of fifty-one works were published on Sino-Japanese relations and thirty-six on Soviet-Japanese relations, only thirteen works were published on U.S.-Japanese relations and fewer than nineteen on Korean-Japanese relations. See *Zasshi kiji sakuin ruiseki sakuin ban, 1955–1965* [Japanese periodicals index: humanities and social sciences cumulative edition, 1955–1964, IX: history and geography], compiled by the National Diet Library, Japan, Reference and Bibliography Division (Tokyo, 1979).

7. See *Asahi*, *Yomiuri*, and other leading national papers for the ten-part series, "Taiheiyo Sensō-shi" [A history of the Pacific War], 8–17 December 1945. The GHQ also simultaneously radiobroadcast a similar program "Shinsō wa kouda" [This is the truth] for ten weeks after 9 December 1945.

8. For a concise review of the rise and fall of Marxist historians and the related problems in both the Japanese and the European contexts in the post-1945 period see Carol Gluck, "Soto kara mita senjō-Nihon no rekishi-gaku" [Historiography of postwar Japan from a foreigner's view], *Nibonshi Kenkyū* [Journal of Japanese history] no. 328 (December 1989): 2–19.

quickly replaced the ultranationalists and defined the defeat as the defeat of Japanese imperialism, militarism, and fascism, as well as of the collaborating politicians and capitalists. The Japanese Marxists, it should be remembered, welcomed the U.S. Occupation forces as a liberation army. In October 1945, when the GHQ liberated some three thousand political prisoners, most of them Marxists and Communists, intellectuals as well as politicians, they thanked the Allied forces for their war effort against fascism and supported their pacifist and democratic policies.⁹

These Marxists defined the scope of Japan's war as long and expansive, a frame appropriate for their revolutionary theory. They saw the root of Japan's fascism in the way modernization had occurred since the late nineteenth century. Since the 1920s, Marxists had attacked the evils of Japan's semifeudal land system under an absolute monarchical rule that was supported in turn by bourgeois capitalists. After 1945, they explained Japan's war as an inevitable outcome of capitalist rivalry and worldwide depression. Japan's fascist government, accordingly, chose the course of aggression overseas to solve the economic stagnation and to divert the growing popular dissatisfaction with ever-widening inequalities in society. Now, with fascism finally overthrown by the popular fight all over the world, the world seemed ripe for socialism. Even the United States, they believed, was not outside this historic possibility; since the New Deal, peace-loving U.S. laborers and proletarians had manifestly stood forth to fight against fascism under the leadership of labor unions and striven ultimately to realize socialism in the United States.¹⁰

The U.S. honeymoon did not last long. In July 1947, *Rekishi Hyōron* (Historical Journal), a leading journal of Marxist history, published an article criticizing the GHQ-sponsored new history textbook *Kuni no ayumi* (Progress of our nation) as inadequate for its exclusive focus on rulers – emperors and politicians – to the detriment of peasants and laborers. But in the following year, perhaps because of the censorship policy, the journal published two special issues praising U.S. democracy and justice at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial – all in an unseemly non-Marxist manner. By 1949, as a Cold War measure, the GHQ

9. Hidaka Rokurō, “Sengo shisō no shuppatsu” [Beginning of postwar thoughts], in *Sengo Nihon shisō taikai* [Great works on postwar Japanese thoughts] (Tokyo, 1968), 1:4–7, 23–25.

10. *Ibid.*, 7–16. The positive view of U.S. laborers is presented in Hayashi Kentarō, “Sekai-shi no tenkan” [Turning point in world history], *Sekai Bunka* [World culture], 1 (February 1946): 16–25. Other related works include Tashiro Masao, “Haisen to rekishi ishiki” [Defeat and the historic consciousness], *Rekishi Hyōron* 1 (October 1946): 71–72; Baba Tsunego, “Sekai minshu-shugi” [International democracy], *Sekai Bunka* 1 (February 1946): 3–6; Tōma Seita, “Sekai-shi no seiritsu – fashizumu to ikani tatakau ka” [Toward a creation of world history – how to fight fascism], *Sekai Bunka* 3 (December 1948): 2–14. Note, however, that Hayashi, a professor of European history and later president of the University of Tokyo (1973–76), modified his stance earlier in the U.S. Occupation due to his disillusionment with Moscow and the Japan Communist Party. While mildly holding on to Marxism, he nonetheless moved to support a U.S.-Japanese alliance. See Hayashi, *Shōwa-shi to watashi* [My life in the era of Emperor Hirohito] (Tokyo, 1992), for his changing ideological stance and accompanying reasons.

initiated a series of antilabor and antisocialist measures, along with the Red Purge in public offices. The journal suspended publication altogether.¹¹

After the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951, Marxist historians reemerged in a different register to oppose the U.S.-Japanese security alliance and the prospect of hot wars across Asia. The U.S. Occupation period, 1945–1951, was no longer a happy conclusion to Japan's war: it now collapsed into a continuing episode of World War II, in which the evil old system of Japan – militarism, the emperor's system, and zaibatsu oligopoly – survived and thrived as a prop of U.S. imperialism. The conservative Japanese government, the central enemy, used the dependency on the United States to promote itself.¹² This general argument had considerable public appeal. The Japanese had not recovered from war fatigue and strongly opposed the prospect of Japan's military involvement in the Cold War as a satellite of the United States. Numerous popular books and college-level history textbooks appeared in this vein. Only by overthrowing the conservative Japanese regime (with ties to U.S. capitalism and militarism) and joining the world peace movement could Japan finally achieve true peace, and thus assimilate the real lesson from the war. By the 1960s, this Marxist current engendered a powerful antigovernment and anti-Vietnam protest movement.¹³

Meanwhile, a completely different school of interpretation emerged from the opposite camp in the Cold War. During the war, Japan's so-called Anglo-American liberals had also been persecuted and imprisoned. After the defeat, they too emerged triumphant, quickly assuming crucial positions in society and actively collaborating with the U.S. Occupation. Just as the Marxists regarded the war as a turning point for Japan in the upward move toward communism, so the liberals saw the defeat as a step toward establishing democracy and capitalism after U.S. and European models.¹⁴ To them, consequently, the most costly mistake before 1945 had been the war against the United States.

Their scholarly focus was thus the road to Pearl Harbor, seen as an aberration from good U.S.-Japanese relations, the result of disastrous misunderstanding. Japan's invasion of China and the nature of fascism were outside the purview. And, after all, even though Japan had now completely lost its colonial empire, it had actually acquired it with Western approval – from Taiwan in 1895, to

11. Hayashi Motoi, "Kuni no Ayumi" o megutte" [On *Progress of Our Nation*], *Rekishi Hyōron* 2 (July 1947): 1–5. For the special issues on the historic legitimacy of U.S. democracy see its June, September, and November issues of 1948 (all in Volume 3). In the September 1951 issue (Volume 5, No. 5), the journal published "8.15 wahei undō no tenkai – Nihon dokusen burujoajī no yakuwari o chūshin to shite" [Development of the August 15 peace movement and the role of Japan's monopolistic bourgeoisie], by Hattori Yukio, 41–52, which points out the post-1945 retention of the same "conservative" forces from the war.

12. For such a Marxist interpretation of the period of the U.S. Occupation of Japan, 1945–1951, as a continuing episode of Japan's war, see *Rekishi-gaku Kenkyū-kai* [The Historical Science Society of Japan], ed., *Taibeiyō Sensō-shi* [History of the Pacific War], 5 vols. (Tokyo, 1953–54).

13. Marxist historians Tōyama Shigeki, Imai Sei'ichi, and Fujiwara Akira coauthored *Shōwa-shi* [History of the era of Emperor Hirohito, 1926–] (Tokyo, 1955), which became a best seller in Japan.

14. Hidaka Rokurō, "Sengo shisō no shuppatsu," 13–16.

Korea in 1910, to the southern Pacific islands in 1919, indeed until the creation of Manchukuo in 1932. The crowning achievement of this sort of historiography appeared in 1963, a seven-volume study on the Pacific War in which the contributors agreed to limit their analyses to the decision-making process of Japan's foreign relations and to eliminate any "jargon" of imperialism, colonialism, and subjugation. They even avoided the phrase "Japanese invasion" since China, now "Red China," was a new "villain" and not necessarily an innocent, powerless victim of Japanese aggression.¹⁵

Washington's Japan policy also had an effect, especially after Edwin O. Reischauer, professor of Japanese history at Harvard, was appointed ambassador to Japan in 1961 by President Kennedy. As one of his chief tasks, Reischauer confronted and undermined Japan's anti-Americanism. He praised Japan's singular Asian achievement in modernization. In what came to be known as the Reischauer modernization theory, expressed in interviews and his own publications, he assured the Japanese people that they had in fact been on the right track of modernization ever since Commodore Perry's expedition in 1853 (the negative contrast being, of course, China's modernization under Mao). He also praised Japan's "indigenous" democratic tradition as rooted in periods long before Perry's arrival. So why not continue good U.S.-Japanese relations in the interest of a better Asia?¹⁶

Amid the economic boom, the Reischauer modernization theory resonated in some unintended ways. As Japan's economy had been revived because of the Korean War (and was about to expand even further because of the Vietnam War), mass media began publishing a glut of articles and books that re-legitimized Japan's war cause – to liberate Asia from the yoke of Western colonialism.¹⁷ Scholarly calls for a positive understanding of U.S.-Japanese relations did not otherwise induce public repentance for Pearl Harbor and the subsequent battles against the United States. Nor did the growing popularity of U.S. material culture, especially among youth. On the contrary, popular journals printed heroic memoirs and narratives of military leaders in the war

15. For this approach see Nihon Kokusai Seiji-Gakkai [The Japan Association of International Relations], ed., *Taibeiyō Sensō e no michi* [Road to the Pacific War], 7 vols. (Tokyo, 1963). For criticism of such approach see Furuya Tetsuo's review in "1963-nen no rekishi-gakkai" [Historical studies in Japan, 1963], *Shigaku-Zasshi* [Journal of historical studies] 73 (May 1964): 165–67.

16. For Reischauer's earliest works in Japanese see Edwin O. Reischauer and Nakayama Ichirō, "Nihon kindai-ka no rekishi-teki hyōka: taidan" [Discussion: historical evaluations of Japanese modernization], *Chūō kōron* 76 (September 1961): 84–97; and Reischauer, "Nihon rekishi kenkyū no igi" [Significance of studies of Japanese history], *Asabi Fanaru* [Asahi journal] 3 (5 November 1961): 28–33.

17. Ueyama Shunpei, professor of history at Kyoto University, published "Dai-TōA-Sensō no shisou-shi-teki igi" [Significance of the Greater East Asian War in Japan's intellectual history] in the same *Chūō kōron* (September 1961) that introduced the Reischauer theory (see the above note). He later published a book version, *Dai-TōA-Sensō no imi* [Significance of the Greater East Asian War] (Tokyo, 1964). Hayashi Fusao's *Dai-TōA-Sensō kōtei ron* [Argument in support of Japan's Greater East Asian War] (Tokyo, 1964) gives a much more aggressive and sensational defense of Japan's war cause, and is therefore both influential with the public and controversial among Japanese historians.

to stir new national pride. In juvenile boys' magazines, too, stories and cartoons glossed over episodes of gallant Japanese marines and pilots in the Pacific in the face of strong opposition from educators and parents.¹⁸ Note that such "masculine" heroism of Japanese in the war was manifested only with the powerful U.S. military as opponent. Battlefields in Asia hardly made an appealing sight to those action-thirsty audiences, old and young.¹⁹

The early 1970s saw a further polarization of war studies under the ironic symbiosis of the violent anti-Vietnam/anti-Japanese government protest movement and the accelerating economic growth of the nation. Marxist and Communist riots on university campuses all over the country paralyzed research, making it impossible for the Marxist/Asianists and non-Marxist/Americanists to collaborate in joint investigations of the cause and nature of the war in a larger perspective. Along with image studies, non-Marxist/Americanists continued to study the decision-making process within the imperial cabinet, the Foreign Ministry, and the military, centering, of course, on the Pacific War, all in search of bureaucratic and subliminal prerequisites for the "right" relationship with the United States. Through scholarly and popular books, leading Americanists in Japan also vigorously promoted a vibrant picture of an early wave of Americanization of Japan from the late nineteenth century to the 1920s, an image suggesting a cultural and historic ferment to the "American Century" in Japan.²⁰

Marxist-Asianists, meanwhile, saw fascism and colonialism as the aggressive repression of revolutionary forces and the world war as a stage in the contest between these poles. About this time, too, these historians began to unearth Japan's popular front movement during World War II in villages and cities. This narrative of oppositional strength was undermined, however, by the ongoing destructive protest movement in Japan and also the evident nonutopian realities of the contemporary Communist world.²¹ Partly because of the U.S. war in

18. Yoshida Yutaka, *Nibon-jin no sensō-kan: sengo-shi no naka no hen'yō* [Japanese view of the war: Its transformation in postwar history] (Tokyo, 1995), 84–97, 112–115.

19. Note, however, that Japan's children's and juvenile books actively bring to light Japan's war in Asia with both Japanese and Asian peoples as protagonists. For a list of works published since the war's end see Hasegawa Ushio and Kido Noriko, *Kyōkasbo ni kakarenakatta sensō – kodomo no hon kara 'sensō to Ajia' ga mieru* [The war no textbook taught – a look into Japan's war in Asia through children's books] (Tokyo, 1994).

20. Early works include: Saitō Makoto, Honma Nagayo, Kamei Shunsuke, eds., *Nibon to Amerika – Isbitsu bunka no shōgeki to badō* [Japan and America – shocks and impacts from different cultures] (Tokyo, 1973); Kamei Shunsuke, *Nibon-jin no Amerika-ron* [Japanese views of America] (Tokyo, 1977); and idem, *Meriken kara Amerika e* [From 'Meriken' to America] (Tokyo, 1979).

21. For a list of works on Japan's popular-front movement see Arima Manabu and Yoshihimi Yoshiaki, "1972 no rekishi-gakkai – Nihon (kindai)" [Historical studies in Japan, 1972, modern history], *Shigaku-zasshi* 82 (May 1973): 149–53. For the early self-criticism of Marxist methodology see Inoue Kiyoshi, "Sengo rekishi-gaku no hansei to tōmen suru kadai" [Retrospect on historical studies in postwar Japan and the impending problems], *Rekishi-gaku Kenkyū* [Journal of historical studies] no. 230 (June 1959): 3–8; and idem, "Gendai-shi no hōhō" [Methodology of modern history], *Rekishi-gaku kenkyū* no. 232 (August 1959): 40–43. Inoue Kōji, "1969-nen no rekishi-gakkai – sōsetsu" [Historical studies in Japan, 1969 – general review], *Shigaku-zasshi* [Journal of historical studies] 79 (June 1970): 2–3.

Vietnam, some historians also connected up the project of Japan's World War II concern in Asia, ironically, with a call for brotherhood with other Asians. In the form of Marxist/Communist support for anti-U.S. independence movements, these arguments bore a peculiar resemblance to the wartime rhetoric of "Asia for Asians."²²

Encouraged by the French Annales school, Japanese scholars in the 1970s and 1980s gradually departed from the paralyzing Cold War paradigm to delve into the lives of ordinary people. The focus on the mental landscape of "ordinary citizens" also affected war studies. Even Marxist historians conceded that the stark thesis of popular struggle against the system of class and imperialism could not possibly explain the meaning and significance of Japan's fifteen years of war. Scholars of "popular history" analyzed both fascism and its opposition at the grassroots level, looking at the active role of ordinary people in executing and opposing the national projects of colonialism, imperialism, and total war, all charged by mass media, propaganda, education, belief systems, and so on. Women's part in the war effort, how mothers and wives upheld Japan's cause in the war, also came under scrutiny as part of gender studies. The nonpolitical (and nonthreatening) Annales approach rekindled popular interest in wartime Japan, its society and culture.

There was a boom in oral history and local history projects, often supported by local governments. The underlying hope was that one might demonstrate that the drive to war would have been avoidable had only the people known better. Yet the methodology contained a danger. By personalizing and humanizing the war, it was also possible to romanticize it as, by unintended extension, peoplehood and nationhood. Such an approach, moreover, tended to put into the background the juggernaut of the war machine. A "human approach," in an effort to transcend the Cold War frame, sidestepped the fundamental questions raised and argued by their predecessors: which war, how, and why?²³

Then came the 1990s, a decade fraught with a number of potentially dangerous anniversaries. Thus, Japan celebrated 1991 as the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor rather than the sixtieth anniversary of "the Manchurian Incident." In 1995, Hiroshima and Nagasaki dominated the scene. The general Japanese public did not recall the fact that their nation also surrendered to China – to Mao's Red Army as well as to Jiang's. Nor did they see in North Korea, an enigmatic and dangerous power, a remnant of their own colonial empire. The

22. Bitō Masahide, "1971-nen no rekishi-gakkai – rekishi riron" [Historical studies in Japan, 1971 – historical theory], *Shigaku-zasshi* [Journal of historical studies] 81 (May 1972): 4–8. Kotani Hiroyuki, an Asian historian, tells how his belief in Asia has been tightly linked to his belief in Marxism; see his "Minzoku, Ajia, Marx" [Nationalism, Asia, and Marx], in *Rekishi-ka ga kataru seigo-shi to watasbi* [Historians tell their own history in the postwar period], ed. Nagahara Keiji and Nakamura Masanori (Tokyo, 1996), 253–56.

23. For general criticism of "people's history" as a "non-historical approach to history" see Yuge Tōru, "1978-nen no rekishi-gakkai – sōsetsu" [Historical studies in Japan, 1978 – general survey], *Shigaku-zasshi* [Journal of historical studies] 88 (May 1979): 1–6; Kabayama Kōichi, "Rekishi riron" [Historical theory], *ibid.*, 7–11.

ceremonies at Hiroshima and Nagasaki featured a solemn national message: “We shall never repeat the same mistake.” But no one was sure what mistakes exactly, and whose they were – the atrocities on the battlefields, Pearl Harbor, the Axis alliance, Manchukuo, colonialism, fascism, or Japan’s entire course of modernization.

A new generation of scholars, gradually untethered from the burden of the ideological commitments of their respective mentors, had by then begun to develop a relatively comprehensive regional coverage of Japan’s war. As the bubble economy of the 1980s accelerated Japan’s globalization, “internationalization” of war studies also became a trend. Scholars compared perspectives of Japan’s war from Asia and the Pacific, Euro-America, and even the former Soviet Union.²⁴ Ever since the late 1970s, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declassified relevant documents, diplomatic historians had been discovering how Japanese army and navy attaches, diplomats, and newspaper correspondents had scurried across the neutral nations of Sweden, Switzerland, Vatican City, and the Soviet Union, scrambling for a diplomatic exit from the war with the United States.²⁵ It was revealed that these wartime agents hardly adhered to the official goal of preserving the new Asian order. While maintaining in their negotiations that the emperor’s institution must remain intact after the surrender, they did not exhibit any anti-Communist stance, either. This new “international” approach has just begun to recast the historiography of Japan’s diverse diplomacy during the war.

Meanwhile, a powerful, transnational concept of human rights emerged as a new tool of analysis. Historians and philosophers discovered the meaning of Japan’s multilayered war crimes – how Japan as a nation and the Japanese people as both imperial subjects and modern (civil and educated) individuals violated the dignity of Asians in their colonial empire and battlefields.²⁶ War and

24. During the 1990s, *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of military history], edited by Gunji-shi-gaku Gakkai (The Military History Society of Japan), published a three-part special issue “Tokushū: Dai-Niji-Sekai-Taisen” [Japan in World War II] that presented a rather comprehensive reference to international military, political, economic, and diplomatic aspects of Japan’s war. See “Kaisen e no kiseki” [Toward Pearl Harbor], 26 (September 1990), “Shinju-wan zengo” [On the eve of Pearl Harbor], 27 (December 1991), and “Shūsen” [Termination], 31 (September 1995). For other international approaches to Japan’s war see Hosoya Chihiro, Homma Nagayo, Akira Iriye, Hatano Sumio, eds., *Taipeiyo Sensō* [The Pacific War] (Tokyo, 1993); “Shūsen gaikō to sengo-kōsō” [Japan’s wartime diplomacy and the postwar visions], *Kokusai Seiji* (International relations), 109 (May 1995); and Hosoya Chihiro, Akira Iriye, Gotō Ken’ichi, Hatano Sumio, *Taipeiyo Sensō no shūketsu – Ajia-Taipeiyo no sengo keisei* [The close of the Pacific War – Formation of postwar Asia and the Pacific] (Tokyo, 1997).

25. See, for example, the following in *Gunji Shigaku* 31 (September 1995): Ōki Takeshi, “Fujimura kōsaku’ no kigen ni kansuru jakkan no kōsatsu” [Some thoughts on the origins of “The Fujimura Operation”], 288–99; Hiramā Yōichi, “Doitsu no haisen to Nichi-Doku kaigun” [German defeat and the Japanese and German Navies], 300–17; and Onodera Yuriko, “1945-nen haru no Sutokkuhorumu” [Stockholm in the spring of 1945], 439–46. See also note 37.

26. Ōkado Masakatsu, “Rekishī ishiki no genzai o tou – 1990-nen-dai no Nihon kindaiishi kenkyū o megutte” [“Theory of National State’ and its critique”: Examining the “now” of the historical consciousness], *Nibonshi Kenkyū* [Journal of Japanese history] no. 440 (April 1999): 85–96. Ueno Chizuko, Japan’s leading feminist scholar, first introduced her argument in a multiple pursuit

aggression, in this perspective, begin when a people invents a logic and a power mechanism that degrade another people's values as human beings. There is now a debate about the relation between, on the one hand, being a self and citizen of a nation-state, and on the other, one's subjective and collective war guilt as well as, in this case, responsibility for Asia.²⁷

Interestingly, this focus on nation and people does not, so far, include the United States and other Western nations. Even pro-U.S. scholars have failed to study systematically Japanese collective guilt and responsibility toward the United States. A classic argument of Pearl Harbor being an act of self-defense in reaction to Washington's ultimatum appeared as early as the time of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, and the theme is alive and well today. Japan's total defeat by the United States, symbolized by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, continues to invoke a victim mentality among Japanese people. Such tendencies are in fact widening.²⁸

The most visible syndrome of such frustration is the aforementioned "liberal historic view," which criticizes Western racism against the Japanese but in turn dismisses the inverse Japanese racism toward the West and also trivializes the newly emerging sense of responsibility and conscience vis-à-vis other Asians. As the bipolar restraints of the Cold War have faded, the "new" narrative of the "liberal historic view" actually turns out to be a replica of ruling visions during the war. The alternative to this view, what might be called the narrative of responsibility, omits the "Pacific War" for the sake of logical coherence: Japan, the powerful, overwhelming Asia, the powerless. These two arguments, though opposite, nonetheless express the insularity of contemporary Japan along with the relative contentment with Japan's status in the world. Despite the defeat of 1945, both approaches take for granted Japan's integral survival and growth as one nation, one people, one history. As a result, they mechanically exonerate post-1945 Japan, never confronting, for example, the remaining dual racism in the view of Asia and the United States. The consequence is a continuing double standard in view of the separate wars in Asia and the Pacific.

of Japanese women's responsibility for the military prostitutes: as a member of Japan, the nation-state, as a citizen, and as an individual female self. See Ueno Chizuko, *Nasbonarizumu to jendā* [Nationalism and gender] (Tokyo, 1998).

27. The latest anthology of related works by historians and philosophers is Abiko Kazuyoshi, Uozumi Yōichi, and Nakaoka Narifumi, eds., *Sensō sekinin to "ware ware" – "rekishi shutai-ron" o megutte* [War responsibility and "us," – on arguments on the subjective commitment to history] (Kyoto, 1999).

28. Since 1991 Rekishi Kyōiku-Sha Kyōgi-Kai [Association for History Teachers and Educators] conducts annual surveys of one to four thousand students (age 6 to 18) on their views of modern Japanese history. Their predominant image of Japan's war is the one against the United States with Japan being the victim. There is no clear awareness among the students that the main battlefield was in China. Meanwhile, the atomic bomb occupies a large place in their image as one of the worst tragedies in the war, and their victim mentality sharpens in reverse proportion to their awareness of the Nanjing Great Massacre and other atrocities in Asia. See Kon'no Hideharu, "Sogai sareru rekishi kyōiku" [Ever alienated historical education], *Rekishi Hyōron* [Historical journal] no. 582 (October 1998): 72–86.

Here is also the place where a price has been paid for the diminution of the Marxist dimension. Too often Japan's war is portrayed either merely as all-out aggression against China, with the imagined, unified nation-state fighting under the banner of Pan Asianism; or, alternatively, as merely a black-and-white clash with the United States over race, culture, ideology, or spheres of influence. The post-1945 narrative produced a different kind of Manichaeian view: fascist and imperialist Japan against revolutionary China, or militarist Japan against the liberal-democratic-capitalist United States. Until the 1990s, Japanese historiography did not accentuate the fact that the Soviet Union had been a most critical ally, an ally of a kind, in the war against the United States. Geopolitically, Japan was in no way capable of fighting a two-front war against the United States and the Soviet Union, which was why the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact in April 1941 was a crucial precondition for the war against the United States. Nor was anything much said about the fact that Japan also surrendered to the Soviet Union, having suffered a total of ninety thousand casualties (eighty thousand military and ten thousand civilian), mostly in Manchuria, in just three weeks of war.²⁹

This long silence may actually tell some hidden story – a clue that provides some missing link between the wars against China and the United States. For Japan's original war goal was not just to remove the Euro-American influence from Asia; it also aimed at eliminating the Communist influence. Japan's fascism, after all, understood itself as a third political force that was both anti-Communist and anti-liberal/capitalist. Based on that principle, Japan's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere aimed to create a self-sufficient colonial empire, independent of both Soviet and Euro-American influences. The parallel struggles against Mao and Jiang is eloquent testimony to this dual thrust.

It is well to remember that severe ideological tensions within Japanese society persisted throughout the war. The Sorge Incident, the Comintern spy ring that penetrated the military, government, and even aristocratic circles, is a sign of the most serious domestic attempt to overthrow Japan's fascism and colonial empire.³⁰ The force of antifascism in the war cannot be dismissed with the present wisdom that communism, after all, was a faulty ideology. Between 1931 and 1942 alone, a total of ninety-nine Japanese soldiers escaped to and joined

29. Recent works on Japan's final war against the Soviet Union include Nakayama Takashi, *Manshū – 1945.8.9: Soren-gun sbinkō to Nibon-gun* [Manchuria, 9 August 1945: Advance of the Soviet army and the Japanese army] (Tokyo, 1990); idem, *1945-nen natsu saigo no NiSso sen* [Summer 1945, the final Soviet-Japanese War] (Tokyo, 1995); and Handō Kazutoshi, *Soren ga Manshū ni sbinkō sbita natsu* [The summer when the Soviets invaded Manchuria] (Tokyo, 1999).

30. The primary source on the Sorge Incident in Japanese is *Gendaishi sbiryō, Zoruge jiken* [Primary documents on modern Japanese history: The Sorge Incident], vols. 1–4 (Tokyo, 1962–71). Ozaki Hotsuki, a half-brother of Ozaki Hotsumi, Sorge's chief collaborator, wrote two books on the Sorge Incident from an insider's perspective: *Zoruge jiken – Ozaki Hotsumi no risō to genjitsu* [The Sorge Incident – goal and failure of Ozaki Hotsumi] (Tokyo, 1963) and *Shanbai 1930-nen* [Shanghai in 1930] (Tokyo, 1989).

either the Soviet or the Chinese Red Army, while in the same period Japan's Secret Police cracked at least sixteen internal Communist plots led by Imperial Army officers.³¹ Leaders of Japan's Communist movement engaged in antiwar campaigns on China's battlefield, urging Japanese soldiers to surrender and not collaborate with the Japanese government. They also trained and organized Japanese POWs captured by the Red Army. At the war's end, between eight and ten thousand Japanese soldiers chose to stay with Mao's People's Liberation Army and help it in the civil war.³² These Japanese soldiers were disillusioned by Japan's "holy war," which had originally been a promise to save their families from poverty.

Into the final year of the war in 1945, rumors of the Soviet (not U.S.) victory in World War II circulated in Japan's cities and villages with a mixture of hope and curiosity.³³ What threatened the Japanese government at that time was no longer just a prospect of defeat itself, but the prospect of a Communist coup d'état in Japan. In February 1945 Prince Konoe Fumimaro urged Emperor Hirohito to end the war and conclude peace with the United States, before hunger, poverty, and the growing influence of laborers together would engender a Communist revolution. The danger was especially strong within the Japanese Imperial Army since, as Konoe put it, most of the military officers come from the lower-middle class families.³⁴ Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, a "liberal" pro-U.S. intellectual and journalist, also expressed the same concern during the war that a "feudalistic" Communist revolution, a "theft" from the haves and an act of destruction, would be inevitable if Japan's uneducated peasants and blue-collar workers continued to speak up against the military government.³⁵

31. Kaji Wataru, *Hansen shiryō* [Antiwar documents] (Tokyo, 1964), chap. 8, "En'an no hansen dōmei" [Antiwar alliance at Yennan]; Ōmori Minoru, *Sengo hi-sbi (3): Sokoku kakumei kōsaku* [Secret history revealed after the war (3): Patriotic revolutionary operation] (Tokyo, 1975), chaps. 3–4; Fujiwara Akira, ed., *Sbiryō Nihon gendai-sbi* [Primary documents on modern Japanese history], vol. 1 "Guntai nai no hansen undō" [Antiwar movement within the Japanese military] (Tokyo, 1980), esp. chaps. 3–4.

32. Furukawa Mantarō, *Chūgoku zanryū Nihon-bei no kiroku* [Records of Japanese soldiers who remained in China] (Tokyo, 1994), chap. 1, 64–65.

33. Nihon Keiho-kyoku Hoan-ka [The Japan Police Bureau, Security Section], "Sankō tsuzuri, 1943–1944: Saikin ni okeru fukei, han-sen, han-gun sonota fuon gendou no gaiyō" [Memorandum, 1943–1944: Records of recent voices on street – blasphemy, anti-war, anti-military, and other disturbing comments], Microfilm Collection, MJ-144, "Japanese Rarities," reel 8, 3.23, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

34. The letter from Prince Konoe to Emperor Hirohito is reprinted in Nihon Gaimu-shō [Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs], ed., *Nihon no sentaku: Dai-Niji Sekai Taisen Shūsen Shiroku (jō-kan)* [Japan's choice – historical records on the conclusion of World War II] (Part 1 of 3) (Tokyo, 1990), 259–63. Governmental concern about class struggle within Japan even after August 1945 is documented in Awaya Kentarō, ed., *Sbiryō Nihon gendai-sbi (3) – Haisen chokugo no seiji to sbakai [2]* [Primary documents on modern Japanese history (3) – politics and society immediately after defeat (2)] (Tokyo, 1981), esp. chap. 3, "Kyū-sayoku, 'shisō-han zenreki-sha' no dōkō" [Recent activities of the former left-wing and "thought criminals"].

35. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, *Ankoku nikki* [Diary in darkness] (Tokyo, 1954). See, for example, entries of 9 July, 5 August, and 28 November 1943 (pp. 30, 40, 75).

The wartime Japanese government remained cautious about plots by pro-U.S. elites but did not think a grass-root revolt along those lines likely. According to the now classic argument, even during the war there was strong hope among the Japanese elites for a return to the “status quo” of the 1920s, when Japan peacefully participated in the Western order. But there were also those who wanted a positive peace with the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist Party, to end the war and move toward a revolution of social relations.

This sentiment might partially explain the relative absence of any popular guilt toward the United States. Ordinary Japanese were involved in the propaganda campaign to stir up anti-U.S. racist sentiments; but the popular inability to feel responsible for the war against the United States is not exclusively due to race-related feelings. Contrary to the post-1945 myth, the United States in prewar Japan did not exist in any wider segments of the population. Contacts with Americans and other Westerners, “superiors” on Japan’s civilizational scale, were limited to a handful of the elite. Demographically, more than 80 percent of Japanese lived away from the glitzy Westernized cities; and peasants, who constituted more than 40 percent of the entire population, barely survived and had nothing to do with Western luxuries.³⁶ “American freedom and democracy” was not propagated in prewar Japan as a solution to poverty and hunger; and the popular classes did not necessarily know how to situate themselves at the outset in a fight between their government and that of the United States.

Here, finally, one should understand that the Japanese government conducted a much more versatile diplomacy during the war than is usually grasped, a diplomacy that included the Soviet Union and China (both Jiang’s and Mao’s regimes). The goal was to contain the revolutionary dilemmas, both internal and external, and ensure Japan’s integral survival as the same nation-state after surrender. There was an attempt, in particular, to exploit the Communist factor in the Grand Alliance so as to achieve the best outcome with the United States.³⁷

36. Kamei Shunsuke et al., eds., *NichiBei bunka no kōryū shō-jiten* [A mini dictionary of U.S.-Japanese cultural exchange] (Tokyo, 1983) is an attempt to offer a historical survey of U.S.-Japanese cultural interactions in 150 years. Elements of U.S. culture that penetrated and affected Japanese “society” before 1945, according to this dictionary, include flour, potatoes, Ford motor cars, household electric appliances, ballroom dance, radio broadcast, tennis, baseball, football and the life-style of “flappers” from the 1920s.

37. Arguments in support of exploiting the emerging Washington-Moscow tension appeared as early as 1944 in response to the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference of October 1943. See related articles in *Gaiko jibō* [Revue diplomatique]: Matsuda Michi’ichi, “Mosokuwa Sangoku gaisō kaidan” [Moscow Conference among three foreign ministers], no. 938 (1 January 1944): 5–12; Yoneda Makoto, “Soren tai Ei-Bei no ichidai mondai” [A grave issue between the Soviet Union and Anglo-America], no. 942 (1 March 1944): 5–14; and Naomi Zenzō, “Kōsaku suru Bei-Ei-So sangoku no seiryaku” [Dynamics of Anglo-American-Soviet political tactics], no. 945 (1 May 1944): 25–31. Akashi Yōji, “Taiheiyō Sensō makki ni okeru Nihon gunbu no En’an seiken tonō wahei mosaku” [In search of peace; the Yanan alternative and the Imperial Japanese Army], in *Gunji Shigaku* [Journal of military history] 31 (September 1995): 175–85, reveals the Japanese government’s attempt between late 1944 and early 1945 to approach Mao, using the former members of the Japan Communist Party as liaison. Akashi argues that the government aimed to form a Moscow-Yenan-Tokyo détente as a pressure for Chungking/Washington.

The government's anti-Communist stance at home was one thing; its geopolitical relations with the Soviet Union another. Quite unlike Cold War renditions of the war, the Japanese government actually moved between Moscow and Washington in an opportunistic manner for the best possible exit.

The dimension of domestic Communist influence during the war and the Japanese government's dealings with Moscow and Yanan were problematic for Japanese historiography for a long period. Pro-U.S. historians avoided the topic because Japan's "flirtation" with communism was an aberration from the proper path of modernization, a tarnish even in light of the Moscow-Washington Grand Alliance in the war. Thus, while extolling the so-called peace-feelers vis-à-vis the United States, they ignored those fighting for a different kind of peace in China. The Marxist historians, on their part, opted to ignore the shameful wartime deal between the "heroic" Soviet Union and the Japanese government. Stalin's "betrayal" in the attack on Manchuria and his subsequent "illegal" occupations of Japan's northern islands were also inconvenient matters to include in revolutionary narratives. As the Sino-Soviet rivalry worsened, many Japanese Marxists refrained from praising the Japanese who fought on the side of Mao Zedong, thus also burying their own people in historic oblivion.

From a post-Cold War perspective it is interesting to speculate on the neglected Soviet aspect in the final moments of the war. My own work in progress on this indicates preliminarily that the refusal of the Japanese government to surrender after Germany's collapse in May 1945 was in part a deliberate attempt, an extremely risky one, to induce Soviet entry into the Asian war, using Manchuria as a gambit. The aim, in a classic geopolitical manner, was to turn the final stage of the Pacific War into a U.S.-Soviet power game and ideally to gain a negotiated peace with the United States. This geopolitical calculation, a "balance of power" in the region, would also check the postwar growth of China, regardless of whether it be unified, nationalist, or Communist. Moreover, the Soviet presence would also appease the revolutionary tension within Japan. And Japan in its defeated state would be able to recede into a new configuration of power. Based on such calculations, the Japanese government perhaps estimated the best timing to surrender to be shortly after the Soviet entry into the war in Asia.³⁸

Indeed, once the Soviet forces began sudden and massive attack on Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands, the Japanese official group in Switzerland issued a strong protest against Soviet entry into the war and persuaded the emperor to turn to the United States alone. On 17 August, only

38. Upon hearing the news of the Soviet entry into the war on 9 August, Prince Konoë himself is said to have uttered: "This must be a god-sent gift. We can now end the war." Yomiuri Shinbun Sha, *Nihon Shūsen Shi (ge)* [History of the end of Japan's war, volume 2] (Tokyo, 1962), 109. Tanemura Sakō, chief of the War Planning Section, the Imperial Army Headquarters, knowing the war was coming to an end, wrote to his colleague on 4 August 1945, two days before Hiroshima: "The only thing we can think now is what we [Japan] should do best when the Soviets enter the war. . . . You know what is the obvious choice." Tanemura Sakō, *Daibon'ei Kimitsu Nikki* [Secret journal of the Imperial Army Headquarters] (Tokyo, 1952), 251.

two days after surrender, the Japanese government requested the U.S. government to halt the continuing Soviet offensive in Manchuria. Subsequently, President Truman announced the sole occupation of Japan proper by the United States.³⁹ So the Soviet interlude secured the integral survival of Japan with the emperor's institution intact and no more fear of internal ideological split. This in turn puts into question any simple orthodox narrative of the atomic bomb according to which Japan fanatically refused to surrender while the United States wanted to avoid the costly mainland invasion. Furthermore, this speculation challenges the long silence about the atomic bomb and Soviet entry into the war in Japanese historiography of the war. It will also hopefully encourage scholars to ponder the causes for nonrevolutionary continuity of Japan as the same nation-state in spite of August 1945, as well as the origin of Japan's "neutrality" henceforth.

Postwar Japan's evasiveness about its own war is not just about its inability to look into the atrocities in the battlefield. Japan's complicated wartime history, with its strong internal sources of opposition, with its peculiar relationship with the Soviet Union, China, and the United States, has prevented a clear understanding precisely because today's Japan is an outcome of these multiple dealings. Japan's survival rhetoric in the war (and in the modernization process) contained numerous combinations of various factors as plausible solutions – culture (Asia or the West), race (yellow or white), ideology (communism or capitalism), geopolitics (Eurasia or the Pacific), and so on. Japan today has not come to terms with any of this history.

39. These Japanese actions and statements are available through Washington's communications. See "Memorandum for the President from William J. Donovan, Director of the OSS (Top Secret)," 14 August 1945, RG 226, M 1642, Records of the OSS Washington, Director's Office, roll 61, frame 935, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland; "To US Military Mission Moscow, signed MacArthur (17 August 1945)," and "For Generalissimo Stalin from President Truman (August 18, 1945)," Papers of W. Averell Harriman, box 181, Moscow Files, August 17–18, 1945, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.