

# In the Ruins of the Japanese Empire

## Imperial Violence, State Destruction, and the Reordering of Modern East Asia

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# Introduction: The Search for Meaning in Defeat and Victory

Barak Kushner<sup>1</sup>

World War II dragged on in East Asia for three more months than in Europe, where the Allies declared victory on May 8, 1945. The formation of the United Nations was announced in San Francisco on June 26, 1945, and soon it became clear that Japan's imperial demise would be entirely different from the Nazi collapse. World War II fractured the political spectrum in East Asia: the result was a cacophony of groups vying for postimperial authority in a situation where nothing was preordained and where no result was inevitable.

The Cold War would more solidly divide these new alliances and political fissures during the ensuing years, but it was the end of Japan's dominance across the regions that lit the initial fuse of imperial destruction for both the European colonial powers and Japan in East and Southeast Asia. In response, we need to examine how imperial violence and the war intersected with the ensuing civil wars, and how such events gave birth to new military and political strategies, modes of anticolonial governance, peoples' wars, and additional cultural and media spheres of influence. Accordingly, the legacy of that imperial control wielded an immeasurable influence on subsequent decades. But while the façade of empire had crumbled, the remnants of the old networks of power and political legitimacy took a while to be reestablished and reconstructed. We are dealing with the consequences of violent alteration of both the physical environment and geographical boundaries, but the thick continuities associated with colonialism, mobilization, industrialization, and technology complicate the relationship between 1945 imperialism and subsequent decolonization.<sup>2</sup> Japan's surrender involved all sorts of administrative and military machinations among the various authorities to ensure their upper hand in the initial power vacuum.

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1. I would like to thank the European Research Council for its support with a six-year grant (2013–2019) to conduct the research, workshops, and conferences with funds to draw together an excellent cohort of scholars as part of the project, "The Dissolution of the Japanese Empire and the Struggle for Legitimacy in Postwar East Asia, 1945–1965" (DOJSFL 313382). The project website is [warcrimesandempire.com](http://warcrimesandempire.com).
  2. See Hiromi Mizuno, Aaron Stephen Moore, and John Paul DiMoia, *Engineering Asia: Technology, Colonial Development and the Cold War Order* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

The research collected in this volume aims to generate new dialogues on the history of the collapse of the Japanese Empire and the ensuing history of the early postimperial years in East Asia. The goal is to examine how political systems and society were rebuilt and in what manner. In part, we need to establish alternative paths for exploring history after violent conflict in ways that do not merely place weight on victory or defeat.<sup>3</sup> We achieved this by gathering a diverse group of scholars who work on a wide spectrum of historical and geographical perspectives, focusing on China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, and who research aspects of military demobilization, law and responsibility, the reorganization of authority and new political ideologies, transformations in postwar societies, culture, and other related topics. The underlying theme that connects these topics is captured in the way in which the collapse of the Japanese Empire affected the region, and how a host of different and often competing groups struggled to remap and reenvision East Asia in the aftermath of the breakdown of empire. These chapters engage in a conversation across the dividing lines of individual national histories concerning the significance of how the Japanese Empire dissolved and then how its legacy was reconstituted elsewhere.

Even with the economic rise and growing importance of contemporary China, East Asia's understanding of its own past and its internal dynamics remain deeply rooted in the contours of the manner in which World War II ended. The Chinese mainland witnessed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) pitted against the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) in a civil war that divided loyalties. On the Korean Peninsula, Kim Ku was a popular choice for president of South Korea but lost to the seventy-year-old US-backed Syngman Rhee, who would go on to win the 1948 election. In the north of the peninsula, the USSR initially sponsored Cho Man-sik then switched to propping up Kim Il-sung, whose family dynasty still rules. Ho Chi Minh, the ardent Vietnamese nationalist, tried to move preemptively while the French were on the back foot with their loosening imperial hold on Indochina. These moves discombobulated the former colonizers; French general Charles de Gaulle had to dispatch non-French officials to several sites in the colony to receive the Japanese papers of surrender. These moves included using the British in Saigon in the south of Vietnam and KMT general Lu Han, who secured Hanoi in the north.

These narratives became exceedingly important to the rise of numerous leaders and served as ballast for their authority. This was surely the case for the creation of the myth of the Kim dynasty in North Korea, if not in part helpful to Mao's rise due to his designation as the central force behind China's war of resistance against

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3. Yoshida Yutaka very ably explored the myriad ways Japanese elites tried to bring the war and empire to a conclusion that best suited Japan's own interpretations. See Yoshida Yutaka, *Shōwa tennō no shūsenshi* (Iwanami shoten, 1994; originally published 1992). See also Hatano Sumio's article that analyzes the various ways Japanese officials at the end of war orchestrated policies and discussions to feature the idea that they were pursuing peace in the early postwar. Hatano Sumio, "Kokutai hoji to hachigatsu kakumei-sengo nihon no heiwashugi no seisei," *Kokusai nihon kenkyū* (Tsukuba daigaku daigakuin jinbun shakai kagaku kenkyūka) 6 (January 2014): 1–15.

Japan.<sup>4</sup> While the KMT and other political parties in East Asia did not necessarily maintain a sharp focus on their 1945 victory over the Japanese military as propaganda fodder for their contemporary political ideology, for many groups it is still an element of their founding ethos. Such stories and mythology were not limited to East Asia. In the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos's popularity was built on the edifice of his having fought valiantly against the Japanese, even though such stories were later found to be false.<sup>5</sup> Even in Malaya, a stronghold of British imperial authority until the 1940s, Tim Harper elucidates that Japanese political ideological education and propaganda, in part, shaped "the Malay radicalism of the post-war years."<sup>6</sup>

These stories are often linked to the process of how Japanese imperial rule was dismantled at the local level, often by those who had opposed Japan, but also by collaborators.<sup>7</sup> Our new research also makes clear that Japan's sudden surrender in no way signified that the country would immediately disavow its deeply rooted imperial ideology. Similar dilemmas developed in formerly occupied lands, which suffered as much trauma in trying to recover their claims to authority as they did while pursuing justice against their former Japanese overlords and those they defined as national "traitors." Such adjudication was necessary, it was believed, to ascertain which groups or individuals were appropriate to place in the seat of power in the immediate postwar.

Historian of Japan, Yoshimi Shunya, reminds us that even the terminology we use to describe how Japan went from "defeat" to "occupation" does not stretch adequately to cover the actual transformations that occurred. As Yoshimi writes, "a certain consistency remained during the war and in the postwar in many Japanese behavioral customs and systems of mobilization. Moreover, the fact is that the 'defeat' had already emerged smack in the middle of the war."<sup>8</sup> Yoshimi underscores the issue that Japan had already begun to lose in key battles in the Pacific, with the March 1945 fire bombings of Tokyo, and with the colossal loss of life in the battle of Okinawa, long before Japan's official surrender—and the public felt this. In his view, the use of words such as "end of war" and "postwar" thus tend to mask the real continuities that remained in place and the general malaise and discomfort that went along with this dramatic transition following imperial implosion. I would venture a further historiographical problem when we discuss surrender or defeat as just the short sliver of time during which these formalities occurred before quickly moving on to the idea of postwar. Building on what Yoshimi is saying, we too easily dismiss

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4. Hans van de Ven challenged this idea of the failure of the KMT in *War and Nationalism in China, 1925–1945* (London: Routledge, 2003).

5. "Marcos's Wartime Role Discredited in U.S. Files," January 23, 1986, *New York Times*.

6. T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 46.

7. We first broached this issue in Barak Kushner and Sherzod Muminov eds., *The Dismantling of Japan's Empire in East Asia: Deimperialization, Postwar Legitimation and Imperial Afterlife* (London: Routledge, 2017).

8. Yoshimi Shunya, "1940 nendai haisen to sengo no aida de," in Hitobito no seishinshi series, vol. 1, *Haisen to senryō—1940nendai*, edited by Yoshimi Shunya and Kurihara Akira (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2015), 15.

events before that moment and then what follows. This book is about what comes after in the space for which we currently have no real adequate linguistic phrase.

Perhaps poetry or artistic creations can better serve. Japanese poet Ibaraki Noriko captures the incredulity and self-doubt that occurred in that interval between the end of war and postwar. Space does not permit me to use her entire poem but a few stanzas reveal, in part, the outlook of disappointment and the absurdity of the moment from the perspective of a young woman.

... When I was at my prettiest,  
 many people around me were killed,  
 in factories, at sea, and on nameless islands.  
 I lost the chance to dress myself up  
 When I was at my prettiest,  
 no one offered me thoughtful gifts.  
 The men only knew how to salute in military fashion.  
 They all departed, leaving only their beautiful gazes. . . .  
 When I was at my prettiest,  
 my country lost the war.  
 Can anything be so ridiculous?  
 Rolling up the sleeves of my blouse, I strode through the abject town<sup>9</sup>

In the same way that Yoshimi Shunya analyzes our vocabulary deficit to alert us to problems in sketching the contours of the fall of imperial Japan, Asano Toyomi, historian of the Japanese legal imperial maze, suggests a similar oversight when discussing the colonies. Asano informs us about the slipperiness of terminology when referring to those of authority in the empire. At the apogee of empire, Japanese imperial subjects were colonials (in Japanese, *shokuminchi no hito* 植民地の人) before suddenly becoming “returnees,” (*hikiagesha*, 引揚者), with all the ensuing ideas of victimization and a lack of connection with any imperial responsibility. In Asano’s words, it is noteworthy that returnee associations continued to lobby the Japanese government for return of their private property and assets until the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> We also need to consider the processes of what might be better regarded as the longer story of “deimperialization.” Yamamuro Shin’ichi offers us one solution through this confusing labyrinth. He investigates the Japanese-created imperial kingdom of Manchukuo and how its labeling shapes our historical mindset. In China, Manchukuo (or Manzhouguo in Chinese) is known as the “fake” or puppet kingdom, *weimanzhouguo* (偽滿洲國). Yamamuro, however, believes this is a misnomer because Manchukuo was neither a puppet state nor strictly a colony but something entirely different. As such, he chooses to identify Manchukuo as a

9. Yoshimi discusses this poet in his previously cited chapter. The original Japanese can be read at [http://kop-puno-ohanashi.com/2017/06/09/茨木のり子の愛% E3%80%80戦争と、戦後を生き抜いた女性/](http://kop-puno-ohanashi.com/2017/06/09/茨木のり子の愛%E3%80%80戦争と、戦後を生き抜いた女性/).

10. Asano Toyomi, *Teikoku nihon no shokuminchi hōsei: hōiki tōgō to teikoku chitsujo* (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2008), 620–21.



chimera, an artificial beast constructed of many elements created in the pursuit of a utopian dream. The Japanese novelist, Abe Kōbō, penned the absurdist *Beasts Head for Home*, a short story depicting the end of Manchukuo and the listless masses shifting around the barren landscape unsure of where to go, like a herd of animals on the move.<sup>11</sup> Yamamuro explains that to merely denigrate Manchukuo as a puppet state denies any of its legacy, mirroring Yoshimi's caution against simplistic vocabulary standing in for historical analysis. By contrast, Yamamuro suggests that we need to investigate the full complexity of Manchukuo to understand its administrative residue within East Asia. For Yamamuro, the deeper question is not to facilely label Manchukuo as a puppet state but to consider how individuals were and remained tied to or opposed to Manchukuo's history and ideals. This was especially true in light of the fact that both during the imperial reign and at the end of the war, in his words, these were times "in which sacrifices called for were truly immense."<sup>12</sup>

The importance of unraveling the history of Manchukuo and Japan's empire cannot be overstated. In the 1930s, Manchuria was called "the cockpit of Asia," demonstrating that whichever power controlled it dominated the destiny of the region. What happened to that notion upon Japan's imperial downfall? We need to dive into and probe how the death of imperial control in that region was a necessary prerequisite for the birth of postwar East Asia and what that entailed. What were the parameters of this crucible for rebirth and what did Japan's empire mean for East Asia's twentieth century? We cannot and should not just fold such a complex moment away with the brusque terms of *defeat* and *postwar*.

## Unexpected Winners and Losers

The general understanding of the Japanese Empire was mainly that it was an accelerant of human misery and violence. This is most probably correct on many levels but rendering judgment does not bring us closer to a deeper historical understanding and often hides the contours of the more significant story. Carter Eckert puts this more dramatically, particularly in reference to Korea, but the example holds for the entire region. "Whatever the topic—social groups and classes, political or cultural movements, governments and other institutions, individual figures, novels, poems, films, scholarship, even ideas themselves—all have been screened through a myopic nationalist lens that is as judgmental as it is pervasive."<sup>13</sup>

There is immense serendipity in this gap between the end of war and the postwar, not necessarily yet accounted for. And the history of this moment in time

11. Abe Kōbō, *Beasts Head for Home*, trans. Richard F. Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

12. "Interview with the *Journal Kan: rekishi, kankyō, bunmei*" (2002) [How shall we understand Manchuria and Manzhouguo?], in Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Manchuria under Japanese Dominion*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 242.

13. Carter Eckert, "Epilogue: Exorcising Hegel's Ghost, Toward a Postnationalist History of Korea," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 366.

forces might race into North Korea to secure weapons of mass destruction, while PLA special forces might race to secure the North Korea archives!<sup>52</sup> The point is China has for so long painted its volunteer army as martyrs for North Korea during the Korean War that if any historical information were declassified that showed the story to be false an entire national paradigm would disintegrate.

## The Central Themes of This Book

The chapters in this book grapple with precisely the elements outlined above, where newly independent entities, or states reclaiming independence, struggled with assigning responsibility (or blame) for Japan's imperial programs. Additionally, they wrestle with related questions of how Japanese and other constituent elements of the former empire tried to reestablish some form of relationship with prior enemies or recast their own memory of the empire and war. The key to grasping the complex history of post-World War II East Asia is to recall that, in August 1945, when Emperor Hirohito announced surrender in his shortwave radio broadcast, Japan was not merely a nation—it was an empire. It was a fragile colossus that stretched almost from the tip of Alaska to the eastern fringes of India and touched down almost to the shores of northern Australia. Japanese imperial rule covered an immense set of seas, oceans, peoples, languages, and cultures. Obviously, to gain control of such vast possessions Japan had mobilized a massive army and numerous societies. To imagine for a moment that the multiple ideologies that underpinned this quest disappeared overnight and accepted defeat is to miss the larger picture.

Early Cold War East Asian history should be examined as postimperial history, but how that postimperial order emerged still remains unclear. These processes included reformatting all the messy imperial-era relationships that would transform the postwar world order but that often get lost when writing within the narrow confines of the national histories of each country in East Asia. This is what noted historian Prasenjit Duara suggested when he called for “rescuing history from the nation.”<sup>53</sup> In our present state of knowledge, it is hard to be dogmatic about how the domestic situation in the two Koreas affected China or Japan, and the reverse. We have little insight into the internal dynamics, though diplomatic historians have been able to seize on recent troves of documents to delineate much of the manner in which individual state actors in East Asia related to the United States and, to some extent, to the United Kingdom and Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup>

52. Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 127–28.

53. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

54. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, ed., *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–1991* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), and Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad's multi-volume edited series *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) are two important studies along such lines.

The lag and difficulties encountered in dismantling Japanese rule in East Asia after the surrender, in contrast to the alacrity of the US assumption of authority in the Japanese home islands, demonstrates that East Asian political and military policies did not always follow the American lead. This divergence underscores the fact that, at the end of World War II, no one region was under the control of any one major military force; former imperial Japanese forces also continued to vie for power in determining the trajectory of East Asia, along with the Soviet Union in Manchuria and what became North Korea. However, the Cold War is not just about superpower struggles but equally concerns how the newly rising states, freed from Japanese imperialism, found direction and geopolitical room to work out their new policies.

At the end of World War II in East Asia, according to the popular understanding, the Japanese failure was celebrated and power quickly changed hands. But many Japanese wished to remain where they were in the empire, as did many other imperial subjects who hoped to reside in Japan or in other parts of the empire where they believed they were comfortable. There was of course also violence focused on righting the wrongs of empire.<sup>55</sup> The three sections into which this volume is divided demonstrate the nature of postwar violence as it remained couched within the legacy of imperial power, which was extremely difficult to dislodge even after Japan's military fiasco. Section 1 details the intricate calculus required by the need to judge responsibility for empire, which rested not just on Japanese shoulders but also on those of other former colonized subjects. The two more central groups in this, Koreans and Taiwanese, seemingly could never resolve their links with decolonization; the chapters here outline the cost to postcolonial societies trying to disarm and demilitarize after supposed liberation. In Section 2, we encounter the way in which the disruption of militarism within Japan and throughout the empire influenced the memorialization of empire, and also served as a catalyst for how the past was invoked when redrafting Japanese military power. As we see in the last portion, Section 3, while political impasses remained in Sino-Japanese relations, on the cultural front nongovernment actors reclaimed hitherto unexplored avenues for exchange, as occurred in literary and religious circles.

Below are more concrete introductions to the scholastic aims and format of each chapter, as divided into the three sections.

## Section 1: Collaboration and Dilemmas of Deimperialization

Ideally, we need to find another term for this span of time because, as mentioned previously, the idea of “postwar” overemphasizes a moment of change that had not yet occurred, and terms such as *postwar* are almost synonymous with the American

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55. Deokhyo Choi, “Crucible of the Post-empire: Decolonization, Race, and Cold War Politics in U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations, 1945–1952” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2013).

occupation of Japan. At stake, fundamentally, was the point that Koreans were not in control of their own territory after supposed liberation because while the Western Allies could not yet really agree whether Koreans were “mature” enough to govern themselves, the Allies actually still preferred the Japanese to rule. No one party was in control; the Japanese were being employed as temporary security forces here and there until the new rules about authority were implemented, as Mark Caprio discusses at length in Chapter 1, “The Politics of Collaboration in Post-Liberation South Korea.” Caprio details how, in the midst of this chaotic situation, the initial set of Korean responses emerged to consider what form justice might take on the postimperial peninsula.

Within Korea, according to Charles Armstrong, Japan in some ways created the colonial canvas but North Koreans responded to the fact that few “painters,” or architects of the original project, remained once empire ended. The Japanese “left behind the basis of an industrial economy, especially in the northern part of the peninsula; a highly fragmented nationalist movement, decimated by years of heavy-handed repression; a relatively weakening Korean landlord class (particularly in the North) and a mass of disenfranchised farmers.” The leadership class attempted to deal with each of these negative legacies.<sup>56</sup>

Anna Louise Strong, the left-wing journalist who visited North Korea at the moment of liberation, breathlessly recalled the atmosphere in a much more positive light as she interpreted the situation:

The idyllic, and rather unrealistic self-assurance that one finds among the North Koreans is due, in my judgment, to the ease with which farmers got land and workers got jobs and the people got the Japanese industries, houses and summer villas without any class struggle. And this in turn is due to the events of the last month of the war.

When the Red Army entered Korea in early August 1945, heavy battles took place in the north, but the Japanese rule remained tranquil in the south, for the Russians stopped by the Yalta agreement at the 38th parallel, while the Americans came several weeks after the surrender of Japan, and ruled at first through the Japanese and then through the Japanese-appointed Korean officials and police. So naturally all of the pro-Japanese Koreans—former police and officials, landlords and stockholders in Japanese companies—fled south to the American zone.<sup>57</sup>

And yet, by the 1960s, this supposed socialist utopia had developed a three-tiered system that locked one into a social class according to how one’s relatives had behaved during the colonial era and the Korean War: there was a core class, a wavering class, and a hostile class.

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56. Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 5–6.

57. Anna Louise Strong, “In North Korea: First Eye-Witness Report,” *Marxists Internet Archive*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/strong-anna-louise/1949/in-north-korea/ch03.htm>.

Similarly, in Chapter 2, “Punishing Han Traitors beyond Chinese Borders,” Yun Xia investigates the tangled web of how internal Chinese definitions of justice were applied at times unequally across the spectrum of Chinese geography toward those designated as imperial Japanese collaborators. At times, KMT officials even attempted to seek justice for Chinese across borders into neighboring countries in ways that suggest the KMT believed ethnic affinity was stronger than laws dealing with national sovereignty. Who controlled what domains and the manner in which justice should be meted out was as difficult to gauge in China as it was in Korea, but the Chinese did manage to implement large numbers of trials.

When we are overly concerned with the broader context of the Cold War, there is a danger of forgetting the regional side of the story, or at least what happened at the fringes of former empires while we focus on diplomatic relations that occurred in the nations’ capitals. While this volume did not have space to examine the massive 1948 revolts on Cheju Island, off of Korea’s southern coast, or the popular backlash to the war on Okinawa, we have tried to bring attention back to the spaces where imperial control ceased but was not really replaced. For instance, the Chinese Nationalists were not really in control of Taiwan soon after Japan’s surrender, as evidenced in what is known as the February 28 Incident.<sup>58</sup> As described above, many areas previously under Japanese control were chaotic, to say the least, and what lay ahead was anyone’s guess. Overall, Taiwan’s economy was in free fall with the arrival of Chinese mainland forces. From 1946 to 1947, the KMT tried to control the markets at fixed prices, with draconian punishments for not following the new regulations. In January 1947, food prices were up 700 percent, fuel by 1,400 percent, and fertilizer by 25,000 percent. This led, in part, to the February 28, 1947 incident. Military pacification was the only way to quell the uprising; KMT leaders were surprised by its ferocity.<sup>59</sup> Victor Louzon details this watershed in Chapter 3, “Colonial Legacies, War Memories, and Political Violence in Taiwan, 1945–1947.”

The instability that the end of Japan’s empire caused in East Asia and in Southeast Asia, as well as in Europe, where governments scrambled to reassert power domestically by shoring up their attempts to reclaim their far-flung colonial territories, saw the very nature of imperial rule drastically weakened. The United Kingdom’s ability to maintain its domain over distant holdings was seriously threatened: in Hong Kong, the Chinese Nationalists initially made it clear they wanted the territory back. The KMT said it would accept Japanese surrender there, to the consternation of the British. European powers tried to rebuild the same imperial structures that had been conquered by the Japanese several years earlier. The very term we now use for some of the regions stems from this war. Southeast Asia comes from the label

58. See Victor Louzon, “From Japanese Soldiers to Chinese Rebels: Colonial Hegemony, War Experience, and Spontaneous Remobilization during the 1947 Taiwanese Rebellion,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 77, Issue 1 (February 2018): 1–19. See also Qiu Guozhen, *Jindai taiwan canshi dangan* (Taipei: Qianwei, 2007).

59. Hsiao-ting Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, The United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 45–48.

“Southeast Asian Command” (SEAC), established by the allies in 1943 to designate forces that were maneuvered there to fight. Others joked that the acronym actually stood for “Save England’s Asiatic Colonies.” The tragedies of the immediate postwar in Indonesia, where “Japanese troops in Semarang in Java fought with Indonesian rebels in October 1945 in a battle in which dozens, perhaps hundreds, were killed,” was one example where lines between competing imperial levers of control also blurred.<sup>60</sup> It was not clear who was in control and on what this authority was based. These skirmishes were part of a larger effort, such as in Indochina and numerous areas where surrendering Japanese forces were employed, to help recolonize lands the European powers had previously lost at the start of World War II. East Asia was unstable but Japan, which later became the stalwart economic power that in many ways fed regrowth and stability in a region that it had once greatly destabilized, served as the lynchpin almost from the start of the postwar in a manner that suggests its imperial control was not really ever fully vanquished.

Domestically, Japan also witnessed profound division, frequently between layers of society—such as immigrants from Korea, Taiwan, or Manchukuo—or different ideological camps—communists or socialists—that had been smoothed over or oppressed by imperial rule. Drugs, lawlessness, and displeasure ran deep since authority and the future had all been turned on their heads. To escape the horrors of defeat, many Japanese resorted to altering their reality: “The methamphetamine addict was a symbol of the postwar nation: a powerless victim, a prisoner of anxiety, a bullied inferior, and above all, a deeply flawed, even strange personality.”<sup>61</sup> While drugs were not the cause of the social unrest sketched in Chapter 4, “Bullets of a Defeated Nation: The 1946 Shibuya Incident,” Adam Cathcart analyzes the way Japanese gangs ran into conflict with former imperial subjects, namely the Taiwanese. In their mutually competitive efforts both groups came into conflict while trying to eke out a space for commerce in the black market areas that sprang up all over Tokyo.

## Section 2: Negotiating Past and Present in the Military and Political Realms

What happened to the weaponized sectors of imperial Japan that supported the Japanese Empire, in various measures for a multitude of reasons, after the fall? In some ways this section ties back to Victor Louzon’s Chapter 3, on the militarized young Taiwanese whose life skills were challenged by imperial disintegration. The West was fairly ignorant of what was going on in East Asia during the war, even though the Americans had made great efforts in some areas such as planning for the

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60. Sandra Wilson, Robert Cribb, Beatrice Trefalt, and Dean Aszkielowicz, *Japanese War Criminals: The Politics of Justice after the Second World War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 50.

61. Miriam Kingsberg, “Methamphetamine Solution: Drugs and the Reconstruction of Nation in Postwar Japan,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 72, no. 1 (February 2013): 142.

Japanese occupation. Elsewhere, however, the road ahead was challenging. In 1945, on the heels of surrender, Charles Bonesteel, future commander of forces in Korea, and Dean Rusk, future secretary of state under American presidents Kennedy and Johnson, used a *National Geographic* map and in one night set the 38th parallel as the dividing boundary between what would become North and South Korea.<sup>62</sup> Such folly shows that the fate of the regions was precarious on many levels and often merely depended on serendipity.

Rotem Kowner, in Chapter 5, “The Repatriation of Surrendered Japanese Troops, 1945–1947,” investigates what happened to the militaries left behind across the great swath of the crumbling Japanese Empire. Kowner details the variety of ways surrendering Japanese were utilized to help restore European imperial power, but also to serve postwar Japanese goals of “liberation” from Western hegemony in other sectors. In Chapter 6, Garren Mulloy digs into how the Japanese military evolved after its defeat. In his chapter, “Ordered to Disarm, Encouraged to Rearm: Japan’s Struggles with the Postwar,” Mulloy identifies the twists and turns of the story regarding Japanese remilitarization after surrender and how such moves also had to deal with the imperial issues of honor and defeat. On one hand, former imperial officers found themselves back in charge within a few years after the end of war, but the constitution and makeup of Japan had changed in the interim. What sort of influence would that have on the nation at large, and Japan’s foreign policy specifically? Andrew Levidis, in Chapter 7, “Politics in a Fallen Empire: Kishi Nobusuke and the Making of the Conservative Hegemony in Japan,” throws a wrench in our understanding of Japan’s major postwar party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Levidis examines its imperial conception, and like Mulloy’s investigation of the continuity from war to postwar, unravels a story that suggests that maybe we should not even conceive of the LDP as a postwar political force, but one that closely aligned itself with imperial policies.

### Section 3: Returning to the Continent, Japan’s Relations with New China

The immediate postwar was not just about violence but also about rebuilding a new international order based on trade and restoring infrastructure.<sup>63</sup> A fairly hazy border existed between the USSR and China, perhaps reflective of the dubious relations the two nations shared until a more clarified legal status for the latter developed at the end of 1949, with Mao Zedong’s first official visit to Moscow. Northern China was key to both the Soviet Union and China due to the ideology of state-assisted economic development; this was bolstered by the tangible industrialization

62. Sheila Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Korean Conflict* (London: Profile, 2013), 18–19.

63. Sören Urbansky, “A Very Orderly Friendship: The Sino-Soviet Border under the Alliance Regime, 1950–1960,” in *Eurasia Border Review* 3 (2012), special issue, ed. David Wolff: “China’s Postrevolutionary Borders, 1940s–1960s,” 35–52.

that the Japanese left behind in their former puppet kingdom of Manchukuo.<sup>64</sup> Mao and others realized the potential of the Manchukuo industrial base and that the workers there, previously trained by the Japanese, could provide an excellent jump-start for China's own national strategy.<sup>65</sup> Mainland China was in desperate need of skilled labor and technicians; this overall lack of industrialization came to the fore as a glaring issue for national security once the Korean War broke out in the summer of 1950. The Korean War exacted a staggering cost to China both in human and economic terms. The Chinese might have been wary of Japan reindustrializing since that signified for many the former enemy's potential to pose a future economic threat, but during this era, at the start of the Korean War, China still traded with Japan—the Chinese literally believed they had to, to keep afloat. The Korean War was also one reason why Japanese were not all repatriated from China until 1954. Only then did China assess that it had fully employed the skills of Japanese technicians. By contrast, Chinese soldiers would not depart from North Korea until 1958.

It is within this mix of both trying to remove Japanese imperial influence from the Asian mainland and attempting to seek out a new relationship with the Japanese that Sino-Japanese efforts to bridge numerous wartime obstacles were born. One relatively unexplored aspect of this postwar cultural gambit is described in Lauren Richardson and Gregory Adam Scott's and co-authored Chapter 8, "Diplomatic Salvation: Buddhist Exchanges and Sino-Japanese Rapprochement." The religious angle was exceedingly important to both wartime Japanese propaganda and postwar ideas of salvation in terms of how to cope with imperial guilt and in the search for portals to mutual cooperation. Chapter 8 examines some key nodes of these efforts and unlocks their significance for the postwar.

The volume closes with Chapter 9 by Matthew Fraleigh, "Reconstructing Sino-Japanese Friendship: East Asian Literary Camaraderie in Postwar Japan's Sinitic Poetry Scene." In a rare piece of scholarship Fraleigh offers us a masterful translation of the sort of cross-border exchanges in Japanese-produced Chinese-language poetry, where Japanese look at the end of empire and the beginning of Japan's new postwar relations with the world. While employing a classical form of poetry that harkens back to Japan's love for traditional Chinese literature, Chapter 9 produces atypical insight into the remnants of this literary connection, which had played such an important historical role for Japanese intellectuals until the postwar era saw Japan more intimately orient itself culturally toward the United States.

## Conclusion

Years after the war was over and Japan regained a cherished position in the international community, the narrative of Japan's empire in China, Taiwan, Korea, and

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64. Amy King, *China-Japan Relations after WWII* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 33.

65. Amy King, *China-Japan relations after WWII*, 59.



elsewhere appeared to have been quickly forgotten. Why do we not know more about this important juncture in the history of East Asia? The short answer is that, as soon as the main issues relating to imperialism were resolved in much of East Asia (with the exception of Japan, which had to deal with its own ambivalent state of victimhood), the region fell into various forms of legal anarchy and had other more vexing social and political issues to worry about. There was famine, fear of the Soviets, as well as disconcerting social upheaval all around. China and Korea were geographically split along Cold War lines, while Taiwan suffered for decades under martial law and what is known as the age of the “white terror.” Our volume seeks to explore what propelled nascent governments at the moment of Japan’s surrender—certainly ones immediately struggling to stay afloat in a reshuffled world order in postimperial East Asia—to pursue costly, cumbersome, and sometimes contradictory policies that were initially supposed to help stabilize the nation-state after the debacle of Japan’s empire.

This book focuses on the East Asian context and how these challenges set the stage for unexpected intraregional alliances and relations, as well as animosities, in the early years of the Cold War. The chapters aim to enhance our understanding of the precise measures that were enacted and how authority reformed and reasserted itself after the fall of the Japanese Empire in East Asia, from 1945 until the Cold War solidified in the mid-1960s. This study offers a fresh analysis based on a new kind of East Asian history that will put postimperial history and the process of decolonization back at the forefront of the postwar narrative. The thrust of the research brought together in this volume centers on analyzing the repercussions of the military, political, social, and diplomatic maneuvers to unravel the Japanese Empire and reorder East Asia society, just after the war and during the first tentative decades of the postwar. We need to focus on the international context in which Japan abandoned its decades-long imperial quest and investigate how those political bodies and groups that stepped into the postwar vacuum strove to resolve many of the problems that Japan’s empire had created.

Dissecting the issue of how East Asians understood the war and its end differently from the Western imperial powers is crucial to comprehending how they envisaged the postwar and what a restructuring of the international order would require. This approach parallels what Timothy Snyder discussed in his book, *Bloodlands*. Snyder argues that our singular and mostly nationalistic approach to historical investigation has obscured the largest historical errors or atrocities, which in his opinion were carried out in what he terms the “bloodlands,” a region wedged in between Stalin and Hitler. While I am not arguing that we have missed the historical record of Japanese atrocities, I would agree with Snyder’s assessment that the general nature or extent of the destruction during World War II in central and eastern Europe was relatively uninvestigated because it was divided up into competing blocs, which succeeded in historically “keeping these parts from touching

each other.”<sup>66</sup> Snyder makes an appeal for taking a supranational and more regional approach to cut across the competitive nationalist histories that dominate, and to avoid a US-centered approach. This could not be more necessary than in the case with Japan and East Asia, where national suffering or victory is remembered and sanctified over all else, creating an easy-to-digest yet monochromatic version of history that essentially whitewashes the complex and uncomfortable actual events. Hiroshima is certainly foremost in the minds of many Japanese as a memory of the end of war, a recollection that feeds a victimhood mentality, while that is not the case outside the main islands in former areas of empire. We need to correlate more of the domestic history against a regional and international backdrop to ascertain a more holistic narrative of what the history of deimperialization and decolonization looked like. This sort of historical methodology will bring into relief how the new world order emerged and how political agents were able to construct innovative lines of power and authority after empire dissolved.

The end of Japan’s empire left an indelible mark on national state formation at an even more global level. In the Far East, the Korean Peninsula was divided in two, and China remains split between two competing dominions to this day—the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that rules mainland China and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) that until the start of the twenty-first century ruled Taiwan as a one-party state. In Southeast Asia, out of eleven countries that exist today, nine became independent on the heels of Japan’s defeat and during the Cold War. Indonesia declared independence in 1945 but did not achieve it until 1949. The Philippines managed this feat in 1946, while Burma separated from the British Empire in 1948, Cambodia from the French in 1953 but more formally in 1954 with the Geneva Accords. Laos became independent but eventually slid into a civil war that lasted until 1975. Vietnam had quickly announced its independence after the Japanese defeat but then was also subjected to a long series of wars until unity under the communists in 1975. Malaya divorced itself from the United Kingdom in 1957, while Singapore lingered until 1965, and Brunei completed the process in 1984. East Timor gained sovereignty only in May 2002. It is rather telling that the power vacuum brought about by Japan’s destruction of European colonial hegemony in this region, and the ensuing Cold War competition for authority across the geographic landscape, saw the United States, China, and the USSR take certain measures to bolster their postwar power. In fact, the postwar for many was more violent and destructive than the mortal combat of World War II. The American military dropped three times more bombs on Indochina than all the participants had used in World War II. On Cambodia alone, three times the number of bombs were dropped than had been used on Japan.<sup>67</sup>

International relations specialists espouse the idea that hegemons rewrite the rules of world order and that subsequent rivals do similarly when they take over,

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66. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Bodley Head, 2010), xix.

67. Philip Short, *Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare* (London: J. Murray, 2005), 216.

attempting to reorient power or at least restructure the order in their favor. However, this new world order was not even one in which East Asia was fully invested during the first several decades after the end of the war. The creation of the United Nations had been announced in the summer of 1945, though Japan would not be allowed to join until 1956 and the PRC would not become a member until 1972. Neither North nor South Korea formally became part of the General Assembly until 1991, the delay mostly stemming from an inability to agree on whether the seat would be represented by one Korea or dual Koreas.

In short, these pages are deeply concerned with the ways in which Japan's empire was employed, deconstructed, and then memorialized, not just in Japan but also throughout the former empire. In particular, these settings were then sculpted to provide an emotive and historical ideology that fed a variety of nation-oriented histories. It remains our duty to uncover these hitherto unexplored links.

## Politics in a Fallen Empire: Kishi Nobusuke and the Making of the Conservative Hegemony in Japan

Andrew Levidis

The creation of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in November 1955 remains one of the most significant moments in modern Japanese political history. The political stability inaugurated in 1955, followed by more than seventy years of mostly unbroken conservative government, has inured us to the striking persistence and durability of conservative ideas, institutions, and men across the political divide of 1945. At war's end, imperial Tokyo was a city under foreign occupation; war and revolution engulfed much of northeast Asia, while in Japan socialism and communism seemed on the verge of removing Japan's monarchical mode of government. By the early 1950s, however, the situation was reversed, as a powerful constellation of center-right political and ex-bureaucratic forces came to the political landscape, unifying conservative forces and reshaping preexisting political traditions to forge a comprehensive postimperial political order.

Historical narratives on the end of empire have focused on imperial bureaucrats, soldiers, policemen, engineers, and technicians. They paint a harrowing picture of the imperial state caught in its death throes as the consequences of war and empire in mainland Asia came home.<sup>1</sup> Recently, international historians have looked in detail at the afterlives of former Japanese soldiers and multiethnic graduates of the empire's far-flung military academies in the militarization of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> What is missing in the way we think and write about the end of Japanese imperialism, however, is the role of the wartime political elites who negotiated the domestic political reordering of the Japanese state in the mid-1950s. Kitaoka Shin'ichi, Nakakita Kōji, and Masumi Junnosuke have almost unanimously characterized the moment the Cold War political order—captured by the phrase “the 1955-system”—crystallized in Japan due to watershed changes in the international environment

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1. Yang Daqing, “Chūgoku ni tomaru nihonjin gijutsusha,” in *1945-nen no rekishi ninshiki: shūsen o meguru Nitchū taiwa no kokoromi*, ed. Liu Jie and Kawashima Shin (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2009).

2. Carter J. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea: The Roots of Militarism 1866–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); for the graduates of the National Foundation University, see Hamaguchi Yūko, *Manshūkoku ryūnichichi gakusei no Nitchū kankeishi: Manshū jihen, Nitchū sensō kara sengo minkan gaikō e* (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 2015).

following the Korean War (1950–1953).<sup>3</sup> Less appreciated has been the process by which older patterns of party politics, parliamentary practices, and electioneering in the metropole and countryside were resuscitated and successfully reconfigured to the new democratic age of the 1950s.<sup>4</sup> In prison cells, political clubs, parliamentary offices, and pages of major daily newspapers and highbrow magazines debates reverberated, as the wartime elite of the Japanese empire—party politicians, high bureaucrats, technocratic planners, and colonial businessmen—waged an interne-cine and violent struggle over the reorganization of the political world of the 1940s and 1950s. The hallmarks of the political regime and bureaucratic state they forged in November 1955 intersected with the grand forces of the era: disintegration of imperial hierarchies, ascension of the nation-state, and reordering of global institutions by the Anglo-Americans.<sup>5</sup> It was overlaid by the experience of the national decline of the political parties after 1931, and by the drive for mass mobilization and integration at the end of the 1930s. This chapter examines the conservative reconstruction of political order in 1955 and the vehicle of that hegemony—the Liberal Democratic Party—through the career and writings of its most unlikely of proponents, the suspected class-A war criminal and premier, Kishi Nobusuke.

At the “zenith” of the Japanese wartime empire, Kishi was an elite imperial bureaucrat (bolstered by right-wing and pan-Asianist political views) and key technocratic planner in the total-war, state-led economic development of the Japanese client-state of Manchukuo. From 1941 to 1944, Kishi served as architect of the Japanese wartime economy in the General Tōjō Hideki cabinet; under his leadership, military and civil technocrats oversaw the material mobilization of the Japanese Empire into an effective machine of modern war. At war’s end in 1945, Kishi was branded a class-A war criminal. He was rehabilitated three years later, and in 1957 named postwar Japan’s ninth prime minister. His political cunning, managerial skill, and fierce anticommunism earned Kishi the sobriquet “The Monster of the Shōwa era.” At his death in 1987, he was eulogized by then prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro: “a great star has fallen.”<sup>6</sup> Kishi’s life crossed the malleable borders of impe-

3. Kitaoka Shin’ichi, *Jimintō: seikentō no 38-nen* (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1995); Nakakita Kōji, *1955-nen taisei no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2002); Masumi Junnosuke, *Sengo seiji: 1945-55-nen* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1983). More recent works include Tezuka Yūta, *Kingendai Nihon ni okeru seitō shiji kibā no keisei to henyō: kensei jōdō kara 55-nen taisei e* (Kyōto: Mineruva shobō, 2017).

4. Gordon Berger’s study of political parties between 1931 and 1941 explicitly emphasized how postwar party politicians “capitalized on the knowledge” of the prewar parties and hence the significance of extending the boundaries of imperial and Cold War history. See Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931–1941* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 356–57. Other important studies of politics under the empire are Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and Peter Duus, *Party Rivalry and Political Change in Taishō Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968). An important work on transwar continuities and discontinuities is Laura Hein, *Post-Fascist Japan: political culture in Kamakura after the Second World War* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic/SOAS studies in modern and contemporary Japan, 2018).

5. See Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

6. Nakasone Yasuhiro, cited in Kishi Nobusuke denki hensan iinkai, ed., *Ningen Kishi Nobusuke haran no kyūjūnen* (Tokyo: Kishi Nobusuke itoku kenshōkai, 1989), 240.

rial and Cold War history, offering new insights into the transwar ideas, institutions, and historical forces that shaped Japanese politics across the transom of 1945.

The founders of the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955 did not work on a *tabula rasa*. Rather they were the survivors of rivalries, power struggles, and political purges, and carried with them the scars of political upheaval in the autumnal phase of the Japanese Empire. In the last decades of the empire, many embraced options ranging from military dictatorship to the totality of the one-party systems of Germany and the Soviet Union. To a man, Hatoyama Ichirō, Ogata Taketora, Miki Bukichi, and Kishi Nobusuke were born in the late nineteenth century and their lives crossed the tumultuous arc of Japan's imperial zenith geographically, politically, and militarily.<sup>7</sup> Their lives embodied the variegated experience of empire across three different monarchical eras, from the *fin de siècle* to the total wars of the twentieth century. As the occupation by the Allied Powers came to an end in 1952 after almost seven years, difficult questions were still to be confronted: what shape would the postimperial political order take? Was it feasible to restore the two-party system that had been terminated in 1932? What lessons could be drawn from the decline of the mainstream parties in the 1930s? What has been little explored in the histories of post-World War II Japanese politics is how the experience of traumatic political crisis and the fracturing of the democratic system of government after 1932 became, in effect, a "protracted historical and experiential condition."<sup>8</sup> That is to say, we can see a distinct set of judgments about parliamentary government that coalesced in the 1930s projected onto debates concerning how to shape a credible postwar political order in the aftermath of world war and imperial disintegration.

## Restoration, Revolution, and Control

Where does the history of the postwar conservative hegemony begin? The political regime and stability that Kishi helped forge in the 1950s traces its genealogy to the downfall of normal constitutional government (*kensei jōdō*) in the early 1930s.<sup>9</sup> As an imperial bureaucrat in the turbulent last decades of the Japanese Empire, Kishi watched as the curtains came down on the era of party cabinets (1924–1932) during the period of "national emergency" of the early 1930s. The reversal of eight continuous years of party-led government, rural immiseration, and the spectacle of frontier armies and zealots exerting influence on the elite politics of the empire left an indelible mark. In the 1920s, the conservative parties were seen as the main vehicles for political integration and national unification. However, by the early 1930s

7. For more on these figures, see Hatoyama Ichirō in Itō Takashi and Suetake Yoshiya, eds., *Hatoyama Ichirō kaoru nikki* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 1999–2005); Ogata Taketora denki kankōkai, ed., *Ogata Taketora* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1963); Shigemori Kyūji, *Miki Bukichi taikōki: ikita seijishi* (Tokyo: Shunyōdō, 1956); and Kishi Nobusuke, *Kishi Nobusuke kaikoroku: hoshu gōdō to anpo kaitei* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1983).

8. Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 2.

9. For the political beginning of the two-party system in the 1920s, see Naraoka Sōchi, *Katō Takaaki to seijishi: ni-dai seitō-sei e no michi* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2006).

the victorious completion of the Northern Expedition in China, world depression, revival of the Soviet Special Far Eastern Army, and decline of the system of cooperative imperial diplomacy with the Anglo-American naval powers, weakened the global system upon which the parties' command of government depended.<sup>10</sup> Over a period of eighteen months between 1930 and 1931, the authority of the Hamaguchi Osachi Minseitō party government was shattered by the combined effect of world depression and the unilateral mobilization on September 18, 1931, by middle-echelon officers of the Kwantung Army.<sup>11</sup>

For almost sixty years since the Meiji Restoration in 1868, politics in the Japanese Empire had been characterized by international and civil wars, military insubordination, and political assassination. Even by this bloody legacy, the violence of the early 1930s was unprecedented.<sup>12</sup> Between 1930 and 1936, two serving premiers and two former premiers were murdered; another was left badly wounded after escaping his young assassins; serving army commanders in the senior leadership were maimed or killed; and key financial figures of the decade of postwar stabilization in the 1920s were murdered in broad daylight.<sup>13</sup> Two mutinous attempts by junior officers brought bloodshed into the halls of power and onto the streets of the imperial capital. Most notably, these included the May 15 incident of 1932, in which a group of naval officers and army cadets murdered the premier Inukai Tsuyoshi, and the February 26 incident of 1936, a “full-blown uprising” in which “rebel officers and troops launched assassination attacks on a number of high officials, killing several and occupied central Tokyo for four days before being dispersed.”<sup>14</sup> The crises played out throughout the empire as newspapers, despite obvious censorship restrictions, carried articles on the military intervention into politics, while reports closely followed the course of the young officers' military uprising to “purify the political world.”<sup>15</sup> In the wake of the military mutiny, army commanders under General Terauchi Hisaichi and General Umezu Yoshijirō quashed the breach of military discipline through courts-martial, executions, transfers from the central

10. For more on the political background to this period see Itō Takashi, *Shōwaki seijishi kenkyū: Rondon kaigun gunshuku mondai o meguru shoseiji shūdan no taikō to teikei* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1969).

11. Kawada Minoru, *Manshū jihen to seitō seiji: gunbu to seitō no gekitō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010).

12. For more on the link between the Meiji Restoration, political violence, and military insubordination, see Danny Orbach, *Curse on This Country: The Rebellious Army of Imperial Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017).

13. The two serving premiers murdered were Hamaguchi Osachi (1931) and Inukai Tsuyoshi (1932); the former premiers included Viscount Admiral Saitō Makoto (1936) and Viscount Takahashi Korekiyo (1936); Admiral Okada Keisuke narrowly escaped murder at the hands of the young officers of February 26, 1936; Chief of the Army Ministry Military Affairs Bureau Nagata Tetsuzan was murdered in his office by Lt. Col. Aizawa Saburō (August 12, 1935); Mitsui financier Dan Takuma and Inoue Junnosuke, former finance minister and head of the Rikken Minseitō, were murdered at the time of the so-called League of Blood incident (*ketsumeidan jiken*) of 1932.

14. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*, 150. For more on the February 26 incident see Hayashi Shigeru, *Ni-niroku jiken hiroku* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1971); and Ben-Ami Shillony, *Revolt in Japan: The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

15. See the daily issues and flyers from the *Tonga ilbo* from February to March 1936 cited in Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*, 159.

headquarters, and retirements. They also placed stringent limits on army involvement in political activities.<sup>16</sup>

An imperial meridian was crossed in 1932, when the *genrō* Prince Saionji Kinmochi, with the agreement of court politicians and parliamentary leaders, suspended party government to “ameliorate” political polarization and stabilize state administration.<sup>17</sup> The suspension of party government mirrored international developments, most specifically the formation of the National government (1931–1935) under Ramsay MacDonald in Great Britain and German chancellor Franz von Papen’s “cabinet of barons,” which was independent of the parties.<sup>18</sup> By the mid-1930s, much of the Japanese ruling class had become skeptical of party rule as it had evolved over the previous decade. Even moderates such as the House of Peers member Minobe Tatsukichi, whose constitutional theory provided the legal foundation of party cabinets, started publicly to air doubts about the parties’ ability to deal with the combination of financial, economic, imperial, and political crises facing Japan.<sup>19</sup> As the military assumed greater influence within the councils of state in response to deepening international insecurity, the fulcrum of policy-making shifted to technocrats such as Kishi Nobusuke, who assumed a pivotal role in the reorganization of the Japanese economy. Kishi was part of a generation of specialists trained at Tokyo Imperial University who entered the technical ministries (communications, commerce and industry, and railways) in the years immediately after World War I.<sup>20</sup> His early career in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI) intersected with the zenith of party authority and prestige in the 1920s known as the “Taishō democracy.” From the second movement for constitutional government in 1924 to the termination of party rule eight years later, his career flourished with the advance of democratization and the fortunes of the parties. He was, however, no ally of the parties nor of the principles of Western democratic politics. In the last years of party rule—at the height of the world crisis of capitalism—Kishi came to national prominence in the industrial rationalization campaigns of the progressive Minseitō government (1929–1931); he spearheaded the Major Industries Control Law (1931), which instituted industrial cartels and extensive controls over production, sales, and pricing in the metropolitan economy.<sup>21</sup> Kishi’s reputation was further solidified by the publication of the 1935 army ministry pamphlet, “On the

16. See the account in Katō Yōko, *Mosaku suru 1930 nendai: Nichi-Bei kankei to rikugun chūkensō* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2012), 187–94; one of the most interesting accounts of the military rebellion is Katakura Tadashi, *Katakura sanbō no shōgen: hanran to chinatsu* (Tokyo: Fuyō shobō, 1981).

17. Berger, *Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931–1941*, 50–53.

18. Arima Manabu, *Teikoku no Shōwa* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010), 131–34.

19. Minobe Tatsukichi, “Hijōji Nihon to kokunan dakai,” *Chūō kōron* (January 1933): 53–58.

20. Roger Brown, “The Bureaucracy and Politics,” in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, ed. Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman (New York: Routledge, 2017), 217.

21. For more on the particulars of the industrial rationalization campaigns of the Minseitō government and the control laws of the early 1930s, see Kishi Nobusuke, “Sangyō gōrika undō ni arawaretaru keiken kōkan,” *Kōgyō keizai kenkyū* (July 1932): 99–120; and Kishi Nobusuke, “Jūyō sangyō tōsei hō kaisetsu,” *Kōgyō keizai kenkyū* 1 (April 1932): 51–76.



basic principles of national defense and its intensification” (*Kokubō no hongī to sono kyōka no teishō*), and the broadening of the economic aspects of national defense in the 1930s.<sup>22</sup>

Kishi’s ideas on the centrally planned and controlled economy meshed perfectly with the socialistic thrust of army national defense plans in the early 1930s. At the height of the world crisis of capitalism in the early 1930s, he enhanced his stature at the center of bureaucratic politics as the highest-ranking member of a group of officials known as “revisionist bureaucrats” (*kakushin kanryō*), who viewed themselves as the vanguard of a new direction in world history toward the centralized planning and command economics of National Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> The revisionists’ writings, of which they left a rich empirical record, reveal a virulent anticapitalist and technological mindset hostile to concentrated wealth, entrenched cartels, excessive competition, and the glorification of the pursuit of individual profit.<sup>24</sup> Unfettered capitalism, Kishi bluntly observed, was akin to a vision of state and society where the “strong devour the weak”—a system without discipline, where private enterprise and men of landed property dominate and where the “rule of force” led to “class conflict and other social divisions that threatened national unity.”<sup>25</sup>

Kishi’s explicit critique of party government followed from his anticapitalist orientation and was a direct corollary of the elitist milieu of the imperial civil bureaucracy as a bastion of national leadership above the narrow compromises of party politicians, businessmen, and financiers.<sup>26</sup> Unlike the young soldiers of May 15 and February 26 who launched their military mutinies in the name of loyalty to the emperor, Kishi never embraced the idea of violent revolution or military rule by coup d’état as the means of restructuring the state and economy. As a graduate of the meritocratic high school system and imperial university, Kishi recognized the necessity of popular mass mobilization for national goals, yet he did not welcome the involvement of party politicians nor their local allies’ disruption of precise and rationalized administration. Revisionists’ commitment to technocratic solutions for the empire’s deteriorating international position in the 1930s pushed many towards

22. Reproduced in Takahashi Masae, ed., *Gendaishi shiryō*, vol. 5: *Kokkashugi undō* (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1964), 268.

23. The most important works are Furukawa Takahisa “Kakushin kanryō no shisō to kōdō” *Shigaku zasshi* 99, no. 4 (1990): 1–38; Janis Mimura, *Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats and the Japanese Wartime State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Shibahara Yoshio, “Kakushin kanryō: Kishi Nobusuke-ron parts 1–3,” *Jiyū* (September–November 1993): 56–69.

24. For more on revisionist bureaucratic views see Okumura Kiwao, *Nihon seiji no kakushin* (Tokyo: Ikuseisha, 1938); Akinaga Tsukizō, Hoshino Naoki, Mōri Hideoto, Shiina Etsusaburō et al., “Manshūkoku keizai no genchi zadankai,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō* (October 1936): 26–39; and Kishi Nobusuke, “Shin Tōa kensetsu e no kakugo,” *Kōgyō kumiai* (January 1940): 5–10.

25. Hara Yoshihisa, ed., *Kishi Nobusuke shōgenroku* (Tokyo: Mainichi shinbunsha, 2003), 358.

26. For more on the elitist ethos of the modern bureaucracy, see Shimizu Yuichirō, *Kindai Nihon no kanryō: ishin kanryō kara gakureki erito e* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2013); see also Roger Brown, “(The Other) Yoshida Shigeru and the Expansion of Bureaucratic Power in Prewar Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 67, no. 2 (2012): 283–327.

cooperation with the proponents of total war within the army control faction (*tōseiha*), including Akinaga Tsukizō, Suzuki Teiichi, and Ikeda Sumihisa, who preferred to reconcile national mobilization with the existing structure of civilian government.<sup>27</sup>

## Soldiers, Revolutionaries, and Technocrats

By the late 1930s, reformists were increasingly central to the governance of the empire's three major metropolitan centers of power—Tokyo, Xinjing (the city was known by the Japanese as Shinkyō and is now labeled as Changchun in modern China), and Keijō (Seoul)—yet the systems of economic guidance and control they advocated did not command majorities in the councils of empire, nor were revisionists ever preponderant in political power or prestige. In the metropole, conservative party leaders—buttressed by their control of the Lower House, alliance with *zaibatsu* capital, and robustness of traditional mobilization structures—served as a powerful countervailing force against reformist plans to alter established forms of political, economic, and social organization. Despite the termination of party cabinets, party politicians in the seventy-third Imperial Diet extracted significant compromises over major pieces of enabling legislation, specifically the National General Mobilization Bill (1938) and Electric Power Nationalization Bill (1938), which preserved (with modification) the capitalist system and principle of private ownership.

It was only far from the metropole in Manchuria, where the army exercised more or less direct political control, that the model of the national defense economy reached its “imperial apogee.”<sup>28</sup> On the periphery of Japanese Empire in September 1931, radical military officers in the Kwantung Army, horrified by the disruption of global depression, intensified military threat from the Soviet Union, and committed ideologically to a Shōwa Restoration, launched the invasion of Manchuria.<sup>29</sup> In the hands of prominent Japanese imperial army commanders—Ishiwara Kanji, Itagaki Seishirō, Honjō Shigeru, and Sasaki Tōichi—the Manchurian Incident was transformed into a highly militarized, fourteen-year state-building enterprise “wedding” military necessity to anticapitalism and “agrarianism to empire,” the ideological repercussions of which drove the politics of the metropole in the early 1930s, collapsing political cabinets in Tokyo and reconstituting the discourse, priorities, and orientation of Japanese empire-building.<sup>30</sup> In the years after the Manchurian

27. For more on army officers' views on total war mobilization, see Akinaga Tsukizō, “Dai Tōa kyōeiken no kōsō,” *Kōa kyōiku* (April 1943): 2–11; Ikeda Sumihisa, *Gunji gyōsei* (Tokyo: Tokiwa shobō, 1934); and Suzuki Teiichi, *Suzuki Teiichi shi danwa sokkiroku* (Tokyo: Nihon kindai shiryō kenkyūkai, 1971). See also Mori Yasuo, *Nagata Tetsuzan: heiwa iji wa gunjin no saidai sekimu nari* (Kyoto: Mineruva shobō, 2011).

28. Eckert, *Park Chung Hee and Modern Korea*, 216.

29. Yamamuro Shin'ichi, *Manchuria under Japanese Domination*, trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 18–33.

30. Emer O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil: Settler Colonialism and Japan's urban empire in Manchuria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 317.

disunity and lack of discipline, and described them as having “drifted far from the desires of the masses” for the “restoration of national independence.”<sup>75</sup>

Kishi’s electoral campaign for rural revitalization and national integration coincided with particular concerns about the precariousness of Japan’s economy and place in the world following the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Such concerns were stimulated by the Korean War, which was carried home through newspapers, radio reports, and munitions factories equipping the American military with arms.<sup>76</sup> Kishi’s early political activities and the role of the empire-wide diaspora that formed an important part of his ideological coalition can be viewed as part of the wider story of Japan’s changing relationship with Asia. These networks of war, commerce, and science drawn from the imperial domains of Korea, Manchuria, and North China embodied the living memory of a multiethnic empire and the irretrievable loss of lives and property dispossessed by war.<sup>77</sup> In the pages of *Diamond* (*Daikyamondo*) and *Nation and Politics* (*Minzoku to seiji*), Kishi’s broad personal nexus, strengthened by the bonds of solidarity from service in northeastern China and Manchuria, served as a key ideological link in transnational anticommunist networks in East Asia. Throughout the 1950s, the pan-Asianist ideology of the wartime empire was transformed into an anticommunist, postcolonial solidarity that sought to align Japan with the movement of ideals and nations at the center of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung.<sup>78</sup> Kishi and his allies present a certain paradox: the vast majority had been imperialists, committed to the empire, and their views of international order upheld an underlying attitude of national destiny and civilizational leadership that had been challenged by military defeat in 1945.

## Party, Sovereignty, and Empire

In the aftermath of the Federation’s electoral defeat in October 1952, Kishi entered the Liberal Party to shape the future of constitutional and political debates, and more importantly to capture the party’s policy-making process. The steady return of formerly purged wartime political and bureaucratic leaders to national life in the early 1950s shifted the balance of power between internal factions of the Liberal Party, weakening Yoshida Shigeru’s grip on power.<sup>79</sup> Kishi’s commitment to national

75. *Asahi shimbun*, July 3, 1952.

76. For more on the influence of the Korean War internationally, see Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

77. Key figures within this network included Ayukawa Yoshisuke, Shiina Etsusaburō, Kan Tarō, Takasaki Tatsunosuke, Fujiyama Aiichirō, Shiobara Tokisaburō, and Fujisaki Nobuyuki, among others. For more on the role of the Manchurian faction in post-1945 Japan and Korea, see Kang Sang-jung, *Dai Nihon, Manshū teikoku no isan: kōbō no sekaishi* 18 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010).

78. For Kishi’s portrait of the international right-wing leaders he admired, see Kishi Nobusuke, *Nijūseiki no ridātachi* (Tokyo: Sankei shuppan, 1982). For more on the Japanese conservatives’ role at Bandung, see Miyagi Taizō, *Bandon kaigi to Nihon no Ajia fukki: Amerika to Ajia no hazama de* (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2001).

79. Suetake Yoshiya and Takeda Tomoki, *Nihon seitōshi* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2011), 184.

cohesion, military rearmament, and anticommunist/anticolonial solidarity with Asia resonated with right-wing nationalists such as Sasakawa Ryōichi and Kaya Okinori, who sought a corrective to Japan's voluntary Cold War pupillage under the United States and to the dichotomy of the global ideological contest between American capitalism and Soviet internationalism.<sup>80</sup> In a banquet speech at the National Policy Research Institute, a little over a year after his election to the Diet in April 1953, Kishi in a similar vein to his earlier criticism dwelt on the chronic factionalism of the conservative right and the need to bring cohesion to the common conservative ideological position. To applause, Kishi declared commitment to the two-party system to address the institutional inefficiencies of the divided and disorganized parliament as the "mission of my political career."<sup>81</sup>

In the aftermath of an election that left Yoshida Shigeru leading a minority government, Kishi's speech was strategically advantageous and found much resonance in the intense national concern over the political decision-making process. As one of the leaders of the wartime revisionist bureaucrats, Kishi was committed to a technocratic vision of continual rapid economic growth through "comprehensive planning" to deepen the industrial and technological structure of Japan.<sup>82</sup> Soldiers may not have been welcome in the new nation-empire, but the technocratic Japanese elite from Tokyo, Seoul, Taipei, and Xinjing were. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, Kishi's wartime supporters assumed pivotal roles in planning the country's economic reconstruction under the socialist cabinets of Katayama Tetsu and Ashida Hitoshi. From the 1940s through the 1960s, Kishi's fellow travelers such as Wada Hiroo, Sakomizu Hisatsune, and Shiina Etsusaburō were appointed to key positions of leadership in the postwar economic planning ministries, centered on the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Economic Stabilization Board (ESB), and the Economic Planning Agency (EPA).<sup>83</sup> The end of the Korean War in July 1953, and the resultant decline in American military and economic aid under the Mutual Security Act (MSA), led Fujiyama Aiichirō and Ayukawa Yoshisuke, technocrats and Kishi's business allies, to stress the close relationship between fiscal equilibrium and stable government and long-range plans for steel, shipbuilding, petrochemicals, and automobiles.<sup>84</sup> At its fifteenth annual meeting on May 6, 1955, the largest business federation, the Keidanren, appealed for "prompt coalescence of opinion on basic national policy" and the "completion of independence for our country."<sup>85</sup>

80. For more, see Itō Takashi, *Hyōden Sasakawa Ryōichi* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron, 2011), 265–69.

81. Kishi Nobusuke, "Hoshu shintō ha watashi no higan," banquet speech presented at the Research Institute for National Policy on July 5, 1954, reprinted in Kishi Nobusuke, Yatsugi Kazuo, and Itō Takashi, ed., *Kishi Nobusuke no kaisō* (Bungei shunjū 1981), 378–81.

82. Mimura, *Planning for Empire*, 198.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Suetake and Takeda, *Nihon seitōshi*, 219; for more on the importance of MSA to conservative consolidation, see Nakakita, *1955-nen taisei no seiritsu*, 17–42.

85. Keidanren official announcement, cited in Suetake and Takeda, *Nihon seitōshi*, 219.

Between 1952 and 1955, Kishi refined his ideas in private lectures, articles, and parliamentary debates. His vision was contested, partial, and uncertain; he harked back to models of parliamentary government and national unity cabinets of the 1920s and early 1930s. To popularize his arguments, Kishi utilized the vibrant press and turned to new methods of mass communication to ensure that the whole citizenry engaged with the new party movement. Traditional campaign practices such as speech tours still figured prominently in Japanese parliamentary politics of the 1950s. In the summer of 1954, Kishi and Kanemitsu Tsuneo, a wartime politician and proponent of the New Order movement, embarked on a tour of the southern island of Kyūshū, visiting the cities of Kumamoto, Kagoshima, and Ōita to promote conservative consolidation.<sup>86</sup>

The Japanese political world of the 1950s was in marked flux. In the pages of *Reconstruction (Kaizō)*, *Asian Affairs (Ajia mondai)*, and *Business World (Jitsugyō no sekai)*, conservative politicians from across the Diet fiercely contested new models of political mobilization, state-building, and electoral institutions. These conservative political imaginaries drew momentum from the arc of imperial debates stretching from World War I to the mid-twentieth-century Keynesian “politics of stability,” based on economic planning, welfare statism, and Cold War internationalism.<sup>87</sup> Kishi’s decisive contribution to the new party movement came with the publication of “Theory of a New Conservative Party” in the May 1953 edition of *Kaizō*.<sup>88</sup> A quarter of a century of political upheaval imparted a distinctive cast to his plans for the new party, one which bore the unmistakable shadow of the polarization in high politics that had once brought strikes, bloodshed, and mutinous armies onto the streets of the metropole, tearing at the empire’s unity. For Kishi, the destruction of the Japanese Empire provided a powerful precedent that served only to prove the point: national cohesion and political integration of the citizenry into the state were essential to generating wealth and power.

Kishi’s ideas to mobilize the popular will drew momentum from the attempt to integrate the traditions of party government in the 1920s with the aims of the reformist and mobilization movement of the 1930s and 1940s. Drawing on the templates and concepts of the interwar period, Kishi championed the resuscitation of the “two party system” to ensure “stable management of the Diet,” outlining plans for the creation of a hegemonic conservative party and Cold War center-right governing coalition. Kishi envisioned two broad-church parties, conservative and socialist, ideologically porous and shorn of the “polarized formations” of right and left to “firmly draw a clear line against violence and the denial of parliament.” The proposed reordering of parliamentary politics aimed to ensure the smooth transfer of power at elections and avoid the serious disruption to national policy that came from frequent elections thus ensuring the “nation will not fall into crisis every time

86. Kishi, Yatsugi, and Itō, ed., *Kishi Nobusuke no kaisō*, 114.

87. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin 2005), 241–78.

88. Kishi Nobusuke, “Shin hoshutō ron,” *Kaizō* (May 1953): 90–95.

the party changes.”<sup>89</sup> By narrowing the areas of political disputation and exiling the political extremes of left and right that had dominated the 1920s and 1930s, Kishi envisaged the creation of a political center close to state authority, conducive to economic reconstruction and long-range industrial planning, and thus safe from political interference and backboned by national solidarity between the classes.

Kishi took the prewar ideas of “normal constitutional government” (*kensei jōdō*) that still resonated with a generation of imperial party politicians and coopted and inverted them in unique ways. As a former imperial bureaucrat, Kishi sought to check unrestrained capitalism in the name of national service and national cohesion; in the postwar, he conflated the destructive competition of free markets with the partisanship and divisiveness of parliamentary debate and liberalism as part of his outline for the creation of a new party of order. Kishi criticized the institutional inefficiencies of the Diet and politicians’ tendency toward “separation and dissolution” as injurious to the reconstruction of national strength.<sup>90</sup> Kishi’s plan for the two-party system was to devise a political system to manage divisions and inefficiencies in the parliament to ensure a stable governing majority responsive to the needs for long-term technocratic planning for economic recovery. His ideal was for the parliament to operate as a type of disciplined administrative apparatus overseen by a socially cohesive governing elite, reinforced by cooperative representatives of the proletarian and agrarian classes, deliberating on state affairs in terms of national interests and driven by national goals.<sup>91</sup> Taken broadly, the distinctive cast of the regime Kishi envisioned represented a continuation of the wartime doctrine of ordering, of creating institutions that provide for the control, monitoring, and management of politics and the economy.

The new national political party would be based on the principle of solidarity of the classes and a rejection of class warfare and social antagonism that was the preserve of the left. Kishi’s conception of the party was progressive, both an agent of national unity and reform, capable of mobilizing public opinion in the name of state power and general interests of the nation. In the high moral and meliorating language of mid-twentieth-century progressives—that is, mass participation, social citizenship, and the national welfare state—Kishi argued for the new party to eschew ideological prejudice and antagonistic class consciousness and to reject a confrontational approach to the democratic enthusiasm of the working class.<sup>92</sup> To do this required constructing a new materialist synthesis that drew on the Keynesian “politics of stability” and the welfare state to constrain economic inequalities. In justifying new priorities such as the development of the welfare state, Kishi drew connections between the participation of the masses in government and the strengthening of the

89. Ibid. This echoed Kishi’s call for the exiling of radical elements from the Japanese parliamentary mainstream that was first made in the September 22, 1952, edition of the *Sangyō keizai shinbun*.

90. Kishi Nobusuke, “Nihon no ikiru michi,” October 13, 1953, speech reproduced in Kishi Nobusuke, *Kishi Nobusuke kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Kōsaidō, 1983), 92–100.

91. Kishi Nobusuke, “Keizai jiritsu no yōtei,” *Fūsei* (March 1954).

92. Kishi Nobusuke, “Shin hoshutō ron,” *Kaizō* (May 1953): 90–95.

anticommunist character of the state. His views were grounded in pragmatic political calculation. War industrialization, in terms of factories and production, and the material and manpower mobilization campaigns carried out during the Korean War boom, expanded the number of Japanese factory workers, technicians, engineers, and branch managers, the so-called drivers of the twentieth century. To Kishi, the energies of this new, massified electorate, eager for material progress, represented an electoral bulwark and, more pragmatically, the vehicle to shift power away from the prewar ruling class represented by the diplomatist Yoshida Shigeru.

By December 1954, Kishi had seized the initiative for the new conservative party and was a central figure in the coalition that drove Yoshida Shigeru from power after a tenure of almost a decade in the premiership. A month earlier, the Constitutional Revision Committee that Kishi helmed published a draft report entitled “Proposals for Reform of the Constitution of Japan.”<sup>93</sup> An attached explanatory note to the November 1954 draft written by Kishi makes plain the linkage between the consolidation of conservative power in the Diet and revision of the 1947 constitutional order. Here, Kishi proposed “adjustment” of the institutional mechanism and linkage between the cabinet and the legislature to complement the two-party system. Second, from the perspective of “political efficiency and stability,” Kishi identified the need to empower the premiership with “strong political power” to constrain elite discord and set national policy.<sup>94</sup>

In 1955, the balance of political power in Tokyo shifted inexorably toward conservative consolidation and into the hands of Kishi and former wartime political elites who had reconsolidated their hold on power after 1952.<sup>95</sup> Kishi, now secretary-general of the governing Democratic Party (*Minshutō*), observed that the renovation of political order underpinned by the creation of a powerful new movement was key to transitioning from the “politics of occupation” to the “politics of an independent country.”<sup>96</sup> From the beginning, Kishi’s pursuit of political renovation had a distinctly international dimension. There is a certain consistency to the centrality of Germany in Kishi’s emulative attitudes, specifically in the unhesitating manner in which he praised the German spirit in appeals to “awaken the essence of the people that made us, together with the Germans, the most industrious people in the world.”<sup>97</sup> In February 1953, Kishi met the suspected war criminal and former Nazi German economics minister Hjalmar Schacht in his offices in West Germany; their wide-ranging discussions—on antipathy for the United States, on the German and Japanese character, national destinies, and economic reconstruction—imparted

93. Jiyūtō kenpō chōsakai, ed., *Nihon koku kenpō kaisei-an yōkō-an* (November 5, 1954).

94. Ibid.

95. One example is Kaya Okinori, who returned to the parliament in 1958. For more, see Miyamura Saburō, *Hyōden Kaya Okinori* (Tokyo: Oriijin shobō, 1977).

96. *Asahi shimbun*, May 7, 1955.

97. Kishi Nobusuke, “Nihon no ikiru michi,” October 13, 1953, speech reproduced in Kishi, *Kishi Nobusuke kai-koroku*, 99.

direction and momentum to Kishi's political campaign.<sup>98</sup> In an October 13, 1953, speech entitled "Japan's Road of Survival," delivered in Hibiya before three thousand assembled students, Kishi presented a perturbingly desolate vision of Japan's overabundance of population, scarcity of land and resources, and deficiencies in national solidarity, industrial planning, and munitions. As architect of the Japanese Empire's war economy, and chastened by the feeling of having lived through crises of unprecedented magnitude, Kishi sought to dispel the prevailing mood of peacefulness and, by extension, the opposition to rearmament and state strength: "I cannot say there is no threat of war."<sup>99</sup>

Three months later, in the private newsletter of his political support group, *Fūsei*, Kishi further developed these themes in "For a Truly Independent Japan." In darker, more biting tone, he eulogized the empire and its vast lands as well as the spirit of self-sacrifice, and praised the seriousness and discipline of youth, "burning with the spirit of nation-building for the fatherland," despite the occupation-era policy to undermine the roots of patriotism and "weaken the national spirit." Such concerns must be contextualized within Kishi's broader preoccupation with and critique of the 1947 constitutional order drafted under the initiative of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP). He insisted that "the essence of the constitution should be a democracy intertwined with the blood and soil of Japan."<sup>100</sup> Increasingly common in all of Kishi's writings in this period was his advocacy of the creation of a powerful movement to realize an ethos of self-sufficiency, national solidarity, and international legitimacy, the sine qua non of "true independence."<sup>101</sup>

International events in 1954 gave a final and decisive impulse to Japanese conservatives' attempt to win American support for the reconstitution of political order in Tokyo. The defeat of French colonial forces in the valley of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 brought an end to the French war to keep control of its empire in Indochina. The success of the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, and Japanese negotiations to restore diplomatic relations with the USSR deepened the specter of neutralism that loomed over Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru's meeting with the American secretary of state John Foster Dulles in August 1955. In a series of high-level meetings in Washington, DC, Shigemitsu requested the United States commence negotiations to revise the 1951 mutual security treaty. Dulles, however, was not prepared to discuss revision of the mutual security treaty before political instability in Japan had first been resolved. As secretary-general of the ruling Democratic Party, Kishi participated in the delegation to Washington; in the months following his return to Japan, Kishi wielded American support for political and economic reform into a calibrated and ideological campaign to tip

98. For more on Kishi's meeting with Hjalmar Schact, see Kishi, Yatsugi, and Itō, ed., *Kishi Nobusuke no kaisō*, 101.

99. Kishi, "Nihon no ikiru michi."

100. Kishi Nobusuke, "Shin no dokuritsu Nihon no tame ni," *Fūsei* (January 1954).

101. See Kishi Nobusuke, "shintō keisei no tame ni," *Fūsei* (September 1954); see also Kishi Nobusuke, "Shintō keisei no tame ni," *Fūsei* (September 1954).



the parliamentary balance toward conservative unification.<sup>102</sup> In October 1955, the right and left factions of the Socialist Party joined hands in a new and stronger party organization under the leadership of Suzuki Mosaburō and Asanuma Inejirō.<sup>103</sup> In a November 14 afternoon meeting of the conservative leadership at the Grand Hotel in Tokyo, representatives of the mainstream conservative parties, fearful of losing control of the cabinet and premiership, agreed to the consolidation of conservative power in the Japanese Diet. Less than a day later, in the crowded and noisy Nakadai Hall in Kanda, the dissolution of the parties' organization was formalized and the creation of the new conservative party announced.<sup>104</sup> Five years past the midpoint of the twentieth century, the Liberal Democratic Party was born.

## Conclusion

In the official history of the Liberal Democratic Party, published in the twilight of the Shōwa era, then ninety-one-year-old Kishi Nobusuke reflected on the history of the LDP, observing that “contemporary Japan’s peace and wealth has its distant origins in the consolidation of conservative power.”<sup>105</sup> As a historically rooted institution, the LDP represented the central political organization of the newly reconstituted Japanese nation-state, one that was overlaid by the memory of political and social crisis in the last decades of the Japanese Empire. To the founders of Japan’s postimperial national order, the “long shadow” of upheaval was not merely a cautionary tale; rather their fixation on political stability and determination to prevent a recurrence of the chronic instability of the 1920s and 1930s were central to the ideology of 1955.<sup>106</sup> Put simply, postwar Japan’s democratic regime was haunted by chaos. In the hands of ex-imperial parliamentarians and high officials, conservative order in 1955 was reinforced internationally by American Cold War power and domestically by an “iron triangle,” linking business, bureaucracy, and the LDP together.<sup>107</sup> The political order they forged, with the LDP at its core, represented a transwar bridge between the imperial and postimperial worlds, one that was suffused, and in many ways shaped by, the political history and culture of the fallen Japanese imperialism. As a key figure in this last generation of imperial bureaucratic and political leaders, Kishi’s experience was shaped by the pandemonium of empire’s collapse in 1945, as the state and mission to which he had devoted his entire life disintegrated.

102. Kishi, *Kishi Nobusuke kaikoroku*, 188–205.

103. For more on the Socialist Party, see Gekkan Shakaitō henshūbu, *Nihon shakaitō no sanjūnen* (Tokyo: Shakai shinpō, 1974–1975).

104. Kishi, *Kishi Nobusuke kaikoroku*, 212.

105. Kishi Nobusuke, “Yoku matomatta hoshu gōdō,” *Jiyū Minshutō tōshi shōgen shashin hen*, ed. Jiyū Minshutō (Tokyo: Jiyū minshutō 1987), 19.

106. The “long shadow” comes from David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013).

107. Louise Young, “Rethinking Empire: Lessons from Imperial and Post-imperial Japan,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 13.

The global Cold War answered Kishi's ambitions for national leadership; in the name of transnational anticommunism, technocracy, and nation-building, his vision assumed new connotations and force in East Asia. The transwar political regime Kishi helped forge in the 1950s assists us to think in a deeper structural and ideational fashion about the transition from empire to Cold War client-state, and about the transformation of the Japanese political class as part of the reification of technocratic knowledge into political power in twentieth-century East Asia.

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