THE GENYOSHA: A STUDY IN THE ORIGINS OF JAPANESE IMPERIALISM

E. HERBERT NORMAN

The so-called “patriotic societies” of Japan have long played an important and sinister role in Japanese imperialism abroad and in reaction at home. Unless carefully watched and checked after Japan’s defeat in the present war they may again become a spearhead for a revived Japanese militarism. The following study of one of the leading societies thus warrants special attention as revealing the evolution and methods of these militarist-gangster organizations in Japanese politics. The article is part of a larger study to be published later by the I.P.R.

Modern Japanese politics conform to categories different from those of the West. This does not mean that Japanese politics are so incomparable or opaque that they can resist the analytical scrutiny of a political scientist. But social and economic forces which run parallel to those in Western countries have expressed themselves in Japan in different political forms, whether it be the constitutional development or the role and activities of political parties. One of the most elusive yet characteristic features of political life in Japan since the Restoration of 1868 has been the activities of the so-called “patriotic societies”, the prototypes of which are the Genyosha (Dark Ocean Society) and its offshoot, the Kokuryukai (Black Dragon Society). It is difficult to find an adjective or phrase which accurately describes them. They are sometimes termed secret societies but this is misleading since secret societies scarcely publish their own official histories or the biographies of their leading members. Reactionary is at once too broad and negative a term for such dynamic groups as the Genyosha or the Kokuryukai which in the past half century or more have spawned numerous societies concerned primarily with advancing the cause of Japanese imperialism. In order not to be drawn into a too elaborate and perhaps barren theoretical discussion, and for the sake of convenience, these societies will simply be described as “extreme nationalist” or “reactionary”, although it should be understood that such terms are merely convenient labels and by no means adequate.

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In the Restoration of 1868 the political leadership was almost exclusively drawn from samurai elements. These were mostly lower-class samurai who through their energy and abilities had replaced the councilors and daimyo in their own respective clans even before the Restoration. It was natural that they should monopolize the key positions in the new government which succeeded the feudal regime of the Tokugawa. Thus the state machine in the Meiji era was saturated through and through with samurai elements; they were men who in their formative years had been raised in the belief that the vast majority of society existed solely for the purpose of victualling, serving and obeying the privileged ruling class of samurai.

Despite the samurai character in the political leadership of the Restoration, the social settlement initiated by it spelled the end of the samurai as a privileged feudal class living parasitically off the peasantry. Commutation of rice pensions in 1873 although at a generous rate of capitalization could not provide the thousands of samurai households who had small hereditary stipends of a few hundred koku of rice a year with more than a paltry sum in negotiable government bonds, quite insufficient to provide for their future economic security. In addition to their economic distress, the more conservative samurai were vexed by the waves of social reform, particularly of Westernization, which swept the country. Even after conscription was first introduced, the standing army was still so small that only a few thousand samurai could find employment in the field most congenial to them, that of arms. Thus the bitterness of thwarted ambition and the cancer of economic uncertainty gnawed at the heart of the declassed samurai. The more enterprising members of the samurai who had obtained important posts in the government or in business did what they could to promote employment or social relief for their less fortunate brothers but such schemes tended only to annoy rather than reconcile the thousands of poverty-stricken ex-samurai.

In the first few years following the Restoration there was much grumbling and discontent among the samurai class and a few ineffective isolated plots. Government leaders such as Okubo, Kido and Iwakura skillfully parried the criticism and plots of discontented samurai by appeasing the wavering elements, thus isolating the hard core of rebellion and crushing it ruthlessly. The plots (until 1874 at least) were of little significance but after the defeat in 1873 of the war faction which favored a campaign against Korea and the subsequent resignation of those min-
isters and councillors who had insisted on this campaign, the samurai opposition at once became menacing, securing in these frustrated expansionists their natural leaders. The demand for a campaign against Korea was the burning issue which fanned the embers of samurai discontent in the fierce flame of revolt. Not only were there strong emotional reasons behind such a demand, such as the memory of Hideyoshi's failure, but there had been sporadic propaganda for expansion even in the late years of Tokugawa rule. Above all there was the economic and social motive which united the opposition groups of declassed samurai, the hope that a large-scale war would give them back their prerogative of leadership in the country together with the rich prospects of military colonization.

The defeat of the war party over the question of a campaign against Korea is one of the great divides of modern Japanese history. With the exception of Itagaki Taisuke1 of Tosa, almost all the leaders who resigned were drawn into conspiratorial and, eventually, armed opposition to the government. In rapid succession there broke out the armed uprising of Eto Shimpei in Saga in 1874, Maebara Issei in Hagi in 1876, Miyazaki Kuranosuke in Akizuki in the same year, and then the grand climax, Saigo and the great Satsuma revolt of 1877.

Tosa, the clan of Itagaki, followed a somewhat different course; it was the home of liberalism in Japan and its opposition to the government was from the left rather than from the right, using tactics of a more legal or peaceful nature and hence confining itself as the Japanese historians say to a "campaign of words" with slogans demanding a constitution, wider representation in the government, and greater civil liberties. The original issue on which Itagaki resigned, the demand for a war against Korea, was either dropped or ignored by the Tosa liberals.

The "Chief of the General Staff" of samurai discontent was Saigo Takamori. His name could kindle the most ardent sentiments among samurai of the whole nation and his exploits even in his lifetime were translated into legend, sure omen of immortalization in future generations. He combined those qualities which made of him not just a natural leader of reactionaries dreaming of a return to the old regime where the warrior class lorded it over their baser fellows; they made him the very paragon of samurai virtues. In person he was large, of commanding height, powerfully muscled, burly, both a formidable swordsman and a

1 In this article Japanese personal names are printed with the family name first.
cunning wrestler, a man of immense physical endurance. There was something in him of the swashbuckling brutality and perversion of a Roehm. Displaying the most unquestioning loyalty to the Lord of Satsuma who had twice exiled him at the wish of the Tokugawa authorities, Saigo could be grossly rude to men of finer intellect or higher position whom he found wanting in his particular brand of patriotism. Reckless in battle he was an able general and tactician who took a personal interest in the welfare of the rank and file soldier. He was above all a master conspirator who had been the chief organizer of three coups d'état against the Tokugawa regime, the last of which (November 1867) was brilliantly successful.

After his resignation from the government he returned to his native Kumamoto where he organized the Shi-gakko (Private School). This was regarded as Saigo's own political society where he lectured young samurai of Satsuma on military tactics, but more important he imbued them with his own reactionary views on government, and on the need for Japanese expansion. His chief lieutenant, Kirino Toshiaki, prepared a study calling for the conquest of Korea. The men trained and indoctrinated in the Shi-gakko of Saigo were the cadres from which his officers were drawn in the revolt of 1877. In one of the most erudite constitutional histories of Japan there is a section describing the organization and views of the Shi-gakko. The conclusion where the author compares the Risshisha (Free Thinkers Society, a pioneer organization of liberalism in Tosa) with the Shi-gakko is worth quoting. "What was the difference between the Risshisha which advocated people's rights and liberty and the Shi-gakko? The Risshisha advocated people's rights but was prepared to use only words in urging a reform of the government. The Shi-gakko, however, anticipated the use of military force in its attempts to change the government. Although its name was Shi-gakko [i.e. school or academy] in fact this was a political organization opposing the government and its distinction from the Risshisha lay in the fact that the latter was organized to be a political party."

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2 Toa Senkaku Shishi Kiden (Biographical Memoirs of Pioneer Patriots in Eastern Asia) by Kuzuo Yoshihisa, published by the Kokuryukai, Tokyo, 1933, vol. 1, pp. 48-9. Henceforth this basic source on Japanese extreme nationalist societies, a work in three volumes—the last of which consists of a series of biographies—will be cited as TSSK.

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Saigo's personality and his Shi-gakko deserve special attention since the most important figures in the later fashioning of Japan's extreme nationalist societies, notably Toyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryohrei, have modeled their characters and political tactics upon the hero of their youth, Saigo Takamori. It was quite fitting then that one of the first official publications of the Kokuryukai under the editorship of Uchida Ryohrei should be an elaborate heavily documented six-volume history of the Satsuma Revolt with rich biographical material on Saigo, his lieutenants and most casual associates. Had he survived, Saigo would have inspired if not organized the type of society which sprang up after his death. Thus in a very real sense Saigo can be called the architect, the first pioneer in the creation of the extreme nationalist societies.

Saigo's fate and later reputation warrant comment in order to throw some light on the official attitude towards the activities of his spiritual descendants. Although a rebel, he has been lauded as the pearl of patriots. His apotheosis has been of incalculable value to the henchmen of Toyama and Uchida whose deeds of violence have been cynically condoned in the Japanese law courts and egregiously praised in the press. The motivation is considered sufficient excuse to absolve them of any stigma of treasonable conspiracy. It should be pointed out that in an official history published by the Black Dragon Society it is stated that Saigo while still a member of the government received warm encouragement from the youthful Emperor on the question of a Korean expedition. Thus the impression was created and has since been strengthened that the Emperor, though separated from such faithful subjects as Saigo by the machinations of self-seeking courtiers or councillors, yet understands and blesses the aspirations of true patriot—the intransigent expansionist.

Another feature of the Shi-gakko which was in so many ways a model for the Genyosha was its emphasis upon the idea of an élite. Although in early Meiji years these élite were usually men of samurai family the question of social origin in later years was not so important. Leaders of such societies as the Genyosha and the Kokuryukai look on themselves

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4 Seinan Kidèn (Biographical Memoirs of the Southwest), published by the Kokuryukai, Tokyo, 1908, six volumes. The Satsuma Revolt is frequently called Seinan no Eki (literally, Campaign of the Southwest) hence the title should be more properly translated as "Biographical Memoirs of the Satsuma Rebellion.

5 TSSK. I, p. 44.
as an élite whose role it is to command, guide, instruct, beguile or cajole the docile masses. Unlike the Nazis who have combined the idea of an élite with mass organization to facilitate thought-control, their Japanese counterparts have been somewhat fearful of creating mass parties, preferring to launch mass organizations on a limited scale to influence public opinion during some domestic or foreign crisis after which the particular instrument of agitation will be allowed to collapse. The continuity of leadership, the direction of political tactics, the choice of lieutenants who are delegated to establish and lead some branch society, all this is closely retained in the hands of the few self-appointed leaders.

**The City of Fukuoka in Kyushu is separated from the Asiatic mainland by narrow seas known in Japanese as the Genkainada.** Fukuoka is the closest Japanese approach to the continent. Today it is the centre of a huge munitions industry, the terminal for air lines linking Japan to the continent and an embarkation point for troops en route to China. It is a city where in recent years few foreigners have been permitted even to alight from the train.

But Fukuoka is more than a strategic centre for the Japanese war machine; it is the spiritual home of the most rabid brand of Japanese nationalism and imperialism. Because of its history and geographical location Fukuoka has been the starting point for all Japanese efforts to secure foothold on the continent, beginning with the semi-legendary invasion of Korea by the Empress Jingo. The district about Fukuoka was the chief target of the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281, and it was the main base for Hideyoshi’s armadas in his invasions of Korea in 1592 and following years; finally it was the chief base of naval operations during the Russo-Japanese war. In comparatively modern times it has produced more men who have concerned themselves with an aggressive foreign policy than perhaps any other centre. The roster of Fukuoka leaders of expansionist and chauvinist societies is imposing; it includes Toyama Mitsuru, Uchida Ryohei, Hiraoka Kotaro, Akashi Motojiro, Hirota Koki, Nakano Seigo and a host of lesser patrioteers.

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6 The Genyosha takes its name (Dark Ocean Society) from this deep gulf separating Kyushu from the mainland. The name signifies its trans-marine or continental ambitions just as the Kokuryukai (Black Dragon Society) indicates the basically anti-Russian orientation of that society since the two Chinese characters for Black Dragon (*Hei Lung*) represent both in Chinese and Japanese the name for the Amur River.

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In the early Meiji years Fukuoka was a castle-town swarming with declassed and embittered samurai. The first overt act of violence aimed at the government, an attempt on the life of Iwakura on January 14, 1874, was organized by Fukuoka men who were inflamed over the defeat of the Setkanron (the advocacy of a campaign against Korea). Every centre of conspiracy in Kyushu, every armed attempt at uprising in that island, found accomplices and eager volunteers from Fukuoka. In no city outside of Satsuma was the defeat of Saigo so deeply mourned as in Fukuoka where his admirers were numerous and devoted.

In those years small bands of intransigents gathered together in the hostels and tea houses of the old city, declaiming against the government, foreigners, Korea, pension commutation and other targets of reactionary abuse. Some of these groups formed ephemeral societies with such characteristic names as the Kyoshisha (Purpose Rectifying Society), the Kyoninsha (Stubbornly Enduring Society), the Kenshisha (Purpose Hardening Society).7 There was one called the Koyosha (Facing the Sun Society) which showed some influence of that liberalism which was a dominant trend in Tosa and so, in contrast to the other societies, paid lip service to such phrases as people's rights, and wider representation in government. It also launched an unsuccessful scheme for the relief of impoverished samurai through settling them on the land.

In February 1881 these societies of Fukuoka banded together and formed the Genyosha with Hiraoka Kotaro as its president.8 The first headquarters of the society as revealed in a photograph was a modest one-story frame house fronted by an entrance-way with two wooden posts so typical of the lower middle class Japanese residence. On one of the wooden pillars there is a plaque on which is written in bold Chinese characters GENYOSHA. The articles of its policy were vague and disclosed nothing of its later history or real nature. Its three principles were to revere the Emperor, to love and respect the nation, to defend the people's rights. In the official history of the Genyosha, it is stated that these broad principles were interpreted to mean that the society would consider itself the guardian of the nation's prestige, ever watchful for slights and insults by the foreign powers.9 Rather than

7 Genyosha Sha-shi (The Society's History of the Genyosha), edited and published by the Genyosha, Tokyo, 1917, pp. 103-4. Henceforth this official history of the Genyosha will be cited as GSS.
8 GSS. pp. 223-25.
9 GSS. pp. 226-27.
summarize this philosophy of nationalism it will be better to let the 
society's activities speak for themselves.

The leaders in the Genyosha had learned one lesson from the defeat 
of Saigo. The raising of armed revolt as a means to achieve their goal 
of a reactionary government at home and expansion abroad was fore-
doomed to failure. It was not unlike the lesson learned by Hitler from 
the Munich Putsch of 1923, after which he chose a policy of winning 
over the key leaders of army, bureaucracy and big business to his pro-
gram. Henceforth the role of these ex-samurai opposition elements 
would be primarily to work within the constitutional framework. This 
did not exclude the use of terror, political blackmail, backstairs intrigue, 
and other similar favored devices. It simply meant that they would 
capitalize on a great natural advantage—the profoundly reactionary 
nature of the bureaucratic personnel, particularly in the General Staff. 
Thus the Genyosha from the first enjoyed and won many active symp-
athizers within the state apparatus itself. These sympathizers in the 
government served as the transmission belt conveying the threats or de-
mands of the reactionary societies to the proper authorities in the gov-
ernment or, at times of great crisis, they would act as go-betweens, per-
sonally introducing Toyama or Uchida to some cabinet minister, gen-
eral or high bureaucrat. In the reverse direction, these contacts in the 
government kept the leaders of the Genyosha closely informed of gov-
ernment trends and policy.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the Genyosha and its lesser con-
temporaries was its organization on a local basis with headquarters in a 
city of rich historical traditions where intense local patriotism or clan-
nishness gave it an inner cohesiveness which later broadening by the 
inclusion of members from other centres never completely shattered. In 
the literature on the subject the Genyosha is almost always referred to 
as the Genyosha of Fukuoka; its leaders have been without exception 
men from Fukuoka.

Another feature of these societies is the tendency to build them around 
some strong or colorful personality whether Saigo, Toyama or Uchida 
after the fashion of a school with its master and his disciples. The Jap-
anese have shown a marked preference for indirection and anonymity 
in government. It frequently happens that the formal head of an organ-
ization is not so important in policy-making as some dynamic personality 
who makes the decisions from "behind the screen." This has been true 
to a certain extent of the Genyosha where from its early days till the
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present the most forceful leader in it has been Toyama Mitsuru, although he has never formally been named as head of the society. It is appropriate to sketch the character of Toyama, the only surviving and most notorious disciple of Saigo Takamori.¹⁹

In his early years Toyama appears to have been a feckless youth who despite his poverty was utterly indifferent to learning a trade or profession. He preferred the turbulent and dissolve atmosphere of the Fukuoka tea-houses and brothels where embittered samurai combined dissipation with sedition. Toyama has retained throughout his life some of the more boorish qualities of the ronin without any of that intellectual curiosity and hunger for learning which made some of the ronin (masterless samurai) in the late Tokugawa period the first pioneers of Western learning. Toyama never writes for publication but occasionally narrates an incident in his life or some reminiscence of his contemporaries; this memoir is then written up for him by a disciple. His sense of humor, judged even by the most loutish manifestation of Japanese rusticity, is crudely scatological; in his tastes and manners he bears a striking similarity to the “best” Nazi type.

Unlike his boyhood hero, Saigo Takamori, whom he still reveres, Toyama has never displayed that fatalistic disregard for his own life which is popularly believed to be one of the essential ingredients for a leader of ronin or “patriots”. Perhaps early in his career he came to regard himself as a general who must not lightly risk his life in battle. However that may be, he has been most lavish in sacrificing the lives of his more fanatic disciples not to mention those of his opponents. As Morgan Young once aptly pointed out, there seems to be some curious legerdemain which transfers the bravado recklessness of his followers to the personal credit of Toyama. Like Saigo, however, he has proved a cunning conspirator. In his early career he was often subject to police suspicion for plotting acts of terror in which Genyosha members were implicated, but he was careful never to be found with incriminating evidence. In later years, of course, he has become a law unto himself, far removed from the vulgar considerations of police inquiry. Once

¹⁹ Uchida Ryohce, whose role in the Genyosha was as remarkable as Toyama's, is usually associated with the Kokuryukai which he founded in 1901 and led until his death a few years ago; a description of his activities will be left for a later detailed study of this and other expansionist societies.

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secure in his position as "Genro of the Ronin."\(^{11}\) Toyama's home became a sanctuary for foreign exiles or native terrorists wanted by the police; once within that sanctum anyone is immune against the attentions of the otherwise ubiquitous Japanese police.

One of the few occasions when Toyama was detained by the police was in August 1889 after the attempt on Foreign Minister Okuma's life by Kurushima Tsunekichi, a member of the Genyosha and close associate of Toyama. At the time of the attempt, Toyama was in Osaka where he was taken to the police station for questioning. When the police began to search his traveling bag, Toyama feigned alarm; when the police triumphantly produced from it a packet of papers, he cried out in mock consternation. Then, to the eager eyes of the police there was revealed only a collection of pornographic pictures. Toyama laughed heartily and was released.\(^{12}\)

Like Hitler in his years before power, Toyama has always been knowledgable about money. Although he has probably not done an honest day's work in his life, he realized the need for large financial reserves and through a friend in the financial world he was able to make a profit of 800,000 yen in speculating in coal mines, part of which he used to build himself a residence in Reinanzaka, Tokyo.\(^{13}\) He has always enjoyed the intimate association and assistance of many leading industrialists and bankers. One of the first to help him was a member of the Genyosha, Hiraoka Kotaro, a wealthy mine owner whose purse was always open to Toyama. More notably, such powerful firms as the Okuragumi and Yasuda, such leaders of finance and industry as the army favorite Kuhara Fusanosuke, and Yamamoto Jotaro, a former Mitsui director and president of the South Manchurian Railway (died 1936), have generously financed some of the more ambitious schemes of the Genyosha and Kokuryukai.\(^{14}\) Toyama would have agreed with Vespasian that money never smells, and it was his advice to an associate, Arao Kiyoshi, who was seeking funds to establish the Nisshin Boeiki Kenkyujo

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\(^{11}\) Genro means "Elder Statesman", the last of whom was Prince Saionji. Toyama is referred to as "Genro of the Ronin" in the official histories of the Genyosha and Kokuryukai. Ronin (literally, wave-man) in its precise historical sense refers to a samurai who in feudal times was masterless; in modern Japanese usage it means an adventurer, dare-devil, free-lance, etc.

\(^{12}\) GSS, pp. 896-7.

\(^{13}\) GSS, p. 631.

\(^{14}\) TSSK, I, pp. 149; 793-4; also O. Tanin and E. Yohan, Militarism and Fascism in Japan, London, 1934, pp. 51; 257; 274; 279 et passim.

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(described below) to accept any money given unquestioningly even if it came from an eta (outcaste).15

Toyama has shown himself a master at "fixing". In times of crisis when his associates are at their wits' end, fearful of some turn of events unfavorable to their ambitions, they go to Toyama for advice. With a fine sense of timing combined with that instinct which he shares with Hitler and other gangster types, he cynically decides whether the key figure in the crisis should be softened by cajolery, browbeating, bribery, terrorism or in the last resort, removed by assassination. This distinction between terrorism and assassination may seem artificial. Toyama, acting through the Roninkai, founded during the last World War and his chief political instrument in domestic affairs, might have a squad of ruffians (soshi) simply demonstrate in front of the victim's house or government office, if he is of a timorous nature; a beating may be called for if he is made of stouter stuff. Assassination is used only when a man is considered to be beyond persuasion either by moral or physical means and if his continued existence is an obstacle to the realization of the plans of these reactionary societies. If Toyama feels that he may be able to use him later he may adopt a more conciliatory approach, combining as he did in the incident described below, flattery, veiled threats and appeals to patriotism.

One incident illustrates Toyama's methods so perfectly that it is almost redundant to relate any others.16 In the period of growing tension between Japan and Russia, on the eve of war between the two powers, Uchida and other anti-Russian leaders looked with mounting disfavor upon Marquis (later Prince) Ito who was not yet convinced of the wisdom of the Anglo-Japanese alliance and still had lingering hopes of reaching a Russo-Japanese accord.17 Seeing in him their chief obstacle to the war against Russia for which they had worked so tirelessly, with years of espionage in Siberia and agitation in their own country, the leaders of the Black Dragon Society asked Toyama for his help with regard to Ito. Choosing three of his closest associates, who combined jujitsu with politics, Toyama paid an uninvited visit upon Ito at his

15 GSS, p. 630.
17 At this time Ito held the position of President of the Privy Council and he enjoyed the greatest prestige for his services throughout the Meiji period. The Privy Council has to ratify all treaties and alliances, hence Ito's reluctance to risk war with Russia was a formidable obstacle.
private residence. Just as Toyama's group arrived, Foreign Minister Aoki was leaving the front door where Ito was still standing. As Aoki passed Toyama he said in a whisper, "Well I see you have come at last, is there going to be any beating up?" Toyama replied in a loud voice so that Ito could hear, "I don't know whether there will be any beating up or not." On hearing this remark and observing that Toyama was wearing a *yukata* (a loose fitting bathrobe worn informally and usually indoors in hot weather), Ito glared angrily at Toyama. Entering the house Toyama calmly sat in the seat of honor in the parlor, and then launched into a harangue on the desirability and inevitability of war against Russia. Ito interjected in an icy tone, "Diplomacy is a matter of secrecy and I regret I cannot discuss it with you." Whereupon Toyama replied, "Diplomacy which you call secret is something which everybody knows about. The real trouble is ignoring public opinion and making government policy a private affair. I think it proper that the trend in public opinion should be given leadership. At one time your Excellency performed many meritorious services for the State, but you have also committed many errors. In case there should be some fatal blunder in the present crisis it is not unreasonable for the people to express anxiety over such a terrible prospect." Then Toyama arose abruptly from his place and, coming close to Ito, looked him full in the face and asked, "Ito-san, [previously he had addressed him formally as "your Excellency"] who is the greatest man in Japan today?" Ito was so startled by this question that he hesitated to reply and Toyama continued in a stern manner, "If I may be permitted to say so, that place belongs to His Majesty, the Emperor." After a pause he added, "However, who is the first man among his subjects?" Ito still remained silent and Toyama answering his own question said, "You are the one" and then repeated it slowly. Toyama went on, "If you do not hold fast at this moment we are in danger of falling into a grave predicament." Ito replied in a tone of frankness, "If that is your purpose then bear with me; rest assured that Ito will be responsible for your wish." Thus they came to an agreement, so Toyama said, "We appreciate having been granted this honor, we are now ready to leave."

In the official publication of the Kokuryukai from which we have just been quoting it is stated that this interview was the turning point in achieving unity within Japan preparatory to war against Russia. Shortly after this interview the same group led by Toyama, called on Prime Minister Katsura who gave them all the assurances they wanted, par-
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tically with reference to the future of Korea and Manchuria, and left them in no doubt of his intentions to make war against Russia. This mixture of effrontery, studied insult (the wearing of the yukata), veiled threat and flattery, reveals Toyama's technique more clearly than a long dissertation based on speculations as to his complicity in this or that plot. It allows us to reconstruct in our imagination the sort of tactics he has used upon other Japanese leaders since the days of Prince Ito, when Toyama's power has become even greater.

Another of Toyama's chief activities has been his sedulous cultivation of Asiatic nationalists and leaders of dissident groups who might be of service in Japanese continental ambitions. It would take us too far afield to relate here the vicissitudes of Toyama's efforts to exploit political exiles, some of whom have been genuine patriots but many again nothing more than potential puppets. Suffice it to give a brief list of the more outstanding figures whom Toyama has befriended. This list begins with Kim Ok-kiun, the Korean revolutionary whose assassination in 1894 in Shanghai spurred Japan's aggressive designs against China; it includes anti-Manchu revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen, Huang Hsing, Sung Chiao-jen; prominent Chinese contemporaries such as Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei; the Philippine rebel Aguinaldo; the Indian terrorist and present puppet, Ras Behari Bose (to be distinguished from Subhas Chandra Bose, Japan's leading India puppet); the former Russian Moslem leader, Kourbangalief; the White Russian leader, the Ataman Semyonov; the Afgan, Mahendra Pratap.

Toyama's purpose in extending hospitality to anti-Manchu revolutionaries such as Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his followers was obvious. He hoped that, should they ever take power, they would look to Japan for financial help and advice in the reform and modernization of China, in return granting Japan special privileges, and finally accepting Japanese leadership in all vital matters of domestic and foreign policy. From the others he expected and in many cases received political intelligence; through them the Japanese army and Foreign Office have obtained valuable contacts in such parts of the world as the Philippines, China and Central Asia.

Toyama is too shrewd a man to expect a hundred per cent return on his investment in hospitality. His two most distinguished guests, Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, were, from his point of view, a total loss. Once in power, both of them have led their country towards unity and independence in the teeth of Japanese threats, ob-
struction and armed intervention. Even though Toyama lost those who were men of principle and has been left only with unscrupulous adventurers, cheap careerists and political mountebanks who have long been unwanted and unwelcome in their own country, he is so well accustomed to the political milieu of Japan where for many years men of similar mentality, taste and morals have been his closest associates, that he must look upon this galaxy of protégés with pride and also a sense of kinship. In the fantasy of the fascist political vocabulary which calls Laval a patriot, Heydrich a martyr, and Hitler a strategist, it is not improbable that Toyama should consider his present assortment of foreign collaborators as peerless exponents of political sincerity.

According to Toyama's own story he has always been frank in telling his foreign guests what he would expect from them, namely, cooperation with Japan (a euphemism for accepting Japanese leadership), especially in driving Western interests and influence out of Asia, and secondly, support in an uncompromising struggle against Communism in any shape or form. Other features of Toyama's political tactics and methods will appear in the further description of the Genyosha, to which we now return at the point where we left it, just after it had entered upon its career as an organization-centre of Japanese imperialism, or as it was called, "the Mecca of the nationalist movement."19

The first head of the Genyosha was Hiraoka Kotaro (died 1906) who became one of the most important liaison men with senior government officials in the army and Foreign Office. In the months preceding the Russo-Japanese war he made frequent trips through North China meeting important Chinese officials, threatening those whom he regarded as pro-Russian and attempting to cajole and win over to the Japanese side those who were of the opposite tendency. His activity was of so important a nature that he and an associate, Komuchi Chijo, were called the "unofficial ambassadors" of Japan in Korea and China.20 He was a man of wealth who owned some of the richest coal mines in Kyushu. He drew heavily on his private means to subsidize various enterprises of the Genyosha. Although shortly after the founding of the Genyosha he resigned in order to travel in China, he remained one of the closest associates to Toyama and the inner circle of the Genyosha.

19 TSSK, III, p. 432.
20 TSSK, I, pp. 860-68.
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The second head of the society was Hakoda Rokusuke who seems to have entertained some lingering interest in the liberal slogans of the day, such as the demand for a more representative government. Between the lines in the official history expressing regret at his death (1888) and an appreciation of his career, one can easily read that he was never accepted as an orthodox exponent of nationalism; his leadership was apparently deemed unfortunate because of his lingering sympathy with the liberal movement.

Hakoda was succeeded by a man of different calibre, Shindo Kibei. Shindo, together with Toyama Mitsuru, Uchida Ryohi, Hiraoka Kotaro and Sugiyama Shigemaru, all of Fukuoka, were the real leaders of the Genyosha. Shindo became a member of the Diet where he was known as the loudest spokesman of the extreme right; he remained a political boss in Fukuoka until his death in 1925. He selected with great care the most suitable types from the young men of his circle for membership in the Genyosha. The idea of the élite which was briefly mentioned above is well revealed in his words: “At the time when the Genyosha was founded I thought that I would like to raise and train one hundred truly splendid human beings. If one were to aim at more than one hundred it seems to me it would then become nothing more than a disorderly rabble; even to create a band of one hundred human beings is a very difficult task.”

It will be recalled that just as the Genyosha was a product of Fukuoka, the Risshisha (Society of Free Thinkers) and the Jiyno (Liberal Party) were cradled in Tosa the home of Japanese liberalism. Some of the early members of the Genyosha flirted with the idea of joint action with such groups as the Tosa liberals because they were both united by their opposition to the government. Any slogan which would embarrass the government whether from the left or right seemed welcome to the Genyosha in its early stage. But as political lines were drawn more sharply and as the dominant political philosophy of extreme nationalism asserted itself in the Genyosha, its early equivocal association with liberalism was completely repudiated. Its growing contempt for liberalism is seen in the Genyosha account of the famous incident when Itagaki Taisuke, the national leader of the liberal movement was speaking at a political rally in Gifu in 1881. In the course of his speech an attempt was made on his life but as he fell, wounded, he cried out, “If Itagaki dies, liberty will not die.” The somewhat cynical comment made upon

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21 TSSK. III, p. 712.
this incident was that Itagaki obviously had deceived himself since liberty was already dead in Japan but Itagaki continued to live. But the turning point in the Genyosha’s rejection of all sympathy with the liberal movement followed a rather minor incident which nevertheless roused the nationalist fever of the Genyosha to a white heat.

In 1886 a Chinese naval squadron under the command of Admiral Ting Ju-ch’ang put in at Nagasaki in the course of an official cruise. Some of the Chinese sailors became involved in a street fight in which both Japanese police and sailors suffered casualties. This was regarded by the Genyosha as an insult to Japan and it immediately launched a violent anti-Chinese campaign in which it specifically repudiated any alliance with groups striving for internal reform such as the extension of people’s rights through broader suffrage, or greater civil liberties. The Genyosha stated categorically that its only interest was to preach uncompromising nationalism and to demand greater armaments. In this campaign the Genyosha was joined by the leader of the Kumamoto Kokken-to (Nationalist Party) led by Sasa Tomofusa, one of the noisiest of Japanese drum-beating nationalists who was to the end of his life (1906) closely associated with Toyama. One of Sasa’s most notorious political proteges was Adachi Kenzo, who was an accomplice in the murder of the Queen of Korea in 1898. Quite typically, Adachi has in recent years been Home Minister in successive cabinets and organizer of reactionary movements.

The first clear evidence of the Genyosha’s support of militarism and reaction in domestic politics was the agreement it reached with the Matsukata cabinet promising support in the coming general elections of January 1892. In return Toyama, who negotiated the agreement, was assured that the government would pursue a strong foreign policy with an enormous increase in military and naval expenditure. In the Genyosha account of this agreement the government is described as divided into two factions, the “soft” (namron-ha) and the “tough” (koron-ha). The latter included the Home Minister, Shinagawa Yajiro, the Minister of War, Takashima Tomonosuke, and Navy Minister, Kabayama Sue-nori. They succeeded in compelling the whole cabinet to agree to the

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22 GSS. pp. 228-9.
23 GSS. pp. 408-10.
24 GSS. pp. 416-17.

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The use of the police force in the coming election to insure victory for government-supported candidates at the polls. The election was the bloodiest in Japan's history, with scores dead and hundreds wounded.

The Genyosha campaigned for the government candidates in their bailiwick of Fukuoka where they organized bands of ruffians to terrorize supporters of anti-government or popular candidates. It is an interesting indication of the obstinacy of the opposition even in Fukuoka that one popular candidate, Okada Koka, was returned.\textsuperscript{25} The Genyosha, feeling that the forces mobilized might not be adequate, called for aid from Sasa Tomofusa, leader of the Kokken-to in Kumamoto, who sent three hundred soshi ("toughs") to Fukuoka as reinforcements. A band of former samurai also came from the neighboring clan of Akizuki. These gangs were aided in every way by the local police. The Genyosha in its official account states quite frankly that the purpose of this campaign of terror was to uproot all democratic or liberal organizations in Fukuoka.

This incident is of special interest since it established the practice in Japanese politics of the secret or unofficial agreement between the Home Ministry and the most powerful right-wing organizations to spread a campaign of terror at times of internal crisis, cowing and beating up popular leaders, particularly those of democratic or labor organizations. At such times the police force is considered inadequate for a real mass attack on the people; it is obviously more convenient if the government can rely on ruffians who are not wearing uniforms to spearpoint the attack. The police can then arrive to restore law and order, taking care only to arrest the victims of the attack. Such organizations as the Genyosha and in more recent times the Kokuryukai have always maintained close contact with the gangster elements who swarm in the slums of the great cities. In recent times Adachi Kenzo, for many years Minister of Interior, worked closely with Toyama and Uchida in organizing such terrorist campaigns.\textsuperscript{26}

There are two or three features of this incident which call for some special comment. First was the inner unity of the "tough" faction within the cabinet of the Ministries of Interior, War and Navy, the three posts which in Japanese politics have always acted as the chief organizers of

\textsuperscript{25} GSS, p. 422.

\textsuperscript{26} For further details on Adachi's career see A. Morgan Young, Imperial Japan, 1926-1938, New York, 1938, pp. 48-9; 59-61; 114-15; also Tanin and Yohan, op. cit., pp. 225; 258; 265; 274.
reactions in domestic affairs. Even before they succeeded in forcing other members of the cabinet to agree to their policy they had already made their pact with the Genyosha. This was also the first occasion in domestic politics that the Kempeitai (Gendarmerie) was turned loose on the people, a foretaste of their future role in Japanese politics. It is characteristic of this use of gangsters that the largest numbers are often imported from other centres, a guarantee that they will be even more ruthless than the local variety who might be somewhat inhibited by the fear of later retribution from their outraged fellow citizens.

Finally Toyama and his associates were well aware of the close connection between repression at home and aggression abroad. The stifling of free expression, the smashing of all organizations potentially dangerous to a militaristic government were the basic prerequisite for unbridled attacks upon peaceful and helpless neighbors. One of the chief purposes of the Fukuoka Genyosha was the establishment of an unofficial intelligence service by sending young men to China, Central Asia, Siberia and Southeast Asia to collect information on a wide range of subjects. Much of this information would be of value to the army, while commercial and economic intelligence would be of use to the Foreign Office and business houses. Contacts with anti-Manchu secret societies, nationalist groups in colonial territories and dissident Moslems in Central Asia were established and developed. In 1882, Toyama, with the help of the Kumamoto Soai-sha (Mutual Love Society) sent over one hundred young men to China to gather information.\(^\text{27}\) The most remarkable of these “pioneer patriots in Eastern Asia” was Arao Kiyoshi.\(^\text{28}\)

After graduating from the Military Academy, Arao was attached to the General Staff where he became a specialist in Chinese affairs. At his suggestion a special bureau was set up for the study of secret intelligence relating to China; in time it grew into branch bureaus covering all parts of the Far East and Central Asia. Under the instructions of the General Staff he left for Shanghai in 1886 where he set up a branch of the Rakuzendo (Hall of Pleasurable Delights) and in the following year moved up to Hankow where he opened another branch.

\(^\text{27}\) GSS. p. 240.

\(^\text{28}\) The details for his career which are summarized in the succeeding paragraphs are taken from his biography in TSSK. III, pp. 607-11. See also Vol. I, pp. 343-559, on the Hankow Rakuzendo.
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The Razukendo was the creation of one of the most enterprising figures of the late Tokugawa and early Meiji eras, Kishida Ginko. He studied English under Hepburn, the pioneer American missionary, took the manuscript of the famous Hepburn Japanese-English dictionary to Shanghai for publishing, and later was a pioneer in the field of journalism. In 1864 he jointly founded with the better known Joseph Hiko the first Japanese newspaper, the Shimbunshi. After a few years in journalism and dabbling in business enterprises with varying success, he entered the pharmaceutical business, not as some petty retail merchant but on a lavish scale, importing not only the medicines and luxury toiletries of the West but also stocking the nostrums, salves and perfumes of the East. His main store on the Ginza was given the happy name of Rakuendo. Anxious to enter the same field of business in China before it was pre-empted by others, he set up branches in Shanghai and Hankow. Kishida had always been interested in the Far Eastern question and was in close touch with societies such as the Genyosha which specialized in the study of China. Shrewdly combining business and "patriotism" he chose his branch managers and salesmen from young men who were either anxious to get a start in the commercial world, or who were pioneers in Japanese intelligence work in China and who could be quite conveniently supported in their work through the proceeds of the Rakuendo. Arao was one of these.

Arao gathered around him in the Hankow Rakuendo a group of young men who made tours into remote parts of Central Asia or China dressed as Chinese with queue and appropriate clothes, speaking the language fluently and supporting themselves by peddling medicines and literature, which consisted chiefly of aphrodisiacs and obscene pictures. Their trips into Sinkiang, Central Asia, Mongolia and Yunnan are described in some detail in their biographies in the last volume of Toa Senkaku Shishi Kiden (Biographical Memoirs of Pioneer Patriots in Eastern Asia). The hazards of travel amongst a distant and often hostile people were many. Some were apprehended and detained by Russian police in Turkestan and the leader of one expedition disappeared in Sinkiang without leaving any trace. But all who returned brought with them what must have been the first detailed information available to the Japanese intelligence services on those parts of the world. The chief subjects of investigation included economic and agricultural development; financial conditions and tax grievances; personalities, par-

20 TSSK. III, pp. 658-60.
particularly those likely to be sympathetic to Japan; roads and communications; the Russian, Chinese, Burmese and Indian defenses in Asia, the prospects of utilizing Moslem and Buddhist clergy for Japanese intrigue.

After his work in Hankow, Arao conceived a more ambitious enterprise to push Japanese penetration of China. Returning to Japan in 1889 he resigned his commission as captain, and with the encouragement of Premier Kuroda and Finance Minister Matsukata, toured the country, speaking before chambers of commerce in the larger cities, urging business leaders to enter the China trade. He completed his tour in 1891 and, on the basis of widely circulated applications, he chose one hundred and fifty prospective teachers who were to go to Shanghai to study Chinese language, geography, commerce, finance and related subjects. This school for Japanese agents was known as the Nishin Böeiki Kenkyūjo (Sino-Japanese Commercial Research). At first this project was impeded by financial difficulties, since promised government subsidies were not forthcoming, but eventually Arao secured adequate financial support chiefly from interested business firms and through Toyama's help. In later years, the number of students increased.

At the end of their course, the graduates of this school were divided into teams of about twenty to make trips into all parts of China, Manchuria, Siam, India, the Philippines, and the South Seas. Later, some would be employed as the local agents of the more enterprising Japanese trading firms; others would enter the Japanese consular service as specialists in Far Eastern trade; many became scouts and official interpreters during the Sino-Japanese war, others again disappeared into the nebulous and ever-growing army of Japanese adventurers whose exact function is hard to define but who have in the course of a half century performed unsavoury tasks for the Japanese army, Foreign Office or expansionist societies.

Arao died in Formosa shortly after the Sino-Japanese war, having performed valuable services for Japanese imperialism. He exemplified in his career the intimate tie-up between Japanese military intelligence, the extreme nationalist societies and business interests, especially those seeking foreign markets.

Finally, a page from the Genyosha history illustrates how even at an early stage the Genyosha both established intimate connections with the General Staff and under its encouragement acted as a firebrand in the

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39 TSSK. I, pp. 396-413.

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war against China in 1894-5. From the very start the Genyosha always closely followed events in Korea. Many of its agents or sympathizers whose business took them to Korea, whether merchants establishing trade connections in Korea, or Buddhist priests (usually from Honganji which had a branch temple in Fusan) who sought to maintain friendly relations with fellow-Buddhists in Korea, built up a detailed and rich store of varied information concerning the peninsula. During the 80's, clashes and incidents in Korea multiplied and tension between China and Japan increased. The members of the Genyosha were in a state of frenzy over the anticipation of war. Events appeared to be moving too slowly for them. The assassination in 1894 in Shanghai of the Korean revolutionary Kim Ok-ki, who was in close touch with the Genyosha, created a considerable stir since the assassin was an agent of the Chinese Government and was officially rewarded for his deed. This seemed to the Genyosha a providential incident which could be made a casus belli.

Matono Hansuke, one of the chief figures in the Genyosha, interviewed the Foreign Minister, Mutsu Munemitsu, asking him to make war at once on China. Mutsu was evasive and suggested that Matono consult General Kawakami Soroku, Vice-Chief of General Staff, giving him a letter of introduction. Matono at once went to Kawakami who, after listening intently to Matono's arguments in favor of war against China, finally said, "What you say is full of good sense, but with a Prime Minister such as Ito we cannot entertain the hope of opening hostilities. According to reports, I have heard of some distinguished men of the Fukuoka Genyosha, which is the heart and soul of the movement in favor of a military expedition. If there were only some who would cross to Korea and start a conflagration, it would then be my duty, which I would not hesitate for a moment to fulfill, to go and extinguish the fire." This oracular statement allowed of little ambiguity and Matono returned overjoyed to his companions of the Genyosha. Under the leadership of Uchida Ryohei, Suzuki Tengan and Matono, a subsidiary society of the Genyosha was created to operate in Korea, with the pretentious name Tenyukyo (Society of Heavenly Salvation for the Oppressed). At once a band of conspirators and ronin crossed to Korea, committing various acts of terrorism. They also sought out the headquarters of the Tonghaks (Society of Eastern Learning) a Korean secret society which was fanatically anti-Western and had risen in revolt against the government.

31 TSSK, III, pp. 491-3; also GSS, pp. 429-41. Details on the activities of the Tenyukyo are to be found in TSSK. I, pp. 173-296.
Although Uchida and his companions succeeded in meeting the leaders of the Tong-haks and making plans for coordinating their efforts to create turmoil and chaos within the peninsula, this agreement does not seem to have been very sound. Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between Japan and China the Tong-haks seemed to have included Japan in their anti-foreign sentiments and acts.

Meanwhile, before the outbreak of war itself, the activities of the Tenyukyo became so notorious that, goaded by the protests of the Korean Government, the Japanese authorities could no longer ignore it, and so promised to make an official investigation. The Japanese army, however, promptly intervened, designating the Tenyukyo a “volunteer corps”; all plans for the investigation were dropped. In the ensuing war the Tenyukyo continued to operate under its title of “volunteer corps”, enjoying the full confidence of the Japanese command as scouts and local intelligence agents.

While the implications of this incident are obvious, some of the details are particularly noteworthy and have a strangely contemporary character. First, the non-committal attitude of the Foreign Minister who, rather than oppose the Genyosha, sends its representative to the General Staff. The General Staff in turn expresses quite openly its contempt even for the Prime Minister and proceeds to encourage the Genyosha to stir up incidents likely to start a war. With the organization in 1901 of the Kokuryukai, primarily an anti-Russian society, the liaison between it and the General Staff became much closer; in fact almost all the preparatory intelligence work in Siberia and Russia for the war of 1904-05 was carried out by Uchida Ryohei and his agents in the Kokuryukai.

In this description of the origins and development of the Genyosha an attempt has been made to choose for illustration those activities which were most typical and, by drawing the moral from each, to suggest that the scope of these extreme nationalist societies has enormously increased keeping step with the ever bolder and more aggressive plans of Japanese imperialism. A student of Japanese politics who devotes some time to an investigation of these societies must guard, however, against the myopia which comes from scrutinizing at too close range some aspect of Japanese political life, thus exaggerating the importance of one institution or trend at the expense of the totality of Japanese political forces. Thus it would give the reader a false
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impression if it were implied that Uchida, Toyama and their cohorts were, exclusively and uniquely, the basic driving force behind Japanese fascism. But this would be nearer the truth perhaps than the opposite extreme which sees these societies only as the lunatic fringe of Japanese political life, to be dismissed in any serious discussion with a few ironical phrases.

The Genyosha and Kokuryukai (both of which are still active today) and their numerous offshoots have been, for the last sixty years, the advance guard of Japanese imperialism. They have charted the course of aggression and have even thrust themselves into the position of an uninvited pilot who at times of great danger or uncertainty has played a decisive role in guiding Japanese policy along that charted course. It is these societies rather than any political party or succession of parties which have moulded public opinion in favor of aggression. They have provided continuity from one stage to the other in the unfolding strategy of Japanese expansionism. All this has been politically possible only through the unique position which these societies enjoy with regard to the bureaucracy, but more important the army.

As pointed out above, this position was secured in the early Meiji years because of the strength of the samurai opposition to the government, an opposition which abandoned the policy of armed insurrection and instead worked within the constitutional framework of the government. But the purely samurai character of this opposition soon evaporated in its later political evolutions. Utilizing to the full their favored position with regard to the army and bureaucracy, the Genyosha and Kokuryukai succeeded in establishing and maintaining a close but informal alliance with the most ambitious houses, including the Zaibatsu (big capitalists), which were interested in expansion as a means of acquiring lucrative overseas markets and a cheap source of raw material. These societies thus are the cement which holds together the whole edifice of Japanese aggression—the army, big business and the key sections of the bureaucracy.

Toyama is the army’s chief contact man in civilian life. When public opinion is to be mobilized in support, for instance, of the Japanese absorption of Manchuria after the “incident” of 1931, Toyama and Uchida throw into high gear the intricate machinery of their various organizations. The flood of propaganda which then poured forth from this source played upon the basest emotions of greed and chauvinism in order to gain public approval for the army’s adventure. Hard on the
heels of the Manchurian incident, Uchida Ryōhei in December 1931 published a widely circulated pamphlet entitled “The Independence of Manchuria and Mongolia” in which he outlined a scheme of development in Manchuria, placing it within the Japanese economic bloc, a remarkable forecast or even blueprint of Japanese policy in Manchuria. The headquarters for the propaganda campaign aimed at selling the Manchurian invasion to the Japanese people was fashioned from a number of extreme nationalist societies which temporarily federated to form the Manchurian Mandate (League for the Solution of the Manchurian Question). The chairman was Viscount Inouye Kyōsirō, a former director of the South Manchuria Railway; Toyama was its counsellor. This league included prominent politicians, members of the House of Peers, army officers, diplomats, but above all, journalists whose task it was to keep public attention diverted from domestic problems and centred upon the attractive prospects of colonization in Manchuria. The two main themes of this propaganda campaign excusing Japanese aggression were overpopulation and the Communist menace from the Soviet Union.

Contemporary Japanese policy represents the fulfillment of sixty years of intensive political intrigue, espionage and propaganda by the extreme nationalist societies. This is true regardless of what may have been the precise role of this or that individual or group in the same period of history and it is obvious that in so complex a society as modern Japan there were many important factors outside and beyond these societies. The maximum war aims of the Japanese Government are identical with the ambitions which Toyama and his men have entertained for decades. Whatever the exact relation of Toyama to the Cabinet or other Japanese leaders, he is today, as Japan nears the precipice of defeat, in full agreement with the governmental policy. In the past three years Toyama and the present head of the Black Dragon Society, Kuzuo Yoshihisa, have spoken not simply as individuals but in the name of the Black Dragon Society. They have been joined by generals, admirals and statesmen. They are associating themselves more closely and openly with the destiny of Japan’s military and fascist leaders so as to have entirely merged with them. They are thus contributing to their own final eclipse after the defeat of Japanese imperialism.

Ottawa, June 1944