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Author(s): Earl H. Kinmonth

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## The Mouse that Roared: Saitō Takao, Conservative Critic of Japan's "Holy War" in China

*Abstract:* On March 7, 1940, Saitō Takao, a conservative Diet member representing a rural constituency, was expelled from the Diet as punishment for a speech he had given in the Diet on February 2, 1940, criticizing Japan's "holy war" in China. Leading the push for Saitō's expulsion were numerous figures who later held top positions in the Nihon Shakaitō (Japan Socialist Party). By analyzing Saitō's speech and the movement to expel him, this essay attempts to provide a new perspective on 1930s militarism and the questions of who profited from it and who supported it.

On February 2, 1940, Saitō Takao, longtime Minseitō Diet member from Hyogo Prefecture, gave a one and one-half hour speech in the seventy-fifth session of the Diet. He sharply questioned the prosecution and justification of Japan's "holy war" (*seisen*) in China. For the next month, Saitō's criticisms and how he was to be punished for making them dominated domestic headlines and attracted international attention. Despite substantial evidence of popular support for Saitō, a coalition of reformist and leftist forces pushed for his expulsion. This came on March 7, 1940. In the rancor that came with the expulsion, Shadaitō (Social Masses Party), the third largest party, split. All parties dissolved themselves in the weeks that followed.

Saitō's speech effectively marked the end of the Diet as a forum for even the most limited criticism of militarism and fascism in Japan. Nevertheless, despite the apparent importance of the incident, neither Saitō nor his speech has been given much attention in postwar Japanese writing. Mention is commonly the limit of coverage. None, or at most a fragment of the specific content, of his criticism is given. More important, postwar histories generally fail to note, let alone explain, why Saitō was expelled from the Diet by forces identified at the time as "progressive" or "reformist."

Throughout this essay, I use terms such as progressive, leftist, renovationist, reformist, and conservative without direct definition. Essentially my

usage follows that of the 1930s Japanese press. Saitō Takao was conservative because he supported the existing Meiji constitutional order, particularly party dominance of that order, and stood against government intervention in the economy. This is very different from present-day Japan where “conservatives” are associated with bureaucratic controls and state subsidies, or in the former Soviet Union or the Peoples Republic of China where “conservatives” wish to reassert or maintain central government control of the economy.

When Saitō gave his speech, true conservatives were very much on the defensive. The “buzz words” of the late 1930s were reform (*kaikaku*) and renovation (*kakushin*). An explanation of these terms and a mapping of the many groups associated with reform and renovation would be a vast project in and of itself. Suffice it to say that in this period, those associated with reform, renovation, or progressive politics all favored greater government intervention in the economy and were sharply critical of cabinets dominated by the political parties.

Some of those seeking to alter the status quo were overtly leftist in the sense of having an explicit background in Marxism, as in the case of the Shadaitō. Others, such as the renovationist bureaucrats (*kakushin kanryō*) and intellectuals were influenced by Marxist and socialist ideas including Stalinism without necessarily being either Marxists or socialists. This ambiguity is perhaps best illustrated by Kishi Nobusuke. Although in the post-war period he was seen as an arch conservative, in 1940 he was often described as “red” by businessmen who detected a threatening enthusiasm for Soviet-style planning and controls in his proposals.

Perhaps the key point in understanding the labels used in this essay, indeed, perhaps the key point in understanding the politics of this period is that in the 1930s, to be “progressive” and “modern” meant to support government (i.e., bureaucratic) intervention in the economy and to favor planning over “marketplace anarchy.” Both “fascists” and “socialists” shared a distrust of political parties and market principles and shared an enthusiasm for state control of the economy. This point has been obscured or even deliberately written out of postwar histories of this period. This essay is in part an attempt to demonstrate this shared ground.<sup>1</sup>

An examination of Saitō’s speech and the response to it within and without the Diet raises serious questions about the common view that by the late 1930s opposition to militarism and fascism in Japan had been made impossible by the threat of right-wing extremist or state terror. Moreover, his criticism was popular and had a demonstrable appeal to the lower-middle class,

1. The coming together in the late 1930s of “reformists” and “renovationists” from the left and from the right is discussed in Ishida Takeshi, “‘Fashizumuki’ Nihon ni okeru dentō to ‘kakushin,’” *Shisō*, No. 619 (1977), pp. 1–20, especially pp. 5–14.

a group commonly associated by Japanese historians with the support of militarism, not opposition to it.

### *Biography*

Saitō Takao was born in 1870 as the second son of the third-ranking farm family in his village of Izushi-gun, Murohani-mura, Azanakamura, in Hyogo Prefecture. Initially apprenticed to a pharmacist, he found a patron in the form of a Naimushō (Ministry of the Interior) official from his village. Taken on as a *shosei* (a student who did nominal work for room and board), Saitō was able to study at Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (predecessor to Waseda University) beginning in 1891. In 1895 he was one of only 33 out of more than 1,500 candidates who passed the bar examination.<sup>2</sup> To this point his career was the material of the tales of self-made men that filled the pages of *Seikō* (Success) and other magazines that catered to the dreams of late Meiji youth.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, he soon came to feel that if he wanted to rise in the world, he needed more education. He applied to Yale University and was accepted for study there.

While in the United States, Saitō was diagnosed as having tuberculosis, and when three operations failed to produce a cure, he was forced to return to Japan in 1904. Following repeated operations and brushes with death (he wrote his will seven times), he was eventually cured. His academic career interrupted, he turned to politics in 1912 at age 43 and was elected as the Kokumintō (Peoples Party) candidate. This was the beginning of a political career that saw Saitō in the Diet continually (except 1919–23 when he suffered his one and only electoral defeat and the period from his expulsion in 1940 to his reelection in 1942) until 1949.

Although initially elected with the backing of landlords and local people of influence, Saitō soon acquired a reputation as something of a maverick. From 1924 on, he took his support from local youth groups rather than establishment figures. He became a notable proponent of universal manhood suffrage. In contemporary terminology, he was a singularly “clean” candidate, one conspicuous in Taisho and early Showa politics for *not* buying votes and for *not* relying on a conventional electoral base built on local men of wealth and influence.<sup>4</sup>

2. Biographical details are from Kamizawa Sōichirō, “Saitō Takao ron—seiji no rinri,” *Waseda shōgaku*, Vol. 223 (July 1971), pp. 153–54, and Saitō Takao, *Kaiko nanajū nen* (Tokyo: Minsei Shoin, 1948; reprinted by Chūōkōronsha, 1987).

3. For a discussion of these magazines and their audience, see Earl H. Kinmonth, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai To Salaryman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

4. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 64–66 and 100–104; Awaya Kentarō, *Shōwa no seitō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 1983), p. 14; Kusayanagi Daizō, *Saitō Takao* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1981), p. 18; Kamizawa, “Saitō Takao ron,” pp. 154–55.

### *Lord of the Mice*

Prior to his 1940 speech, Saitō had achieved wide (and favorable) attention for several orations in support of the Meiji constitutional order. He first achieved fame for a speech in 1925 in support of universal manhood suffrage.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently he earned wide acclaim with his 1936 “Shukugun ni kansuru enzetsu” (Oration on controlling the military) delivered in the wake of the coup attempted in February of that year by dissident elements in the army.<sup>6</sup> Later, in 1938, he attacked the Kokka Sōdōin Hōan (Draft National Mobilization Law), which would have allowed the government to ignore the Diet and rule by fiat.<sup>7</sup>

It was probably this pattern of long periods of silence and invisibility followed by a brief appearance causing consternation and commotion that prompted the contemporary political satirist Okamoto Ippei to style Saitō as “Lord of the Mice.” Although he is now largely unknown in terms of the political history of prewar Japan at large, those who look at the period in terms of political oration rank Saitō along with Ozaki Yukio and Nagai Ryūtarō. In 1982 Saitō and his 1940 speech figured prominently in an NHK special devoted to famous orators and oratory of the Showa era.<sup>8</sup>

### *Questions about the Resolution of the Incident in China*

The speech that was to lead to Saitō’s expulsion was given late in the afternoon on the second day of the Diet session.<sup>9</sup> In that part of his speech

5. Kamizawa, “Saitō Takao ron,” pp. 155–57; Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 14.

6. Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, pp. 282–84; Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, pp. 29–35; Kamizawa, “Saitō Takao ron,” pp. 168–69. Contemporary newspaper accounts including the speech itself are reproduced in Irie Tokurō et al., *Shōwashi no shōgen*, Vol. 10, pp. 211–15. In English, see the translations given in “Japanese Press Views,” *TransPacific*, May 14, 1936, p. 5.

7. Nagao Ryūichi, “Teikoku kenpō to kokka sōdōin hō,” *Nenpō kindai Nihon kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1982); p. 14; Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 99; Fujiwara Akira, *Nitchū zenmen sensō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1982), p. 135. Contemporary press coverage is reproduced in *Shōwashi no shōgen*, Vol. 12, pp. 118–21. Useful background is given in the analysis section of this volume, pp. 539–43.

8. Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, pp. 9–11. For a contemporary example of this appellation, see “Machi no jinbutsu hyōron,” *Chūō kōron*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (March 1940), p. 332. The NHK program was aired on May 3, 1982, and a VHS format video tape is available from the NHK Service Center. NHK, *Shōwa no meienzetsu—gekidōki no seijika tachi* (Tokyo: NHK Saabisu Sentaa, 1990).

9. The context is noted in Fujiwara, *Nitchū zenmen sensō*, p. 235. The entire speech is reproduced in Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, pp. 288–309, and Saitō Takao, “Saitō Takao daigishi shitsumon enzetsu sokki,” in Usui Katsumi, ed., *Nitchū sensō 5* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1966), pp. 336–48. These appear identical except that the latter reproduces comments made by military officials immediately after the speech. For the uncensored portion (first third) of the speech, I have used the account appearing in *Shōwashi no shōgen*, Vol. 14, pp. 62–64, which is a reproduction of a *Yomiuri shinbun* account for February 3, 1940. This account is slightly

that was not censored and which was reported in the contemporary press, Saitō first and foremost asked for concrete answers about the “China Incident.” The government headed by Yonai Mitsumasa had issued numerous “policy statements” that were just listings of topics devoid of any content. What he wanted to know, and what the Japanese people wanted to know, was, “What is going on with the China Incident? How long is it going to continue? How is the government going to solve it?”

Although the Yonai government was the nominal target of his attack, Saitō made it clear in his speech and in numerous later essays that he thought the real culprit was Konoe Fumimaro. In Saitō’s words, Prince Konoe had brought about the incident and then resigned after having done nothing to resolve it. Subsequent governments had not enunciated any clear policy for resolution. Originally the government had sought to limit the “incident” and settle it locally, but when this was not achieved, this policy was abandoned.

The Japanese people had been and were continuing to make tremendous sacrifices. They had provided a million conscripts. Then another million. This looked likely to continue; there was no basis for predicting how many more men would be needed. This was the greatest war since the founding of the nation. Already 100,000 had been killed and nonfatal casualties were in the hundreds of thousands. Japan had a million men in China, but even with this commitment, there was no basis for thinking that a resolution of the incident might be in sight. Earlier, the national fate had been on the line in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, but considering their importance, they were minor compared to the present conflict. Therefore, even if there was a settlement, the people would not be satisfied unless there were proportionally great benefits from the current war. He asked rhetorically whether the government was prepared to settle the China Incident in a manner that would reward the Japanese people in proportion to their sacrifice.

Saitō then proceeded to an extended attack on the Konoe Proclamations.<sup>10</sup> Noting that he was neither for nor against the Konoe Proclamations,

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less complete than that appearing in the two previous sources, but it illustrates that there was more than enough in the public portion of his speech to get a reasonable sense of what Saitō had said.

10. In Japanese writing, the term Konoe Seimei (Konoe Proclamations) is used to refer to three different statements: January 16, 1938, declaring that Japan would have no dealings with the nationalist government in China; November 3, 1938, setting out a New Order in East Asia; and December 22, 1938, giving three principles for dealing with China. See the chronology in Fujiwara, *Nitchū zenmen sensō*, pp. 422–23. From the context, it appears that Saitō was referring to a composite of the second and third Konoe Proclamations. For an English-language discussion of these proclamations, see John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), pp. 76–82, 192–93, 213–16.

he declared that he would reserve judgment until the government clarified what the proclamations actually meant. According to Saitō, the important points of the Konoe Proclamations were that Japan would respect the independence of China, would not seek territorial concessions in China, would not seek an economic monopoly in China, would respect third-party rights in China, and would withdraw its troops from China once the “incident” was settled. Making a point he would repeat many times, Saitō observed that the Konoe Proclamations were not the basis for negotiating a settlement. These principles had been declared immutable and broadcast to the world at large. Any deviation from the enunciated goals would harm the international credibility of Japan and undermine Wang Jing-wei who had split with Chiang Kai-shek on the basis of the Konoe Proclamations. Yet, if Japan actually adhered to the principles in the Konoe Proclamations, there were even more problems. Literal adherence precluded future Japanese intervention in Chinese affairs. Although unstated, his implication was that if Japan could not intervene in the future, why bother now?

Continuing to stress the absence of benefits relative to costs, Saitō observed that the Konoe Proclamations precluded Japan from seeking any indemnity even after spending billions of yen. Further, Japan would not monopolize economic opportunities in China and would protect the economic rights of third countries. Not only did this not seem to give the Japanese people any return for their sacrifices, it was logically absurd because the Konoe Proclamations also asserted that Japan would rescue China from Western colonial domination. Quite rightly, Saitō described himself as unable to understand how China could be liberated from Western colonialism while Japan honored the rights of third countries (the colonial powers) in China.

Having noted the logical and economic contradictions of the Konoe Proclamations, Saitō moved on to the ideological and rhetorical absurdities that he saw as taking the place of concrete political policies and programs. His immediate target was the New Asian Order (Tō-A Shinchitsujo) that had been enunciated by Konoe. Saitō observed that the term “new order” had originally been used in Europe to describe a type of international communism, but of late the term was being used indiscriminately. What did “new order” mean in the Asian context? To the extent that anything could be teased out of the Konoe Proclamations, they appeared to call for neighborliness and brotherhood (*zenrin yūkō*), mutual defense (*kyōdō bōkyō*), and economic cooperation (*keizai teikei*). With the clear implication that this did not seem like much of substance, Saitō asked if there was anything more to the New Asian Order than these three points.

Citing the “Tō-A shinchitsujo yōkō” (Outline for a new Asian order) issued December 11, 1939, by the Kō-A Inkai (Committee on the Development of Asia), Saitō described the contents as virtually incomprehensible

for a hands-on, practicing politician like himself. More than anything, he declared, he found it impossible to understand why, if creating the New Asian Order was indeed the goal of the China Incident, it had been necessary to have a special committee to study this and why this goal was announced more than a year and a half after the outbreak of the incident. Presumably all present knew, without Saitō reminding them, that originally the official goal had been to chastise China for its violent behavior.<sup>11</sup>

Although he did not know it while speaking, this was the last point of his speech that would be included in the public record and the last point that would be reported in the press. Had he said nothing more, he would have already made an immensely powerful statement on the contradictions inherent in Japanese official ideology and policy (or lack of policy). As he himself said, he was asking questions that Japanese people wanted asked, but which others were not in fact asking. But, Saitō was not finished. He was just getting warmed up at this point and would carry on for another hour adding layer upon layer of devastating criticism to his indictment of Japanese policy (or lack of policy) in China.

In the censored portion of his speech, Saitō repeatedly mocked the slogans under which the war was being fought, explicitly attacking government claims that it was a “holy war” to “extend the imperial beneficence to all corners of the world” and that the war was being fought for lofty and righteous grounds, not for reasons of petty profit. While admitting there was a certain grandeur to the statements in the Kono Proclamation, Saitō asked whether the government really believed its own rhetoric.

Saitō warned that lofty ideals were fine, but those who “held the fate of the nation in their hands” should be aware that the competition among nations in the international arena was not based on ideals. Any national policies not based on this recognition were a type of fantasy. As far as Saitō was concerned, “The question of righteousness is only of intellectual interest. Righteousness without power is like having a big cannon without any balls. When it comes to war, arguments over righteousness are not worth the paper they are written on.” Speaking as a man of the Meiji period and one thoroughly schooled in Meiji-era social Darwinist rhetoric, Saitō declared, “The strong dominate the weak. The fit survive. The fit are those who are strong. The strong advance. The weak decline. This is the history of the last thousand years.”

At this point, Saitō launched into an attack on Christianity for cloaking power struggles pure and simple in a rhetoric of righteousness. Not without considerable justification, his opponents in the Diet bellowed “Get to the point! Get to the point!” Saitō’s point, made more by implication than direct statement, was that rhetoric and slogans that prevented a calculation of costs

11. This goal was declared August 8, 1937. Fujiwara, *Nitchū zenmen sensō*, p. 105.



versus benefits led to dangerous policies. Saitō launched into another attack on the Konoe Proclamations, asking whether they offered anything useful for ultimately resolving the contact and whether they offered anything that was useful for dealing “with this incident that is requiring such unprecedented sacrifices.”

Saitō was particularly concerned about the costs of supporting the Wang Jing-wei regime, noting that no one had ever controlled China just on the basis of a righteous cause. China was 15 times the size of Japan and the area not under Japanese control was 12 times the size of Japan. Wang had no military to subdue this area and Saitō asked “How does this burden stand relative to the power of our country? Although I am hardly a pessimist, what the people want to know is [how this burden stands relative] to the human resources, the material resources, and the financial resources of this country. On this point, we would like as much detail as can be given by the relevant ministers.” Describing the China Incident as the greatest clash between Japan and another nation in the 2,600 years since the founding of the country, Saitō declared, “Consequently, how this incident is handled, how this incident is resolved, is in reality a matter that can determine the rise or fall of Imperial Japan.” With such a great incident, there were many things to ask, but of these, the essence was how the incident was to be resolved.

Observing that successive governments had repeatedly presented the people with spiritual exhortations, Saitō suggested that the government should be asking itself whether the people were really responding. To a mixture of applause and jeers, Saitō declared, “It seems that the people do not yet even understand completely what the point of this incident is.” Speaking of himself in the past tense, he went on: “From what I hear, some famous old politician stood up to give a speech, turned to the audience, and said, ‘I do not understand the goal of this war. I do not understand why we are at war. I do not know. Do you gentlemen know? If you have it figured out, then explain it to me.’ But, in the packed chambers, there was not a single one who replied.” As it turned out Saitō was correct. When their opportunity for rebuttal came, government and military spokesmen provided no answers to his questions, only a repetition of the slogans he had been questioning.

In the run up to this question, and at many points in the second portion of his speech, Saitō experienced severe heckling, but despite being 71 years old and rather frail, he was fully capable of shouting down his leftist and reformist opponents.<sup>12</sup> When the heckling subsided, Saitō returned to what

12. This segment is featured in NHK, *Shōwa no meienzetsu—gekidōki no seijika tachi*. On January 1 he had noted in his diary that while he was 71, he thought he could go on another ten years. Only a few small portions of Saitō's diary have been published. The segment relative to his expulsion appeared in Itō Takashi and Watanabe Yukio, “Saitō Takao nikki (shō),” *Chūhō kōron*, Vol. 106, No. 1 (January 1991), pp. 147–63.

might be termed the *basso ostinato* of his speech, that the Japanese people were making tremendous sacrifices for no obviously apparent reason. These sacrifices were, he observed, not just those of military casualties in the past and of those sure to come in the future, but also “the unknown numbers who have fallen into the crevices of society when they received a blow from the war economy and lost their livelihoods.” Worse yet, there were others profiting from the war including “so-called boom firms” that had sprung up from nowhere to capitalize on the inflationary situation. Far from taking effective measures to adjust the inequities of the situation, the government was instead bombarding the people with calls for endurance and a firmer will. To some calls of “Hear! Hear!” Saitō suggested that instead of making demands on the people, it should be getting serious about national affairs.

Launching into an attack not just on the present government, but also its predecessors, Saitō observed that since the outbreak of the incident two and one-half years earlier, three cabinets had come and gone. Current and past cabinets had been populated by people who “ignore the flow of public opinion, have no base among the people, and who have no experience in national government.” With what is almost certainly a reference to Prince Konoe, Saitō continued:

They form weak cabinets by picking up people of no particular capability, and because they lack popular support, whatever comes up, they lack the resolve to take decisive action on their own beliefs. They lack courage. They conduct politics by temporizing from day to day with stopgap measures. It is hardly surprising that they fail.

Once again speaking as a man of the Meiji period, Saitō compared contemporary government leaders with those of the Meiji era. Certainly the Meiji leaders made mistakes, but they resigned *after* rectifying their mistakes. In contrast, recent cabinets had resigned as soon as they encountered a new set of problems.

Repeating his concern about the sacrifices being made by the Japanese people, Saitō declared, “Perhaps, when it resigns the cabinet thinks it is fulfilling its responsibilities, but this does not resolve the incident. Resignation does not bring back those who have fallen in the defense of the fatherland.” The implication was that the people wanted a resolution of the incident, not gestures, and with only gestures and no resolution and no promise of benefits, their support would flag.

He went on to observe that the Japanese people had been submissive and endured much including the spreading evil of bureaucratic politics. They had done this because of love of country and the expectation that the government would solve the incident. There were, however, limits to this willingness to sacrifice, particularly if people could not see progress toward a settlement. Without progress, “they will fall into the depths of despair.” Concluding, Saitō once again asked for an explanation of how the China

Incident was to be resolved and called on the prime minister to set out a positive and statesman-like program that would be accepted by the whole nation.

### *Reaction*

After Saitō finished his impassioned speech, he was rewarded with jeers from the “reformist” factions within the Diet and cheers from the conservative side.<sup>13</sup> This division foreshadowed the line for and against expulsion: “reformists” for, “conservatives” against.

Three government representatives made formal replies to Saitō: Prime Minister Yonai Mitsumasa, Minister of Finance Sakurauchi Yukio, and Yanagawa Heisuke of the Asian Development Board (Kō-A In). Requiring fewer than ten minutes, these responses were a perfunctory reiteration of the slogans that Saitō had just finished criticizing.<sup>14</sup> Hardly a rebuttal, they seem almost to have been intended to prove Saitō’s main point: the government had no concrete policy for prosecuting, let alone ending, the war in China.

Aside from the loud jeering of the “reformists” in the Diet, there was little indication that the speech would be the beginning of a major political controversy. The army and navy ministers did not offer any official comment. Hata Shunroku, the army minister, is even recorded as remarking, “He really knows how to say things!” and gave no evidence of being angered by the speech.<sup>15</sup> Other military officers are reported to have seen the speech as what could be expected from Saitō and not worth a reply.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Saitō had previously said much the same thing in two articles in *Kaizō* (The reformation). He had attacked the logical absurdities and the empty rhetoric of the Konoe Proclamations, noted the fragility of the Wang regime, and lamented the suffering of the people under the increasingly bureaucratized economy.<sup>17</sup> Neither of these articles seems to have produced a reaction and neither seems to have been subject to any significant censorship.

The speech did produce a reaction, and a strong reaction, within some elements of the military. Diet Secretary Oki Misao, a direct participant in both formal and behind-the-scenes maneuvering, reported hearing angry voices from the Army-Government Liaison Office (Rikugunshō no Seifu Iinshitsu) after Saitō had finished. “What the hell is this speech by MP Saitō? He has blasphemed the ‘holy war’ [*seisen o bōtoku*]! This is the ul-

13. Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 301.

14. Kamizawa, “Saitō Takao ron,” p. 151; Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 301.

15. “Nakanaka umai koto o iu mon da na.” Quoted in Hayashi Shigeru, *Taiheiyō sensō* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1967), pp. 135–36.

16. Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 153.

17. These articles are cited and analyzed in Arima Manabu, “Sensō no paradaimu—Saitō Takao no iwayuru ‘hangun’ enzetsu no imi,” *Hikaku shakai bunka*, Vol. 1 (1995), pp. 2–3.

time in casting an evil shadow on the struggling Nanking government just as we had got it set up!"<sup>18</sup>

Various party leaders were called back to the Diet to deal with the crisis. Saitō returned at 8:00 in the evening. He defended himself by noting that there had been no negative reaction from the army minister after his speech and no warning from the parliamentary chair during it. Nevertheless, he offered to allow the purge of a portion of his speech from the record for the sake of his party (Minseitō, or Democratic Party). He left the specific cuts up to the discretion of Parliamentary Chair (Shūgiin Gichō) Koyama Matsuhisa.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, Koyama cut the latter two-thirds of the speech.

In addition, a gag order was issued to stop publication of newspaper accounts of the speech. However, because strong objections to Saitō's speech had only been voiced several hours after he finished and because of time-consuming arguments among politicians and objecting military officers, the gag order was issued only *after* several regional papers including the relatively important *Fukuoka nichinichi* published accounts based on the whole speech. Perhaps more important, various foreign newspapers carried accounts of the speech.<sup>20</sup>

Purging the official record of the most inflammatory portions of Saitō's speech did not end the pressure for more drastic action against him. If anything it intensified, especially after the speech received substantial attention in the U.S. and Chinese press.<sup>21</sup> One possible response was for Saitō to resign from the Diet. He was quick to resign from his party, doing this the day after his speech.<sup>22</sup> Resigning from the Diet was another matter, although he seriously considered this after considerable pressure from his patron Hara Kunizō and especially his wife.<sup>23</sup> At one point it was even reported in various papers that he had resigned.<sup>24</sup> Diary entries for this period clearly show the strain Saitō was under. He records sleepless nights and the use of sleeping pills. At one point he was so distracted that he spent two hours riding a train in the wrong direction. In his diary, Saitō is clearly a rather frail septuagenarian who is more than a little surprised by the stir he has created. Nevertheless, despite a certain amount of wavering, he did not resign, and the "progressive" elements in the Diet did not let the issue fade. If anything,

18. Oki Misao, *Gekidō no shūgiin hitsuwa: butaiura no iki shōnin ha kataru* (Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hōki Shuppan, 1980), p. 235.

19. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 150–54; Oki, *Gekidō*, p. 236; Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 302.

20. Oki, *Gekidō*, pp. 241–45; Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 154; Fujiwara, *Nitchū zenmen sensō*, pp. 236–37.

21. Oki, *Gekidō*, p. 248.

22. Itō and Watanabe, "Saitō Takao nikki (shō)"; see February 3.

23. *Ibid.*; see February 7, 10, 21, 22, and 29; March 1–4. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, p. 158.

24. Itō and Watanabe, "Saitō Takao nikki (shō)"; see February 29.

they pushed even harder for expulsion, seeing a hard line on Saitō as a means to curry favor with certain elements of the military and by so doing advance their own political agenda.<sup>25</sup>

Three factors seem to have influenced his decision not to resign. First, after drafting a “justification statement” (*shakumei enzetsu*) to go with his resignation, it appeared that he would not be given the chance to make his case in public.<sup>26</sup> Second, several delegations from his constituency urged him not to resign.<sup>27</sup> Third, as a practical matter, Saitō had no income other than his salary as a Diet member. He was not personally wealthy and had explicitly avoided relying on wealthy supporters. Being a Diet member was not just his life; it was his principal source of income.

There were four possible responses other than letting the matter pass that were available within the rules of the Diet: rebuke or censure (*kenseki*); a formal apology (*shagi*); suspension for 30 days or less (*tōin teishi*); and expulsion (*jomei*).<sup>28</sup>

As far as can be determined from contemporary sources, the pressure to take a hard line on Saitō came largely from within the Diet.<sup>29</sup> Contemporary accounts make no mention of the right-wing pressure groups or right-wing academics who figured so prominently in cases such as the attack on the Minobe “organ theory.”<sup>30</sup> The conservative factions, while recognizing the need to do something, tried for an “out of court” (*onbin*) solution. Within the Diet, it was the Asō Hisashi faction of the Shadaitō that was consistently reported as taking the lead in seeking the expulsion of Saitō.<sup>31</sup>

After weeks of political infighting within the Diet, the vote on whether to expel Saitō came on March 7, 1940. Table 1 gives the overall distribution of votes for and against expulsion by members of the various parties.

25. This was the contemporary press view, and it was Saitō's own reading of the events. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 158–59. Also, Gordon M. Berger, *Parties Out of Power in Japan, 1931–1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 249; Itō Takashi, *Jūgonen sensō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 1976), p. 256; Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 133.

26. “Premier Denies Interference in Diet's Work on Saitō Case,” *TransPacific*, March 7, 1940, p. 23.

27. “Let People Read Is Saitō's Appeal,” *TransPacific*, February 29, 1940, p. 9.

28. The alternatives are described in Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 303.

29. This was Saitō's own view and is the general impression conveyed by contemporary press coverage. There seem to be no significant retrospective accounts of this incident other than Saitō's. As documented below, other figures who were in the thick of things seem to have suffered from selective and collective amnesia.

30. The campaign against Minobe Tatsukichi was led by Minoda Kyōki, a graduate of the Tōdai law faculty and professor at Keiō University. Tsurumi Shunsuke, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931–1945* (London: KPI, 1986), pp. 28–29; Eguchi Kei'ichi, *Jūgo nen sensō no kaimaku* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 1982), p. 202.

31. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, p. 153; Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 303. For contemporary statements of this role, see *Asahi shinbun* coverage for (1940) February 3, 4, 6, and 14, and March 1 and 9; and “Great Asia Association, Headed by Konoe, Demands That Saitō Be Punished for Remarks,” *TransPacific*, February 29, 1940, p. 8.

Table 1  
Expulsion Vote by Faction

Party Faction	Members	For Expulsion	Against Expulsion	Not Voting
Minseitō	170	101	0	69
Seiyūkai Seitōha	71	39	5	27
Seiyūkai Kakushinka	97	81	0	16
Jikyoku Dōshikai	30	25	0	5
Shakai Taishūtō	34	23	0	11
Dai-ichi giin Kurabu	25	19	1	5
Seiyūkai Chūritsuha	10	6	0	4
Mushozoku	10	2	1	7
Total	447	296	7	144

*Note:* Of the 144 not voting, 23 were hospitalized or did not attend the Diet for the vote.

*Source:* This table is a reproduction from Awaya Kentarō, *Shōwa no seitō* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1983), p. 306. It was derived from data given in Oki Misao, *Gekidō no shūgiin hitsuwa: butaiura no iki shōnin ha kataru* (Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hōki Shuppan, 1980), pp. 251–55.

Only 7 of the 447 Diet members voted *not* to expel Saitō. Five of the seven came from the Seiyūkai Seitōha (Seiyūkai Mainstream Faction). These were Ashida Hitoshi, Makino Ryōzō, Nagawa Kan'ichi, Miyawaki Chōkichi, and Maruyama Benzaburō. One contrary vote came from Kitaura Kei(tarō) of the Dai-ichi Giin Kurabu (First Diet Members Club) and another from Ozaki Yūjirō, a personal friend of Saitō and former member of the Minseitō. Even celebrated defenders of parliamentary politics such as Ozaki Yukio and Tagawa Daikichirō are not to be found in the short list of nay votes, although they did abstain.<sup>32</sup>

Ultimately, not a single “reformist” or “renovationist” unequivocally supported Saitō in his criticism of Japan’s China policy by casting an explicitly negative vote. Not a single member of Shadaitō explicitly voted against expulsion although 11 of the 34 party members passively indicated support by not voting. In return, the party mainstream, led by Asō Hisashi, expelled the dissidents.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the only unequivocal support Saitō received came from explicitly conservative Diet members.

### *Popular Response*

Contemporary records give no indication that in voting to expel Saitō, his colleagues in the Diet were responding to constituency pressure for his ouster. If anything, the general public either supported Saitō or at least

32. Oki, *Gekidō*, p. 254. For a detailed voting list for all parties, see Kiya Ikuzaburō, *Senzen sengo* (Tokyo: Sekai Ōrai-sha, 1956), pp. 284–88.

33. “Social Mass Ousts 9 Liberal Members,” *TransPacific*, March 14, 1940, p. 9.

Table 2  
Support Messages Sent to Saitō

Main Theme of Message	Number of Messages
The speech expressed the desires of the people.	142
The constitution and freedom of speech are under threat.	
The speech preserved these.	100
The people at large support the main points of the speech.	70
If expelled, seek reelection.	50
Criticism of the political parties.	49
Even if it means expulsion, do not resign.	46
Criticism of the military.	45
Criticism of the Konoe Proclamations, the New Asian Order.	15
Criticism of war.	2

Source: Reproduced from Kawahara Hiroshi, "Saitō Takao no hangun enzetsu to sono hankyō," *Shakai kagaku tōkyū*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (December 1981), p. 50.

wanted to know what he had said. The *Kanpō* (Official gazette), not normally a bestseller, experienced an upsurge in demand as would-be readers sought in vain for more of Saitō's speech than could be printed under the gag order.<sup>34</sup> More important, letters and telegrams poured in to Saitō. Fortunately, a large collection of these survived the U.S. bombing that destroyed the bulk of Saitō's papers. These have been analyzed by Kawahara Hiroshi.<sup>35</sup> According to his count, the overall distribution of the letters and postcards in support of Saitō was as shown in Table 2.

Of the mail that Saitō received, roughly 40 per cent of the postcards and 10 per cent of the letters used obvious pseudonyms.<sup>36</sup> This is a clear indication of some concern that criticism of government policies might bring reprisals. Nevertheless, the number of supporters *not* disguising their identity is even more remarkable. Popular writers on this period would have one believe that terror was all-pervasive and that there was absolutely no room for criticism of government policy without the risk of extreme, perhaps even fatal, consequences.<sup>37</sup> The letters to Saitō suggest that a rather large number

34. Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 284.

35. Kawahara Hiroshi, "Saitō Takao no hangun enzetsu to sono hanbiki," *Shakai kagaku tōkyū*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (December 1981), pp. 37–74.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–49.

37. In addition to Ienaga Saburō discussed below, Tsurumi Shunsuke has consistently described this period in such terms. In English, see Tsurumi, *Wartime Japan*, p. 90. For skeptical, alternative views, see Gregory J. Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan, 1918–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Ben-Ami Shillony, "Myth and Reality in Japan of the 1930s," in W. G. Beasley, ed., *Modern Japan: Aspects of History, Literature and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

of ordinary Japanese did not feel this to be the case. Moreover, no accounts suggest that Saitō faced any serious threat as a result of his remarks. To be sure, there were negative and even threatening letters and cards, but these were less than ten per cent of the total. Saitō was also briefly assigned a plain-clothes police guard after rumors of an attack on him circulated.<sup>38</sup> The Ōsaka Aikokutō (Osaka Patriotic Party) called and threatened Saitō telling him that he would be “taken care of” (*shoketsu*) but, as was their style, did nothing.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, for any rightist who took the trouble to find out what Saitō had said, there was nothing in his writings or speeches that could be seen as anything but patriotic. Unlike others who had come under right-wing attack, Saitō was not associated with any statement that could be construed as an attack on the imperial system. Although elements in the military took umbrage at his speech, Saitō had praised the military profusely. He criticized only the lack of direction being shown in its usage. Indeed, those in the military who were riled by his speech never charged him with attacking the military as such.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the military itself was divided on China policy with some sections of Supreme Command seeing the war in much the same terms as Saitō did.<sup>41</sup>

Would-be attackers could not easily tar Saitō with the label of promoting a foreign ideology. On the contrary, he had attacked the New Asian Order as a foreign concept and one that smacked of communism.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, at least one diary entry suggests that Saitō was actually on good terms with some rightists. On the twenty-third of March, shortly after his expulsion, he dined with members of the Kōkuryūkai (Amur River Society, or, more commonly, the Black Dragon Society) at the posh Happon restaurant in Meguro.<sup>43</sup> His diary records that they discussed affairs in China.

In any event, that Saitō could make his criticisms, experience no bodily harm, and be overwhelmingly reelected in 1942 suggests considerably more

38. Itō and Watanabe, “Saitō Takao nikki (shō),” February 17.

39. *Ibid.*, February 24.

40. The more or less official navy objections to his speech are reproduced in Saitō, “Shitsumon enzetsu,” pp. 345–48, and Bōeichō Bōei Kenshūjo Senshi Shitsu, *Daihōnei rikugunbu Dai-Tō-A sensō kaisen kei I* (Tokyo: Asagumo Shinbun-sha, 1975), p. 274.

41. James B. Crowley, “A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism,” in Bernard S. Silberman and Harry D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 282–83. Indeed, it is possible that in part Saitō was speaking for a segment of the military. John Dower notes that “according to [American ambassador Joseph] Grew’s informants, [retired general] Ugaki [Kazushige] had been behind the courageous anti-war speech of Diet member Saitō Takeo [sic] in early 1940.” John Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878–1954* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 243.

42. Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 295.

43. Itō and Watanabe, “Saitō Takao nikki (shō),” March 23.



room for dissent than the usual postwar portrait of 1930s society would suggest.<sup>44</sup> The next section considers the ways in which Saitō's speech and the movement to expel him from the Diet raise fundamental questions about popular postwar interpretations of the 1930s and 1940s.

### *Saitō and the Japan Socialist Party*

In examining postwar writing about politics in the period in which Saitō made his speech and in which he was expelled, several distinct patterns can be found. (1) Some highly detailed political histories of the period fail to mention Saitō, his speech, or his expulsion even as they deal with other contemporary incidents that produced far less press coverage. (2) More commonly, his speech and expulsion are noted, but the content is either not described or misrepresented as “antimilitary” (*hangun*) in some broad sense rather than being explicitly critical of the Konoe Proclamations, the lack of reward relative to sacrifice, and the spread of bureaucratic control over the economy. (3) Relatively few postwar accounts note the role of the Shadaitō in seeking the expulsion of Saitō, and when this role is noted, invariably only the names of its Diet members who indicated passive support for Saitō are given, not the much longer list of its members who voted to expel him.

The probable explanation for failing to list those in the Shadaitō who voted to expel Saitō and to silence his criticism of the “holy war” is that this list includes a number of the leaders of the postwar Nihon Shakaitō (Japan Socialist Party, JSP). Men such as Asanuma Inejirō, Kawakami Jōtarō, Miwa Jusō, and others achieved major positions in the JSP despite their role in expelling Saitō and despite their past enthusiasm for Japan's “holy war.”<sup>45</sup> There is more than a little “cognitive dissonance” in the fact that the JSP had “unarmed neutrality” and “antimilitarism” as key slogans while at the same time the top leadership of the party included a number of individuals who had previously enthusiastically supported Japan's “holy war.” Indeed, at least one prominent figure, Asanuma Inejirō, in the 1930s had his own contingent of bullyboys who wore dark shirts and tried to act

44. In the 1942 Yokusan election, Saitō received 19,753 votes versus 12,268 for his closest rival. This was despite massive government interference in his campaign. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 174–85; Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 228.

45. For expulsion: Abe Shigeo, Asanuma Inejirō, Asō Hisashi, Inoue Ryōji, Ishiyama Torakichi, Kamei Kan'ichirō, Katō Ryōzō, Kawai Giichi, Kawakami Jōtarō, Kawamata Seion, Kawamura Yasutarō, Kikuchi Yōnosuke, Kōno Mitsu, Kuroda Hisao, Maekawa Shōichi, Miwa Jusō, Miyake Shōichi, Nagai Kazuo, Nakamura Takaichi, Nomizo Masaru (Katsu), Okazaki Ken, Satake Haruki, Sugiyama Motojirō, Sunaga Kō, Tahara Haruji, Taman Kiyoomi, Tsukamoto Jūzō, and Yamasaki Kenji. Abstaining: Abe Isoo, Katayama Tetsu, Matsumoto Jiichirō, Matsunaga Yoshio, Mizutani Chōzaburō, Nishio Suehiro, Suzuki Bunji, Tomiyoshi Eiji, and Yonekubo Michisuke.

like the thugs around Benito Mussolini.<sup>46</sup> This background, to say nothing of his vote against Saitō, does not seem to have impeded his rise to the top ranks of the “pacifist” JSP.

Selective memory seems to have been the order of the day when JSP party leaders wrote “movement histories” (*undōshi*). For example, in 1960 a history was published under name of Kōno Mitsu, one of the major figures in the JSP. Unlike some 1960s accounts that simply ignore the Saitō incident, Kōno describes it but in a highly selective manner. He identifies those in the Shadaitō who supported Saitō, however half-heartedly, by abstaining but fails to list those who voted explicitly for expulsion.<sup>47</sup> Although Kōno was 64 years old at the time this account was published and may have had difficulty remembering the names of all who had voted to silence Saitō, it is not, I think, an unreasonable expectation for him to have recalled that he himself was one of those who had voted to expel Saitō.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Postwar Academics and Saitō*

That a party history by a party politician would be less than forthcoming in terms of some of the more “ambiguous” elements of the historical record is hardly surprising. More worrisome is that much academic writing on this period also shows the same forgetfulness that plagued Kōno.<sup>49</sup> If parts of the record concerning Saitō have been fiddled in some accounts, the suspicion naturally arises that other events and other trends in the 1930s have been handled in a manner more in accord with postwar political and personal convenience than in terms of wartime reality. This section shows how the Saitō incident raises serious questions about the interpretations of this period put forward by two of Japan’s best-known academics, not because they have overtly fiddled the record, but because they have avoided treating the incident.

46. Yamamuro Kentoku, “Shakai taishūtō shōron,” in *Shōwaki no shakai undō* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1983), p. 79.

47. Kōno Mitsu, *Nihon shakai seitō shi* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1960), pp. 168–71.

48. Kōno apparently had problems recalling more recent events as well. In his “history,” he notes that membership in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association led to many socialists being purged by SCAP for activities in support of Japan’s war effort, but he seems to have forgotten that he himself was among those purged. *Ibid.*, p. 187. The general criteria used by SCAP are described concisely in Harold S. Quigley, “The Great Purge in Japan,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (September 1947), pp. 299–303. The official published report on the purge is Government Section, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, *Political Reorientation of Japan: September 1945 to September 1948* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949). Kōno is mentioned as a specific target on p. 17.

49. This generalization is based on checking all popular and political histories for this period held in the Hōsei University Library. It would be pointless to cite the many works on this period that simply ignore the incident.

In his *Pacific War*, written ostensibly to remind the Japanese people of their activities in the 1930s and 1940s, Ienaga Saburō goes to great effort to document opposition to Japanese militarism. But, while giving detailed attention to certain figures whose opposition to militarism was so muted as to be invisible to all but professional historians looking for such, Ienaga dismisses the highly visible Saitō in a single sentence.<sup>50</sup> This peculiar treatment is, I believe, because Ienaga could not deal with Saitō without undermining the whole thrust of his own and much other postwar writing on militarism, specifically the assertion that the Japanese people were the coerced and deceived victims of “the militarists” and “the state.” On deception, he wrote: “Why did they [the Japanese] lack the capacity for critical analysis of imperialist policies and the wars they bred? I think the answer lies in the state’s manipulation of information and values to produce mass conformity and unquestioning obedience.”<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, the Japanese people were victims of massive state coercion. Noting that only one person was executed under the Peace Preservation Law, he concludes, “Strangely enough, this may only mean that oppression was actually greater in Japan [than Germany]. Every aspect of life was so regimented and controlled that no one could plan a treacherous act worthy of the death penalty.”<sup>52</sup>

Leaving aside the logical absurdity of the second point,<sup>53</sup> there is no question that these explanations have been both sufficient and satisfying for

50. Ienaga notes that Saitō gave “an extraordinary speech criticizing the war in China,” nothing more. In contrast he devotes several pages to the very, very muted criticism made by certain intellectuals. Ienaga Saburō, *The Pacific War, 1931–1945: A Critical Perspective on Japan’s Role in World War* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pp. 110–11, 208–23.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

53. Since this point has not been questioned in print, it may not be so obvious that it is logically absurd. Indeed, one prominent historian of Japan has endorsed this claim. See Hilary Conroy, “Concerning Japanese Fascism,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 40 (February 1981), p. 328. I would observe that if there is an inverse correlation between numbers executed and the level of oppression, as implied by Ienaga, this means that the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin or Cambodia under Pol Pot were less oppressive regimes. If the circumstances of these two cases are considered too different to refute Ienaga’s logic, this can be done simply from within the Japanese empire. Since many Koreans were executed or murdered by the Japanese state, this means, following Ienaga’s logic, that Koreans were less “regimented and controlled” by the Japanese state than were Japanese and thus had more opportunity to engage in activities that produced a de facto or de jure death sentence. For some examples of state violence against Koreans, see Chong-sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). For perspective, it should be noted that Hoffman estimates that between 1933 and 1945 the Nazi regime executed at least 32,600 people for political crimes. The 1944 plot against Adolf Hitler alone generated 4,980 executions. Peter Hoffman, *The History of the German Resistance, 1939–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977), p. 16. By German standards, to say nothing of Stalinist standards, celebrated cases of repression in Japan such as the Yokohama Incident or the Kikakuin Incident look definitely minor league.

many postwar Japanese. But neither claim is easily reconciled with the Saitō expulsion incident. There is no evidence that Saitō Takao had any access to information or had been any less exposed to the state's efforts at manipulating values than was the case for those who supported the war in China. Nevertheless, he was able to see the slogans and policies of Japan as explicitly imperialistic and hypocritical. Moreover, this was the one part of his speech that was not struck from the Diet record and the one part that could be cited in the press. It therefore had to have figured in the popular support for Saitō at the time of his speech and later when his constituents put him back in the Diet in 1942 with the greatest majority in his long political career. There is no reason to think there was something about Saitō's rural constituency that gave it a clarity of vision denied the rest of the Japanese population. The Tajima area has been regarded socially as one of the more conservative or even backward areas outside of Tohoku, and famous figures associated with it such as Katō Hiroyuki are generally well to the right on the political spectrum.<sup>54</sup>

If anything, Ienaga's assertions smack more of diversion than analysis.<sup>55</sup> The same may be said of Maruyama Masao, a historian of the same generation as Ienaga.<sup>56</sup> Writing during the early occupation period, Maruyama found it difficult to understand why "true" (in his typology) intellectuals had not been able to see through the hypocrisy of Japanese proclamations of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.<sup>57</sup> This is indeed an important question, since Saitō, as a graduate of Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō, was probably not a "true intellectual" in Maruyama's typology, but had no difficulty in seeing through the slogans associated with Japan's "holy war" and the New Asian Order. If Saitō's rural, farmer, and small-business constituency had believed in these slogans, it is most unlikely they would have voted him back into the Diet, especially since Saitō was a singularly ineffective constituency (pork-barrel) politician.

Although Maruyama did not explain why "true intellectuals" could not see through the hypocrisy of New Order slogans, Saitō did, albeit indirectly. In his articles in *Kaijō*, in the speech that got him expelled, and in

54. For the "color" of Tajima, see Ueda Hirao, *Fukutsu no seijika Saitō Takao* (Kanishi, Hyogo: Tajima Bunka Kyōkai, 1992).

55. Tamamoto Masaru, *Unwanted Peace: Japanese Intellectual Thought in Occupied Japan 1948–1952* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 29.

56. Although Maruyama is often identified as a "political scientist," use of that term invites confusion with contemporary American empirical political science. For a discussion of Maruyama and his role (or lack thereof) in the development of political science in postwar Japan, see Otake Hideo, *Sengo seiji to seijigaku* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), pp. 17–36.

57. Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 58–60.

a series of notes and letters that he appears to have sent to Konoe, Saitō noted that the empty slogans associated with the “holy war” and the New Asian Order were the product of committees and “half-baked intellectuals” around Konoe.<sup>58</sup>

Saitō did not explicitly name those advisors, but scholars with a will to do so have had little difficulty identifying those responsible for the ideology of the “holy war” and the slogans of the New Asian Order. The “hypocritical slogans” of the Konoe Proclamations originated not with the petty bourgeoisie constituency that Saitō spoke for. These slogans in general and the Konoe Proclamations in particular were the products of the Shōwa Kenkyūkai, a veritable who’s who of intellectuals assembled from Japan’s most prestigious universities, including Tokyo Imperial University Professor Yabe Sadaji (Teiji) and the Marxist philosopher Miki Kiyoshi who had been educated at Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the role of these “true” intellectuals in promoting the “holy war,” the New Asian Order, Konoe’s New Order Movement, and the later Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Taisei Yokusankai) was well known from public records at the time. Contemporary commentators often wrote about the “brain trust” supporting Konoe.<sup>60</sup> Intellectuals were seen as so enthusiastic about these movements that contemporary journals often used the term *binjō* (catching the wave as in surfing) to describe their behavior. “Don’t miss the bus!” was a catch phrase of this period and usually used in the context of intellectual behavior.

A “new order in Asia” had little or no meaning to the mass of the petty bourgeoisie who were concerned first with survival. The slogans of the New Asian Order are part of the currency of contemporary high-brow journals such as *Kaizō* and *Chūō kōron*. They are *not* prominent in the pages of trade publications aimed at segments of the petty bourgeoisie. To the extent that the petty bourgeoisie had an interest in New Asian Order, it was a matter of what, in contemporary terms, would be called “the bottom line.” Only elite intellectuals with secure status and incomes could dream of a more abstract New Asian Order.

Saitō’s belief that the war in China probably could not be won, and if

58. His criticism of Konoe and the advisors around him is summarized in Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 161–72. The essays Saitō wrote after his expulsion are collected in Saitō Takao, *Saitō Takao seiji ronshū*, ed. Saitō Takao Sensei Kenshōkai (Izushi: Saitō Takao Sensei Kenshōkai, 1961). See also Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 205. The term “half-baked” is from Leslie Russell Oates, *Nakano Seigo* (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1982), pp. 71–72.

59. James B. Crowley, “Intellectuals as Visionaries of the New Asian Order,” in James W. Morley, ed., *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), and Miles Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

60. For example, Yoshida Tokujirō, “Konoe no bureen torasuto,” *Chūō kōron*, Vol. 52, No. 7 (July 1937), pp. 274–82.

victory was possible the rewards would not justify the sacrifices, was a vastly more realistic reading of the situation than that made by Maruyama's "true intelligentsia." Although apologists for these intellectuals would portray them as seeking to control the military, there is no question that their formulas actually justified the expansion of warfare in China and then the whole of Asia. Indeed, Miki Kiyoshi and other proponents of the New Asian Order explicitly proclaimed that capitalistic criteria of profit and loss were not to be applied to the "holy war."<sup>61</sup> With no hard criteria for judging the costs and benefits of the "holy war," there was no logic for calling a halt at some point and no basis for mustering the antiwar feelings of that portion of the Japanese population that was not profiting from the war. Perhaps Miki and some of the others around Konoe were motivated by idealism, but it is also highly unlikely that a prime minister from the ranks of capital would have given Miki and other Shōwa Kenkyūkai members such access to the corridors of power.<sup>62</sup>

Other "true" intellectuals of this period were rather more up front in linking personal and class aspirations to militarism. For example, in his *Nihon keizai no saihensei* (Restructuring the Japanese economy), said to have "raised the cost of paper" because of its popularity, Ryū Shintarō proclaimed the need for a separation of ownership and management. Owner-managers were a thing of the past. The future belonged to trained specialist managers who would be quasi-civil servants.<sup>63</sup> In other words, Ryū saw the economic problems generated by the war in China as an opportunity for replacing the hegemony of plutocrats with that of technocrats, or members of the "true intelligentsia," specialists trained at Japan's top educational institutions.<sup>64</sup> Hon'iden Yoshio, a Tokyo Imperial University professor, was even more forthright in a lecture series he delivered and later published as a book in 1938. Noting that under Marxist formulas, intellectuals were nominally subject to the proletariat, he explained that under "totalism" demanded by the crisis facing Japan, intellectuals (specialists) would hold absolute authority without having to be even nominally subject to the prole-

61. Nakamura Takafusa, *Shōwa-shi* (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 1993), Vol. 1 pp. 283–86. For an example of defending Miki, see Ishizeki Keizō, "Chishikijin no kokka ishiki," *Shakai kagaku tōkyū*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (March 1973), pp. 11–13.

62. Although Miki Kiyoshi has been regarded as something of a martyr, his opportunism was criticized by Takeuchi Yoshimi. Andrew E. Barshay, "Imagining Democracy in Post-war Japan: Reflections on Maruyama Masao and Modernism," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 376. Miki's enthusiasm for the "Holy War" is also recorded by Yatsugi Kazuo. Yatsugi Kazuo, *Shōwa jinbutsu hiroku* (Tokyo: Shin-kigen-sha, 1954), pp. 289–91.

63. Ryū Shintarō, *Nihon keizai no saihensei* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1939), p. 153.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 242–43. For its part, business saw Ryū as "red." Chalmers A. Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), p. 150; Nakamura, *Shōwa-shi*, Vol. 1, p. 293.

ariat.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the China Incident, the “holy war,” and the New Order Movement that followed meant socialism on the cheap and class power for the technocratic elite.<sup>66</sup>

*A Dark Valley for Whom?*

As of 1940, the benefits of militarism were not limited to individual opportunistic intellectuals who saw a route to socialism on the cheap. By the time Saitō spoke in 1940, skilled blue-collar workers were in extremely short supply and firms were bidding up wages in order to secure a work force to meet their highly profitable war production contracts. The promise of high (relative to what they currently enjoyed) wages was pulling workers out of the countryside to the degree that it was becoming difficult to find harvest workers. Low-rank and low-pay civil servants were shifting to the munitions industries.<sup>67</sup>

Komagaya Tokuchi, a machinist quoted in Theodore and Haruko Cook's outstanding book, *Japan at War: An Oral History*, recalled the period as anything but a “dark valley” for skilled workers.

Machinists welcomed the munitions boom. . . . By the end of 1937, I was able to take care of my father. War's not bad at all, I thought. As a skilled worker, I was eagerly sought after and earned my highest wages in 1938, '39 and '40. There were so many hours of overtime! I changed jobs often, each new job better than the one before. In 1940, a draft system for skilled workers was introduced to keep us from moving around. . . . Because of the war, I made as much as a section chief in a first-class company—about

65. Hon'iden Yoshio, *Jikyoku to gakusei* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1938), pp. 144, 164–65, 203, 245.

66. It was a contemporary criticism that the New Order Movement was nothing more than a change in strategy on the part of the left. Sugimori Hisahide, *Taisei yokusan kai zengo* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1988), p. 95; Richard H. Mitchell, *Thought Control in Prewar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 179.

67. Some of the reports behind these generalizations include “Shugyōdō no jōsho ichijirushiki rōdōkai,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō*, February 13, 1937, pp. 20–23; “Rōdōryoku wa ikani hōkyū sareruka,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō*, July 16, 1938, pp. 35–36; “Rōdō seisaku no tekisei to rōdō chōsa,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō*, May 27, 1939, pp. 34–47; “Rōdōsha ni kiku,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō*, May 27, 1939, pp. 48–50; “Jihen keizai,” *Tōyō keizai shinpō*, January 1, 1940, pp. 34–42; “Careless Workers Lose Much Money,” *TransPacific*, May 4, 1939, p. 22; Fujibayashi Keizō, *Kinrō to seikatsu* (Tokyo: Keiō Shuppan-sha, 1944), pp. 26–46. Despite the date, the Fujibayashi work is largely about this period. The rapid expansion in the number of entry-level workers and women did pull down gross averages, a statistical phenomenon that has led some to incorrectly see militarism as having a negative economic impact on workers. For discussions of this phenomenon, see Shōwa Kenkyūkai, *Rōdō shintaisei kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōyō Keizai Shinpō-sha, 1941), pp. 130–32; and Mori Kiichi, *Jūkōgyō no chingin to seikatsu* (Tokyo: Minzoku Kagaku-sha, 1944), pp. 6–15.

120 yen a month. . . . The happiest thing was that I didn't need to worry about finding a job.<sup>68</sup>

As early as 1934, Asō Hisashi had recognized that inflationary military budgets were good for the skilled working class, especially those that he counted among his electoral constituency.<sup>69</sup> While postwar histories of the 1930s labor and socialist movement have almost uniformly focused on state repression as the cause of its failure to oppose militarism and fascism, both the economic and political records for this period suggest that opportunism was rather more important than coercion.

White-collar workers from the rank and file to the elite were riding to the crest of a booming job market that had taken off when the Kwantung Army had seized Manchuria and set up a puppet state operated by a newly recruited Japanese civil service.<sup>70</sup> Corporate bureaucracies had boomed as militarization brought about the growth of larger-scale, higher-technology firms. More important, militarism had generated economic controls and planning that added substantially to the size of the civil service. Students going on to secondary or higher education were in an especially favored position. In a system biased heavily in favor of the intellectual elite, those who remained students were draft exempt until age 26. The few who had not developed some disqualification by that age were given preferential treatment and a short tour of duty.<sup>71</sup>

A comparison of publications aimed at university students with those aimed at proprietors of small businesses vividly illustrates the differential impact of militarism by class, occupation, and educational level. The placement rate for elite graduates was at its nadir in 1931, just before the Kwantung Army took over Manchuria. Subsequently, the job market improved dramatically. The pages of the *Teikoku Daigaku shinbun*, the student newspaper at Tokyo Imperial University (Tōdai), describe a job market for elite graduates that was highly dependent on jobs spawned as a result of militarism, i.e., the Manchurian bureaucracy, think tanks, research institutes, economic control agencies, and firms in advanced industrial sectors.<sup>72</sup> In the

68. Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore Faylor Cook, *Japan At War: An Oral History* (New York: New Press, 1992), p. 49.

69. William D. Wray, "Asō Hisashi and the Search for Renovation in the 1930s," *Papers on Japan*, Vol. 5 (1970), p. 61.

70. For the impact of Manchuria on the domestic labor market, see Kinmonth, *Self-Made Man*, chap. 8.

71. The favorable treatment of students is discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 346–47; Ben-Ami Shilony, "Universities and Students in Wartime Japan," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol 45, No. 4 (August 1986), pp. 778–79; Oe Shinobu, *Tennō no guntai* (Tokyo: Shōgakkān, 1982), pp. 65–66, 308–9.

72. This generalization is based on reading all articles concerning placement in the Meiji Shinbun Zasshi Bunko holdings of the *Teikoku Daigaku shinbun* and other student newspapers for the major imperial and private universities for the 1920s and 1930s.



same period, articles in general economic journals and publications aimed at specific segments of the old middle class were reporting increasing unemployment among shopkeepers and small-business owners who could not benefit from the military-driven economy of the late 1930s.

In contrast to the uniformly positive impact of militarism on the industrial work force and on the intelligentsia, the agrarian sector was a more mixed picture. On the one hand, the government had already initiated a system of price controls and production subsidies that had the effect of transferring income from landlords to cultivators. Rents were fixed; payments to cultivators were not. This meant that in a period of steady inflation there was a de facto rent reduction.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, it was the agrarian sector that provided the bulk of the manpower for the military. As such, it was the sector that absorbed the bulk of the casualties. Nevertheless, Saitō was singularly unromantic about agriculture. Indeed, his autobiography contains numerous references to his dislike of farming.<sup>74</sup> While it is unlikely that farmers were not part of the Japanese population that he saw suffering from the war, there is good reason for believing that Saitō actually had a rather different social group in mind when he repeatedly raised this issue.

Ultimately there was only one class in Japan that was, as of 1940, suffering much and receiving little gain from militarism. This was the old middle class, traditional artisans, merchants, and petty manufacturers. By 1940 government economic policy was called *jūten shugi* or an emphasis on strategic industry. As various commodities and raw materials became increasingly scarce due to military demands, these were withdrawn from the civilian market and allocated to strategic industries.<sup>75</sup> This policy hit hard at small manufacturers who could not obtain raw materials to maintain production. When small firms could convert to military production, this was typically done by becoming a subcontractor to a larger firm. This usually

73. For a description of the subsidy system, see Jerome B. Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949), pp. 383–86. A description nearly contemporaneous with the Saitō incident is found in “Cabinet Approves Farmers’ Subsidies,” *TransPacific*, July 18, 1940, p.18. Its role in bringing about de facto land reform is noted in Theodore Cohen, *Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal*, ed. Herb Passim (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 178; Nakamura Takafusa, *The Postwar Japanese Economy: Its Development and Structure* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981), p. 19.

74. Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 14, 17.

75. An excellent general discussion of the hardships of the petty bourgeoisie is found in Shiota Sakiko, “Senji tōsei keizai shita no chūshō shōkōgyōsha,” in Nakamura Masanori, ed., *Sensō to kokka dokusen shihon shugi* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōron-sha, 1979), pp. 221–66. Ironically, this article appears in a collection that begins with the tired claim that the petty bourgeoisie were the social basis of Japanese militarism! For a distillation of contemporary reports, see Thomas A. Bisson, *Japan's War Economy* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1945), pp. 70–82.

meant a loss of autonomy and lower profits. As so many contemporary accounts were to lament, relatively few small manufacturers were able to convert to military production. Small firms that hung on, perhaps with black-market materials, found themselves facing great difficulty in securing help. Younger workers deserted small firms in droves for the higher wages and better perks of the larger firms. This left many small firms with only a proprietor and a few workers too old to change or with skills unwanted by the armaments and related sectors.

The old middle class stands out in these years as the only segment of Japanese society experiencing unemployment. It was the only segment of society targeted for relief measures. Although it would be naive to explain Saitō's criticism of the war in China *solely* in terms of expressing the discontent of the old middle class, logically his repeated references to the "suffering of the people" from war-related burdens, especially ever-extending bureaucratic controls, cannot apply to any other major social or economic group as of the date of his speech. Similarly, when he spoke of the war as producing "unemployment," this could not be anything other than a reference to the old middle class, because by all contemporary accounts, the old middle class was the only locus of unemployment in the booming 1940 economy.

Unfortunately, the old middle class had few friends other than Saitō. The various renovationist or new bureaucrats who were largely allied with the military and the civilian proponents of the "controlled economy," one of the buzz words of this period, had no brief for small business. Indeed, control bureaucrats initially hoped to "rationalize" small business out of existence.<sup>76</sup> Intellectuals in this period, as well as the postwar period, have regularly shown their contempt for the old middle class through the use of the highly pejorative term *puchi buro*, literally petite bourgeoisie, but with strong overtones of "grubby little bourgeoisie."<sup>77</sup>

Similar attitudes were held by those military officers who believed a centrally planned economy was an essential component of military preparedness. Conspicuous in the Kwantung Army, they had restricted the access of small business to Manchuria, believing small business to be technologically backward and hard to control. Instead, they had invited in the compliant and technologically advanced Nissan, offering enormous subsidies.<sup>78</sup>

76. Earl H. Kinmonth, "The Impact of Military Procurements on the Old Middle Classes in Japan, 1931–1941," *Japan Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (October 1992), pp. 252–56.

77. There is more than a little of this attitude manifest in the writings of Maruyama Masao, especially Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour*, pp. 57–63.

78. Gary D. Allinson, *Japanese Urbanism: Industry and Politics in Kariya, 1872–1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 95; Cohen, *War and Reconstruction*, pp. 39–40; Hara Akira, "'Manshū' ni okeru keizai tōsei seisaku no tenkai," in Andō Yoshio, ed., *Nihon keizai seisaku shi ron* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1976), p. 231.

On the military side, those who attacked Saitō were not the quasi-religious types who floated in clouds of rhetoric based on the allegedly unique Japanese spirit. The military names associated with the attack on Saitō were technocrats associated with military planning and logistics, men such as Mutō Akira (1892–1948), head of the Military Affairs Bureau (Gunmu Kyokuchō).<sup>79</sup> Mutō was known for his association with a variety of “think tanks” that favored a planned and controlled economy. Essentially he was an intellectual who happened to wear an army uniform rather than a suit. The worsening of the war in China was allowing the control elements within the military to achieve what Saitō had feared and spoken out against in his 1938 speech against the Kokka Sōdōin Hōan (Draft National Mobilization Law).

Despite Maruyama Masao’s vivid depictions of Japan’s military leaders as romantics celebrating agriculture while denying the economic realities of modern warfare,<sup>80</sup> there was a substantial contingent within the officer corps that was very concerned with technological, political, and economic modernization. Some had spent three or more years at the law or economics departments at Tokyo Imperial University.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, one of the key documents that Maruyama cites to demonstrate agrarian romanticism, the (in)famous 1934 army pamphlet “Kokubō no hongī to sono kyōka no teishō” (Basic theory of national defense and suggestions for its realization),<sup>82</sup> in fact has relatively little to say about agriculture but does call for many of the economic and technological policies that were followed by Japan after the war in the so-called high-growth period. It was the strongly socialist and strongly industrial coloring of this document that first attracted Asō Hisashi, leader of the Shadaitō, to the military.<sup>83</sup>

This pamphlet was not the product of agrarian romantics as Maruyama would seem to suggest, but rather it was the product of Tōdai-educated army and civilian intellectuals explicitly concerned with industrial modernization.<sup>84</sup> The “holy war” was most welcome to those in the military who

79. Awaya, *Shōwa no seitō*, p. 302.

80. Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour*, pp. 34–51.

81. Ikeda Sumihisa, one of the officers closely associated with the 1934 army pamphlet, is an example. See Otani Keijirō, *Gunbatsu* (Tokyo: Tosho Shuppan-sha, 1983), pp. 121, 126. This system for the secondment of military officers to faculties other than engineering seems to be little known and largely unstudied.

82. Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour*, pp. 48–49.

83. On Asō and his enthusiasm, see Wray, “Asō Renovation,” pp. 63–64.

84. For a typology of army economic bureaucrats, see Furukawa Takahisa, “Kakushin kanryō no shisō to kōdo,” *Shigaku zasshi*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (April 1990), pp. 7–8. On the drafting of the pamphlet, see Arisawa Hiromi and Andō Yoshio, *Shōwa keizaiishi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1976), pp. 116–17; Itō Takashi, *Konoeshintaisei: taisei yokusankai e no michi* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1983), pp. 52–54; Ikeda Sumihisa (Yoshihisa), *Nihon no magari-kado* (Tokyo: Chijō Shobō, 1968), pp. 52–60. Ikeda’s comments are especially important because he was directly involved in the writing of the 1934 pamphlet and had been on secondment to Tōdai for three years.

wanted larger budgets for modernization and greater control over the economy because they saw production mobilization as a key component of war. Moreover, continuation and expansion of the war had a significant personal payoff. Hirota Teruyuki in his study of careerism in the army has pointed out that the Japanese military had an unusually low retirement age coupled to a poor pension scheme and poor placement prospects for ex-military men. War greatly enhanced promotion opportunities, and promotion meant a later retirement age and a substantially better pension.<sup>85</sup>

Although it would be naive to explain the army enthusiasm for the “holy war” solely or even primarily in terms of careerism, no less a figure than Kaya Okinori, minister of finance under Konoe (1937) and Tōjō Hideki (1941), has, in his memoirs, noted the issues of promotion prospects and forced early retirement (if the war wound down) as significant factors working to prolong the war in China.<sup>86</sup> As in the case of civilian intellectuals who could see socialism on the cheap coming with militarism and for whom socialism ultimately meant bureaucratic positions for themselves and members of their class, a mix of socialism and careerism, in other words personal and class benefits, can be detected in the military intelligentsia as well.<sup>87</sup> Viewed in terms of the exceedingly poor job market for the civilian intelligentsia in the early 1930s and the reductions in the size of the military establishment in the 1920s and 1930s, the “holy war” was most welcome to the “prize students” from elite educational institutions, both civil and military.

### *Life after Death*

After Japan’s surrender in 1945 Saitō enjoyed some attention as one of the few really clean politicians for the Allied Occupation’s efforts to democratize Japan. He served as *kokumu daijin* under Yoshida Shigeru and Katayama Tetsu but cannot be considered to have been a major political figure. He died largely unnoticed at age 80 in 1949.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, his name remains very much alive in the contemporary press. A keyword search of Japan’s big four newspapers turned up 68 references to Saitō for the years 1985–98.<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, this posthumous notoriety in the popular press shares the peculiarly selective treatment of him by scholars as well as adding

85. The system is described in detail in Hirota Teruyuki, *Rikugun shōkō no kyōiku shakai-shi: risshin shusse to tennōsei* (Tokyo: Seori Shobō, 1997), pp. 305–56.

86. Kaya Okinori, *Senzen—senjo hachijūnen* (Tokyo: Rōman, 1975), pp. 115–17.

87. According to Otani, there was criticism within the military that the so-called *tōseiha* was “red” and made up of “red economic staff officers.” Otani Keijirō, *Gunbatsu*, p. 135.

88. Kamizawa, “Saitō Takao ron,” pp. 147, 174. As a consequence of being in the Yoshida cabinet, Saitō’s name appears on the current Japanese constitution.

89. The Nikkei Telecom database was used with the search expressions “Saitō Takao” and “enzetsu.” The newspapers are the *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, *Nihon keizai*, and *Yomiuri*.

a few journalistic twists, none of which correctly conveys his ideas or actions in 1940.

In journalistic accounts, Saitō is most often, indeed, almost exclusively, cited as having given an antimilitary speech that caused him to be expelled from the Diet. Unlike some scholars who at least add “so-called” to “antimilitary speech,” journalistic references are unequivocal that his speech was “antimilitary” and that it was the military alone that caused his expulsion. Indeed, the antimilitary image associated with this speech is so strong that in some instances it is conflated and confused with his 1936 “Shukugun ni kansuru enzetsu” (Oration on controlling the military).<sup>90</sup>

More important than this perhaps understandable confusion is the singular failure to mention Saitō’s wide-ranging attacks on Konoe and on the Nazi-inspired intellectuals who were advising him.<sup>91</sup> The failure is particularly conspicuous in the case of the *Asahi shinbun*, because it regularly cites Saitō in articles pertaining to constitutional and military issues and because the *Asahi* had extensive coverage of the expulsion incident in its 1940 pages. Indeed, the *Asahi* coverage of the expulsion incident is one of the most readily available sources for documentation of the leading role played by the Shadaitō and other “renovationist” and “reformist” elements in expelling Saitō.

Perhaps nothing more than repetition of previous inaccurate accounts explains descriptions in the 1980s and 1990s of the Saitō incident in terms so at odds with the paper’s 1940 coverage. But, it may well be the case that an antimilitary Saitō defending the constitution against the military is more attractive to the contemporary *Asahi* than an anti-Konoe Saitō criticizing left-wing intellectuals and bureaucrats seeking to use militarism for their own ends. Moreover, Saitō’s veneration of the Meiji emperor and the Meiji Constitution, to say nothing of his celebration of *laissez faire* economics, is hardly in accord with the general editorial stance of the *Asahi shinbun*.<sup>92</sup> It

90. Kusayanagi, *Saitō Takao*, p. 18.

91. Saitō’s characterization of the intellectuals advising Konoe as Nazi-inspired is to be found in his autobiography, Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, pp. 161–64. The essays themselves have been reprinted several times, most recently in 1994. Saitō Takao, *Saitō Takao seiji ronshū*, ed. Saitō Takao Sensei Kenshōkai (Tokyo: Shin-jinbutsu Ōrai-sha, 1994). Saitō carried his criticism of Konoe into the postwar period. On November 11, 1946, Saitō raised the issue of Konoe’s war responsibility in the Diet. According to Quigley, this “bitter attack . . . brought home to Occupation authorities the inconsistency of Konoe’s confidential position with his war record” and was immediately followed by the *Yomiuri* branding Konoe a “war criminal.” Harold S. Quigley and John E. Turner, *The New Japan: Government and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 114. By committing suicide on December 16, 1945, in the face of arrest as a war criminal, Konoe later proved the validity of Saitō’s 1940 criticisms centered on Konoe’s repeated flights from responsibility for his acts.

92. For Saitō’s feeling about the Meiji emperor, see Saitō, *Kaiko nanajū nen*, p. 44. Note also his pleasure at being one of a small group of Diet members allowed to participate in the ascension of the Showa emperor. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

is hard to imagine Saitō Takao, had he been younger, being taken on by the *Asahi*, but it did give a prominent position to Ryū Shintarō who had seen in militarism a worthwhile force that would bring about a shift to a planned economy managed by technical specialists.

*Honor without Understanding*

When Saitō died, his passing was so low key that there was not even the almost-obligatory commemorative volume in which friends and associates lament the deceased and provide brief anecdotal sketches celebrating some aspect of his personality or career and their connection to it. The people of Saitō's home village did not, however, forget him. In the period when Japan was still recovering from defeat and when "income doubling" was not yet even a slogan, the villagers raised the funds to produce their own commemorative volume (1955) and later to publish a collection of Saitō's speeches and essays (1961).<sup>93</sup>

This veneration continues today in the Tajima area in general and in Izushi in particular. It was quite a moving experience for me, during a visit to Izushi in 1995, to hear postal clerks, gasoline-stand proprietors, and other ordinary people speak in almost worshipful terms of Saitō. The monument to him that they erected is impressive because of its exquisite taste and because it was built entirely without the pork-barrel funds that support so much provincial construction in Japan. What is perhaps most impressive about the continued veneration of Saitō is that it honors a man who was a singularly ineffective politician, either at the national or local level. Saitō was notorious for spending relatively little time in his constituency, and his one notable attempt at being a constituency Diet member failed when he could not prevent the military from pulling up the railroad tracks to Izushi and shipping them off to the South Pacific.

Nevertheless, for all the veneration accorded to Saitō in Izushi, there also seemed to be little understanding of what he had done other than to stand up to the military. From this, people conclude that he was a pacifist, for in postwar Japan, for large segments of the population, there is either pacifism or militarism with nothing in between. When the issue of supplying Japanese troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations was raised in 1990, the *Asahi* interviewed people in Izushi. Various local people were quoted to the effect that if Saitō were alive, he would certainly be opposed to the participation of Japanese troops.<sup>94</sup> Possibly, but not necessarily.

Despite the popular image of Saitō as antimilitary, all his speeches and writings suggest that he in fact favored a strong military, provided it was

93. Kamizawa, "Saitō Takao ron," p. 147. These are Saitō Takao Sensei Kenschōkai, *Saitō Takao* (Izushi: Saitō Takao Sensei Kenschōkai, 1955); and Saitō, *Saitō Takao seiji ronshū*.

94. "Saitō Takao shi o unda Izushi de heiwa kyōroku hōan no ikikata o mimamoru hito-bito," *Asahi shinbun* (Hyōgo), November 8, 1990.

under civilian, constitutional control. In the speech that got him expelled from the Diet and in various essays, Saitō repeatedly declared that the (first) Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War had been worth fighting because they enhanced Japanese security and brought economic benefits commensurate with their cost. By no stretch of the imagination was he a pacifist.<sup>95</sup> Reading his autobiography shows that he was also very much of a monarchist. And while he was a defender of the constitution, it was the Meiji Constitution that he defended using rhetoric straight from the imperial rescripts.

### Conclusion

The neglect of Saitō Takao and his opposition to Japan's "holy war" in China may be accidental and the result of later writers cloning the errors of earlier writers. Then again, the neglect of Saitō Takao may be deliberate. Even the most cursory examination of his speech raises serious questions about a whole range of assertions pertaining to militarism that have been comforting to the Japanese intelligentsia in the years since 1945. Examining the background to Saitō's concern about those losing their livelihood because of the war in China shows that while these years were a "dark valley" for Japan's petty bourgeoisie, they were a period of expanding opportunity and influence for its new middle class and especially for the intelligentsia. That a frail old man in his seventies could have stood up and questioned Japanese militarism and the so-called New Order raises serious questions about the integrity, motivations, and even the virility of the scores of younger, stronger men who not only did not question, but who jumped on the band wagon. More disturbingly, the facts of the Saitō incident and its treatment in post-1945 writing, both by scholars and journalists, raises serious questions about the motivations, even the basic honesty and intellectual integrity, of a whole generation of Japanese writers and by extension, those non-Japanese scholars who have failed to question their interpretations.

TAISHO UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

95. For this evaluation in his essays, see Saitō, *Saitō Takao seiji ronshū*, pp. 76–78. Saitō is styled a "pacifist" in John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War 1937–1945: The Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 297.