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Nazis and Women, A Gunshot in Manchuria

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Nazis and Women

Translated by Takeshi Morisato & Alexandra Mustătea

Senior students at a women's university [in Japan] were recently asked to list the names of great politicians they look up to in the contemporary world. As it turned out, Hitler and Mussolini far exceeded many others in popularity. Of course, since these were young women, they would not know much about what these politicians have been doing. However, the underlying tone of their choices seems to be based on a vague and blind toadyism or a hero worship, where [these men were chosen] "because they are simply strong," "dare to do what they think," or are "manly."

This is not a problem only for the remote country of Japan. Even in Germany itself, the suspicion that women's votes are supporting Nazis is a source of concern for various progressive parties.

Then what have Nazis done for women? Oddly enough, instead of protecting the interests of women, they have done the opposite.

First, they expelled women from the front lines of different occupations, using their famous propaganda slogan: "go back [into the] home." Especially women working in manufacturing industries or doing office work have become the victims [of this policy]. Moreover, the Nazis expelled a great number of women from the workplaces that had hired them, such as the textile and electronic industries, which have conventionally been regarded as suitable for women. In any case, things have now reached the point where [the Nazis] have decided that women are not allowed to work at factories or to engage in office work beyond the age of twenty-five. Because of this, about one million women have lost their jobs over the last two or three years.

On the surface, this has been labeled as “unemployment relief,” but it has, in fact, merely increased the number of unemployed women instead of men; and as far as the working class as a whole is concerned, nothing was gained. Not only that, but since the men hired instead of women have had to work for a woman’s wage, they have suffered a huge loss. Apparently, the Nazis only wish to leave farming and maidservant work to women. Then, where does this flood of unemployed women go? Considering that prostitution is the only business involving women which is still thriving in Germany nowadays, it seems we have our answer. Should these politicians be the heroes that women seek?

Yamakawa Kikue

A Gunshot in Manchuria

Translated by Takeshi Morisato & Alexandra Mustățea

A single gunshot, released in Manchuria, suddenly silenced the hustle and bustle in Japan. Critical voices, recently tending to focus on the military—including the reduction of armaments, the reformation of the military system, dual diplomacy, the reorganization and reduction of military spending, etc.—were instantly buried under the bloody and charging screams of the military, calling for punishment of savage China, the protection of Manchuria and Mongolia’s rights and interests. The problem of deficit and that of unemployment, and all the articles filling the newspapers until just yesterday are now absconded by pictures showing Japan’s national flag and bayonets. Newspaper A and Newspaper B, as if they have forgotten their daily competition and hostility, are publishing the same news and the same opinions. It is as if the cracking sound of the machine-guns is now dominating the organ of public opinion (言論機関), not only in Southern Manchuria but also in the mainland. Replacing words, [this sound] takes on the role of a hammer slamming the 1.5 billion investment, one million Japanese expatriates, more than three hundred pending problems, etc., into people’s heads.

If one is to borrow the words of the hardliners, Manchuria is Japan’s “lifeline.” In other words, it is the precious sacred-land that Japan has redeemed with blood through two Sino- and Russo-Japanese wars; it is a point of strategic importance, both militarily and economically, necessary for maintain-

ing its national independence. However, China's capitalistic development infringes on these "special rights and interests" that Japan has redeemed with blood—which is precisely like delivering a fatal blow to the life of Manchuria, the Manchuria Railway, by laying a parallel line to it—eventually trying to wipe out Japan's political and economic power and even to retrieve Manchuria and Mongolia in its own hands. If we do not protect these "special rights and interests" (even through an occupation) now, they argue, Japan's status therein will be completely overthrown. The military, alongside a group of politicians and industrial capitalists who have a stake in Manchuria and Mongolia, have been advocating this theory, and due to the aggravating recession in South Manchuria under the Great Depression, they have suddenly started pouring all their passion into it recently.

On the other hand, financial capitalists—who focus more on the economic exploitation of the entire Chinese territory than the rights and interests of its part—are rather trying to squeeze even more profits (利潤) [from this situation] by advocating peaceful business transactions and investments. That is to say, [they do this] by avoiding the military means, which tends to be followed by suspicion of territorial ambitions, by aggravating China's feelings, which further invites the drawback of an anti-Japanese boycott and an anti-Japanese currency movement, and by losing international sympathy. This is the so-called "Shidehara diplomacy," which is commercially-centered (*soroban hon'i* そろばん本位); it is also called "spineless" or "cowardly" diplomacy, and stands in opposition to the so-called "hard-liner" or "saber" diplomacy (サーベル外交).

Nevertheless, the *soroban* and the saber are not necessarily mutual enemies. Not only that, but the merchant (商人) also needs a bodyguard, not just their calculator (*soroban*). The only difference is that [the merchant] believes that if they fire a pistol or rattle their saber at their customer's front door—instead of begging for an invitation—their expected profit will plummet (そろばん勘定にひびがある).

It was often reported that there was a "lack of national consensus" (国論の不一致) between the military (and its supporters) and those who sacrifice the commercial foundation of the whole of China and its future development. The former tries to solve the myriad problems in Manchuria and Mongolia all at once (even by force), while the latter coldly weighs the gains and losses of executing this [sacrifice], even at the risk of international isola-

tion. The reason why the independent activity of the military was more or less corrected, and the range of the dispatch of troops was more limited than the initial plan, is believed to have something to do with the power of the latter. However, it goes without saying that theirs is by no means a fundamental conflict, but merely the difference between the two sides of the same coin—the means for serving their shared class interests.

As this incident unfolds, the anti-Japanese campaign in Southern China is becoming fiercer by the day, and the foundation of the export trade with China, which amounts to 3–4 trillion yen per annum, is about to be destroyed. Japanese products have disappeared from the textile market; India and the United States are about to occupy the stage; and British products, which had been previously driven out by the Japanese, are also doubly stimulated by the anti-Japanese campaign which took place at the same time as the gold embargo, thereby lunging to win back the Chinese market. Our textile capitalists in China, who say they are willing to close down their factories, and the industrial capitalists who—annoyed by traders and the competition in China—say they will put up with any sacrifices, both express their patriotic flame.

Manchuria, considered by Japan to be its “lifeline,” has a considerable significance for all the concerned world powers, in various degrees. From the neighboring Soviet Union to the geographically remote European and North American countries, [Manchuria] is an important commercial outlet for pushing their products, as well as a target for their investments. The vast undeveloped territory that extends into Manchuria and the Chinese mainland, its four hundred million people, and its cheap servile-labor provide stalemated world capitalism with a golden stage of action. While Europe is throwing itself into the World War head-first, Japan’s capitalists have torpedoed through its influence and spread their own roots in this new continent. However, the end of the war and the recovery of manufacturing power revived the influence of White capitalism and have thrown it back into the market struggle over this continent and into the violent investment war.

Foreign capital has survived to this day because [these powers] collaborate with one another, keeping each-other in check and supporting the growth of emerging Chinese capitalism, while at the same time competing and fighting against it.

Chinese capitalism takes advantage of the delicate relations between

these powers, and as they fight fire with fire, it skillfully forms its roots, spreads its branches, and begins to grow as an independent, enormous tree. Just like a mythical monster who, from the bloody splatter of its severed head instantly grows two others, so too this people (*minzoku* 民族), with its strong and tenacious vitality, pushed out its shoots in rapid succession and steadily extended its branches, no matter how much it was exploited or “punished” (膺懲). Japan (its Army and Navy) cultivated the massive capitalistic power of this immortal people in the land of Manchuria, which it jump-started with its investment of 1.5 billion yen, and now it has no choice but to be driven to an unprofitable competition with it.

The cracking sound of machine guns could very well “unify” the “public opinion” in mainland Japan. However, it will not succeed in making the public opinion in our neighboring country fall in line. Nothing can be done about the passionate demand of our four hundred million neighbors to escape their half-colonized condition by using the economic power of their emerging capitalism, to rebuild their vast territory into an independent state, and to reclaim control over it. Indeed, even if the countless problems that lie between them and us (彼我) are solved, there would be no way to prevent the countless *other* problems that may arise afterwards. And each one of these would imply a dreary “catastrophe” that could instantaneously lead to war and detonate the culture of bourgeois society.

The present incident has revealed the powerlessness of the League of Nations as an organ of war prevention. European capitalist countries, which are the leaders of the League, weighted their gains and losses in each of their colonies or against weak, minor peoples; they had to avoid any statements or actions that could later constrain their activities, and they had to ponder their disgrace in the face of rejection, in case they rashly utter something that resembles an interference. In the end, the attitude of the League, which seemed to lend a hand to world peace, ended up being anticlimactic, as it easily withdrew its hand from the issue. However, as long as the incident has something to do with the safety of the capital that they themselves have invested in China, we cannot predict how the “justice” of the League will develop in the future.

In times of peace, that elegant movement which seeks the power of war prevention in women’s instinct for peace is, after all, a mere play. As much as they love peace and detest war, the social and collective training of women

is so firmly cultivated that they would readily sacrifice their private interests and feelings for the common interests of the community (社会) they belong to, namely for what they believe to be “just.” In whichever world, and in whichever society, we can always see the sacrificial and ardently patriotic attitude of women in times of war. For justice and for the common interest, they do not regret offering their child on the altar of the gods of war with the same fervor and emotion they pour into their devotion to that child. The simple, instinctual maternal love, as well as the obsession with a peaceful family life are always readily sacrificed for the benefit of the larger communal interest.