

# When Democracy is Not Enough: Japan's information policy and mass politics in diplomatic and economic crisis in the 1930s 民主主義は万能ではない—1930年代の外交、経済危機における日本の情報政策と大衆政治が示すもの

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The history of propaganda has long been closely intertwined with the development of mass communication. In the twentieth century, the world experienced two World Wars, the Cold War, its ending (or the beginning of a second Cold War), and numerous territorially-confined wars interspersed with peace (or non-war periods). Many scholarly works associate propaganda with war (including the Cold War), and distinguish public diplomacy from war propaganda.

Do the structures and institutions utilized by the state to disseminate information (including news) for foreign policy fundamentally change in time of war? A substantial literature holds that a state's information policy largely defines the nature of its political regime. Did liberal democratic regimes, such as the U.S., Britain, France or Australia, have fundamentally different information policies from those of autocratic or authoritarian regimes?

In approaching these issues with respect to Japan and Manzhouguo, I focus on three global factors: the development of mass politics in an era of universal male suffrage, rapidly changing mass-communication technologies (especially global cable networks, the development of wireless communication, electronic photo delivery, and news reels), and the rise of international public opinion as an important factor in international politics in

general, and the institutionalization of Japanese news propaganda in particular.

In February 1932, the second general election in Japan after the universal male franchise bill had passed the Diet gave Seiyūkai, one of the two major parties of the time, a landslide victory. Japan was facing diplomatic and domestic crises, and Seiyūkai promised a greatly expanded electorate economic recovery and an aggressive China policy. Five months earlier, in September 1931, Japan's Guangdong Army had begun a military incursion in Northeast China, and by December it had occupied a large part of the region then known as Manchuria. The Minseitō Wakatsuki Cabinet (April–December 1931) fell in December, and the new Seiyūkai Prime Minister, Inukai Tsuyoshi, took over and called for a general election in order to gain a popular mandate for his new government.

There were censorship, coercion and bribery in the election process, as in many contemporary parliamentary democracies of the time. The problem, however, was not limited to these anti-democratic actions. Rather, political actors and media organizations were responding to a new political environment created by universal male suffrage and new telecommunication technologies that fed war fever. For some months before that February (even before September 1931, but especially subsequently) opportunistic politicians, military officers, and media organizations were utilizing not only print media, but also the new media of radio

and newsreels to stoke mass nationalism. A significant majority of voters bought into this jingoism and the package Seiyūkai offered: an aggressive China policy sold as a key to economic recovery.

Orthodox Japanese historical accounts tell us that the May Fifteenth Incident of 1932, in which Prime Minister Inukai was assassinated by a terrorist attack, marked the beginning of the end of parliamentary democracy in pre-war Japan. The election of February 1932 was, however, equally important because the electorate gave a mandate to the then government for the aggression in China. It was the action that set a course for subsequent full scale war with China in 1937 and then with the United States, the other Allied forces and their colonies in the region.

Throughout modern history in Japan (and many other countries), expanded political participation has been no guarantee of the primacy of peaceful alternatives to colonialism and war. Party politicians, not only military officers, have frequently led jingoism. Media was also not only the victim of state repression, for it too contributed substantially to war mongering. Jingoism, after all, sells newspapers and magazines and creates broadcast audiences. Most importantly, many voters supported expansionist policies. Are similar patterns emerging in contemporary Japan, indeed, in both China and Japan, at a time of mounting territorial conflict?

In February 1932, during a time of economic crisis, mass politics undermined moderate foreign policy options. Democracy did not prevent Japan from taking the path to colonial expansion and war. Eight decades later, we can reflect anew on lessons from the 1930s.

# Abstract:

Japan's information policy did not change suddenly during the Manchurian Crisis in September 1931–March 1933. Rather there

was continuing development of state policy and institutions for news propaganda in response to two ongoing phenomena: growing mass political participation as indicated by universal manhood suffrage, and technological changes in mass media and communication.

The Japanese metropolitan government did, however, begin a coordinated and systematic approach to news propaganda during the Manchurian Crisis, one primarily driven by foreign policy concerns, rather than concerns with domestic thought control. At the same time, in the period that is often regarded as the beginning of Japan's diplomatic isolationism, MOFA and other foreign policy elites actively sought to engage international public opinion through management of the news for overseas propaganda. They further emphasized coordination between metropolitan centre, Tokyo, and a parallel news institution in Japanese-occupied Manchuria in 1931–3. The process of unifying news coverage, however, met strong oppositions from various stake holders in 1931–5.

Key Words: propaganda, international news network, international public opinion, mass politics, media and war, public diplomacy, Japanese foreign policy, the Manchurian Incident

Orthodox international history sees the 1930s as the period of a 'dark valley'. The Great Depression that started with the Wall Street stock market crash of 24 October 1929 spread globally in the early 1930s. While the U.S.S.R., almost unaffected by this economic turmoil, continued its economic expansion, fascism emerged and gained strength especially in Germany and Italy. National unity governments were formed in Britain and Japan, and even the United States opted for greater state economic intervention. Competing for contracting markets, empires moved to form bloc economies. The period was to lead to the Second World War, which killed tens of millions

throughout the world.

In Northeast Asia, the 1930s began with a war and ended with a war. What contemporary Japanese called the ‘Manchurian Incident’ (*Manshū jihen*) started with a railway explosion near Mukden in Manchuria on 18 September 1931. It was planned by the Japanese garrison, the Guandong Army, which was stationed in Manchuria to protect the Japanese leased territories along the South Manchuria Railway and in the southern part of the Liaodong peninsula. Claiming the explosion was Chinese provocation, and using this as an excuse to expand its military control to the whole of Manchuria, the garrison executed a well-planned campaign.



**Japanese forces enter Mukden during the Manchurian Incident**

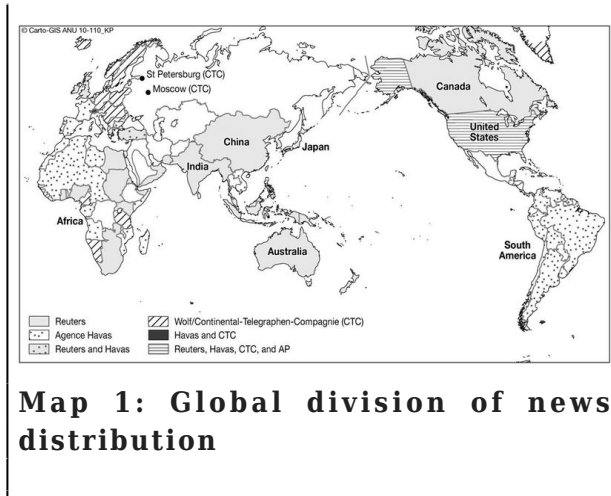
The forces of the warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Xueliang (Chang Hsueh-liang), presented little resistance, although the fighting with other Chinese resistance forces was often bitter, producing many killed and wounded on both sides. The fighting in Shanghai (late January–early May 1932) was also fierce. The campaign in Manchuria resulted in Japan’s military occupation of Manchuria (the eastern three provinces) by February 1932, which was

then expanded to Inner Mongolia (Rehe province) in early March 1933. The Guandong Army created Japan’s puppet regime, Manzhouguo (1 March 1932), and then, unhappy with the League of Nations’ solution to the Manchurian Incident, Japan withdrew from the League on 27 March 1933.

The Manchurian ‘Incident’ is often understood as a watershed for Japan; domestically, it marked a shift from the liberal parliamentary democracy of the 1920s to an authoritarian regime dominated by the military. Externally, Japan’s foreign policy changed from internationalist, cooperative diplomacy to isolationism driven by rising nationalism. This led Japan to a second war with China (1937–45) and then to war with the Allied Powers and their colonies in Asia and the Pacific region (1941–5).<sup>1</sup>

Many works on the state and media in Japan during the Manchurian Incident understandably focused, and continue to focus, on the state’s repression of the media and its thought control. In this view, media organizations were victims of the state’s coercion, which dragged a blinded population into the war.<sup>2</sup>

These works, however, often neglected the foreign policy aspects of the state’s information policy, and thus told only part of the story. This chapter examines the state’s information policy during the Manchurian Crisis, which I define as a diplomatic crisis between September 1931 and March 1933, not as an abrupt change of course. It locates the crisis in the continuing development of the Japanese state’s policy and institutions for news propaganda as its response to two ongoing phenomena: growing mass political participation, and technological changes in mass media and communication.



The Japanese metropolitan state began a coordinated and systematic approach to news propaganda during the Manchurian Crisis, driven mainly by foreign policy concerns, rather than concerns with domestic thought control.

In 1931–3, the foreign policy elite, including military officers, did not choose isolationism. Acutely aware of the need to justify their actions to the League of Nations and other powers, they appealed to ‘international public opinion’, not despite Japan’s military aggression, but because of it. In this period, which has often been regarded as the beginning of Japan’s diplomatic isolationism, MOFA actively sought to engage with international public opinion.<sup>3</sup>

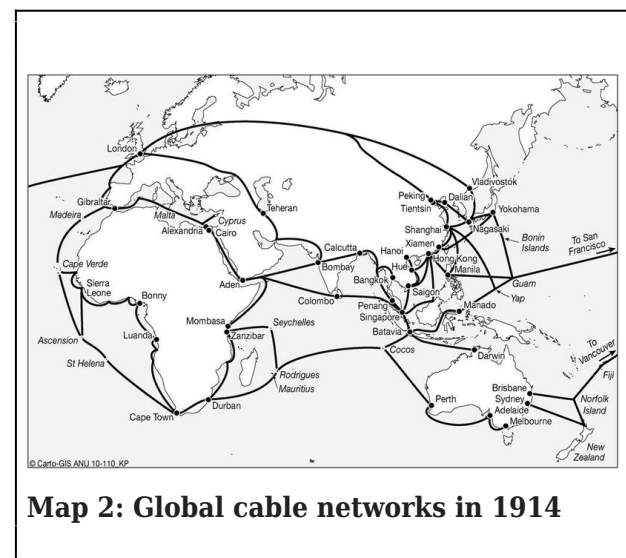
MOFA and other foreign policy elites began a process of creating the united national/imperial news agency as the critical strategic operational agency for the state’s coordination of overseas news propaganda. The chapter demonstrates the close connection between the two institution-making processes (the state’s coordinating body and the national/imperial news agency) at the metropolitan centre, Tokyo, and between this process in Tokyo and the parallel institution making in Japanese-occupied Manchuria in 1931–3. In this context, the Manzhouguo News Agency or the MNA was founded in Changchun in December 1932. The

process of establishing the united national/imperial news agency in Tokyo, however, proved to be a long and winding road.

## THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT AND MASS POLITICS

Scholars often stressed the roles of the military and nationalism during the Manchurian Crisis, and they also assumed the ‘undemocratic’ nature of the military. They often, however, neglected several crucial aspects of mass politics and mass communication in this period.

First, the ‘Manchurian Incident’ was Japan’s first war<sup>4</sup> fought in the context of mass (male) politics. The Universal [Male] Franchise Law was promulgated in 1925. The first general election under this law was held in 1928, in which mass-based political parties gained eight out of the 466 seats of the House of the Representatives (four for the Social Mass Party and four for other proletarian parties [*Musan seitō*]).



Second, greater mass participation did not result in an anti-war platform in 1932. In the first general election of 20 February 1932, following the Manchurian Incident, Seiyūkai, one of the two major bourgeois parties, called



for an aggressive policy in Manchuria and economic recovery, and won a landslide victory against its opponent, Minseitō. Furthermore, while the left (communists) who were the core of the proletarian parties that had been established after 1925 argued for non-aggression, they were suppressed by major-party dominated governments. Moreover, as Andrew Gordon argues, the right wing of these mass-based parties came to support an aggressive policy towards Manchuria.<sup>5</sup>

Third, the Manchurian Incident was Japan's first electronic mass-media war with radio and newsreels playing a significant role in domestic war propaganda. As Louise Young and Ikei Masaru demonstrate, in 1931–2, war stories came to the masses not only in printed form, but also with voices and moving pictures.<sup>6</sup> The war was also reported with vivid photos. Electronic transmission of photos still had to wait until 1935 when AP launched 'AP Wirephoto', which would become common in news services in the late 1930s. Yet news media began to use airplanes and brought photos to readers in the late 1920s. Rengō, for example, started domestic photo news in 1928.<sup>7</sup> The Manchurian Incident expanded the use of this new news media, the photo service, to overseas coverage. While John Dower demonstrated how visual materials such as *Nishikie* caused strong emotional responses in Japan in previous wars,<sup>8</sup> by 1931 photo images had become a dominant form of visual war reportage, adding a greater sense of reality of war. When Japan's attack on Shanghai in January–March 1932 was reported to the world with photos, it created a major international sensation.

Fourth, while the state strengthened censorship on media outlets that were critical of Japan's aggression in Manchuria, positive stories created a boom in the print and electronic mass media markets.<sup>9</sup> Recent analyses of major Japanese newspapers suggest that the state's censorship and coercion, and

military and right wing organizations' intimidation, indeed prompted self-censorship. Yet they also show that the newspapers used the Manchurian Incident to increase circulation, and that their editors and correspondents had their own reasons to support the aggression.<sup>10</sup>

Fifth, the military in this period was deeply divided, and not all were dismissive of the Meiji Constitution system. In 1930–2, there was a series of terrorist incidents in Japan, which involved Navy and Army officers. Some officers used force, attacked parliamentary democracy, and wanted to create a military dictatorship. The terrorists, however, remained extremist minorities in the military. Most military officers, especially at the top, tried to increase their political influence through the framework of the Meiji Constitution, not through a coup d'état and/or a military dictatorship. Uprisings in 1930–2, therefore, often targeted superior officers or other factions within the military. While these events radicalized military officers, the military continued to be divided by factional conflicts.

Sixth, many military officers did not dismiss, but fully appreciated, and sought to utilize for their own ends, mass political participation. Previous works on the state and media often assumed the military's inherent undemocratic attitudes towards the media. These works understood that the military's increased political influence resulted in greater suppression of opposing views through censorship, coercion, and physical intimidation. There is indeed an inherent brutality in a profession which uses force. The rigid hierarchy of chain of command in the military also goes against the democratic principle of open discussions among equals.

At the same time, many officers were well aware of global trends and the policies and institutions of other countries. While repressing opposing views, they understood the need for

and the power of propaganda in order to secure mass support for their military actions and budgets, and conducted effective propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s. Major bourgeois political parties were losing credibility in the mid-late 1930s because of their tainted image (and the reality) of corruption with big business money. At the same time, the military, along with the bureaucracy, emerged with an image as a 'clean', 'fair', and 'competent' political force to which the masses could entrust state affairs.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1930s, the military's (especially the Army's) domestic mass propaganda had been building such positive images for almost a decade.

Seventh, in the age of mass politics, the main political actors needed to secure mass support for their policies.

#### THE ARMY IN MASS POLITICS: PROPAGANDA AND A TOTAL WAR SYSTEM, 1927-30

Up until 1931, diverse ministries managed different areas of information-related activities. The state's only attempt to coordinate and centralize such activities in the 1920s came from the Department of Information of MOFA in 1924. This concerned foreign policy-relevant propaganda and intelligence activities.

The attempt was, however, not followed up. Meanwhile, different ministries continued to control different aspects of the state's information management. The Home Ministry was in charge of censorship, and the Ministry of Communication (MOC) of communication infrastructure. MOFA's Department of Information gathered overseas information and conducted overseas news propaganda, while its Department of Cultural Affairs was in charge of overseas cultural propaganda. The Army and the Navy each had propaganda/publicity departments. They were mainly concerned with domestic propaganda. The Ministry of Education administered international educational and cultural exchanges, and the Ministry of Railways managed international

tourism.

MOFA had been leading overseas news propaganda. Together with the non-official foreign policy elite, it had been responding to the two global trends: the development of greater mass political participation, and the development of telecommunication technology. After the First World War, Japan's foreign policy elite recognized the significance of 'international public opinion', not only the public opinion of a specific country. MOFA's Department of Information was created in order to adjust to this new demand, and to deal with foreign policy-relevant intelligence and news propaganda in general. Recognizing the significance of Japan's own news agencies, it strengthened Kokusai and Tōhō news agencies.



Photo taken in front of the headquarters of Kokusai, winter 1923.

Iwanaga Yūkichi at the centre with crossed arms. Russell Kennedy is on the right side of Iwanaga with glasses and a bow tie. Furuno Inoseuke is right behind Iwanaga.

Source: Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi* (Tokyo: Editor, 1958).

MOFA's initial idea of propaganda came from publicity and advertising in the mass market. In contrast, the idea of propaganda in the military, especially among Army officers, originated in the propaganda of total war during the First World War.<sup>12</sup> Yet both ideas were closely connected to the development of mass politics and telecommunication technologies. Propaganda was a means to utilize what we now call 'soft power' (distinguished from the hard power of military might). The state needed to mobilize soft power, because civilian support (physical and moral) became crucial for it to stay in power and to conduct war efforts. Propaganda was a means of mass mobilization, not by force, but by co-option and persuasion, and the state needed to utilize constantly advancing communication technologies and experts. In Japan, the Ministry of the Army established the Newspaper Section at its minister's secretariat in 1920, which specialized in domestic propaganda. Those who were posted to this section, especially in the 1930s, seem to have understood propaganda as a critical part of a total war system.<sup>13</sup>

After the First World War, Army officers became major advocates of the creation of a total war system. In the 1930s, they were called *kakushin ha* or statist reformists, and formed alliances with like-minded bureaucrats in other ministries.<sup>14</sup> The total war system was in a sense the ultimate version of such statist reform schemes. Ide Yoshinori argued that such schemes became a global trend. Many states, including the U.S., Britain, Italy, Germany, and Japan, created new ministries and departments in the 1920s in order to respond to a major crisis caused by global economic and political structural changes.<sup>15</sup> Similar to these state-led reform schemes, the total war system also aimed to establish a permanent system for the ultimate crisis, war, by drastically reforming political, economic and social structures to increase national production and effectively mobilize national resources.

Advocates of a total war system, however, were a specific kind of statist reformist, because they argued not only for individual ministries' reforms, but also for the centralization of state power. In their view, reforms of individual ministries could not deal with current crises and anticipated war. A more coordinated (inter-ministerial) or centralized (supra-ministerial) state action was needed, and they wanted to establish a strong central office for this coordination/centralization.

Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, these Army advocates of a total war system wanted the Cabinet Office, not their own Ministry of the Army or the Army's General Staff Office, to serve as the site for this central office. This meant that they intended to create a total war system within the framework of the Meiji Constitution, not an Army dictatorship.<sup>16</sup> Their path toward a total war system, however, was neither coherent nor smooth, and whether their vision was realized or not is debatable. We examine below how these Army total war advocates began to push their agenda during the Manchurian Crisis, how they regarded news propaganda within such a total war system, and how other actors reacted to their vision.

As the first step towards a total war system, they created a think tank office at the Ministry of the Army in June 1918. Its duty was to research, formulate, and propose policy ideas for material mobilization. Although the Army also established the Newspaper Section in 1920, total war advocates in the Army were concerned mostly with the mobilization of war-relevant materials.<sup>17</sup> Inspired by Soviet Russia's New Economic Policy (NEP), which began in 1921, they especially wanted to increase economic capacity and strengthen economic mobilization.

Total war advocates made little progress until 1927. After some trials and setbacks, Army Minister, Ugaki Kazushige (January 1924–April

1927, July 1929–April 1931), got the Diet's approval to establish the Resource Bureau (Shigen kyoku) at the Cabinet Office in May 1927. As Furukawa Takahisa and Michael Barnhart point out, it was the first central organization for planning national mobilization.<sup>18</sup> The bureau was to become a key civilian office through which the Army would influence policy-making.<sup>19</sup> At this stage, however, it was concerned with the mobilization of material and human resources, not information.<sup>20</sup>

The Resource Bureau soon included information in its national mobilization plan. It produced a document in 1930 which Ishikawa Junkichi regards as the starting point of Japan's national mobilization plan.<sup>21</sup> It was entitled 'On the Institution to Prepare the Control and Administration of Resources'.<sup>22</sup> The document clarified what the total war system meant: 'we need to nurture resources, research on resources, prepare human and material resources in peace time, and create legal frameworks for their systematic use during wartime'. Then it identified 'the unification of information and propaganda [activities]' as one of the six priorities.<sup>23</sup>

In this document, Army officers at the Resource Bureau articulated the role of information in the total war system. It regarded 'information' both as a significant resource for state power, and as a means for smooth mobilization. Furthermore, this first national mobilization plan regarded overseas propaganda and intelligence gathering as important as, if not more so than, domestic thought control. It emphasized that the state needed to coordinate information-related activities such as gathering information in order to know the enemy; domestic propaganda in order to maintain and foster national morale; reinforcing third countries' favourable attitudes towards Japan; and weakening enemy nationals' will to fight.<sup>24</sup> A large portion of information-related activities was, therefore, overseas propaganda and

intelligence gathering. The point is worth stressing because scholars often suggest that the Army and its total war agenda were mainly concerned with domestic thought control.

Domestic opinion, nonetheless, mattered in total war. According to Pak Sunae, between the late 1920s and mid-1930s, the Army's Newspaper Section produced a great number of propaganda pamphlets in order to educate the public on the idea of total war. Notably, during the Manchurian Crisis of 1931–3, it issued 123 pamphlets.<sup>25</sup> They propagated a new and broader notion of 'national defence' that stressed the importance of mass contribution. The period corresponded to the emergence of Japan's mass politics. The Newspaper Section clearly recognized the significance of mass support for Army actions. Direct appeals by the Army built up mass support for its agenda for military expansion and national mobilization, and the idea of a broader national defence state in the mid-late 1930s.

MOFA also recognized the need for domestic propaganda in this critical period of development of mass politics. In 1927, Komura Kin'ichi, then Director of the Department of Information at MOFA, expanded his department's scope beyond overseas news propaganda and intelligence activities. The department should now, Komura argued, pay attention to the guiding domestic public opinion on foreign policy.<sup>26</sup> Both the Army and MOFA, therefore, were preparing for mass politics before 1931.

APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC  
OPINION, TOKYO, SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER  
1931

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AS A REFERENCE  
POINT

The Manchurian Crisis provided a catalyst for Japan's policy elite to form a more coordinated policy and institutions for overseas news propaganda. This did not happen overnight,



however. Coherent action did not emerge until June 1932, and even then there were different visions among the policy elite, which included high officials of MOFA, the Army, and the Navy, as well as members of the Cabinet (and the Cabinet Office). The news agency men, Iwanaga Yūkichi, Rengō's Executive Managing Director (*Senmu riji*) and Furuno Inosuke, its General Manager (*Sōshihainin*),<sup>27</sup> also contributed policy ideas, and were responsible for news propaganda.



**Iwanaga Yūkichi** Source: *Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., Tsūshinshashi* (Tokyo: Editor, 1958).



**Furuno Inosuke** Source: *Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., Tsūshinshashi* (Tokyo: Editor, 1958).

While certain Army officers saw the Manchurian Crisis as an opportunity to advance their total war system projects, in 1931-3, a majority of the policy elite was mainly concerned with overseas news propaganda, not domestic thought control. As a result, they understood the creation of the united national/imperial news agency as a most urgent issue, and let MOFA take the lead in this period.

Japan's policy elite had good reason to prioritize international public opinion in 1931-3. The Manchurian Incident was a crisis of Japan's relations not only with China, but also with the League of Nations, its member countries and the U.S. It was also an international crisis.<sup>28</sup> Only a few days after the Japanese Guandong Army began an attack in Manchuria, China's Nationalist Government appealed its case against Japan to the League (21 September 1931). As a result, the

Manchurian Incident entered the League's collective security system, while it also came to the attention of the U.S.-initiated international conventions (the Nine Power Treaty, 1922 and the Pact of Paris, 1928). The incident aroused international public opinion at the League's General Assembly and public opinion of a non-League member, the U.S. Furthermore, Japan's attack on Shanghai in late January 1932 took the lives of expatriates as well as Chinese, and horrifying news and photos of the bombing outraged Chinese and Euro-American metropolitan public opinion.<sup>29</sup>

Developments at the League in 1931–3 provide a reference point for the formation of Japan's news propaganda policy and institutions. Having failed to devise effective measures to stop the Guandong Army's aggression in September–November 1931, the League decided on 10 December to send an inquiry commission to China and Japan. The commission comprised members from Britain, France, Italy, Germany and the U.S., and was headed by the British Lord Victor Lytton (hence it was known as the Lytton Commission). It arrived in Japan on 29 February 1932. The Guandong Army created its puppet state, Manzhouguo, on 1 March 1932, shortly before the commission landed in China (14 March). The commission conducted an inquiry in China from 14 March to 28 June, and examined the 'incident' on the railway and the nature of Manzhouguo. It then came back to Japan via Korea on 4 July, and went back to Beijing on 20 July, where Lytton wrote a draft report.

The report was completed on September 4 and formally sent to the governments of Japan and China as well as other League member countries on 30 September 1932. The Japanese government realized that while the report was sympathetic to Japanese interests in Manchuria, it did not recognize Manzhouguo as a 'genuine' nation, nor Japanese actions after 18 September 1931 as 'self-defence'.

Losing on these two crucial points, the Japanese government hurriedly gave formal recognition to Manzhouguo, on 15 September 1932. The League's Council discussed the commission's report and its proposed solutions in late 1932 and early 1933. Its General Assembly finally voted to adopt the commission's proposal on 24 February 1933. Japan cast the only vote against this resolution, and special envoy Matsuoka Yōsuke led his team in their dramatic exit from the assembly in protest. The Japanese government then communicated its formal notice of withdrawal from the League on 27 March 1933. According to League regulations, withdrawal was to become effective two years after official notification.

Closely examining Japanese dealings with the League in 1931–3, contemporary observers and later scholars concluded that Japan had 'lost the battle for world opinion' to China by March 1933.<sup>30</sup> Between September 1931 and March 1933, however, the Japanese foreign policy elite worked hard to win the sympathy of this very 'international public opinion'. Japanese overseas propaganda both from Tokyo and from Japanese-occupied Manchuria targeted the Lytton Commission (between December 1931 and September 1932), and the League's Council, its General Assembly, its member countries, and the U.S.<sup>31</sup>

#### IWANAGA'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE 'UNITED' NEWS AGENCY, DECEMBER 1931

What was happening to Japan's news propaganda policy and institutions in the initial period of the Manchurian Crisis in 1931? There is little surviving archival material on this issue. One note by a MOFA official, Amō Eiji (1887–1968), which was compiled in his reprinted personal papers, gives a clue. Amō was Director of MOFA's Department of Information from June 1933 to April 1937. In April 1934 he created a global sensation by commenting to the press that Japan would

oppose any economic and other assistance to China by other powers. This became known as 'Japan's Monroe Doctrine declaration'. He later served as Director-General of the Board of Information from March 1943–July 1944). Amō, therefore, held a central position in the state's information policy in the years leading up to the war and during the war.<sup>32</sup>

Amō's note entitled 'A Summary of the Process of the Establishment of a New News Agency' chronicled how Dōmei News Agency came into being between 1931 and 1935.<sup>33</sup> It was written as a MOFA departmental note, and Amō must have written it some time in 1935 as Director of the Department of Information.

According to this note, MOFA made the very first move to coordinate foreign news propaganda. MOFA initially proposed, it recorded, the creation of a strong news agency, not the establishment of a state office to coordinate and supervise news propaganda operations. In autumn 1931, soon after the Guandong Army had begun its aggression in Manchuria, MOFA (under Foreign Minister Shidehara of the Wakatsuki Cabinet) was concerned about the 'bad press' on Japan's actions in the aftermath of the 'Manchurian Incident', and began research on the creation of a strong news agency. This was important, the note continued, because Japan needed to 'defend itself against foreign propaganda and to clearly explain Japan's case to the world'.<sup>34</sup>

The Amō note suggests that the matter was not taken up until the next cabinet was formed. The Wakatsuki Cabinet, in which Minseitō was the majority party, had promised the League to restrain the Guandong Army's aggression and had failed in this promise. Unable to unify the cabinet, it resigned. The opposition party Seiyūkai formed the new cabinet on 13 December 1931 with Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932) as Prime Minister (he was also Foreign Minister until mid-January 1932). This was only three days after the League's decision

to establish an inquiry commission.

Soon after this new Cabinet was formed, the Amō note stated, Cabinet Secretary Mori Kaku (1882–1932) formed a three-ministry committee (MOFA, the Army and the Navy) to work out a plan to amalgamate Rengō and Dentsū. The plan was to create a unified news agency in Tokyo to strengthen overseas news propaganda.<sup>35</sup> Although Mori had close connections with the Army,<sup>36</sup> it is unclear whether this initiative came from Inukai, Mori, MOFA or the Army.

The amalgamation of the two major news agencies, Rengō and Dentsū, became a most urgent issue for the foreign policy elite in late 1931. They found conflicting news on Manchuria by Rengō and Dentsū confusing both internationally and domestically. The Cabinet Office, MOFA, the Army, the Navy, and Rengō agreed that the 'correct' and 'unified' view on Japanese policy in Manchuria had to be presented to the world as well as to the Japanese public.<sup>37</sup>

At this precise moment when Mori instructed the three-ministry committee to work on this amalgamation, the Executive Managing Director of Rengō, Iwanaga Yūkichi, wrote a proposal, 'On the Formation of the State's Great News Agency: the Amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū'.<sup>38</sup> Iwanaga discussed this proposal with Prime Minister Inukai, who was his relative.<sup>39</sup> He then most likely submitted it to the above three-ministry committee. Considering the timing (the proposal was written after the League's decision to send an inquiry commission to Japan and China), Iwanaga was most likely thinking about how to appeal the 'Japanese case' to the League and its commission.

Here, Iwanaga argued that a strong and credible news agency was 'absolutely necessary for a modern state'. Such a competent news agency should be public, he

continued. It should consolidate media organizations in the nation. It should also have editorial independence, but should be 'responsible' to the state. Stressing the significance of the credibility of its news, and being cautious about the government's 'supervision and assistance' (*Kantoku enjo*), Iwanaga suggested that this news agency should 'contribute to the government's policy' on a voluntary basis. It should nonetheless have, he argued, privileges from the state, such as exclusive right to international wireless communication. This was because most other national news agencies already had this privilege, and without it, he insisted, the proposed news agency would not be able to compete with them.<sup>40</sup> Iwanaga's proposal of December 1931 was the blueprint for what became Dōmei News Agency in December 1935.

At the same time, Iwanaga and other members of the foreign policy elite were also working on the creation of a united news agency in military-occupied Manchuria.

#### THE MAKING OF THE 'NATIONAL' NEWS AGENCY FOR A PUPPET STATE, AND METROPOLITAN POLITICS, DECEMBER 1931-MAY 1932

##### IWANAGA'S BLUEPRINT

The Guandong Army was a dominant force in the making of both information policy in Manchuria and of the Manzhouguo News Agency (Manshūkoku tsūshinsha) or the MNA. The MNA was established in Changchun, the new capital city of Manzhouguo, in December 1932. The memoirs of MNA's founding members (published in 1942) reveal that the garrison relied on two expert groups. One group came from the South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR). Soon after the Guandong Army's military aggression began in September 1931, four commissioned staff members (*Shokutaku*) of the SMR were seconded to the Fourth Department of the Guandong Army's

General Staff Office. This department specialized in propaganda work. According to Katō Shinkichi, who was one of the four, by 1931 SMR's Department of Information had been formulating media and information policy in Manchuria for some time.<sup>41</sup>

The second group of experts was from Rengō, namely Iwanaga and Furuno, and Sasaki Kenji, who was sent to Mukden as a Rengō correspondent in mid-November 1931.<sup>42</sup> While the SMR men worked on propaganda within the military-occupied Manchuria, the Guandong Army relied on Rengō for overseas propaganda. Rengō eagerly offered help. According to Sasaki's memoir of 1942, upon his arrival at Mukden as Rengō's correspondent on 17 November 1931, he called on the Guandong Army Headquarters. The Guandong Army told him that it saw 'internal' propaganda going well in Manchuria, but was concerned with its 'bad international publicity'. They asked Sasaki's advice on 'international publicity'. He contacted Furuno in Tokyo, who assured Sasaki that Rengō would come up with a good solution.

A month later, on 19 December 1931 (less than a week after the formation of the new Inukai Cabinet in Tokyo), Iwanaga submitted his proposal to the Guandong Army: 'On the Manchuria and [Inner] Mongolia News Agency'.<sup>43</sup> In Japan, Iwanaga had the best knowledge and experience of international news propaganda. He also had intimate knowledge of Manchuria, having spent his early career as a colonial officer of the SMR in Changchun in the 1910s. Those who were involved in the making of the Manzhouguo News Agency (MNA) regarded Iwanaga's proposal as its blueprint.<sup>44</sup>

In December 1931, therefore, just after the formation of the Inukai Cabinet, and around the time when the League of Nations decided to send an inquiry commission to Japan and China, Iwanaga wrote two proposals, one for



the united national/imperial news agency at the metropolitan centre, Tokyo, and another for a news agency for Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. He viewed the two institutions as integral to Japan's news policy.

When he wrote the proposal on the news agency in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, however, the Japanese military occupation did not encompass the whole of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. The regime, Manzhouguo, was also yet to be established. Iwanaga was, therefore, basing his proposal on two assumptions that were more or less shared by other foreign policy elites in Tokyo in December 1931.

The first assumption was that a certain transitional administrative body should be formed in the Japanese-occupied area in Manchuria. This meant that he regarded the current Guandong Army occupation of Manchuria as a *fait accompli*.<sup>45</sup>

By December 1931, many Japanese foreign policy elites were supporting an option of creating an 'autonomous' regime in the occupied area, although there was no unanimous view on what form this regime should take. The Guandong Army initially had wanted to annex the region. Already by 22 September 1931, however, it decided to create a pro-Japan regime, which was 'virtually' separated from the Chinese Nationalist Government. Japan would control its defence and diplomacy.<sup>46</sup> Such an autonomous regime was a non-annexation option. In this way it was hoped, Japan could appease other powers and the League of Nations. At the same time, it could control the area, secure Japan's interests, and exclude other powers' intervention.<sup>47</sup> In late October, the Guandong Army argued this pro-Japan regime should be an 'independent' state with no connection with the Nationalist Government; a state which 'on the surface' was run by the Chinese, but was virtually under the Guandong Army's control.<sup>48</sup>

The new Prime Minister Inukai accepted and supported the Guandong Army's occupation plans. After being appointed as Prime Minister, Inukai called a general election in February 1932 in order to secure a popular mandate. His Seiyūkai Party argued for a 'strong' China policy and economic recovery, contrasting them to Minseitō's (Shidehara's) 'soft' China policy and its failed economic recovery schemes. Inukai's Seiyūkai won a landslide victory (301 seats) against Minseitō (146), which lost more than 100 seats from the previous election of 20 February 1930.<sup>49</sup>

A few factors contributed to this victory. First, two bourgeois political parties suppressed severely the radical left centered on the communists, who held to an anti-imperialism and anti-imperial war policy. Second, for the past five months since September 1931, the mass media had been stirring jingoism and supporting the aggressive China policy, while the right wing of the mass-based parties, such as the Social Mass Party, prioritized nation/empire over class.<sup>50</sup> Third, Inukai's decision on the gold embargo in December contributed to an economic recovery, which was welcomed by the population when the official figure of unemployment was close to half a million. Fourth, on 20 February 1932, election day, the Japanese military started a full-scale attack in Shanghai,<sup>51</sup> further fueling jingoism.

In December 1931 when Iwanaga proposed a news agency in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, therefore, the foreign policy elite assumed that some form of an 'autonomous' state would soon be created in this military-occupied area. Iwanaga proposed a 'national' news agency for a transitional government before the exact nature of the government was worked out.

Iwanaga's proposal of December 1931 was also based on a second assumption. Iwanaga regarded Manchuria and the eastern part of Inner Mongolia as a coherent area, as relatively

autonomous from China, and as within Japan's sphere of influence.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, he called the proposed news agency 'the news agency of Manchuria and [Inner] Mongolia'. He assumed that the envisaged 'new autonomous state' would eventually integrate the administrations of all the areas of Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia, and that the proposed news agency would cover these areas, which were beyond the current Guandong Army's occupation.<sup>53</sup>

Iwanaga recognized, however, that this 'national' news agency in the military-occupied region was no ordinary 'national' news agency. The general principle of a national news agency could not be applied here. In the mid-1920s, Iwanaga had opposed strong state control over Japanese news delivery in China, arguing that an abundant, and high-quality news supply would best serve propaganda objectives.<sup>54</sup> For the Japanese metropolitan 'national' news agency, he also still stressed editorial independence in December 1931. In contrast, Iwanaga was aware of the strategic role of his proposed news agency in military-occupied Manchuria. He argued that the proposed news agency should be officially controlled, and should monopolize news delivery in the region just as the Soviet Tass, the state-funded news agency, did. Without state control, he argued, the area would become 'a dumping market of foreign and Chinese propaganda', and this would obstruct the efforts of the Japanese metropolitan state and the new state in Manchuria to make the world understand their policies correctly.

The proposed 'national' news agency in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia nonetheless had features common with other national news agencies. Iwanaga argued it should have privileges from the proposed new state in Manchuria, as other 'national' news agencies had from their respective states. These privileges were: an exclusive right to wireless communication and first access to official statements. Iwanaga went further to suggest

that there should be no censorship of news in the area so that news would not be delayed. For the proposed news agency to be influential, Iwanaga stressed, its news had to be not only accurate and selective, but also speedy and low priced.<sup>55</sup>

Rengō tried to implement Iwanaga's proposal in Manchuria. In January 1932, Furuno travelled to Mukden, the headquarters of the Guandong Army, and met top officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Honjō Shigeru, Colonel Itagaki Seishirō, and Lieutenant-Colonel Ishiwara Kanji. He also saw Doihara Kenji, the head of the Army's Special Service Unit at Harbin. Furuno had known Itagaki well since the time he had been posted to Kokusai's Beijing Bureau in 1920–23.<sup>56</sup> These officers endorsed Iwanaga's proposal. They shared Iwanaga's view that 'news was central in propaganda and a news agency would be a crucial institution of propaganda war'.<sup>57</sup>

## CONFLICTS IN METROPOLITAN POLITICS

Internal fights, chaos and confusion dominated politics in Tokyo until June 1932. This delayed the process of establishing the news agency in Manchuria. As Satō Junko observes, the metropolitan state was far from reaching consensus on information policy.<sup>58</sup> The Inukai Cabinet had to work on economic recovery, while dealing with Seiyūkai's internal conflicts. The two major political parties (Seiyūkai and Minseitō) were also challenged by a series of military coup attempts and terrorist attacks, and military factional fights were intense in this period.

Such developments occurred not despite, but because of the rise of mass politics in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and in this context, party politicians themselves contributed to their own decline. Both the Seiyūkai and Minseitō governments were responsible for suppression of the radicals and the left of the new political forces. The Minseitō government,

which had won the election of February 1930, for example, arrested the communists soon after this victory. At the same time, they co-opted moderate progressives and the right. The Minseitō-dominated House of Representative passed a bill to allow female franchise at the municipal level (but not national level) in May 1930. In order to solve intensifying industrial disputes, the House of Representatives also passed the reformed Labour Union Law, and Labour Dispute Mediation Law in March 1931.

Meanwhile, Seiyūkai's opportunistic attacks were detrimental to parliamentary democracy. Pressed by the economic depression, the Minseitō government pursued disarmament policy, and concluded the London Naval Disarmament Treaty in early April 1930. The opposition party, Seiyūkai, led by Inukai Tsuyoshi, and the Navy's Chief of General Staff (*Gunrei buchō*), attacked the government, arguing that this treaty violated the prerogative of supreme command of the military that had been defined by the Meiji Constitution. The action undermined the convention of parliamentary democracy and the authority of the elected government. While the matter was finally settled in September, a persistent campaign by Seiyūkai and Navy hardliners stirred right-wing fanatics, and Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi was shot in November 1930.

In March 1931, the ratification of this disarmament treaty in the Diet prompted a failed military coup (the March Incident) that sought to mobilize 'proletarian parties' and 'left-wing and right-wing' masses to attack the headquarters of Minseitō, Seiyūkai and the Prime Minister's official residence.<sup>59</sup>

While the military was increasing its political power, it was also deeply divided. The Guandong Army and its liaising Army officers in Tokyo were increasingly unhappy not only with the 'soft' approach by the Minseitō government to anti-Japanese movements in Manchuria, but also with the top staff of the Ministry of the

Army. In March 1931, they planned a simultaneous attack in Manchuria and a coup attempt in Tokyo for later in the year.<sup>60</sup> The attack in Manchuria was executed in September 1931.

The coup attempt in Tokyo was, however, aborted in October 1931 (the October Incident). The October Incident was led by a group of middle-ranking officers mainly from the Army. Its aim was to assassinate the Cabinet members, occupy the metropolitan police headquarters, and force the top level of the Army to create a new Army-led cabinet.<sup>61</sup> After this failed attempt, the Army's top level became more vigilant against subversive actions by middle and lower-ranking officers in association with private terrorist groups such as Ketsumeidan. Ketsumeidan shared a similar agenda with these middle-ranking officers—to get rid of major bourgeois political parties, 'corrupt' with big business money. Now largely isolated from Army officers, but in contact with some Navy officers, Ketsumeidan targeted political party and big business leaders in early 1932.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile Japanese and Chinese forces were in full-scale confrontation in Shanghai and the Guandong Army occupied Harbin.

Terrorist activities reached a peak in Tokyo in May 1932. Although Inukai supported the aggressive China policy, this did not save him from becoming a terrorist target. The Inukai Cabinet decided not to formally recognize Manzhouguo in March 1932, in order to avoid the accusation of violating international treaties and further alienating the major powers.<sup>63</sup> While the police strengthened surveillance against Ketsumeidan in early 1932, the group carried out a terrorist attack with some Navy officers in May 1931 (the May 15 Incident) in which Inukai was assassinated.<sup>64</sup>

THE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF A COHERENT INFORMATION POLICY, TOKYO AND MUKDEN, JUNE-AUGUST 1932

## THE ARMY AND MOFA, TOKYO, JUNE 1932

A coherent government policy on Manchuria and news propaganda over the Manchurian Crisis began to appear only in the aftermath of this terrorist attack. Saitō Makoto, Navy Admiral, formed the national unity government on 26 May 1932. One of the urgent issues which the Saitō Cabinet faced was to decide the form of an imperial supervisory body over Manzhouguo. The main stakeholders were: the Guandong Army, the Ministry of the Army, MOFA (and its missions in Manchuria), the Colonial Ministry, and the SMR. The Colonial Ministry, which was founded in 1929, had been the supervisory ministry of the SMR and the Guandong Agency (Kantōchō). The Guandong Agency was Japan's colonial administrative body for the leased territory (from China) of the southern tip of the Liaodong peninsula, where two major ports, Dalian and Port Arthur, were located.

After a series of discussions among these key players, the imperial supervisory body was established as the Three-in-One System in July 1932. It was a compromise among the Guandong Army, MOFA and the Colonial Ministry (the Guandong Agency). The Japanese Ambassador Extraordinary to Manzhouguo headed the body and also served concurrently as the Guandong Army's Commander and the Guandong Governor. The first Ambassador Extraordinary was Mutō Nobuyoshi, the Guandong Army's Commander.

Although the Guandong Army was dominant in military-occupied Manchuria, Tak Matsusaka suggests that it was not sufficiently dominant to rule the military occupied area without negotiating with other stakeholders in 1932-3.<sup>65</sup> The imperial supervisory body was an inter-ministerial body. In 1932-4, the Guandong Army and the Ministry of the Army, along with MOFA, tried to reduce the influence of the Colonial Ministry (the Guandong Agency) in this imperial supervisory body. They

succeeded in this attempt in December 1934. The Manchurian Affairs Bureau replaced the Three-in-One system, and the Army Minister became its head. The office absorbed the Guandong Agency as one section within this new office. It came, however, directly under the Prime Minister (Tokyo), not the Ministry of the Army.<sup>66</sup> The power dynamics among these competing forces shaped news propaganda policy in Japanese-occupied Manchuria in mid-late 1932.

Another layer of bureaucracy further complicated these power dynamics. The Council of the State was the administrative body of Manzhouguo, and the council's General Affairs Board was the main decision-making body. Japanese high officials from the metropolitan ministries filled its key posts, while its control was essentially in the hands of the Guandong Army.<sup>67</sup> Although the Guandong Army was dominant and increased its power over time, as Masumi Junnosuke indicates, there were constant internal conflicts among diverse Japanese groups. MOFA, for example, used the Meiji Constitution to argue that the military should not intervene in civilian affairs in occupied Manchuria. MOFA and the Ministry of Finance both used the constitution to legitimize their control over administrative matters, while also promoting metropolitan ministerial interests.<sup>68</sup>

When the new Saitō Cabinet was formed, the League's Lytton Commission was in the middle of conducting an inquiry in Manchuria. The government had to work out an effective campaign to present the Japanese case to the commission, the 'international public', and the League. It instructed MOFA and the Army to re-start coordinating overseas news propaganda, which Mori Kaku of the Inukai Cabinet had begun in December 1931, but which had since been disrupted.

According to the note written by the Board of Information in April 1941, the Army and MOFA



formed an informal committee (Jikyoku dōshikai) to coordinate external and domestic propaganda (*Keihatsu senden*) soon after the Saitō Cabinet was formed. This committee held its first meeting at MOFA some time in June 1932.<sup>69</sup> I will call this committee the June Committee.

Furuno's biography claims that MOFA took the initiative, and Iwanaga and Furuno played a key role in bringing an otherwise reluctant Army on board. It explains that the Army and Dentsū News Agency opposed Iwanaga's proposal to amalgamate Dentsū and Rengō. This was because both Dentsū and the Army saw the amalgamation as the creation of a Rengō-centred news agency. As MOFA had been close to Rengō, it continues, the Army saw this move as a MOFA plot to dominate the proposed institution.<sup>70</sup> Iwanaga asked Furuno to overcome Army opposition to the amalgamation. Furuno used his contact, Lieutenant-Colonel Suzuki Teiichi (1888–1989), whom Furuno had known since their time together in Beijing in the early 1920s. Furuno, as his biography claims, proposed to Iwanaga to involve Suzuki not only in the negotiations for this amalgamation, but also in the inter-ministry committee on information.<sup>71</sup> The politics of the amalgamation of Dentsū and Rengō was, therefore, far more complex than the simple dichotomy of pro-aggression Army (Dentsū) versus peace-loving MOFA (Rengō).

According to the above-mentioned note by the Board of Information of 1941, this informal June Committee's first meeting was attended by three members from MOFA and four from the Army (two from the Ministry of the Army and two from the Army's General Staff Office). At the first meeting the Army's General Staff Office submitted the document, 'The Basic Plan for Overseas Propaganda'. It argued for conducting proactive, not defensive, propaganda. The main message of such propaganda would be, it argued, to tell how crucial the economic development of

Manchuria was for Japan. The propaganda would target mainly big powers, but also not neglect small countries. The plan also proposed to integrate the Army's and MOFA's overseas activities.<sup>72</sup>

In June 1932, both MOFA and the Army worried about international public opinion. The Lytton Commission was finishing up its inquiry in Manchuria and was coming back to Tokyo in early July. The newly formed informal information committee (the June Committee) had to make the Japanese case to the commission as well as to the international public opinion of the League's member countries and the U.S.

The Army, however, had a more ambitious plan—the formation of a central office for information management for the total war system. By this stage, both the Army and MOFA had come to regard overseas and domestic propaganda as integral, and understood united domestic support as crucial for successful foreign policy. In July 1932, the committee agreed that it would aim to encompass a broader area of information management in the future. To this end, it decided to include other relevant ministries—MOC, the Home Ministry, and the Ministry of Education.<sup>73</sup>

The Army pushed its agenda further. In August 1932, after consulting with these ministries, Lieutenant-Colonel Suzuki Teiichi submitted a proposal to the committee. Suzuki was close to the Army's Control Faction (*Tōseiha*), which was attuned to statist reformism and the creation of the total war system. He was also soon to head the Newspaper Section at the Ministry of the Army in 1933–5. In August 1932, he argued that 'a new committee on domestic and overseas propaganda' should be created at the Cabinet Office. It should be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, and consist of two members respectively from MOFA, the Army, and the Navy, and one from the Home Ministry, the Ministry of Education, and MOC.

Its main objectives were: 'to discuss and research propaganda policies and means in order to unify and strengthen current propaganda activities'; and 'to research and prepare the coordination of information and propaganda organizations for a crisis or war'.<sup>74</sup> Suzuki's proposal aimed to create a permanent central organization to manage information at the Cabinet Office as a part of the total war system, not only for the inter-ministerial coordination of overseas propaganda operations with a specific aim.

#### MOFA AND THE GUANDONG ARMY, MUKDEN, SUMMER 1932

In summer 1932 the June Committee declined to endorse the Army's proposal for a central state office to manage a broad range of information gathering and disseminating operations as a part of the total war system. Rather, it identified the most urgent issue as overseas propaganda, not domestic thought control, and called for the amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū operations in Manchuria.<sup>75</sup> Reflecting this foreign policy priority, in summer 1932, MOFA led metropolitan inter-ministry coordination of news propaganda operations in Manchuria. It acted quickly. Shiratori Toshio, then MOFA's Director of the Department of Information, sent Secretary Suma Yakichirō to Mukden with this mission.

Corresponding to this coherent approach of the metropolitan government, inter-ministerial coordination of information policy began in Manzhouguo in August 1932. There, it was decided that the establishment of a 'national' news agency for Manzhouguo was a priority. On 17–18 August 1932, the first meeting of an inter-ministerial committee was held at the Yamato Hotel in Mukden. The committee (which I call the Mukden Committee) consisted of representatives of the Guandong Army's General Staff Office, the Japanese Consulate at Mukden, the Guandong Agency, the SMR, and the Manzhouguo administration. They decided

to hold monthly meetings. In this first two-day meeting, they discussed general issues, such as control over media organizations in Manzhouguo, and the consolidation of Japanese-run (pro-Japan) newspapers in Chinese, English, Russian, Korean, and Japanese languages in Manzhouguo and the leased Guandong area.<sup>76</sup> The committee then decided that 'it was an absolute necessity to establish a news agency in Manchuria, and make Manzhouguo advance into the international news world'. This proposed news agency's main role was overseas propaganda. In this discussion, they clearly identified Iwanaga's proposal of December 1931 as a blueprint, and used his term, the 'news agency of Manchuria and [Inner] Mongolia', for the planned news agency. The term, the 'Manzhouguo (National) News Agency', had not yet emerged.<sup>77</sup>

The Guandong Army took charge of the formation of this news agency in Manchuria. When MOFA's Secretary Suma Yakichirō arrived at Mukden, his main contact was a man from the Guandong Army, Satomi Hajime. Satomi was, however, not a military officer, but an SMR man, currently seconded to work at the Fourth Department of the Guandong Army. The garrison entrusted Satomi with the task of establishing the news agency in Manzhouguo.

Satomi was no stranger to Japan's news propaganda in China. Having graduated from the Shanghai-based Japanese imperial institution, the East Asia Common Culture Academy,<sup>78</sup> Satomi was fluent in Chinese, and had extensive contacts in China, including in the pro-Japanese underground. While Satomi had been a stringer agent for Japanese military intelligence and an opium dealer, he had also been engaged in news propaganda at Japanese-funded newspapers in Tianjin and Beijing. He then became a 'consultant' for the SMR's Nanjing office, and following the Manchurian Incident, he was called to the SMR's headquarters at Mukden.

Suma and Satomi had known each other since they spent time together in Beijing. In Mukden in the summer of 1932, they worked out a plan for the amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū. Satomi then wrote an outline of the proposed news agency for the Fourth Department of the Guandong Army's General Staff Office.<sup>79</sup>

In September 1932, the Guandong Army sent Satomi to Tokyo on three major missions: to get funding from MOFA; to sort out the technical details of the use of telecommunication infrastructure in Manzhouguo with the Ministry of the Army and MOC; and to get an agreement for the integration of Rengō and Dentsū.

The timing could not have been a coincidence—Satomi arrived in Tokyo at the precise moment when the new (informal) inter-ministerial committee to coordinate Japan's information policy was organized.

#### THE INFORMAL INFORMATION COMMITTEE (THE SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE) AND THE 'NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY', TOKYO AND CHANGCHUN, SEPTEMBER 1932 to 1933

In Tokyo, the majority in the June Committee regarded overseas propaganda, not the creation of the total war system, as the state's priority in late summer 1932. The committee concluded that it would take too long to get official approval for Lieutenant-Colonel Suzuki's proposed permanent central organization to manage information at the Cabinet Office. Meanwhile the Lytton Commission was about to produce its report. The committee stressed the pressing need to conduct coordinated overseas propaganda targeting the League. As a result, a new informal information committee was formed in September 1932 (I call it the September Committee). The new committee nonetheless did not totally reject Suzuki's proposal: its member ministries remained as extensive as Suzuki had wanted. Suzuki himself agreed that overseas propaganda was the utmost priority at that time,<sup>80</sup> and he must have been satisfied

that the committee retained the potential to cover a broader area of information management in the future.

MOFA led this committee of inter-ministry coordination on information policy and operations. This reflected the committee's priority on overseas propaganda. The Saitō Cabinet's conclusion of a diplomatic agreement with Manzhouguo in mid-September also strengthened MOFA's position, as Manchurian affairs were now 'diplomatic', not colonial or military matters. The Vice-Minister of MOFA (then Arita Hachirō) headed the September Committee, not the Cabinet Secretary, nor Suzuki from the Ministry of the Army. The committee met every Tuesday afternoon at MOFA. After January 1933, it became a lunchtime discussion group, until it became formalized as the Cabinet Information Committee in July 1936.<sup>81</sup>

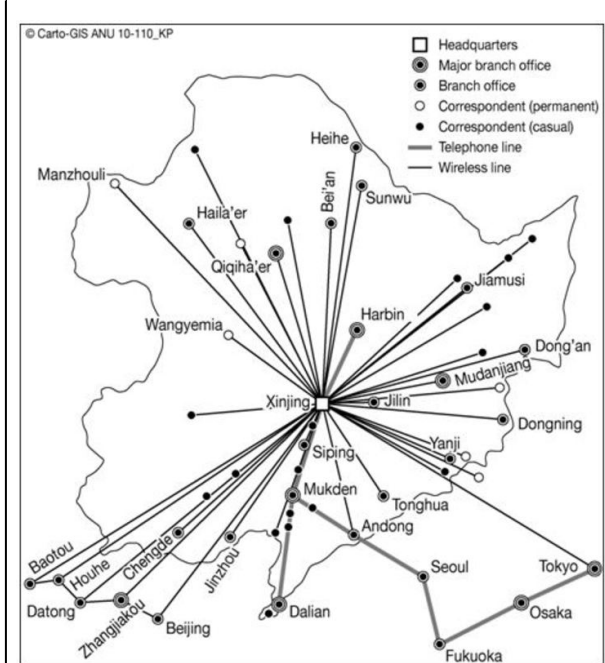
The duties of this September Committee were: to work on the Foreign Minister's official statements, and disseminate a message on how critical the economic development of Manchuria was for the Japanese empire; to make the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Army, the Navy, and Education inform their overseas missions and overseas Japanese students correctly and thoroughly on Japanese policies, and co-opt these overseas Japanese to conduct their propaganda activities; to encourage foreign journalists' visits to Manchuria and make them 'understand' its 'de facto independence from China'; to show the Lytton Commission united support from the Japanese people for the action in Manchuria; and make the commission favourable to Japan's action. The committee saw the League as Japan's propaganda target, although it did not neglect the significance of uniting domestic opinion.<sup>82</sup>

Satomi Hajime arrived in Tokyo from Mukden just as the September Committee was formed, which meant that he met officials who were

working out a coherent overseas propaganda policy at the metropolitan centre.<sup>83</sup> Satomi's visit (and the events in Manchuria) prompted speedy and coordinated actions by the otherwise fragmented and competing metropolitan ministries in Tokyo. Shiratori immediately assured MOFA's funding of ¥200,000 for the foundation and ¥240,000 for the first year of the proposed new agency's operation in Manzhouguo. The Ministry of the Army and MOC also negotiated the details of the news agency's use of wireless in Manzhouguo during Satomi's one-month visit to Tokyo.<sup>84</sup>

Satomi understood that the third objective was the hardest. Since late 1931, Rengō had been taking the initiative in founding the proposed news agency in Manzhouguo. Dentsū saw it as a plot for Rengō and MOFA to establish Rengō's dominance in Manchuria. Persuaded by patriotic rhetoric, however, Dentsū compromised. Satomi managed to gain a partial, yet satisfactory agreement from Dentsū that news input would be channeled to the single proposed new news agency in Manchuria, while outgoing news would be distributed to both Rengō and Dentsū.<sup>85</sup>

Upon Satomi's return to Manchuria, the Guandong Army announced the formation of the Manzhouguo News Agency (MNA) on 15 November 1932. It was formally established on the snowy first day of December in Changchun. Changchun was now called Xinjing, the new capital of Manzhouguo. The Guandong Army also moved its headquarters from Mukden to Changchun.



**MAP 3: Manzhouguo News Agency's network in 1943**

**Source:** Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi* (Xinjing [Changchun]: Editor, [1942]), n.p.; Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi* (Tokyo: Editor, 1958), p. 392.

The making of the national/imperial news agency in Tokyo proved, however, far more difficult. Metropolitan ministries guarded their own jurisdictions. Nor were non-official groups ready to stand aside, and there was no political will or mechanism to force them to do so. Dentsū and its clients, provincial newspapers, strongly opposed the Rengō-initiated amalgamation plan.

According to the Amō memo of 1935, the Cabinet formally decided on the amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū and the creation of a strong and united news agency in September 1932, most likely in the first meeting of the September Committee. Amō's memo said: 'the creation of this strong national news agency was needed for state policy', and 'the government was determined to achieve this



goal against all odds'. Amō's predecessor as Director of the Department of Information, Shiratori Toshio, began to negotiate with Rengō straight away, while Army Lieutenant-Colonel Aoki Shigemasa talked to Dentsū.<sup>86</sup> The amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū and the creation of the united news agency were simultaneously negotiated in Tokyo and Manchuria.

In Tokyo, the government's vision was largely based on what Iwanaga had proposed in December 1931. Another top-secret note of 26 September 1932, most likely written by Amō, confirmed the government's decision to create a united national news agency in Japan. It restated Iwanaga's reasoning on why Japan needed the strong news agency, why the two major news agencies needed to be united, and why the state needed to support the proposed news agency.<sup>87</sup> The form of the proposed news agency was an AP model of a co-operative of news media organizations, as Iwanaga had outlined.<sup>88</sup>

This note of 26 September 1932 clarified the strategic role of the proposed news agency. Saitō Hiroshi, then MOFA's Director of the Department of Information (January 1929–May 1930), had al

ready made this point in early 1929. It was the first time MOFA regarded the national news agency as a state agency. Saitō then noted:

One does not need to detail the very important role which news agencies would play in future foreign policy. All modern states have or should have an influential news agency. Domestically, it would explain domestic and international affairs to all the nationals, and nurture healthy [national] public opinion. Externally, it would report its own country's affairs and views in

detail and quickly [to the world], while reporting foreign affairs [to Japan] so that Japan could take appropriate steps [in foreign policy].<sup>89</sup>

In Saitō's view, the national news agency as a state agency had a strategic role in state policy. Iwanaga's proposal of December 1931, however, differed slightly on this point. It still maintained that the proposed news agency should be independent from the state, but serve the state when needed on a voluntary basis.<sup>90</sup> In contrast, state officials, such as Saitō and Amō, assumed official control. Amō discussed which ministry should administer the proposed news agency. A draft on the administrative details of the news agency, which MOFA most likely prepared, stated that MOFA, the Army, and the Navy would jointly control it, each appointing one director of the board. The other four directors would be elected from among the associated members of the proposed news agency at their general assembly, as the agency was, like Rengō, to follow an AP model of a co-operative of news media organizations. Furthermore, 'the appointment and dismissal of these [elected] directors as well as the president needed approval by these ministers, except for those whom the ministers had appointed'.<sup>91</sup>

The government's negotiations with Rengō and Dentsū, therefore, assumed stronger state control over the proposed united news agency than did Iwanaga's proposal of December 1931. The government suggested to both news agencies that it would buy out the two organizations' respective news departments with ¥1,100,000.

The September Committee nonetheless adopted another point of Iwanaga's proposal: the proposed news agency should have privileges from the state, such as exclusive right to use wireless communication. The government indeed threatened Rengō and

Dentsū that if they did not cooperate, they would be deprived of the privilege.<sup>92</sup> The government knew this was a strong bargaining chip to make them drop opposition to the amalgamation. If they were to lose this wireless communication privilege, they could not gather and deliver international news competently.

Rengō responded positively. After all, it was a plan largely formulated by Iwanaga. MOFA still asked Rengō formally in October 1933 whether it would go along with the amalgamation scheme. Rengō replied yes, and restated what Iwanaga had proposed in December 1931.

Rengō, however, tried to weaken the state's control in this process. First, it would not demand any money for transferring its business and its contracts with the other major international news agencies, because unlike Dentsū, it had been a non-profit organization. In other words, Rengō sought to retain its private status. Second, Rengō also wanted to retain editorial independence, and put two conditions to the government. One was that in order to secure the independence and fairness of news reporting, the proposed news agency should remain a non-profit co-operative of media organizations. The other condition was that representatives of these organizations should be consulted on major decisions.<sup>93</sup>

Probably yielding to Iwanaga's persuasiveness, and also having an absolute trust in Iwanaga, MOFA stepped back and agreed to these conditions. As a result, by late 1933, the plan for direct state control over directors and management seems to have been dropped.

In 1931–33, overseas propaganda, not the control of domestic opinion, remained a government priority. The government discussed the control of domestic opinion as relevant to specific foreign policies. Furthermore, while joint ministerial supervision for the news agency was proposed in autumn 1932, MOFA had been most influential in this process. Its Department of Information had led

the negotiations for the amalgamation of Rengō and Dentsū. The Home Ministry (in charge of domestic thought control) was not included in this joint supervision team.

Rengō's strategic role for the state was further articulated during the diplomatic crisis. One episode demonstrates this point. On 27 May 1933, Iwanaga sent a letter to AP's General Manager, Kent Cooper, confirming Rengō's new service to AP. Rengō would send a text of Japanese official statements and communiqués, for which Rengō would prepay the cost. AP would forward them to the Japanese Ambassador in Washington D.C., to the Consul-General in New York, and if feasible, to the Consul-General in San Francisco. AP was 'at liberty to give out these messages in full or in summary to its members in the United States for publication'. Cooper understood that this was a cheaper way for the Japanese government to send its messages in the U.S. than using the government cables and wireless. In return, AP would get the information more quickly than its competitors. Cooper was happy to accept this offer.<sup>94</sup> Rengō made a similar arrangement with Reuters and Havas.<sup>95</sup> The episode suggested that Rengō was acting in the state's interest. At the same time, AP collaborated with Rengō with clear understanding of its intention. Such a convention was not regarded as a compromise of journalistic codes of conduct at the time, but as a widely practiced norm. It is worth noting that this agreement between Rengō and AP was concluded during the period of diplomatic tension between Japan and other countries, especially the U.S.



**Iwanaga at a dinner party held by Kent Cooper of AP, New York, Autumn 1932. Iwanaga is in the front, third from the left. Source: Furuno, Inosuke ed., *Iwanaga Yūkichi kun* (Tokyo: Iwanaga Yūkichi kun denki kankō iinkai, 1941).**

## CONCLUSION

The state began to coordinate overseas news propaganda operations during the Manchurian Crisis of 1931-3. This diplomatic crisis, which started with the Guandong Army's aggression in Manchuria in September 1931, exacerbated the problems of party governments in the age of mass politics and economic depression as a series of military coup attempts and terrorist attacks rocked politics in Tokyo in 1931-2. In this context, a coherent information policy did not emerge until late May 1932. The national unity cabinet was formed after the May 15th Incident claimed the life of Prime Minister Inukai.

The Army began an attempt to create a total war system, in which a broad range of information management was to be centralized at the Cabinet Office. This attempt was, however, unsuccessful in 1932-3. The main concern of the policy elite at this stage remained foreign policy, especially developments at the League of Nations and in the U.S. This was why MOFA led the inter-

ministerial information committee, which focused on overseas news propaganda and not thought control or domestic mobilization, and why this committee identified the creation of the national news agency as the most urgent priority.

Iwanaga's policy inputs were critical in this development as he presented a blueprint for this national/imperial news agency in Tokyo and another for a national/colonial news agency for newly occupied Manchuria in December 1931. Rengō worked closely with MOFA in Tokyo for the former project, while it worked with the Guandong Army in Manchuria for the latter. All these institution-making processes in Tokyo and Manchuria (the inter-ministerial information coordination office, the national/imperial news agency at the metropolitan centre, and the creation of a news agency in a puppet regime) were closely connected. In this context, the state shaped the basic nature of the proposed united national news agency in Japan.

In the diplomatic crisis of 1931-3, not only MOFA, but also the Army recognized the significance of mass politics and 'international public opinion'. They felt the need for propaganda to the League, its Lytton Commission, the U.S., and China.

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*Internationalizing the Pacific: The United States, Japan and the Institute of Pacific Relations in War and Peace, 1919-45* (London: Routledge, 2002); 'The nation-state/empire as a unit of an analysis of the history of international relations: A case study in Northeast Asia, 1868-1933', in Isabella Löhr and Roland Wenzlhuemer eds, *The Nation State and Beyond: Governing Globalization Processes in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York; Springer, 2013); 'The emergence of international public opinion and the origin of public diplomacy in Japan in the inter-war period', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 3 (2008), pp. 1-30; 'Between the state and global civil society: Non-official experts and their network in the Asia-Pacific, 1925-45', *Global Network*, vol. 2, no.1 (January 2002), pp. 65-81.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the orthodox view, see, for example, Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 176-7. See also a summary of the orthodox view in Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-33* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 2-3. In contrast, Wilson stresses the transitory impact of the Manchurian Incident, and questions the notion of the fifteen-year war. *Ibid*, pp. 3, 5-8, 217-18.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Uchikawa, *Masu media hōseisakushi kenyū*, pp. 217-18.

<sup>3</sup> I have argued elsewhere a similar point about the active propaganda activities of 'liberal internationalists' and their internationalist

organizations especially in the mid-late 1930s. Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific*, pp. 188-91, 227-31. Inoue also argues that Japan withdrew from the League in order to maintain good relations with other empires, while saving the face of the League. Inoue Toshikazu, 'Kokusai renmei dattai to kokusai kyōchō gaikō', *Hitotsubashi ronsō*, vol. 93, no. 3, pp. 365-6, 369. Wilson examines MOFA's active campaign in 1931-3, and refutes the label of isolationism. Sandra Wilson, 'Containing the crisis: Japan's Diplomatic Offensive in the West, 1931-33', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 29, No. 2 (May 1995), pp. 269-70, 338.

<sup>4</sup> It was a war. Japanese aggression met little military opposition from the Nationalist Government or the warlord Zhang Xueliang in Manchuria in 1931-2, while there were major armed confrontations in Shanghai in January-May 1932.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 283-7.

<sup>6</sup> Ikei Masaru, '1930 nendai no masu media: Manshū jihen e no taiō o chūshin toshite', in Miwa Kimitada ed., *Saikō Taiheiyō sensō zenya: Nihon no 1930 nendairon toshite* (Tokyo: Sōseiki, 1981). On radio and news movies, see Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 63-4, 65-6, 67-8, 82-3. Wilson argues that this metropolitan new media had limited influence in rural areas in Japan in the early 1930s. Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*, pp. 49-52, 139-40.

<sup>7</sup> The journal was initially sold for 25 sen (a quarter of one yen). By the end of 1935, its circulation was around 7,000, and it created an annual revenue of ¥43,000. Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, pp. 284, 330.

<sup>8</sup> John Dower, 'Throwing off Asia II: Woodblock prints of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95)', and



'Throwing off Asia III: Woodblock prints of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)' in a series of Visualizing Cultures, Cambridge Mass: MIT 2008, [here](#), and [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> See note 6 for Young, *Japan's Total Empire*.

<sup>10</sup> Asahi shimbun 'shimbun to sensō' shuzaihan, *Shimbun to sensō* (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy*, pp. 316-7.

<sup>12</sup> Furukawa Takahisa, *Showa senchūki no sōgō kokusaku kikan* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1992), p. 25; Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 23-4.

<sup>13</sup> Satō, *Genron tōsei*, p. 232. The Newspaper Section was moved under the Research Committee on Military Affairs in 1929, and then under the Department of Research on Military Affairs in 1933. The section was strengthened during the Manchurian crisis, and after the February 26 Incident of 1936, it was regarded as a significant post in the Military Affairs Bureau and functioned as policy-making adviser to the Army Minister.

<sup>14</sup> On the term *kakushin*, see Itō Takashi, *Showa shoki seijishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1969), pp. 7-11. For the terminology of 'statist reformism', see also Akami, *Internationalizing the Pacific*, p. 77. These reformists saw the state as the key institution to implement reform and welfare schemes in order to strengthen the power of the state and the nation. These statist reformists agreed on the need for a drastic restructure of the state machinery and a greater state control of national resources. They prioritized the rights of the state over those of workers and farmers. Furukawa, *Showa senchūki*, p. 16. Furukawa, however, notes that *kakushin* bureaucrats at MOFA were

distinct from those in other ministries.

<sup>15</sup> Ide Yoshinori, 'Hijōji taisei to Nihon "kan"sei', in Tokyo daigaku shakai kagaku kenkyūsho 'Fashizumu to minshu shugi' kenkyūkai ed., *Undō to teikō*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1979), pp. 254-5.

<sup>16</sup> The point also supports Yi's argument that despite the military's dominance in politics, even in the late 1930s and early 1940s the Army sought not a military dictatorship, but a constitutional, and indirect political influence over the civilian government. Yi, *Gunbu no Showashi*, vol. 1, pp. 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> These attempts were Gunjyoku (at the Cabinet Office), June 1918-May 1920, and Kokuseiin (an outer bureau), May 1920-November 1922. Furukawa, *Showa senchūki*, pp. 25-6; Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War*, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Furukawa, *Showa senchūki*, p. 27. It was planned to encompass all economic activities of Japan at all times, not only in wartime. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War*, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Katō Yōko, 'Sōryokusenka no sei-gun kankei', in Kurasawa Aiko et. al. ed., *Ajia Taiheiyō sensō* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2005), p. 15. The bureau was to last until it was absorbed into the Planning Board in October 1937.

<sup>20</sup> 'Shigenkyoku kansei', 27 May 1927, reprinted in Ishikawa Junkichi ed., *Kokka sōdōinshi: Shiryō hen*, vol. 3 (Fujisawa: Kokka sōdōinshi kankōkai, 1975), pp. 17-20. In 1930, the bureau began planning national mobilization. The Cabinet decided on the first national mobilization plan in 1933. The last and third plan began in 1936, which was then interrupted by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Furukawa, *Showa senchūki*, p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Ishikawa Junkichi, 'Kaidai', in Ishikawa ed., *Kokka sōdōinshi: Shiryō hen*, vol. 3, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> It also attached a survey of key countries' national mobilization schemes, such as those of France, Italy, the U.S., Germany, and Britain. Shigen kyoku, 'Shigen no tōsei unyō jumbi shisetsu ni tsuite', 1935, reprinted in Ishikawa ed., *Kokka sōdōinshi: Shiryō hen*, vol. 3, pp. 113-14.

<sup>23</sup> It also noted: 'resources are defined as sources of state power'. Ibid., pp. 107, 109.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> Pak Sunae, "'15 nen sensōki" niokeru naikaku jōhō kikō', *Media shi kenkyū*, vol. 3 (June 1995), p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Gaimushō hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Gaimushō*, vol. 1, p. 1038.

<sup>27</sup> Furuno had been the head of the Bureau of Domestic News and the Bureau of Foreign News at Rengō's headquarters in Tokyo, while Higashikawa Kaichi had managed Osaka-based economic news (especially news of the stock market). After Higashikawa's death, in October 1931, Furuno absorbed this Osaka operation, and became General Manager in charge of all regions in Japan. 'Furuno Inosuke nenpu', in Furuno Inosuke denki henshū iinkai ed., *Furuno Inosuke*, p. 532.

<sup>28</sup> On this international aspect of the crisis, see Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972); Ian Nish, 'Introduction', in *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China and the League of Nations, 1931-3* (London: K. Paul International, 1993), pp. vii, viii, 22.

<sup>29</sup> O'Connor, *The English Language Press Networks*, p. 201. Japan's attack on Shanghai also outraged Chinese public opinion. Coble, *Facing Japan*, p. 44. Wilson, however, points out that the responses of the top officials and business leaders in the U.S. and Britain were

more nuanced. Wilson, 'Containing the crisis', pp. 366-8.

<sup>30</sup> Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, pp. 191, 239, 240; O'Connor, *The English Language Press Networks*, p. 213.

<sup>31</sup> Wilson's analysis of MOFA overseas mission activities in 1931-3 suggests that massive propaganda activities took place in the U.S., while MOFA also stressed Europe and South American countries, and did not totally neglect China. Wilson, 'Containing the Crisis', pp. 340, 341, 348, 352-3.

<sup>32</sup> As a result, he was charged as a war criminal at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (the Tokyo Trial) in 1945, and purged from public office. The charge was dropped and he was released from the Sugamo Prison in 1948. His purge was lifted in 1951. Amō's papers, which have been reprinted, include MOFA documents, his diary, his notes, and published and unpublished articles which he wrote before and after 1945.

<sup>33</sup> [Amō Eiji], 'Shintsūshinsha setsuritsu keikaku keika gaiyō', reprinted in Amō Tamio ed., *Amō Eiji nikki shiryōshū, shiryō hen*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Editor, 1989), pp. 1529-36.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 1529.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Mori Kaku (Tsutomu) began his career in business as the head of the Tianjin branch of Mitsui Trading Company in 1914. After a brief but successful business career, he became a politician (Seiyūkai) in 1918 and was elected to the Diet in 1921. As Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs during the Tanaka Giichi Cabinet (April 1927-July 1929) he pushed a hardline policy towards China. After the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, he became instrumental in the Army's increasing involvement in politics. He served as Cabinet Secretary of the Inukai Cabinet in December

1931.

<sup>37</sup> Dōmei tsūshinsha, *Dōmei no soshiki to katsudō* (Tokyo: Dōmei tsūshinsha, 1941), reprinted in Ariyama and Nishiyama eds, *Dōmei tsūshinsha*, vol. 5, pp. 236–7.

<sup>38</sup> Iwanaga Yūkichi, ‘Kokkateki daitsūshinsha setsuritsuron’, December 1931, reprinted in Furuno ed., *Iwanaga Yūkichi kun*, (Part III), pp. 163–73.

<sup>39</sup> Furuno Inosuke denki henshū iinkai ed., *Furuno Inosuke*, p. 193.

<sup>40</sup> Iwanaga, ‘Kokkateki daitsūshinsha setsuritsuron’, December 1931, (reprinted), pp. 163, 164, 166, 167–8, 170.

<sup>41</sup> The department was located at the office of the Director of the SMR, and it began research on media and information policies of Manchuria in 1927 when Matsuoka Yōsuke became Vice Director. Katō Shinkichi, ‘Kioku o tadoru’, in Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi* (Xinjing [Changchun]: Editor, [1942]), p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Sasaki created a serious problem with the Nationalist Government of Nanjing in March–September 1931. See Chapter Seven and Chapter Nine.

<sup>43</sup> Sasaki Kenji, ‘Kokutsū no shinwa o kataru’, in Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi*, pp. 28–30.

<sup>44</sup> Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi*, p. 39.

<sup>45</sup> Iwanaga Yūkichi, ‘Manmō tsūshinsha ron’ [December 1931], reprinted in Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi*, p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> Katakura Tadashi, ‘Manshū jihen kimitsu seiryaku nisshi’, 18 September–31 October 1931, reprinted in Kobayashi Tatsuo and Shimada Toshihiko eds, *Gendaishi shiryō*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1964), p. 189.

<sup>47</sup> Y. Tak Matsusaka, ‘Managing occupied Manchuria, 1931–1934’, in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie eds, *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 103–4; Gaimushō hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Gaimushō*, vol. 2, pp. 215–19.

<sup>48</sup> Based on the Guandong Army’s proposal, the Ministry of the Army began research on the legal and economic aspects of an autonomous state on 1 October 1931. The idea of the establishment of a new ‘independent’ state became the core of the submission of the Guandong Army of 24 October 1931 to the Ministry of the Army, ‘Manmō mondai kaiketsu no konpon hōsaku’, 24 October 1931, reprinted in Inaba Masao, Kobayashi Tatsuo, and Shimada Toshihiko eds, *Gendaishi shiryō*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1965), pp. 337–8.

<sup>49</sup> In 1932, proletarian parties won five seats. In 1930, Minseitō had won a landslide majority of 273 against Seiyūkai (174) and proletarian parties (5). The total number of the House of Representatives was 466 in this period, and the rest of the seats were won by other independent parties. The exact number of the seats won by both major parties in 1932 varies by two seats from one source to another. Kitaoka Shin’ichi, *Seitō kara gunbu e* (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 1999), p. 171.

<sup>50</sup> Gordon, *Labor and Imperial democracy*, pp. 275–6, 283–4.

<sup>51</sup> The Japanese Navy had attacked the Chinese military in Shanghai on 28 January 1931.

<sup>52</sup> Duara argues that such a claim had been valid until the late nineteenth century, and had been commonly acknowledged in Japanese and Western scholarship. Japanese scholarship, however, deliberately ignored the substantial Han-Chinese migration into the area in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This served Japan’s strategic and economic interests. Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and*

*Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), pp. 56-8.

<sup>53</sup> Such an idea was also commonly expressed at MOFA and its diplomatic missions in Manchuria in December 1931-January 1932. Gaimushō hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Gaimushō*, vol. 2, pp. 217-18.

<sup>54</sup> Ōtani, ‘“Shimbun sōjū” kara’, pp. 88-9.

<sup>55</sup> Iwanaga, ‘Manmō tsūshinsha ron’, pp. 39-41.

<sup>56</sup> Sasaki, ‘Kokutsū no shinwa o kataru’, p. 32; Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, p. 356; Furuno Inosuke denki henshū iinkai ed., *Furuno Inosuke*, pp. 187-8.

<sup>57</sup> Sasaki, ‘Kokutsū no shinwa o kataru’, p. 31.

<sup>58</sup> Satō Junko, ‘Manshūkoku tsūshinsha no setsuritsu to jōhō taisaku’, *Media shi kenkyū*, vol. 9 (March 2000), p. 39.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Iwayuru sangatsu jiken’, cited in Masumi Junnosuke, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1980), pp. 100-1.

<sup>60</sup> Masumi, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6, pp. 9-10.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Tanaka shuki’, cited in Masumi, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6, pp. 113-16.

<sup>62</sup> Ketsumeidan assassinated Inoue Junnosuke, a prominent Minseitō politician, in February 1932, and Dan Takuma, Director of Mitsui Company, in March 1932.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Manmō shinkokka seiritsu ni kansuru taigai kankei shori yōkō’, (Cabinet decision, 12 March 1931), reprinted in Kobayashi and Shimada eds, *Gendaishi shiryō*, vol. 7, p. 495.

<sup>64</sup> Masumi, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6, pp. 118-21.

<sup>65</sup> Matsusaka analyses the Guandong Army’s failure in controlling the SMR in 1932-3.

Matsusaka, ‘Managing occupied Manchuria, 1931-1934’, pp. 120-7.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-20, 127-33.

<sup>67</sup> Matsusaka, ‘Managing occupied Manchuria, 1931-1934’, p. 107; Masumi, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6, pp. 59-67.

<sup>68</sup> Masumi, *Nihon seitō shiron*, vol. 6, pp. 65-7; Gaimushō hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, *Gaimushō*, vol. 2, pp. 228-66.

<sup>69</sup> Jōhōkyoku, ‘Jōhōkyoku setsuritsu ni itaru made no rekishi’, 1 April 1941, reprinted in Ishikawa Junkichi, *Kokka sōdōinshi: Shiryōhen*, vol. 4 (Fujisawa: Kokka sōdōinshi kankōkai, 1976), p. 109. The same document is also reprinted in Ogino Fujio ed., *Jōhōkyoku kankei gokuhi shiryō*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 2003).

<sup>70</sup> Furuno Inosuke denki henshū iinkai ed., *Furuno Inosuke*, pp. 171, 193-4.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 193-4. It is unclear, however, whether such negotiations took place before or after June 1932. Furuno’s biography mentions the involvement of Uchida Yasuya, Shigemitsu Mamoru, and Amō Eiji. Uchida was Foreign Minister after July 1932. Shigemitsu became Vice Minister one year later in May 1933, and Amō became Director of the Department of Information, also in June 1933.

<sup>72</sup> Jōhōkyoku, ‘Jōhōkyoku setsuritsu’, 1 April 1941, (reprinted), p. 109.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi*, p. 47.

<sup>76</sup> Katō, ‘Kioku o tadoru’, pp. 25-6; Satō, ‘Manshūkoku tsūshinsha’, pp. 30-32.



<sup>77</sup> Katō, 'Kioku o tadoru', p. 26.

<sup>78</sup> On this organization, see Douglas R. Reynolds, 'Training young China hands: Tōa Dōbun Shoin and its precursors, 1886-1945', in Duus, Myers, and Peattie eds, *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, pp. 210-71.

<sup>79</sup> Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, p. 359; Satomi Hajime, 'Sōritsu no zengo dan', in Manshūkoku tsūshinsha ed., *Kokutsū jūnen shi*, pp. 15, 23; Matsumoto Shigeharu, *Shanghai jidai*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1974), p. 186.

<sup>80</sup> He in fact argued that the committee should have an administrative group, headed by the Director of the Department of Information of MOFA. This group should be composed of representatives of these ministries and if necessary, include representatives of private organizations. Jōhōkyoku, 'Jōhōkyoku setsuritsu', 1 April 1941, (reprinted), p. 109.

<sup>81</sup> Jōhōkyoku, 'Jōhōkyoku setsuritsu', 1 April 1941, (reprinted), p. 110.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11. The Army documents suggested that the Ministry of the Army and the Guandong Army worked closely to facilitate foreign journalists' visit to Manchuria, such as an AP journalist, James A Mills. [Rikugun] shimbunhan to Rikugun daijin, 7 November 1932; 'Fukukan yori Kantōgun sanbōchō ate tsūchō', 7 November 1932, in the file of 'Rikuman kimitsu: Mitsu fu dainikki', Bōeishō bōei kenkyūsho (formally called Bōeichō Bōei kenshūsho Senshi shiryō shitsu).

<sup>83</sup> Satō, 'Manshūkoku tsūshinsha', pp. 34-5.

<sup>84</sup> Satomi, 'Sōritsu no zengo dan', p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> Satomi, 'Sōritsu no zengo dan', p. 20; Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, pp. 359-60.

<sup>86</sup> [Amō], 'Shintsūshinsha setsuritsu', (reprinted), pp. 1529-30.

<sup>87</sup> [Amō Eiji], [No title], 26 September 1932, reprinted in Amō ed., *Amō Eiji nikki shiryōshū, shiryō hen*, vol. 2, pp. 1450-57.

<sup>88</sup> 'Dainihon tsūshinsha teikan sōan yōryō', reprinted in Amō ed., *Amō Eiji nikki shiryōshū, shiryō hen*, vol. 2, p. 1458.

<sup>89</sup> [Amō], [No title], 26 September 1932, (reprinted), p. 1451.

<sup>90</sup> Iwanaga, 'Kokkateki daitsūshinsha', December 1931, (reprinted), p. 163.

<sup>91</sup> 'Dainihon tsūshinsha teikan sōan yōryō', (reprinted), pp. 1460, 1461.

<sup>92</sup> [Amō], 'Shintsūshinsha setsuritsu', (reprinted), pp. 1529, 1530.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1530-31; 'Shimbun rengōsha kaitōsho', October 1933, reprinted in Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, pp. 426-7.

<sup>94</sup> Iwanaga to Cooper, 27 May 1933; Cooper to Elliott, 31 May 1933, reprinted in Ariyama and Nishiyama eds, *Kokusai tsūshinsha*, vol. 2, pp. 419-21.

<sup>95</sup> Tsūshinshashi kankōkai ed., *Tsūshinshashi*, p. 336.