

POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE NEW ORDER:
A REAPPRAISAL OF MIKI KIYOSHI AND THE SHŌWA KENKYŪ KAI

by

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of the Japanese philosopher Miki Kiyoshi and his involvement in the controversial Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, an organization charged with the task of formulating an intellectual foundation for Konoe Fumimaro's "New Political Order" and the "New Order in East Asia," the former project being a domestic program of reform and the latter being concerned with foreign policy. The study aims at elucidating on the complexities of the 1930s in Japan and suggests that previous attempts to place Miki and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai into oversimplified categories has not aided our understanding of the period. It calls for a reappraisal of Miki and his role in the organization, and stresses the broader continuity in Miki's thought and action that has previously been neglected.

The argument comprises five chapters. The first is a look at Miki's formative period and stresses that Miki was a complex and critical thinker who was interested in political involvement from the beginning of his career. The second addresses the 1930s, and argues that they were not only a time of distress for Japanese intellectuals, but also one of opportunity. This chapter addresses some key components of Miki's thought and helps to situate him politically. The third chapter compares Miki to Konoe Fumimaro, and argues that while the two men are often portrayed as quite different, in reality their thought and aspirations had much in common. It can be said that Miki was a philosopher who wanted to be a leader, and Konoe was a leader who wanted to be a philosopher. The fourth chapter is concerned with the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai itself as well as Miki's role within the organization, and shows how, far from being an aberration in Miki's career, his participation in the organization can be seen as a logical step. The thesis thus stresses the continuity running through Miki's thought and action and see his role in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as reflecting this. The final chapter explains the downfall of the organization, and of Miki.

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For Rieko, with all my love

One who loves truth will not allow politics to be entrusted only to "Will to Power." Politics also must stand in the standpoint of truth, and the mission of the philosopher is the standing of politics in the standpoint of truth. Philosophers must ask, what kind of authority does political power possess? Simple power does not possess authority. It is not until power is connected to truth that it has authority. According to Professor Spranger, "Without thinking, the attainment of truth is impossible. However, thinking which is truly deep and correct is able also to produce correct action." Truly this is so. Nevertheless, true thinking cannot accept as is a premise which is demanded as a premise according to politics. If "inside true knowledge lies absolute power leading to true action," then will to truth cannot be yielded to will to power.¹

- Miki Kiyoshi

Introduction

The Japanese philosopher Miki Kiyoshi² (1897-1945) has received frequent mention in scholarly works on the prewar intellectuals, yet little serious study has yet emerged in English-language scholarship.³ His involvement in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai (Shōwa Research Association)⁴ has, however, been the subject of some controversy. This current paper is an attempt to investigate Miki and the nature of his role in that organization, and argues that a reappraisal is in order.

The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was organized to provide the intellectual foundation for Prince Konoe Fumimaro⁵'s New Order (Shin-Taisei⁶), the domestic partner to the New East Asian Order (Tōa Shin Chitsujo⁷) -- the latter was to be brought about by imposition of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (Dai Tōa Kyōeiken⁸), the former by the Imperial Rule Assistance Organization (Taisei Yokusan Kai⁹).¹⁰ The New Order was to take apart the established system at home, and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere would then carry out a similar role with the international order; thus Japan would be put in the forefront of a new historical movement to change both itself, and the world.

Miki's involvement with the ideas of the New Order and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere did not begin with his work for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai; in fact, these concepts

¹ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「政治の哲学支配」 "Seiji no Tetsugaku Shihai" [Philosophy-Controlling Politics], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 14.23-39; 38-39.

² 三木清

³ I have followed the Japanese custom of putting family names first; where names of individuals, organizations, and such, are given in the main text, the Japanese characters are provided in a footnote directly following the first instance of the romanized version or translation. Titles of written works are provided in translation in the text, and the footnote contains the original characters as well as a romanji rendering, to avoid cluttering the body text. In instances where words and names only appear in footnotes, I have avoided providing characters for reasons of brevity. All translations given in this paper are, unless otherwise indicated by reference to a translated work, my own.

⁴ 昭和研究会

⁵ 近衛文麿

⁶ 新體制 Some writers use "New Structure Order," or "New Political Order."

⁷ 東亞新秩序

⁸ 大東亞共榮圈

⁹ 大政翼賛会

¹⁰ There have been many excellent works written on the formulation of the New East Asian Order; a decent overview can be found by reading the classic Akira Iriye's *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1965) followed by Ian Nish's newer *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period* (London: Praeger, 2002); another succinct overview can be found in James B. Crowley, "A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism," *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, eds. Bernard S. Silberman and H.D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974), 270-298.

are heavily indebted to his philosophical writings, stretching back long before the organization was contemplated. As an influential intellectual who has received little serious attention, and as an influential organization that has suffered likewise, Miki and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai risk being obscured while they are as of yet remembered as deeply intertwined. To some extent, I am here using Miki as a vehicle by which I wish to illustrate the complex nature of the relationship between intellectual and political spheres during 1930s Japan, and examine what happened to intellectuals and how organizations like the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai linked these two spheres. The interweaving intellectual and political developments of this chaotic decade in Japanese history are extremely complicated, but that has not prevented all manner of attempts to simplify it, many of which I examine in the course of this paper and most of which must be discarded as failing to adequately come to grips with the complexities of the time and its people. At the same time, Miki is a unique individual, and his experience, through his thought and action, provide a contrast to other intellectuals at the time, so that viewing the 1930s from the vantage point of Miki provides, I hope, a refreshing take on those troubled times.

I will not, therefore, attempt here to answer the broader question posed by Maruyama Masao, who asked, in the context of seeking to understand the internal forces that drove Japan to war,

How was it that Japanese intellectuals, who for decades past had been absorbing Western scholarship and techniques and ways of life, who were more familiar -- or at least believed themselves more familiar -- with Western than with Japanese or Asian traditions, proved in the end so willing to accept, or at least so impotent to halt, the onrush of a blindly nationalistic militarism inspired by the crudest beliefs in the mythology of a uniquely Japanese 'Imperial Way'?¹¹

Instead, my concern here is specifically with Miki and his involvement with the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, and I will not limit myself in that capacity to using him as a case study for why many intellectuals joined nationalist movements. That is because, while there may be similarities, there are also significant differences, and these will become readily apparent as this paper progresses.

The question I would be expected to start from, then, would be more modest in scope: what could motivate one man, a leftist intellectual concerned with ideas of materialism and class struggle as driving forces in history, to join a policy research group concerned with establishing an intellectual foundation for a nationalist prime minister? Several conjective answers immediately present themselves. First, perhaps this was a case of dissent from within, so that, aware that he would not survive 'above ground,' Miki joined the organization to resist the rising

¹¹ Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), expanded edition, xii.

This question is echoed by Sharon Minichiello in her study of Nagai Ryūtarō, *Retreat from Reform: Politics of Political Behaviour in Interwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), ix.

One could, in fact, argue that Maruyama's question is flawed because of its extensive generalization of Japanese intellectuals, and its ignoring the fact that Japanese students tended to pick and choose fragments from their European teachers. One could make a distinction between the sophisticated arguments of Nishida Kitarō that were "nationalistic" in the sense of presenting a Japan uniquely poised to create a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought superior to either, and the base ideologues of the army. One could even argue that Maruyama is wrong in making the assumption that nationalism arose out of purely Asian thought, when many of the intellectuals -- not just the left, but the right (e.g. Kita Ikki) -- borrowed heavily from socialist ideals from European philosophy and current politics -- it seems a convenient method for European intellectuals to wring their hands of their Japanese students by claiming that the latter's transgressions were in fact due entirely to "Asian thought." Even Emperor worship in the early Shōwa model -- the Emperor resplendant upon his white steed -- had more in common with the spectacle of European imperialism and popular rightist leaders in the interwar years than it did with earlier Japanese history.

nationalist-militarist tide from within. This hypothesis comes in two flavours: resistance from within by choice, or resistance from within by circumstance, the latter being brought about by the infamous *tenkō*¹², or forced ideological conversion. The ‘dissent-from-within’ motif is an idealistic ‘resistance-fighter intellectual’ view, and certainly appealing.¹³ Secondly, perhaps Miki was offered a chance to turn his abstract philosophy into practical policy, and was so swept away by this possibility that he did not consider the real implications of his co-operation with such forces. This is the romantic view, presenting the philosopher as well-intentioned but naïve.

A third view is that offered by Fletcher.¹⁴ Fletcher charts the development of the intellectuals Rōyama Masamichi¹⁵, Ryū Shintarō¹⁶, and Miki, and argues that they sought answers first in Marxism in the 1920s and then in “fascism” in the 1930s; just what is meant by “fascism” is never clearly defined but appears here, and this is but a hypothesis, to mean the populist definition of an ultra-nationalistic and pro-government position.¹⁷ Regardless, for now let us put aside the issue of fascism for our purposes and conclude that Fletcher argues that the intellectuals in question, after a move to Marxism initially, move away from Marxism and adopt an ultra-nationalist and pro-government stance.

However, I now believe that this entire perspective (all three views) is flawed, because it posits a major shift whereby Miki either stops being a ‘man of thought’ and becomes a ‘man of action’, or transforms his thought from Marxist critique to the formulation of justifications for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. I posit here that there is no such clean break, and while Miki’s thought developed over time the continuities are greater than the discrepancies, and there is no ‘grand shift’. The approaches to Miki based upon a, or even a series of, ‘conversion(s)’ are based upon attempts to pigeon-hole Miki, where his inability to fit any established, simplified slot is explained by ‘conversions’ attempting to chart his movement from one oversimplified static position to another, completely ignoring the continuity in his thought and action. As an aside, neither was Miki’s philosophy abstract, but from the beginning was engaged with practical concerns facing his society and times.

My thesis here would begin by stating that Miki Kiyoshi was a sophisticated philosopher who when young studied under some of the greatest minds of his time, and like all great thinkers

¹² 転向 In my translations throughout this paper, I will render this term as ‘conversion’, or ‘to convert.’

¹³ An example of this ‘resistance from within’ argument is Mary L. Hanneman’s treatment of Hasegawa Nyozeikan (“Dissent from Within: Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Liberal Critic of Fascism,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52.1 (1997): 35-58.

Hanneman argues Hasegawa wrote like he did not to support the militarists but to critique them while avoiding being silenced by openly attacking them -- he attacked them from within without appearing to do so, but the readers could read his real convictions between the lines of the nationalist jargon of the times.

¹⁴ William Miles Fletcher III, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

¹⁵ 蠟山政道

¹⁶ 笠信太郎

¹⁷ Fletcher’s lacking of a definition of fascism, and even his use of the term, is of course problematic; this is something a reviewer of his book complains about, for Fletcher either chooses not to engage with the debate or behaves as if he were unaware of it, although he does address the issue in his earlier paper (which I will discuss later; for the critique see Thomas A. Stanley’s review of Miles Fletcher’s *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (University of North Carolina Press, 1982), in *Monumenta Nipponica*, 39.1 (1984): 106-108). Fletcher joins Herbert P. Bix and others in persisting in using the term “fascism” throughout the 1980s despite a general consensus that it had been shorn of all value for Japanese studies (please refer to the third part of this essay and the footnotes therein where I discuss this issue at length). Fletcher’s use of the term is even more baffling when one considers that his article and book showed clearly Miki, Ryū, and Rōyama’s different understandings of fascism, indicating that it was certainly not a constant for the three of them and therefore of little help in arguing that they charted a course for the same thing if all three of them were in fact aiming in different directions. Finally, I do not understand how Fletcher can recognize the array of labels applied to the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai (see *The Search for a New Order*, 176 n1), and then proceed to apply one of his own, unless he does not see that these labels are meaningless in their reductionism and he considers “fascism” to be the magic cure-all.

he strove to improve the world around him. Miki was not actually a Marxist, although he was inspired by dialectical thought and Marxist thinking; neither was he just another student of Nishida Kitarō¹⁸ and the Kyōto School¹⁹, or of German idealism, or of “nationalism” in a broader sense, although he borrowed elements from all of these which were surging through the Japanese intellectual *milieu* at the time. Miki was also profoundly interested in history, culture, and religion, but his writings on these topics are seldom given the attention they deserve. Furthermore, the 1930s presented Japanese intellectuals with grave threats, but also incredible opportunities as the thought of today could quickly become the rallying cry for a political revolution tomorrow. Miki’s experience reflects both the stimulation felt individually by prewar intellectuals who were awash with radical philosophies being put into political programs in Europe and the desire to get involved with something like that in Japan, and also on a broader level the pressure on intellectuals in the 30s to side with the dominant forces, those warring factions that were seen as securing Japan’s future against foreign aggression and socialist/national-socialist thought: on the one hand, the maelstrom of political philosophy rising in Europe was giving Japanese thinkers all sorts of ideas, but at the same time they ran the risk of being ‘un-Japanese’ in the eyes of the political right and therefore courting danger both to their careers and themselves physically (the threat of imprisonment or assassination). Thinkers like Miki Kiyoshi frequently had the best intentions for Japan, but were vilified during the war for not supporting the hard-right nationalists, and after the war for having appeared to be complicit in the collapse of the liberalism and parliamentarianism of the interwar period.

This paper comprises four chapters that attempt to reappraise Miki and his involvement with the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. The first will examine how Miki’s early thought and education, when he studied under such notables as Nishida Kitarō in Japan and Rickert and Heidegger in Europe, prepared him not just for idealistic contemplation, but also for action, and particularly political involvement, thus setting a foundation for his later development. Building on from this examination of the development of Miki’s thought, the second chapter examines how the climate of the 1930s was not only one of danger to intellectuals, but also a time of great opportunity, which had an impact on Miki by prompting him to take action formulated on his thought. This chapter thus helps to place Miki in his context by looking at his times, and then examining various key aspects of his thought. In the third chapter, I argue that, far from being the polar opposite of Prince Konoe, the man for whom the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai attempted to formulate the basis for a New Order, Miki and the Prince were actually quite similar in many respects, and may have shared more common thinking than we have previously assumed. Their similarity in perspective may help in explaining why both Miki and Konoe pursued the ideal of a New Order. The fourth chapter brings the previous three threads together by looking at Miki’s joining the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, his role in it and what he accomplished. It further presents the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as a complex organization (that has not received the attention in Western scholarship that it deserves), that has resisted simple categorization and was actually quite different from the group often portrayed as trying to establish a fascist dictatorship and so on. In short, this chapter intends to show how joining the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was not a strange aberration in Miki’s career, but actually shows continuity with his earlier thought and was a logical step.

Perhaps then, this paper can be seen as a reappraisal of Miki that contains reappraisals of Konoe and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as well. While I am not really adding much in the way of research, I am building upon previous work and offering a reinterpretation that I believe makes more sense in approaching Miki and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai than oversimplified theories that do

¹⁸ 西田幾多郎

¹⁹ 京都学派

not allow for the complexity of the man, the organization, and the times. This undertaking begins, as all enterprises must, with a turn to the formative period of the man in question.

Chapter I The Seeds of a New Japanese Philosophy: Miki's Formative Period

A philosopher is not a meditator²⁰ who does not carry responsibility, but must be one who moves the world, and forms the world.²¹ - Miki Kiyoshi

In the second chapter I will examine Miki's thought in greater depth, but his interest in improving society and striving for a worldly philosophy that must transcend the particular evolved from his formative period, which is the topic of this chapter. Religion also occupied an important role in Miki's world, for religion too was transcendent, and along with philosophy was destined to lead politics, for politics, left to its own devices, would only bring ruin. From the beginning, Miki emphasized a pragmatism in his thought that was a refreshing contrast to the purely academic, abstract pursuits of many of his contemporaries. For Miki, philosophy was not just 'philosophy' per se, but a force for leadership and improvement in society. The object of philosophical inquiry was by necessity, reality. To truly understand philosophy, for Miki, was to understand reality, and that reality naturally included politics. As Miki himself said, "If, like this, Japanese politics and Japanese culture also have to become worldly, then worldly thought will be extremely necessary for Japan. We cannot these days think of a politics or culture without thought. *Thought is the leader of politics and culture.*"²²

This chapter will begin with tracing Miki's early life, and examine the Kyōto School, of which he was a part, his studies in Europe, and his return to Japan, from the vantage point of Miki's own intellectual development. Before starting this journey, it would be best to consider some of the (unfortunately limited) scholarship on Miki.

1.1 Overview of Scholarship on Miki Kiyoshi

Miki tends to be treated in the scholarship as one of a group of intellectuals who shifted their thought in the 1930s towards a pro-government, 'nationalist' position, that some have gone so far as to dub 'fascist' or argue supported Japanese imperialism, but I have come to the conclusion that this generalization is not only distortive of the variety of individuals and thought of the time, but in the case of Miki is simply incorrect. Before turning to an examination of Miki's early life and thought, it would be helpful to look at several perspectives advanced by scholars concerning him.

One perspective that may prove interesting in Miki's case is that offered by Andrew E. Barshay in *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan*.²³ Barshay looks at how the development of the modern Japanese state gave birth to a "public sphere," a "vast area of social thought and practice concerned with national life," in which activity pursued in large organizations was privileged over activity pursued by individuals, to the extent that "public" came to be identified

²⁰ 観想者 *kansōsha* (*kansō* is a Buddhist term meaning a sort of revelation that comes through such a spiritual practice as meditation. Miki means that a philosopher is not just someone who sits in a temple and meditates. He thus contrasts the active, involved philosopher with the passive, detached recipient of meditational insight.

²¹ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「哲学と教育」 "Tetsugaku to Kyōiku" [Philosophy and Education], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.422-431; 428.

²² 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「新日本の指導力としての宗教」 "Shin-Nihon no Shidōryoku toshite no Shūkyō" [Religion as the Leadership of the New Japan], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works], (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.71-81; 71-72 (emphasis mine).

²³ Andrew E. Barshay, *State and Intellectual in Imperial Japan: The Public Man in Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

with the state.²⁴ Barshay proposes a new approach to the intellectuals at this time that would examine how for these “public men” the “intellectual content of public work and the mutually defining status positions of insider and outsider were interrelated.”²⁵ He focuses on the cases of Nanbara Shigeru²⁶ and Hasegawa Nyozeikan²⁷, but the hinge of the work that connects these two is Maruyama Masao. While Barshay touches upon Miki but briefly, he comments on his tragic life that “A better example of the public man *in extremis* can hardly be imagined.”²⁸ Considering Miki from this viewpoint in the future could be a revealing undertaking and a corrective to earlier misconceptions regarding the intellectuals of this period.

The key approach to consider here for my purposes, however, is that of Miles Fletcher. Fletcher, recall, posits that Miki, with Ryū and Rōyama, shifted their emphasis from Marxism to ‘fascism’, and thus embraced the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai because it was fascist and offered them a chance to build a fascist new order.²⁹ The key in Fletcher’s perspective is a shift whereby the three intellectuals, whom he sees as a cross-section of intellectuals at the time, turn to fascism to solve the problems they perceived to be confronting their society. Fletcher claims that the three intellectuals, like many others, were merely following popular trends -- in the 1920s Marxism was on the rise, and in the 1930s fascism came to the forefront.³⁰ He notes how intellectuals were rushing to import the latest ideas from the West, as well as a conspicuous lack of reference to the Japanese tradition in their work.³¹ Furthermore, he suggests they were attracted to fascism because it used irrational nationalism in the service of rational reform.³²

I think that Fletcher’s research is of immense value, but his overarching framework, as I suggested in the introduction, is problematic.³³ It seems to be based on several flawed premises, which it is in our best interests to briefly examine.³⁴ The first of these is Fletcher’s assertion that the intellectuals were only parroting the West and did not draw on Japanese tradition. Where Maruyama saw a shift from democratic, logical Western thought to nationalistic, irrational Eastern thought, Fletcher sees everything as coming from the West. He is also incorrect, for proving Japanese intellectuals drew on *kokugaku*³⁵ and so forth is no difficult task. In Miki’s case, like Nishida he drew on a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought in the hopes of

²⁴ Ibid., xii.

²⁵ Ibid., xiii-xiv.

²⁶ 南原繁

²⁷ 長谷川如是閑

²⁸ Barshay, 27-28.

²⁹ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 4.

³⁰ Ibid., 4-7.

³¹ Ibid., 5.

³² Ibid., 6.

³³ This criticism is not to suggest Fletcher’s entire perspective is wrong -- I agree that there were elements in Japanese society calling for change along the lines of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and I agree that the fascists failed to capture the Japanese state, but I do not see most of the Japanese intellectuals, especially Miki, or the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as anything but opposed to these elements as well as the military in general.

³⁴ There is also a stylistic issue. Despite neglecting the debate over ‘fascism,’ which I address later in this paper, Fletcher, after defending his use of the term without providing a working definition, uses it excessively -- even when other terms would better suit the context. He furthermore frequently adds to descriptions of policies or ideas statements like “as in fascism” or “like the Nazis,” even though it may be equally true in the situation to say “like in the UK” or “like the American robber barons.” While technically true, his use of these ‘selective’ comparisons, combined with the overuse of the term ‘fascism’ seems almost designed to elicit an emotional response from the reader. A particularly galling instance is the statement “In 1935, Miki’s ideas blended smoothly with the newly professed goals of the Imperial Army on the continent,” (62) in which the implication that Miki supported the army is hard to miss. The notion that because Miki and some army leaders were both discussing pan-asiatic values, that these values were one and the same, and thus Miki supported the army, is reductionism of the worst order.

³⁵ 国学 The National Learning thought that was influential in the Edo Period.

transcending both. Even his ideal of cooperativism³⁶ drew heavily on the Japanese tradition. In addition, Miki discussed Japanese culture and history extensively, notably writing on Buddhism and Shinran³⁷, whom he had always been inspired by.

The key problem with Fletcher's argument is the notion of a major shift in Miki's thought, something his own account does not substantiate. Possibly this is due to his conflation of Miki with Ryū and Rōyama in much of the work -- I do not believe that Ryū and Rōyama began chasing a fascist spectre either, but they are beyond my scope here -- and while Fletcher's research seems solid and his summaries of Miki's thought decent, they seem disjointed from his larger framework attempting to argue for a shift towards fascism.³⁸ After two pages summarizing Miki's criticism of fascism, imperialism, and nationalism in general, Fletcher suddenly asserts that he was attracted to fascism as well as repulsed, and made it his task to create a 'new totalitarianism' (!).³⁹ The claim is sudden and without substantiation. He states near the beginning of the book that there was much continuity in the three writers, and no sudden changes, suggesting that he sees them as 'fascists' from the start.⁴⁰ However, his own accounts of their early thought disproves this and he constantly refers to their *shifting towards* fascism.⁴¹ Miki's cooperativism, rejection of Marxist revolution, interest in Japanese tradition, and striving to create a new culture through formulating a Japanese philosophy with world impact are all presented as new developments in the later 1930s, but, as I will show in this paper, they are actually rooted in Miki's early thought and experience.⁴²

Miki drew ideas from a variety of schools of thought, notably Marxism and German Idealism, but his readings of both were far from orthodox, something that earned him critics early on. He also placed a high value on progressive action. Fundamentally, he was driven to seek a worldly philosophy which would transcend the particular and enable him and other Japanese thinkers to postulate a set of universal political and cultural ideals that were both derived from the Japanese condition and yet could rise above it to challenge Western ideologies. To view Miki as a Marxist, a student of German Idealism, or a quasi-nationalist, or even worse, to study him as somehow representative of any of these groups, serves naught but to distort and obscure him. If there is any one school of thought that Miki can be identified with, it should in fact be Humanism, and that is my position herein. Miki always had humanity at the centre of his studies, and his love of learning and culture, and his persistent fight against those who would take away the freedom and beauty of humanity, unite his work more strongly than any notion of Marxist dialectic could. With that in mind, I will now turn to consider Miki's early life.

1.2 Miki's Early Life

³⁶ 協同主義 *Kyōdō-shugi*

³⁷ 親鸞

³⁸ See, for instance, the summaries on pages 15-19 and 45-50. Regarding conflation, on page 70 Fletcher states how the three intellectuals had a growing belief in their spiritual mission and influence, which certainly was not true for Miki, who had always both considered himself special, and believed intellectuals should have a say in politics.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 84-86. It is troubling how Fletcher never puts quotation marks around his own use of the term 'fascism,' but frequently does so when Miki or others criticize it, as if to suggest that their usage is incorrect while his is not.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴¹ Perhaps Fletcher means that there were no *fundamental* shifts, but merely superficial ones. Given the space between Marxism and fascism as described by Miki, this would suggest that the intellectuals were never really Marxist *or* fascist in anything but a superficial manner; indeed, Fletcher's claim that the Japanese intellectuals copied *verbatim* from the West would seem to suggest he holds this view. This, of course, would not only render the intellectuals essentially commentators not thinkers, but also takes the wind out of Fletcher's arguments for using fascism to view either them or the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. If 'fascism' or any other ideology meant nothing to them but what was popular at the time, how meaningful is it to treat them in terms of 'fascism' or anything else?

⁴² *Ibid.*, 159, 47, 83, 84, respectively.

While it may seem that little is known about Miki's early life, his propensity for discussions and friends has actually enabled us to come to a better understanding of his early years than those of many intellectuals of the time.⁴³ Miki Kiyoshi was born on the fifth of January, 1897, in Hyogo-ken, Ibo-gun, Hirai-mura Ogami (now Issaichō-ogami).⁴⁴ While a child, Miki was interested most in literature and history. There is a dearth of writing on Miki's early years, but Akamatsu Tsunehiro's 1989 article provides some insight; Akamatsu comments that

Throughout his life Miki pursued a philosophical grasp of history, but the starting point was in his university graduation thesis. However, it looks like he was interested in history from his middle school days. Miki was a young literary enthusiast while at the same time a young man who loved history, recalling like this: "During middle school, if I had something I had pride in, that was history. I read a lot of a kind of historical biographies by Yamaji Aiyoshi⁴⁵, but I was especially fond of Jōzan Kidan⁴⁶ and Nihon Gaishi^{47,48}.

In 1914, Miki entered the First Higher School, that is, Daiichi Kōtō of Tokyo. While there he founded a philosophical study club.⁴⁹ Miki also especially loved reading religious books, especially Shinran.⁵⁰ Japan at the time was in a moderate stage and students enjoyed unprecedented access to Western writings as well as Japanese classics.⁵¹

According to Michiko Yusa, Miki first attended a talk by Nishida Kitarō on April 15th 1917; he confessed that he did not understand the professor's talk well, but nevertheless was strongly impressed.⁵² After then reading Nishida's "*An Inquiry into the Good*"⁵³ he decided to

⁴³ Two helpful references are 「年譜」 "Nenpu" [Chronological History], in 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 19.851-889; and 榊田啓三郎 Masuda Keizaburō, 「著作年譜」 "Chōsaku Nenpu" [Chronological History of Literary Work], in 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 19.891-965.

⁴⁴ 古田光 Furuta, Hikaru. 「三木清」 "Miki Kiyoshi." In 「国史大辞典」 *Kokushi Daijiten* [Great Encyclopedia of National History], 13.288.

⁴⁵ 山路愛由 Unfortunately I cannot be sure of the reading since I could find absolutely nothing else on this writer.

⁴⁶ 「常山紀談」 An Eighteenth Century work concerning the bushi of Bizen, in 25 volumes. It was named for the compiler, Jōzan, and records famous bushi from the old days until the time of its composition.

⁴⁷ 「日本外史」 A classic Tokugawa work looking at political development from Heian into Tokugawa; this work was read quite heavily from late Tokugawa into Meiji and was used to encourage Emperor worship. It is seen as an orthodox work on the period and comprises some 22 volumes.

⁴⁸ 赤松常弘 Akamatsu Tsunehiro, 「学生時代の三木清——三木哲学の出発点」 "Gakusei Jidai no Miki Kiyoshi: Miki Tetsugaku no Shuppatsuten" [Miki Kiyoshi's Student Days: The Starting Point of Miki Philosophy], 人文科学論集 *Jinbun Kagaku Ronshū* [Humanities Treatises] 23 (1989.3), 1-13; 4.

⁴⁹ Gino K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1996: A Survey* (Tokyo: Enderle Bookstore, 1963; 3rd revised edition, Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1997), 178.

⁵⁰ Contrary to common assumptions, he never lost his interest in the topic and produced a notable essay on religion in 1938 which I will refer to later. It is thus a testament to the postwar Marxist views of Miki that few consider his writings on religion. One recent corrective to this is an article by Tanabe Masahide that considers religion in Miki, Nishida, and Tanabe (田辺正英 Tanabe Masahide, 「哲学者の内なる宗教——西田幾多郎、田辺元、三木清に関連して」 "Tetsugaku no uchinaru Shūkyō: Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime, Miki Kiyoshi ni Kanrenshite" [The Religion in Philosophers: Concerning Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime, and Miki Kiyoshi], 比較思想研究 *Hikaku Shisō Kenkyū* [Studies in Comparative Philosophy] 20 (1994.3), 173-176).

⁵¹ Calls for military expansion in the 1910s had been curtailed by the Genrō, and the rice riots had ended in a new party cabinet (the Hara Cabinet, the first party cabinet since the first Okuma Cabinet in 1898), so the approaching twenties looked like a promising age for democracy in Japan. At the same time, darker currents moved beneath the surface. There was also a rising interest in Marxism among intellectual elites while political personalities continued to try and make liberalism work as it had so far, thus avoiding serious reform.

⁵² Michiko Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 161.

study philosophy under Nishida, and in that same year (1917) he entered the philosophy department of Kyōto Imperial University^{54, 55}.

1.3 A Disciple of Nishida and the Kyōto School

Nishida Kitarō is widely seen as the founder of modern Japanese philosophy. Early in life Nishida was critical of religion, but later it became a key component of his thought which is best exemplified by his masterpiece *An Inquiry into the Good*.⁵⁶ Indeed, it has been said that everything after this 1911 work is a broadening and deepening of his original philosophy, in which he never made a radical shift.⁵⁷ Nishida was never particularly involved in politics, which makes him quite a different figure from Miki, and explains why the latter has been received more sympathetically by Japan's predominantly leftist postwar intelligentsia. Nishida's thought differs from that of his predecessors in that, as his student Nishitani Keiji⁵⁸ notes, "the base of his thought is worldwide in scope."⁵⁹ Indeed, Nishida was not just a Western philosopher in Japan or an Eastern philosopher with some Western ideas, but someone who saw underlying universals at the base of the traditions of East and West that through his own thought he sought to synthesize -- through what Nishitani refers to as a dialectic of nothingness (the base of the East) and reason (the base of the West) that gives rise to a world philosophy.⁶⁰ This notion of a synthesis that produced a philosophy on the world stage of greater proximity to the universal, and hence a closer approximation of 'truth' than any particularistic notion, was to have a significant effect on Miki.

Nishida, Tanabe Hajime⁶¹, and Nishitani are the three key figures in the Kyōto School, a school of philosophy founded as thinkers and students gathered around Nishida.⁶² The school developed broadly under Tanabe after Nishida's 1928 retirement, and the first use of the name is attributed to Tosaka Jun⁶³'s 1932 article "The Philosophy of the Kyōto School."⁶⁴ Along with

⁵³ 「善の研究」 *Zen no Kenkyū*

⁵⁴ 京都帝國大学 (Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku)

⁵⁵ Furuta, 288. Also see Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 163.

⁵⁶ Valdo Humbert Viglielmo in "Nishida Kitarō: The Early Years," (in *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, Ed. Donald H. Shively (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 507-562) notes that Marxists have used these early essays of Nishida to argue that the philosopher started off on the right path (anti-religion and materialist) but then declined (515-516). Currently the best biography of Nishida is Michiko Yusa's landmark *Zen & Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

⁵⁷ Viglielmo, 508-509. Viglielmo argues that the key components of Nishida's thought were in place by 1903. James W. Heisig sees this as an over-generalization (e.g. Heisig, 289).

⁵⁸ 西谷啓治

⁵⁹ Nishitani Keiji, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heiseig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 39. Nishitani was Nishida's most famous student; he and Tosaka arrived at Kyōto after Miki did, although actually Miki and Nishitani attended the same school earlier (9-12).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 53-55. Note that this necessarily requires an essentialist notion of each tradition.

⁶¹ 田辺元

⁶² This is a more general definition of the school. Some authors see Tanabe's divergence from Nishida, and thus the expansion of Nishida's thought beyond Nishida himself to a broader phenomenon, as the start of the school. An excellent study of the three main figures and the school itself is James W. Heisig's *Philosophers of Nothingness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). Numerous key figures in the school died shortly before and after the end of the Pacific War, including Nishida, Miki, Tosaka, and allies like Iwanami Shigeo.

⁶³ 戸坂潤

⁶⁴ 「京都学派の哲学」 "Kyōto Gaku-ha no Tetsugaku"

This article can be found in 戸坂潤 Tosaka Jun, 「戸坂潤全集」 *Tosaka Jun Zenshū* [Complete Works of Tosaka Jun] (東京 Tōkyō: 勁草書房 Keisō Shobō, 1966), 3.171-176. Tosaka was trained in Neo-Kantianism at Kyōto and later came to be influenced by Miki as well. Also like Miki, he became a professor at Hōsei University in 1931 (a year after Miki had left there; perhaps he took Miki's place), left his position due to being hounded by the

Miki, Nishitani, and Tosaka, many other notable students trained under Nishida. Tanabe was seen as Nishida's successor, but the use of his philosophy by nationalists during the war caused him to be relentlessly attacked by critics later; hence, newer writers that approach the philosophy of the Kyōto School sympathetically tend to downplay Tanabe and emphasize Nishida instead.⁶⁵ Critics of the Kyōto School persist, however. Not infrequently, Kyōto School thinkers have been made to seem 'fascistic' or 'pro-government' through criticism drawing upon examination of their use of terminology associated with ultra-nationalists in the 1930s.⁶⁶ This argument tends to draw on the infamous 1941-1942 *Chūō Kōron*⁶⁷ roundtable discussions, which involved four thinkers: Kōsaka Masaaki⁶⁸, Suzuki Shigetaka⁶⁹, Kōyama Iwao⁷⁰, and Nishitani.⁷¹ Typical interpretations show the thinkers supporting the war and justifying Japanese militarism as a sacred war to liberate Asia. A recent article has argued, however, that at least in Nishida's case such criticism is distortive since Nishida fought against nationalism and war by engaging the army in a "tug of war over meaning," defining terms in a way that undercut the army's position.⁷² Nishida lost the battle, and now these terms have only nationalistic meanings, but to assume that this was so during Nishida's time is unfair. Further evidence indicates Nishida defended liberalism and spoke out against fascism and imperialism on many occasions.⁷³ Nishida, Tanabe, Kōsaka, Kōyama, Miki, and others were actually all considered liberal, pro-democracy, and pro-individualism (and hence a threat) by ultranationalists.⁷⁴ It is certainly a fact that several of the Kyōto School thinkers saw their ideas, and their students, contribute to politically-minded organizations, so a serious issue is to what extent they were responsible for the misuse of their philosophy by political and military actors.⁷⁵ Whereas Nishida can be connected to political movements through guilt by association, Miki from the beginning

authorities, made a living by translating and writing, and finally, arrested for leftist views, died in prison (see 鈴木正 Suzuki Tadashii, 「戸坂潤」 "Tosaka Jun," in 「国史大辞典」 *Kokushi Daijiten*, 10.345).

⁶⁵ After years of neglect, especially in the West, the past decade has seen a renewed interest in Tanabe, and this should prove interesting to juxtapose with Nishida and the Kyōto School generally. See, for instance, Taitetsu Unno and James W. Heisig, eds., *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990).

⁶⁶ This has been an enduring controversy of the Kyōto School, and even prompted a symposium in 1994 which resulted in the book *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School & the Question of Nationalism*, edited by James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994). Japanese writing on the history of philosophy has not spared the Kyōto School either; with many works being written by hard leftists, there is a disconcerting tendency to refer to the thought of the Kyōto School as an "imperialist philosophy."

⁶⁷ 中央公論

⁶⁸ 高阪正顕

⁶⁹ 鈴木成高

⁷⁰ 高山岩男

⁷¹ See Horio Tsutomu, "The *Chūōkōron* Discussions, Their Background and Meaning," trans. Thomas Kirchner, in *Rude Awakenings*, 289-315, for an examination of these roundtables.

⁷² Ueda Shizuteru, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question," *Rude Awakenings*, 77-106. See also Yusa Michiko's "Nishida and Totalitarianism: A Philosopher's Resistance" in the same volume, 107-131.

⁷³ Viglielmo, 525.

⁷⁴ Yusa, "Nishida and Totalitarianism," 119-120.

⁷⁵ In "Beyond 'East and West': Nishida's Universalism and Postcolonial Critique" (*Review of Politics* 59.3 (Summer 1997), 541-560), Yoko Arisaka argues that whatever their intentions may have been, the Kyoto School thinkers contributed to the rise of fascist ideology in Japan. This is a Utilitarian argument in contrast to that advanced by Graham Parkes in "The Putative Fascism of the Kyoto School and the Political Correctness of the Modern Academy" (*Philosophy East & West* 47.3 (July 1997), 305-336) in which he argues the Kyoto School thinkers did not have the intention of supporting fascism, and he rails against current trends in academia that have scholars go through history and sort out those thinkers who they believe can be labelled as 'fascist' and whose work can be subsequently dismissed. Indeed, such dubious enterprises should not only trouble intellectuals (are we to study only those thinkers who affirm our own understanding of the world?) but historians, for they smack of brazenly applying the standards of one's own time to the past.

encouraged political action, not being content to just have his ideas associated with a movement indirectly.

Nishida furthermore had little patience for Marxist ideology; at a seminar with the Marxist intellectual Kawakami Hajime⁷⁶ and some younger economics faculty interested in Marxism, after a young professor gave his own understanding of historical materialism, Nishida commented "Superficial," and the seminar broke up shortly afterwards.⁷⁷ Nishitani notes that after retirement Nishida penned the verse "It is because of Marx / That sleep comes hard to me."⁷⁸ This could be merely a reference to Nishitani and Tosaka's keeping him up all night discussing Marx, but Nishida's mood was sombre and dark during those days and I believe he was likely troubled by the rise of a philosophy that he saw as superficial and overly pragmatic compared to that which he had spent his life refining. Yet by all accounts Nishida continued to think favourably of Miki, suggesting Miki was not just a straight-forward Marxist but a thinker who incorporated Marxist dialectic into a broader body of thought that Nishida could appreciate.⁷⁹

While studying, Miki was also influenced by Tanabe Hajime and Hatano Seiichi⁸⁰, and he became familiar with Neo-Kantianism.⁸¹ Accepted wisdom sees Nishida as the key influence on Miki. Certainly Nishida had a significant impact upon the formulation of Miki's philosophy, although often subtle, and this will become clear when considering Miki's works later. That being said, neither was Miki just a follower of Nishida's who did not venture forth his own ideas -- there is a tendency to see Miki as just one student of Nishida's, which does not aid in understanding Miki. For instance, I have already suggested that while Nishida avoided political involvement, Miki encouraged it, and recognizing where Miki and Nishida differ even at this early stage will help in understanding Miki's later life and thought. Neither is this issue a problem merely in postwar scholarship; Miki *himself* feared being equated to 'Nishidaism' and wanted to move beyond it. As he later wrote,

*I think this year I want to do just how much work I can do. I will isolate the fundamentals of Nishida philosophy for comprehension. I think I will build a foundation that can go beyond this; I'll get started. Nishida philosophy should probably be called the completion of Eastern Realism, but, it not the case that this Eastern Realism together with its strong points has some serious weak points, I wonder.... At any rate, I think if I don't investigate fundamentally Nishida philosophy I won't be able to give birth to Japan's new philosophy in the future.*⁸²

At the same time that Miki was already contemplating the formulation of a new

⁷⁶ 河上肇

⁷⁷ Gail Lee Bernstein, *Japanese Marxist: A Portrait of Kawakami Hajime, 1879-1946* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 139, paraphrasing Sakuda Shōichi, *Jidai no hito: Kawakami Hajime* (Osaka: Kaikensha, 1949), 31.

⁷⁸ Nishitani, 29-30.

⁷⁹ For the postwar impact of Kyōto School thought see the first part of "The Existentialism of the Kyoto School," in chapter VII, "Post-War Philosophical Trends, 1945-1962" in Gino K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1996: A Survey* (Original edition Tokyo: Enderle Bookstore, 1963; 3rd revised edition, Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1997), 197-206).

⁸⁰ 波多野精一

⁸¹ Furuta, 288.

⁸² 宮川透 Miyakawa, Tōru 「西田幾多郎と三木清」 "Nishida Kitarō to Miki Kiyoshi" [Nishida Kitarō and Miki Kiyoshi]. 三木清全集月報 1 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin], 1 (1966.10). 8-11; 9, quoting an unknown source. It looks like a letter to someone.

philosophy, he tended to isolate himself from his established teachers through his behaviour. Miki was assertive and encouraged political action; at the same time, he was reputed to have had an affair with a widow much older than he, and in general was somewhat obnoxious and outspoken. This behaviour was to become worse upon his return from Europe, and I will return to this subject later when it affected his career.

Miki graduated from Kyōto University in 1920, and his Master's thesis was entitled "Critical Philosophy and the Philosophy of History."⁸³ Miki had already made quite a name for himself as a student; as Akamatsu observes,

Two months after publishing "The Understanding of Individuality," Miki's graduation thesis "The Philosophy of Criticism and the Philosophy of History" was published in the same "The Study of Philosophy" journal. At that time, it seems that having a thesis published in this journal meant receiving a guarantee of its being the greatest thesis that year. Miki, as the brightest student of Kyōto Imperial University, began to publish several essays in "The Study of Philosophy" in rapid succession thereafter.⁸⁴

The young rising star was soon offered a chance to expand his horizons further by means of a trip to Europe, for the purpose of studying with some of the leading intellectual figures of the day.

1.4 A Student in Europe

In 1922, Miki went to Germany with the support of Iwanami Publishing.⁸⁵ "This was the first time he came into contact with the severity of the reality following the First World War, and his eyes were opened to a new intellectual trend."⁸⁶ Indeed, this is often seen as a period of change for Miki -- socialist ideas were quite influential at the time in Germany, and Miki's experiences there must have exposed him to rising philosophies. However, I believe the impact of this period upon the young Miki is often overemphasized, and we often suppose he studied differently than he did. The key is the notion that Miki received instruction in German Idealism from Martin Heidegger and Marxism from Karl Mannheim, but it is my contention that Miki actually was familiar with German Idealism *earlier* than we presume, and became interested in Marxism *later* than we presume.

First of all, Miki had been well-trained in modern German thought, especially Neo-Kantianism, in Kyōto, and this was likely why he was supervised in Germany by Heinrich Rickert, a member of the Heidelberg School of Neo-Kantianism who specialized in the philosophy of historiography.⁸⁷ While Rickert interested Miki in pursuing his inquiry into the philosophy of history further, and Mannheim encouraged him to look at Marx, neither thinker had a particularly significant impact on Miki. Rather, they introduced him to more material which he then engaged with in his own way, often quite differently from what his teachers expected.⁸⁸ Miki established himself as an independent thinker who was not afraid of unorthodox interpretations, something that was to later draw him criticism. It was only after Miki's return to

⁸³ 「批判哲学と歴史哲学」 "Hihan Tetsugaku to Rekishi Tetsugaku"

⁸⁴ Akamatsu, "Miki Kiyoshi's Student Days", 3.

⁸⁵ Miki had a significant impact on Iwanami; even today the series of pocket 'bungo' books carry words of his near the back cover.

⁸⁶ Furuta, 288.

⁸⁷ Kuki Shūzō, Ishihara Ken, Abe Jirō, and Naruse Mukyoku were among those also in Heidelberg at the time (Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 181. According to Yusa, through Miki and Amano Teiyū (who also studied with Rickert) "a rapport developed between Nishida and Rickert." (197).

⁸⁸ Piovesana, for instance, suggests Miki's approach to Marx brought him closer to Marx than Mannheim's (181) -- despite the latter's fame for both his approach to Marx and supposedly training Miki in Marxism.

Japan that he really became interested in Marxism, something I will address below. Similarly, the case of Miki's time with Heidegger is often misunderstood. It is true that Heidegger had several Asian students and later became interested in Asian philosophy, but this was not the case yet in the 1920s.⁸⁹ Nor did Miki pick up much in the way of German Idealism from Heidegger -- in the 1920s Heidegger was focusing on Classical philosophy, especially Aristotle, and did not focus heavily on German Idealism until the next decade.⁹⁰ Miki's studies of Aristotle under Heidegger were significant for him and later he produced some translations of Aristotle as well. Miki is occasionally conflated with Kuki Shūzō⁹¹, who stayed with Heidegger longer; furthermore Miki's later works do show the influence of the later Heidegger but this is because Miki continued to read Heidegger's newer writings.⁹² These two observations, that first of all Miki did not learn from his European teachers what we tend to associate with those teachers, and that Miki was less interested in their philosophy *per se* than in how their thought could contribute to his own developing system, go a great way in explaining how Miki differed from others in the Kyōto School who were more heavily indebted to Nishida and their European mentors.

Not only was Miki seeking insight in Europe, he was also particularly interested in the implications of European philosophy for Japanese thought and society, as Takakuwa Sumio illustrates:

Miki Kiyoshi, while studying in Germany, contributed an article called "The Significance of Rickert's philosophy as Influence for Japanese Philosophy" to the "Frankfurt Newspaper." Therin, he gave Buddhist naturalistic pantheism and Emperor absolutism⁹³ as two obstacles facing Japanese scientific history research. Regardless of the content of the article, this surprising accuracy became a personal manifestation of Miki's philosophic nature.⁹⁴

Miki was already well on his way to forging his own philosophy, and already he showed concern for Japanese society and how ideology could limit a nation's progress and development.

Miki went on to Paris, and there finished "A Study of Humanity in Pascal"⁹⁵, which was later published in 1926. This work is seen as Miki's first masterpiece, and it clearly shows his humanistic perspective. Piovesana says that this work reveals his existential humanism which was to continue in his interpretation of Marx, something that I also hold to be true.⁹⁶ The work also subtly shows the influence of Nishida -- there is an undercurrent of a synthesis that can produce a stronger philosophy more approximating truth -- but it also reveals Miki's own concern for humanity. Miki's thought, and its implementation in the form of action, did not truly begin, however, until after he returned to Japan.

⁸⁹ Graham Parkes, ed., *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1987) provides a variety of perspectives on Heidegger's engagement with Asian thought.

⁹⁰ Refer to David Farrell Krell's "General Introduction: The Question of Being" in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, 2nd, rev. and expanded ed. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 1-35.

⁹¹ 九鬼周造

⁹² Nishida heard about Heidegger through Miki and Tanabe, but it was a 1924 paper by Tanabe that really introduced Heidegger to Nishida, as well as the Japanese population generally (Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 198).

⁹³ 天皇絶対主義 *Tennō-zettai-shugi* (the notion of the Emperor as absolute)

⁹⁴ 高桑純夫 Takakuwa Sumio, 「三木清の死の意味」 "Miki Kiyoshi no Shi no Imi" [The Meaning of the Death of Miki Kiyoshi], 三木清全集月報 3 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 3 (1966.12), 6-8; 6.

⁹⁵ 「パスカルに於ける人間の研究」 *Pasukaru ni okeru Ningen no Kenkyū*

⁹⁶ Piovesana, 180.

1.5 Miki's Return to Japan

In 1925, Miki returned to Japan and got a seat at Kyōto Imperial University.⁹⁷ A mere two years later, however, he went off to Tōkyō and became a professor at Hōsei University.⁹⁸ Why was this the case? Fletcher states that Miki's biographers are mystified as to why, but there were rumours of an illicit love affair which doomed his appointment at Kyōto.⁹⁹ Actually, we are fairly sure why Miki left, and the affair was only part of it. Miki's rejection for the appointment, and the direct cause of Miki's departure, is revealed by Nishitani, who, after discussing a rare exception to Nishida's normally quiet and tolerant temperment, offers the following explanation:

I have heard of several similar outbursts by Nishida, but only rarely have I heard of him scolding his disciples. Nishida tended to let most things pass unnoticed. After Miki Kiyoshi had returned from Europe, a group of us, including Tosaka Jun, Kanba Toshio, Kojima Takehiko, and the late Toda Saburō used to meet at Miki's apartment to read Aristotle. At the time all of us felt something new and fresh about this man who had been with Heidegger. During this period Miki was summoned by Nishida and scolded about something or other that sent him dashing off pale-faced to a friend's house afterwards. From that time on Miki often spoke ill of Nishida at our meetings, drew closer to Marxist thought, and finally left for Tokyo.¹⁰⁰

Nishida had withdrawn his recommendation of Miki for the appointment at Kyōto and then severely criticized his student. Was it the rumours of the illicit affair that had caused Nishida to react in such a manner? Michiko Yusa explains that there *was* the old affair that Miki had with a widow 30 years his senior, which I mentioned earlier, and which, although it had ended before he left for Europe, had become known to people outside just his friends.¹⁰¹ On top of that, however, Miki loved the nightlife and would recruit friends, including Tosaka Jun, to go to nightclubs, whereupon Miki tended to get into discussions evaluating Japanese professors both in and outside Kyōto University, and the rumours naturally spread quickly.¹⁰² So it was not just the widow, but was also Miki's lifestyle with his partying and his big mouth, that cost him the appointment.

This, of course, only suggests why Nishida was angry at Miki; was the rest of the faculty of the same mind? Apparently not, suggests Wada Yōichi, who was told by a graduate of the philosophy department: "Why Miki was not able to become a professor [at Kyōto University] was not the fault of his relationship with the widow. It was just that his colleagues were jealous of him, and impeded him [from getting a job at Kyoto]."¹⁰³ So, one must be wary of just accepting Nishida's own reason as the reason for the whole faculty blocking Miki's appointment, when quite a few members likely had their own reasons, including jealousy of the young upstart. One should not forget that Nishida initially recommended Miki and only later withdrew his support due to Miki's destruction of his own image in the eyes of the faculty, whereupon he criticized Miki and told him to straighten up; furthermore, without Miki's

⁹⁷ Furuta, 288.

⁹⁸ 法政大学 Hōsei Daigaku

⁹⁹ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Nishitani, 19-20.

¹⁰¹ Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 212.

¹⁰² Ibid., referring to Kakehashi Akihito, "Rōgoku to guntai", 51-52.

¹⁰³ 和田洋一 Wada Yōichi 「私の記憶に残るなつかしい不良教師——不良教師京都を去る」 "Watashi no Kioku ni Nokoru Natsukashii Furyō Kyōshi: Furyō Kyōshi Kyōto wo Saru" [Poor Teachers Still Alive in my Memory: Poor Teacher Leaving from Kyōto], 思想の科学 *Shisō no Kagaku* [Science of Thought] 387 (1984.7), 2-3; 3.

knowledge, it was Nishida who consulted with people who had connections with Hōsei University to acquire a position for Miki there.¹⁰⁴

It was at this point that Miki, loud-mouthed and angry at Nishida, may have told people that he felt himself a Marxist, rumours oft-referred to by postwar writers. Although Miki became interested in studying Marx at this time, his writings indicate that he rejected Marxism even during this period, and this is an issue I will return to in the next chapter when discussing Miki and Marxism then. Miki continued to follow trends in philosophy, both to critically engage with them, and to build upon them in his own work, and found that his fresh ideas received great attention, while Nishida's time seemed to have passed. Writes Nishitani,

*On one occasion, [Nishida's] class overlapped with a lecture by Miki, who during his time in Tokyo had swung towards Marxism. Rather few students went to Nishida's lecture, leaving the large classroom far from full. He carried on in a quiet, almost lonely tone. During the class a storm of applause erupted from the neighboring lecture hall. He looked puzzled for a moment and then continued speaking.*¹⁰⁵

Miki style of teaching was quite different from that of Nishida. Nishida was known to walk solemnly around, quietly making observations almost in a stream-of-consciousness fashion. Miki, on the other hand, would become excited and speak aggressively. As one observer recalled, "Especially, Miki's talking was lively, and it was as if his spit formed a ball. There is one time when I was stumped. I happened to sit down just under the platform, and his spit, almost like balls, were going to attack my face often."¹⁰⁶

Miki's wife Kimiko was also a unique figure; unlike the demure housewife of Nishida's, Miki's wife was reputed to be just as eccentric as her husband, and she also liked philosophy. Kobayashi Isamu recalled that she would request of him any copy of *Shisō* in which Miki's work appeared, so that it became obvious that she liked Miki, and after the couple were married Kimiko would read all night just like Miki did.¹⁰⁷ Miki dearly loved her and never quite got over her death, on 6th August 1936, although he did remarry. In 1941 he published a work dedicated to her.

It was also at this time, in connection with Iwanami Shoten¹⁰⁸, that Miki made his start in journalism and wrote multiple essays concerning Marxism, which attracted him attention.¹⁰⁹ These essays, oft-cited by postwar writers, include "The Materialistic View of History and Consciousness"¹¹⁰ (1928) and "A Preliminary Conception of Social Science"¹¹¹ (1929). Note that

¹⁰⁴ Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 212-213, referring to Letter no.426 to Watsuji Tetsurō, 7 January 1927, *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū*, 18:318. Watsuji was one of the people in question.

¹⁰⁵ Nishitani, 30. This event took place in January 1930 when Miki returned to Kyōto briefly from Tōkyō. As an aside, Yusa, in *Zen & Philosophy* 230-231, quotes parts of this passage as well, but where Seisaku and Heisig present Nishida as lonely and a bit confused (displaying the difference between the old and new ways of doing philosophy), Yusa's Nishida is unmoved and completely untouched by the normal realm such as noisy students etc. (suggesting Nishida's philosophy is purer or of a higher realm than Miki's populist thought). This is certainly an interesting reflection on translation.

¹⁰⁶ 金子武蔵 Kaneko Musashi, 「三木清さんについて」 "Miki Kiyoshi ni tsuite" [Concerning Miki Kiyoshi], 三木清全集月報 11 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 11 (1967.8), 1-3; 2.

¹⁰⁷ 小林勇 Kobayashi Isamu, 「徴用の日」 "Chōyō no Hi" [The Days of the Draft], 三木清全集月報 6 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 6, (1967.3), 6-8; 6.

¹⁰⁸ 岩波書店

¹⁰⁹ Furuta, 288.

¹¹⁰ 「唯物史観と意識」 "Yuibutsushikan to Ishiki"

¹¹¹ 「社会科学の予備概念」 "Shakaikagaku no Yobigainen"

this was the age of proletarian literature in Japan, and Miki's writings merely because of their subject matter probably appealed to a wide audience.¹¹² At the same time Miki began to produce a variety of essays on other issues, particularly concerned with new philosophy and the impact on Japan.

Yet Miki was not content to stay at school and write away his years; the political and intellectual spheres in Japan were starting to crash together in a furor not seen since the Meiji Restoration, and Miki, who had already shown his appetite for causing controversy and challenging the old system found ample opportunity to put his new ideas into practice. Miki's formative period had paved the way for him to step forward and participate in the intellectual chaos of Japan in the 1930s.

Chapter II Japan in the 1930s: The Receptacle of Becoming

*In the afternoon in Kamakura, visiting Nishida-sensei.... Talking to sensei makes me want to study. I myself too cannot not do a great job as a philosopher. I should by no means look lightly at my mission and power. I can do it. I am not fearful of being envious of others. What is my present situation! It's my job! It's my job! Thinking like that I become happy. I have the power.*¹¹³ - Miki Kiyoshi

*It is also worth paying attention [to the fact] that recently Miki philosophy, of Mr. Miki Kiyoshi, is rapidly becoming an influential successor to the Nishida School.*¹¹⁴

-Tosaka Jun

The 1930s were an incredibly varied and confusing time, in terms of both political and intellectual activity. Hence, I believe it is fitting to refer to it as I have done as a receptacle of becoming, within which ideas, and the intellectuals who formulated them, were caught up in the *Zeitgeist* and made and unmade at incredible rates. In this chapter I will examine the times, and Miki's thought that he had by this time systemized, building upon his formative period. The best way to introduce the time period and the political and intellectual problems it presented is by considering the scholarship that has been produced on the subject.

2.1 Overview of the 1930s and Scholarship Thereupon

Nearly as varied and complex as the intricacies of the decade itself have been the numerous approaches advanced by scholars over the years. Contemporary accounts tended to be uniform in their alarmist character, frequently employing the term "fascism" without really defining to what it referred, but suitable for the purpose of grouping Japan with Germany and Italy as states that threatened the established world order.¹¹⁵ Wildes (1934), Colegrove (1936),

¹¹² On proletarian literature, see Yoshio Iwamoto's "Aspects of the Proletarian Literary Movement in Japan" in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, eds. Bernard S. Silberman and H. D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 156-182.

¹¹³ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「日記」 "Nikki" [Diary], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 19.131-215; 153 (entry for 02/22/1936), quoted in Miyakawa, "Nishida Kitarō and Miki Kiyoshi", 9. Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁴ Tosaka, "The Philosophy of the Kyōto School", 175.

¹¹⁵ It is best to keep in mind in the following overview that many Japanese authors have no compunction about continuing to use the word ファシズム "fascism", often by merely distinguishing between a "European" variety and a "Japanese" variety. This enables the differences to be addressed, but seldom is a reason given why, if the circumstances of the countries was so different, using the term "fascism" for both is helpful. Karl Radek, in his introduction to O. Tanin and E. Yohan's *Militarism and Fascism in Japan* (1934) assumed similarly that Japanese,

and Byas (1942) are representative in this respect; they also share the idea, popular among Western scholars through the early postwar period, of a group of militarists and ultra-nationalists high-jacking the Japanese state.¹¹⁶ This idea was demolished by Crowley in *Japan's Quest for Autonomy* (1966), who revealed the prewar period to be one of great complexity and a nation struggling to find itself, while Berger's *Parties out of Power* (1977) showed the political parties to have been far from inept and powerless from 1932 onward, to the extent that they supported Premier Konoe's New Order Movement until it became clear it was not in their best interests to do so.¹¹⁷

These developments enabled scholars to delve deeper into the complexities of the 1930s, and strive to do away with two recurring tendencies which unfortunately persist until the present moment. The first is the old, persistent tendency, especially among Western scholars, to view the period as but a series of stepping stones to ultimately culminating in 1945. Critiques of this tendency are hardly new, for as early as the 1960s scholars were identifying this as problematic.¹¹⁸ Interwined with this is the second tendency, that of applying to the period the blanket label of "fascism."¹¹⁹ The debate over fascism, and the possibility for its use as an analytical tool in the case of 1930s Japan, has been beaten into the ground, partly because when

Italian, and German were just flavours of the same thing, prompted by the bourgeoisie seeking a way to prevent a proletarian revolution in the face of monopoly capitalism (16-17).

¹¹⁶ Harry Emerson Wildes, *Japan in Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); Kenneth W. Colegrove, *Militarism in Japan* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1936); Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942).

Wildes and Colegrove warned against developments in Japan during the 1930s which by the early 1940s writers like Byas could point to as having led Japan to war. This interpretation both served the needs of the time and allowed convenient grouping of Japan with Germany and Italy as being part of the same broader movement. Wildes concluded (in 1934, remember) that war was almost certain ("What, then, of the future? War? Almost without a doubt. Japan has no other recourse if she would remain alive." (284)), whereas Colegrove was more optimistic, seeing the Manchurian Incident of 1931 as a militarist victory but the 1930 London Naval Treaty as a triumph of responsible government (58), and suggesting militarist dominance of Japan was by no means certain.

¹¹⁷ James B. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Gordon Mark Berger, *Parties out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹¹⁸ See, for instance, George M. Wilson, ed., *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan* (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1970), which was based on a panel chaired by Crowley at the 1969 AAS Annual Meeting, and Peter Duus' and Daniel I. Okimoto's "Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept," *Journal of Asian Studies* 39.1 (November 1979): 65-76.

As an aside, this 'series of steps' tendency seems to be reinforced at the mass level by the ongoing juggernaut of journalistic works on Japan's role in the war that present the 1930s as the setting of the stage; while there are notably some excellent works in this category that scholars should note (works by Ian Buruma come to mind) and the military chronicles of battle-by-battle are usually not too bad, the overall bulk of these journalistic works are poorly researched and simply conform to the diatribe of painting Japan as an 'evil empire' with everything before 1945 building up to that point. Some even, ludicrously, posit a point where a 'good' Japan became 'bad', and a disturbingly large number of works paint Japan as *essentially* evil with its origins in some fundamental character flaw, which they attempt to trace back to ancient origins, often to lead into an alarmist diatribe against modern Japan as continuing to seek hegemony through business what it began with the military. This is purile nonsense, but it is shocking that such ideas still carry currency in the mass market.

¹¹⁹ I say the two tendencies are connected because they are both associated with a particular portrayal of Japan and the modernization thesis. The view of Japan as rapid-modernizer and Western-imitator is threatened by the internal and external developments in the 1930s. Present these as being born of modernization and the Western modernity project is threatened; it is easier to argue that Japan is 'fascist', identify a point at which it became so, and then conclude that Japan's modernization was botched because it slid off the rails of modernity. One can then 'excuse' the 1930s and the Pacific War as a sort of grand mistake, and draw a line of continuity that stops at the mid 1920s and picks up again in 1945, preserving the notion of a positive universal Western modernization. Rather than see the developments in 1930s Japan as a product of that very modernization, and thus imply that modernization is not necessarily an entirely positive, progressive, one-dimensional development, Japan becomes a state where something 'went wrong' along the way.

any clear definition is assigned to the word "fascism" (which resides in a hazy cloud of nightmare imagery), Japan seldom fits the bill, and when no clear definition is provided¹²⁰, the term is simply useless.¹²¹

In fact, the domestic situation in Japan during the 1930s was so chaotic and involved so many groups urging so much change so quickly -- frequently resorting to violence in the process -- that it is not only impractical but a gross generalization to apply any one term to the period. Following the September 1931 Manchurian Incident¹²² engineered by Ishihara Kanji¹²³, right-wing and militarist groups of various sorts exploded. 1931 in fact saw several attempted military

¹²⁰ Those who argue Japan was fascist and do not provide a clear definition tend to rely upon general associations of the term with authoritarian governments, censorship, and thought control, but these generalizations are meaningless since all of these elements existed in many other countries at the time that were not, and are not, considered "fascist." The use in this context then appears to be merely one of *degree* (e.g. Japan censored *more* than the UK), which again implies the term is of little worth. The other angle is that offered by Andrew Gordon who suggests in *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) that critics who reject the term in the Japanese case do so because their definition of fascism depends upon identifying elements of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in 1930s Japan (333-339). He seems, if I interpret correctly, to imply that one could just isolate similarities (as opposed to differences) between Japan, Italy, and Germany, and then label this 'fascism' (as if this would somehow aid in comparative analysis) so that there would be no model fascist state but merely states which approximate it. He thus implies a broader meaning of the term that would not be limited to the European context, but if the meaning of the term is truly that maleable (which surely would argue *against* its use -- there clearly can be no consensus on what is meant by it), then this strikes me as a pointless exercise in semantics.

¹²¹ The issue of whether or not Japan can be characterized as 'fascist' still persists, despite articles like that of Duus and Okimoto which simply argue that the issue is dead. So why does the term, and the debate, persist? Richard H. Mitchell, in a 1985 review of Olavi K. Falt's *Fascism, Militarism, or Japanism?* in *Monumenta Nipponica* (40.4, 447-449), observed dryly on the first page that "A good title for this review would be 'Beating the Dead Horse of Fascism'." There is widespread agreement that the term 'fascism' must not be applied to Japan between 1930-1941. Even Japanese scholars who continue to use this term in book titles will admit in private that it is nearly useless for analytical purposes. General readers, however, are conditioned to its use and it sells books."

Despite such criticism, even many academics continue to use the term, debating the 'problem of fascism,' yet there really is no 'problem' unless one makes use of the term in one's polemics for shock effect. I feel personally that whether or not Japan can be characterized as 'fascist' or not no longer has (if it ever had) any bearing on comparative studies (one can compare Nazi Germany and Japan in the 1930s on many levels which would not be aided by the use of the term) and it is completely useless when dealing entirely with Japan in a study.

Regardless, some are adamant that fascism can be a helpful tool of historical analysis. Here I will provide a brief look at some of the key trends that have used it as a vehicle for comparative analysis. First there was the view that Germany, Italy, and Japan were all similar, but this was based on assumptions about structures, and structural comparisons revealed no institutions in Japan comparable to those of Germany or Italy. In 1984, Gregory J. Kasza's "Fascism from Below? A Comparative Perspective on the Japanese Right: 1931-1936" (*Journal of Contemporary History* 19.4 (October 1984), 607-629) looked not at structures but at rightist groups, and argued for fascism as having value for comparisons of some of these groups with similar ones in Europe in this respect, and not when used to characterize the whole society at the time (he borrows the group idea from that employed by Stanley Payne in *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison, 1980), 3-21). More recently, 'post-modern' theorists have raised the spectre of 'cultural fascism' but this term is so vague and has been used in so contemporarily in so many contexts as to be meaningless.

A better approach is offered by Bernard Silberman in "The Politics of Modernism in Japan: Once Again the Problem of Fascism," (*Japan in the World, the World in Japan: Fifty Years of Japanese Studies at Michigan*, ed. Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 2001), 159-167). Against accounts that compare the institutions of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany with Japan and conclude that the latter was not fascist due to its lack of these institutions, Silberman compares the three countries in the 1930s on the basis of their aesthetization of power and the elevation of myth to a unifying force for society, and concludes that they were very similar; in Japan the civil bureaucracy played the same role mediating between state and society that the Nazi and fascist parties did in Germany and Italy, none of these countries constrained capitalism, and all three countries shared a common solution to the problem of modernity. We find in Silberman then an ideological reconceptualization of fascism as opposed to a structural conception.

¹²² 満州事変

coups, notably the March and October Incidents¹²⁴. Extremist groups like the Ketsumeidan¹²⁵ assassinated figures, like Mitsui Zaibatsu¹²⁶ baron Dan Takuma¹²⁷ in March 1932. The May 15th (1932) Affair¹²⁸ was another attempted army coup that saw Premier Inukai¹²⁹ assassinated, and yet another bizarre occurrence was the Shimpeitai Affair¹³⁰ of July 1933, where a group planned to bomb the Premier's residence (thereby killing him and the Cabinet), declare martial law, and give the premiership to either Prince Chichibu¹³¹ or Prince Higashikuni^{132 133}. The plot was uncovered by the police and stopped. After a variety of smaller attempts, a watershed was reached with the February 26 Affair¹³⁴ of 1936, which saw a massive military coup by forces stationed in Tōkyō, one that according to Ben-Ami Shillony was actually so well-backed by key military and civilian officials that it very nearly succeeded.¹³⁵ Extremist organizations flourished further after the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident¹³⁶ which saw the beginning of war with China. Furthermore, many of these organizations were not united by a common goal but grappled with each other, and were almost as likely to target leaders of other extremist organizations as they were public figures and business magnates.

Clearly, the time period was one of great danger for many intellectuals. Doors were closed for those with unpopular views that questioned the movements towards the increasing armaments and expansionist policies advocated by the army elite. Indeed, intellectual freedom had been effectively compromised since 1925 when the Peace Preservation Law¹³⁷ emaciated the left-wing.¹³⁸ March 1928 and April 1929 saw major round-ups of leftists, including many students. Intellectuals accused of leftist tendencies suffered greatly -- in April 1933, for instance,

¹²³ 石原莞爾

¹²⁴ 三月事件、十月事件

¹²⁵ 血盟団 (Blood Brotherhood)

¹²⁶ 三井財閥

¹²⁷ 団琢磨

¹²⁸ 5. 15 事件

¹²⁹ 犬養毅

¹³⁰ 神兵隊事件

¹³¹ 秩父宮

¹³² 東久邇宮 (later 東久邇稔彦 Higashikuni Naruhiko)

¹³³ Both princes, especially Chichibu, fraternized with far-rightist groups, were frequently candidates for leading positions in the new orders envisioned by plotters, and infamous for their support for some of the attempted coups. The group involved in the Shimpeitai Incident was the Seinen Faction of the Dai Nippon Seisantō (Great Japan Production Party, which had split into two factions in 1932). The Shimpeitai Incident was first chronicled in English by Byas (213-225). The two princes were also criticized (by the Emperor, Konoe, Kidō, and others) for their alleged involvement in such plots.

¹³⁴ 2. 26 事件

¹³⁵ Ben-Ami Shillony, "The February 26 Affair: Politics of a Military Insurrection" in *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, ed. George M. Wilson (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1970), 25-50. Shillony relates how the seasoned plotters, connected to the Kōdō Faction of the army (which had suffered from the 'purges' of Hayashi Senjurō who favoured the Tōsei Faction), attempted, with the support of the War Ministry and the Supreme War Council, to overthrow the government, but was unable to gain the Emperor's support, enabling the Navy, and the (Tōsei-dominated) General Staff to turn the tide. The prominent figures who had supported the rebels switched sides when defeat became obvious, and the rebel leaders alone were punished.

¹³⁶ 蘆溝橋事件 (Rokōkyō Jiken)

¹³⁷ 治安維持法 (Chian Ijihō)

¹³⁸ The law was enacted in response to a rise in left-wing organizations, and extremists, during the early 1920s. A good introduction in English is provided by Richard H. Mitchell in the second chapter of his *Thought Control in Prewar Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 39-68. W. G. Beasley, in *The Rise of Modern Japan: Political, Economic and Social Change Since 1850* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), states that by 1945 over 75,000 people had been arrested under the law, but only about 5000 of these were brought to trial (184).

Takigawa Yukitoki¹³⁹, a law professor at Kyōto Imperial University, was labeled a leftist, and promptly found his works banned and the Minister of Education demanding his resignation, which prompted the entire law faculty to resign in protest.¹⁴⁰ Educators were also pressured to teach ‘patriotic’ history, and in an atmosphere recalling the infamous Scopes Trial in America, could be punished for teaching alternatives. In the most well-known case, Tsuda Sōkichi¹⁴¹ was sued for claiming the *Nihonshoki* was a fabrication to bolster imperial rule.¹⁴² Then in 1935 there was the crisis surrounding Minobe Tatsukichi¹⁴³’s “Organ Theory” that posited the Emperor as an organ¹⁴⁴ of the state, which ended in his resignation following a campaign launched by the Imperial Military Reserve Association¹⁴⁵.¹⁴⁶ In the late 1930s, many professors were dismissed for criticizing the government’s China policy, colonialization, or other issues.¹⁴⁷

However, at the same time, many intellectuals themselves became directly involved in the radical political scene. At the extremity of this were radical thinkers like Kita Ikki¹⁴⁸, who was involved with the February 26 Affair.¹⁴⁹ Kita enjoyed money¹⁵⁰ from the Mitsui Zaibatsu, and while supporting the rebels went so far as to tell them to ignore an imperial command to

¹³⁹ 滝川幸辰; the incident is referred to as 滝川事件

¹⁴⁰ 岩井忠熊 Iwai Tadakuma, 「滝川事件」 “Takigawa Jiken” [The Takigawa Affair] in 国史大辞典 *Kokushi Daijiten* [Great Encyclopedia of National History], 9.94. Wildes (115-116) was likely the first to address the Takigawa Affair in English. While scholars see Takigawa as a liberal (e.g. Fletcher, 48; Barshay, 38), to the vehement rightists he was a ‘red.’ Like many of the prewar academics who had been purged for views deemed critical of the government, Takigawa returned to academia after the war (Nakamura Takafusa, *A History of Shōwa Japan, 1926-1989*, trans. Edwin Whenmouth (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1998), 266-267). Miki was one of the few who understood the implications of the incident for academic freedom etc. at the time (see Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 253-254).

¹⁴¹ 津田左右吉; the incident is referred to as 津田左右吉事件

¹⁴² The court decided that his research was innocent, but his suggestion that the early Emperors were not real was not tolerated, and he was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment, with a stay of execution (家永三郎 Ienaga Saburō, 「津田左右吉事件」 “Tsuda Sōkichi Jiken” [The Tsuda Sōkichi Affair] in 「国史大辞典」 *Kokushi Daijiten* [Great Encyclopedia of National History], 9.766). In other cases, Inouye Tetsujirō of Tōkyō Imperial University, and Kunitake Kume of Waseda, suffered for teachings that were not in strict accordance with the mythological, heroic view of the imperial lineage. Again, Wildes (117-119) was the first English work I could locate that made reference to these facts.

¹⁴³ 美濃部達吉

¹⁴⁴ 機関 *kikan* (a part of an organization or machine)

¹⁴⁵ 帝国在郷軍人会 (Teikoku Zaigō Gunjin Kai)

¹⁴⁶ See Richard J. Smethurst’s “The Military Reserve Association and the Minobe Crisis of 1935” in *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, ed. George M. Wilson (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1970), 1-23. Minobe had expounded his theory years earlier, but it was not extremely controversial until the 1930s. Minobe’s defense of 1934, “Clearing up a Misinterpretation of a Constitutional Theory,” can be found in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, eds. Ryusaku Tsunoda, et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 746-753.

¹⁴⁷ In the Hiraga Purge of 1938-1939, ten Tōkyō Imperial University professors were fired for their political views.

¹⁴⁸ 北一輝

¹⁴⁹ Shillony, 27. The rebels saw themselves as pary of a broader movement embodied in the concept of a Shōwa Restoration, and they drew inspiration in this from Kita’s *A Plan for the Reorganization of Japan*. George M. Wilson notes in *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki 1883-1937* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969) that this best-known work of Kita’s outlines the consolidation of East and Southeast Asia under one structure supported by Japanese economic and military might that is similar to Konoe’s New Order in East Asia and Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (66-67). Wilson also argues that Kita did not agree with much of the rebels’ programme for what to do if and when the revolution was successful (113-114), and vice-versa (125-128). As an aside, Robert Harvey in *The Undeclared: The Rise, Fall and Rise of Greater Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1994) also claims Konoe’s views reflected Kita’s influence, although Harvey sees this in Konoe’s view of ‘have’ nations keeping down ‘have-nots’ like Japan, so that it was necessary to destroy the status quo to preserve Japan (173).

¹⁵⁰ Specifically, “protection” money paid to take Mitsui’s officials off the hit list.

cease their rebellion.¹⁵¹ Kita was later executed for his role in the Affair. The sheer number of organizations calling for radical change opened doors for intellectuals looking to advance their views to young reformers and rebels against the establishment. Many formerly hard-left intellectuals, frustrated in their efforts to bring about a revolution on the Marxist model, began to pursue rightist, ultra-nationalist ideology as an alternative -- this 'conversion', the aforementioned *tenkō*, was even forced upon many intellectuals. That being said, we should not let this blind us to the fact that many, caught up in the opportunity of the moment, were all-too-eager themselves to seize a chance at fame and enacting their ideals. In this regard, I believe Fletcher's argument to be correct, for it is a fallacy to see all of these intellectuals as victims when many genuinely believed in the movements they took part in. That being said, as I mentioned earlier, I believe he is incorrect in positing in the case of Miki a grand shift from Marxism to 'fascism', and likewise those who suggest Miki went from being an idealist to a pragmatic actor are also mistaken -- in both cases, Miki's thought and action show a greater consistency and continuity than has heretofore been assumed. Therefore, at this point I shall undertake an examination of a major controversy concerning Miki at this time that sheds some light on this issue.

2.2 Miki's Arrest & The *Tenkō* Controversy

Towards the end of the 1920s, Miki had become increasingly determined that philosophy needed to play a genuine role in improving society. Direct action was called for by thinkers, who were needed now more than ever to intervene on behalf of Japan's destiny, lest the country be consumed by the rising crises that threatened its national and international stability and security. This was not by any means strange, but a natural step for a pragmatic thinker who wanted to improve society with his new philosophy. Furthermore, we have already seen that Miki was no ascetic stereotypical philosopher, but a rowdy and aggressive fellow who would follow his own rules and argue in the way he saw fit. His involving himself in organizations and pursuing political activity should then surprise no one.

In 1928, together with Hani Gorō¹⁵² he founded the periodical "Under the Flag of New/Rising Science"¹⁵³.¹⁵⁴ Hani, who had also been in Heidelberg, was actually a lifelong friend of Miki's, and this journal was to advocate a humanistic approach to science. It was aimed not at a purely academic audience, but at influencing the public, and was a vehicle through which the two young thinkers could communicate their European-acquired knowledge. At this point, strongly motivated by such an ideal, Miki truly entered the world of journalism, and worked hard on the journal.

Miki was not a Communist and was never connected to the Japanese Communist Party, yet one often hears of his having given money to the organization. Here is where the controversy begins. An encyclopedia gives the simple, standard overview: In May 1930, Miki was arrested on the charge of supplying funds to the JCP, and hence was forced to resign from teaching.¹⁵⁵ Miki was tried in July, and then imprisoned until November. Uchida Hiroshi notes that when he

¹⁵¹ Shillony, 46. Wilson neglects to mention this, and instead states Kita knew little about the Affair and was only peripherally involved (113, 124-125). He holds this view mainly on Kita's statement of his innocence and that of several other leaders in the uprising -- his students and supporters -- as well as the judges' preliminary statements (130-132). As the judges' information came from interviews with Kita, and the participants, who supported Kita, I find the argument somewhat dubious.

¹⁵² 羽仁五郎

¹⁵³ 「新興科学の旗のもとに」 *Shin-Kagaku no Hata no Moto ni*

¹⁵⁴ Furuta, 288.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

had no choice but to resign, the students of the Hōsei University Liberalism Research Society¹⁵⁶ protested vehemently.¹⁵⁷

The whole affair seems a bit suspicious, and with good reason. Digging deeper, one finds that Miki was arrested, as a Communist sympathizer, on account of helping a friend.¹⁵⁸ It turns out that Miki lent a friend, who was actually in the JCP, some money, and this led to his arrest. It also seems to have resulted in a generation of postwar historians who proclaim that Miki supported the JCP, which is simply untrue. Nakano Eji, who was the individual whom Miki lent the money to, thus starting off the strange chain of events, explains

*It was between around autumn in 1929, to around spring in 1930. Even if it was spring in 1930, it was before March. I borrowed 20 yen as cash from Miki Kiyoshi. I visited his place without notice, and asked him suddenly and borrowed the money on the spot. ... I just told him that I wanted to borrow money, and borrowed it.*¹⁵⁹

Nakano goes on to explain that he was supposed to have been collecting money for the JCP, but he had been out of touch with them and had spent most of the money himself; after describing his poor living circumstances in a tiny house with five other people, Nakano relates that when the party contacted him and demanded the money, he was stuck, so he went to Miki's house, simply because it was nearby and he desperately needed the money -- he furthermore makes the point that Miki simply agreed to lend him the money and did not ask him what it was actually for.¹⁶⁰ Miki thus lent money to a friend in need, who happened to have owed it to the Communist party, which made Miki an (unintentional) accessory to supporting Communism. Nakano furthermore paid off the debt to Miki later, so the money can hardly even be construed as a donation. Miki never had any intention of joining or supporting the Communist Party; as a philosopher interested in Marxism he was quite distinct from those Marxists who sought roles in the Communist movement, like Kawakami Hajime, who Bernstein tells us joined the JCP in 1932.¹⁶¹ Fletcher in fact indicates that not only Miki, but his Shōwa Kenkyū Kai colleague Ryū Shintarō, were both hostile to the JCP.¹⁶²

A second debate, following on from the arrest issue, has raged over whether or not Miki committed *tenkō* and abandoned Marxism to emerge more right-wing after his imprisonment in 1930, after perhaps having been intimidated by the experience. Of course, this entire line of reasoning is irrelevant if one recognizes that Miki was not Marxist to begin with (what would he convert *from*?). Nevertheless, for the purposes of examining the controversy, one should hold off on that criticism for a moment. The idea that Miki was a Marxist until his arrest, and then converted to a more right-wing position, is a commonly occurring notion. This is often part of an argument that tries to lay the groundwork for a second conversion when Miki joins the Shōwa

¹⁵⁶ 法政大学自由主義研究会 Hōsei Daigaku Jiyū-shugi Kenkyū Kai

¹⁵⁷ 内田弘 Uchida Hiroshi 「三木清の自由主義思想と創造的社会論——ファシズムとスターリニズムに抵抗して」 “Miki Kiyoshi no Jiyūshugi to Sōzōteki Shakairon: Fuashizumu to Suta-rinizumu ni Teikōshite” [Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory: In Opposition to Fascism and Stalinism], 社会科学年報 *Shakai Kagaku Nenpō* [Social Science Annual] 24 (1990.3), 91-135; 117.

¹⁵⁸ Piovesana, 179.

¹⁵⁹ 中野重治 Nakano Eji, 「金二十円也」 “Kane ni-jiyū-en nari” [A Sum of 20 Yen], 三木清全集月報 8 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 8 (1967.5), 1-3; 1.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 1-3.

¹⁶¹ Bernstein, xii.

¹⁶² Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 36.

Kenkyū Kai, or sees his participation in the organization as merely following on *ipso facto* from this supposed 1930 conversion. Yet there is no evidence to support such arguments.

Akamatsu Tsunehiro succinctly states that:

Whether, taking this incident as an opportunity, Miki converted from Marxism, has been a problem since that time, and has been greatly discussed by Miki researchers. Following the method taken thus far, we are going to investigate [the issue] using but Miki's writings, but so long as one examines his writings one cannot recognize any change in what Miki wrote before and after the incident. The themes discussed before the incident are also discussed afterwards, and they became deeper. There is no change in his consciousness of the problems. ... In Miki's writing, it is not possible to find any evidence of a change at this point in his philosophical tendency. ...
...Actually, if we are tracing what Miki left behind, there is no change at the time of the incident, and the themes and consciousness of the problems held from before were deepened, and this path came to fruition in the 1932 work Philosophy of History^{163 164}

This is a good point to turn to look at this work, *Philosophy of History*, for a moment.¹⁶⁵ Miki looks at history from various viewpoints and examines historical time and perception; Piovesana characterizes this as Miki's attempting to find a new logic, different from the classical one, as well as from the Neo-Kantian or Nishida's logic of place.¹⁶⁶ He suggests that if there was a slight change in Miki's direction that is noticeable in considering *Philosophy and History*, this was due to the incorporation of Heidegger's existentialism, for *Sein und Zeit* came out but four years earlier.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, one must consider that Miki had distanced himself from Marxism *before* his arrest; for instance, Uchida notes that,

*At a time when nearly all Marxists were not attentive to Stalinism, or lacked the courage to speak out at what they thought was suspicious, Miki openly criticized Stalinism. Before he was arrested in the 'Fund Campaign Affair' (February 1930), in response to a Marxist following atheism Miki countered that religion would persist even in a classless society.*¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ 「歴史哲学」 *Rekishi Tetsugaku*

¹⁶⁴ 赤松常弘 Akamatsu Tsunehiro 「三木清の『歴史哲学』について」 “Miki Kiyoshi no *Rekishi Tetsugaku* ni tsuite” [Concerning Miki Kiyoshi's *Philosophy of History*], 人文科学論集 *Jinbun Kagaku Ronshū* [Humanities Treatises] 28 (1994.3), 17-28; 18.

The first line has two associated endnotes which are of note; the first, addressing how the *tenkō* issue was active at the time, states “For example, Honda Kenzō criticized Miki's conversion (“Philosophy's Newest Conversion: Concerning Mr. Miki's *Philosophy of History*”, *Shisō* 1932.8), and Miki refuted this (“In Reply to the Criticism of My Work”, *Shisō* 1932.9)” (27). The second, concerned with more recent debate, states “Miyakawa Tōru takes the view that Miki carried out one kind of *tenkō* (Miyakawa Tōru *Miki Kiyoshi* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 1958)), and Hisano Osamu that “it is not possible to think Miki converted in prison” (Chikuma Shobō's *Gendai Nihon Shisō Taikei* #33 “Miki Kiyoshi”, 1966, commentator: Hisano Osamu, 45). Sumiya Kazuhiko also agrees with Hisano (Chikuma Shobō's *Gendai Nihon Shisō Taikei* #27 “Miki Kiyoshi Shū” 1975, commentator: Sumiya Kazuhiko)” (ibid.).

¹⁶⁵ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「歴史哲学」 *Rekishi Tetsugaku* [Philosophy of History], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波支店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 6.1-287.

¹⁶⁶ Piovesana, 183.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Uchida, “Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory”, 118-119, paraphrasing 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「宗教闘争と階級闘争——批評家に答へて」 “Shūkyō Tōsō to Kaikyū Tōsō: Hihyōka ni Kotaehete” [Religious Conflict and Class Conflict: Replying to a Critic], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.12-19; 18-19.

The issue of Miki's relationship with Marxism is a key one and something to be pursued further, but first it is important to consider Miki's rise as an activist and popular writer.

2.3 Miki the Activist and Popular Writer

A young academic with seemingly a great career ahead of him had encountered a serious setback, but he did not give up, and after his release from prison he returned to the forefront with renewed gusto. Miki's literary output now increased significantly because of his having lost his teaching position; forced to make his living by writing magazines, he wrote articles in a clear and accessible style.¹⁶⁹ It is perhaps not an overstatement to suggest that one of the reasons for Miki's clarity viz. Nishida is that, unlike Nishida, Miki simply could not afford to be overly profound and impenetrable. He had already been interested in journalism as a way of spreading his thought amongst the people, but now he depended upon it, and wrote with renewed passion. Much of his effort in the early 1930s was put into writing popular material for periodicals that increased his fame substantially.

He also seriously pursued his activism. In 1933, Miki, along with Hasegawa Nyozeikan and others, formed a group to protest the burning of books in Germany under the newly-formed Nazi regime. For the intellectuals gathered in the group, book-burning was the destruction of culture and could not be allowed to continue.¹⁷⁰ The name of this organization was the Arts & Sciences Freedom League.¹⁷¹ Nakajima Kenzō¹⁷² recounted the inaugural meeting: "...I had just exchanged my business card for the first time with Miki Kiyoshi at this meeting. I knew from the beginning that the 'Arts & Sciences Freedom League' was an anti-fascist group."¹⁷³ Miki was involved in groups like this throughout the 1930s. Why Miki participated in such groups should not be hard to fathom. Consider, for instance, what he said in the 1938 work *The Reality of World Culture*¹⁷⁴, while citing Bertrand Russell's *Religion and Science* (1935):

*Today we all know that the persecutors of Galileo did not know the truth. However, for those among us, it is not possible to doubt that Hitler and Stalin are also like them [the persecutors]. The menace facing intellectual freedom in our time is greater than in any time since 1660.... We cannot allow [personal] favour for Communism to encourage us to lean towards accepting the wrong-doings in Russia. Conversely, disgust towards Communism or socialism should not lead us to forgive the barbaric things which have been done in Germany to suppress such thought.*¹⁷⁵

Uchida says that this form of 'dual-front criticism' which was simultaneously aimed at Nazism and Stalinism, came from Miki's "solid historical position, which ran through his whole life."¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Piovesana, 179.

¹⁷⁰ Nishida and Tanabe were among other Japanese intellectuals enraged at the Nazis' actions (Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 254-255).

¹⁷¹ 学芸自由同盟 Gakugei Jiyū Dōmei

¹⁷² 中島健蔵

¹⁷³ In 『回想の文学 (2)』 *Kaizō no Bungaku (2)* [Literature of Recollection (2)] (平凡社 Heibonsha, 1977), 92, cited in Uchida Hiroshi's "Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory", 99.

¹⁷⁴ 「世界文化の現実」 *Sekai Bunka no Genjitsu*

¹⁷⁵ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「世界文化の現実」 "Sekai Bunka no Genjitsu" [The Reality of World Culture], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō : 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966) 14.3-22; 5-6. Also cited by Uchida in "Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory", 109.

¹⁷⁶ Uchida, "Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory", 109.

Note how Miki distinguishes between an ideology and actions undertaken in its name or to suppress it; he argues that a Communist should speak out against the crackdown on freedom in Russia without rejecting Communism, and similarly that an anti-Communist should speak out against the Nazi crackdowns on Communists, because in both cases, regardless of the motives, the activity is barbaric and the outcome a loss of freedom for all.

Famously, Miki wrote a letter to Heidegger criticizing him for joining the Nazi Party in Germany. Miki furthermore continued to attack fascism both abroad and what he feared was rising at home, so that by 1935 Miki was an out-of-work thinker engaged “in a bitter struggle with Japanese fascism”, as Miyakawa put it.¹⁷⁷ Both as an individual and as a group member, Miki struggled on. Most people, of course, knew nothing of that; they knew Miki as a smart and savvy writer who was representative of a new generation of Japanese intellectuals. It was not just in journalism that Miki was creating a storm, however. He kept up a variety of philosophic endeavours, which receive less attention than his earlier writings on Marx. One of Miki’s most important accomplishments was the popularization of the philosophy of Nishida. In 1932 he was involved in getting discussions between various intellectuals and Nishida published in a newspaper to favourable reviews.¹⁷⁸ Two interviews with Nishida were also published in 1936.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, many people only knew Nishida through Miki, so it is thus ironic that in the postwar period Nishida is well-known in Japan but few know who Miki was. Miki also wrote on political issues, and discussed broad problems in society.

As the 1930s wore on he continued to do work on history as well, building upon the themes in his landmark 1932 work *Philosophy of History* discussed earlier; Uchida Hiroshi notes that Miki “searched for the starting point of his own time in the Meiji Restoration.”¹⁸⁰ Miki wrote,

The truth is, from observing those who would raise up Japaneseness recently, there is a tendency that the Meiji Period, which we could imagine future Japanese will think of as a classical age, will be eliminated. ... however, the fact of the matter is that surely the Meiji Period was in Japanese history a time of the formation of national unity, and a time of the appearance of true nationalism^{181 182}.

¹⁷⁷ Miyakawa, “Nishida Kitarō and Miki Kiyoshi”, 9.

¹⁷⁸ Miki remained on good terms with Nishida and was one frequent visitor of Nishida’s when the latter resided in Kamakura for part of 1932; this was when the discussions were arranged (Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 249-250). Miki never lost respect for his old master and continued to visit him in later years.

¹⁷⁹ Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 281.

¹⁸⁰ 内田弘 Uchida Hiroshi, 「三木清に投影する開発独裁国日本像」 “Miki Kiyoshi ni Tōeisuru Kaihatsu Dokusaikoku Nihonzō” [The Projection in Miki Kiyoshi of the Image of the Development of a Despotic Japan], 専修経済学論集 *Senshū Keizaigaku Ronshū* [Specialized Economics Theses] 36 (2) (2001.11), 117-197; 120.

¹⁸¹ 国民 *kokumin*, not to be confused with 民族 *minzoku*, which is built more on racial identification. Modern thinkers like Maruyama tend to be more tolerant of the more neutral, democratic and geo-cultural base of *kokumin-shugi* nationalism as opposed to the inherently racial, exclusionist *minzoku-shugi*. An oversimplified example would be to suggest that the identity of a ‘Japanese’ in the *kokumin* is based on birthplace and citizenship whereas the identity of a ‘Japanese’ in the *minzoku* is based on blood and ancestry. One should not, therefore, condemn Miki in terms of the ‘nationalism’ of the sort propagated by the militarists and extremists, which he did not hold.

¹⁸² 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「日本の性格とファシズム」 “Nihon-teki Seikaku to Fuasshizumu” [Fascism and the Character of Japaneseness], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.241-267; 245, as quoted by Uchida in “The Projection in Miki Kiyoshi of the Image of the Development of a Despotic Japan”, 124.

Miki was stunned that, in a time of crisis when the lessons of Meiji were most instructive, they were being neglected. Even Miki's complex philosophical ideas and his studies of history were quite literary and could be understood at the popular level, so that his popularity soared. According to Nakamura Shinichirō, Japanese youth at the time were inspired by Miki's writings. He writes, "It was when I was a university student that there was *The Logic of the Power of Conception*.¹⁸³ The book gave a big encouragement to us, the youth. A friend of mine and I became very happy to see a young girl was reading the book on the train."¹⁸⁴ By way of contrast, I find it hard to envision anyone reading Nishida on a train. This is now a fitting point at which to turn to the major question of Miki's relation with Marxism, wherein I will argue that despite Miki's frequent characterization as a Marxist, he was in fact a Humanist in nature.

2.4 Not a Marxist, but a Humanist

Here I will elaborate on my earlier position that Miki was not a Marxist, but a Humanist, who considered a variety of philosophies, including Marxism and its challenge to previous views of history, to grapple with when seeking to formulate a new worldly philosophy. It is my contention that there really is little evidence to indicate Miki was a Marxist, other than recollections that he may have said at one point in the late 1920s that he felt he was a Marxist, and that critics in the 1930s identified him with the Marxists because he shared their dislike of the emerging militarist power. There was also the tendency of critics at the time to dismiss all critical intellectuals and academics as leftists, and the fact that, by discussing Marx at all in such a climate, Miki left himself open to accusations of actually supporting the Marxist position.

Yet despite these facts, many postwar scholars continue to view Miki as a Marxist. I earlier showed that Miki became interested in Marx a bit later than accounts often lead us to believe; post-war Marxist writers would of course attempt to argue for an earlier date to suggest Miki 'converted' to Marxism sooner, but in truth there was no conversion; he was never a Marxist, and certainly not a Communist, but a thinker who drew inspiration from a wide variety of ideas, including Marx. As will be discussed shortly, this was far from uncontroversial in the 1920s and 1930s when Japanese Marxists believed they alone could interpret Marx, and the idea of an 'outsider' philosopher -- probably one sympathetic to the bourgeoisie at that -- offering an interpretation of Marx infuriated them. The irony of postwar Marxists trying to make Miki a Marxist, when their earlier brethren in his own time despised him as anything but, should not be lost on the reader of today.

As I said, Miki also thought that Marxism offered a challenge to society that needed to be addressed; yet in grappling with the position he seems to have become confused with it by critics even after the war. I had assumed initially that the question of his supposed speaking of himself as a Marxist, most likely around 1927-1928 when he was, as Nishitani related, sort of estranged from Nishida and off studying Marxism in Tōkyō, had likely also been blown out of proportion.

Several other scholars and writers have come to similar conclusions upon pondering Miki's life and writings. For instance, Kaba Shuno says on the issue:

Generally, was Miki a Marxist, do we think? Even now this is a problem that still has a lot of room left for investigation, but, to be frank, I do not think Miki was a Marxist. Of course, it cannot be denied that Miki at one time was referring to himself as a Marxist.

¹⁸³ 「構想力の論理」 *Kōsō-ryoku no Ronri*

¹⁸⁴ 中村真一郎 Nakamura Shinichirō, 「三木清と私の青春」 "Miki Kiyoshi to Watashi no Seishun" [Miki Kiyoshi and My Youth], 三木清全集月報 5 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 5 (1967.2), 3-5; 3.

*However, I think that because he seized on a materialistic view of history that took a humanistic Marxist form, more than saying his thought was Marxism we can say that his thought was humanism.*¹⁸⁵

Funayama Shinichi tells us with more certainty that:

*Certainly, even when Mr. Miki drew exceedingly close to Marxism (1927-1931) he was not a Marxist philosopher. In this point, it cannot be denied that critics, and then Mr. Miki himself, had a time of illusionment. However, the greatest aspect of Mr. Miki's historical role in the history of Japanese modern thought and philosophy is his connection and confrontation with philosophy and Marxism.*¹⁸⁶

Generally, I find little fault in Gino K. Piovesana's short pronouncement that "Miki... was basically an existential humanist tinged with social-liberal ideas."¹⁸⁷

However, the best account is that given by Miki scholar Masuda Keizaburō, who writes that "It was humanities, anthropology, which was the guiding principle of Miki Kiyoshi's research on the materialist view of history. I think that perhaps Miki Kiyoshi was the first to translate this foreign word "anthropology" as "humanities."¹⁸⁸ Masuda furthermore states that this humanities was the guiding principle of Miki Kiyoshi's materialist view of history, and that "This humanities was... lying at the base of all of his theories. ... Marxism too, as an idea, stood on the foundation of this certain humanities."¹⁸⁹ Masuda's excellent summary follows:

*...Miki Kiyoshi's research on the materialist view of history has an extremely important, epoch-making meaning for the history of philosophy of our country. He taught the positive significance that we should respect the tradition and accumulation of culture, in opposition to the tendency to drive out from our heads thought outside our own 'ism' as a harmful thing. At the same time, Miki recognized Marxist philosophy -- which had been seen as an indifferent thing to philosophy, to which it had no relation, and something that philosophers could not come to feel, as well as a terrifying thing, and something that had been kept away -- as a problem philosophers had to confront, recognized its true content, and opened a path for philosophy scholars to study it.*¹⁹⁰

Masuda further states that "Since then, *confronting Marxism, and simultaneously overcoming it*, was one of Miki Kiyoshi's lifetime works," and "Needless to say, he was not a Marxist. Furthermore, he never identified himself as such either."¹⁹¹

Masuda's summary is solid, but his final point goes against the accepted wisdom with which I too started, that holds that at one point Miki may have indeed spoken of himself as a

¹⁸⁵ 樺俊雄 Kaba Shuno, 「思想家としての三木清」 "Shisōka toshite no Miki Kiyoshi" [Miki Kiyoshi as Thinker], 三木清全集月報 6 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 6 (1967.3), 4-6; 5.

¹⁸⁶ 船山信一 Funayama Shinichi, 「三木さんについて思うこと」 "Miki-san ni tsuite Omoukoto" [Thoughts Concerning Mr. Miki], 三木清全集月報 4 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 4 (1967.1), 3-6; 4.

¹⁸⁷ Piovesana, 179.

¹⁸⁸ 枘田啓三郎 Masuda, Keizaburō 「三木清の思想遍歴とその意味するもの (1)」 "Miki Kiyoshi no Shisō Henreki to sono Imisuru mono (1)" [Miki Kiyoshi's wandering thought and what it means (1)], 三木清全集月報 14 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 14 (1967.11), 3-8; 5.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. In the original this is all one sentence.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 5 and 6 respectively.

Marxist, something that even those who are not quick to critique Miki, like Kaba and Funayama above, assume to be so. Yet Masuda emphatically states that Miki did not identify himself as a Marxist. This is because the accounts that claim Miki did so are actually unreliable, but far from being treated with caution, they are passed on as common knowledge. The reason they are unreliable is that they seem to have a common origin in a single statement by Tosaka Jun, that implies Miki seized upon Marxism because it was popular and he was ambitious. As Awata Kenzō relates,

*Although our [Awata and Miki's] philosophical positions were fairly different... It was because there was much in common in our standards of value when judging things that we could get along well. To put it concretely, we agreed on the point of opposition to the war and fascism. Lastly, in relation to this, I want to briefly discuss the relationship between Mr. Miki and Marxism, and the interpretation of one group which sees the relationship as based on secular ambition. This interpretation seems to have its root in the comment by Tosaka Jun, that "Seeing the rise of Fukumoto Kazuo, it seems that instantly a kind of ambition arose [in Miki]. I remember him boasting he could do what Fukumoto did." As Hisano Osamu has also pointed out, we cannot simply accept these words, but it is true that Mr. Miki made such irresponsible remarks. I too have frequently heard similar remarks like this.*¹⁹²

The reality is indeed that Miki neither converted to Marxism in the late 1920s, nor, logically, then converted from it in 1930. He was completely unprepared for criticism after 1930 that accused him of abandoning an ideological standpoint that he had never held to begin with, but he expected and was frustrated by the criticism he faced when he wrote on Marxism in the late 1920s. He wrote a letter to his wife, complete with a critical newspaper clipping, complaining about critics that could not understand how he could write on Pascal and write on Marx and still be the same individual thinker -- why did people assume he had converted to a 'Marxist', he wondered?

*Who wrote the article, I wonder; it will become a good example of a society which tends to make wrong guesses, I think. There is the closest connection between I, who wrote about Pascal, and I, who is discussing about Marx, and the common belief and philosophy through it which works on their foundations. Perhaps, it is a rare [person] who can understand it. Some day, I am going to develop it generally [overall] so that it will become clear to anyone, but in the meantime, I am going to leave it to people's judgment.*¹⁹³

Furthermore, in a memoir demanded by the public prosecutor while Miki was in Toyotama Jail in 1930, Miki wrote:

What was the basis of my behaviour? To start with, from the beginning I did not discuss any other issues from the standpoint of Marxism, but instead took Marxism as a problem and treated it from the viewpoint of my own philosophy. Secondly, in connection to this, my attitude has been a tendency to defend Marxism more than supporting it. Accordingly, it is obvious that I should not be called a Marxist. Just as one who vindicates a murderer

¹⁹² 栗田賢三 Awata Kenzō, 「思い出」 "Omoide" [Recollections], 三木清全集月報 10 卷 Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] (1967.7), 2-5; 5. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹³ Masuda, "Miki Kiyoshi's wandering thought and what it means (1)", 6.

is not a murderer, it is not the case that one who vindicates Marxism is necessarily a Marxist. ¹⁹⁴

Miki here clearly states that his base is not Marxism, but he also provides a clue as to why so many think he was. At a time when even discussing Marx made one suspect, it is natural that Miki's writings would be seen in this way, even though he was only taking Marxism as a research object and did not actually subscribe to its teaching. His defence of Marxism as a serious issue worthy of study (recall Nishida's rejection of Marxism as superficial; this was typical of many philosophers) was taken to be an endorsement of Marxism as a whole. Considering this then, one can perhaps suggest Miki was naïve in expecting people to approach his writings on Marx the same way they did his work on Pascal, even if he had not changed his approach at all. The sheer controversy of the topic and its implications politically invited danger to Miki regardless of what he had to say on the issue himself.

Yet the reality is that during the time period when Miki was supposedly converting to Marxism, or converting from it, he was working on a variety of works of which only a few dealt with Marxism at all, yet it is these that receive the most attention and lead people to argue he was a Marxist. This is logical thinking for someone living at the time, but to harbour such illogical notions now is surely beneath scholars. Throughout this time Miki continued to produce works on the philosophy of Pascal, Aristotle, Kant, and others as well as Marx, and he showed his zeal for a broad humanistic approach in each case, as opposed to arguing for slavishly following any one single philosophy.¹⁹⁵ How foolish, then, he would say, for us to assume he did so with Marxism!

Moreover, Miki stressed the need to critically engage with *all* philosophy; in "Liberalism Hereafter"¹⁹⁶ (April 1935), he stated that "From the beginning this [new] liberalism will be against, and demands the freedom to critique, bourgeois liberalism, and Marxism, and, needless to say, Fascism."¹⁹⁷ Furthermore,

Liberalism demands the freedom to critique against Marxism as well.

¹⁹⁴ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「手記」 "Shuki" [Memoirs], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 18.95-124; 99. Emphasis mine. Parts of this same page I found to be also quoted by Akamatsu, "Concerning Miki Kiyoshi's *Philosophy of History*", 17; I myself was first referred to Miki's prison memoirs by 渡辺一民 Watanabe Kazutami 「三木清と林達夫 (下) —— 1920年代論 (III)」 "Miki Kiyoshi to Hayashi Tatsuo (shita): 1920-nendairon" [Miki Kiyoshi and Hayashi Tatsuo (second half): Thought of the 1920s], 文学 *Bungaku* [Literature] 54 (1986.5), 80-94; 88.

¹⁹⁵ Consider, in the *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū*, some of the following: on Pascal 「「パスカル冥想録」 推薦の言葉」 (Nov. 1938), 17.469, and 「パスカルの人間観」 (July 1937), 13.416-421; on Aristotle 「アリストテレス」 (March 1929), 9.1-27, and 「アリストテレス「形而上学」」 (June 1935), 9.27-178, and 「アリストテレス」 (Oct. 1938), 9.179-306; on Kant 「カント「実と崇高との感情性に關する觀察其他」」 (Mar. 1939), 17.427-431; and on Socrates 「ソクラテス」 (June 1939), 9.307-448. As for demonstrating openly his humanistic approach to thinkers, consider his look at Spinoza 「スピノザに於ける人間と国家」 (July 1932), 2.292-333, and of course, Marx 「人間學のマルクスの形態」 (June 1927), 3.5-41. Note the work on Marx was produced one year after his landmark work on Pascal, and is essentially the same approach, only considering humanism in Marx as opposed to Pascal. Yet who would accuse Miki of being a "Pascalian"? Finally, consult Miki's brief work on new humanism 「新しい人間の哲學」 (July 1934), 10.335-351.

¹⁹⁶ 「自由主義以後」 "Jiyū-shugi Igo"

¹⁹⁷ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「自由主義以後」 "Jiyū-shugi Igo" [Liberalism Hereafter], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.168-175; 172. Also quoted in Uchida, "Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory", 119.

*Without the freedom to critique, the meaning of intellectual activity, that which is said to distinguish man from beast, will not be thoroughly shown, and formalization, dogmatization, and fixation are detrimental to progressive development.*¹⁹⁸

Thus, while Miki is often referred to as a Marxist, in reality, as we have seen, he saw Marxism as just one more philosophy to engage with, which could be of help in formulating his own ideas which he strove to raise to a universal level, as well as a challenge to society that had to be overcome, in the creation of a new world philosophy; hence it is reductionist and limiting to see his thought merely through the lens of Marxism and treat him as a 'Marxist' as opposed to a humanist philosopher who studied Marx and engaged with the challenge he believed Marx posed to society. Rather than trying to force Miki's thought and actions into a Marxist schema, it is instead essential to consider Miki's interpretation of Marx from his own viewpoint.

2.5 Miki's Unorthodox Approach to Marxism

We have just seen that Miki was not a Marxist but a Humanist who considered Marxism from a humanist standpoint. This led to his interpretation of Marxism being unusual when compared to that followed by Japanese Marxists in the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, Miki's view of Marxism was taken not from other Japanese or European Marxists at the time, but was drawn from his own understanding of Marx and was quite unorthodox -- even those who would see Miki purely from the point of view of Marxism must admit that he cannot in any way be seen as representative of Japanese Marxists at the time, who criticized him for going against orthodox Marxist ideology. So how was Miki's view of Marxism different?

Piovesana notes that of all Miki's studies on the philosophy of history, only those from 1927-1930 concern themselves with historical materialism.¹⁹⁹ The studies preceding and following those works "are not Marxist at all" he notes on the same page, although I have already argued that just because Miki wrote about the materialist view of history does not by any means indicate that he necessarily subscribed to said view. Miki's reading of Marx was very unorthodox, but it was also fresh and intelligent. Miki placed emphasis on "fundamental experience"²⁰⁰, the Marxist proletarian social experience.²⁰¹ Piovesana, drawing upon "Historical Materialism and Modern Consciousness"²⁰², goes on to explain that this experience is the starting point of the four aspects of Miki's theory, the second is "logos" (here a kind of epistemological experience), to the phases of an ideology which is thought of as a pattern of social being, and finally to anthropology, which is the historical result of the three former aspects.²⁰³ I think that this is notable for several reasons; first of all, this reading of Marx does not necessitate the breaking down of ideology, it is shorn of metaphysics, and the ultimate historical result of the system is "anthropology", which we have already seen, is Miki's term for his own humanistic understanding. The pattern of history this envisions is pragmatic and not metaphysical. Piovesana notes that he places the emphasis on the social world or social consciousness, making his position closer to Marx's than Engels', or that of the Soviet or Japanese Marxists at the time, and so he was criticized for neglecting the "philosophical" aspects of Marxism.²⁰⁴ Here, of course, "philosophical" means "metaphysical", and again serves to indicate the barriers Miki faced from those who associated philosophy with the purely abstract.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 174. Also quoted in Uchida, "Miki Kiyoshi's Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory", 119.

¹⁹⁹ Piovesana, 181.

²⁰⁰ 基礎経験 *kiso keiken*

²⁰¹ Piovesana, 181-182.

²⁰² 「唯物史観と現代意識」 "Yuibutsu-shikan to Gendai Ishiki" (see *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū*, volume 3).

²⁰³ Piovesana, 181-182.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 182-183.

Naturally, Miki faced heavy criticism for daring to offer his own interpretation of Marx. He thus did not get along well with the Yuibutsuron Kenkyū Kai²⁰⁵ (Society for Study of Materialism) started in Oct. 1932, which held orthodox views of materialism and Marx, and had as notable members Nagata Hiroshi²⁰⁶, Tosaka Jun, Hasegawa Nyozeikan, Hani Goro, Honda Kenzo²⁰⁷, and others, which was dissolved in 1938.²⁰⁸ Because of his writings on Marx and the periodical with Hani, Miki was caught between being suspected by the police on the one hand, and enduring a “storm of criticism” from Communists on the other, who believed that only they had the right to interpret Marx.²⁰⁹ While Miki remained interested in Marx, his departure from writing about it much makes sense considering the risk and criticism it earned him. He did not fit in with the Marxists in other groups either, where the Marxists alienated those who were not specialists or did not follow the orthodox line.²¹⁰ Neither should one be fooled into thinking that this criticism was a new occurrence; even in 1930 while Miki was in prison, his interpretation of Marx was denounced as “hereical” by Proletariat Science Institute²¹¹ members.²¹² Fletcher further says that many critics were against Miki’s conviction that Marxism represented a form of anthropology, and that dialectical theory actually recognized the unpredictability of social change.²¹³ As I explained above, these are some of the very elements that make Miki’s interpretation of Marx interesting, but because they strip away its use as a teleology (e.g. for claims that social revolution is both an end in and of itself, and a means to an end, as well as being good, necessary, and unstoppable) and its mythos as a form of received wisdom for the Communists, they were bound to be rejected by the Marxists. It is at this point that I will turn to examine the philosophy of Miki’s that was ultimately to become intertwined with the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, that of cooperativism.

2.6 Miki’s Cooperativism

Miki’s cooperativism tends to be seen as a product of his role in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.²¹⁴ While its role in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai is what made it famous, it clearly had its origins in Miki’s original thought, as I have suggested previously. Cooperativism can be seen either in a purely philosophical mode (a variety of perspectives synthesized into a universal, transcendent view) or a more political mode (such as urging cooperation between the countries of East Asia so as to build a politico-economic bloc to resist Western imperialism). Miki did not support imperialism; cooperativism meant that Asian countries would work together for their own best interests. The role of Japan in this was to formulate a philosophy that would unify the nations, but this did not mean imperialism, despite how some have twisted Miki’s words. Miki wanted East Asian nations to be free from Western imperialism to pursue their own destinies, and could not have expected how the army might make use of such ideals to justify Japan’s own expansion, the precise opposite of cooperativism because it was so particularistic and self-serving.

In fact, Miki was critical of the Japanese army’s actions in China because they went against the entire basis of cooperativism. Ben-Ami Shillony uses Miki as an example of someone

²⁰⁵ 唯物論研究会

²⁰⁶ 永田廣志

²⁰⁷ 本多謙三

²⁰⁸ Piovesana, 186-187.

²⁰⁹ Piovesana, 179.

²¹⁰ See, for instance, Barshay, 205.

²¹¹ プロレタリア科学研究所 Proletaria Kagaku Kenkyū Jo

²¹² Yusa, *Zen & Philosophy*, 231; citing “Hōjō-sensei ni hajimete oshie o uketa koro” *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū*, 12:258-259.

²¹³ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 26.

²¹⁴ For instance, see Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 159.

who criticized the behaviour of the Japanese in China and urged his fellow countrymen to treat the Chinese with respect, reminding them of China's heritage and influence on historical Japan, and stressing further that there were no fundamental differences between the Japanese and Chinese other than the time at which they modernized.²¹⁵ Miki's reference to Nazi thought and how it aimed at formulating a world ideology is also controversial for it could also be used to suggest Miki supported fascism, but this goes against everything Miki said and did. Miki, after all, recognized that Communism was rapidly becoming a world ideology, and he was just as outspoken in his condemnation of Stalin as he was Hitler. Miki merely offered the Nazi ideology as one more attempt at a world ideology; the implication was not that this was necessarily a good ideology (he clearly did *not* think so), but that it showed that a world ideology could be formulated.²¹⁶ If Japan were to formulate one and actually do it successfully, then it could compete with the Western powers. However, Japan's world ideology was not going to be fascist or Communist in nature, but cooperativist, and through the combined strength of the mutually-benefitting Asian countries, a true challenge could be offered the West. Both Miki and Konoe recognized the existence of an Anglo-American world ideology as well, and criticized it for different reasons than they did that of Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. The idea was that for Japan to stand against these and make a real impact on the international scene, it would also need a world ideal, not that it should copy the content of others'.

As to what Japan's new worldly ideology would be built on, Miki referred to Confucianism and the shared heritage of East Asian nations to suggest a foundation for a universal philosophy uniting them. Again this was not intended to be some sort of justification for the military dominance of other countries by Japan, and Miki made no reference to, for instance, Empress Jingu²¹⁷'s mythical invasion of Korea or Toyotomi Hideyoshi²¹⁸'s Sixteenth-Century campaign, to justify expansion under the idea of a mythic empire like those in Italy and Germany were doing with their history and legends. Again, one could point to Miki's lack of support for Chinese and other Asian nationalisms to say he supported Japanese expansion and so forth, but this is again misconstruing his thought because Miki did not support *Japanese* nationalist movements either, but strove for a philosophy transcending nationalisms that would unify East Asia and allow it to compete on the world stage, so of course he did not support any particularistic movements that would have challenged that.

Indeed, it was because he rejected the surging militarism and Japanese nationalism that he was so vigorously attacked by the rightists, who despised his liberalism and political ideals: For instance, Uchida Hiroshi quotes an attack made on Miki by Minoda Munaki²¹⁹:

"For Miki's thought and writing, which tried to make the Japanese spirit corrupt or lost, I am forced to feel the impulse to tear him apart²²⁰, with the feeling that he is having delivered upon him the punishment of heaven²²¹." ²²² Uchida comments that "the 'language terrorism' of

²¹⁵ Ben-Ami Shillony, "Friend or Foe: The Ambivalent Images of the U.S. and China in Wartime Japan," *The Ambivalence of Nationalism: Modern Japan between East and West* eds. James W. White, Michio Umegaki, Thomas R.H. Havens (New York: University Press of America, 1990), 187-211; 204-205.

²¹⁶ We have already seen Miki's involvement in the Arts & Sciences Freedom League, criticizing the Nazis for their destruction of culture.

²¹⁷ 神功皇后

²¹⁸ 豊臣秀吉

²¹⁹ 蓑田胸喜

²²⁰ I cannot tell if Minoda means a desire to 'tear apart' Miki's works with criticism, or if he means physically tear Miki to pieces. Both meanings may be implied.

²²¹ Again, the phrase is uncertain; Minoda may mean that the criticism heaped upon Miki (not just by Minoda specifically) could constitute the punishment of heaven, or he may mean that Miki's imprisonment and harassment by the authorities was a punishment from heaven.

Minoda developed while the installation of an oppressive fascist state [was taking place] in the background”, thereby suggesting that Minoda made his criticism drawing power and authority from the state so that he could attack Miki without fear.²²³ Yet Miki responded,

insisting that a leader should not be self-righteous or dogmatic, but must be one who organizes “cooperation that is understood [by the people]” with the “power of conception”; in response, “Minoda sang the praises of the “power of language” of Hitler and Rosenberg, and attacked Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime, and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai (in which Miki participated).²²⁴

Fletcher is correct in asserting that Miki supported the New Order Movement, but wrong in thinking that this was a new development and did not follow on from Miki’s earlier thought.²²⁵ Of course, the New Order Movement as planned by the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was quite different from the fascist spectre envisioned by Fletcher and others; here, the irony is that Miki *could have* used his influence and his philosophy to support fascist movements for his own gain (like some revolutionary intellectuals did by joining extremist right-wing groups), but he chose to use his knowledge to fight fascism instead, despite the risk and total lack of credit he received for doing so. Awata touches on this irony: “With his talents he could have done logical manipulation, such as forming a plausible theory catering to fascism. However, the Mr. Miki I knew personally was not a person who could do such a thing.”²²⁶

In the following passage, Miki explains what he means by cooperativism a little better; here he is speaking specifically of the role of religion, but clearly he held similar views regarding the role of philosophy viz. politics and the nation as well:

A religious order declares cooperation in regard to the state of things. That is from the start to be expected. However, cooperation has to be real cooperation. Following the current, and accomodating the political power of the time, is not cooperation. Buddhism must cooperate with the time by taking a leadership [role] and making appeals to politics. If we look at the world, the misery of today is politics as absolute power in every culture, ruling every religion, and moreover this politics of absolute authority exists everywhere without question, and still even to question it is not tolerated. It is not that religion is on the same level as politics, but rather that because religion is not on the same level as politics that, instead, it can lead politics by its own authority. The authority of religion cannot lose respect. The authority that religion should obey is not supposed to be politics. When religion becomes political, the leadership of religion will surely be lost; only by returning to its true nature, can religion take leadership of politics. The reason religion is religion does not exist seperately from the worldly character. Religion must obey its own authority, and by its worldly character, must lead politics.²²⁷

Miki’s ideal of cooperativism has different elements of society, or different societies, working together for *mutual benefit* through the strongest elements of each coming together to overcome individual weaknesses, thereby producing a synthesis that is stronger than any of the

²²² 「学術維新」(原理日本社 Genri Nihonsha, 1941), 322, quoted in Uchida, “Miki Kiyoshi’s Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory”, 126.

²²³ Uchida, “Miki Kiyoshi’s Liberalism Thought and Creative Social Theory”, 126.

²²⁴ Ibid., 126.

²²⁵ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 145.

²²⁶ Awata, 5.

²²⁷ Miki, “Religion as the Leadership of the New Japan”, 80-81. Emphasis mine.

individual components. 'Cooperation' as envisioned by the military, with Japan ruling other countries and exploiting their populations and resources for Japanese profit alone, is antithetical to Miki's ideal. We must thus distinguish between notions such as the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" *as they were formulated* by intellectuals like Miki, and *as they were used to label practices implemented* by the military and authorities.

Finally, I will close this chapter by looking briefly at Miki's explanation of *action*, and specifically how he conceived of the necessity for philosophers to involve themselves in politics as opposed to being disinterested spectators.

2.7 Miki as Man of Action

I touched upon earlier how Miki became involved in movements unlike Nishida who remained aloof and detached from them, despite having strong opinions. Nishida had no love for the military and the criticism being heaped upon academia by rightists, but it was Miki who openly spoke out against such things and joined organizations to protest. Miki was against isolated academism, and the key idea here is intellectuals becoming involved in society in order to improve it, hence his interest in the connection between philosophy and politics -- recall that he thought the former should lead the latter. For Miki, a sort of philosopher-king ideal was not only possible, but inherently desirable. Konoe would take up this challenge, although his ultimate failure left little hope for the aspirations of the intellectuals afterwards.

Before philosophy was able to play any role in politics, it had to be restored to its true self, which required it to abandon the pretentious self-worship and metaphysics that detracted from its natural object: reality. The restoring of the scope of philosophy to its object became one of Miki's objectives. Uchida Hiroshi says,

*Miki Kiyoshi, first of all, overcame the unrealism into which taught philosophy was falling, and made the recovery of reality in philosophy a theme of his life. He was thinking that analyzing experience in real life is the road for philosophy to re-realize reality.*²²⁸

Thus, it should be no mystery as to why Miki liked Aristotle, whose famous dictum that "man is a political animal" fit right in with Miki's ideas; on a broader level, Miki saw politics as the key to humanity, and the "political human" as the ideal human. Hence, Miki's statement, which I provided earlier, that a philosopher is not a meditator echoes throughout his philosophy. A philosopher for Miki is not a passive, detached recipient of wisdom, but an active, involved participant. Neither is the action to be taken vague and abstract contemplation. Miki's action is not action in a vague sense, but definite and historical action. It became clear to him that Japanese thinkers needed to act, so that the intellectual pursuit of truth was, for Miki, a dialectic of active and speculative aspects.

As he explains, in *Philosophy and Education*²²⁹ (1937):

What is called philosophy's standing in the standpoint of action has in the time of the philosophers of our country today almost entirely become common knowledge. However, action is not general abstract action, but always only concrete historical action. Consequently, truly the philosopher who is going to stand in a position of action as their own responsibility must do philosophy from a resolution to strongly face and solve the problems of our society (of this time, in which we live). If a philosophy avoids the

²²⁸ Uchida, "The Projection in Miki Kiyoshi of the Image of the Development of a Despotism in Japan", 118.

²²⁹ 「哲学と教育」 "Tetsugaku to Kyōiku"

problems of the age and does not take responsibility for solving them, how can we say such a philosophy is standing in the standpoint of action? Education is but the putting into practice of what exists in reality as an object.²³⁰ Such an object is nothing but the present society, which is nothing but the reality in which we find ourselves and in which we are living. ... As education, philosophy must take responsibility for facing itself, and the times.²³¹

Miki's decision to become more involved and put his philosophy into action does not conflict with his philosophy since he believed in this active element since the beginning; he attacked from right and left, striving to form a synthetic philosophy but at the same time going his own way and incurring the wrath of all for doing so. Miki was thus an individualist who was not afraid to fight for what he believed in, and his recognition, based upon the development of his thought and his years of grappling with the problems facing Japan, that real action on the part of intellectuals was called for, prompted him to seek out venues by which he could enact his philosophy and try to assist the country and its people in overcoming the crises. It was through such ventures, and his rising reputation, that he came to be involved with the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, and the fascinating character of Prince Konoe Fumimaro.

Chapter III Not Quite A Union of Opposites: The Konoe Connection

Philosophy must return to the beginning of its spirit in order to be true to its nature. ... Even if philosophy is not politics, it must at least be education.²³² - Miki Kiyoshi

...I came to think that the most vulgar thing in the world was a politician, and the most noble was a philosopher...²³³ - Konoe Fumimaro

Prince Konoe Fumimaro, lord of the foremost families of the great Fujiwara clan, persists as somewhat of an enigmatic character in both Japanese and Western scholarship, holding the premiership three times and yet leaving behind naught but paradoxes and questions as to who he really was. He was the protégé of Saionji Kinmochi²³⁴, the last of the Genrō²³⁵ and probably the one person who kept the groups of militarists and ultranationalists from achieving power in the early 1930s.²³⁶ Konoe's rise to power was almost accidental, for he rose to the premiership initially as a compromise between the militarists and their foes, as a stabilizing force, and ultimately ended up pleasing neither.

It should no longer be a mystery why Miki would join a group of intellectuals interested in formulating policy for the bright young prince, but at first glance it seems peculiar that Konoe, notorious for his fear of Communism, would keep a philosopher suspected as a Marxist in his midst. My purpose in this chapter is to show that, far from being opposites, Miki and Konoe were very similar in terms of their thinking, and that they were connected by the threads of politics and philosophy. Through examining Konoe with an eye to Miki's formative period and

²³⁰ Hence, education and philosophy thus both concern themselves with the same object.

²³¹ Miki, "Philosophy and Education", 429.

²³² Ibid., 430-431.

²³³ Konoe, quoted in 矢部貞治 Yabe Teiji, 「近衛文麿」 *Konoe Fumimaro* (東京 Tōkyō: 時事通信社 Jiji Unshin Kai, 1958), 12.

²³⁴ 西園寺公望

²³⁵ 元老 The "elder statesmen" who advised the Emperor.

²³⁶ A decent biography in a scene bereft of them is Lesley Connors' *The Emperor's Advisor: Saionji Kinmochi and Pre-War Japanese Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

his thought in the context of the 1930s, all of which I have just discussed, we can better understand why Konoe and Miki would end up together through the means of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, as well as a better understanding of how philosophy and politics were intertwined in Japan of the 1930s. Before going much further, it will be helpful to examine some of the scholarship on Konoe, which, unlike that on Miki, is plentiful, although, like that on Miki, equally prone to oversimplifications.

3.1 Overview of Scholarship on Prince Konoe Fumimaro

Much scholarship on prewar Japanese politics that considers the role of Prince Konoe overwhelmingly follows the confused and peculiar popularized image of a warmonger who was also an inept day-dreaming fool. Discrepancies between the image of an involved, determined militarist and that of a self-obsessed non-actor who just let the system collapse around him, are explained by presenting him as an ‘enigma.’ Authors tend to either emphasize that he led Japan into war, but was also an idiot, or emphasize that he was a idiot with no idea of what was going on, but can be held responsible for what happened by virtue of his being in power when it did.

I can set the tone best by first referring to a popular work fairly typical of this image of Konoe, since it has remained fairly common. Robert Harvey writes unabashedly in *The Undefeated* that Konoe “was aristocratic, foppish, indecisive, shallow and a flirt with both sexes.”²³⁷ He was chosen as a compromise, “Yet his ideas were shallow and silly, and he lacked any popular power base; he was merely, at first, a useful front man for military rule” and “He had a weak and attractive personality; idle and easygoing, he treated the emperor as a chum, which endeared him to the friendless Hirohito. He was tall, good-looking, and a womanizer (and probably bisexual), as well as a hypochondriac.”²³⁸ Harvey does say Konoe was “fated” to be prime minister, and “destined” to be a “doormat for warmongers”, like Franz von Papen in Germany, and he includes Konoe’s frustration at the Emperor being swayed by militarists like Tōjō Hideki²³⁹, but ultimately concludes that he was a “devious happy-go-lucky aristocratic nationalist, intelligent enough to foresee the disaster which he nevertheless played a leading role in leading Japan towards.”²⁴⁰

Much of this portrayal of Konoe has its origins in rather dubious sources, such as the views of British Ambassador to Japan in 1937, Sir Robert Craigie, who said of Konoe:

*“There were moments when his actions showed a touch of genius. Time and again one was impressed by acts of statesmanship, only to be irritated just as often by his apparent lack of firmness in leadership, and his failure at times of crisis to use his strong personal position to curb the extremists. His Japanese friends were completely baffled by many of his actions, wondering whether he really stood for what he was supposed to represent -- a moderating influence -- or whether, unknown to his more responsible friends and followers, he was a totalitarian at heart and rather enjoyed giving the army its long rope.”*²⁴¹

Furthermore, Konoe was a “dilettante theorist”; most shocking of all, however, appears to have been his success at golf while not keeping his eyes on the ball in the correct textbook fashion.²⁴²

²³⁷ Harvey, xxii.

²³⁸ Ibid., 206. In all the material I came across this is the only work that touches upon Konoe’s sexuality. It furthermore does so as if it were a matter of profound relevance.

²³⁹ 東条英機

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 207, 235, and 291, respectively. Konoe would have endorsed the idea of being fated to his role and destined to be walked on by the military.

²⁴¹ Sir Robert Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask* (London: Hutchinson, 1945), 60.

Such were Craigie's thoughts, and we should not rely upon them too heavily: no less a scholar than George B. Sansom himself criticized him for being ignorant of Japan, and East Asia generally.²⁴³ Sansom recalled that upon his resignation from the Foreign Office in 1939 "I had said to the Permanent Under Secretary, I really don't see why I should stay. I'm not going back to Japan. I hate your ambassador there. He's a fool."²⁴⁴

By contrast, a radically different, and seldom referred to, appraisal of Konoe comes from the American ambassador, Joseph C. Grew: Nov 21 1941, "Second Thoughts on Prince Konoye":

Have often thought about my letter to Prince Konoye, in reply to his letter informing me of the fall of his cabinet, and especially my allusion to the distinguished service which he had rendered his country. Some people might quibble at that statement, on the ground that he had led his country into all sorts of difficulties, including the Axis alliance. I grant all that, but I put it down more to the nefarious influence of Matsuoka than to Konoye himself, who had his own military people and the extremists to deal with.

*The chief reason why I mentioned his outstanding service was the fact that he alone tried to reverse the engine, and tried hard and courageously, even risking his life and having a very close call as it was. Whatever mistakes he made in directing Japan's policy, he had the sense and the courage to recognize those mistakes and to try to start his country on a new orientation of friendship with the United States. If only for that, I think he deserves some degree of good will. With the invasion of Indo-China staring us in the face during the Washington conversations, it is difficult for anyone not living in Japan and understanding the forces and stresses loose in this misguided country to appreciate what Konoye was up against, but I do, and hence that allusion in my letter. I would not change it if I had the letter to write again.*²⁴⁵

What, then, of scholarship concerning Konoe? At first W. G. Beasley saw Konoe's appointment to the premiership in 1937 not so much as a matter of compromise, but one of desperation, which resulted only in Konoe becoming a figurehead that did the army's bidding.²⁴⁶ Then, in *Japanese Imperialism*, he suggested that in the 1930s premiers as a whole lacked the authority to impose their will on their ministers, but he pinpoints Konoe's policies, and then the Konoe government, as taking steps that led to the Pacific War.²⁴⁷ Later Beasley was more inclined to see Konoe as a compromise figure who, in the form of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, tried to please everyone and ended up pleasing no one.²⁴⁸ A peculiar view is that of Robert A. Scalapino, who, rather than arguing that Konoe was a single isolated enigma, argued that Konoe was a figure of confusion, ambivalence, drive for unity, fear of radicalism, and

²⁴² Ibid., 103 and 98 respectively.

²⁴³ Gordon Daniels, "Sir George Sansom (1883-1965): Historian and Diplomat", *Britain and Japan 1859-1991: Themes and Personalities*, Eds. Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Gordon Daniels (London: Routledge, 1991), 277-288, 282 paraphrasing Katherine Sansom, *Sir George Sansom and Japan: A Memoir* (Tallahassee, Florida: 1972), 94-97.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 314 n.18, quoting "The Reminiscences of Sir George Sansom" (New York: Oral History Research Office, Columbia U., 1957), 57.

²⁴⁵ Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), 481-482.

²⁴⁶ W. G. Beasley, *The Modern History of Japan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963. 3rd ed., 1981), 251.

²⁴⁷ W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 198, 204, and 231 respectively. Grew actually supports the argument that premiers as a whole lacked power; he noted on January 1, 1941, that "Konoye, and especially Matsuoka, will fall in due course, but *under present circumstances* no Japanese leader or group of leaders could reverse the expansionist program and hope to survive" (360, italics his).

²⁴⁸ W. G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 183-184.

fatalism that mirrored the conservative groups.²⁴⁹ F. C. Jones in Japan's New Order in East Asia paints Konoe as being constantly in a state of indecision and thinking of resigning; he notes:

*Prince Konoye's own record is equivocal; perhaps the best judgement on him is that he was at heart opposed to totalitarian methods at home and to a line-up with the Nazi-Fascist Powers abroad, but that he was a man of weak and irresolute character, prone to take the line of least resistance, to procrastinate as long as possible, and to lay down the burden of office when evasion would no longer serve him.*²⁵⁰

Takemoto Toru's *Failure of Liberalism* in Japan is not untypical, then, of many works in that it presents Konoe as a militarist, 'evil' character, but also an inept and weak figure in prewar politics; I chose to refer to it here because it unabashedly proclaims him as such. "Konoe Fumimaro," notes Shidehara the first time he describes him, "dreamed of establishing a quasi-Nazis (sic.) state in Japan in spite of his own character weakness."²⁵¹ Again, "Together with Konoe and Hiranuma Kiichirō²⁵², Kido Kōichi²⁵³ was the Japanese version of a Nazi, or a Nazi imitator."²⁵⁴ Furthermore, Konoe's decision to undertake post-war constitutional revision -- pointed to by some Konoe apologists as proof of his underlying pacifist and democratic nature -- was merely "in order to save himself from the impending war crimes prosecution."²⁵⁵ Neither was Konoe dedicated to doing his duty: "Konoe was a well known quitter. ...and he was eternally alien to the concept of hard work."²⁵⁶ Takemoto presents Konoe as a dreamer, but one who was responsible for dragging Japan into war; he mocks the criticism Konoe received before, during, and after the war, confident in his view of Konoe as a militarist "Nazi-imitator" who quit everything and feared hard work, and he also dismisses the view of Konoe provided by Oka Yoshitake, which I shall examine in a moment.²⁵⁷ The problem with Takemoto's view is not only the internal inconsistency -- between the active militarist who led a country into war and the passive incompetent who fled from hard work -- but also the lack of data to back up his broad critiques.²⁵⁸

²⁴⁹ Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan: The Failure of the First Attempt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), 387.

²⁵⁰ F. C. Jones, *Japan's New Order in East Asia: Its Rise and Fall, 1937-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 64, 70, and 109 respectively.

²⁵¹ Takemoto Toru, *Failure of Liberalism in Japan: Shidehara Kijuro's Encounter with Anti-Liberals* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), 60-61. The reader is left in the dark as to what this is based on, as unfortunately no elaboration is provided.

²⁵² 平沼騏一郎

²⁵³ 木戸幸一

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 165. Takemoto uses as evidence alleged anti-semitism, suggesting Kido and Konoe imitated the Nazis to the extent that they became anti-semitic, despite the fact that there were few Jews in Japan. This ignores 1) Konoe saw the Jews, like the Communists, as contributing to problems in the West -- he feared, paranoid as he was, that the two groups were in league to dominate various nations, so whether or not there were any Jews in Japan was irrelevant, and 2) Konoe held these views (both on Jews and Communists) before the Nazi seizure of power in Germany.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 180. Again, the reader is given no indication as to where this conclusion came from.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 226-227.

²⁵⁸ For example, he associates Konoe with Hiranuma and Kido as "Nazis" but what precisely he means by this other than derision is not clear; Hiranuma was famous as the archetypal 'Japanese fascist' in Western critiques of Japan in the 1930s (Colegrove saw Hiranuma as planning to establish a fascist dictatorship with himself at the helm (30-31); Wildes further connected him to Kenzo Adachi -- "Japan's chief exponent of the Fascist policy" (51)). Yet Hiranuma was clearly not 'fascist' enough, since once he adapted to parliamentary politics and backed Konoe's 1939 policy of resisting the demands of the military he was shot in 1940 by an ultranationalist who evidently felt

A more sympathetic view of Konoe that follows the Prince's view of himself as 'fated', is that of Oka Yoshitake.²⁵⁹ Oka looks at Konoe's life sympathetically; he sketches Konoe's isolated and lonely childhood and shows how he was interested in ideas, then charts his rise to power and then his ultimate defeat and downfall. He stresses what Konoe did as opposed to what he did not but perhaps should have done, serving thus as an antidote to all of those "idiot dreamer" descriptions. Oka also avoids putting Konoe into a corner -- he is upfront about Konoe's friendship with rightists, but also his persistent interest in socialism, and reveals Konoe's hesitation for power and dislike of the aristocracy at the same time that he shows Konoe as prideful and seemingly above everyone else. The work offers Konoe as a real person as opposed to a pre-packaged generalization. The book's weaknesses are its failure to firstly provide adequate context for some events, and secondly contrast Konoe's views to others -- often what Konoe says or does is made to seem quite natural without it being made clear why this may have really been controversial at the time. Such details *are* touched upon, but lacking overall.

Upon reviewing Oka's original (Japanese) book, Takayanagi Shunichi commented that "Inasmuch as a man is a product of the system around him, Konoe can be said to have been a statesman made a plaything of fate."²⁶⁰ Finally, an excellent quotation from Shillony helps set the stage for my study of Konoe:

*Konoe was many things to many people. He was close to the imperial entourage, yet he was often critical of the emperor; he associated with generals and right-wing civilians, but he made efforts to block the military's influence on the cabinet; he was a shrewd politician, yet he despised politics and brought about the dissolution of the political parties; he shunned power, but tried to make himself into a strong leader; he abhorred war, yet authorized the escalation of hostilities in China and presided over the fateful decision to go to war with the U.S. and Britain.*²⁶¹

It was this man whom Miki came across when he agreed to join the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, and it was this man that the members devoted all of their time and energy towards establishing an intellectual platform for so that he could implement the vision they all shared: that of a glorious New Order.

3.2 Philosophy and Politics, Philosophers and Politicians

A quick glance suggests that Miki and Konoe could not have been more different; the former is usually presented as a Marxist philosopher interested in social science interpretations of history, and the latter as a shameless aristocrat, and an ardent nationalist, even being a member of the Greater Asia Society, established in 1933.²⁶² Yet the oversimplification of these two men is stifling. Already I have shown how Miki was not a Marxist or indeed a follower of

betrayed. There were also attempts on Konoe's life by rightists. Despite Hiranuma's reputation, the British ambassador seems to have held a favourable view of him (Craigie, 70). Mayhaps he was a better golfer than Konoe?
²⁵⁹ Oka, Yoshitake. *Konoe Fumimaro: A Political Biography*. Trans. Shumpei Okamoto and Patricia Murray. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983.

²⁶⁰ Takayanagi Shun'ichi. Review of Oka Yoshitake 岡義武's *Konoe Fumimaro -- Unmei no Seijika* 近衛文麿「運命」の政治家 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), and *Konoe Shintaisei no Kenkyū* 「近衛新體制」の研究, ed. *Nihon Seiji Gakkai* 日本政治學會 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973). *Monumenta Nipponica* 29.1 (1974), 104-106; 106.

²⁶¹ Shillony, Ben-Ami. Review of Gordon Mark Berger's *Parties out of Power in Japan, 1931-1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). *Monumenta Nipponica* 32.3 (1977): 395-397; 397.

²⁶² 大アジア協会 Dai Ajia Kyōkai

any one philosophy, despite exhibiting a strong humanist focus, but an independent, complex thinker who was not content to follow philosophical inquiry alone but considered the times and sought involvement himself, and that he was a lot more rambunctious than he is usually given credit for, perhaps because people nowadays associate him with the reserved and non-political Nishida. So too have I problematized the view of Konoe. For all his nationalism he did not support war with either China or the United States.²⁶³ Fletcher's presumption -- that when Konoe advised Saionji that the parties could not lead unless they saw a new direction for the nation and took the initiative away from the army he meant that the parties should prepare the nation for a major war in Asia -- is a terrible distortion.²⁶⁴ If Konoe wanted war, why would he be concerned as to whether it was the parties or the army that started it? Clearly Konoe meant that for the parties to be relevant they needed a new vision of Japan and a policy to compete with the army's expansionist vision -- they did not -- and had to seize the initiative from the army in leading the nation before the army embroiled the country in warfare -- they failed to do so.²⁶⁵ Indeed, one of the reasons for the militarists' seizure of power was simply the lack of any coherent policy to resist theirs, which was one of the impetuses for the 1936 reformulation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. So too does Fletcher confuse cause and effect when he asserts that Konoe launched the New Order Movement for not just reform but "as a program of mobilization for war."²⁶⁶ While the Home Ministry eventually took over the movement which in practice *became* a program of national mobilization, this was quite the opposite of the planners' intentions and only came about through their failure -- specifically the failure of Konoe, Miki, and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. Indeed, Konoe was widely regarded among civilians as "the last trump" (*saigo no kiri-fuda*) to forestall the total seizure of power by the militarists.²⁶⁷ Konoe then, like Miki, was much more complex than the peculiar oversimplified parody he is often presented as.

My study here will focus on Konoe, and will reveal various similarities to Miki, so before turning to a more advanced comparison of their ideas, it will be helpful to show how they had similar background experiences, despite their difference in class. Both Konoe and Miki were as young men brash, outspoken fellows with little respect for proper etiquette. Already I have shown how Miki was assertive, not afraid to criticize professors, and would generally do what he felt like regardless of how proper that was deemed to be. Konoe too exhibited similar characteristics. For instance, a chamberlain once complained that Konoe did not seem to respect the Emperor properly -- Konoe would greet Emperor Shōwa casually as a friend, and actually

²⁶³ See, for instance, the account in Richard Storry's *The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Nationalism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), which chronicles Konoe's efforts to stop war with China (216), and Great Britain and America (286), to the point of having the cabinet resign just to get rid of Matsuoka who he feared would get Japan into a war with the West (287-288), and Konoe's fruitless efforts to convince army leaders, especially Tōjō, to compromise with the US to avoid war -- Konoe comes across as the sophisticated compromiser, whereas "In refusing to entertain the idea Tojo showed himself to be stupid as well as obstinate" (293). Konoe also played a role in getting rid of Tōjō in 1943 and subsequent attempts to end the war. Grew tells us that Konoe was "dead against the alliance" [with the Axis], and that even the Emperor was unhappy with the situation, but they may not have survived a refusal, and the alliance took place amidst constant talk of Konoe's fall and replacement by a military dictator (Grew, 339, 347). Even the inept Craigie recognized Konoe's opposition to war and was concerned when Konoe resigned in October 1941 (Craigie, 122).

²⁶⁴ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 94.

²⁶⁵ Later I discovered that Oka Yoshitake holds a similar view to myself. He reads Konoe as stating that reforms were necessary and so long as the political parties did nothing to solve the problems facing Japan (thereby neglecting the nation's destiny), the military would seize the initiative and try their own brand of reform -- hence, the military fury should have been an immediate incentive for the politicians to try to solve some of the problems that had driven the military to propose such drastic measures (31-32).

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁷ Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 114.

sit in front of him with legs crossed; further, rather than report officially on state matters he would chat about whatever crossed his mind.²⁶⁸ Both Miki and Konoe behaved like playboys and loved parties, yet both married for love and genuinely cared about their wives. Both were also risk-takers and their escapades angered their mentors; in Konoe's case, for instance, at the Paris Peace Conference he at one point posed as a reporter for a Japanese newspaper so that he could attend a conference from which aides had been barred.²⁶⁹

Importantly, Konoe shared Miki's love of philosophy from a young age. For Konoe, the world of philosophy was an ideal world, in contrast to the world of lies in which he dwelt. Konoe's childhood was shattered by two events which led to this way of thinking. The first was that although his mother had died almost immediately after his birth, this was hidden from him for years, and when he learned the truth he felt so betrayed that he was never again able to truly trust others. As Konoe himself reminisced later in life, "Until I became considerably older, I was led to believe Sadako-mother was my real mother. Once I knew [the truth], I came to believe the human world was one of lies."²⁷⁰ The second was the sudden death of his father, whereupon family 'friends' suddenly became anything but.²⁷¹ Konoe became someone who loathed society, immersed himself in reading Western works, and became a melancholiac.²⁷² This melancholy never truly left him. To a lonely child, feeling isolated and betrayed in a world of lies and hypocrites, philosophy had an enormous appeal. Philosophy offered a world of truth and ideals to Konoe, and he came to venerate philosophers; inspired by the example of his teacher Iwamoto²⁷³, who influenced him the most at First High School, he set himself to becoming a philosopher.²⁷⁴

Miki too was inspired by a professor at school to seek answers in the world of philosophy, and there too he sought ideals. He expressed the following regarding his life and thought when he was but 22 years old:

*The thing that guided me towards philosophy was, truly, a yearning for that which is eternal, that which Plato called Eros. My soul is afflicted by a nostalgia for the home of the eternal. Perhaps through the whole of my contemplative life I will remain as an idealist. More than one whose heart felt wonder at seeing an apple fall from a treetop, I was born with a heart holding feelings of awe gazing at the stars that sparkle in the sky.*²⁷⁵

Both Miki and Konoe were idealists, but Miki sought ways to take those ideals and put them into practice in reality, whereas Konoe seems to have seen them just as often as also an escape from reality. From the beginning, Miki sought to bring philosophy down to earth whereas Konoe strove to elevate the world to the level of philosophy. The issue was thus one of focus, for Miki sought to orientate philosophy towards reality, whereas Konoe hoped to move reality to reflect

²⁶⁸ Oka, 49-50. Konoe got on very well with the Emperor; it was likely that the two shared a common sense of isolation and difficult childhoods, so they could relate to one another..

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 14.

²⁷⁰ Quoted in Yabe, 9.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

²⁷² See, for instance, Yabe, 8-9.

²⁷³ 岩元

²⁷⁴ Yabe, 12.

²⁷⁵ 小林修一 Kobayashi Shūichi, 「三木清と近代化の宿命——30年代に於ける理想主義のゆくえ」 "Miki Kiyoshi to Kindaika no Shukumei: 30nendai ni okeru Risoshugi no yukue" [Miki Kiyoshi and the Destiny of Modernization: The Whereabouts of Idealism in the 1930s] 法政大学教養部紀要 *Hōsei Daigaku Kyōyōbu Kiyō* [Hōsei University Liberal Arts Department Bulletin] 59 (1986.1), 71-93; 71, quoting Miki Kiyoshi, 「話られざる哲学」 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* 18.3-93; 22. This reference led me to consult the original, which I refer to elsewhere.

the philosophical ideals. Not that this did not mean they were moving in a similar way, only that the direction differed. A suitable parallel in terms of orientation might perhaps be that of Plato (Konoe) and Aristotle (Miki). To his German tutor, Konoe expressed antagonism towards the privileged classes, and went so far as to talk about giving up his title to become a philosophy professor (several other professors were needed to come in and persuade him otherwise).²⁷⁶

In addition to sharing a love for philosophy, Miki and Konoe also had common dislikes. Both men shared a dislike for the military and the wealthy; Yabe recounts of Konoe, "Soldiers and rich people he both hated, with the exception of only Generals Tōgō and Nogi."²⁷⁷ This may come as a surprise to those who associate Konoe with the rebellious young officers, whose enthusiasm for reform he found refreshing, albeit misguided, but he never had any love for the military, the rising power over the state of which he both feared and loathed. Konoe also remained suspicious of the wealthy because of his family's suffering following the death of his father, when suddenly everyone demanded loans be paid back and old friends turned a cold shoulder.²⁷⁸ Miki, likewise, was outspoken in his criticism of the military; as Uchida Hiroshi argues,

He pointed out that they loudly said 'Japan, Japan,' but "thus far, has there been any case where the whole of the Japanese were represented under the name of Japan?", and it is said that the spirit of Japan is Bushidō, but the Bushi were nothing but a small ruling class, and realizing something which represents the whole of Japan has to be the goal Japan should be aiming for. Miki Kiyoshi expressed these statements in a situation where the military was strutting about saying "our job costs our life"²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰

Konoe graduated from high school in 1913, and entered the philosophy department at Tōkyō Imperial University²⁸¹. He recalled, however, that while he attended Inōye Tetsujirō²⁸²'s lectures, he found them not the least bit interesting, and wanted to go to Kyōto Imperial University where Nishida and others were.²⁸³ He soon left Tōkyō and went to Kyōto, but the school entrance period was ending, so he sat down at the student advisor's, and eventually was admitted into the law department; however, he did not go to nearly all of the law lectures, studied Kawakami Hajime, and received teaching from Nishida and Toda Kaiichi²⁸⁴, later expressing, regarding that, that he had been happy.²⁸⁵ He liked Kawakami Hajime, who got him into Marx.²⁸⁶ Having felt betrayed by his father's supposed 'friends' after his death, and because of the aristocratic structure that left him a lonely isolated child, Konoe was naturally inclined to socialist ideals and challenging the status quo. His brother Hidemaro recalled Konoe lecturing him on socialism; for example, one night Fumimaro asked him what he felt about having enough

²⁷⁶ Oka, 7.

²⁷⁷ Yabe, 11. Konoe received special training from Nogi and venerated him.

²⁷⁸ Oka, 6. The fact that these people reappeared as 'friends' when Konoe became more prominent was not lost on him; his speech in 1924 to a group dedicating a monument to his father (see Oka, 22) is so overblown that it is clear he does not mean it, and may even be sarcastic in his thanks to them.

²⁷⁹ 「俺たちは命がけだ」 "Oretachi wa Inochi gakeda"; a rough expression and difficult for me to render. Perhaps a better translation would be "we're working at the cost of our lives." Either way, a sign of military egoism and a reflection of their power in society at the time. That Miki did not fear such fellows is admirable in and of itself.

²⁸⁰ Uchida, "The Projection in Miki Kiyoshi of the Image of the Development of a Despotism Japan", 128.

²⁸¹ 東京帝国大学 Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku

²⁸² 井上哲次郎

²⁸³ Yabe, 12-13.

²⁸⁴ 戸田海市

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Oka, 8-9.

to eat when many people were hungry, and Hidemaro was frightened by such talk so he and his younger brothers bought some sweets to hand out to less fortunate people in the neighbourhood.²⁸⁷ Konoe also liked Oscar Wilde and translated his “The Soul of Man Under Socialism”, and it was published in 1914 in two issues of *Shin Shichō*, which were soon banned.²⁸⁸ In 1917, Konoe graduated from Kyōto, the same year that Miki arrived there. Interestingly, Nishida was very skilled at mathematics (in fact, he had been torn over whether to be a mathematician or a philosopher), but both Miki and Konoe, in contrast, fared very poorly at the school subject. Yabe, in fact, notes that Konoe was an excellent student, with mathematics being the only thing he was weak at.²⁸⁹

Finally, both Miki and Konoe had travelled in Europe, with Konoe learning politics and Miki studying philosophy. Konoe had attended the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, and afterwards, when the Saionji retinue went home, Konoe left them and travelled in France and Germany instead, then visited England, and returned to Japan via the United States in November.²⁹⁰ His expressing his inspiration from visiting the West was controversial, and led to rumours that he was planning to emigrate to the United States.²⁹¹ Shortly after his return, while only 30 years of age, Konoe was elected acting president by the Upper House in December, 1921, when the 45th Diet convened.²⁹² His experience in Europe contributed to his image, as did his tutelage under Saionji; John M. Maki commented in 1945 that Konoe had been regarded as

*...one of the last remaining bulwarks of liberalism in Japan. ... His liberal outlook, in spite of his aristocratic background, is attributed to the fact that he spent some years in France at the end of the nineteenth century when he became firmly converted to democratic principles. One of the primary reasons for Prince Konoye's being regarded as a liberal was the fact that he was Saionji's principle protégé.*²⁹³

Having looked at some of the background similarities between Miki and Konoe, now I will proceed to discuss Konoe's way of thinking and see if it truly differs much from Miki's.

3.3 Konoe's Way of Thinking I: Konoe the Compromiser

In the next two sections I will examine Konoe's way of thinking, beginning by looking at Konoe's tendency to compromise, and in the following section turn to examining Konoe as a thinker. The purpose of this exercise is to see in what ways Konoe thought, before considering this and the previous study of Miki's thought in the second chapter and continuing with my comparison of Miki and Konoe.

I have already shown how Konoe is frequently portrayed as a fool, but this certainly was not the case, as his background would seem to indicate. Maruyama Masao's suggestion that his name would occur to anyone thinking of an example of a leader with “weak nerves” [in the sense of a weak mind, weak character] that led him to capitulate to the militarists is positively droll.²⁹⁴ Konoe's fear of Communism and association with right-wing individuals (whose enthusiasm for reform inspired him despite their tactics) are used to put him in the hard-right mold, but this ignores his background as I have discussed thus far, his socialist ideals and need to overturn

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 9.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Yabe, 7.

²⁹⁰ Oka, 15-16.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 16-17.

²⁹² Ibid., 19.

²⁹³ John M. Maki, *Japanese Militarism: Its Cause and Cure*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 174.

²⁹⁴ Maruyama, 97-98.

status quo, and also his association with left-wing individuals. It is true that Konoe was anti-Communist, as were most of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members, although not all Marxists were suspect since they did not necessarily follow the Comintern. It is likely that Konoe feared a Communist takeover as a threat to the Imperial institution, as well as the intellectual and political elite which were to create the New Order. Konoe liked to surround himself with intelligent people, and rather than being strange, it was quite normal for him to be around various leftist thinkers, of whom there were several among his entourage. Spaulding says of Konoe that "His friends and associates, often chosen with singular lack of discretion, ranged from socialists and 'converted' Communists to extreme conservatives. Partly for this reason, Konoe sometimes seemed intent on riding off in all directions at once."²⁹⁵

Actually, I think an excellent way of approaching Konoe is by seeing him as a compromiser. Indeed, Konoe reputedly "could sit at his private table with a communist at his left and a nationalist at his right, and keep the conversation on an idealistic plane which indicated sympathy for each tint and shade of social thought."²⁹⁶ It seems that Konoe's ability to compromise and juggle people who had radically different viewpoints was one of the factors that contributed to his success with people; historian Nakamura Takafusa states that Konoe was known as "the man with three thousand friends."²⁹⁷ Konoe's friendship with Araki Sadao²⁹⁸ and Mazaki Jinzaburō²⁹⁹ is often brought up in scholarship; less so is his relationships with Asō Hisashi³⁰⁰ and Kamei Kanichirō³⁰¹ of the Socialist Masses Party³⁰². His most frequent response to problems was to try to implement a balancing effect, to compromise and thereby please all parties. For instance, it is true that Konoe suggested to Saionji that Inukai should be replaced by an Imperial Prince (1932) and the new cabinet should include the right-wing Hiranuma, but he also proposed the inclusion of Makino and Saito, who were known as liberals and moderates, for balance.³⁰³ It is understandable that most political figures and writers, intent on attacking their opponents, have difficulty understanding a man who would deliberately try to include all points of view in a decision, especially since all-too-often this did not in practice work out.

Konoe was often forced to adapt his plans for compromise; as an example, he joined the Kenkyūkai, the infamous political force of the Upper House, probably hoping to keep it under control, but condemned it when it went out of line.³⁰⁴ He left it in 1927 when he realized he could not control such a divided group.³⁰⁵ Konoe even turned down premiership when he was chosen by Saionji to replace Okada Keisuke³⁰⁶ because he feared that his friendship with Araki and Mazaki would open his administration to accusations of favouring the Kōdō Faction³⁰⁷ of the

²⁹⁵ Spaulding, 64.

²⁹⁶ Robert J. C. Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 159, quoting an unpublished study prepared in 1946 by an intelligence officer of MacArthur's HQ: United States Army, General Headquarters, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, Counter Intelligence Section, "The Brocade Banner: The Story of Japanese Nationalism", 103.

²⁹⁷ Nakamura Takafusa, 138. A bitter irony, I might add, since he always felt truly alone; as a child Konoe complained people were friendly but always treated him differently because of his status, and this loneliness persisted (e.g. see Oka, 7); Konoe's wisdom comes out when he observed, considering to be premier, that because he was popular across the board, he was not truly popular at all (Oka, 40).

²⁹⁸ 荒木貞夫

²⁹⁹ 真崎甚三郎

³⁰⁰ 麻生久

³⁰¹ 亀井貫一浪

³⁰² 社会大衆党 Shakai Taishū Tō

³⁰³ Storry, 116.

³⁰⁴ Oka, 20.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 24.

³⁰⁶ 岡田啓介

³⁰⁷ 皇道派 (Imperial Way Faction)

army.³⁰⁸ This was a decision that, with the dominance of the ultimately more dangerous Tōsei Faction³⁰⁹ after the February 26th Affair, he probably regretted. However, Konoe's willingness to compromise even with the far right contributed to his estrangement from Saionji; Konoe's thinking to place a rightist amongst the advisors to the Emperor in the hopes of forestalling a rebellion infuriated Saionji.³¹⁰ He also contributed to the rise of the new/reform bureaucrats, something else that he lived to regret.³¹¹

In fact, Konoe's compromising mode of operation was something suited to the times, which was probably one reason why Saionji eventually put aside his reservations and nominated him as Premier in 1937. I say "suited to the times" because, frankly, there was very little solid policy to build on anyway, and a compromiser offered a chance to at least forestall disaster. Crowley notes that when the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai's Foreign Policy Deliberative Committee failed to provide a "fixed standpoint" for Prince Konoe, this was "a deficiency they shared with the ministries of state and the two general staffs."³¹² Konoe failed at least partly because he was never provided with anything to work with, but had to play the game entirely by ear, drifting from one fleeting idea to another, while various factions squabbled for power, and the military -- after its purging by the Tōsei Faction, the only group that *did* have a policy -- smugly took advantage of the situation to rule by default, which is what Konoe had tried to warn Saionji about. There was thus an urgent need for the formulation of a workable policy, but none was forthcoming. The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai too was to fail in its mission of providing a synthesis-driven policy that would enable Konoe to rein in the army, re-assert authority, and begin a broad program of reform, but by 1940 when the organization was dissolved it no longer mattered, for the militarists had entrenched themselves to such an extent at that point that even had a grand new synthetic policy emerged it would have had little effect. Given that he was a natural compromiser, in a situation that forced him to do naught but wait and compromise, it is no wonder that Konoe comes across as indecisive.

3.4 Konoe's Way of Thinking II: Konoe the Philosopher

In addition to having a keen interest in philosophy and being a natural compromiser able to negotiate between different positions, Konoe was also a thinker himself. He was quick to engage in many debates of the day, and argued for extensive reform of many aspects of society. Konoe in the 1920s proclaimed his ideas for reform of the House of Peers, education reform, the abolition of the General Staff, and the rejection of the military clique, and gave his views on these topics and more in newspapers and lectures.³¹³ Miki had criticized Heidegger for joining the Nazi Party and had spoken out against fascism. Similarly, Konoe, shortly after Mussolini's

³⁰⁸ Nakamura Takafusa, 128-129.

³⁰⁹ 統制派 (Control Faction)

³¹⁰ See, for instance, Oka, 29, and 34.

³¹¹ Konoe was indeed associated with the rise of the 'new bureaucrats', that new generation of bureaucrats that challenged the old establishment and cooperated with the Tōsei Faction to dominate Japan's political realm. Robert M. Spaulding argues in "Japan's 'New Bureaucrats' 1932-1945" (in *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, ed. George M. Wilson (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 51-70) that Konoe more than anyone else helped the bureaucrats become a powerful force in government, especially putting them into high positions after his becoming Premier in October 1937 (63-64). However, he later fell out with them. Spaulding relates that a secret Shōwa Kenkyū Kai paper prepared in December 1936 complained that the new bureaucrats were less powerful than the public supposed, but they would become more powerful and with the military would be influential in opening a new era (63; Fletcher in *The Search for a New Order*, 104 uses this too). Evidence like this makes it look as though the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were allied with the Tōsei Faction, but this is a vast oversimplification. I will return to this issue further on.

³¹² James B. Crowley, "Intellectuals as Visionaries of the New Asian Order," *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*, ed. James William Morley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 319-373; 348.

³¹³ Yabe, 24-25.

March on Rome (1922) published a denouncement of Fascism and a defence of representative government.³¹⁴ He also resolved the issue of dispatching an ambassador to the Pope; considering all of this together, it looked like “he had become a star of the age” says Yabe, and he came to be called a “new thinker of the aristocracy.”³¹⁵

Even the aforementioned Takemoto Toru, no fan of Konoe, admitted that Konoe was capable of superb analysis and thought, and examined Konoe’s famed 1918 essay, “In Rejecting Pax-Anglo-Americana”³¹⁶ ³¹⁷ Takemoto recounts that this was an “excellent piece on contemporary international relations” after the First World War, in which Konoe recognized the democratic principles and humanism advocated by the United States and Great Britain, but at the same time he saw that behind these laudable principles were the two countries’ own selfish motives, specifically the maintenance of the status quo to thereby protect their own interests.³¹⁸ The noble ideas, pointed out Konoe, disguised the fact that these two powers had colonies and spheres of influence.³¹⁹

Takemoto points out, however, that Konoe neglected to see that Japan had her *own* colonies and spheres of influence, and Konoe saw Japan as a victim of the system and not a beneficiary.³²⁰ I wonder about this. I feel that this is a similar argument to that used to discredit Miki by claiming that since he rejected Chinese nationalism he was anti-Chinese and pro-Japanese imperialism, without recognizing that Miki was against Japanese nationalism too, and imperialism in any form. Let us see if this is indeed a similar situation. In the paper, Konoe does not suggest that Japan should break down the status quo so that she too may enjoy more colonies and power. Actually, Konoe clearly dismisses all imperialism as self-serving, and suggests that countries should share their resources and cooperate.³²¹ His suggestion that Germany’s actions in the World War were a reaction to its late arrival in the imperial scene *viz.* America and Britain is not an argument supporting Germany’s actions, but rather serves to show the *flaw* in the existing system. If the system were truly fair for all, then there would be no imperialism at all. I will return to this issue in a later section when comparing Miki’s cooperativism to Konoe’s thoughts expressed here.

Konoe made a very similar argument in a speech in America in 1935, 17 years later.³²² He also explained that there were two causes of war: one being the unfair distribution of territories among nations, and the other being the maldistribution of resources.³²³ This is key because the 1918 paper hinges on a distinction between “have” and “have-not” countries, and follows a similar line of thought. In fact, Konoe remained remarkably consistent in his views, and his writings from the 1918 paper through the 1930s follow similar themes.³²⁴ Oka comments thus on the 1918 paper that “...the beliefs stated there by the 27-year-old Konoe remained basically unchanged. They are important, for they continued to influence his entire political career.”³²⁵

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ 「英米本位の平和主義を排す」 “Eibeihoni no Heiwashugi wo Haisu”

³¹⁷ This article was in *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* (日本及日本人) Dec.15 1918. An excellent summary of this is also to be found in Oka, 10-13.

³¹⁸ Takemoto, 211.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 211-212.

³²¹ I am taking this information from Oka’s summary, 10-13, although Konoe’s views on this issue are essentially common knowledge, if frequently misrepresented.

³²² Oka, 36.

³²³ Ibid., 36-37.

³²⁴ Oka makes the same point on pgs.48-49.

³²⁵ Ibid., 13.

Neither were Konoe's ideas of no import; au contraire, even the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members were influenced: Takahashi Kamekichi³²⁶ presented two essays to a Shōwa Kenkyū Kai group in March 1937, in which he argued the old order was crumbling and Britain and the United States were building economic blocs to expand their power, and then he posited a dialectic of 'have' and 'have-not' countries, just as Konoe had nearly two decades earlier.³²⁷ When Konoe travelled to the United States again, he brought with him Rōyama Masamichi, one of the first, and always one of the most important, members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. This also likely furthered the connection.

Looking through Konoe's *Seidanroku*³²⁸, a collection of his writings, reveals quite a thinker; not a philosopher in the Nishida mold, but a quite pragmatic philosopher interested in politics, reform and the application of thought in the real world. Needless to say, this is clearly similar to the approach taken by Miki, who was no supporter of abstract academic philosophy with no application to reality. Miki and Konoe both, then, sought answers in the realm of philosophy to the problems facing Japan.

Konoe was both intelligent, and a compromiser who could see good in a variety of ideals, but unfortunately his was not the time for an idealist who could bring together different thinkers to compromise. A man of action who could make firm decisions in the absence of a stable policy and in the face of military pressure was called for, and Konoe was not such a man. As Gotō Ryūnosuke³²⁹, his lifelong friend, and organizer of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, put it in his estimation of Konoe's character:

*Konoe was virtuous, intelligent, and a man who possessed great elegance. ... However, because he was too intelligent, and could see the future too clearly, he lacked the courage to make decisions.*³³⁰

Hence, this is why Konoe is so often seen as a dreamer and a procrastinator who couldn't act, making him look like a Hamlet-like figure (he would have relished the comparison).

Keeping in mind what I have revealed of Konoe's way of thinking in these last two sections, and recalling again Miki's, and the context in which these two men thought and acted as discussed in the second chapter, it is now apt to return to a comparison and see what is revealed, starting with a look at how Miki and Konoe compared regarding their belief in change.

3.5 Miki and Konoe's Belief in Change

Having come to a clearer understanding of Konoe's thought, from here I shall begin a comparison of Miki and Konoe in terms of their belief in change. Both Miki and Konoe held a belief in forms of revolution, and both had extensive, idealistic programs for change across all aspects of Japanese society. Miki had the clear idea that philosophy should form the basis of action, and argued for the involvement of philosophy in politics in order to guide politics and thereby change the world for the better. Under the leadership of philosophy, the differences and conflicts between various fields and views could be transcended, and better policy would result.

³²⁶ 高橋亀吉

³²⁷ Crowley, "Intellectuals," 325-328.

³²⁸ 「清談録」

³²⁹ 後藤隆之助

³³⁰ Gotō quoted in 酒井三郎 Sakai Saburō, 「昭和研究会——ある知識人集団の軌跡」 *Shōwa Kenkyū Kai: aru Chishikijin Shuudan no Kiseki* [Shōwa Research Association: The Tracks of a Certain Group of Intellectuals], (東京: 株式会社 TBS ブリタニカ, [Kabushiki Kaisha TBS Buritanika], 1979), 293. Emphasis mine. Harada Kumao also told Saionji that "[Konoe] lacked courage and worried too much about his popularity" (Oka, 41, referring to Harada Kumao, *Saionji kō to seikyoku*, vol.5 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1951), 129.

There was thus a strong emphasis in his work on actually changing society through political involvement. Konoe too shared a long-held belief in revolutionary change; indeed, his aforementioned early writings and activities showed him eager for drastic reform of all manner of institutions, but his desire to overturn the whole system set him at odds with his mentor Saionji.

Konoe had been a protégé of Saionji's since 1912. Konoe's relationship with Saionji was a lot like Miki's with Nishida; in both cases the younger men had more radical ideas and sought action while their elder 'guardians' attempted to rein them in. While both Saionji and Nishida cared about their respective protégés and considered criticism a helpful method of guiding them, both Miki and Konoe were sensitive youth and took criticism poorly, often leading to anger and hurt feelings.

Konoe fell out with Saionji at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, fundamentally because Saionji believed in the League of Nations and the Wilsonian model of international relations. However, throughout the conference Konoe was critical of the League as merely serving British and American interests.³³¹ Recalling his 1918 essay (which caused a furor and made Saionji angry), he likely saw the whole event as further evidence of the "have" nations (Britain and America) subjugating the "have-nots" (Japan). Saionji chose to deal with problems in the context of the currently-operating socio-political system, but Konoe wanted to break down the current system and build an entirely new order, a task more befitting of a visionary thinker than a politician.³³² To this end, Konoe decided that it was better to control revolutionary movements than crush them; Saionji favoured a 'hard stand' against the militarists during the 1930s, but Konoe saw the long-term futility of this and instead chose to try and appease the right in the hopes of controlling it. Here, his compromising nature ultimately failed him, for when he gave the army an inch it took a mile. Saionji, in desperation, enabled Konoe to become Premier in the hope that, in the chaotic world following the February 26 Affair, the Prince would be able to hold off the rising militarist tide. He was to be disappointed both in Konoe's method of attempting, and his eventual inability, to do so. Konoe finally split away from Saionji in 1937-1938 over fundamental disagreements in matters both personal and political.³³³

However, Konoe's ambitions for reform were not perceived as realistic by many; Saitō Takeo, a member of the Lower House, criticized Konoe's plans for the New Order, noting

³³¹ Connors, 69.

³³² Hagihara Notuboshi characterized these differences as the contrast between a democrat (Konoe) and a liberal (Saionji); see "Does history repeat itself?" *Bungei Shunjū* May 1973 376-386, 382, as referred to by Takemoto, 209.

³³³ Personally, Saionji was pleased with the death sentences of Kita Ikki and Nishida Zei, who had been implicated in the February 26 Affair, but Konoe sympathized with their motives and wanted amnesty granted for them, as well as the release of General Mazaki (Connors, 199-201). Mazaki was the rightist hero who in July 1935 had been dismissed from his post as Inspector-General of Military Education following the Military Academy Affair in which two young officers were dismissed in November 1934 for planning a military insurrection. Rage at the treatment of Mazaki was one factor that prompted them to lead the February 26 Affair. Storry suggests that Konoe genuinely feared another armed outbreak in Tokyo if Mazaki was convicted (199). More important were the political disagreements between Saionji and Konoe. Saionji was opposed to Konoe's idea of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Connors, 206), and the two disagreed over the role of the Court: Konoe wanted the Court involved in efforts to restructure society and be a force for change, whereas Saionji wanted the Court to continue in the liberal mode of the 1920s and preserve the status quo; furthermore, while Saionji wanted the Emperor to play only a formal and symbolic role in political decisions, Konoe wanted direct involvement (Connors, 201-202). In fact, Konoe wrote in 1942 complaining about the Emperor's failure to take a stand against going to war with America, a situation he felt could have been avoided had the Emperor followed the constitution and directly intervened (Tōjō Hideki Kankōkai, *Tōjō Hideki*, 571, quoted in Mikiso Hane's introduction to *Emperor Hirohito and His Chief Aide-de-Camp: The Honjō Diary, 1933-1936* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), 55).

*It is a dream.... War is not a struggle between the just and the unjust. It is an out-and-out power struggle. ... The nation must cease questing after noble-sounding dreams and face realities.*³³⁴

Saitō's statement should cause us to consider a serious issue here. With his suggesting that Germany or Japan's situation in the First World War was understandable and had been motivated by challenges to the status quo, Konoe risked playing into the hands of the militarists who would argue that future war was 'justified', regardless of what Konoe had to say in the matter. One of the many conflicts was that Konoe wanted great change but he also wanted continuity in the form of such elements as the Imperial institution which were by no means guaranteed in the event of a massive political upheaval -- which was indeed why he was interested in leftist ideas but fearful of a Communist revolution, and why although he wanted to avoid war, he associated with rightists whose belief in tradition and the primacy of the Imperial institution reassured him.

While Miki and Konoe shared a strong belief in change, they lacked a clear understanding of how the program of reform they envisioned would come about. As time passed and the impetus for reform grew, the crisis worsened as it became ever more crucial to implement a reform policy they still possessed no inkling of how it would really be carried out. For all the faith heaped upon it, the New Order Movement would have a long road to travel were it to accomplish all that its creators demanded of it.

3.6 A Philosophy of Cooperativism and A Policy of Compromise

I have already discussed Konoe's faith in compromise, and his attempts to negotiate between right and left to create something which rose above the limitations of each; this later fed into the Imperial Rule Assistance Association which was to be a political body that would be theoretically superior to any other. Furthermore, we have seen that not only in domestic politics, but also internationally, Konoe favoured a sort of mutually cooperative system, fundamentally rejecting the foundations of imperialism. To recall the 1918 paper, "Rejecting Pax-Anglo-Americana," with Konoe's argument here summarized by Oka:

*Should [the Anglo-American] policy prevail, Japan, which is small, resource-poor, and unable to consume all its own industrial products, would have no resort but to destroy the status quo for the sake of self-preservation, just like Germany. This is true not only of Japan but of all late-coming nations that are small and do not have colonial territories. That is why we must reject economic imperialism, not only for the sake of Japan, but to establish among all nations equally the right of existence based upon the principle of justice and humanity.*³³⁵

Here, rather than supporting imperialism and Germany's position, Konoe is saying that what occurred were natural results of the current system, thereby illustrating *exactly* what was *wrong*

³³⁴ As quoted by Crowley in "A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism", 282-283.

Crowley seems to be taking this from a Newspaper clipping in the Hugh Byas Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., but he says as far as he knows the complete text of the speech is only available in the archives of the Self-Defence Agency, War History Division, Kihon kokusaku kankei, III, "Saitō daigishi ensetsu ni tai suru shoken." Crowley relates that this speech of Saitō's to the Diet was rubbed from the Diet proceedings and he was expelled from the Diet following it. Crowley also notes that the Supreme Command, bogged down in China, actually shared the basic assumption of Saitō's realistic view; this to me illustrates the difference between the idealistic approach of those like Konoe and the military realists, in spite of assumptions by some that Konoe and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were in league with the militarists.

³³⁵ Oka, 13. Emphasis mine.

with the current system, for, if it were fair and truly stood for the principles it was supposed to stand for, these things would simply not happen.

*We must require all the powers to open the doors of their colonies to others, so that all nations will have equal access to the markets and natural resources of the colonial areas.*³³⁶

Notice, how, as Takemoto earlier pointed out, Japan would actually stand to lose as well as to gain if this were to become a reality, but Konoe does not care -- it is entirely *because* one nation *can* profit at the expense of another that the current system is flawed and must be changed.

How does this connect to Miki Kiyoshi? It is paralleled by Miki's cooperativism, which politically was to transcend liberalism, Communism, and so forth, overcoming the individual shortcomings of all previous ideologies into a grand synthesis. This reflected Nishida's ideas of Japanese philosophy as seeking to find a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought that was superior to both and could forge a new worldly and universal philosophy -- it was *this* very philosophy that Miki sought and later advocated in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. This was to have an enormous impact on the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, encouraging the method of taking elements and then transcending the individual (particularistic) limitations of those elements through a synthesis that would lay the framework for a general (universal) principle, and the building of a New Order.

Hence, both Miki and Konoe not only planned broad programs of change, but both were seeking a synthesis, a new order to replace the old, in order to lay the intellectual groundwork for a sort of utopian vision. Miki sought a synthesis of thought, while Konoe sought a synthetic policy, so the former was to become the intellectual foundation for the latter. There was thus a clear connection between these two; the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was to go through the entire process, searching for a synthetic policy for Konoe, and this in turn required a synthetic philosophy upon which to base the policy. Here again we can see the dependance upon dialectic modes of reasoning, for Nishida, Miki, and Konoe all held to a form of dialectic by which the contradictions between two forces could be transcended to a higher state that incorporated both but was superior to either.

Miki and Konoe both believed that the dominant world powers had entrenched their power through the formation of not particularistic, but worldly, philosophies that allowed them to impact world culture. Konoe especially, recall, was critical of the Anglo-American world order and its use of democratic ideals to maintain a status quo that suited its own interests. There was a sense here, then, of 'impure' ideologies -- the Anglo-American ideology was good in theory, but in practice it was used as a front for the interests of the powers that propagated it. Miki and Konoe thus agreed on the need for Japan to produce a world philosophy of its own that could have a universal and not merely particularistic impact. Japan was then not only to formulate a world philosophy to compete in the world (through offering a challenge to the Anglo-American ideology, Nazi ideology, and Communist ideology), but there was also, moreover, the sense that, unlike previous ideologies, *this* one would be 'pure', for by being based upon cooperativism and compromise, it would unify first Japan and then Asia into a mutually-beneficial sphere that would take a stand against those powers that formed worldly ideologies merely for their own benefit. Miki and Konoe could not, of course, have foreseen how elements in Japan were to twist this new ideology and create a system equal to, if not worse than, that backed by the Western powers, perverting their dream for the very purpose that it had been designed to stop: particularistic, self-serving imperialism.

³³⁶ Ibid.

Therefore, Miki and Konoe had fundamental similarities in many aspects of their ways of thinking. It is thus pointless to place them into oversimplified and loaded categories which they do not fit for the purpose of reducing the time to a mere clash between stylized ideologies represented by various two-dimensional figures. While typical representations of Konoe and Miki would serve to make them appear ideologically incompatible, in reality, despite their differences, they had a lot in common.

3.7 A Key Difference: The Role of Politics and Philosophy

Miki and Konoe both loved philosophy as I have shown, but there was a significant difference regarding their perception of how it was to be used. Both saw philosophy as an ideal juxtaposed with politics (i.e. the real), but, as I mentioned earlier, Miki wanted to bring philosophy down to politics (bring philosophy back to reality) whereas Konoe wanted to bring politics up to philosophy (bring reality up to the philosophical standard). Consequently, Miki was attracted to not only philosophy, but also politics, and from the beginning he wanted to act and have an impact on the real world:

I was obstinate and stubborn. What makes it worse, because I happen to have a little ability, by taking the opposite and resisting everything, like what is happening to many people, I was going to show my own ability. I believed I could accomplish anything that I myself willed to do. I came to fancy, one after another, all the kinds of person which were worth my paying attention to. Politician, lawyer, legal scholar, literary scholar, critic, writer, newspaper editor, philosopher.... However, from the beginning there were two I did not intend to be. Those were merchant and soldier.³³⁷

Note that all of these occupations revolve around using a pen or speech to influence society. Miki loved thinking, but he desperately wanted to have some 'real' impact, just like that advocated by his pragmatic philosophy; he wanted to put it into action and improve society, and despised academism that did not concern itself with society, real people, and real problems.

Konoe, while also loving philosophy, saw it as miles above the dirty world of politics. He never really changed from the young man who said of his inspirational teacher Iwamoto,

...teacher's ideal was Plato, and one had the feeling like a Greek philosopher had come and been reborn in this world. I looked at the great influence a teacher received; at that time I came to think that the most vulgar thing in the world was a politician, and the most noble was a philosopher...³³⁸

It was from then, writes Yabe, that "he thought to resign his Peerage and become a philosopher."³³⁹ As we have already seen, it took several professors to dissuade him. For Konoe, like Miki, politics represented the real world, but unlike Miki, for Konoe that world was one of lies and hypocrisy when seen from the vantage point of the realm of philosophy, which was one of truth and purity. While Miki loathed academism and saw it as pointless escapism from the real world, Konoe saw academism as the pursuit of truth and freedom.

³³⁷ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「語られざる哲学」 *Katararezaru Tetsugaku* [Philosophy Which is Not Discussed], 三木清全集 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 18.3-93; 18. Also quoted in 宮川透 Miyakawa Tōru, 「三木清」 *Miki Kiyoshi* (東京 Tōkyō: 東京大学出版会 Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 1970), 9.

³³⁸ Quoted in Yabe, 12.

³³⁹ Yabe, 12.

So while both wanted to use philosophy to actualize the ideal world, Miki personally wanted to leave that world and enter into the real world of politics and policies, whereas Konoe wanted to move up into the ideal world of philosophy, so that while both sought a transition, in bridging the two worlds they were moving in different directions. Ultimately, Miki was a thinker who wanted to be a leader, and Konoe was a leader who wanted to be a thinker. They came together in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, with Miki seeking a synthesis of thought and Konoe seeking a synthetic policy; in 1938 Miki was not just an advisor to Konoe but also a speech-writer for him; as Crowley notes: "Many of [Miki's] ideas were soon mirrored in the premier's explanations of national policy."³⁴⁰ Both men likely had a similar vision for the organization: a vehicle to defend Japan from domestic dominance by the militarists, and a think-tank to formulate a synthetic approach that would enable Japan to resolve itself of the China quagmire and form a new order.

If, as I have suggested, Miki was a thinker who wanted to be a leader, and Konoe was a leader who wanted to be a thinker, then both, one could argue, were failures at what they were handed by life, and were unable due to their circumstances to follow their desired pursuits, despite their efforts. While there is no sign that Miki subscribed to a fatalism like that of Konoe, he could as well have. Ultimately, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was also a failure; the militarists came to dominate domestic policy as they had international, and the ideas of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai ended up being used by the military for its own purposes; yet, it is the highest irony that, by virtue of its being "nationalist" in nature (in the sense that it aimed at defending the country domestically by formulating an intellectual foundation for a new political order therein), without distinguishing this from other less liberal nationalisms, so many think of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as allied to, or even synonymous with, the militarists whose rise to power more than anything it aimed to stop.

Chapter IV The Crucible of the New Order: The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

*These days, it has practically become common sense that the entirety of politics, economics, and culture is related to intellectual problems. Even taking this incident [the China Incident], one essential point is the intellectual problem. It is said that the intention of Japan's action in China is Sino-Japanese friendship and peace in Asia thereafter. The intention surely cannot be anything aside from this. The problem is, how is this ideology of Sino-Japanese friendship made concrete, or what is the content of the thought that will be the foundation of establishing peace in Asia?*³⁴¹ - Miki Kiyoshi

*...the dilettante Konoye, who, surrounded by the young men of his "brains trust," delighted to toy with dangerous political experiments...*³⁴² - Sir Robert Craigie

*...a member blurted out that, 'then, we can think of nothing but fascism!' and he was counterattacked by Miki Kiyoshi.*³⁴³ - Nakajima Kenzō

³⁴⁰ Crowley, "A New Asian Order," 278.

³⁴¹ 三木清 Miki Kiyoshi, 「日本の現実」 "Nihon no Kenjitsu" [The Reality of Japan], 三木清全集 Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works] (東京 Tōkyō: 岩波書店 Iwanami Shoten, 1966), 13.438-463; 439. Emphasis mine.

³⁴² Craigie, 69. Emphasis his.

³⁴³ Nakajima Kenzō, 「回想日記」 *Kaisō Nikki* [Diary of Recollections], cited in 塩崎弘明 Shiozaki Hiroake, 「昭和研究会と三木清の協同主義」 "Shōwa Kenkyū Kai to Miki Kiyoshi no Kyōdō-shūgi" [The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai and Miki Kiyoshi's Cooperativism], 日本歴史 *Nihon Rekishi* [Japanese History] 542 (1993.7), 18-37; 30. Nakajima is here describing a scene during reform discussions in Miki's group within the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.

I, who saw with my own eyes Miki's passion in his exploration of "Principles of Thought of the New Japan" and his enthusiasm in expecting the New Order Movement, cannot help but express respect from the bottom of my heart when I remember his strong desire to improve his country and his deep affection for humanity.

*In such a time, the so-called men of culture were always critics of the time, and remained onlookers, and they even treated Miki as an opportunist.*³⁴⁴ -Sakai Saburō³⁴⁵

By now I have broken down the meaningless images of an idealistic leftist philosopher being coerced into joining a rightist Shōwa Kenkyū Kai which was determined to build a new system under a militarist Premier Konoe; it has been clearly illustrated that Miki was hardly a naïve thinker, but a complex individual clearly seeking political involvement in order to improve society, and that Konoe strove to be a thinker who hoped to keep the military under control and launch a broad program of reform, and I concluded the previous chapter by suggesting that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai does not fit so easily into the puzzle either. Indeed, a reevaluation of the organization is long overdue. Against the approach that would ask why Miki joined the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, arguing either that his participation is strange or he became fascistic, I again state that coming to an understanding of Miki's thought and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai brings the realization that neither man nor organization were fascist, and it was certainly not strange that Miki became involved. Without further delay, then, I will begin this chapter by briefly looking at just what the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai actually was.

4.1 The Formation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, the Shōwa Research Association, was organized by Gotō Ryūnosuke, a student of Nitobe Inazō³⁴⁶'s, and Konoe's longtime friend since their First Higher School days.³⁴⁷ Western scholarship is curiously confused about some of the details of the organization, describing it as a small group of advisors, for instance, which is simply incorrect; it is best to start, however, by looking at the confusion over the organization's formation. Marius B. Jansen and Barshay both say the organization began in 1936, whereas Spaulding consults Furuta Tokujirō who stated that it was formed in September 1933, disbanded, and revived in the fall of 1936.³⁴⁸ Spaulding is close, but only Fletcher seems to have a grasp of how the organization developed.³⁴⁹

Personally, I think that one can identify three stages in how the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai developed. The first stage, from 1933 to 1936, saw a smaller, more informal group; the second stage, from 1936 to 1937, was a larger organization, hoping and preparing for Konoe's rise to power, and the third stage, from 1938 through 1941, was a full-blown research organization, working to formulate an intellectual basis for the policy of Konoe's first cabinet.

Insight into the first incarnation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai can be gleaned from its papers which are collected in *Documents Related to Kido Kōichi*.³⁵⁰ The papers concern such matters as the Manchurian Incident and political reform, and are dated from November 1934 through 1936.

³⁴⁴ Sakai, 222.

³⁴⁵ 酒井三郎

³⁴⁶ 新渡戸稲造

³⁴⁷ Nakamura Takafusa, 138.

³⁴⁸ Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 613; Barshay, 214; Spaulding, 63.

³⁴⁹ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 88-104.

³⁵⁰ 「木戸幸一関係文書」 *Kido Kōichi Kankei Bunsho* [Documents Related to Kido Kōichi] (東京 Tōkyō: 東京大学出版会, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 1966), 189-246.

By 1935, the organization was prepared to expand; at this time of deciding to make a fresh start in the national policy research group, Sakai Saburō, a member of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai throughout its history, recalls:

The move was decided on the 5th of March in the same year; immediately, concerning the establishment of the national policy research institute, Ōkura Kinmochi, Igawa Tadao, Matsui Haruo, Rōyama Masamichi, Gotō Ryūnosuke, and I, got together and discussed. Then it was decided that the title of the research organization would be that of the name of the meetings we had had until then, "Shōwa Kenkyū Kai," and we provided the fundamental policies of the research organization as follows:

- 1: Undertake domestic reform, within the limits of the present constitution³⁵¹*
- 2: Denounce the existing political parties³⁵²*
- 3: Oppose fascism^{353 354}*

In 1936, the organization was rocked by the crisis of the February 26 Affair, and the refusal of Konoe in the aftermath to form a cabinet. Having lost their chance for power, and perhaps fearing for their safety, a number of members were dissatisfied; and the organization, sizing up the remaining loyal members, embarked once more with renewed vigour, which is perhaps why so many people date the organization's formation from this time:

From this time (after Konoe rejected [the Emperor's request to form a cabinet]), among those who had joined the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, some people became estranged. Even in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, which had been generally seen as a gathering of Konoe's brain, there were people holding various expectations, such as people who desired getting a position envisioning becoming a cabinet minister, or such, while expecting the formation of the Konoe Cabinet, and people hunting for information to make money. Because of the February 26 Affair and the refusal to form a cabinet, the true intentions of these people became practically obvious. At the same time, those people with burning hearts who truly thought about the future of the national policy, and grappled with the establishment of national policies, became clear. From then on, our research activity became much more active.³⁵⁵

Curiously, some have referred to the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as Konoe's 'unofficial' 'brain trust', but since Konoe personally sanctioned it, I fail to see how it could be any more 'official'. There were many groups seeking Konoe's attention, especially once he rose to the Premiership, and some were calling for the establishment of a mass movement (resembling something like that of Germany or Italy) but the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was not among them; of the numerous groups with proposals for the future, only the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai enjoyed the position of Konoe's personal 'brain trust' and his confidence. Having examined briefly the formation of the group, I will now proceed to look at the scholarship on the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.

4.2 Overview of Scholarship on the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

Sakai observed that,

³⁵¹ 1: 現行憲法の範囲内で国内改革をする

³⁵² 2: 既成政党を排撃する

³⁵³ 3: ファシズムに反対する

³⁵⁴ Sakai, 43.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 46-47.

*The people who had gathered in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were what we call intellectuals; the history of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai... was at the same time a history of the gathering, and the failure, of intellectuals.*³⁵⁶

That is a decent point from which to address the history of the organization, so it is baffling that so few have taken up the issue. Frequently the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai appears in Western writing on the period only briefly, and usually in a dismissive way. In fact, it seems that in terms of scholarship on the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, there seems to be less work aimed at understanding the organization and its members than there is work directed at fitting the organization into a prepackaged category. It has resisted all attempts to reduce it to a distinct political category, yet writers keep trying. What Berger said of this regarding the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, that “These labels do more to obscure the nature of political conflict in the prewar period than to clarify it” could apply with equal force to the case of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.³⁵⁷ Miles Fletcher wrote an article that illustrates this problem; he suggests viewing the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, and by extension the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, through the lens of fascism, with one of his arguments being that the term was used at the time.³⁵⁸ This, however, ignores the fact that there were also informed figures at the time who spoke out against the term, such as American ambassador Joseph C. Grew, who noted on September 1, 1940 “The “new structure” is going ahead fast and Japan is rapidly becoming a regimented nation, although in its main outlines this regimentation cannot be said to be either Fascism or Nazism. It is very far from either.”³⁵⁹

One of the older but still meaningful views of the organization comes from Chalmers Johnson’s *An Instance of Treason*. Johnson stresses that the members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were desperate men, and the organization was not a seminar called to discuss abstract problems but more akin to a conspiracy, in which even the members could not trust each other’s motives.³⁶⁰ Further, “These men had no basis of mass support, no place to seek political asylum, and no freedom even in silence. They were under direct attack from the numerous extremists, so pervasive as to seem almost invisible, who were demanding a totalitarian state and a racist war in East Asia.”³⁶¹ The members had chosen a policy of limited resistance that had little chance of success, and each had a different reason for doing so; the collective goal was to support Konoe as a means of getting political leverage *viz.* those who had tried to seize control of the government since 1930.³⁶² Ultimately, they failed, and may even have contributed to Japanese totalitarianism, “but theirs was the only serious effort to challenge the militarists before the creation of a police state in 1941.”³⁶³

The first English work to focus specifically on the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was James B. Crowley’s “Intellectuals as Visionaries of the New Asian Order,” in which the author examined how some intellectuals participated in the formulation of the New Order (in East Asia), focusing

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 289.

³⁵⁷ Berger, 344-345.

³⁵⁸ Miles Fletcher, “Intellectuals and Fascism in Early Shōwa Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 39.1 (November 1979): 39-63. The paper remains useful for its succinct summary of the views on fascism held by Rōyama, Ryū, and Miki at the time. I find Fletcher’s arguments that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai intellectuals were concerned with using fascist ideas to reform the capitalist and political party systems, and not controlling the army, unconvincing (61). He makes the same argument in his book, *The Search for a New Order*.

³⁵⁹ Grew, 327.

³⁶⁰ Johnson, 115-118.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 116.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid.

on the ideas of members from 1936-1938.³⁶⁴ The focus here is on how Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members discussed Japan's foreign policy in an attempt to resolve the China problem, and how the rationalism gave way to idealism as the establishment of a politico-economic bloc emerged as the perceived solution. Early plans and recommendations were made redundant by the China Incident and the start of full-scale hostilities, in which the Konoe made decisions seemingly without a clear policy because in fact there *was* no clear policy.³⁶⁵ Eventually a generalized plan of mutual cooperation between Japan, China and Manchukuo was planned, and then a separate committee attempted to formulate a practical means of attaining this objective, but this remained elusive and the resolutions were hopelessly vague and contradictory.³⁶⁶ Miki Kiyoshi's speech on the first anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident is seen as the starting point for the new cooperativist ideology which then became the dominant idea and the perceived goal of Japan's program of expansion in Asia.³⁶⁷ Crowley notes that it remains conjectural how much impact the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai really had on national policy formulation, but he has shown that the ideas of the New Order in Asia were not just militarist fantasies but indeed flowed "from a passionate concern with and an informed understanding of the domestic and foreign nettles confronting the empire."³⁶⁸

However, the dominant image that has persisted is of a rightist organization, which is peculiar given the numbers of leftists in it. This is explained away either by arguing that the members gave up Marxism for 'fascism' (like in Fletcher), or that they were forced to undergo *tenkō* (as in A. J. Zavala³⁶⁹), or that they joined to resist from within (examples of similar 'dissent from within' arguments are those of Hanneman and Ueda concerning Hasegawa and Nishida respectively). I have yet to see a study suggesting a thinker was completely naïve and joined the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai unawares. The other alternative, that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was not a purely rightist organization, does not seem to have been overly considered, and this is the view I will undertake in this section. As for those who would dismiss the organization as 'fascist,' that merely returns one to the debate touched upon earlier, and serves little purpose.³⁷⁰

Then there are frequently attempts to fit the organization into a perceived larger dichotomy that can be reduced to the clash between the Kōdō Faction and the Tōsei Faction in the army. Sharon Minichiello associates the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai with the Tōsei Faction, as well as the People's League for the Building of East Asia³⁷¹, under the grouping of the 'reform right', which she separates from the 'spiritual right' which she claims was more "nationalistic," in the

³⁶⁴ Crowley, "Intellectuals," 320-322.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 342-348.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 350-354, and 355-363 respectively.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 363-366.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 369-370.

³⁶⁹ For Zavala's view, see Agustin Jacinto Zavala, *Textos de la Filosofía Japonesa Moderna*, vol.1, 355-363, as translated and adapted into "Miki Kiyoshi", *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, trans. and eds. David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo, with Agustin Jacinto Zavala (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 289-297. It is poorly substantiated, merely stating bluntly that "One aspect that should not be forgotten is his forced conversion (*tenkō*) to the line of the militaristic government ideology during the war, as can be seen in his "Ideological Foundation of East Asia" (293). The work in question is clearly built on nothing but Miki's long-held views on cooperativism, and even the most ardent *tenkō* advocates give 1930 and/or 1937 as dates, when the military was not yet completely entrenched domestically, unless Zavala means the Pacific War, in which case he is simply incorrect.

³⁷⁰ Theoretically, if one chose to characterize the resulting Japanese socio-political order after 1941 as 'fascist', then the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai could be charged with contributing to fascism if only for no other reason than its *failure*, given that its stated purpose, something I will turn to in a moment, was to *prevent* fascism. It would be a category error, then, to argue that because it *failed to stop* fascism, the organization was *itself* fascist in nature.

³⁷¹ 東亜建設国民連盟 (Tōa Kensetsu Kokumin Renmei)

tradition of the Kokuryūkai³⁷² and Genyōsha^{373 374}. The 'spiritual right' here incorporates the Kōdō Faction, but *all* of these groups were nationalistic; I think when she says the 'spiritual right' was more 'nationalistic' she presumably means more 'activist and militaristic.'

In a similar vein is Miwa Kimitada's approach; Miwa formulates a very interesting model of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, but his approach fails in my opinion because it depends upon grand generalizations based upon implausible assumptions, even though his background research by itself would prove intriguing. Without going into too much detail, Miwa creates a straight dichotomy, like others drawing upon the Kōdō/Tōsei division, but he goes further. For Miwa, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai is juxtaposed with the Dai Ajia Kyōkai.³⁷⁵ Both groups were expected to function as Konoe's brain trust, he says.³⁷⁶ This is counter to all other evidence that indicates while certain groups may have influenced Konoe, only the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was formed specifically as his brain trust and acted in said capacity. For a moment, however, let us assume Miwa's notion is correct, and see where he takes it. For Miwa, the Dai Ajia Kyōkai held an emotional view, was driven by sentimental nationalism, was based on Eastern 'values', and was allied with the Kōdō Faction; the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, conversely, held a scientific view, was driven by geopolitics, was based on Western philosophy, and was allied with the Tōsei Faction.³⁷⁷

This approach is indeed attractive in its organization and simplicity, but it masks some serious flaws. I will address the Kōdō/Tōsei issue separately in a moment, but one should also note the distinction between philosophy as Western and 'values' (whatever that means) as Eastern. In a complete reversal of Maruyama, who argued (just as incorrectly) that the prewar intellectuals drifted from Western thought to Eastern thought, Miwa places them squarely in the Western 'camp' opposite the political hotheads of the Dai Ajia Kyōkai. The fact that several Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members made appeals to solve the China Problem through the shared Eastern heritage of Confucianism does not evidently register as Eastern 'values' to Miwa. While most members were 'scientific' (in the sense that they tended to occupy their meetings with genuine debates as opposed to empty rightist rhetoric) compared to other groups, this does not mean that they were any less nationalistic or emotional when it came to dealing with Japan's destiny. While Crowley saw a movement from a rational (how to solve what *is*) to an idealist (what *should be*) perspective in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai with regard to the China Incident, and how this led to the push for the New Order and the role of cooperativism, Miwa's Shōwa Kenkyū Kai is undynamic and merely a static symbol of a scientific, rational approach.

Having traced the scholarship that touches upon the subject of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, I will now take a few moments to respond more clearly to some of the issues that have been raised here.

³⁷² 黒龍会 (Amur River Society; often mistranslated as Black Dragon Society)

³⁷³ 玄洋社 (Dark Ocean Society)

³⁷⁴ Minichiello, 5-6.

³⁷⁵ 大アジア協会 (Greater Asian Association)

³⁷⁶ Miwa Kimitada, "Japanese Policies and Concepts for a Regional Order in Asia, 1938-1940," Research Paper, Series A-46; Institute of International Relations: for advanced studies on peace and development in asia (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1983) 7.

A slightly modified version of this paper is in *The Ambivalence of Nationalism: Modern Japan between East and West*, edited by James W. White, Michio Umegaki, and Thomas R.H. Havens (New York: University Press of America, 1990), 133-156.

³⁷⁷ My extrapolation of pages 3 to 19:

/Shōwa Kenkyū Kai [scientific view / geopolitics / Western philosophy / Tōsei-ha]

Konoe

\ Dai Ajia Kyōkai [emotional view / sentimental nationalism / Eastern 'values' / Kōdō-ha]

4.3 My Response to the Scholarship

My position is that views setting the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai into a static relationship *viz.* other organizations and groups results in gross oversimplifications. First of all, the East Asian League³⁷⁸, which was linked with the Dai Ajia Kyōkai, had very similar aims to the Dai Ajia Kyōkai, but favoured the Tōsei Faction, and according to Storry backed Hayashi Senjurō³⁷⁹ as successor to Araki.³⁸⁰ Yet in 1941 Tōjō feared the group was working to topple the Konoe cabinet to get at him, and moved against the movement.³⁸¹ This shows the group then favoured neither the Tōsei Faction, nor Konoe. Much the same could be said of many other groups at the time. This is because, unsurprisingly, by the late 1930s the military had split into more factions over the China policy, and the Kōdō/Tōsei division was no longer of any real consequence.³⁸² Hence, suggesting that the Dai Ajia Kyōkai was Kōdō against the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai which was Tōsei is simply illogical.

Secondly, there is the issue of the “reform bureaucrats.” The view that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was allied with the Tōsei Faction may have originated in the association of some reform bureaucrats with the organization, as the reform bureaucrats were known to have been allied with the Tōsei Faction. The problem is that there were never that many reform bureaucrats in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai to begin with (and fewer still in Konoe’s entourage), and that the ‘alliance’ between the reform bureaucrats and the Tōsei Faction effectively ceased after the February 26 Affair anyway.³⁸³ The reform bureaucrats that remained in the organization after that date soon departed as well. Peter Duus suggests that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was not supportive of the reform bureaucrats because the underlying thought of the members was essentially anti-bureaucratic; the cooperativism of many members, exemplified by Miki, can be seen as the ultimate expression of the “liberal impulse to define a political structure congruent with such a social vision [of a harmonious parliamentary state]” which drove the earlier Japanese liberals, and remained just as anti-bureaucratic in nature.³⁸⁴

Of course, Konoe himself had been a Kōdō sympathizer, so he was unlikely to have aided the Tōsei Faction, nor the reform bureaucrats if he saw them as allied with them.³⁸⁵ The anti-war Konoe further blamed the victory of the Tōsei Faction for embroiling Japan in China and Pacific War.³⁸⁶ It was leaders of the Tōsei Faction like Nagata Tetsuzan³⁸⁷ who as early as

³⁷⁸ 東亜連盟 Tōa Renmei

³⁷⁹ 林銑十郎

³⁸⁰ Storry, 150. Hayashi succeeded Araki in January 1934. Ironically, at the time he tended to be seen as Araki’s puppet, but in reality he set about destroying the Kōdō Faction’s influence in the army.

³⁸¹ Tōjō’s statement to Anami Korechika, in Higashikuni Naruhiko, *Higashikuni Nikki: Nihon gekidōki no hiroku* (Takuma Shōbo, 1968) 25-26, referred to in Mark R. Peattie’s *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan’s Confrontation with the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 326.

³⁸² Recall that the Kōdō Faction was already emasculated due to the pressure of Hayashi and others by 1936 when its last gasp, the February 26 Affair, failed to seize the reins of power, and sealed Tōsei dominance. A few Kōdō generals were returned to positions in 1937 by Konoe. No longer a ‘faction’ but a ruling group, the Tōsei did not last long before its leaders too divided over other issues. To speak of Kōdō/Tōsei rivalry as being of any significance after 1938 or so is ludicrous.

³⁸³ See Spaulding, 36 for a look at how the relations between the reform bureaucrats and the Tōsei Faction changed.

³⁸⁴ Peter Duus, “Liberal Intellectuals and Social Conflict in Taishō Japan,” *Conflict in Modern Japanese History: The Neglected Tradition*, eds. Tetsuo Najita and J. Victor Koschmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 412-440; 439-440.

³⁸⁵ Marius B. Jansen implies that the reform bureaucrats were a group of Konoe’s followers (Jansen, 614), but this is incorrect. Refer to footnote #310 which addresses Konoe and the reform bureaucrats, an issue taken up by Spaulding.

³⁸⁶ *Konoe Fumimaro no shuki: ushinuwareshi seiji* (Tokyo, 1946), partial English translation, IMTFE, *Document 1467*, as quoted by Crowley in *Japan’s Quest for Autonomy*, 247-248.

³⁸⁷ 永田鉄山 Assassinated in August 1935 by a Kōdō officer inflamed by Mazaki’s dismissal. See footnote #332.

1926 had argued for 'total war' based on a military industrial complex.³⁸⁸ Sound military thinking, and anapha for the Kōdō leaders and their ilk with their ideals of bushi spirit and purity that led them to target domestic *zaibatsu* leaders and politicians. The 1938 general mobilization bill appears to have been accepted by many only grudgingly as something necessitated by the war in China; this prompted still further divides in the military. The Kōdō Faction, unconcerned with the West and focused on challenging Russia, was not only against the war in China from the start (unlike the Tōsei Faction which supported expansionism; indeed, this conflict was one of the issues that prompted the February 26th Affair) but it had also acted as a sort of buffer that kept the more radical elements of the military distracted. Konoe himself was deeply troubled by the direction the military would take without the Kōdō leaders there for a "dampening effect."³⁸⁹ Ultimately, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai fell out of favour with Konoe, and its whole approach was disregarded, and Konoe fell out with the Tōsei Faction, which he had never liked anyway, but which went on to dominate Japan, so then to equate the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai with the Tōsei Faction is not only illogical but completely meaningless.

Finally, to address another issue, there were also no real political figures of note connected with the organization with the exception of Prince Konoe. It is true that Kido Kōichi was a member at the start in 1933, but "According to a talk by Kido Kōichi, he joined from when the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was formed, but he never attended even once, and was not influenced by means of the various documents which were forwarded."³⁹⁰ Since Kido had nothing to fear from being associated with the organization, there is no reason to suggest he is being untruthful here.

4.4 Miki joins the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

Having looked briefly at the formation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai and the scholarship on the organization, it is now fitting to begin examining Miki's involvement itself. Miki was not the only intellectual at the time grappling with Japan's future; as Miyakawa explains, many intellectuals were interested in looking at the meaning of the Manchurian Incident and trying to solve the China Problem.³⁹¹ Miki was undertaking similar endeavours through means such as his articles in the *Yomiuri Shinbun*³⁹², which addressed various problems in society. Rōyama Masamichi, already a Shōwa Kenkyū Kai member, and Ozaki Hotsumi³⁹³, were following similar paths, as were many other intellectuals. It is impossible to argue that all these intellectuals, notably Miki, only started dealing with policies on these issues after a *tenkō*; in Miki's case, the only difference was that in the early 1930s his material was being read by the masses and not considered seriously, if at all, by actual policy makers. In the case of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* articles, Miki had been doing these since at least 1932.³⁹⁴

He was also active in other groups, and continued to be right through his membership in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. For example, the League for National Arts and Sciences³⁹⁵, formed in 1939, which studied cultural science from a national perspective, and included not only Miki but also Nishida, Ryū, and Nyozeikan among its members.³⁹⁶ The group suffered from not having a

³⁸⁸ Peattie, 186-187.

³⁸⁹ Oka, 40.

³⁹⁰ Kido Kōichi, 189.

³⁹¹ Miyakawa, 114-115.

³⁹² 読売新聞 (Yomiuri Newspaper)

³⁹³ 尾崎秀実

³⁹⁴ Miki's *Yomiuri Shinbun* articles are collected in *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* volume 16.

³⁹⁵ 国民学術協会 Kokumin Gakujutsu Kyōkai

³⁹⁶ Barshay, 216-217.

clear purpose, as well as tension due to the variety of members and their approaches; it later suffered rightist attacks, particularly in 1943 from the army which reacted to Miki's presence.³⁹⁷ Miki, along with Tosaka Jun, and others also took part in translation work for a Catholic Encyclopedia which started in 1939; notes Piovesana "Their dire economic situation in the midst of the military nationalism in Japan moved to compassion the director of the Encyclopedia, Fr. Kraus of Sophia University, who, out of charity, did not hesitate to use them as translators."³⁹⁸

Then, in 1938, in the midst of all of Miki's activities, and his trying to earn enough to keep going, he was offered the chance to actually become involved in formulating policy -- the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai had created a Cultural Problems Research Group, and wanted him to lead it. It would provide little financial remuneration, but it would enable him to actually become involved in a group of intellectuals working to establish an intellectual basis for the the rising star in Japanese politics, Prince Konoe. Miki eagerly accepted.

4.5 The Role and Purpose of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

It is here that I will turn to examining the role and purpose of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai itself, before moving on to discuss the actual structure of the organization. The goal of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, broadly, as already stated, was to establish an intellectual foundation for the New Order and the New East Asian Order; necessary for this plan to come to fruition was the effective control of army influence. The irony is that the policies produced by the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were ultimately warped by the militarists and used for their own ends, and the still further irony is that then the anti-militarist organization, through its failure, was branded as a militarist organization itself by later writers. Given the circumstances of the *de facto* primacy of military policy, given that no other policy presented itself to wrest control of the government, time was not on the side of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. Chalmers Johnson comments that

*It was hoped that these men could hammer out concrete measures for checking the drift toward war and fascism and define Japan's national interests in a way that would provide alternatives to the abject acceptance of faits accomplis engineered by military officers.*³⁹⁹

One should refer here to the official November 1936 document that signalled the end of the transition stage for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai and the dawn of the fully-fledged research institute:

*Purpose of the Establishment of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai*⁴⁰⁰

These days, the economic and political place of Japan in the world changed completely from the foundation up. Nevertheless, the system and policy in each field, such as diplomacy, economics, society, education, administration, which should progress in accordance with [this change outlined] above, still remained the same as they used to be in many respects, and because of this there are contradictions everywhere, and bewilderment, that are repeating in this present internationally important period.

To shake free of this state of affairs, now the whole nation's full knowledge and full experience must be put to use completely. For such a mobilization of the nation, as the cornerstone, broadly, the wishes of the bureaucracy, army, industry, academics, critics, and all classes of people must be sufficiently communicated among themselves,

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 217.

³⁹⁸ Piovesana, 180.

³⁹⁹ Johnson, 114. Emphasis his.

⁴⁰⁰ 昭和研究会設立趣旨 "Shōwa Kenkyū Kai Setsuritsu Shushi"

*and all these views and experience put together, for there is an urgent need for the establishment of a research institution by synthetic cooperation that should deal with the establishment of true national policy. These are the grounds for our establishment of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.*⁴⁰¹

The document is dated November 1936, and signed by 34 members.⁴⁰²

From the beginning, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai suffered criticism, primarily from the right-wing. The members were generally unhappy with the military's role both abroad and at home, and saw control of the military as a necessary prerequisite to reform. Ultimately, the inability of another force to resist the military meant that, once in power, Konoe had to try and push through his program of reform with the military running the show, and the project was doomed before it even got off the ground. Back in 1937, however, the members still believed they had a chance to create a policy that would put the military in their place and allow order to be restored. On June 29th, 1937, for instance, at a meeting of the Foreign Policy Deliberative Committee of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, some participants complained about the military approach and how the military were leading everything; they argued that strong politicians were needed, not military officers.⁴⁰³

One participant wanted the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai to become like the British Chatham House, as opposed to just serving the Foreign Ministry.⁴⁰⁴ However, the autocratic military, along with the political situation, prevented the organization from transforming itself into anything other than a policy think-tank. Many members feared that if left unchecked, the military would escalate the conflict in China and start war with Great Britain and the United States, and their fears proved to be well-founded.⁴⁰⁵ Far from supporting the military or the 'government', then, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai represented the mainstream of the Japanese intellectual response to militarism and war, as Johnson argued.⁴⁰⁶

To show that general works do not need to distort, I offer the example of Janet E. Hunter, who clearly understood the complexities of the organization and the results of its failure when she observed that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was part of Konoe's broader plans to resist the influence of the army; she rejects (wisely, as we have seen) the notion that Konoe was but the creature of the army, and states that the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was at least partially an attempt to build a force strong enough to resist the army's control.⁴⁰⁷ It was the failure to resist the army influence over dealing with the United States with regard to Japan's actions in China and Southeast Asia that was key in bringing about Konoe's resignation.⁴⁰⁸ As I have already indicated, the brainchild of Konoe and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, would be stillborn, failing almost immediately both to control the

⁴⁰¹ Provided in Sakai, 49-50. Please refer to Appendix I where I have included the original Japanese text of this document.

⁴⁰² Possibly mistaking this document to refer to the original founding of the organization and not its re-organization could explain why the 1936 date crops up so frequently in scholarship as the date of foundation.

⁴⁰³ Crowley, "Intellectuals", 345-346.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 346.

⁴⁰⁵ I remain, consequently, baffled by scholars like Beasley, who argues in *Japanese Imperialism* that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai turned to a traditionalist critique of modern society to justify Japanese imperialism and criticize Western imperialism (204-205). Not only is there no basis for such a claim, but it is the precise opposite of what the organization sought to accomplish.

⁴⁰⁶ Johnson, 115.

⁴⁰⁷ Janet E. Hunter, *The Emergence of Modern Japan: An Introductory History Since 1853* (London: Longman, 1989) pg.226-227.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

military and to bring about the New Order it had promised, but that is something I will return to later.

What, then, of the people involved in this enterprise? Tsurumi Shunsuke comments that

*The chief organizer [Gotō]’s intent was to build a bulwark against the growth of militarism. Gotō was prepared to use whatever school of scholarship might be effective for that purpose. Now that the Japan Communist Party no longer existed except for those of its members in prison, he was not afraid of including any ex-Marxist and liberal scholars who took a firm and resilient stand against military dictatorship in Japan.*⁴⁰⁹

This resulted in a mix of individuals as peculiar as Konoe’s entourage; Johnson notes that “Its members included liberals, ultra-nationalists, Communists, Marxists, opportunists, and several men committed only to bureaucratic roles.”⁴¹⁰ None of this peculiar band of intellectuals were really financially remunerated for their efforts either, prompting Sakai, himself a member, to ponder, “Although there was practically no reward or salary, why did they meet every night like that with serious passion? Thinking about it now, it is like a mystery one cannot think is really true.”⁴¹¹ Consider Johnson again, “They were an imposing group, both on paper and in terms of their respective individual talents; but a more heterogeneous, mutually incompatible, and hopelessly indecisive group of liberal intellectuals intending to influence politics can hardly be imagined.”⁴¹² Why all of these intellectuals came together in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was likely due to a shared sense of crisis, and the chance to influence policy to propose reforms that they believed would set Japan back on the right path, both in its national and international affairs. They remained constrained as to precisely what reforms they could propose, since the authorities were not inclined towards anything that would threaten their own power. The strongest bond between the members was thus a recognition that something was gravely wrong with the current Japanese political and economic system, and that steps needed to be taken to correct this. Indeed, as Crowley observed, “Common to all members of the association was an acute dissatisfaction with existing affairs and a desire to chart a national course which would be feasible and ethical.”⁴¹³ At the same time that this brought the members together, however, it was also a problem because *beyond* a sense of crisis and a desire to do *something*, there was little unity amongst the members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.

The upshot of all of this is that it is simply inaccurate to label the organization as ‘right-wing’; in fact, as I indicated earlier, domestic criticism of the organization at the time argued not that it was in the nationalists’ pocket, or even that it supported the militarists generally, but that it was too *progressive*, or even a *Communist* organization! Likely this image came about because of the notoriety of Ozaki Hotsumi later, however. If anything, the organization was somewhat leftist (although it was explicitly anti-Communist; the organization in fact took a stand against extremists be they to the far right or the far left). Janice Matsumura noted that

... at the height of his political career in the 1930s, Konoe Fumimaro was known for his close relations with prominent Marxist intellectuals and was something of a patron for many former thought control offenders. Leftist thinkers and former offenders were free to

⁴⁰⁹ Tsurumi Shunsuke, *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 34.

⁴¹⁰ Johnson, 116.

⁴¹¹ Sakai, 56.

⁴¹² Johnson, 115.

⁴¹³ Crowley, “Intellectuals”, 370.

*enter the Shōwa Research Association and Academy, and a conspicuous number of them participated in Konoe's New Order Movement [shintaisei undō].*⁴¹⁴

Miwa was correct in seeing the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as more scientific than other groups at the time, although this was not always a constant due to the variety of members and ideas; Crowley, recall, noticed that the scientific mode was gradually subordinated to more idealistic notion as time went by. Part of this may have been due to the increasing desperation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai's situation as it became rapidly apparent that there were no easy answers and their grandiose reform schemes were going to be blocked at every turn by the military or the bureaucrats. Konoe's frustration and resignation under such circumstances should not mystify. Even when the members became more idealistic, though, they did not embrace the rightist ideology that had come to dominate the country. Fletcher, in an argument echoing Maruyama's from the opposite direction, generalizes intellectuals as turning to 'fascism' from the Western world, and not domestic Japanese ideas (recall that Maruyama had argued it was the other way around, and the intellectuals abandoned good Western thinking for Eastern nationalisms etc.), but this entire notion is just as silly. Much of what is frequently termed 'fascist' ideology in Japan was every bit as indebted to nativist nationalisms as it was Western theory, and the intellectuals who really embraced the right-wing and its political manifestations were quite distinct from the bulk of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members, who, for all their nationalistic tendencies, had little patience with arcane terminology, *Bushidō* fantasies, and Emperor-worship.

Finally, here is Rōyama Masamichi's perspective on the role of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, recounted by Sakai:

*After the war, Rōyama Masamichi said that the following two things could be thought of as the role that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai played. One is letting intellect and thought into politics, through the political participation of the intellectual class, and the education of people who had influence with the bureaucratic government. The other one is the training of the bureaucracy as policy makers, the criticism towards the political parties and bureaucracy, despite having no party political power, and playing a role in providing a new direction.*⁴¹⁵

The simple fact of the matter is that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was a complex organization of various eminent personalities; they came together because of a shared sense of crisis, and a desire to help reform Japan, and were motivated to attempt to both keep the military from gaining more power and lay the plans for Konoe's New Order. Having discussed their purpose and motivation, I will now proceed to briefly discuss the structure of their organization.

4.6 The Structure of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

When considering the structure of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai after 1936, it is imperative to note that this was not an informal group of advisors, but a complex and sophisticated research organization. As Johnson notes, it was large, well-endowed, had its own staff, its own offices in Marunouchi, and published material to acquaint the public with its policies.⁴¹⁶ The core of the organization consisted of a cluster of independent research groups, each formed around a particular intellectual problem. The China Problem Research Group was one of the oldest, with

⁴¹⁴ Janice Matsumura, *More Than a Momentary Nightmare: The Yokohama Incident and Wartime Japan* (New York: Cornell East Asia Program, 1998), 68-69, referring to Itō Takashi, "Kyū sayokujin no 'shintaisei' undō," *Shōwaki no shakai undō*, ed. Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1983), 260.

⁴¹⁵ Sakai, 290-291.

⁴¹⁶ Johnson, 125.

Miki's Cultural Problems Research Group being one of the later additions. Eventually there would be more than ten of these core groups. Ozaki Hotsumi, later revealed to be a spy, joined in 1937; he became coordinator of these groups, as well as chairman of the China Problem Research Group.⁴¹⁷ There was a smaller, more informal, advisory group comprised of Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members, which was known as the Breakfast Society⁴¹⁸. This was formed in November 1937 by Konoe's two private secretaries, Ushiba Tomohiko⁴¹⁹ and Kishi Michizo⁴²⁰; it was not apparently connected to the *earlier* Breakfast Society as the members were different.⁴²¹ Konoe's Breakfast Society was also called the Wednesday Society⁴²², and is likened by Johnson to a US "kitchen cabinet"; elsewhere he refers to it as the "innermost Konoye brain trust."⁴²³ Ozaki was not always there, but he reportedly selected those who should attend.⁴²⁴ The need to coordinate the research groups was clear. The idea was that each group in the organization would work to promote reform in its designated area, so that a broader reform movement would spread, destroy the status quo, and then enable the creation of a new order.⁴²⁵

4.7 Miki as Shōwa Kenkyū Kai Member

In the course of the next two sections I will cover Miki as a member of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, and look at him in the context of the membership, and then look briefly at his work during his time as a member.

The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai's early attempts to solve the China problem and prompt domestic reform had resulted in lukewarm reaction from the authorities and little real progress. As Crowley showed in "Intellectuals as Visionaries of the New Asian Order," the organization had moved from dealing with specific issues with diplomatic or policy reform suggestions to plans for an enormous reformulation of East Asia. At the same time, call for New Order domestically and reform of both China and Japan led to movement away from diplomacy which alone seemed unable to resolve the problems, and towards broader, more abstract issues; thus, there was a move towards the realm of culture, with the goal being to find universal ideas across cultures which could bridge the gap and unify Asia. There was consequently no better man than Miki for the task, which was why the association promptly asked him to lead the new group.

As before when he was a student, Miki lived an energetic life. He both worked hard and played hard, pouring out paper after paper while at the same time finding time for the nightlife and drinking with his colleagues. An interesting story I heard has Miki drinking with his fellows, and handing the hostess his wallet, telling her to take as much as she wanted. Even if we cannot be sure that the story is true, it reflects Miki's nature so well that it might as well be. Here is revealed not only the persistence of Miki's playboyish nature, but also his generosity and trust

⁴¹⁷ Tsurumi, 34.

⁴¹⁸ 朝飯会 Asa-meshi Kai

⁴¹⁹ 牛場友彦

⁴²⁰ 岸道三

⁴²¹ Spaulding, 63. The original Breakfast Society held meetings once a week from 1931 to 1935, normally at the Tōkyō residence of Baron Harada Kumao, Sainoji's chief agent, to discuss political problems (55-56). While the membership was large, the composition at the meetings depended on the subject to be discussed, and rarely were more than 15 present at any given meeting; note that Kido and Konoe were both regular members (ibid.).

⁴²² 水曜会 Sui-yō Kai

At one point during the late 1920s, according to Oka, Konoe organized a political faction of Upper House members which met on Tuesday and hence was known as the "Tuesday Club" (Oka, 24). For an idealist, Konoe seems to have occasionally lacked imagination.

⁴²³ Johnson, 125 and 26, respectively.

⁴²⁴ Tsurumi, 35.

⁴²⁵ Nakamura, 162.

towards humanity. It was only natural, then, that Miki impressed his colleagues in his research group with such behaviour.

As to Miki's significance within the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, this is a debatable issue. It largely depends upon what one chooses to focus on, since the organization consisted of numerous groups and committees and was quite large. Even after many members had left, the core of the organization had some 200 members.⁴²⁶ Many, naturally, did not know each other. In terms of the organization as a whole, Miki is usually neglected in favour of Rōyama (e.g. Fletcher, Miwa), who was a member from the earliest days in 1933. Ryū too crops up frequently; because both he and Rōyama had postwar careers, they likely could leave a larger impact on writers than Miki, whose readers in the 1930s were all too keen to forget those times altogether. Chalmers Johnson, however, says that Miki's significance in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was vast indeed; after listing some of the key members, including Rōyama and Ryū, he writes "The intellectual who towered above these men and influenced all of them, [was] Miki Kiyoshi."⁴²⁷ Furthermore, "Miki's views were the most representative, and his influence may be detected in the works of all of the other members."⁴²⁸ This is certainly significant. If Johnson is correct, then after years of being the alienated in every organization, Miki found kindred souls in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. I doubt this though; what I think Johnson means is that, to some extent, Miki was taken as speaking for the organization, and perhaps in a sea of ideas and people, his ideal of cooperativism served as a glue and provided the group with some focus. It seems that Miki was finally being able to play the role of leader that he had always wanted.

Yet at the same time, Miki was not dogmatic, but considered contrary opinions and accepted them if they held water. Sakai tells us that on one occasion, "Miki even agreed at once with Ryū Shintarō when, on the verge of the settling of the dispute over the "Economic Ethics of Cooperativism," the latter gave a negative conclusion concerning the materialist view of history."⁴²⁹ That is to say, when summarizing the discussion (the groups submitted reports based on their talks) and reporting on the "Economic Ethics of Cooperativism", Ryū asked Miki's opinion regarding his (Ryū's) negative conclusion about the materialist view of history, and Miki immediately agreed with that. Miki proved by such actions that not only did he hold cooperativism to be an ideal, but he could also compromise in actuality as well.

Miki's group, the Cultural Problems Research Group, concluded that international principles for Asia were necessary, that could compete with, for example, Hellenism in the West, and that this new ideology would enable China to join Japan.⁴³⁰ Miki's influence here is obvious. On a broader level, the fact that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai intellectuals preferred to speak of the East Asian Co-operative Body⁴³¹ than of the New Order in East Asia or the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere is also an indicator of Miki's pervasive influence. We also have Ryū Shintarō's account to consider:

In the whole Shōwa Kenkyū Kai there were various research sections; I was connected with 2 or 3 groups, and among those Miki led the culture section. ... The culture section, at Miki's suggestion, decided to rethink the materialist history view. That [suggestion of Miki's] was that, in this unusual state of affairs, it was necessary to make clear their attitude regarding the future, but before they could present something positive, it was necessary to confront the materialist view of history. This is indeed reasonable, but at the

⁴²⁶ Sakai, 221.

⁴²⁷ Johnson, 18-19.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁴²⁹ Sakai, 295.

⁴³⁰ Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order*, 62, 110-113, respectively.

⁴³¹ 東亞協同体 Toa Kyōdō Tai

same time reminds us of the storm of terror [at that time], and even now I think that this proposal was very Miki-like^{432 433}.

Clearly Miki was still concerned with the challenge posed to society by the Marxist historical viewpoint, but Ryū helps us to reconsider things more carefully; hence there are two more conclusions we can draw from this. Firstly, Miki was concerned with confronting the Marxist viewpoint so that once it had been cleared away a new synthetic viewpoint (to be formulated by him and his committee) could be formulated; this is something that those who think Miki was a Marxist, or the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was, should consider. Secondly, Ryū indicates the context of fear, but clearly he is referring not to the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, but the surrounding world. This is because the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai in general and Miki in the particular were challenging both the Marxist viewpoint and the militarists, isolating them from everyone and leaving them open to attack. Fantasies that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai supported the militarists, or the 'government', or that the members were somehow immune from attack (they simply were not) should be dismissed here. On this last point, Sakai Saburō attacks those who think Miki was 'protected' by being in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai; this is ridiculous, he charges, for these are the same critics who stood by and did nothing:

*Concerning Miki Kiyoshi, there are also those who take a superficial view of him as one who was camouflaged during the war. However, he loved the country of Japan and the Japanese, and he held contempt for men of culture who were political bystanders at the time of Japan's confronting a situation which would determine its destiny.*⁴³⁴

Ryū too goes on to state that Miki's impact in the culture section was enormous.⁴³⁵ He further shows that Miki was not afraid of speaking out against the authorities, and persisted despite the risk. For instance, he noted that Miki frequently said, "If, Japan now, orders us to assist, first of all order control of the right wing."⁴³⁶ Through such comments Miki revealed his frustration at the hypocrisy of a government that hoped for rational solutions to its problems while doing nothing to prevent extremists -- who did not alleviate crises but rather aggravated them -- from gaining power. Miki was eager to help his country, but he was frustrated by the military and the bureaucrats who increased their own power and refused to rein in the extremists' rise, forcing Miki to struggle against the tumultuous tide. He was not afraid of the military that he so disliked, and according to Ryū even met with an army general who seemed reasonable, and honestly told the general his opinion without holding back at all.⁴³⁷ Miki continued to criticize the military, as he had earlier, despite the increasing precariousness of doing so.

Such was the man who headed the Cultural Problems Research Group of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. What of the other notables in the organization? When Miki joined the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, he entered a roster of the eminent thinkers of his day, including political scientists like Rōyama Masamichi and Yabe Teiji⁴³⁸, economists like Ryū Shintarō, Takahashi Kamekichi,

⁴³² まったく三木清らしい

⁴³³ 笠信太郎 Ryū Shintarō, 「頭脳と情熱の人」 "Zunō to Jyōnetsu no Hito" [A Man of Brains and Passion], 三木清全集月報 13 巻 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 13 (1967.10), 3-6; 4.

⁴³⁴ Sakai, 295.

⁴³⁵ Ryū, 4-5.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ 矢部貞治

and Ōkita Saburō⁴³⁹, lawyers like Miwa Jūso⁴⁴⁰, socialist leaders like Asō Hisashi and Kamei Kanichiro, journalists like Sakai Saburō, and famous notables like Inukai Ken⁴⁴¹ and Saionji Kinkazu⁴⁴², all under the general coordination of Ozaki and Gotō.⁴⁴³ Future premier Yoshida Shigeru⁴⁴⁴, a liberal critic of the authorities at the time, was also a member, and so was Miki's brother-in-law, who had nothing but the utmost respect for Miki. Again, other than to say the assembled group were all people dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, there is not much holding this group together -- they truly are a snapshot of Japan's intelligentsia of the 1930s, and they were varied in their opinions and frequently uncooperative with each other. All of them, however, were clear that they wanted an end to the war in China, along with reforms across the board. Addressing the variety of individuals, and some of the criticism aimed at the organization, Sakai writes,

*At the time, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was attacked as "red," but it seems that the same was thought after the war as well for some reason. However... Among the members of the research association were all manner of people, but the central, mainstream of the members were people who had always lived in freedom through their lives and protected freedom. They were not bystanders regarding the destiny and trends of Japan, but a group who, because of their love of the country and people of Japan, burned with passion to proceed to a solution to the war with China.*⁴⁴⁵

The members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai were further united by their recognition of Konoe, and their pinning of their hopes for the future on him. If Miki's philosophy helped hold the organization together, it was Konoe that truly gave it meaning. As Nakamura Takafusa explains,

*[the plans] were drawn up with little regard for the widely different agendas of the different groups involved, from Asō and Kamei and their followers to the Home Affairs Ministry bureaucrats and the Military Affairs Bureau of the Army Ministry. Yet each of these factions recognized Konoe Fumimaro as the central figure who was to be elevated to the role of chief advisor to the Emperor.*⁴⁴⁶

Sakai echoes this, by noting that,

However, when all is said and done, the greatest attraction was this research association's deep connection to Konoe Fumimaro. There was the possibility that the fruits of our research and the policies based thereon would come true through Konoe and

⁴³⁹ 大来佐武郎

⁴⁴⁰ 三輪寿壮

⁴⁴¹ 犬養健

⁴⁴² 西園寺公一

⁴⁴³ Rōyama had actually been involved since the beginning in 1933; Ryū joined in 1938 and Barshay notes his proposal formed the basis for discussion of economic matters in the organization (27). Postwar, Rōyama became President of Ochanomizu Women's University, and Ryū wrote for the *Asahi Shinbun*; both were also involved with the journal *Japan Quarterly*. Takahashi was also a professor after the war. Ōkita went on to be foreign minister in 1979-1980. Asō and Kamei were figures in the Socialist Masses Party, as already mentioned. Inukai was the son of Inukai Tsuyoshi, and was involved in both the Breakfast Society and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai (Johnson, 50). Saionji was the grandson of Saionji Kinmochi; he was in fact a dear friend of Ozaki Hotsumi, and he maintained always that Ozaki's motives had been patriotic (Johnson, 113).

⁴⁴⁴ 吉田茂

⁴⁴⁵ Sakai, 294.

⁴⁴⁶ Nakamura Takafusa, 162.

*through the Konoe Cabinet. Even if that could not be, we had the desire to see our policies, through Konoe somehow, have a real effect.*⁴⁴⁷

It was understandable, then, that the rise to power of Konoe thrilled the members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, especially Miki. They were not alone in their optimistic (and, as it were, premature) jubilation -- the whole of Japan cheered the new leader who they saw as the saviour to all their problems. Konoe was young, handsome, popular, noble, elegant, and awe-inspiring. "Thus when Konoe became head of government," comments Oka, "he was welcomed as a long-awaited leader who would guide the nation through these turbulent times."⁴⁴⁸ At a press conference following the inauguration of the first Konoe Cabinet, Konoe explained his plan.

*...his underlying goal was, he said, to strive for a true peace based on international justice, a genuine peace, not merely the maintenance of the status quo. Within Japan, he would do everything possible to build systems based on social justice so that all citizens, hand in hand, would contribute to the reform and progress of their country.*⁴⁴⁹

At last there was to be a chance for both domestic reform, through the organization being planned (which eventually emerged as the Imperial Rule Assistance Association), and the pursuit of the destruction of the old (Anglo-American) world order and the advancement of the new (Japanese) world order, through the the planned formulation of an East Asian Co-operative Body (which eventually became the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere⁴⁵⁰). The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, a complex organization with as many views as individuals -- it was not that Miki was a unique character in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai so much as the organization was a collection of unique characters -- but with an over-arching purpose to build an intellectual foundation for the new order, both domestically and internationally, at last saw its plans nearing fruition, and the possibility that the members could actually now implement policies to rescue the nation from its series of crises had arrived. It should have been Konoe's, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai's, and Miki's, moment of triumph.

4.8 Miki's Work in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

Before looking at the outcome of Konoe's rise to power and the chance for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai to actually affect policy, I will undertake a brief look at Miki's work while he was a member in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.

One of the first works to consider is "The China Affair and Japanese Thought", which was published in English in March 1938.⁴⁵¹ Miki mentions intellectuals converting, and also says

⁴⁴⁷ Sakai, 291.

⁴⁴⁸ Oka, 46.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁵⁰ Just what the sphere consisted of changed as time passed; to begin with, Mark R. Peattie in "Nanshin: The Southward Advance, 1931-1941, as a Prelude to the Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia," (in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*, eds. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 189-242) states that "...Konoe Fumimaro's announcement in November 1938 of a "New Order in East Asia," generally considered to be the precursor of the coprosperity idea, made no mention whatever of the "Southern Regions" (as the "South Seas" were now called)," (211) but this changed as time went by to include more and more territory. There was also a general movement from pan-Asianist rhetoric towards economic arguments, something aptly chronicled by Duus in "Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues." Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke gave the sphere its name in a proclamation on 1 August 1940. The newspaper version in the *Asahi Shinbun* the following day is included in Joyce C. Lebra, ed., *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World War II: Selected Readings and Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 71-72. The Dec. 23 newspaper edition of Konoe's November announcement is included in the same volume, 68-70.

⁴⁵¹ Miki Kiyoshi, "The China Affair and Japanese Thought," *Contemporary Japan* (March 1938), 601-610.

Marxism was a fad, which was what Fletcher argued, but Miki does not include himself in either of these two groups. He goes on to say that Western philosophy is not bad, but studying Western thought to the neglect of Eastern thought is problematic. Likewise, he suggests that nationalist movements that argue for a 'return to Japan' have the right idea, but he quarrels with extremism; to reject, for instance, all foreign things merely because they are foreign is hardly a good idea. The energy of the people must be moved in a good way, and not a bad way, continues Miki, sounding remarkably like Konoe who suggested the rightists could be made use of provided their energy was directed towards the common good. Miki questions whether Japanese thought is universal [i.e. applicable to China] or not, and returns to stressing the need for a synthesis of East and West. Simply rejecting Western culture is wrong, he argues. Only through the synthesis can universal thought be achieved. Finally, he posits that the idea of one culture being the center of the world is wrong, and that therefore both Europeanism [occidentalism] and Orientalism are wrong. It is worth noting how these ideas are natural progressions from Miki's earlier thought; far from being a break, there is a noticeable development taking place, and the influence of Nishida is also evident. Also notable is that this paper is remarkably moderate and advocates a point of view based upon premises that the militarists did not accept.

A related paper in the same year, "The World Historical Significance of the China Incident"⁴⁵² is the aforementioned speech that was delivered on the one-year anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, in July 1938.

Then there are the two key documents produced by Miki's Cultural Problems Research Group under his supervision. These are *Principles of the Thought of New Japan*⁴⁵³ in January 1939, and *The Philosophical Foundation of Cooperativism*⁴⁵⁴ in September 1939. The first document contains a section addressing the China Incident, following a similar pattern to the previous two documents discussed. The second document presents cooperativism as a new philosophy beyond Communism, individualism, liberalism, and so on. Here is presented the groundwork for cooperativism, which was to be the guiding force in the formulation of a new world ideology that would enable Japan to compete with other world ideologies. Both documents clearly illustrate the influence of Miki's thought.⁴⁵⁵ They have also tended to be seen in retrospect alone, so that, for instance, the economic exploitation of Asia by Japan has been read back into these works, which is illogical and self-defeating for the purpose of understanding Miki and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. The use of the intellectuals' terminology by the army in justifying its pattern of expansion and destruction hardly constitutes the support of the intellectuals for said action. Hence, in the future I intend to return to these documents and offer a fresh interpretation that does not start from how they may have been misused by the army.

Finally, it is fitting that now I return to another article that Miki wrote during the period, "Religion as the Leadership of the New Japan." I already made reference to this article before, but I mention it now because it was written in 1938 when Miki was already a member of the

Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. Yet the article is clearly a continuation of Miki's earlier thought, and there is no major shift of any sort. Reading it now, it is clearly composed in the same spirit as those earlier works of Miki's, and his passion for his arguments has not faded in the slightest. Miki

⁴⁵² "shina jihen no sekai-shiteki igi" (July 7, 1938, Daitō Bunka University Collection], as summarized briefly in Crowley's "Intellectuals" (363-366) and also "A new Asian Order" (278-279). This transcript does not appear to be included in the *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū*.

⁴⁵³ 「新日本の思想原理」 *Shin-Nippon no Shisō Genri* (January 1939). See *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshu* 17.507-533.

⁴⁵⁴ 「協同主義の哲学的基礎」 *Kyōdō-shugi no Tetsugakuteki Kiso* (September 1939). See *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshu* 17.534-588.

⁴⁵⁵ Miyakawa, 120-121, comes to a similar conclusion.

argues that religion is an engine for change because it can transcend the realm of politics. For Miki, the universal aspects of religion transcend the particular and can assume a leadership role. This is quite different from the Marxist view of religion as merely another ideology formulated for the purpose of class control, but there is nothing new here: Miki held the same views in the early 1930s. Religion and philosophy for Miki lead politics and are influential in daily life and world affairs, not merely in abstract academic discussions. Miki saw philosophy as not just ideals as distinct from reality, but rather something that directly affects reality and is fundamentally concerned with it.

So it was that when Miki waited for Konoe's implementation of the New Order, he was not a prisoner tied captive to some ideology he had been forced to create. Rather, he was a willing thinker who had struggled to deal with the problems facing his nation and attempt to find a solution; not being content to stand back as so many of his contemporaries had done, Miki sought direct involvement -- thereby being true to his ideals -- and attempted to use his philosophy for the purpose of a broad-ranging program of reform that aimed at restoring the Japanese political system, and ending the military control, at the same time that internationally it would restore Japan to its earlier prestige and end the horrid mess in China that the army had begun for its own self-serving purposes. It was by no random act of the Divine or by chance that Miki joined the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. After his exhausting work, he at last stood to fulfil his dream of directly having an impact on the real world and assisting Japan to overcome the quagmire she was sinking into. Hearing Konoe, as Premier, officially announce his grand schemes for reform, based on Miki's ideas, must have been a highlight of his career. It was supposed to have been his proudest moment.

Chapter V The Crucible Shatters: Dissolution and Defeat

*Considering, the tragedy of Konoe was also the tragedy of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.*⁴⁵⁶

- Sakai Saburō

*Lord Konoe's was an existence that made us think of Mount Fuji soaring over many rivals, but he was not a leader who would drive his horse into the vanguard and lead an advance.*⁴⁵⁷

- Gotō Ryūnosuke

Konoe's ambitious program failed, and with it, the hopes of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. One of the immediate problems Konoe faced upon coming to power was a slew of international problems that began piling up. When Konoe assumed the premiership on June 4th, 1937, "he emphasized domestic affairs as the most pressing concern. There was, despite the Sian incident and the abortive efforts at a détente with Britain, no desire for or anticipation of war with China."⁴⁵⁸ The Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the war with Jiang Jieshi, in which Konoe rashly declared the 'New Order in East Asia', was something he was hopelessly unprepared for. While the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai worked throughout 1938 and 1939 formulating the components of the New Order, the man who was to lead it was struggling to keep his head above the water. Not that the failure of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai can be placed wholly on Konoe, offers Johnson, for a bigger problem was the members, specifically "the contradictory motives that brought [them] together, and peculiar style in which they communicated with each other, and the particular policies they espoused."⁴⁵⁹ The members may have been able to agree on what was

⁴⁵⁶ Sakai, 294.

⁴⁵⁷ Quoted in Sakai, 297.

⁴⁵⁸ Crowley, "A New Asian Order: Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism", 276.

⁴⁵⁹ Johnson, 115.

wrong with the current situation, and they supported trying to rein in the army and launch a program of reform, but *how* the army was to be controlled, and *what* the content of the reform should be, and *how* this was all to be implemented, was never resolved. Frustrated by his failure with regard to the situation in China, Konoe resigned in 1939, and would bide his time until ready to launch the New Order.

5.1 The Failure of the New Order

Konoe appeared firmly planted in the spotlight again in June 1940, and declared that the New Order had begun. The old parties, already emancipated under the military power, effectively dissolved themselves in order to get on to the new project and maintain what power they had.⁴⁶⁰ A month later Konoe returned as Premier⁴⁶¹ and prepared to unleash the master plan. In August 1939, he had formed the Shintaisei Junbikai⁴⁶² (Commission for Establishing a New Political Order), a wide-ranging group of policy people who were to make the new order a reality.⁴⁶³ In a way, the Commission was the practical side of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai coin, having been charged with actually implementing the grand vision. Unfortunately, the organization was heavily divided into multiple competing factions, with the conflict becoming so great that when Konoe finally announced the inauguration of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association on the 12th October, 1940, he merely stated that the purpose of the organization was to foster loyalty to the Emperor in support of the government, and he said he had decided not to make an announcement of their overall plans. This was necessitated by the fact that the group could not agree even on the *content of the speech*, and this bland and redundant statement about loyalty was the only thing Konoe could say to keep everybody happy.⁴⁶⁴

The organization ended up doing little, and not just the 'Japanists' but the majority of the Diet came to see it as their enemy.⁴⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the army had ceased their reservations, but only because they had realized they could pervert the organization for their own use as a tool to mobilize the home front. According to Storry, Konoe lost control of the organization, but re-asserted control in 1941.⁴⁶⁶ I am not sure whether or not this is true, but the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was reorganized completely again in 1941. It still failed to work. Konoe left the Premiership in October 1941, dejected and frustrated.

The Imperial Rule Assistance Movement "was in its essence Konoe's failure," writes Takayanagi.⁴⁶⁷ "It remained a nation-wide organization only on paper despite Konoe's high-sounding rhetoric, mainly because of military infiltration and lack of articulation concerning the character of the movement."⁴⁶⁸ There had been people connected to the military in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, but it had never been under the military's control by any means. This was a mistake that the militarists did not repeat when it came to the Imperial Rule Assistance Association.

Konoe's idealistic plans to reform Japan had failed. Konoe "was thwarted by the opposition of the Japanists. His ambitious plans for reform fizzled out, opening the way for military control of the domestic political system."⁴⁶⁹ The New Order Movement became a mere

⁴⁶⁰ Refer to *Berger's Parties out of Power*, discussed earlier.

⁴⁶¹ Second Konoe Cabinet: 1940.07.22 - 1941.07.18; Third Konoe Cabinet: 1941.07.18 - 1941.10.18

⁴⁶² 新體制準備

⁴⁶³ Nakamura Takafusa, 164.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 165. Nakamura actually gives the date of the inauguration as 1939, but this is clearly a mistake. Refer to 木坂順一郎 Kisaka Junichirō, 「大政翼賛会」 "Taisei Yokusan Kai" [Imperial Rule Assistance Association] in 「国史大辞典」 *Kokushi Daijiten* [Great Encyclopedia of National History] 8.790-8.791.

⁴⁶⁵ Nakamura Takafusa, 165.

⁴⁶⁶ Storry, 279-280.

⁴⁶⁷ Takayanagi, 105.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Nakamura Takafusa, 179.

branch of the Home Ministry, used to mobilize the home front and suppress domestic resistance, and the idea of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was used to justify military expansion across the Asia-Pacific. The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai's policies had been perverted and put to the use of the very powers they had hoped to stop through creating them. By this point, however, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai itself was long gone. What had happened?

5.2 The Dissolution of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

Well before its dissolution in 1940, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai had come under frequent attack as Communist-orientated, and most of the reform bureaucrats connected with it had prudently withdrawn.⁴⁷⁰ Sakai had also stated that the organization was attacked as 'red', both before and after the war.⁴⁷¹ Much of this may have had to do with how intellectuals in general came to be seen as Marxist, which is something I suggested back in the second chapter while discussing Miki and Marxism. Hori Makiyo, for instance, shows in "Kita Ikki and Japanese Fascism" how the general public regarded Kita Ikki, of all people, as a Marxist.⁴⁷² This criticism, however, was not the main reason for the dissolution.

The Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was dissolved in November, 1940, when Gotō left to take a role in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. A replacement could not be found, but perhaps that was an excuse. Possibly, with the creation of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, and the criticism levelled at both it and the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai by the military, business interests, and rightists generally, there was no real purpose for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai anymore. Sakai suggests that finances were also an issue. With some key members having joined the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, the continuation of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was in jeopardy, he explained, especially the look of expenses; at that point,

*The decision by the permanent committee to dissolve was not decided at one time, rather there was continual discussion. Especially Miki Kiyoshi, until the end argued "We should continue to the last," but nearly all of the members said "we have no choice," and finally dissolution was decided upon. Later Miki even said "If it is that the money is not holding out, I will make more myself." To myself, he gave the name of a certain religious organization and confessed where he had gotten the money from.*⁴⁷³

Later, the ex-Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members were distrusted by Konoe, argues Spaulding, given that the March 28, 1941 Planning Board Incident and the Sorge Spy Case had both involved former Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, "In reaction, having learned too late the folly of trusting Ozaki, Konoe became suspicious of almost everyone who had any connection

⁴⁷⁰ Kazama Michitaro, *Ozaki Hotsumi den* (Tokyo: Hosei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 1968), 240, cited in Spaulding, 66.

⁴⁷¹ Sakai, 294.

⁴⁷² Hori Makiyo, "Kita Ikki and Japanese Fascism," *Rethinking Japan vol.II: Social Sciences, Ideology & Thought*, Eds. Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, and Massimo Raveri (Sandgate, Folkstone, Kent: Japan Library Ltd., 1990), 70-79; 71, citing Yamamoto Katsuichi, *Keikaku Keizai Hihan* (Tokyo: Risōsha Shuppanbu, 1941), 7.

⁴⁷³ Sakai, 221.

⁴⁷⁴ Spaulding, 65-66.

In the Planning Board Incident, 17 officials of the Cabinet Planning Board were arrested for Communist activity; Spaulding (66) says that 6 of these were Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members. In the Sorge Spy Case, Ozaki Hotsumi was arrested on October 15th 1941 as a Soviet spy. Ozaki was a key member of Konoe's entourage and had been one of the top figures in both the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai and the Breakfast Society. Ozaki assisted Richard Sorge, who through posing as a German newspaperman had received information from the German ambassador. Sorge's tale is told in F. W. Deakin and G. R. Story, *The Case of Richard Sorge* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966). Ozaki is the most well-known person to be executed under the revised Peace Preservation Law of 1928, and the best account of his story is Chalmers Johnson's.

with the [Shōwa Kenkyū Kai].”⁴⁷⁵ Konoe thus fell out with the ‘new bureaucrats’ and the former Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members at the same time. Finally, many former Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members were arrested in the Yokohama Incident⁴⁷⁶, again because of their supposed connections to resurgent Communist activity, (which was especially feared after the Sōrye Incident⁴⁷⁷).⁴⁷⁸ Miki, too, did not escape from the wreck of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai ship unscathed.

5.3 Miki’s Fate

Miki likely felt deeply hurt by the breakup of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. Not only did he rashly offer to keep the organization afloat financially, as Sakai Saburō indicated, but he furthermore felt betrayed by Gotō’s departure and the unwillingness of the remaining members to keep the organization going.

According to Shimizu Kitarō, Miki greatly resented Gotō’s unexpected jump to that place [the Taisei Yokusan Kai] as a chief of the organization, in exchange for the ruination of a major national policy research institute that brought together influential persons of broad political circles, official circles, academic circles, and the press. It is not the case though that with even a little frivolous feeling Gotō entered the Yokusan Kai. Far from it, it was with the feeling of risking himself confronting a national movement. However, for Miki, who had poured his heart and soul into the research association, which until now had been prone to be separate from politics⁴⁷⁹ (along with the apathy of the intellectual stratum which had started), without receiving a penny of reward, for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai which met everyday without pay to simply break up must have been as painful as cutting himself.⁴⁸⁰

Perhaps Miki still held out some hope for reform through the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, or he had not expected his role to come to an end with the inception of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Perhaps he harboured bitter resentment towards those who, having failed, were now prepared to accept defeat instead of keeping up the struggle.

Some, like Barshay, have stated that after 1941, Miki resumed contact with the left, but I am not sure precisely what that means since his circle of acquaintances and the organizations he participated in changed during his work for the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai.⁴⁸¹ I think instead that Miki was disillusioned with the New Order and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (the

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 66.

⁴⁷⁶ 横浜事件

⁴⁷⁷ ゴルゲ事件

⁴⁷⁸ Janice Matsumura’s monograph, *More Than a Momentary Nightmare: The Yokohama Incident and Wartime Japan* looks at this incident in considerable depth. The term “Yokohama Incident” referred to the city where much of the police investigation took place; this investigation had its origins in the arrest of the political writer Hosokawa Karoku, a former Shōwa Kenkyū Kai member, in September 1942 (13-14). The Political Economic Research Group was a key target; it had been organized by members of the Shōwa Academy, a sort of student wing of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai that had proved a refuge for students expelled from school after being arrested for leftist activity (21). Some notable editors and journalists (such as those of *Chūō Kōron*) were also rounded up (22); however, most of the people arrested were formerly in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai. The Shōwa Academy, also originally found by Gotō, was dissolved following the arrest of Ozaki Hotsumi, who had been one of its directors.

⁴⁷⁹ This is not to mean they were uninvolved politically (quite the contrary), but to mean they were supposedly immune from political threat and should not have suffered dissolution due to a change in the political structure. Indeed, many suggest for some reason that the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai members were somehow politically immune, but this was certainly not the case!

⁴⁸⁰ Sakai, 221.

⁴⁸¹ Barshay, 28, 214-215.

actualization of which proved no better than the exploitive Western empires it was supposed to supercede), and that this resulted in him returning to a more idealistic and removed position, although he did not back away from his belief in political involvement and reality-centered philosophy. It is possible that although he still held these beliefs, Miki had decided that he had tried his best and there was little else that he could do personally. Although his thought remained consistent, his most earnest attempt, through the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, to put it into action had brought about a terrible failure, and while it was likely that he saw it as a failure of implementation and not of fundamentals, nevertheless the experience must have been one of profound disillusionment with the enterprise that he had been involved in.

Miki went on writing, and ironically enough, his later work showed his thought becoming slightly closer to Nishida's, which may explain why he has occasionally been seen as just a student of the Kyōto School. He had not abandoned his studies of history, having in 1939 written the two-volume *The Logic of the Power of Conception* in which he investigated the "ethics of historical creation."⁴⁸² In early 1941 another work of Miki's, "A History of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Relations," was published by the Institute of Pacific Relations of the Japanese Council, as part of a series of works addressing current developments in Japan that were translated; Ryū, Rōyama, and Ozaki were among others whose essays were translated for the series.⁴⁸³ Just as he had during his time as a member of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, he continued to work on a variety of projects.

Miki faced another distraction from his work when he was drafted into the military propaganda branch in 1942 and proceeded to Manila; by now he was thoroughly disillusioned with Japan's road and wanted simply to return to his writing. However, Miki retained his aggressive and outspoken nature to some extent. Not that Miki was not prepared. Funayama recalled that Miki hid himself quickly during the February 26th Affair, and was very proud of having built a strong shelter as soon as the control of goods during the war started, similarly encouraging his friends to build such shelters -- why, wondered Funayama, did Miki stay around Tōkyō for so long?⁴⁸⁴ Yet Miki had always been one to court danger through both speech and pen, and considering what had happened to many other former members of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, who remained on police and military lists as potential threats, perhaps it was just a matter of time before his luck ran out.

On March 28th, 1945, Miki was arrested, for a "violation of protecting the maintainance of the public peace" because he had protected his friend, the Communist thinker Takakura Teru.⁴⁸⁵ Takakura was a writer and had been involved in the socialist movement; furthermore, he had been arrested in the April 1933 roundup, although he was released the next year on bail.⁴⁸⁷ Yet Miki's assistance hardly seems the sort of thing that should have landed him in jail. Actually, Takakura had escaped from the police, and come to see Miki to get food and clothes.⁴⁸⁸ Hence, Miki was in trouble for assisting "a fugitive anti-war activist who had escaped from

⁴⁸² Furuta, 288.

⁴⁸³ Miki Kiyoshi, "A History of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Relations", *Introductory Studies on the Sino-Japanese Conflict*, (Tokyo: Japanese Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), 3-50.

⁴⁸⁴ Funayama, 6.

⁴⁸⁵ 高倉輝

⁴⁸⁶ Furuta, 288.

⁴⁸⁷ 山野晴雄 Yamano Haruo, 「高倉輝」 "Takakura Teru" in 「日本近現代人名辞典」 *Nihon Kingendai Jinmei Jiten* [Encyclopedia of People in Modern and Contemporary Japan], Tōkyō: 2001, 592.

⁴⁸⁸ Piovesana, 179-180.

jail.”⁴⁸⁹ Yet how much Miki knew is open to question, and we are right to be suspicious when we consider the debacle that resulted in his going to jail in 1930.

Ōhashi Ryōsuke suggests that Miki was simply careless; comparing the potential of Miki and Nishida to be arrested, he says

*Speaking of Miki, he was arrested, for the minor offense of cooperating with the escape of a Communist, close to a false charge, and it was not the case that he was eventually released alive. In his case in contrast [to Nishida], if he had behaved a little more cautiously, he would have avoided being arrested.*⁴⁹⁰

It is certainly true that Miki had never been one to be overly cautious. Funayama wondered about Miki's arrest,

*Was it not connected with his carelessness, such as saying “Hitler will commit suicide” or “Japan will be occupied by the US military so master English conversation well from now” in a loud voice on the train shortly after the war started? Tosaka's being put in jail until death was the result of his being careful, but carelessness was working behind Miki's being put in jail until death.*⁴⁹¹

It remains suspicious that after so long Miki was arrested and imprisoned over this, though. One is naturally inclined to suspect Takakura Teru, and with good reason, according to Miki's brother-in-law, Tōhata Seiichi:⁴⁹² Tōhata explains that bad luck was to blame for Miki landing in jail a second time, but the ‘luck’ in question had a clearly identifiable source; when he heard from Iwanami Shoten⁴⁹³ that Miki was arrested, he was shocked and assumed it was due to “the crazy suppression policy when Japan was becoming very likely to be defeated.”⁴⁹⁴ However, this turned out to be not the case, because Takakura Teru, while released for a few days (probably because of his mother's funeral), escaped, and was finally re-arrested, but while escaping he had visited Miki's house and taken clothes or money, so it seems that “it was the case that Miki was arrested under the suspicion of the crime of helping him escape from jail.”⁴⁹⁵ Tōhata realized that Takakura Teru had told the police everything in order to save himself, dooming Miki in the process:

It was like a bolt from the blue, and I could not help but hold him in strong contempt for his speech and action, which was talking fluently of the matter from the beginning to the

⁴⁸⁹ 志田昇 Shida Noboru, 「三木清の「実践的唯物論」」 “Miki Kiyoshi no ‘Jissenteki Yuibutsuron’” [Miki Kiyoshi's Practical Materialism], 唯物論研究年報 *Yuibutsuron Kenkyū Nenpō* [Materialism Research Annual] 1(soukan-go) (1985.10), 48-68; 48

⁴⁹⁰ 大橋良介 Ōhashi Ryōsuke, 「戦後日本の思想標識：三木清と西田幾多郎——戦後日本の哲学思想は不妊症を患っていないか」 “Sengo Nihon no Shisō Hyōshiki: Miki Kiyoshi to Nishida Kitarō -- Sengo Nihon no Tetsugaku Shisō wa Funinshō wo Wazuratteinai ka” [The Sign of Post-war Japanese Thought: Miki Kiyoshi and Nishida Kitarō -- Was Post-war Japanese Philosophy Afflicted with Sterility?], 「アステイオン」 *ASTEION* 40 (spring 1996), 194-210; 207.

⁴⁹¹ Funayama, 6. Emphasis his.

⁴⁹² 東畑精一

⁴⁹³ 岩波書店 Iwanami's bookstore, now a major Japanese publisher.

⁴⁹⁴ 東畑精一 Tōhata Seiichi, 「そとから見た三木さん」 “Sotokara mita Miki-san” [The Miki I Saw from Outside], 三木清全集月報 19 卷 *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū Geppō* [Miki Kiyoshi Complete Works, Monthly Bulletin] 19 (1968.5), 1-4; 3

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

*end to the police. In sum, Miki was not a criminal of thought, but a regular criminal suspect.*⁴⁹⁶

Miki was locked up at the Tōkyō House of Detention.⁴⁹⁷ He died there on September 26, 1945 at the age of 48.⁴⁹⁸ It is not known precisely how he died, although it was most likely sickness. Writes Shida Noboru,

*...on 26th September 1945, he died from sickness, in loneliness behind bars. It was a tragic death, as if symbolizing the life of the philosopher who raised the flags of "Humanism" and "Anti-Fascism," and discussed a "limited situation."*⁴⁹⁹

Furthermore, Ryū Shintarō observed that

*If the authorities could really have understood, [Miki] would not have hesitated to spend all of his brains and passion, and especially at least until 1935 he was really willing to help the government with his all, if they could have understood his true meaning. But the reward the government gave Miki was death in jail, and this is not just an embarrassment but is truly terrible.*⁵⁰⁰

Shida also notes that "It is said that Miki's death became one 'affair,' and because of that the release of political prisoners by the occupation army was at last actualized."⁵⁰¹ Indeed, Nakamura's account reveals that 439 political prisoners were released on the 10th of October, and the Peace Preservation Law was repealed on the 13th.⁵⁰²

Shortly afterwards, on the morning of the 16th of December 1945, Prince Konoe Fumimaro, who had worked to avoid war, planned to usher in a new era of reform, played a key role in the surrender in August 1945, and harboured hopes of working on a new constitution now that the country was free to reform (under the direction of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), as opposed to that of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai), upon learning that he was to be investigated as a war criminal, took poison rather than face such shame.

*Shortly before his suicide, Konoe called Gotō and requested of him, "Since the China Incident, I repeated all manner of failures, but what I was aiming at was different. In the future I want this to be clear to the whole country." The intentions of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai too were quite different [from the failures in reality].*⁵⁰³

Conclusion

I think he, ultimately, as intelligentsia, was not able to surpass the limits of petit-bourgeois. Yet, in spite of that, he, as an intelligentsia, facing the nationalism of the authorities, facing the conservatism of academism, and facing the aggression of the

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Nakamura Takafusa, 266.

⁴⁹⁸ Miki's grave is at Shomiji Temple in Nakano (Furuta, 288).

⁴⁹⁹ Shida, 48.

⁵⁰⁰ Ryū, 6. Emphasis mine, although he does really stress "terrible."

⁵⁰¹ Shida, 48.

⁵⁰² Nakamura Takafusa, 266.

⁵⁰³ Sakai, 289.

*military, with the weapon called thought he did his best attempting opposition, and fought. It was when fascism was running wild that the fate of imprisonment visited him. His death in prison is a tragedy, but a suitable death as an anti-fascist fighter. Relating to his imprisonment, a little earlier, the avant-garde [progressive] parties, empty-handed, had already disappeared, and the will to fight of the proletariat class also began weakening. I think, at such a time, until the last not breaking from the progressive position and trying to resist fascism through journalism was, even thinking of it now, courageous.*⁵⁰⁴

-Kaba Shuno on Miki

Miki was a complex thinker who had always retained a practical edge and saw the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai as a way to enact his ideas. Miki's formative period set the stage for his involvement, as he learned a wide variety of philosophical perspectives which he studied with the same critical and humanistic eye, and, faced with the chaos, but also the opportunity of Japan in the 1930s, he became more politically involved, and began to publish widely at the same time that he participated in several organizations. Moreover, he was in fact very similar to Prince Konoe Fumimaro, with whom he shared similar interests and a desire to improve the world through philosophy. Miki's decision to participate in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai was a logical step in his career, offering him a chance to work alongside other intellectuals to forge a synthetic philosophy which was to form the basis of a New Order both in Japan domestically and in Asia internationally.

There is a strong continuity, devoid of dramatic shifts, in Miki's thought. Not only was Miki's involvement in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai not inconsistent with his earlier thought, but it is actually an entirely understandable step for someone who believed as strongly as he did that philosophy should lead politics and offer a solution to the rising militarists and the series of crises facing Japan from within and without. Miki ultimately was able to fulfil his desire of truly involving himself in politics through the formulation of policy, just as Konoe was to fulfil his by attempting to usher in a new era that would enable Japan to stabilize domestically, end the war in China, and compete with the Western world's ideologies. The efforts of both men, and that of the organization that brought them together, the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, were ultimately to end in bitter failure, a failure that doomed Japan to a course it could not shake itself free from.

Further research is needed concerning various aspects of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai, particularly with regard to what members had the strongest effect on particular policies. I mentioned earlier that Nishida is almost a household name in Japan whereas few know who Miki was, and considering how important he was at the time and how the popular audience then only knew Nishida through Miki, it is unforgivable that he has not received enough attention. He deserves better than I can offer him, and he deserves to have a fair treatment and a decent evaluation of his numerous and insightful writings, not mere reductions of him to a simple category to be filed and ignored. All of Miki's works should be considered in evaluating him as a philosopher, not just those dealing with Marx, and more than ever he needs to be studied as an independent, individual thinker on his own grounds. I hope to some extent that my re-evaluation of him and his role in the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai can contribute to that.

This has ultimately been a chronicle of failure: the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai failed to bring about its New Order, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association which resulted was reduced to a mere tool for mass mobilization, the army ran amok unchecked, Konoe failed to both control the army and keep the country out of war, and Miki saw his philosophical vision realized not in a glorious emancipation and worldly historical development of new thought, but in a reign of

⁵⁰⁴ Kaba, 5-6. Emphasis mine.

terror, with his hopes reduced to mere bloody tatters across the Asia-Pacific. However, as Sakai observes,

*However, even though the result was to end in breakdown, intellectuals who until then had been indifferent to politics and but bystanders got together and seized Japan's destiny as their own; surpassing interests they discussed day and night, suffering, as they grappled with the issue of the Japan-China war which had become more serious and important than ever, and endeavouring to find a solution. These facts are worthy of mention.*⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁵ Sakai, 290.

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Appendix I The Purpose of the Establishment of the Shōwa Kenkyū Kai

昭和研究会設立趣意

最近、世界に於ける日本の経済的、政治的位置は、その根柢より一変した。にも拘わらず、右に順応して進化すべき外交、国防、経済、社会、教育、行政等、各分野の制度並に政策は、依然として旧態のままに残れるもの多く、ために到る処に矛盾、昏迷が現下の国際的重大時期に於て繰返されつつある。此の現状を脱却せんがためには、今や朝野の全知能と全経験とが総動員せられねばならぬ。かかる朝野一体の総動員のためには、その礎石として広く官僚、軍部、実業界、学界、評論界等各方面の意志を十分に疏通せしめ、その経験と識見とを打って一丸とし、総合的協力を以て真の国策樹立に当るべき研究機関の設置を急務とする。

之れ吾人が此度昭和研究会を設立せる所以である。

昭和十一年十一月

常任委員

大蔵公望、唐沢俊樹、賀屋興宣、後藤文夫、後藤隆之助
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三浦鉄太郎、村田省蔵、湯沢三千男、吉田 茂、吉野信次

なお、のちに常任委員には、三木清、矢部貞治、笠信太郎が加わった。

(Sakai's comment immediately following the document)

Source:

酒井三郎 Sakai Saburō, 「昭和研究会——ある知識人集団の軌跡」 *Shōwa Kenkyū Kai: aru Chishikijin Shuudan no Kiseki* [Shōwa Research Association: The Tracks of a Certain Group of Intellectuals], (東京:株式会社 TBS ブリタニカ [Kabushiki Kaisha TBS Buritanika], 1979), 49-50.