

Total War and Japan: Reality and Limitations of the Establishment of the Japanese Total War System[†]

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Interest in the First World War among the Japanese people was relatively mild during that conflict. In contrast, the Japanese ruling classes perceived the war with shock and a deepening sense of crisis. Thus, party politicians, military officers and bureaucrats had to adjust their interests to prepare for Japan to conduct the sort of “total war” that they observed in WWI. However, they failed to reach a consensus about the total war system, and this conflict continued until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. Even afterward, they were never able to construct a Japanese model of the total war system. The primary reason for this failure was the existence of multiple layers of authority in the Japanese state and the inability of the nation’s elite groups to mutually adjust their own vested interests. In doing so, they put their own particular interests above the needs of the state and the people. In other words, it was the state structure of Japan, with its multiple powerful stakeholders, that comprised the main obstacle to the construction of a total war system. In this article, I will outline the conflicts that accompanied discussions of the creation of a total war system, arguing that these conflicts were at the very core of Japan’s essence as a state. I will conclude that the Japanese model of a total war system was highly deficient, particularly in comparison with those of Europe and the United States.

I Introduction: The Emergence of Total War and Japan’s Response

(1) The First World War as a total war

The First World War (1914–1918) brought significant changes to the traditional form of wars. Traditional wars, i.e. cabinet wars, were waged between regular military forces, and there was a certain separation between the battlefield and the home front. However, during the First World War, that border became ambiguous due to the appearance of an array of new military technology. Thus, World War I is often considered a total war.

While traditional war had been limited to the ground and the surface of the sea, the

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appearance of modern weapons such as aircraft, tanks and submarines extended warfare into the air and under the sea. While the appearance of modern weapons is a result of the development of modern technologies, wars fought using these technologies have caused enormous human and physical damage that is not comparable to that caused by traditional wars. Already, during World War I, the expansion of battlefields and an increase in war damage was predicted to accelerate in future wars.

A total war is characterized by mass mobilization, mass consumption and mass destruction, requiring mobilization not only of the military sector but also of the economy, education, thought, mentality and culture of a people. It is possible, therefore, to call a state that establishes a mobilization system with which it may enact total wars a “total war state.” It was Leon Daudet (1869–1942) of the Action Française, a French royalist, who proposed a theory of the “total war state” for the first time. He argued that World War I was a total war and released a book entitled *La Guerre Totale* (The Total War) in 1918, when the war ended.

Daudet argued in the book that World War I was different from traditional wars and that its impact would spread to various fields, such as politics, the economy, industry, intellect, commerce and finance and would reach all states and their people. It was German General Erich Ludendorff (Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff, 1864–1937) who, based on Daudet’s argument, did the most to familiarize the public with the theory of total war. Ludendorff wrote *Der Totale Krieg* (Total War Theory) in 1935 and advocated the necessity of mass mobilization of military forces by universal conscription.

(2) Characteristics of the total war theory

The characteristics of total wars can be summarized as follows: a) a change in the way of wars, b) the increased importance of economic and industrial mobilization, and c) the necessity of mental and ideological mobilization. Generally, either one of the following strategies are chosen in a war: the annihilation strategy, the purpose of which is to utterly destroy the enemy, or the exhaustion strategy, the purpose of which is to force the enemy to exhaust its national strength, including its military power. In the former case, the aim would be to achieve results in a short, decisive battle, deploying active operations from the very beginning of the war by intensively mobilizing forces and supplies in large quantities in order to achieve that aim. This strategy requires the maintenance of military forces and stockpiles of strategic goods and resources during peacetime, an extension of the period a person service in the military and an increase in the military budget. Concerning weapons, the focus is on offensive and frontal equipment. This is a strategy chosen by countries with limited natural resources, such as Japan and Germany.

On the other hand, in the case of the exhaustion strategy, the draining of the enemy’s military resources is the main goal, and thus, mobilization of forces can be kept to a minimum initially, in order to save military capabilities until the time of a decisive battle. This strategy expects a long conflict. Strategic goods are stockpiled moderately, and pressure on private demand is avoided. This strategy is adopted by countries that have advantages in terms of capital and technology, such as the U.S., the U.K. and France.

The increased importance of economic and industrial mobilization imposed a substantial burden on the Japanese industrial structure because of its inferiority to advanced Western countries in terms of technology and capital accumulation. Limited capital, technology and human resources in Japan were used for economic and industrial mobilization. This helped the military sector to be reinforced, but the private sector fell behind. In addition,

concerning mental and ideological mobilization, increased military education was introduced to the classroom, and this resulted in rigid indoctrination. Free speech and activities were limited. As the wartime system was put in place, Japanese society was stagnated and blinkered.

As mentioned above, wide gaps emerged in discussions of total war theory and debates about how to establish a total war system and its content. These exchanges were often influenced by each country's conditions and the respective stage of total war the country was in. World War II, which assumed the character of total war to an even greater extent than the First World War, led to the emergence of further differences. Japan and Germany had tried to develop an active all-out system with the aim of establishing a total war state from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, and they ultimately set out on the path to a total war state involving short-term, decisive battles with a view to establishing the national mobilization system by the initiative of the military.

(3) Impact of total war debates on Japan and preparations for a total war system

Interest in WWI among the Japanese people was relatively low. On the other hand, the war had a strong impact on major leaders in the government, and quite a few started to wonder how their country might handle a future crisis.

For example, Aritomo Yamagata (1838–1922), one of the most powerful political leaders at that time, on October 15, 1917, stated that “we have no choice but resorting to the full strength of the whole nation from top to bottom”¹ to prepare for a future war. Tsuyoshi Inukai, a famous proponent of party politics who was respected as an advocate of universal suffrage and was also called the “God of Constitutionalism,” asserted in the National Party convention in January 1918 that “all men in the country are soldiers and all industries in the country are military factories for producing weapons.”² Kazushige Ugaki, who had sketched out a response to total wars from an early stage together with Giichi Tanaka, accurately grasped the nature of such wars: “victory or defeat [in] a future war will depend not only on military battles and military tactics but also on [the] huge crash of all energies that compose states and deployment and operation of all energies.”³

A group of progressive officers in the army, whom were later called the Control Faction, advocated preparation for a total war in an organized manner and involved various authorities in Japan. In particular, the Control Faction established a special military investigation board in the Ministry of the Army on December 27, 1915 and invested lots of financial and human resources into the investigation and analysis of wartime mobilization systems and the state of affairs in those countries that were involved in the war.

Their results were recorded in booklets such as *Overseas Missions Report* and *Monthly Report of the Special Military Investigation Board*. Based on their research, they also published the *Agenda on Necessity of a Nationwide Mobilization Plan* (September 1917, Chief of Staff), the document *Imperial State National Defence Resources* (August 1917, Chief of Staff) and *Opinions on National General Mobilization* (May 1920, Special Military Investigation Board). The preparation for establishing a total war system had progressed steadily.⁴

After WWI, the world started to move towards democracy and national self-determination, and party politics began to rise in Japan. Under these circumstances, it

¹ Comment by Tokutomi, I., *Koshaku Yamagata*.

² Washio, p.406.

³ Tsunoda, *Kazushige*, p.327.

⁴ The above-mentioned principal reports are contained at the end Koketsu, Soryokusen.

became inevitable that Japan would reconcile advocacy of a total war system with democratic ideas and institutions. In other words, although ideas of total war might be superficially considered mutually contradictory with democracy, both were adjusted so that a total war system on a grand scale could be prescribed as the response of Japan to global developments.

Against this background, a drastic review of civil-military relations became an urgent issue. The Munitions Industries Mobilization Act was enacted in 1918 as a starting point of the development of legislation that eventually led to the enactment of the National Mobilization Law in April 1938. During this process, confrontation and compromise occurred repeatedly between military and politics.

In the process of preparing for total war, civil-military relations were complicated, and contradictions frequently emerged which could not be resolved until a Japanese defeat in World War II. Therefore, I believe that the establishment of a total war system was never completed in Japan. The principal reason for this is that Japan had a structure in which different powers existed separately so that coordination among them did not progress smoothly or sufficiently though the country and the people saw the need to establish a total war system. This is to say, the national structure of Japan itself as a pluralistic polity was a decisive factor inhibiting the establishment of a functioning total war system.

I want to point out that it is possible to analyse the nature of modern war in the Japanese state by summarizing the process of preparation for total war and by discovering the contradictions that this process revealed, while, at the same time, drawing the conclusion that the Japanese total war system was insufficient compared to that of Western states.

II Japan's Total War System: Development, Legislation and Establishment of the Total War State

(1) Preparation for total war

After the end of WWI, the Japanese government came to think that future wars would be total wars, based on the results of investigations by the army and the navy. Therefore, it started to develop laws for the establishment of a total war system. The Munitions Industries Mobilization Act (Act No. 38), put into place in March 1918, the year in which WWI ended, was a starting point in this process.

The act was to provide various munitions industries with protection and promotion, clarifying the resources required in wartime, and to establish an administrative system that was suited to respond to an outbreak of war immediately by enhancing those industries during peacetime. This was different from a requisition order, the purpose of which is to *force* industries to donate resources, in that its purpose was to *encourage* industries to voluntarily donate resources that were expected to be necessary in wartime. This kind of mobilization was different from traditional mobilization, which occurs after the outbreak of war.

A course toward the establishment of a total war system was pioneered by the Munitions Industries Mobilization Act and was further concretized by the establishment, in May 1918, of the Munitions Bureau, an institution that supervised matters related to the enforcement of the Munitions Industries Mobilization Act under the control of the cabinet. The president of the Munitions Bureau was the Prime Minister, and the vice ministers of the army and the navy also served as vice ministers of munitions. In addition, representatives from all

ministries and agencies were allocated to the Munitions Bureau. Although the bureau was a comprehensive organization in which representatives of all concerned ministries and agencies were present, its membership initially consisted of ten military officers, and the preparation for full-scale mobilization of munitions industries, in reality, was led by the military.

The total war system is a political system for dealing with total wars, but it is established in peacetime. The changes in warfare and the emergence of total war thinking in the early twentieth century left no choice but to align a state system with a total war approach, particularly in the case of countries with relatively low national endurance, especially when such states, like Japan and Germany, are involved in a long, drawn-out war.

Based on such views, the preparation for mobilization was sketched out starting in the 1920s, and organizations dealing with national mobilization were established in quick succession. Mobilizing human resources was the most important aspect of establishing the total war system, and various approaches were suggested. The Resources Bureau, established under the cabinet in May 1927, considered humans as “resources,” and the “mobilization of human resources” began to spread as a slogan among advocates of total war thinking.

These developments accelerated in the 1930s and the 1940s. In my work, *Soryokusen*,⁵ I have identified the most important steps in this development. For example, *Opinions on National Mobilization*, drafted by the Special Military Investigation Board in May 1920, is a document of extreme importance. It is the first official document to use the term “public mobilization,” defining it as industrial mobilization, transportation mobilization, financial mobilization and mobilization in other areas. In this document, which was a foundational document for the later total war system, “public mobilization” was understood as the mobilization of human resources. The public is specified as a target of the concept of mobilization.

In other words, goods and humans are classified as “resources,” and it is this kind of society in which a total war system can be implemented at the national level, opening the way for the process of establishing a national mobilization system. The recognition of human beings as a state resource is the fundamental thought that underlies the total war system. Total war theories based on a variety of approaches were presented during the 1920s and the 1930s. Resultingly, the controversy over how to turn humans into resources was a common issue in those theories.

(2) Toward the enactment of the National Mobilization Act

As a central organization in charge of national mobilization was established under the leadership of the military, the army, decided to establish the Munitions Division in the Army Ministry’s Ordinance Bureau. This division was in charge of formulating an annual plan for munitions industry mobilization. In a related move, in May 1920, the National Statistics Bureau was established as a central control organization for munitions industry mobilization by the cabinet of Hara Takashi, the president of the political party Seiyukai. The Munitions Bureau and the Statistics Bureau were later integrated into the National Statistics Bureau for the purpose of coordinating the cooperation of governmental organizations related to industrial mobilization.

However, the government decided to dismantle the National Statistics Bureau in October

⁵ See pp. 213–244 of the first edition (Sanichishobo, 1981) or pp. 224–255 of the new edition (Shakaihyoronsha Co., Ltd., 2010).

1922 because international opinion strongly favoured disarmament after World War I and particularly during the Washington Conference (1921/22). As a result of this conference and the post-war recession that followed, administrative and financial streamlining became necessary for the Japanese military.

Under such circumstances, the government had to postpone policies premised on the establishment of the total war system. In addition, as the influence of the Great Depression in the late 1920s started to reach Japan, it became even more difficult to pursue the establishment of the total war system. Nevertheless, the army enhanced the Engineering Division under the Munitions Bureau as its industrial mobilization organization, and starting in 1920, it steadily implemented “industrial mobilization plans.” In May 1927, the Resources Bureau, which was under the direct jurisdiction of the Prime Minister, was established as an organization for handling central managing duties and consultations in order to prepare for the control and operation of resources supplied under the general mobilization system. Duties related to national mobilization were brought back on track. Just as in the case of the National Statistics Bureau, nearly half of the Resources Bureau consisted of military officers on active duty, and it was basically a military-dominated organization in charge of general mobilization.

Organizations for national mobilization were repeatedly established and abolished, but in March 1930, the commissioner of the Resources Bureau issued a notification on general mobilization upon an initiative of the army at the time before and after the Manchurian Incident on September 18, 1931. At the time of the Manchurian Incident, a general mobilization planning meeting was convened to initiate specific works for designing a general mobilization plan. Twenty army officers, including Hajime Sugiyama, Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau, participated in drafting these plans.

Such developments became more prevalent as a result of the Manchurian Incident and led to the establishment of the Planning Agency in May 1937 and the Planning Bureau in October 1937. The drafting of the general mobilization plan continued steadily. Then, the National Mobilization Act was enacted in April 1938, and a legal basis for military mobilization and national mobilization was established.

The repeated establishment of organizations in charge of general mobilization and the development of relevant laws had advanced, and the establishment of a Japanese total war system was pushed forward. Of course, it is not possible to assert that such developments directly led to the formation of a total war state. However, there was no doubt that, with keen awareness regarding the possibility of future wars becoming total wars, the creation of a Japanese total war system began to make rapid progress.

III Preparation for Total Wars under Taisho Democracy: Background of its Limitations

(1) Preparation for total war in the age of Taisho democracy (1910s–1920s)

Submarines, aircraft, tanks and toxic gas weapons appeared during WWI as a result of the rapid development of modern military technology. In addition, while battlefields used to be limited to the ground and the surface of the sea, fighting now also extended into the air and underseas. The border between the battlefield and the home front was gradually disappearing because of the expansion of war areas and spaces. A war was not far from daily reality anymore for many people, and they were now exposed to the risk that their

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living space might turn into a battlefield any time.

The appearance of modern weapons with levels of killing power that did not exist in the past was a major characteristic of World War I and led to immense damage. At the same time, because the war turned into a total war, a social structure emerged in which a great number of people were forced to participate in the conflict. This structure was the biggest factor in causing unprecedented, disastrous harm. In order not to experience further such disasters, democracy became a major trend in the world after WWI.

The origins of democracy may be traced back to the age of the French Revolution, but WWI was a moment when the importance of democracy was recognized on a worldwide level. The idea spread that it was impossible to prevent a battle for supremacy by a group of nations seeking supremacy unless people (*demos*) and power (*kratia*), which are the roots of democracy, were connected and activated worldwide.

On the other hand, democracy was reaffirmed as an essential factor for establishing the total war system. That is to say, after WWI, the capability of corresponding with total war became essential for any political thought or system adopted.

Taking the concept of modernization, for example. As it became necessary to establish and expand a system related to the development, production and deployment of the new weapons systems that appeared during WWI, the weight of a concept that regarded technological modernization and the capability of producing large quantities of weapons and ammunition increased. Therefore, a technology-centred system, i.e. a technocracy, emerged which would become all-powerful. Furthermore, as total war resulted in enormous human cost, this necessitated an increase in human mobilization to satisfy the demands of the battlefields and the home front.

The two issues of scientificism and human mobilization became the key issues in the response to the emergence of total wars. The state's role expanded to ensure technocracy. In addition, the promotion of human mobilization relied to a high degree on bottom-up public initiative rather than forced mobilization by the state. To that end, the raising of interest in technological innovation and the democratization of human mobilization had to become a goal. In a total war, Japan was originally inferior to Western countries both in terms of capital and technology, so the mobilization of human resources was expected to be urgently required to reinforce national strength. For that reason, the framework of the total war system was established as a system for human mobilization.

The motivation for driving (particularly) the mobilization of human resources for a total war must be considered. That awareness of both internal and external factors must be able to be shared by the public, and it is easy to achieve with the public's interest in and support for a response to total war. However, the thing is not that simple, so it is necessary to strongly appeal to equality in the appearance of total war society in the process of establishing the total war system. In any case, the change of a state regime to a total war system as an internal issue became urgent after WWI.

An important external factor was the necessity for Japan to gain supremacy in mainland China and Southeast Asia as supply centres for resources, with the ultimate aim of reaching autarky, because a large quantity of resources would be consumed in a total war. The orientation toward self-sufficiency—the desire to secure a physical base for the total war system—would eventually lead to the wars against the other parts of Asia in the 1920s and the 1930s.

(2) Total war systems and democracy

Did the power of democracy that became a global trend after WWI influence the

establishment of a total war state or a total war society? This issue has attracted particular attention among researchers, including myself, and is now prominent in academic discussions. As mentioned earlier, democracy is premised on the expression of the public will in discussions about the realization of national, social or individual growth and happiness.

The public collectively collaborates with the state by forming organizations such as political parties and labour unions and strives to realize its goals. In fact, the participation of social organizations increased worldwide after WWI. In Japan, the party cabinet under Takashi Hara appeared in 1918. The Universal Manhood Suffrage Act enacted in 1925 was based on the same type of desire of the people to participate in political discussions. On the other hand, in Korea, which was under Japanese colonial rule, the March 1 Independence Movement occurred in March 1919. Under such circumstances, democracy played an important role in establishing the total war system.

A total war system cannot be realized by a small number of military leaders, bureaucrats and politicians. Rather, it depends on the active involvement of the public and the emergence of an understanding among the people regarding the importance of a total war system. The development of organizations such as political parties and labour unions which acknowledge the importance of democracy for the establishment of a total war system, was extremely important in nurturing the same understanding among the public. In brief, ideas about democracy and ideas of total war emerged at almost the same moment.

At a glance, it may sound strange that thought regarding both democracy and total war were related phenomena; they have contradictory aspects. We need to understand that a political system that is capable of responding to a war at any given time can avoid national crisis in the age of total war. At the same time, a total war system is implemented and established in various forms as a national strategy for stabilizing the domestic political order under the excuse of national crisis prevention and crisis management.

In other words, large numbers of troops should be kept ready at all times, including peacetime. Even in peacetime, the dissemination of the consciousness of national defence and of nationalism were necessary to create a state which is always ready to go to war. The distinction between wartime and peacetime disappears by converting peacetime into wartime and vice versa.

IV Conclusion: Total War Systems and Pluralistic Federation of Japan

(1) Fascism and total war systems

Before concluding this article, I would like to touch on the correlation between fascist systems and total war systems.

According to textbooks, the reasons for the emergence of fascism in Europe after WWI were the impasse of the capitalist system and the appearance of questions and contradictions regarding the capitalist system revealed by the emergence of a socialist country, the Soviet Union. Those problems, coupled with internal contradictions, caused domestic conflicts in many countries. This is why fascist movements and parties, which advocated the necessity of overcoming the contradictions and uniting nations across the lines of races and social classes, appeared one after another.

In 1922, the emergence of a fascist regime in Italy after the March on Rome by Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) became a turning point. Francisco Franco y Bahamonde (1892–

1975) of Spain, Antonio Salazar (1889–1970) of Portugal and Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) then succeeded in establishing fascist systems in their countries. In addition, fascist parties and fascists, such as the Action Française (French Royalists) in France and Oswald Mosley (1896–1980) in the United Kingdom, were influential in Western countries, although they failed to take the reins of power.

The concept of fascism is summarized in a famous speech given by Mussolini on October 28, 1925. He said, “Everything shall be under the control of the state. No one shall be outside the state nor oppose the state.” (*Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato.*) “Everything shall be under the control of the state” meant that the state came ahead of the importance of social classes and races and that a state in which all people were homogenized under state power was the ultimate objective.

Such ideology gradually started to appear in Asia, particularly in Japan. Japanese fascism was formed, through the absolutism of the emperor system, as a vehicle to integrate all the people on a mental and a constitutional level.⁶

Fascism in Germany and Italy, however, was defined as “bottom-up fascism” (in the words of Masao Maruyama). This was because, particularly in the case of Germany, the fascist (Nazi) party was the fruit of a subjective movement of the people that grasped power through legal procedures, based on an election. With regards to Japan, the theory that denies the establishment of fascism in that country has emerged because Japanese fascism was not established through legal procedures as in the case of Germany. The controversy over Japanese fascism has been discussed from various angles based on the contradictory opinions of Marxists and anti-Marxists.

To solve the seeming contradictions with regards to Japan, the theory of total war has to be taken into consideration. The above-mentioned speech by Mussolini may be understood as a suggestion of a total war system, not just a fascist system, in that he appealed to the establishment of a stable and robust political community across different social classes and races. In that context, socialist and communist systems can also be understood as types of total war systems because they are dictatorial systems in which there is only one class.⁷

After all, where a political system focuses on the mobilization and unity of the people, regardless of whether it is a top-down iron hand or a bottom-up approach, it may be categorized as a “total war system.” It would be important to point out the risks and problems of such systems by actively questioning their significance.

It is widely-known that Mussolini was an activist from the Italian Socialist Party and strongly influenced by Marxism and that he was committed to the ideas of Georges Sorel (1874–1922), philosopher of revolutionary Syndicalism. In addition, the political style of Nazism owed much to the propaganda practices of Soviet socialism and the Communist party; Hanna Arendt (1906–1975) pointed out the similarity between Nazism and Stalinism and maintained that Italian Fascism, German Nazism and Soviet Stalinism were “twin

⁶ Eguchi, *Nippon Fascism*.

⁷ Concerning the connection between the total war system and the fascism system, in a recent study by Arakawa, *Senjikeizaitaisei* and Koketsu, *Soryokusen* is discussed, and Arakawa points out that “the purport of Atsushi Kouketsu is that the establishment of the total war system is a factor of changing the prewar social system into fascism and that the entire process of establishing the total war system is thus called Japanese fascism” (a nationalism movement with an irrational system of thought) (p. 16, note 4). He offers the critique that “Kouketsu moves his discussion forward on the premise that fascism is irrational” (p. 16, note 8). It is true that I discussed the premise that the Japanese total war system was basically Japanese fascism in my book published 30 years ago. Although I emphasized the unity of relation between the two systems in my book, I did not explore their interrelation sufficiently. I would now argue that the course toward the establishment of the total war system was a background that promoted the formation of Japanese fascism from a point of view of coordination and integration of democracy and fascism.

totalitarianism[s],”⁸ meaning that the three systems were the same nature.

Although we can point out a number of issues in comparative discussions, the point here is a comparative discussion of fascism and the total war system. To deliberate on that issue, we need to know: What is the support base of the total war system? There are two reasons for asking that question.

The first is that political systems that can be regarded as total war systems have been born since World War II (WWII). A number of military and authoritarian regimes can serve as examples, such as those of Park Chung-hee (1917–1979) in South Korea and Jiang Jieshi (1887–1975) in Taiwan in the 1950s; other instances include South American military regimes, such as those of Juan Domingo Peron (1895–1974) and Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006). While these regimes stood for domestic democratization through physical violence, they aggressively pushed forward policies for modernization at the national level. This is a political system called developmental dictatorship.

These regimes may be called modern fascism. They advanced policies that gave national development the first priority at high costs by hiding the demands for domestic democracy and contradictions based on the excessive supremacy of nationalism and succeeded in achieving a certain degree of economic development and forming a large middle class, i.e. a white-collar class. The middle class formed in that process became the support base of the total war system.

Although there is no need to provide examples from those countries, the total war system in pre-war Japan and the total war system in the post-war reform period and the economic reconstruction period no doubt had in common their promotion of economic development. As a result, the large middle class emerging in post-war Japan, not comparable to that of pre-war times, was formed, and it was said that “all Japanese belong to the middle class.” This has inevitably created a structure in which the people have a middle-class mentality and are indifferent to their own social class or position. This is actually what the total war system intends.

The second issue to be challenged is directly and indirectly related to the above-mentioned point. Given the use of a kind of propaganda in which a total war system functions to promote equalization and homogenization by neutralizing differences and disparities, each individual who belongs to the society naturally sharply spurs the people’s consciousness. A national crisis, such as a war, is tactfully termed a public crisis, and a political system is established in which the people are driven into the war for the purpose of WHAT? When the people are mobilized for a common national issue, such as a war, in an integrated manner, the differences between social classes and positions are dissolved, irrespective of whether the issue at stake is domestic or international.

For example, differences in origins and backgrounds are dissolved when persons are drafted into the army and sent to the battlefield. This was certainly evident in the army life, but the Japanese people who were put into the wartime regime were converted into fictitious soldiers while the whole country was turned into a fictitious battlefield. In summary, the total war system can be understood as a nationalism-oriented society that disables the differences between individuals and converts them into objects that constitute the state in the name of victory in war and economic development.

(2) Today’s research issues regarding total war systems

What are the important topics of research on total war systems today? I believe that at least

⁸ See Arendt(1951).

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the following two issues are relevant.

The first issue is that, if there is any possibility that the modern total war system will become more dominant, it is necessary to consider abolishing modern democracy in order to prevent this from happening. Although democracy is an important concept and system that relativizes existing power, it is often used as a tool for mobilizing the public. The United States has employed a method of waging consecutive wars in the name of saving democracy. This American pattern gives the impression that democracy has become nothing but a tool for mobilizing the public.

The second issue is to overcome the false egalitarianism that is said to be created by the total war system, although its merits and demerits have already been discussed with regard to the study of total war systems. By way of this false sense of egalitarianism, the people's consciousness is unified. This tendency is spreading in our society, where a variety of social contradictions are hidden under false egalitarianism and incorporated into the total war system.

On the other hand, the reality of a society under the total war system is that the younger generation in Japan, due to an underlying sense of stagnation in society and the existence of many people who are effectively ousted from society. In that sense, we have to accept subjectively that the total war society is a tool for hiding a variety of contradictions and social problems.

We should not secure our position by first taking a free ride on goals presented by the state. Rather, each of us has to answer the question of how much space we can secure in the future for being independent from the state, maintaining autonomy and acting freely. Unless we keep asking this question, we have no choice but to be incorporated into the total war system or total war society, characterized by mobilization, control and management.

Total war systems may be differentiated by establishing categories, such as the European total war system or the Japanese/German total war system. However, what is important here is to take measures for effectively utilizing democracy when, even in the case of a democratic state, it is intended to establish a total war system. In the case of Japan, the slogan of all nations and partial revision of the power structure were enforced when establishing the total war system.

I insist on this point because I would like to call attention to the fact that the post-war total war system in Japan has succeeded in mobilizing the people through the slogan "production first" with the aim of economic development based on democracy, and this high economic growth was achieved, a characteristic of recent total war systems.

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