

# **Imperialism**

**Monster of the Twentieth Century**

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## Preface

From its inception, human history has always been a struggle between faith and power. Sometimes faith defeats force, but force wins out at other times. When Pilate ordered Jesus Christ to be crucified, force triumphed over faith, but when Bishop Ambrose of Milan forced Emperor Theodosius to make a public act of contrition, faith subjugated force.<sup>1</sup> If faith governs force, the world is bathed in light, but if force oppresses faith, the world is plunged into darkness. We live in a dark age when force oppresses faith.

Throughout the Japanese Empire, there is not a single philosopher who teaches the principle of world harmony, yet we maintain an army of thirteen divisions that flaunts its weapons on every occasion. There is not a single poet in our society to offer consolation for the distress of the people, but we possess a fleet of warships of 260,000 tons constantly prowling the coasts of our country and ready for war. Disorder reigns in families, father and child are at daggers drawn, brothers engage in bitter rivalry, and mother and daughter-in-law hold each other in mutual contempt. At such a time, our country, dubbed the land of the cherry blossoms in the Far East, takes imperialism as its emblem and fancies itself a nation of gentlemen.

My dear friend, Kōtoku Shūsui, author of *Imperialism*, you have raised your banner aloft in the literary world, although you are still a young man. While you do not profess belief in the Christian faith, you hate the charade that passes itself off as patriotism in our times. Although you have never traveled to a free country, you are a fervent socialist. I consider it an honor to count you among my friends and thank you for granting me the privilege of introducing your original work to the general public.

*April 11, Meiji 34 (1901)*  
*Uchimura Kanzō, Tsunohazumura, Tokyo*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emperor Theodosius (346–395) submitted to Bishop Ambrose's (332–397) order in 390 and proclaimed Christianity the state religion of Rome in 392.

<sup>2</sup> Uchimura Kanzo (1861–1930) was a Japanese religious philosopher and colleague of Kōtoku at the newspaper *Yorozu Choho*.

## Three Preliminary Observations

1. Storm clouds gather over the Eastern Sea and the winds blow more strongly every day. I alone calmly preach justice and virtue whereas the most fervent patriots of our nation, their hair standing on end and their eyes burning with hatred, strive for great feats of conquest. I know that I will be treated as the butt of mockery, like the Chinese sage who rescued the Confucian classics from the waves during a great naval battle.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, I knowingly undertake this task because I shudder to think of the horrors the next century holds in store for our country. I ask both those who understand me and those who curse me to read this book.
2. The theories of imperialism set forth in this work were first developed in insightful analyses by Western intellectuals. I have taken up the most progressive theses propounded by renowned thinkers who hold to the highest ideals, such as Tolstoy, Zola, John Morley, Bebel, and Bryant.<sup>2</sup> For that reason, I do not consider myself an original author but rather a commentator on other men's ideas.<sup>3</sup>
3. Although I could not elaborate on these ideas in this short booklet, I am confident that I have set them down in broad strokes. If, upon reading this book, uninstructed people open their eyes to the current state of affairs and if this book makes a small contribution to the establishment of truth and justice, I will have achieved my goals.

*April, Meiji 34 (1901), the cherry blossoms in full bloom,  
at the editorial office of the Yorozu Chōhō<sup>4</sup>  
Shūsui, a disciple.*

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<sup>1</sup> Yasan (Gaisan in Japanese) was the site of a great naval battle in 1279 c.E. in which the Mongols defeated the Southern Song dynasty. The minister Liu continued to instruct the young Song emperor in the commentaries on the *Great Learning* (one of four Confucian classics) even during the famous battle. In the end, when the Song forces were on the verge of defeat, he drowned himself along with the eight-year old emperor.

<sup>2</sup> John Morley (1838–1923), a leader of the liberal party in England, opposed the Boer War (1889–1902) and later Britain's entry into the First World War. August Bebel (1840–1913), one of the historic founders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, was jailed for opposing the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine during the Franco-Prussian War. William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925) a leader of the Democratic Party in the United States, opposed the annexation of the Philippines.

<sup>3</sup> Kōtoku distinguishes between author (著) and commentator (註). Scholars have noted that he paraphrases and translates from J. M. Robertson's 1899 *Patriotism and Empire*.

<sup>4</sup> The *Yorozu Chōhō* was an extremely popular and influential daily newspaper established by Kuroiwa Ruiko in 1892 at which Kōtoku and Uchimura both worked until 1903.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## *Imperialism: A Wildfire in an Open Field*

Imperialism spreads like a wildfire in an open field. All nations bow down to worship this new god, sing hymns to praise it, and have created a cult to pay it adoration.

Look at the world that surrounds us. In England, both government and citizens have become fervent acolytes of imperialism. In Germany, the war-loving emperor never loses a chance to extol its virtues. As for Russia, the regime has long practiced a policy of imperialism. France, Austria, and Italy are all delighted to join the fray. Even a young country like the United States has recently shown an eagerness to master this new skill. And, finally, this trend has reached Japan. Ever since our great victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese of all classes burn with fever to join the race for empire, like a wild horse suddenly freed from its harness.

### *What Virtue, What Power?*

Long ago, Taira no Tokitada haughtily proclaimed: “Anyone who is not a Taira cannot be considered a human being.”<sup>1</sup> At present, no politician, of whatever stripe, can hope to be appointed as cabinet minister in any national government unless he agrees to serve the cause of imperialism. And no government that renounces imperialism will gain the respect of other nations. But, in the final analysis, what virtue, what power, and what value does imperialism possess, that it is able to inspire such fervent devotion in its acolytes?

### *The Purpose of the Nation-State*

Ultimately, the main purpose of the nation-state is to ensure continual social progress and to better the welfare of humanity. A state should not aim just to create a brief show of prosperity but rather pursue policies that result in continual progress over the long term. In addition, it must adopt policies that lead to the happiness of all and not simply secure the privileges of a small minority. In what way does imperialism, now supported by all political leaders and nations, contribute to the progress and the happiness of the human race?

### *Scientific Knowledge and Civilized Morality*

I believe social progress must be based on true scientific knowledge and human happiness and well-being must be founded on civilized morality. I support the ideals of freedom and justice for all and the goals of universal love and equality. Throughout history, statesmen who have adhered to such principles have ensured that the prosperity of their nation outlasted the pine and the

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<sup>1</sup> Taira no Tokitada was a great counselor of state in the twelfth century and younger brother of the wife of Taira no Kiyomori. This is a citation from chapter 4, book 1 of the classic *Tale of the Heike*.

oak tree.<sup>2</sup> However, those who have ignored them have seen their nation perish as quickly as the dream of a nighttime in spring.<sup>3</sup> If imperialism were truly based on a solid foundation and served the cause of human progress, men would welcome it as the glad tidings of heaven on earth. I would gladly become its advocate and even its watchdog.

But, what if, to the contrary, the growing craze for imperialism is based not on scientific knowledge but rather on rank superstition? What if it derives from fanaticism rather than from civilized morality? And what if it results in despotism, injustice, narrow-mindedness, and conflict instead of freedom, justice, universal love, and equality? And what if all nations of the world are ruled by these evil feelings and embrace this vicious morality, in both the material and the spiritual domains? How can one not shudder to think of the ravages that this poison is spreading in the world today?

### *Angels or Devils*

Oh, imperialism! Will you lift the world of the twentieth century to the eternal light of the Pure Land, or will you plunge us into the hell of no respite?<sup>4</sup> Do you represent progress or corruption, well-being or catastrophe? Are you angel or devil?

### *Our Most Urgent Duty*

The most urgent duty of thinkers called on to lead our twentieth century is to expose the imminent perils of imperialism.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding my own shortcomings, I have decided to undertake this mission on my own since I can no longer afford to wait any longer as danger approaches.

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<sup>2</sup> Both were symbols of longevity.

<sup>3</sup> This image is taken from the opening *Tale of the Heike* in reference to the Taira clan, whose precipitous decline is the central theme of the epic. The proud are as ephemeral as “the dream of a nighttime in spring”

<sup>4</sup> In Buddhist iconography, the deepest hell is called *muken no jigoku* or the hell of no respite. It is “an unremittingly scorching abode reserved for individuals who have committed the most heinous offenses, such as killing their parents or injuring a Buddha” Hirasawa 2008, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, “to singe one’s hair and burn one’s face in order to put out a fire,” an expression from the *History of the Han Dynasty* (Hanshu).

# Chapter 2: On Patriotism

## PART 1

### *The Battle Cry of the Imperialists*

“Let’s increase our population, expand the size of our territory, build a great empire, raise the national prestige, and bring glory to our flag.” This is the battle cry of the imperialists of every nation. The imperialists have a deep, abiding love for their country.

England battles with South Africa, the United States invades the Philippines, Germany seizes the region of Jiaozhou, Russia annexes Manchuria, France conquers Fashoda, and Italy makes war on Abyssinia.<sup>1</sup> These are the most striking manifestations of imperialism in recent years. In every case, the advance of imperialist nations has been accompanied by the deployment of military force and by aggressive diplomacy backed by the threat of force.

### *The Warp of Patriotism, the Woof of Militarism*

However, let us look at the consequences of these invasions. Isn’t imperialism derived from patriotism and militarism? These constitute the warp and woof from which the fabric of imperialism is woven. Without a doubt, patriotism and militarism constitute the foundation upon which the imperialism practiced by the great powers of the present day rests. Accordingly, before we judge the merits of imperialism, we must first examine the nature of patriotism and militarism.

### *What Is Patriotism?*

In fact, what is “love of country”? What does “patriotism” really mean? Why do people feel an emotional attachment to their native land and their country? Why do they have to love their nations?

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<sup>1</sup> The Boer War (1899–1902) was the longest and most expensive of Britain’s colonial wars against the Dutch settlers of South Africa. Britain crushed the guerrilla resistance after herding Boer women and children into concentration camps, where 28,000 of them died of starvation and disease. After winning the Philippines in its war with Spain, the United States fought Filipino nationalists in a guerrilla war. After the murder of a German missionary, Germany seized the port of Qingdao and pressed for other concessions in China’s Shandong Province in 1897. In 1898, the Russians obtained a twenty-five-year concession on Port Arthur and Dalian to complete the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

In the diplomatic crisis of Fashoda (1898), France and Britain almost came to war over competing claims to African territory. General Marchand conquered this military base in southern Sudan for the French side, but within a short time the British under General Kitchener forced the French to evacuate the base.

## PART 2

### *Love of Country and Human Compassion*

I agree with Mencius that any human being would, without hesitation, rush to rescue a child about to fall into a well. If patriotism were nothing more than the natural empathy that motivated this generous act, and if it were an emotion filled with the spirit of charity and love, then it would be a beautiful and glorious thing. I would have nothing more to say on the topic.

On second thought, however, a human being moved by such selfless love and charity does not pause to think whether the child is a family member or a close relative. When he rescues the child from danger, he does not even ask himself whether the child is his own or belongs to another. For the same reason, righteous and benevolent men in every nation in the world pray that the people of the Transvaal will win their freedom and that the people of the Philippines will gain their independence. There are many such men even in England and the United States, even though their countries are belligerents in these wars. How is it possible for a patriot to adopt such a stance?

At present, nationalists and patriots in England denounce their fellow countrymen who pray for their nation's defeat in the Transvaal and decry their lack of patriotism.<sup>2</sup> In America, patriots revile fellow citizens who hope for the independence of the Philippines and condemn their hatred of their own country. But even if these people are lacking in love for their country, they are certainly filled with compassion, charity, and generosity. For this reason, we can conclude that patriotism is an emotion far removed from the profound feeling that leads a human being to rescue a child from impending danger.

I am saddened that patriotism has nothing to do with compassion and charity. In fact, the love a patriot feels for his country stops at national borders. He only cares about the human beings who live in his own country. A patriot who does not care for the people of other countries and only loves his fellow countrymen is like a man who only loves members of his own family and immediate relatives and is indifferent to everyone else. He only seeks superficial glory and the satisfaction of his material desires. How can we speak of public interest in such a case when only a person's private interests are at stake?<sup>3</sup>

### *Nostalgia for One's Hometown*

In addition, love of country can be likened to the nostalgia that men feel for their hometowns. The nostalgia that fills a man's heart when he misses his hometown is a noble thing, but, at the same time, it is base and contemptible.

### *Hatred for the Other*

A little boy mounts his hobbyhorse at a time when hair still covers the nape of his neck, but does he really understand that he should love the mountains and rivers of his country?<sup>4</sup> Is not the

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<sup>2</sup> Transvaal and the Orange Free State were republics established by Dutch settlers in South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> In traditional Confucian terms, Kōtoku condemns patriotism as a narrow, personal and private "interest" rather than a broad, public concern. Traditional morality stipulated that a man's public duties should take precedence over his private interest.

<sup>4</sup> In traditional society, it was customary for young boys to grow their hair down to their neck collar.

exact contrary true? A man only longs for his homeland and the place of his birth after he learns that there are foreign towns and countries. After he has wandered around the world, experienced setbacks to his ambitions, and endured the coldness of strangers, he fondly recalls the days of his boyhood and youth and yearns for bygone times and familiar places. People nostalgically recall their native land when they have trouble adjusting to a different climate, getting used to exotic food, expressing their thoughts in a foreign tongue, or living apart from their parents and family members who might have soothed their pain.

Men become nostalgic not because they have love or respect for their native land but because they hate other countries, especially when they have been exiled from their homes due to circumstances beyond their control. This nostalgia is not pure sympathy and compassion for their own nation, but instead a hatred that they come to feel toward foreign places. After seeing their dreams shattered or their hopes dashed, many people begin to hate foreign countries and to long for their native land.

Some assert that men who have met with adversity and disappointment abroad are not the only ones to feel the love of country and that patriots are also to be found among those who have been successful and even built a fortune overseas. In fact, this is certainly the case. But the feeling of nostalgia that successful people feel is especially contemptible. All that they really want is to show off their success to their family members, friends, and acquaintances in their hometown. This spirit of ostentation merely reflects their vanity, pride, and competitive spirit, and has nothing whatsoever to do with compassion and sympathy for their homeland. People in ancient times said, "To become rich and famous without returning to one's hometown is like wandering around in the pitch darkness wearing brocade robes."<sup>5</sup> This saying exposes the petty and shameful motives that lie hidden under their pompous attitudes.

The citizens of a particular town demand that the government found a university in their hometown or build a railway line that passes through their district. Some even insist that the ministers and officials of the national government must be from their own prefecture. Does such selfish behavior have anything to do with sympathy and compassion for their homeland, as opposed to personal interest and vanity? How can a man of intelligence or moral probity feel anything but scorn for such ignoble sentiments?

### *The Pettiness of War*

If patriotism and love for one's homeland came from the same source or were based on the same motives, then the rivalry between the Yu and the Rui would offer the perfect model for the patriot to follow in the settlement of disputes. And the fable of the warring kingdoms on the horns of a snail would offer the patriot valuable lessons on the pettiness of human war!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The expression is from a passage in the *Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji) of Sima Qian (145–86 B.C.E.) in the chapter on Xiang Yu.

<sup>6</sup> According to the *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian, the Yu and the Rui fought over the ownership of arable land situated at their border. They traveled to the country of Zhou to request the king to arbitrate their dispute, but they were so impressed by the high morality of the inhabitants of Zhou that they felt ashamed, ended their quarrel, and left the disputed land fallow. The fable of the warring kingdoms is mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*. Two countries situated on different horns of a snail fought a war for two weeks at the cost of many thousands of lives. The lesson of this fable is that, just as a war between nations on the horns of a snail is a trivial matter for human beings, human conflicts are insignificant when viewed from the higher perspective of heaven.

## *Vanity and Love of Glory*

One must not laugh when Mr. Iwaya, who boasts of his “great services to the nation,” promises a donation of a thousand yen to build a memorial to commemorate the marriage of the crown prince but then forgets to carry out his promise. There is only a minuscule difference between Mr. Iwaya’s patriotism and that of other so-called patriots of the realm. They only trumpet their love of country to better serve their own selfish interests, pride, and vanity.<sup>7</sup>

## **PART 3**

### *Patriotism in Ancient Rome*

“At that time not a single man stood for the interests of his party. All men united in support of the state.” A poet of ancient Rome, carried away by his emotions, once penned this panegyric to patriotism. But perhaps the poet did not realize what he was saying. Perhaps the men he referred to lacked the intelligence to organize a party and advance their cause. Perhaps what brought them together and caused them to feel unified was not their common membership in a nation, but rather the existence of enemy nations. In the end, their unity probably resulted from the superstition that drives men to hate adversary nations and the enemies who inhabit them.

### *The Poor People of Rome*

Consider the following: poor peasants of ancient Rome were mobilized along with a small minority of rich patricians, who served as their commanders, to fight in wars on behalf of the nation. These soldiers demonstrated exceptional bravery on the battlefields: they advanced fearlessly upon the enemy, fought with outstanding courage, and risked their lives without a second thought. How can one not be moved by their great show of loyalty and righteousness? But observe what happened after the wars ended. When they returned to the safety of their homes after winning a military victory for their nation, they quickly fell into slavery because they had incurred large debts during their time of military service. While the rich were off busy fighting wars for the nation, they had slaves and servants tend to their fields, but the poor had no choice but to let their fields go to waste. Upon their return, they fell deeply into debt and were forced to sell themselves as slaves. Who is to blame for such a catastrophe?

They hated the so-called enemies of the Roman nation. But these enemies surely caused them no more harm than their rich fellow-citizens. During the war, they faced multiple dangers: the enemy would deprive them of their freedom, steal their property, or capture them, and sell them as slaves. But how could they have guessed that their fellow citizens would be the cause of their downfall? They could never have imagined such an outcome was possible.

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<sup>7</sup> Iwaya Shōhei (1850–1920), a businessman born in Kagoshima, established a textile business in the Ginza district of Tokyo and a tobacco company known for its Tengu brand of cigarettes. Faced with a competitor in the latter business, he defended a state monopoly in the production and sale of tobacco. The expression “great services to the nation” was an advertising slogan for the cigarettes he sold.

### ***Why Are People So Foolish?***

When the rich go to war, they increase the amount of their wealth and add to the number of their slaves and servants. In contrast, the poor draw no benefits from war; they fight only for so-called national honor. After they have fallen into slavery, they console themselves by recalling the heroic battles in which they defeated the enemy and the services they rendered to their nation. They are filled with pride and self-satisfaction when they recall these events. What foolishness! Such was the patriotism of ancient Rome.

### ***The Slaves of Ancient Greece***

Let us next consider the condition of the slaves in ancient Greece, the Helots. Depending upon circumstance, they either fought as soldiers or worked as slaves. Their masters often massacred them if they grew too strong or if they increased too rapidly in number.<sup>8</sup> But when they fought for their masters, they were incomparable in their loyalty and exceptional in their bravery; they never thought of turning their weapons against their master to win their freedom.

### ***The Superstitions of Patriotism***

Why did they behave in this way? They believed that the highest honor and glory was to defeat the enemies of their nation whom they hated. They failed to become aware of their own vanity and stupidity. Their so-called patriotism was a hollow, vulgar superstition even more incurable than that of the faithful of the Tenri sect, who drink putrid water because they believe that it has mystical powers. In fact, their superstition had far direr consequences.<sup>9</sup>

### ***The Two Feelings of Love and Hatred***

You should not be surprised that they feel such a deep hatred of their enemy. These primitive creatures live lives that are close to those of animals and cannot understand the noble ideals of universal love and humanity. Since the earliest period of history, love and hatred have been joined together like the threads of a rope or the links of a chain. Look at the beasts. They are suspicious of one another and even devour members of their own species; when they happen to meet a creature they do not know, they are filled with terror and panic, which quickly turn to envy and hatred. This hatred and envy give rise to growling and lead them to attack the intruder. While they previously devoured animals of their own species, now they join together with others to fight against a common enemy. Once they face a common enemy, they start to feel a bond of sympathy with their own species that holds them together. Do these animals really feel a sentiment that we can call patriotism? People of ancient times were not so far removed in their way of life from these beasts.

Barbarians are tied closely to one another in their groups, unite in their struggle with the forces of nature, and fight wars with the members of different tribes. And they have a feeling that resembles what we call patriotism. In fact, we must acknowledge that their unity, friendship, and sympathy only derive from the existence of a shared enemy and is merely an ancillary reaction

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<sup>8</sup> The Helots were a serf class who worked for the free citizens of Sparta and belonged to the state. Thucydides recounts an episode when 2,000 Helots were massacred in this way.

<sup>9</sup> A religious sect founded by Nakayama Miki (1798–1887).

to their hatred of the enemy. Their compassionate feeling resembles the sympathy that patients who suffer from the same sickness tend to feel for one another.

### ***Love of War Is an Animal Instinct***

Following this chain of reasoning, so-called love of country is a war-like feeling that incites those who feel it to consider it an honor to subjugate foreigners and foreign countries. The love of war is an animal instinct. For this reason, both the Buddha and Christ condemned animal instincts and love of warfare, and all civilizations are united in rejecting them as unworthy ideals or aims of human life.

How appalling! The people of the world, after spending the nineteenth century competing with one another in accordance with their animal instincts, are getting ready to enter the new world of the twentieth century with exactly the same frame of mind.

### ***The Principle of the Survival of the Fittest***

As society has gradually evolved in accordance with the principle of survival of the fittest and the means of communication and transportation have unified the different regions of the world, the members of other races and other villages who used to constitute a common enemy have decreased in number and the hatred that united men against them has started to lose its object. If they lose a common target of hatred, then they can no longer find a common cause to unite with their neighbors. At this point, their love for their country, their community, or their village undergoes a change and simply becomes a sentiment that they feel toward themselves, their families, and their groups. At the same time, the war-like instinct that governed relations between different communities or villages of the barbarians also changes into competition among individuals, rivalry among political parties, and struggle among the different classes of society. As long as we fail to realize pure ideals and a noble morality [in our society], as long as we fail to extirpate this animal instinct, then the people of the world will be unable to live without having an enemy, without hating one another, and without fighting wars. And they will dignify this atavism with the name of “patriotism” and consider it to be honorable behavior.

### ***Free Competition***

Consider the nineteenth-century civilization of the countries of the West. On the one hand, human beings have become cold and vicious as a result of the prevailing cutthroat competition that sets them against one another; on the other, they proclaim their faith in the highest ideals of justice and endeavor to free the world of evil. How can one not tremble from fear when one considers the future prospects of our civilization? Unscrupulous politicians taking advantage of every opportunity, adventurers in search of glory, and capitalists greedy for profits proclaim in unison: “Look at the borders of our nation. Powerful enemies threaten us on all sides. The people must end their squabbles and join forces on behalf of the nation” In fact, they seek to divert the hatred that individuals feel toward one another onto foreign enemies in order to derive profit for themselves. They reproach anyone who refuses to go along with this project by saying: “You are an enemy of the nation, a traitor”



## ***Inciting Animal Instinct***

The popularity of imperialism in the world today is really based on the manipulation of such feelings. It depends ultimately on the incitation of a patriotic spirit of the people, that is to say, on the deliberate provocation of animal instincts.

## **PART 4**

### ***Hatred of Western Barbarians***

One must love one's family and hate all others, love one's fellow countrymen and hate those that live in other lands, love the country of gods [Japan] and China and hate Westerners and barbarians.<sup>10</sup> For the sake of those whom one loves, one should attack those one hates. In a nutshell, this is the logic of patriotism.

### ***A Useful Tool for Tyrants***

Indeed, if patriotism were not a pitiful superstition, then it would be a spirit of belligerence. If it were not a spirit of belligerence, it would be an ostentatious display of vanity, like an advertisement for a commercial product. In addition, this ideology offers a useful instrument that enables authoritarian leaders to achieve their ambitions and acquire fame.

Ancient Greece and Rome enjoyed no monopoly on these worn-out and empty dreams. The manipulation of popular patriotism in modern society is even more outrageous than that of antiquity and the medieval period.

### ***Patriotism in the Holy Period of Meiji***

Recall the article of the late Morita Shiken in which he suggested that the mysterious eagle discovered over the Yellow Sea was not a living spirit of the emperor.<sup>11</sup> For this offense, he was widely reviled and attacked as a traitor. When Kume Kunitake wrote an article in which he held that the Shinto religion derived from ancient sun worship, he was forced to resign from his university post.<sup>12</sup> When Count Saionji tried to introduce a cosmopolitan curriculum to the public

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<sup>10</sup> The movement to restore the Meiji emperor and overthrow the Tokugawa *bakufu* was launched under the banner of expelling the barbarians (that is, people from Western countries) from Japan.

<sup>11</sup> Morita Shiken (1861–97), journalist and translator, ridiculed war hysteria in a poem written in 1894. During the war, an eagle flew to the mast of the warship *Takachiho*, named after the mythical place where the first Japanese emperor descended to earth. Sent as an offering to the Meiji emperor, the eagle was taken care of and given the name of *Takachiho*. This incident inspired several Chinese-style poems about the eagle being a spirit of the imperial family, a notion that Morita ridiculed.

<sup>12</sup> Kume Kunitake (1839–1931), a secretary during the Iwakura Mission, became a founder of the school of historiography at Tokyo University. In 1892, he had to resign from his professorial chair after he published the article “Shinto wa saiten no kozoku” (Shinto is merely old customs for worshipping the heavens) in the history journal of record, *Shigakkai Zasshi*. Adopting the methodology of the new discipline of comparative religion, he analyzed Shinto as a primitive form of nature worship that had not developed religious importance in the Western sense. Eventually, under pressure from Shinto organizations and imperial loyalists, he recanted and was dismissed from the university by government order. The Kume case, which occurred shortly after the adoption of a Japanese constitution vesting sovereignty in the emperor, was the first instance of the suppression of historical research by government intervention.

schools, he was nearly fired from his position as minister of education.<sup>13</sup> When Uchimura Kanzo refused to bow in worship before the Imperial Rescript of Education, he was dismissed from his job as teacher.<sup>14</sup> When Ozaki Yukio pronounced the word “republic” in a speech, he lost his post as government minister.<sup>15</sup> All of these men were condemned for the crime of lese majeste and antipatriotism. So much for the manifestations of patriotism of the Japanese people in this holy period of Meiji Japan.

This is what the patriotism of the people leads to: anyone who challenges the conventional wisdom of the day is muzzled and forcibly restrained. Patriots even try to put the private thoughts of people under surveillance, to interfere with their religious beliefs, to forbid historians from conducting research, to prevent scholars from examining sacred texts, and they are determined to destroy any science that stands in their way. Such behavior is an insult to the morality of a civilized society, but the patriot considers it to be his pride and glory.

### *Patriotism in England*

Such patriotism is not unique to Japan. In modern times, England claims to be the freest nation in the world and a beacon of peace and humanity. However, even in England, when patriotism has been aroused among the people, those who demanded freedom or proposed social reforms or defended universal suffrage were all attacked as rebels and traitors to their country.

### *The Sacred Union of the People*

In the modern period, the best example of the ravages of patriotism is the attitude of the English during the war against the French. This war began in 1793, at the time of the French Revolution, and then, with a few minor interruptions, stretched on until the fall of Napoleon in 1815. The period in question is close to our own and the mentality of the people is not very different from that of people today. In addition, the patriotism of the English closely resembles that of people today, both in its wide popularity and in the particular forms in which it manifested itself.

“The War against France.” This was the only thing that mattered and the term became the catchphrase of the times. It was impossible to probe impartially into the causes of the war, to consider its consequences, to debate its costs and benefits, to discuss its rights and wrongs; anyone who attempted to do so was immediately branded a traitor. For a period of time, the will to reform, the motivation to oppose the government, and the critical spirit all went on vacation, or rather they were banished, while all debate among political parties within the country came to an abrupt halt. Even a man like Coleridge, who had criticized the war at the beginning, ended

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<sup>13</sup> Prince Saionji Kinmochi (1849–1940) was a Japanese statesman and served twice as prime minister. After spending several years in France, he founded the Meiji Law School (later Meiji University). A close friend of Nakae Chomin, he is considered the most liberal Japanese political figure of his time. As minister of education under Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909) and Matsukata Masayoshi (1835–1924), he tried to reform the Japanese school curriculum, bringing it more in line with international (Western) standards.

<sup>14</sup> Uchimura Kanzō, a Christian teacher at the Imperial First Higher School, was forced to resign from his position for refusing to bow to a portrait of the emperor in a school ceremony on the grounds that such an act of worship constituted idolatry. Journalists accused Uchimura of disloyalty to the throne.

<sup>15</sup> Ozaki Yukio (1858–1954) was a liberal politician who served in the Japanese Diet for sixty-three years. He was forced to resign from his position as education minister in 1898 after he gave a speech in which he was accused of advocating republicanism.

up praising God for using the war to forge a spirit of unity among the English people.<sup>16</sup> In spite of this atmosphere, Charles James Fox remained intransigent in his support of the principles of peace and freedom.<sup>17</sup> Realizing that he could not sway other members of parliament to his side, he refused to take his seat in the chamber. Even though there were other men who opposed the war, the members of the parties in parliament engaged in no political debate on the matter. At that time, England truly experienced a sacred unity of the people, such as Japanese politicians are so fond of acclaiming today, and the words of a Roman poet, “all were for the state,” captured the popular mood.

But behind this mobilization of the English people, what ideal, what morality, what emotion, and what “nation” lay concealed? What mobilized the English, what made them fanatical was only a hatred of France, a hatred of the revolution, and a hatred of Napoleon. They began not merely to hate any form of the revolutionary spirit and any thought connected to French ideals, but vied with one another to insult and vilify them and poured all their energy into repressing any expression of such ideals.

### *The High Tide of Patriotism*

Let me note that when patriotic mobilization against foreigners reach this level of intensity, the evils that it causes in the internal politics of a nation also reach their zenith. We need only look at what happens once war ends and the tide of patriotic fanaticism begins to ebb.

### *Postwar England*

After the war ended, the hatred that many felt toward France lost some of its sting and the government cut its military expenses. During the conflict, demand for English products had fallen because business in the countries on the European continent had suffered from the turmoil. As a result, both English industry and agriculture fell into a sharp recession, leading to impoverishment and famine among the lower classes of English society. At this moment, did the wealthy and the capitalists prove they were true patriots? Did they show any mercy or compassion to their fellow citizens, or experience a sacred unity of the people? They were hardly more moved at seeing their fellow citizens die of starvation than they had been at seeing enemy soldiers fall on the battlefields. Indeed, the hatred they felt toward the poor people of their own country surpassed in intensity anything that they had felt toward the French revolution or Napoleon.

### *Peterloo*

How can one keep silent in the face of the outrageous Peterloo incident? Only a short time after they defeated Napoleon’s army at Waterloo, the English army massacred a large group of workers assembled in St. Peter’s Field to demand a reform of parliamentary representation. The massacre was named Peterloo in ironic reference to the Battle of Waterloo. The patriotic troops, who had defeated the enemy army at Waterloo, now turned their arms against their own people

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<sup>16</sup> Samuel Coleridge (1772–1834) was an English poet and critic.

<sup>17</sup> Charles James Fox (1749–1806), a prominent Whig statesman in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whose parliamentary career spanned thirty-six years. He supported the French Revolution and became an outspoken opponent of Prime Minister Pitt’s policies toward France.

and massacred them at Peterloo.<sup>18</sup> Is such patriotism truly a love of one's fellow citizens? What benefits do the sacred union and great patriotic concord of the nation confer upon the citizens once the foreign enemy has been defeated? The blade of the bayonet that cuts off the enemy's head serves just as well to spill the blood of one's fellow countrymen.

### ***What Hypocrisy!***

Coleridge thanked God for unifying the nation to wage war, but in the final analysis, what happened to those who were joined together in warfare? The emotion of hatred can only give birth to more hatred, hatred of the foreign enemy is an animal instinct that changes into hatred of one's fellow countrymen, the heart that produced Waterloo quickly becomes the heart that leads to Peterloo. What hypocrisy this so-called patriot unity is!<sup>19</sup>

## **PART 5**

### ***Turning to the Case of Germany***

Let us put England aside and consider the case of Germany. The late Prince Bismarck was the personification of the patriotic spirit and the German Empire is the Mecca of patriotism. If one wishes to commune with the luminous spirits of the patriotic cult, one must undertake a pilgrimage to Germany.

Patriots of every country in the world, including members of the aristocracy and teachers in Japan's military academies, take German patriotism to be the standard and the model to be imitated, but is German patriotism any less superstitious and vacuous than that of ancient Greece and Rome or that of modern England?

### ***Bismarck***

The late Bismarck was truly a genius in the art of political oppression. Before his rise to power, the disunity of the states of northern Germany was the source of despair to every imperialist, who held that a people who spoke a common language ought to be united in a single nation. Because he succeeded in forging the different states of Germany into a unified nation, Bismarck enjoys an enormous prestige that continues to shine throughout the world even today. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the imperialists did not forge these different states into one nation simply to bring peace and well-being to their citizens. Rather they sought first and foremost to make Germany a militarily powerful country. Heroes who embraced the principles of liberty and equality looked with envy at the splendid spectacle offered by the French Revolution and hoped to unify the different states of Germany in order to end their petty squabbles, bring peace and well-being to their people, and defend them against foreign invasion. Nevertheless, the real history of German unification was a total betrayal of their hopes and desires.

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<sup>18</sup> This massacre occurred at St. Peters Field in Manchester in August 1819.

<sup>19</sup> The discussion in this entire part is closely based on pages 18–21 in Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire*.

## *The Unification of Germany*

If the unification of Germany truly served the interests of the different states of northern Germany, then why did they not also unite with Austria, where the majority of the people also spoke German? The real motives for unification were different. Bismarck sought to increase his personal power and glory and that of Prussia, not to establish a brotherhood of all the Germanic peoples or to create a peaceful confederation of states.<sup>20</sup>

Men of a belligerent turn of mind not infrequently resort to tactics of union and cooperation to satisfy their ambitions. Let us say that one is the friend of A but the enemy of B. Perhaps the reason why one courts A's friendship is from hatred of B. Similarly, if a nation cultivates friendly relations with another, it may do so not because it is genuinely interested in establishing a lasting peace, but because it desires to increase its own hegemonic power. Prince Bismarck was a brilliant strategist who thoroughly understood human psychology. He stirred up the animal instincts of his own countrymen and manipulated them with great skill and mastery. In other words, he roused the patriotism of the people, sent them to fight in wars against foreign enemies, and crushed any expression of opinion in his own country that opposed his policies. In order to create this patriotic cult that he desired, he provoked a series of senseless wars.

### *Provoking Senseless Wars*

This unifier of Germany, the apostle of bestial violence, the ideologue of "iron and blood," deliberately launched a war against his nation's weakest enemy as a way to accomplish his plans. Victory in this war induced a state of euphoria among the people and whipped up their superstition, vanity, and animal spirits; people vied with one another to join his political party. This was the cause of the unity of the new German Empire and the starting point of the new patriotism of Germany.

In a subsequent stage, he started a second war with another neighboring country. This time he picked a fight with an opponent much stronger than the first one, but he was able to take advantage of his enemy's lack of preparedness at the time of the war.<sup>21</sup> Once again, patriotism and the spirit of national unity flourished on this new battlefield. Bismarck used and directed this movement skillfully in order to expand the power of his own country, Prussia, and that of its king.

### *Prussia*

He did not unify the states of northern Germany simply to further the cause of justice and humanity. He did not permit his own state of Prussia to be swallowed up and to disappear in the new unified country. What he sought was simply a unification that would take place under the leadership of Prussia and a merger of German states that would make Prussia's king the kaiser of the glorious German Empire. While some contend that a popular movement of the German people caused the unification of Germany, I would argue that it came about because an ambitious man skillfully manipulated the patriotism of his people and channeled their superstition and vanity in order to establish his own name.

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<sup>20</sup> "Brotherhood" appeared in the original using the borrowed term *burazaafudo*.

<sup>21</sup> The two earlier wars were the Danish-Prussian War (1864) and the Austro-Prussian War (1866).

## ***Feudal Ideals***

The ideals that Bismarck stood for are not really different from the primitive ideals of feudal times. And he owed his success in carrying out his barbaric and corrupt plans simply to the fact that the majority of the people were not able to free themselves from the mentality of this bygone period, either ethically or psychologically. In other words, the morality of the majority of the population is still the morality of the feudal period and their mentality is still primitive. They hypocritically conceal their primitive mentality under a thin veneer of modern science in order to deceive themselves and others.<sup>22</sup>

## ***The Franco-Prussian War***

Bismarck had already provoked two useless wars and won spectacular victories in both. To prepare for the third, his military sharpened its claws and bided its time, waiting for a favorable opportunity to present itself. When the opportunity came, he attacked a strong country that was not militarily prepared for battle. This was the Franco-Prussian War. This war was a dangerous gamble and the stakes were high, but for that very reason, Bismarck's victory was all the more spectacular.

The Franco-Prussian War was fought by a confederation of northern German states placed under the boot of Prussia and led by the king of Prussia, whom all states venerated as the emperor of Germany. It benefited the king of Prussia and served the interests of Bismarck, but it did not bring any happiness to the German people. Consequently, I assert that the unification of Germany was not founded on compassion for fellow human beings or on a demand for justice. If the German people succeeded in the great task of unifying the nation by piling up mountains of corpses and shedding rivers of blood, it was thanks to the mobilization of hatred toward enemy nations and the vain self-intoxication with its war victories. Are these sentiments what one would expect from a gentlemen and a great man?

In addition, the majority of the Germans proudly proclaimed that Germany had won its victories through the grace of God and imagined that Germany was far superior to the other nations in the world. Many people in other countries in the world started to admire Germany's greatness and to take it as a model to follow. The most decorated members of the Japanese nobility vied with one another to imitate this model, each one striving to become the Bismarck of the Orient.<sup>23</sup> The great prestige that England enjoyed in the world because of its constitutional government was supplanted suddenly by the military power of the Prussian army.

## ***The Brandy of Patriotism***

The inebriation of a people with the glory and prestige of the nation is like that of an individual who has had too much alcohol to drink. Drunk, red-eyed, hot behind the ears, and over-excited, they do not pay the slightest attention to the horrible piles of corpses they trod over or notice the filth of the river of blood they wade through. Confident of themselves and arrogant, they are not even cognizant of the evil they have caused.

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<sup>22</sup> The analysis of the unification of Germany follows Robertson's *Patriotism and Empire*, 22–28.

<sup>23</sup> A likely reference to the Japanese statesman Itō Hirobumi.

### ***Disciples of Jujitsu and Sumo Wrestlers***

In addition, nations that strive to achieve fame by their superior military power and battlefield victories are like people who seek to master and earn a rank in the martial arts. They are like the sumo wrestlers who strive to reach the top rank of *yokozuna*. The martial arts disciple and the sumo wrestler can only show off their technique by defeating their rivals; if they lacked opponents, what gain or fame would they obtain from fighting? The pride of German people is based only on winning victories over their enemies; if they lacked enemies, what gain or fame would they obtain from fighting wars?

When we see a martial arts disciple or a wrestler who has had a drop too much to drink and boasts of his technique and his strength, is it possible to have confidence in his talent, his understanding, or his virtue? When the people of one nation, inebriated with their military victories, brag of their great glories and successes, should people in other countries believe that their political, economic, and educational systems are an index of their civilization and well-being? I have the deepest respect for German philosophy and literature, but I cannot sing the praises of German patriotism.

### ***The German Emperor***

Today, both Bismarck and the German emperor he faithfully serves are already creatures of the past. Nevertheless, this emperor still has the ideology of “blood and steel” lodged in his head and continues to stupefy himself with the brandy of patriotism. Fond of war, oppression, and vainglory, he is far worse than Napoleon I and even inferior to Napoleon III. The vast majority of the great German people continue to shed their blood in the name of national unity and to submit themselves to the exactions of this young oppressor. Today, this patriotism remains a powerful force. But will this phenomenon last forever?

Consider that the evils caused by patriotism are also at their height. But just as the Birnam Wood moves toward Dunsinane Castle in which the tyrant Macbeth is hiding, a strong enemy that strikes terror into the heart of present-day world leaders is already on the move in our countries.<sup>24</sup> This dangerous enemy is not superstition but reason; it is not tradition but modernity; it is not fanaticism but organization. And its aim is to completely eliminate the religion of patriotism and the evils that it has wrought. This enemy is called modern socialism.

### ***Modern Socialism***

The fanatical, barbaric patriotism of the ancient world has gained a new lease on life and is sapping the moral foundations and undermining the noble ideals of modern civilization. We must wait until the middle of the twentieth century to see whether Bismarck’s successes will endure. Thanks to the sudden rise of the socialist movement in Germany and its fierce resistance against patriotism, we realize clearly that a patriotism based only on an empty pride in military victory and a hatred of enemy nations can only be a hindrance to the mutual respect and spirit of brotherhood among the different peoples of the world.

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<sup>24</sup> A reference to the downfall of the tyrant Macbeth in act 5 of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

## ***A Philosophical Nation***

Not the least of the great crimes committed by Bismarck is that of making this most philosophical of nations enact the most antiphilosophical policies in his name, as if there were not far worthier political ideals! If only Bismarck had never existed! Who knows what great progress Germany might have accomplished and what noble ideals it might have realized; and not only Germany would have benefited, but all the other nations of Europe, which worship everything German in literature, the arts, philosophy, and ethics. How is it possible that at the dawn of the twentieth century we still live in a world in which the different nations devour one another mercilessly like wolves and wild dogs?

## **PART 6**

### ***The Emperor of Japan***

The emperor of Japan is different from the callow German emperor. He prefers peace to war and values freedom over oppression. He takes no pleasure in the barbarian vanity of his own nation, but desires to spread the benefits of civilization to all nations. He is different from the so-called patriots or imperialists. However, in present-day Japan, any man who is not a patriot is as rare and solitary as the last star shining in the sky at dawn.

Since I cannot bring myself to extol the love of country that arises when men are led to hate and attack their enemies, as is the case with the patriotism of all times and places, I also reject the patriotism of the Japanese people.

### ***The Late Count Gotō***

The late Count Gotō once rallied the Japanese people and called upon them to confront the imminent perils that threatened their survival and awaken their patriotism. In response to his call, patriotic men throughout the nation, as numerous as a field of grass bending to the wind, raced to gather by his side. However, the count suddenly decided to join the government and his call for a grand coalition of the people vanished like the dream of a spring night.<sup>25</sup> Was the patriotism of the Japanese at that time actually nothing more than a love for the person of the count?

No, it was not a love for the count, but rather a hatred for the government by the Satsuma and Chōshū clans. Their love of country was really just a form of hatred. On board a ship in a storm, even sworn enemies act like brothers, but who would think to praise them as models of brotherhood?

### ***The Sino-Japanese War***

The patriotism of the Japanese rose to fever pitch during the Sino-Japanese War, and this patriotism had no precedent in the past. No words can do justice to the contempt, envy, and hatred that the patriots felt toward the Chinese people. They were prepared to massacre 400 million

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<sup>25</sup> Gotō Shōjirō (1838–97) was a member of the early Meiji regime who cofounded the Liberal Party along with Itagaki Taisuke in 1881. In 1886, 204 members of the party met in Tokyo to create a grand coalition (*daidō danketsu*) to press for political change, but the coalition was dissolved in 1889 when Gotō reentered the government.



Chinese down to the final white-haired, elderly man and the tender babe less than three feet in height. What is one to think of their hearts filled with vanity? Is this emotion not a form of fanaticism and cruelty? In what way does it differ from bestiality?

### ***The Superiority of Bestial Force***

In the final analysis, were they truly motivated by a desire to bring happiness and advantages to the Japanese nation and people? Were their hearts filled with compassion and pity for the Japanese people? No, they only took pleasure in killing as many of their enemies as possible and in seizing as many treasures and lands as they could get their hands on. They sought to show off the superiority of their bestial natures before the eyes of the entire world.

When our emperor led his troops into battle in ancient times, he truly aimed to subdue barbarian peoples and to serve the cause of world peace, humanity, and justice. The true nature of the patriotism that was mobilized to achieve these ends in our times, however, was hatred, contempt, and vanity. It is likely that the leaders of Japan did not give a thought to the material and spiritual effects that the Sino-Japanese War would have on the general population.

### ***Canned Food Tainted with Sand***

On the one hand, millionaires make huge donations of money to support soldiers on the war front, but, on the other, they sell them canned goods tainted with sand. While military leaders exhort the soldiers to sacrifice their lives on the battlefield, they regularly receive bribes from merchants. This is what they dare to dub “patriotism.” How can one be surprised that such bestial and murderous instinct, given free reign, inevitably brings a flood of crimes and misdemeanors in its wake? Is this the will of the emperor?

### ***The Japanese Soldier***

It is praiseworthy that the Japanese soldier is imbued with feelings of loyalty and respect toward the emperor. However, the real issue is whether his loyalty and respect for the emperor contribute in any way to the progress of civilization and the welfare of humanity.

During the rebellion of the Boxers, our soldiers suffered great hardships on the dangerous route from Dagu to Tianjin.<sup>26</sup> Some men, shedding tears, said that they would prefer to die than endure such suffering if it were not for the sake of the Emperor. No one who heard these words could restrain his tears. I also wept for them.

### ***“For the Sake of the Emperor”***

How can one utter a word of reproach to these pitiful soldiers who are fighting in the name of the emperor for justice, humanity, and their fellow citizens? Indeed, from their most tender years, whether at home, at school, or in the barracks, they have been indoctrinated with the teaching that they must lay down their lives in service to the emperor and they know no other perspective. The Helots of Sparta were ignorant of freedom, human rights, or happiness. Whether they were

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<sup>26</sup> The Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901) is generally referred to as the North China Incident (*Hokushin jihen*) in Japanese language sources. Dagu (a military fort) and Tianjin (a treaty port) were focal points of growing competition among European powers for the control of China.

whipped by the master, sent to die in wars, or simply massacred if they survived the wars, they proudly thought that they were serving their country. When I read accounts of their history, I cannot restrain my tears, just as I shed tears when I think of the fate of our soldiers today.

However, we are no longer living in ancient Sparta. How could our emperor, who values freedom, peace, and humanity, want his subjects to receive the same treatment meted out to the Helots of ancient times? I am convinced that if our soldiers proclaimed that they were fighting for humanity and justice, rather than merely in service to the emperor, the emperor himself would endorse their statement. In this fashion, they would manifest their true loyalty toward the emperor.

### ***Prostitution as an Expression of Filial Piety***

Some people go so far as to commit theft or prostitute themselves to provide for their poor parents or to help their brothers and sisters. They run great dangers and destroy their reputation but they succeed in supporting their family and protecting the lives of its members. Since ancient times, such conduct has been upheld as a model of morality. The standard bearers of morality and civilization do not condemn this conduct: instead they praise the state of mind that motivates it and express compassion for the foolishness of those who practice it. People who claim that they act from a spirit of loyalty and for the sake of the emperor but know nothing of justice and humanity display the patriotism of a barbaric country and a superstitious loyalty. It is not unlike the filial piety that leads others to theft and prostitution.

I am greatly saddened that the feeling of loyalty and love of country of our soldiers is far from being a civilized and noble ideal and is no better than the mentality of people in the ancient world.

### ***The Army and the War Correspondents***

If one wants proof that the feelings of loyalty and patriotism that the military takes pride in are far removed from the basic humanity that one owes to fellow human beings, one only needs to consider the fashion that they treat war correspondents. During the Boxer Rebellion, the military authorities dealt with journalists attached to the army with great cruelty. The soldiers did not give a thought to the fact that journalists lacked food, lodging, or medical care when they fell ill. Not only did they insist that the journalists were no concern of theirs, but they insulted them and reprimanded them, treating them as if they were servants or enemies.

Soldiers claim that they are fighting for the nation. But are not the journalists also members of the same nation? Are they not fellow citizens? Why do soldiers lack any sense of duty to offer them care and protection? They seem to think that the nation consists only of the emperor, the soldiers themselves, and of nobody else.

As forty million of their fellow citizens followed the progress of the army and waited impatiently for every piece of news and every report of victory from the front, the journalists who covered the war at great risk to their own lives sought to satisfy the thirst for information of forty million people rather than simply to increase the circulation of their newspapers. The military authorities that consider this type of work useless do not feel a speck of sympathy for their forty million fellow citizens.

### ***Indifference toward the People***

The warriors of the feudal period thought the nation was their own private property. They used their power to shape the nation in their interests while they considered that other classes of society—farmers, artisans, and merchants—had neither rights nor duties. Today, the military thinks of the nation as belonging to the emperor and to the military itself. Although they claim to love their country, they have no concern for any compatriots who do not belong to the military. Consequently, one can say that their patriotism is a blend of hatred for the enemy and an absence of love toward their fellow citizens.

### ***The Consequences of Patriotic Hysteria***

They increase the military budget by sacrificing the blood and tears of the masses, dilapidate the productive capacity of the nation in wasteful expenses, and exacerbate the rise in prices by their excessive imports. And they do all of this for the sake of the nation. And these are the result of their glorious patriotism!

They kill many of their enemies, seize their enemies' property and land for their own use, but they also double and triple the expenses of the government. And they do this for the sake of the nation. And these are the fruits of their glorious patriotism!

## **PART 7**

### ***What Is the True Nature of Patriotism?***

From my foregoing explanation, I believe that the reader will have gained a general idea of so-called patriotism and love of country. In brief, it is an animal instinct, a kind of superstition, a sort of fanaticism, a type of vanity, and a belligerent posture.

### ***The True Reasons for Human Progress***

One must not view patriotism as an ineradicable instinct and part of human nature. Consider that the true reason for human progress is that man can protect himself against the various poisons produced by nature.

Water goes bad when it stops moving and stays in one place: that is nature. Should we reproach those who launch public works to make water flow and prevent such stagnation because they are going against the course of nature? People naturally age and fall sick: that is nature. Should we prohibit the dispensing of medicines that cure illness because they violate the natural way of life? The beasts, birds, and plants all entrust their lives to nature and they die in accordance with natural law. Whether they progress or regress, they do not do so through their own efforts, but they simply abandon themselves to the flow of nature. If man had simply followed the course of nature throughout history, he would not be any different from the beasts, the birds, and the plants.

Human beings have made progress because they have striven to remedy the evils of nature. The people who have achieved the greatest progress in morality are those who are best able to control their natural desires. The people who have made the greatest material progress are those

who can transform the products of nature. One who wishes to enjoy the benefits of civilization must not blindly follow the course of nature.

### ***The Royal Road of Progress***

Know that we must give up superstition and acquire knowledge, renounce fanaticism and perfect our ability to reason, free ourselves from vanity and search for truth, abandon all thoughts of war and attain universal love. This is the royal road to progress for the human race.

Know as well that nations that fail to free themselves from this bestial instinct and submit to manipulation by patriotism have a vile and constricted nature and do not deserve to be called a highly civilized people.

Know at last that those who strive to sacrifice politics, education, and industrialization on the altar of patriotism are traitors to civilization and enemies of progress and one should consider them as criminal offenders against the human race. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, they have not only attempted in the name of a blind patriotism to enslave anew the majority of humanity, who had only recently thrown off their shackles, but they have also reduced humanity to the condition of bestiality.

### ***Civilization of Justice and Humanity***

Consequently, I assert that the justice and humanity of world civilization must not permit patriotism to spread and should do all that is necessary to extirpate this evil. Moreover, this contemptible patriotism has given rise to militarism and to imperialism, and is spreading throughout the world. I will next consider how militarism is destroying world civilization and constitutes an obstacle to the happiness of humanity.

# Chapter 3: On Militarism

## PART 1

### *The Trend of Militarism*

In the entire history of mankind, the trend toward militarism has never been as strong as it is at present. Militarism is truly at its zenith. It is impossible to calculate the expenses, whether in treasure or in lives, that the great powers devote to the expansion of their military power. Why are these military efforts not confined to what is required to defend the nation against the usual foreign threats or to prevent internal conflicts, and why do they vastly exceed what is strictly necessary? The defense budget imposes an enormous burden, at once material and moral, on the entire nation in order to allow the expansion of the army. The causes and objectives of this expansion must be sought for outside the usual reasons of defense or self-protection that are generally invoked.

### *The Reason for the Expansion of Armaments*

The real motives for military expansion are to be found elsewhere. They are none other than fanaticism, vanity, and a belligerent love of country. However, the expansion of armaments is also promoted by military officers who amuse themselves dreaming up new stratagems and new military gadgets and by the greed of capitalists who seek to gain a monopoly on the enormous profits that accrue to suppliers of weapons and provisions ordered by the armed forces. In the case of England and Germany, these latter factors play an especially important part in bloated military budgets. However, what enables military men and capitalists to gratify their greed is the possibility of stirring up a jingoistic and arrogant patriotism among the vast majority of the population.

The people in country A say, "We desire peace, but the people in country B want war." The people in country B say, "We desire peace, but the people in country A want war." What are we to make of such reasoning? Nevertheless, the people of every country in the world delude themselves with this nonsense.

### *Childish Games*

In this way, the citizens of every country in the world compete to build the most elaborate weapons and the biggest warships just as little girls and boys vie to assemble the most beautiful dolls and toys for the festivals of March 3 and May 5.<sup>1</sup> They compete with each other not because they believe they face an imminent danger of being invaded by their enemies or because they

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<sup>1</sup> March 3 (3/3) and May 5 (5/5) are two traditional public holidays devoted to children. The former, which used to be known as Girl's Day, is today known as the Doll Festival (Hinamatsuri) during which many families display *hina-ningyo* on a five or seven-tiered stand covered with a red carpet. The latter, formerly known as Boy's Day, was

must prepare for a sudden dispatch of troops overseas. Superficially, this competition resembles a game of children, but what can we say of the terrible tragedies that lurk beneath the surface?

### ***General Moltke***

The late General Moltke said, “World peace is only a dream, an illusion, and it is not even an especially beautiful dream.”<sup>2</sup> The general may think that the dream of peace is ugly, but he is nevertheless just as much a dreamer as those he criticizes. Even though he defeated France and was rewarded with an indemnity of five billion francs and the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, the business enterprises of France have since enjoyed great prosperity while victorious Germany has been plunged into economic depression. This economic situation is the clear realization of the general’s beautiful dream. The results of such dreaming have been quite sobering.

*The Sociology of Barbarians* In retaliation, General Moltke plans to use his great army to administer a crushing defeat on France and plunge her into a decadence from which she will not soon recover. This is a political ploy in which the general hopes to bring economic prosperity to his fellow citizens by winning another military victory. If we adopt this way of thinking as a twentieth-century ideal, how can we escape from an archaic ethics or free ourselves from the sociology of barbarians?

### ***The Proliferation of Little Moltkes***

However, General Moltke has become a model and an ideal figure in an age of rising militarism. All over the world, little Moltkes have hatched, just like spring shoots proliferate after a rain shower. Little Moltkes are already on the march in this small nation of East Asia.

People mock the emperor Nicholas II, who has called for restrictions on military spending, by labeling him a dreamer, and they ridicule Peace Conferences. While they usually claim to desire peace, they also promote military preparedness and proclaim the necessity of war. I will not harp on the contradictions in their arguments, but what reasons do they give for claiming that armaments and war are necessary?

## **PART 2**

### ***Admiral Mahan***

Currently, there is no greater authority on military matters than Admiral Mahan.<sup>3</sup> He is the recognized expert among the militarists and imperialists of England and the United States, his writings are widely circulated, and he has avid readers in Japan as well, as can be seen by the

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renamed Children’s Day after the war. On this day, families with boys fly huge carp-shaped streamers (*koinobori*) outside the house and display dolls of famous warriors and other heroes inside.

<sup>2</sup> Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke (1800–91) was commanding general of the Prussian and later of the German armies and led Germany to victory in its foreign wars. A disciple of the great military thinker Clausewitz, he wrote many works on strategy and military history.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914), author of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*, was a naval officer, military strategist, and educator. His views on the importance of sea power influenced naval policy throughout the world, prior to the First World War. Kōtoku likely encountered the passage cited in the next section in Robertson’s *Patriotism and Empire* (83), which cites Mahan’s *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Past and Present* (232–34).

spate of advertisements for translations of his books. Consequently, all supporters of imperialism cite his views and believe they must read him.

### *The Virtues of Military Conscription*

No one has made a stronger and more eloquent case for the virtues of military preparedness and conscription than Admiral Mahan. He says:

Everyday, our ears are assailed by speakers pointing out the shortcomings and damage caused by the build-up of military forces: it wrecks the economy by cutting the production of goods and imposes a harsh burden on the lives and the time of human beings. I have nothing new to add on this score.

However, if we look at this issue from a different point of view, can we not reply that these disadvantages are more than compensated for by the benefits it confers? At a time when authority is weakening and morals are in decline, can we say that the youth of our country are wasting their time to learn order, obedience, and respect in the school of the army, where they develop their physiques systematically and are inculcated in the basic virtues of the soldier, such as courage, self-control, and firmness of will? Many young men leave their villages and towns and form a single mass, where they associate with elders who have received a higher education. By joining their spirits together and acting as one, they learn to respect the nation's constitution and imbibe political principles that remain with them after they return to their hometowns. At a time when religious belief is in rapid decline, is this not a valuable thing? If you compare fresh soldiers who have not experienced conscription with a company of veterans who have completed their training, you cannot fail to be impressed by their difference in demeanor and attitude. The superiority of the latter to the former is so great that no one can help but notice it. Military training is not harmful to young men in later years when they lead active lives and become the breadwinners of the family and it is certainly no more wasteful of time and money than a university education. Since nations of the world respect each other for their military power, they are able to preserve peace and to cut down on the number of wars. When, occasionally, a war suddenly breaks out, it is generally of short duration and easily brought to an end. Can we say that this is without benefit? In the past century, war was more like a chronic illness, but today it is fairly rare, and, when it does occur, it assumes the form of a sudden and acute attack. In the case of a sudden and acute outbreak of war, soldiers who are well prepared, and confident that they are fighting for a just cause, will be far more effective in battle and have higher morale than an army of mercenary soldiers who lack a noble reason to fight. In short, the soldiers in a modern army are the soldiers of the people rather than the slaves of a despot or king.

Admiral Mahan is a clever writer who sets forth arguments in support of his position in a plausible way, but I have noticed that the reality is quite different from what he claims in his theories.

## ***War and Sickness***

If we look closely at the theses of Admiral Mahan, we observe that he asserts that young men learn respect for order and the virtue of obedience by military training. He stresses the necessity of such training at a time when political authority is weakening and moral constraints are being relaxed. Furthermore, he argues that war is a kind of illness, that it was chronic a century ago, but has become rare in recent years now that all young men serve in the armed forces. Consequently, when a war breaks out today, it is like an acute ailment. In a period of general health one needs to pay attention to and be prepared for the sudden outbreak of illness. The admiral argues that the time when war was a chronic illness from which people suffered was also a time when order was upheld and moral constraints were binding on people, whereas he states that the period that we live in is a healthy one in which “political authority is weakening and moral constraints are being relaxed.” Is this not a strange way of reasoning?

### ***The Weakening of Political Authority and the Relaxation of Moral Constraints***

When the admiral speaks of the weakening of authority and the loosening of morality, he specifically pins the blame for this state of affairs on the birth of the socialist movement. Such ignorant rambling hardly merits refutation. However, even if I were to concede, purely for the sake of argument, that the restraints of morality have been weakened over the past century and that present-day socialists work to undermine so-called order and political authority in their societies, and that the results of their activity are sapping the foundations of morality and destroying religious faith, is he correct to argue that universal conscription and military training constitute the most effective way to cure these problems? Let us look at the facts.

### ***Propagators of Revolutionary Thought***

Is it not true that the soldiers of the French army who fought on the side of the Americans in the War of Independence found a powerful motive to take part in the destruction of order during the French Revolution? Did not the soldiers of the German army that invaded the city of Paris become powerful agents for the spread of revolutionary thought throughout the different city-states of Germany? Is it not a remarkable phenomenon that the barracks of the European countries that have adopted the system of universal conscription are a perfect breeding ground for socialist ideas and an ideal school for the cultivation of rebellion against present-day society? Since I favor the propagation and spread of socialist thought and support institutional settings that serve this purpose, I do not back the abolition of the barracks. However, I must note that it is mistaken to think, as Mahan professes, that the barracks are only a setting where soldiers are trained in obedience to their superiors and in the beautiful virtue of respect.

The army of Caesar apparently had a measure of respect for the order of the state. The army of Cromwell, who at the start brandished his sword in the name of Parliament, later overthrew this same assembly. The soldiers certainly recognized the authority of Caesar and Cromwell, but they did not necessarily recognize the founding principles of state order.



### ***The Outbreak of Illness***

Do soldiers simply receive military training for the noble purpose of fighting on behalf of the good? Are they simply applying their training to the treatment of acute illness? If this were indeed true, will they be content to continue their training patiently from start to finish, and wait even if it takes a hundred years for a chance to bring their remedy to bear on the acute illness? On the contrary, I believe that they will be inclined to provoke the outbreak of illness in order to exercise their own role as doctors.

### ***Universal Conscription and the Frequency of War***

Certainly, it is better for citizens to become soldiers rather than servants of the kings and nobility. However, it is wrong to suggest that the number of wars will decrease if the different countries of the world respect one another's military power. In the case of ancient Greece and Rome, all the citizens were soldiers and not merely the servants of the aristocrats, but that did not prevent the outbreak of war from becoming a chronic condition. Since an army of mercenary soldiers proved adept at conquering weaker countries, mercenaries have sometimes been preferred over an army of purely conscripted soldiers. However, it is false to claim that a system of universal conscription will effectively eliminate war or reduce the frequency of its occurrence. The army of Napoleon was an army of conscription, and in modern European history the wars between Austria and France, the Crimean War, the war between Austria and Germany, the Franco-Prussian War, [and] the Russo-Turkish War were all tragic conflicts fought by conscripted armies.

### ***The Reason Why There Are Fewer Wars***

The wars of modern times tend to end quickly not because all the citizens in the nation receive military training, but rather because the damages caused by war are too great and people are quicker to come to their senses and reflect on the principles of human morality.

If the major powers, evenly matched in military power, have fought almost no major wars since 1880, the reason is not that the people of these countries respect the military power of their neighbors, but rather because people reflect on the frightful consequence of war and have become aware that war is a murderous form of madness.

France and Germany realize that they would both be ruined if a war were to break out between them. Russia knows that it would fall into decay and ruin if it fought a war with another great power.

This is the real reason why the great powers do not fight wars with one another. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the spirit of respect inculcated to soldiers by military training under a system of universal conscription. It suffices to look at the ostentatious military power that great powers flaunt in Africa and Asia. In short, military training does much to rouse a soldier's love of vainglory, belligerent spirit, and animal instincts.

## PART 3

### *War and the Fine Arts*

The militarists claim that just as steel must be tempered by fire and water to make a sharp blade, a people will not become great until it has been forged in the crucible of war. They also assert that the arts, the sciences, and the manufacturing industry rarely attain a high level of development unless they have been stimulated by war. They argue that the periods in which the arts flourished since ancient times belong, by and large, to the aftermath of military strife. Such was the case with the age of Pericles, the epoch of Dante, or the Elizabethan period in England. During the time of the Peace Conference, an influential militarist from England defended this theory.

It is true that the people of the times of Pericles, Dante, and Elizabeth all knew the experience of war. In fact, the history of the world is filled with wars and the periods of great cultural flourishing are far from being the only ones to have known war. However, most periods that experienced war did not later go on to develop brilliant literature: how, then, can one conclude that literary achievement is a legacy of war?

It is a gross distortion to claim that literature began to flourish in the aftermath of war and flawed logic to argue, based on a handful of cases, that there is a causal relationship between war and literature.

Among the city-states of ancient Greece, Sparta was the one fondest of war and had the greatest experience of fighting. Yet who can recall the name of a single outstanding individual in the fields of science, literature, or philosophy from ancient Sparta? During the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII, England was embroiled in a violent civil war, but there was no particular development in the fine arts worth mentioning. Since the literary revival during the Elizabethan period was already well underway before the defeat of the Spanish armada, one can hardly argue that Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon appeared thanks to war.

### *The Fine Arts and Sciences in Europe*

The Thirty Years' War caused cultural decline and destruction in Germany. Whereas the arts and sciences in France flourished after Louis XIV acceded to the throne, they later fell into decline as a result of his military adventures and revived only toward the end of his reign. Is it not the case that French letters have tended to flourish more after the nation's military defeats than after its war victories? The assertion that the literature of Tennyson and Thackeray and the scientific theories of Darwin were the result of England's victory in the Crimean War would rightly be met with mockery. In modern Russia, who would not laugh at the claim that the literature of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev was the product of Russia's defeat in the Crimean War? The great writers of Germany produced their works before the Franco-Prussian War, not in its aftermath; the great period of American literature occurred prior to the Civil War, not afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kōtoku's analysis of militarism and the fine arts borrows liberally from Robertson's similar discussion in *Patriotism and Empire*, 71–76.

## *The Fine Arts in Japan*

As for the literature of Japan, it flourished during the peaceful Nara and Heian periods and declined after the Hogen and Heiji disturbances.<sup>5</sup> While literature experienced a short revival during the serene reign of the Hōjō regents, it fell off once again when they lost power in 1333, and for all intents and purposes it virtually disappeared from the period of the Northern and Southern Courts, through the Onin disorder, until the early sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> During this period, only the Zen monks of the Five Mountains kept a faint glimmer of light alive, as anyone who has read the history of our country can attest.

If the arts flourish after a war ends, the reason may be that artists are able to lift up their heads once peace is restored whereas they are oppressed and inhibited during the actual prosecution of war: it is certainly not that they are stimulated by war itself. What did the achievements of Murasaki Shikibu, Akazome Emon, or Sei Shōnagon have to do with war? What inspiration did Sanyo, Bakin, Furai, and Sorin derive from military victories? What relation can one draw between warfare and the works of Ōgai, Shōyō, Rohan, and Koyo?<sup>7</sup>

I believe that war is only an obstacle to the progress of the arts and of society and has never made a positive contribution to them or furthered their development. Can we dignify with the name of art and culture “Strike and Punish the Qing,” a famous war song that appeared during the Sino-Japanese War?<sup>8</sup>

## *The Improvement of Weapons*

Whereas some writers have attributed the progress in the power and accuracy of munitions and armaments to the requirements of warfare, I would counter that such improvements owe much more to general scientific and technical advancements that are the product of peaceful times. But even if it were true that these improvements were the consequences of war, how would such inventions contribute in any way to elevating the level of knowledge and the morality of the people?

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<sup>5</sup> The Hogen (1156) and Heiji (1160) disturbances were military skirmishes that signaled the collapse of the Heian period and the beginning of a new feudal era.

<sup>6</sup> The Hōjō family controlled the post and hereditary title of *shikken* or regent, who in fact wielded governmental power during most of the Kamakura period (1185–1333).

<sup>7</sup> Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon are the authors of *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*, the two most famous masterpieces of the Heian period (794–1185), while Akazome Emon was a prominent poetess. Rai Sanyo (1786–1832) is best known for his *Unofficial History of Japan* (*Nihon gaishi*). Takizawa Bakin (1767–1848), a great Japanese writer of the later Edo period, is best known for the multivolume novel *Nanso satomi no hakkenden*. Furai Sanjin (1729–80) is the pen name of Hiraga Gennai, a scholar and *gesaku* writer. Sorin is the pen name of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724), the author of many plays for the puppet and kabuki theaters. Besides pursuing a career as the surgeon-general of the Japanese army, Mori Ōgai (1862–1922) was a prominent writer and literary critic of Meiji period. Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859–1935) was a professor of literature at Waseda University, critic, dramatist, and the first to translate the plays of Shakespeare into Japanese. Koda Rohan (1867–1947) and Ozaki Koyo (1868–1903) were both important novelists of the Meiji period.

<sup>8</sup> The song in question is “Ute ya korase ya” and goes as follows: “Strike and punish the Qing. It is the enemy of our sacred country, the foe of peace in the Far East. Strike it to make it a proper country. An obstacle to our country’s rights, strike this arrogant and rude enemy. Ignorant of peace in the Far East, strike this ignorant and stubborn foe ...” The song and lyrics are reprinted, along with those of three Sino-Japanese War songs, in Eastlake and Yamada 1897, 535.

## *Political Abilities of Military Heroes*

Indeed, militarism is certainly not an appropriate means to improve society or to raise the level of civilization. Military maneuvers and the military way of life do not increase a man's intelligence or foster virtues that can later be applied to the social and political spheres. In order to offer evidence to prove this point, I will show that the greatest military heroes throughout history, notwithstanding their outstanding feats on the battlefield, have proved to be deficient as political leaders and have few cultural accomplishments to their credit.

### *Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar*

In ancient times, the three leaders Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar are the most prestigious of all military heroes and every schoolboy learns their names. However, while these men were true geniuses when it came to destruction on the battlefields, they failed to leave behind a stable foundation on which to build a new society. Looked at from a geopolitical point of view, the empire established by Alexander was a phenomenon that never should have come into being in the first place. It was the product of a paroxysm of short-lived conquests and, as such, it vanished just as quickly as it was created, in accordance with the course of nature. Through a combination of military strategy and wise planning, Hannibal subjugated Italy in fifteen years, but he failed to establish his authority over the people of Rome and, in the end, was unable to save Carthage from the madness of corruption. As a military commander in the field, Caesar could be compared to a hungry tiger, but as a politician mounting the podium, he was closer to an unseeing viper; he only succeeded in pushing the Roman government into decadence and in making it an object of contempt for the Roman people.<sup>9</sup>

### *Yoshitsune, Masashige, Yukimura*

Minamoto Yoshitsune was gifted in the ways of war, as were Kusunoki Masashige and Sanada Yukimura, but who would dare to argue that they excelled as political leaders? If they had become leaders of the nation through their military exploits, would the Hōjō regents have held on to power for nine generations? Would the Ashikaga have survived for thirteen generations and the Tokugawa for fifteen?<sup>10</sup>

### *Xiang Yu and Zhuge Liang*

Xiang Yu won victory in seventy-four battles, both great and small, but how can he be compared with Liu Bang who founded the Han dynasty and codified the law in three chapters?<sup>11</sup> The eight divination techniques of Zhuge Liang are not worth the first writings of the Emperor Wu on the way of virtue.<sup>12</sup> The way that binds together the hearts of men living in society and real-

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<sup>9</sup> This passage is a paraphrase of Robertson 1899, 96–97.

<sup>10</sup> In suggesting that these legendary heroes lacked political sense, Kōtoku seeks to dissipate the aura that surrounded them. Kusunoki Masashige, a loyalist and fighter for the restoration of the emperor during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts, was the object of a cult on the part of nationalists during the Meiji period.

<sup>11</sup> The founder of the Han dynasty established a legal code in three chapters, covering the crimes of murder, injury, and theft. This legal code was simple and easy to understand and was contrasted with the complicated code established by the earlier Qin dynasty.

<sup>12</sup> Zhuge Liang (181–234) was one of the greatest Chinese military strategists; his achievements have been immortalized in the novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. Emperor Wu (also known as Cao Cao) laid the foundations for the kingdom of Wei and was famed both for his military achievements and his patronage of the arts (155–220).

izes peace on earth is not to be found in the power to seize enemy banners or to defeat generals in battle. It must be looked for elsewhere.

### ***Frederick the Great and Napoleon***

In the modern period, Frederick the Great and Napoleon were the two military men who acquired the greatest political power. However, Frederick from the start heartily detested the soldier's life. He also had the greatest difficulty learning how to fight wars and can hardly be thought of as a suitable embodiment of the militarist ideal. Moreover, after his death, he was unable to leave behind a solid foundation for the state. As for the empire of Napoleon, while it glittered for a moment like fireworks seen from the top of Ryogoku Bridge, it soon faded away and disappeared.

### ***Washington***

Washington was a wise man. He began his career as a military general but he ended it as a statesman. However, we should not regard him as a pure specimen of the warrior type. He only waged war when he was compelled to do so by the force of circumstances and he had no other alternative, not because he took pleasure in fighting battles.

### ***U.S. Politicians***

It is a noteworthy fact that, in the history of the United States, many individuals with a military background are ranked among the finest politicians of the past. Andrew Jackson was not the first soldier to become president of the United States nor was his term as president the first in which there was struggle for the spoils of political office. General Grant is certainly one of the most highly respected of military leaders in modern times. However, since the members of his party fell to quarrelling among themselves, he did not make any great accomplishments when he became president. He possessed great powers of endurance, plain honesty, and a flair for war, but he was unable to apply these estimable qualities to the tasks of running a civilian government.

Lincoln knew a great deal about military affairs and his understanding of strategy and tactics compared favorably with that of the military officers who served him, but this simply goes to prove that a truly outstanding politician is just as capable of managing military matters as he is of deciding political issues. As Confucius put it, an educated man will necessarily be prepared to lead a military force. In fact, Washington and Lincoln both provide examples of this general rule. However, an excellent general will not necessarily prove to be a competent politician, as is shown by the case of General Grant.

### ***Nelson and Wellington***

In the history of modern England, Nelson and Wellington are models of the professional soldier on sea and on land, and are the objects of a worshipful cult on the part of militarists throughout the world due to their glorious achievements. While Wellington possessed political talents that slightly exceeded those of the average politician, he did not have the makings of a great leader who could inspire the masses and resolve the great problems of his epoch. He opposed the creation of a cheap class of service on the national railways because, as he argued, it would only

allow the “people from the lower classes to make unnecessary trips throughout the country.” With respect to Nelson, there is practically nothing to say about him since, apart from his skills as a naval officer, he had nothing in particular to recommend himself as a human being.<sup>13</sup>

### *Yamagata, Kabayama, Takashima*

Looking at our own country, why should we praise the talents of military men? Admirers of Duke Yamagata, Baron Kabayama, and Count Takashima worship them as the Moltke, the Nelson, and the Wellington of East Asia, but what have they accomplished that deserves honorable mention in the political and social annals of the Meiji period? Are they not guilty of interfering in elections, buying off deputies, and plunging our society into an abyss of corruption and decadence?<sup>14</sup>

You must not think that I am trying to place unfair blame on soldiers and the army. Just as intelligent and wise men exist in other classes of society, they are to be found among military men as well. I am more than ready to pay my respects to such men.

### *Military Intelligence*

However, these men do not acquire their wisdom and intelligence through military training or the experience of war. Even without weapons, epaulettes, or medals on their chest, a wise man is a wise man. Yet no matter how intelligent or wise an individual officer may be, the military profession and military form of training do not bring any particular benefit to society as a whole.

We should not call for training in the spirit of unity. What is there to admire about a unity that murders people? Nor should we call for mere obedience to rules—what is there to respect about rules that dilapidate our wealth? We should not call for the testing of bravery. What is there to hope for from a bravery that only destroys civilization? Once the soldier steps outside of the barracks, all of these things—unity, obedience to rules, and bravery—vanish into thin air and leave no trace behind. In their place we find only the evil customs of blind obedience to the powerful and the humiliation of the weak.

## **PART 4**

### *The Poisons of Militarism*

Militarism and warmongering are not the only obstacles that block social progress and civilization, but they are terrible poisons that bring about great destruction and misery.

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<sup>13</sup> Paraphrase of Robertson 1899, 97–100.

<sup>14</sup> Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922) was an important Meiji statesman and founder of the Japanese Imperial Army. Kabayama Sukenori (1837–1922), a general in the Japanese Army and admiral of the Japanese Navy, led the Japanese invasion force of Taiwan and served as Japan’s first governor-general of Taiwan. Takashima Tomonosuke (1844–1916), a lieutenant general of the Japanese army, later served as minister of war and colonial affairs in the late 1890s. After the Japanese Diet was established in the 1890s, bureaucrats and military officers attempted to bribe diet members to pass legislation and interfered in elections.

## ***Ancient Civilization***

Militarists claim there is no distinction between the role of citizen and soldier in the earliest civilized societies. To support this argument, they adduce examples from ancient Egypt and Greece and contend that military preparedness leads to advances in civilization. However, they are mistaken. I believe that Egypt's prosperity might have lasted for centuries and its empire continued to exist for millennia if it had refrained from military conquests and had avoided the decadence of the military way of life. As for ancient Greece, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on its history.

## ***Alexander the Great***

Not all of the city-states in ancient Greece had the same views on military matters. Sparta was a thoroughly militarized society, military training shaped its everyday life, and its economy was organized around the prosecution of war. As for the contributions that Sparta made to civilization, I have already noted that there is nothing worth mentioning on that score. The city-state of Athens is a completely different case. Pericles promised that he would show his mettle in the case of a real emergency although he did not have to endure the hardships of military training. He did not suffer by comparison with men who devote their entire lives to military training to prepare for war, a fact that proves that such training offers no great benefit. Do the militarists of our time choose Sparta as their model or do they prefer Athens?

No matter how ignorant or obstinate, they would hardly dare to praise the barbaric militarism of Sparta and reject the economic prosperity and civilization of Athens. However, if one looks closely at their pet theories, it is clear that Sparta, rather than Athens, more closely corresponds to their highest ideal.

The militarists will doubtless reply, "We do not wish to fall into the excesses of Sparta, but we want to imitate the militarism of Athens and learn from its noble qualities" In comparison with Sparta, the superiority of Athens is undeniable. But even in the case of Athens, in what way did its military preparations contribute to the improvement of its political life? In what way did they help to better the social life and improve the moral character of the people? Aside from urging the citizens to fight in wars, what advantages could military readiness possibly bring?

## ***The Peloponnesian War***

Athens fought in the Peloponnesian War for three decades. If militarism truly had positive effects on the nation, one would expect that these effects must have been at their peak during the Peloponnesian War. However, contrary to expectations, the consequences of this war were wholly negative ones, consisting mainly of corruption and decadence. If one wishes to understand how the Peloponnesian War swept away the morality of the Greek people, destroyed their religious beliefs, ruined their rationality, and in general created a catastrophic situation, one must read the account given by Thucydides in his great history of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>15</sup> He writes as follows:

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<sup>15</sup> Thucydides wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a work that recounts the fifth-century b.c.e. war between Sparta and Athens.

Revolts broke out in the different city-states and the spirit of rebellion spread with the force of life itself throughout the land, destroying everything that existed. Men's projects became ever more violent and their acts of revenge ever more atrocious. The meaning of words no longer corresponded to the reality of things and men simply assigned them the sense that accorded with their desires. Impulsive violence was praised as fearless, prudent and careful thought was condemned as cowardice, moderation was treated as the mask of weakness, and the sage who understood everything was unable to accomplish anything. Manliness was thought to consist of fanaticism and violence ... Those who were most enamored of violence won the trust of other men, but those who opposed it earned the suspicions of their fellows. Those who did not wish to participate in the plots of the political factions from the start were ostracized by the others, and were treated as poltroons who feared the enemy ... Those who deceived the others with criminal schemes were admired and those who incited them to commit crimes were venerated ... Taking vengeance against the enemy became more important than protecting one's own life. Many of the different parties came together to form a vast alliance in order to wield enough influence to crush the other parties and to impose their draconian policies and violence. A frightful spirit of vengeance gave birth to other acts of vengeance in an endless cycle ... In these ways, all the vices of the Greeks fermented amid these political revolutions. Candor, a great element making up a noble disposition, was ridiculed and all but disappeared, while an ugly spirit of contention and dispute thrived everywhere. No one could pronounce a single word that would restore harmony and no one could swear an oath that would win trust among the people. The people who won the greatest success were those with the fewest scruples.<sup>16</sup>

And these are the consequences of war, in a society where every citizen was given military training, in ancient Greece, the most civilized country of the ancient world, and also the results of the preparation for war that our militarists glorify. Militarists in our own country of Japan can discover the same state of mind among citizens of our society in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War. What satisfaction can they derive from it?

### *Looking at Rome*

Let us look at the case of Rome. What sort of moral disposition did the citizens of Rome acquire when they were robbed of their freedom and persevered in war? What great virtues did they perfect? The country was transformed into a slaughterhouse in which the worst massacres were perpetrated, a Marius appeared on the scene of history, and then a Sulla.<sup>17</sup> The civil republic degenerated into a regime of aristocratic despotism and the citizens of Rome, who had prided themselves on their self-rule, fell to the condition of miserable slaves.

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<sup>16</sup> This citation from Robertson 1899, 93-94.

<sup>17</sup> Gaius Marius (157-86 B.c.E.) was a Roman general and Lucius Sulla (138-78 B.c.E.) a leader of a political faction and a subordinate under the command of Marius. Sulla later opposed Marius, began civil war, punished his enemies, and seized their properties. This civil war set a precedent for the civil wars to come that led ultimately to the destruction of the Republican form of government and the establishment of the Roman empire.



## *The Dreyfus Affair*

The accusations of treason brought against Dreyfus in France, which have aroused the conscience of people around the world, offer a compelling example of the corruption that military interference in politics causes in the life of civil society.

The trial was held in conditions of secrecy, the verdict was excessive and cruel, and the rumors propagated during the affair were preposterous and libelous. Because of legal irregularities, the public could hardly help but wonder whether the top command of the French army was filled with knaves and fools. There is no room to doubt that the organization of the army offers an ill-intentioned man ample opportunity to work mischief. What's more, it has the perverse effect of causing men who support justice in civilian society to be treated as fools. This is far truer of the military than it is of any other institution in society. The reason is that the internal organization of the army is a world of oppression, a world where might makes right, a world of rigid hierarchy and blind obedience. Those who enter this world must leave all thoughts of righteousness and morality behind.

With the exception of the countries of the Far East, in which the independence of the judiciary is incomplete, one can only find examples of such corrupt proceedings and such a miscarriage of justice in the trials of military tribunals. These procedures have nothing whatsoever to do with usual judicial process or with the ordinary penal code.

## *Zola Steps Forward*

However, many tens of thousands of brave fighters for justice stepped forward to defend Dreyfus, to clear his name of the slanderous charges leveled against him, and to demand a retrial. They insisted that one innocent man should not become a scapegoat to conceal the ugly corruption of the armed forces. And the writer Emile Zola came to the fore and, in words that dazzled like a display of fireworks, led 40 million of his compatriots in a passionate and courageous battle to rectify this miscarriage of justice.

If Zola had held his silence, the French army would never have budged from its position and the retrial of Dreyfus would never have taken place. However, in the end the determination of a single man of letters overpowered the shamelessness, injustice, and cowardice of the army. Does the training that soldiers receive include any moral instruction?

## *Splendid Soldiers and a Man of Letters*

Mencius writes: "I refuse to yield even when millions oppose me if to yield is to betray my conscience." Why is it that one never encounters such a courageous spirit, epitomized by the man of letters Zola, among the splendid and imposing soldiers of the army?

Certain writers argue that soldiers in the army enjoy no freedom of choice and must obey their superiors. With such reasoning, they seek to justify the blind obedience that the soldiers of the French army showed in the Dreyfus affair. I do not know if this is really the case, but if they are right, it offers excellent proof of the moral corruption rampant in the military.

### ***Field Marshal Kitchener***

Field Marshal Kitchener, who commands the British army at war in the Transvaal today, is worshipped as a god by English militarists and imperialists.<sup>18</sup> But he also took pleasure in desecrating the tomb of the chief of the Mahdi during the battle to conquer the Sudan.<sup>19</sup> More than two thousand years ago, when Wu Xiwu ordered the dead body of his father's enemy whipped to avenge his father's death, he was condemned by the thinking men of the time. What can we say about it when the same thing happens at the end of the nineteenth century, in our civilized period? To exhume the body of a great man called the "savior" or the "barbarian saint" by the indigenous people is an unacceptable action on the part of a commander who acts under the protection of the British flag, a military man who, according to Admiral Mahan, should be inculcated with the virtues of endurance and courage. What a frightful picture: rousing the citizens of a nation, making them believers in the cult of militarism, worshipping as an ideal the profanation of the tomb of the Mahdi, and entrusting to the hands that committed such atrocities the destiny of a nation.

### ***The Cruelty of the Russian Army***

Consider the cruel violence committed by the soldiers of the Russian army sent to north China in recent days. In the region of Tongzhou alone, they threatened and drowned over seven hundred women.<sup>20</sup> The only possible purpose of this action was to terrify the innocent. If it is true that military training and war preparations improve human character and elevate the moral sense, then the Cossacks who have lived and died in battle since the thirteenth or fourteenth century should be paragons of morality and models of human character. However, the facts show that the contrary is true.

### ***The Politics of Turkey***

If militarism truly fostered the wisdom and the virtue of the people of a country and had the potential to improve its moral character, then Turkey should occupy the first place among the European nations.

The government of Turkey is a military regime and its budget is a military budget. If we consider its military power, then Turkey is certainly not a weak country even though its hegemony has begun to decline since the start of the nineteenth century. The Turkish army has fought bravely at Nawalino, in Crimea, at Plevna, and Thessaly, and it has never proved a pushover.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Horatio Kitchener (1850–1916) led the British forces that conquered the Sudan, where he ruled between 1892 and 1899. He was also commander in chief of the British forces in the South African War (1899–1902).

<sup>19</sup> Mahdi means redeemer. It was the religious title of Muhammed Ahmad (1844–85), a Sudanese leader who declared a holy war against Egyptian rule in 1881, defeated the Egyptian army in 1883, and later captured the city of Khartoum and killed the British general Gordon. In the Battle of Omdurman, Kitchener retook the city and desecrated the tomb to avenge the death of Gordon. Robertson (1899, 109) mentions the desecration of Mahdi's grave in his *Patriotism and Empire*.

<sup>20</sup> This is likely a reference to an alleged massacre committed by Russian Cossacks in the town of Blagoveshchensk, a city located at the confluence of the Amur and Zeya rivers. According to a Japanese intelligence report on July 16, 1900, Russians massacred 3,000 Chinese civilians immediately after the occupation of Manchuria. This "Amur massacre" became the symbol of Russian barbarism in newspapers. See Kobayashi 2008, 226–27.

<sup>21</sup> These place names were the sites of battles between the Ottoman Empire and the powers of Europe during the nineteenth century. A great naval battle at Nawalino pitted the Ottoman Empire against France, England, and Russia

In addition, the Turkish take pride in their military power, but are they correct to do so? When one judges the corruption, violence, poverty, and ignorance in this country according to the criteria of civilization, then Turkey occupies the lowest rank among the nations of Europe. The fate of this country, which Tsar Nicolas I has called the Sick Man of Europe, can rightly be compared to that of a precarious thread about to be cut off.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Germany and the Sources of Ethical Ideals***

Germany claims that, just as in the past, it remains a country in which people have acquired a high level of education and in which the arts and sciences flourish. But now that the militaristic policy of “iron and blood” has swept away everything else in its path, what place is left in this nation for noble thinkers and philosophers?

The nation of Germany was once the source of the highest ethical ideas in Europe. The names of Kant, Schiller, Herder, Goethe, Richter, Fichte, Marx, Lasalle, Wagner, and Heine are famous throughout the civilized world, the influence and the authority of their thought can be described as limitless, but where are their successors today? Many of our artists and scientists have traveled to Germany to study philosophy and ethics or reflect on the great problems of justice and morality, but are there today any noteworthy figures among the Germans in literature or religious thought?<sup>23</sup>

### ***The Phoenix and the Qilin***

There is nothing mysterious about this. The phoenix and the *qilin* do not thrive behind barbed wire.<sup>24</sup> In the world today, which idolizes Prince Bismarck and General Moltke, it is pointless to expect that a Goethe or a Schiller will be reborn. Pathetic militarists, how can you advance the cause of civilization with figures like Wilhelm, von Bulow, and Waldersee?<sup>25</sup>

Therefore I say that a day spent carrying out military policy means a day of moral degeneration for the people. A day devoted to the exercise of violence is a day in which theoretical thought goes extinct. Ever since Germany became the Germany of Bismarck, it has given up the moral influence that it used to exert throughout Europe in the past. In the ten years that have passed since Wilhelm II acceded to the throne, several thousand people have been punished for the crime of lese majeste and among those arrested are many adolescents. And this is the nation that the good people of Japan idolize and seek to emulate. The militarists still hope to take Germany as a model, but how could one find anything to admire in the politics of a militaristic country?

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during the Greek War of Independence (1821–29). The Crimean War (1853–56) was fought on the Crimean Peninsula between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Plevna was the site of a famous battle in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78). Thessaly was a battlefield in northern Greece during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897.

<sup>22</sup> Tsar Nicholas I of Russia is said to have used the phrase “sick man of Europe” to refer to the Ottoman Empire because it was falling under the financial control of other powers and losing control of its territories.

<sup>23</sup> Discussions of Turkey and Germany have close counterparts in Robertson 1899, 110–17.

<sup>24</sup> Both are mythical Chinese creatures that are said to appear with the arrival of a sage.

<sup>25</sup> Wilhelm II (1859–1941) was the final German emperor and king of Prussia who ruled from 1888 to 1918. Bernhard von Bulow (1849–1929), a German statesman, served as foreign minister in the 1890s when he was responsible for carrying out Germany’s policy of colonial expansion and later as chancellor of the German Empire from 1900 to 1909. Alfred von Waldersee (1831–1904) was the chief of the German general staff and leader of the allied forces during the Boxer Rebellion (1900–1901).

## PART 5

### *Dueling and Warfare*

Among other tributes that militarists pay to the glories of war, they say that the history of nations is a history of warfare. Just as duels were formerly the final court of appeal in which disagreements between individuals were settled, warfare now renders the final verdict that resolves the disputes between different nations. As long as there are different nations on earth, they will inevitably fight wars and therefore need to build up their defenses as a preparatory measure. They also state that military training helps people to develop strong bodies, to learn the virtues of endurance, and to build firmness of character. Wars develop boys with strong wills and high spirits. If war were abolished, the world would become weak and effeminate. Is there any truth to this argument?

### *Strategy of Mutual Deception*

I do not have time here to address the pros and cons of the duel as a means to settle private disputes. But it is thoroughly illogical to compare war that pits one nation against another with a duel between two individuals. Whether it is a matter of duels in the nations of the West or of personal vendettas in Japan, the objectives of such contests of will were always to preserve the honor of the individual, to save face; an exchange of arms between men took place on equal terms, and in broad daylight. In addition, if one of the two combatants happened to be wounded or killed in the fight, the dispute ended then and there. There was no room left for the slightest resentment in the heart of the other. In the case of war, however, the exact opposite is true. No questions of honor are involved, the objectives are evil, and the means used base and loathsome.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Gradual Development of Warfare*

In the past, war resembled dueling between individuals since it consisted of a series of engagements between evenly matched warriors, mounted on horseback, who announced their names before they started to fight. However, it would be ridiculous to treat such cases as typical of warfare in general. Wars inevitably involve guile and trickery. Wars organized on equal terms and fought in broad daylight have been the butt of laughter for the military since ancient times, as is proven by the expression the “benevolence of Duke Xiang of Song.”<sup>27</sup>

In short, war is merely a contest in stratagems of cunning and the development of war is the development of such stratagems. Barbarians in primitive societies made great use of cunning: they struck at the enemy when he least expected it, launched ambushes, attacked in the middle of the night, cut the enemy’s supply lines, and set traps. In such fights, those who have not developed the art of deceit to the requisite degree are sure to lose their lives, have their goods stolen, and their lands taken away. In this struggle for survival, only the craftiest and trickiest contestant

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<sup>26</sup> The Prussian thinker Clausewitz had defined war as a form of dueling in *On War*.

<sup>27</sup> During the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 B.c.E.), Duke Xiang of Song spurned the advice of his subordinate who recommended that he take advantage of the enemy’s lack of preparation to launch a surprise attack. Xiang replied, “A gentleman must not inflict suffering on another person when that person is in difficulty” Xiang, who waited for the enemy to assemble his troops before attacking, ended up losing the battle. The expression *sājō no nin* has the meaning of “misguided or useless benevolence.”

will survive. When ordinary machinations no longer worked, the belligerents were faced with the necessity to train harder and to develop more sophisticated weapons and stratagems. This has been the general trend in the development and progress of military techniques since ancient times.

Each and every step in the development of warfare has consisted only in devising new ways of tricking and ensnaring the enemy. No matter how ignoble the objective and however vile the means, planners of war strategy have never wasted a moment submitting either ends or means to the tests of ethics. How can one seriously speak of war as having anything in common with the individual duel? How can one claim that it resembles a contest in which two individuals match their strength, endurance, and force of character, all considered to be manly virtues? Whereas a private duel comes to an end when one of the parties defeats the other, war is simply an ongoing disaster in which vengeance leads to more vengeance.

Ultimately, war consists of plots, of dirty tricks, of effeminate behavior, of crafty stratagems: it is not a fair or open contest at all. For as long as society needs to indulge in and to prize warfare, mankind will never be able to free itself from a crafty and effeminate morality. In addition, in all the nations of the world, the vast majority of young men are dragged off and thrown into the hell of military barracks where they are taught to develop their animal nature so that they can take part in contemptible and evil wars.

### ***“A Young Conscript Leaves His Beloved Village”***

Look at the young conscripts as they leave their beloved villages and part, in tears, from their beloved parents and families. Watch them weep as they leave their farm animals and pets behind. They enter the barracks far away from the lovely mountains, streams, and the peaceful fields of their villages. Night and day, all they hear is the scolding voice of their superior officers; the only sight they see are the cruel and vicious faces of the veteran soldiers. Carrying heavy packs on their backs, they race to the west and to the east. Enduring their great fatigue, they turn to the left and march off to the right. Three monotonous and painful years are wasted in such maneuvers.

### ***The Misery of Hungry Demons***

They earn the daily pittance of three *sen* for their labor, an allowance that is equivalent to the sum earned by a beggar. They can hardly afford to pay for a pack of cigarettes or even a postal stamp, and on top of that, they are regularly subjected to cruel and degrading treatment from the veteran soldiers. They are unable to obtain money to purchase food and drink and are not allowed to carry around with them the smallest amount of spending money.

Even those from a wealthy background endure such treatment, but for those who come from poor families, military service means three long years of hunger and privation and the humiliation of being constantly reprimanded by their superiors. In many cases, the wealthy can win exemptions from military service in order to pursue higher education or because they have frail and sickly constitutions. But the children of the poor have no alternative other than to endure this cruelty and suffering. The unfairness of the conscription system is public knowledge. When I hear that a conscripted man has skipped his induction calls, or fled the barracks, and then, driven

to desperation by the cruel treatment he received, ended up killing himself, I cannot blame such a man for taking his life and feel the deepest sympathy for his plight.<sup>28</sup>

After they spend three years in this way, what is left for them when they return to their homes? Their parents have grown older and weaker, their fields have been left untended, and they themselves have become depraved by their experiences. How can one affirm that the nation genuinely needs this system or speak of the call of duty?

### ***Let's Stop Glorifying Military Weapons***

We must stop glorifying military weapons and venerating the system of military conscription. I have learned that the system of conscription produces a wave of vagabonds and squanders the productive capacities of the nation, and that many promising young lives are ruined by their experiences in the military. The morality and the traditional customs of regions of the country are corrupted when military barracks are built in their proximity and the good citizens that live in the path of military maneuvers often have to endure the excessive demands of the military. Neither the building of weapons nor the system of conscription adds even a single grain of rice to our food supply or contributes even a trifling sum of money to the national income. Not only do they do nothing positive to favor the sciences, the arts, or the noble ideals of religion and morality, but they cause great harm and destruction to all of these.

## **PART 6**

### ***Why Keep Provoking Wars?***

Ah, politicians and citizens of every country in the world, why do you mobilize so many troops, deploy so many weapons and battleships, and why have you for so long issued challenges to one another? Why don't you hurry to abandon this game in which you deceive one another like foxes and devour one another like rabid dogs, and endeavor to reach the higher realm of civilization and morality?

Even though men are well aware that war is a criminal act that causes great hardships, they have no desire to see it disappear once and for all. They are cognizant of the justice and the advantages that peace and universal love would bring, but they have no wish to see these hopes realized in the near future. Why do they hesitate to take decisive action to abolish war preparations once and for all and enjoy in return the benefits of peace and humanity?

People wish to increase the production of manufactured products at affordable prices and to stimulate the growth of commerce with other nations. And they know perfectly well that the military budget consumes enormous amounts of capital and is an immense drain on the nation's productive capacity, that wars interrupt the smooth flow of commerce and cause economic stagnation. Why do they not decrease military spending and cut back on their armaments, using the money they save to invest in industry and domestic enterprises?

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<sup>28</sup> Kōtoku's teacher, Nakae Chomin, had argued that the conscription system favored the rich, who were able to obtain exemptions, and that it was too costly. Nakae 2001, 263–64.

### ***A Resolution at the Peace Conference***

Two years ago, the emperor of Russia proposed that a peace conference be held to limit military expenditures; none of the great powers of the world voiced the slightest objection to his proposal.<sup>29</sup> Representatives of twenty countries participated in the conference, including England, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, Japan, and China. They issued a final resolution at the Peace Conference that stated: “We recognize that it would be most desirable to limit the crushing burden of military expenditures in today’s world in order to advance the material and spiritual welfare of mankind.” Furthermore, they also agreed on the criteria for the creation of a court of arbitration to settle disputes between nations in a peaceful manner: “We sincerely hope to act in cooperation with other nations to maintain world peace and to work together to settle international disputes in a peaceful manner... Since we hope to establish a firm international order founded on principles of justice, we recognize the need to establish impartial and just rules by international agreement in order to ensure the peace and welfare of the people of the world” (Treaty for the Peaceful Resolution of International Conflict). However, why do they not expand this resolution to include the abolition of land and naval military forces throughout the world?

### ***Just One Small Step and the World Will Change***

Needless to say, governments would reply to my argument that the present level of military expenditures is necessary to uphold world peace. But, in light of their lust for fame and vanity, politicians and military officials do not intend to allow their cannons to rust from lack of use or to permit their warships to fall into disrepair. They are simply waiting for an opportunity to put these weapons to use. They are like drunken bullies, holding a sword in one hand and on the lookout for someone to persecute. Only a thin line separates peace preservation from disruption of peace, and they are always ready to cross it. Even if the great powers of Europe endeavor to preserve the peace by maintaining sufficient forces to preserve a balance of power, they abruptly change and act to destroy peace in the name of imperialism once they encounter a weaker and less populous nation in Asia and Africa. It suffices to look at what they have done in China and South Africa. They have made inconsequential and half-hearted gestures in favor of world peace but they have hardly reduced the number of their weapons at all. How can they hope to enjoy the fruits of peace unless they do away with their armies?

Not only are they unwilling to contemplate dismantling their military forces, but they devote great efforts to exhausting all the resources and treasures of the country to reinforce them. Their conscience is completely smothered by a desire for fame and material gain, a belligerent spirit, and animal instincts. A spirit of empty ostentation snuffs out their feelings of humanity, their sense of justice and morality, and their reason is darkened by the powers of superstition.

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<sup>29</sup> At the suggestion of Emperor Nicolai II of Russia, the First International Peace Conference took place in The Hague in the Netherlands in 1899. Some twenty-six countries participated, including China, Japan, and the major powers of Europe. In their closing resolution, these nations pledged to ban the use of poison gas and to resolve international conflicts through peaceful means. A Second International Peace Conference was held in 1907.

### ***A Jungle of Wild Beasts and Poison Snakes***

While individuals in our societies have been deprived of weapons, states remain armed to the teeth. Individuals are not permitted to settle their conflicts by violence, but states retain the right to provoke wars. The civilization of the twentieth century has transcended the morality in which the strong prey on the weak. But the nations of the world are still subject to the law of the jungle, with its wild beasts and poison snakes. Is it not a bitter shame and a disgrace that people cannot live in peace and security? Is this something that men of advanced social views can afford to overlook or ignore?



# Chapter 4: On Imperialism

## PART 1

### *Wild Beasts in Search of Prey*

The wild beast polishes its claws and nails and roars because it must seek its prey to survive. Unable to free themselves from their bestial nature, patriots bolster the military power of their nation and increase its arsenal of weapons to satisfy their own vanity, belligerence, and superstition. And they, too, must constantly search out new victims. For that reason, it is hardly surprising that the policy of territorial expansion assumes its full dimensions when patriotism and militarism reach fever pitch. The end result is the popularity of the policy of imperialism today.

### *Territorial Expansion*

Imperialism means the construction of a great empire, and the construction of a great empire implies the acquisition of far-flung territories. However, I am pained to note that the acquisition of new territories can only take place at the cost of numerous crimes and injustices, widespread corruption and degradation, and all kinds of destruction and decadence. On what evidence do I base this judgment?

The building of an empire would be a wonderful thing if it consisted only in the settlement and cultivation of virgin, empty, and wild territories. However, are there truly any such empty, unused, and undiscovered territories left in the world today when the rapid development in the means of transportation has made it possible for man to reach every part of the globe? If every part of the world belongs to someone and is inhabited, how could one occupy even a square inch of new territory without resorting to violence, declaring war, or employing trickery and deception? The policy of territorial expansion, whether practiced by the Europeans in Asia and Africa or by the Americans in the South Seas, is always accomplished by the deployment of militarism and the use of armed force.

In order to carry out this policy, the imperialists must spend millions of dollars each day and lose hundreds of lives each month. In order to implement their military strategy year by year, they fan the flames of bestial patriotism among the masses, who are nevertheless the first victims of these policies.

Think about it: in order to expand their military power and satisfy their private interests, they invade foreign territories at will, plunder the wealth and resources of these lands, and either massacre their people or reduce them to a state of servitude. And then they proudly proclaim before the world: "We are building a great empire." However, how does the building of a great empire differ from theft and plunder?

## ***Building a Great Empire Means Theft and Plunder***

Politicians advocating imperialism, lacking in any sense of justice or righteousness, claim that this policy of theft and plunder is simply the way of the samurai and they take pride in these actions. Many of the actions committed by heroes and adventurers of the previous century and earlier were hardly different from those of present-day conquerors. But it is time for us to open our eyes. The heavens cannot help but be angered by such injustice and villainy. What could prevent the fall of empires in the past that were based on military expansion? The imperialists stir up the bestial nature of the populace to invade and conquer foreign countries in order to enrich themselves and to uphold unity and social peace in the home country. But once they have seized foreign lands and built a great empire, the people are deluded with pride, the military gain influence and the new territories are plundered and oppressed, the tax burden increases, and the finances of the colony are ruined. Ultimately, in every case, the results are the devastation of the new territories, growing poverty, inequality, and rebellion; in the home country, the fruits are greed, corruption, and decadence. After falling into decline, this old empire will in turn become the prey of another rising empire. Without exception, the military empires of the past have suffered this fate.

## ***The Rise and Fall of Military Empires***

Gazing at the ruins of Carthage, Scipio the African lamented, “Some day Rome will endure the same fate,” and history later proved him right. What has become of the great empire founded by Genghis Khan? Or of Napoleon’s empire? What about the lands annexed by the Empress Jingu? Or the great plans of conquest of Toyotomi Hideyoshi? All these empires have vanished like the morning mist, without leaving a trace behind. One should not assert that the empires of Christian countries will last forever: remember that in its final years the Roman Empire was Christianized. One must not say the empires will not decline if they liberate their slaves, since the great Spanish Empire fell after it abolished the system of slavery in its territories. One must not say that the industrialized empires will not in the end decline. Weren’t the Moors and the Florentines industrial powers of their times?

The prosperity of the nation must not be based on theft and pillage, and the greatness of a people can never be built on a foundation of plunder and invasion. The progress of civilization will not occur under the despotism of a single ruler and the welfare of society will not be brought about by unification under a single flag. These goals can only be achieved by peace, freedom, universal love, and equality. Consider that the people of our country benefited from the peaceful rule of the Hōjō and compare their fates to the soldiers of Kublai Khan. Today, the people of Belgium enjoy more peaceful lives than the people of Germany or Russia.

## ***“Ruin Follows in the Wake of the Flag”***

There is a famous slogan that “trade follows in the wake of the flag.” The lessons of history show us clearly, however, that ruin follows in the wake of the flag. Even though the cart in front has been overturned in its tracks, the other carts behind follow in the same path. And the lights of the revolving lantern turn endlessly. Today, I fear that the present empires of Europe and the United States will meet the same fate that Scipio lamented in ancient Rome.

## PART 2

### *Expansion of the People?*

Some imperialists concede that the great empires of the past were established just to satisfy the private interests and the vanity of kings and their political advisors. However, they argue, territorial expansion today expresses the irrepressible need for expansion of the citizens. In the past, imperialism was a private matter but today it is a popular and national cause.

Is this really the case? Does imperialism today truly represent the expansion of the people? Or does this expansion only serve the desire for fame of a small number of politicians and military leaders and the interests of a few capitalists and speculators? Consider that the reverse side of this so-called expansion of the people is that the struggle for survival grows more difficult every day for the vast majority of people. Isn't there a widening gulf between rich and poor, a worsening of poverty and hunger, an increase in the number of anarchists, and a worsening toll of crimes and other social ills? What benefit do the masses derive from unlimited expansion?<sup>1</sup>

### *A Small Clique of Military Officers, Politicians, and Capitalists*

A small minority of military officers, politicians, and capitalists block any improvement in the livelihood of the vast majority of the population, destroy their meager savings, and even take their lives in order to build their great empire. Not only do they sacrifice the progress and welfare of the vast majority of their citizens, but they also threaten and murder the poor and defenseless people in Asia, Africa, and the Philippines. And they have the cheek to call this the "expansion of the people" Even if the majority of the people benefited from such a policy, it would still not represent any real progress, since it is nothing more than a subtle manipulation of their bestial love of war and an exploitation of their jingoistic feeling and superstition and fanaticism. This policy causes damage and injustice today much as the ancient empires did.

### *The Conquest of the Transvaal*

England conquers the Transvaal, deprives the Boer people of their independence and freedom, takes control of their gold mines, seeks to unify Africa under the British flag, and builds train lines across the continent in order to allow capitalists, industrialists, and speculators to satisfy their greed for profits, fulfill the ambitions of Cecil Rhodes, and gratify Chamberlain's desire for glory. For the attainment of these useless objectives, how many horrible and astonishing sacrifices have been made!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 1905, Kōtoku often treated anarchism as equivalent to poison and identified anarchists with fomenters of social chaos. In *Shakaishugi shinzui* (Essence of socialism), he wrote: "Scientific socialism is not anarchism. Desperate acts of violence by a militant few are senseless. In order to achieve our goals, constructive political action is necessary. Nor is scientific socialism to be confused with nihilism. Riots and destruction are not the answers. In order to achieve our goals nonviolent action is necessary" Kōtoku, "Shakaishugi shinzui," KSZ 4:514.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) was a legendary British businessman and champion of imperialism. He founded the diamond company, De Beers, which still markets more than a third of the world's diamonds, and became the founder of the state of Rhodesia. Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) was a British statesman and colonial secretary during the Boer War.

### *Immense Sacrifices*

In the nearly five hundred days that have elapsed between the outbreak of the war in the Transvaal in October 1899 and my taking up the pen to write this manuscript, the number of British soldiers killed has reached thirteen thousand and the number of wounded is even higher. In addition, some thirty thousand soldiers have been released from military service and returned to their homes as cripples. As for the number of the indigenous dead, there is no way to calculate the real toll.

### *The Economic Costs*

Moreover, think of the economic costs of war. In order to transport two hundred thousand soldiers to distant battlefields, the nation dispatches countless ships to places thousands of miles away, costing an estimated two million yen per day. England has already squandered more than one billion yen of its wealth to spill the blood of both peoples. In addition, it has had to halt the extraction of gold from the mines because of the war, costing an additional two hundred million yen in lost production. This war has not only brought misfortune to the two belligerent parties but has also had severe repercussions on the welfare of the entire world.

The suffering of the indigenous people is truly to be pitied. The English have taken countless prisoners and have deported some six thousand to the island of Saint Helena, another two thousand four hundred to Ceylon, while General Kitchener is about to send a further twelve thousand to India. Both countries have almost run out of young people to send to the battlefield, the fields are untended, and crops no longer grow where the engines of war have passed. What blame do these people bear for this war?

Considering these facts, how can one claim today that imperialism has not resulted in injustice and corruption? How can one say that it has not caused violence and destruction? How could a people with a high moral sense permit it? How can the lands of civilization in the twentieth century accept it?

### *The Policies of Germany*

If even England, a nation that cherishes liberty and loves peace, behaves as I have described, then how can anyone be shocked that Germany, the very incarnation of militarism, sacrifices untold wealth to expand its army and navy? Last year, during the Boxer Rebellion, the kaiser of Germany dispatched General Waldersee to East Asia and he publicly proclaimed his intention to seek vengeance.<sup>3</sup> The Social Democratic Party of Germany, at its congress in September the same year, passed a resolution that unmasks the reality of German imperialism.

*Resolution of the German Social Democratic Party Adopted at the congress in Mainz:*<sup>4</sup>

The policy of intervention in China adopted by the German imperial government is the result of the frenetic pursuit of profits by capitalists [and] militarist vanity to build an empire and a greed for plunder. The aims of this policy are to occupy foreign

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<sup>3</sup> Alfred von Waldersee (1832–1904) succeeded General Moltke as chief of Imperial German General Staff.

<sup>4</sup> At the 1900 Congress in Mainz, the German Social Democratic Party adopted resolutions opposing increases in military spending and the German military intervention in China.

territories by force and to oppress their people. As a result of this ideology, plundering armies have employed violence and war to inflict destruction on foreign countries and satisfied their greed by annexing territories by illegal and unjust means. The victims who have suffered from these policies have inevitably been led to resist the aggressors. Furthermore, these policies of plunder and aggression have roused envy and heightened rivalries among the major powers. As a result, spending for naval and land forces has imposed an intolerable burden on these countries. This has heightened the danger of international conflict and the threat of global chaos.

Since the Social Democratic Party is firmly opposed to the exploitation and oppression of man by man, we strongly protest against these predatory and aggressive policies. The aim of our party is to respect and preserve human rights, freedom, and independence and to promote the development of peaceful relations and exchanges among the countries of the world based on the principles of modern civilization. The principles that have been adopted by the bourgeoisie and the military powers of these countries are a great disgrace to civilization, etc.<sup>5</sup>

Do not these just and impartial words rival the sun and stars in illuminating our troubled world?

### ***American Imperialism***

The imperialism of the European countries, which aims for territorial aggrandizement through conquest and plunder, is truly a great insult to civilization and humanity. However, I must acknowledge that U.S. imperialism is also following the same iniquitous and immoral path.

The United States helped the Cuban rebels free themselves from the yoke of Spain in the name of the principles of freedom and humanity. Some people admire the justice and righteousness of America's actions in this case. Indeed, if the Cuban people had wanted to be placed under the rule of America as an expression of its gratitude for America's support, we would have no reason to object to this annexation. We do not mean to imply that Americans used deception to instigate the Cubans to rebel against the Spanish. However, we cannot accept their conquest and annexation of the Philippine archipelago.

### ***Conquest of the Philippines***

Did the United States sincerely fight for the freedom of the Cuban rebels? Why then have they cruelly suppressed the freedoms of the Filipino people? If they really supported the independence and sovereignty of Cuba, then why have they intervened to prevent the independence of the Philippines? Against the will of the Filipino people, they have invaded the country with military force, confiscated their lands, and seized their resources. This action is the greatest blemish on the glorious history of the United States since the founding of its republic, which was based on the principles of freedom and civilization. While the United States has earned profits from annexing the land and the wealth of the Philippines, in what way do their actions differ from those of

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<sup>5</sup> Here Kōtoku uses the term *chūryū shakai*, now used to designate the middle class of Japanese society, to mean the capitalist class.

military bands that pillage to enrich themselves? What have they done to the achievements of their forefathers, their Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Monroe Doctrine?

### ***What Happened to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution?***

How can one assert that a nation must expand its territories to survive in today's world? While the founders of the nation established the nation in the name of freedom and humanity, why have they turned their backs on this past and degenerated to the point that they allege that territorial expansion is necessary for the existence of the nation?

Let us grant for the sake of argument that the United States would fall into economic crisis if it did not continue to expand territorially. Even if this were the case, the wealth and the profits that they gain from the annexation of the Philippines would hardly suffice to overcome such a crisis; it might allow them to improve the situation for a day or so, but their ultimate collapse would only be postponed for a short time. With their population and vast territory, their limitless supply of capital and the power of their business enterprises, how can they take seriously such imaginary dangers and fearful scenarios without fear of becoming the butt of the world's ridicule?

### ***The Crisis of the United States***

I believe that if the United States faces a crisis that threatens their national survival in the future, this crisis will not be caused by the smallness of their territory, but rather by their unlimited territorial expansion. It will result not from their failure to exercise their political power in the world, but rather from the corruption and decadence that has infected their own society, not from the small size of their market, but rather from the unfair distribution of wealth, from the destruction of freedom and equality, and from the rampant spread of imperialist and expansionist ideologies.

### ***Why Is America Prosperous?***

Consider for the moment the reason for the present prosperity and wealth of the United States. Is it based on freedom or oppression? Reason or violence? The strength of its economy or the power of its weapons? The vanity of its expansionists or the diligence of its entrepreneurs? Liberalism or imperialism? At the moment, the nation is starting to head down an evil path, driven by a desire for glory and profits and a fanatical nationalism. I not only fear the dangers that their future holds in store, but I also feel deep anguish for the future of freedom, justice, and morality.

### ***Resolution of the Democratic Party***

Last fall, the Democratic Party of the United States passed a resolution during a meeting held in the state of Iowa. I was deeply moved by the following passage:

We are opposed to the conquest of the Philippines. In general, imperialism implies militarism, militarism signifies a government by force, and a government by force in turn means the death of representative government, the destruction of economic and political freedom, the murder of human rights and equality, and the abolition of the democratic system of government.

In short, throughout the world, imperialism has brought in its wake a host of injustices and disasters.

## **PART 3**

### ***The Need for Emigration***

Imperialists in England and Germany both justify the need for the construction of empire on the grounds that it permits people to emigrate overseas. They argue that the population of their countries is growing every year and that the number of the poor is constantly increasing. The only way that this surplus population can hope to survive is to move overseas through the expansion of territory. At first glance, such an argument seems very reasonable.

### ***Population Growth and Poverty***

I will concede that the population of England and Germany is increasing and that the number of the poor is growing. However, is it true that the growing number of the poor is caused by the increase in population? Is there no other solution to the problem of poverty than to promote the emigration of people to lands overseas? This is a question that deserves a closer look. If we follow the reasoning of the imperialists to its logical conclusion, then the more populous a country is, the poorer its people will be, and inversely, the fewer people that live in a country the richer it will be. However, this is an absurd argument. This completely contradicts the great principle of social progress, the conclusions reached by the social sciences and economics.

In a society based on hunting and fishing, people have to consume the food that they find in nature. If the number of people increases, then the amount of food per person will diminish following the unbending laws of nature. However, man is also a productive animal who has the knowledge and capacity to produce his own food and clothing by utilizing the forces of nature. In addition, human beings improve their abilities and increase their knowledge with each passing year, and from one generation to the next, they make enormous strides. Indeed, ever since the Industrial Revolution, the population of the world has been multiplied several times over, but at the same time, the productive wealth of the world has been increased several thousand times. And England and Germany are two countries that monopolize the greater share of the world's wealth.

### ***Causes of Increasing Poverty***

Since the riches of the world have grown enormously, the constant increase of poverty in modern societies cannot be caused by the growth in population, but must rather be attributed to some other factor. Indeed, the increasing number of the poor is the result of flaws in our social organization and economic system. It is due to the fact that capitalists and landlords use their power to extort extraordinary profits and rents from others, and because of the uneven distribution of wealth in our societies. For that reason, I affirm that if we fail to eliminate these evils by applying a truly civilized morality and scientific knowledge to the problems of our society, then emigration can be no more than a temporary salve that palliates the problem while failing

to deal with its root cause. Indeed, even if all the people in the country were to move overseas, the problem of poverty would not disappear.

For the sake of argument, I will concede that emigration is the only effective solution to the problems of overpopulation and poverty. But why would this fact justify the expansion of the nation's territory? Why would nations find it necessary to build great empires? Are those who leave their country unable to live in any place except one in which the flag of their mother country flies? Let us take a look at the facts.

### ***Statistics on Emigration from England***

It is said that the territory controlled by the British Empire grows a bit larger with each passing day. Nevertheless, between the years of 1853 and 1890, a total of 8.5 million Irish and English emigrated from their motherland to lands overseas. Out of this total, fewer than 2 million moved to territories controlled by their mother country, whereas more than 5.5 million headed to the United States of America. Here is the statistical breakdown of English emigrants by country of destination for the single year 1895:

The United States of America	195,632
Australia	10,809
Canada	22,357

The proportion of emigrants to lands that are controlled by the home country is less than one-sixth of that to lands not controlled by the home country.

### ***Emigration and Land***

The emigrants choose to move to lands of freedom and they do not give a thought to whether the land where they emigrate is a colony of their homeland. From this example, you can see that when imperialists speak of the needs of emigrants, they are merely creating vain excuses that are not supported by a shred of evidence.

I do not think that emigration is to be condemned. By comparison with the Helots of Sparta, who were killed by their masters when their numbers grew too quickly, the fact that the poor today have the option of emigration certainly represents progress. However, there are limits in the extension of available territories in the world, whereas the growth in population is limitless. If emigrants claim that the land they emigrate to ought to belong to their homeland, should we just sit back and let them do as they please?

Consider the reasoning of the imperialists: England and Germany at first set out to search for unclaimed territories in Asia and Africa. They then divided the lands among themselves and colonized them. However, as emigrants settled in these lands and occupied all of them, they then began to feel the need for other lands and they set off to expand their territory once again. If this process continues, the people of different countries will seize land from their neighbors and kill one another, until at last, the country that possesses the strongest military power takes control of and colonizes all the land. After another number of years go by, this territory will also be filled with people as other poor and desperate people from the home country settle there. This process is the reasoning of the imperialists. The end they see in emigration has no scientific basis.



Let us consider the case of France. France is truly relentless in its campaign to expand the territory of the nation, but the population of France is not growing at all. If we consider the fact that the proportion of poor is relatively low in France, how can one argue that France is extending its territories in order to promote the emigration of its people?

Now the United States is also demanding to expand its territory. It is evident in this case that its imperial expansion is not driven by the needs of emigration. The land of the United States is vast in size, it possesses great wealth of resources, and emigrants from all over the world flock to it in an endless flow. Not only do vast numbers come from England, but some 195,000 out of the 224,000 emigrants that left Germany between 1893 and 1897 also went to the United States. In addition, large numbers of emigrants from Switzerland, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries head to the United States. Why would a country like the United States, which welcomes emigrants from every country in the world, find the need to encourage emigration to other lands?

In order to take over the resources and land of Abyssinia, Italy squanders its wealth and the lives of its people in the hope of adding to its colonial lands.<sup>6</sup> In spite of this, the vast majority of Italian emigrants prefer to live under foreign flags in North and South America.<sup>7</sup>

### ***An Erroneous Notion***

In fact, I can affirm, without the slightest hesitation, that the claim by imperialists that they support territorial expansion to provide lands for people driven by the need to emigrate is a totally erroneous notion. In this case, they are merely using emigration as an excuse to deceive themselves and to pull the wool over the eyes of other people. It is hardly worth taking the time to refute their theories.

## **PART 4**

### ***The Need for New Markets***

With a single voice, all imperialists proclaim that “trade follows the flag” and assert the urgent need for territorial expansion to create new markets for their nation’s commercial products.

I welcome the further development of the means of transportation throughout the world and the future growth and prosperity of the trade among the great powers. But must British merchants trade in markets under the control of the British flag, or do German traders have to do business only where the German flag flies? For what reason do nations seek to impose their trade by violence and military power?

### ***The Dark Age of the Economy***

In the dark ages of history, the great military heroes would ordinarily invade other countries, plunder their resources, and impose heavy taxes upon their people in order to enrich their own country. The economic policies of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane were of this type. When the

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<sup>6</sup> In 1895, Italy invaded Ethiopia (Abyssinia) to strengthen its foothold in East Africa, but it suffered a military defeat at the battle of Adowa in 1896 and was forced to recognize Ethiopia’s independence. This military defeat of a European power punctured the myth of the white man’s invincibility in Africa.

<sup>7</sup> Kōtoku borrows these statistics from Robertson’s discussion of emigration (1899, 173–77).

imperialists subjugate barbarian tribes, seize their lands, reduce their people to servitude, and force them to purchase manufactured products from the home country, how does their economic policy differ in the slightest from that of the dark ages? How can modern civilization and science permit such a system to exist?

### ***The Overproduction of Goods***

Why is it that they must exploit new markets? They argue that their economies suffer from a surplus of capital and an overproduction of goods. Even though the capitalists and industrialists complain that they suffer from so-called overproduction, their impoverished compatriots, by the tens of millions, lack adequate supplies of basic necessities such as clothing and food and tearfully bemoan their terrible destitution. If it were not for the lack of demand, how could one speak of excessive production? This lack of demand is due to the lack of purchasing power of the majority of the population, the unjust distribution of income, and the growing divide between the rich and the poor.

### ***Today's Economic Problems***

Consider that the growing disparities between rich and poor in the Western countries have led to great concentration of wealth and capital in the hands of a small minority and the severe reduction of the purchasing power of the vast majority of the people. Both are the results of the system of free competition in which a small group of capitalists and industrialists enjoys a monopoly over capital and earns excessive profits. In reality, the economic problems in the countries of Europe and the United States today will not be solved by oppressing the population of underdeveloped societies and making them buy their manufactured products, but rather by greatly boosting the purchasing power of the vast majority of people in their own countries. Boosting the purchasing power of the masses can only be achieved by prohibiting the excessive and monopolistic profits of the capitalists and by establishing a fair distribution of income that will benefit the general interests of the laboring classes. To create a just distribution of income, we must radically reform the present system of free competition and establish a socialist system.

### ***The Establishment of a Socialist System***

If we succeed in establishing such a system, we will put an end to competition among capitalists and eliminate monopolistic profits. When these monopolistic profits no longer exist, then it will be possible to make a fair distribution of the necessities of life to the masses and to guarantee that they do not lack clothing and food. In that case, no one will be able to speak of overproduction or to complain of its pernicious effects. Also, there will be no need to plant the national flag in overseas territories or to apply the rapacious principles of Tamerlane to the management of the economy. This will be the triumph of civilization and science as well as of morality.

### ***Only Bankruptcy and Decadence***

However, since the politicians and capitalists in the Western countries reject this project, they boast about their ephemeral victories and seek to prolong their monopoly forever. They squander enormous sums of money to steal vast new territories overseas from their rightful owners in an

insatiable quest for new conquests. And what are the consequences of this policy? The national budget grows ever more bloated, more and more capital is diverted to fund these ventures, capitalists become ever more greedy for excessive profits, and the distribution of income ever more skewed toward the rich. As the size of the empire and the volume of goods traded increases, the number of poor people in the country swells with each passing day. In the end this can only lead to bankruptcy and to decadence.

### ***An Economy of Nomadic Tribes***

Even if the imperialist powers succeed in staving off financial crisis and bankruptcy brought about by their profligate spending for territorial expansion, how will they manage to keep their frantic competition within bounds when they run out of new lands and new markets to capture? When they lose any room to maneuver, they will not be content to stop and starve to death. Instead, the great powers will attack and seize territory from one another. Nomadic tribes move from place to place in accordance with the availability of water and pasture but they cannot hope to survive when these resources disappear. If they lack water and pasture, they kill one another in order to appropriate the means of survival. Is not the economy of the imperialists similar to that of nomadic tribes?

### ***Anglo-German Trade***

In fact, the new markets they crave have already started to become few and far between and the great powers are starting to fight over these few remaining spoils. The English claim that the Germans are the great enemy they face in their markets and that they must crush them to survive. The Germans reply that the English are their great competitors and that they must be defeated. In the meantime, both sides hardly miss a day when they do not add to their arsenal of weapons. How is it possible that trade and commercial ties do not result in mutual benefits, but instead make both sides seek to harm each other for the sake of petty profits? Instead of competing peacefully in production, these powers vie with one another in the exercise of military power.

### ***Killing One's Best Customer***

Is not England already the largest commercial client of Germany, while Germany is the third-largest customer of England? In the past decade, bilateral trade between the two countries has grown by millions. The total amount of the trade between England and Germany has already attained a level equivalent to that between England and Australia, and is far larger than the combined totals of its trade with Canada and South Africa. In addition, Germany imports a very large amount of capital from England and uses it to fund its own economic development. If one of these two countries were to attack the other in order to eliminate a potential rival, it would end up destroying a large proportion of total world trade. In addition, the relations between the other great powers resemble those between these two nations. If someone were to speak of a businessman who planned to increase his sales by killing off his largest client and stealing that client's property, everyone would find such an idea preposterous. But the great powers of the world today practice exactly such a policy, inflicting pain on their rivals in order to protect their own nation's profits.

I am appalled to note that competition among nations for the capture of new markets has degenerated into competition in the building of armaments and that quarrels over tariffs and trade have resulted in open military clashes. Intending to inflict great suffering upon others, they end up hurting themselves. In order to ensure that others are deprived of profits, people in many countries are willing to suffer from poverty, hunger, corruption, and eventually death. For this reason, I denounce the economy championed by imperialism as a barbaric economy on the model of Tamerlane for its injustice, iniquity, and fundamentally uncivilized and unscientific nature.<sup>8</sup> The politicians only pursue their vain desires for glory and serve the desire of speculators for extravagant and short-term profits.

### ***The Japanese Economy***

Let us look now at the situation of the Japanese economy. The Japanese economy is far worse than those that I have already described. Japan uses military force to plant its flag in territories far from its shores, but the Japanese people do not have a surplus of capital to invest in these new territories or an abundance of manufactured products to sell to these new markets. As the territories under Japanese control grow in extent, so does the power of the military, which makes the law there. The expense of ruling colonies imposes an increasing burden on the Japanese people, the amount of capital available to support economic growth diminishes, and the production of goods withers. Rather than leading to progress, the imperialist policies of Japan cause the country to regress in the ways that I have described.

### ***The Utmost Foolishness***

Imperialists in Europe and the United States speak of surplus capital and overproduction of goods as reasons to acquire colonies. But Japan is in a completely different economic situation than these other nations. Even though Western nations merely hasten their decline when they build great empires, they still have the wherewithal to persist in this foolishness for several more years and can take pride in the size of the empire placed under their flags at least temporarily. However, as far as Japan is concerned, can the nation seriously expect to maintain the empire it builds any longer than a single day? Nevertheless Japan maintains a huge army and an impressive navy in order to become an imperialist nation. The foolishness of the Japanese imperialists exceeds that of all their rivals.

## **PART 5**

### ***The Unification of the British Colonies***

An imperialist in England has said: "If we wish to build up impregnable defenses to protect the homeland, we must unite all of our colonies into a single community" This notion enchants war-mongering imperialists but it is thoroughly absurd.

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<sup>8</sup> Tamerlane (1336–1405), also known as Timur, was a Turko-Mongol ruler who conquered much of western and central Asia and founded the Timurid dynasty (1370–1405) in central Asia, which survived until 1857 as the Mughal Empire in India.

The reason why some English people are so frantically worried about the deficiencies in the military defense of the nation is that their territory has grown so large that it has become indefensible. Consider that the people who have emigrated to the different colonies, unable to make ends meet in the nation of their birth, moved to lands thousands of miles away to live in freedom and to secure an adequate livelihood. In each of these territories, they have succeeded in realizing prosperity and attaining happiness. Why must they acquiesce to bearing the oppressive yoke of the motherland or countenance its political interference just to ensure the unification of the empire? Why must they bear the extravagant costs of England's military defense or be forced to fight in its wars? Must they be drawn into the whirlwind of conflicts of the great Western powers just because England happens to be embroiled in them? The disadvantages and the dangers of such a course are great.

### ***Useless and Dangerous***

I have already explained why the exercise of armed power is useless and immoral. But let us assume that military power is necessary to defend the independence of one's own country. In order to develop an adequate defense of the country and to deter an enemy from attacking it, a nation does not need to control a vast territory or to build a huge empire. Consider that the England that defeated the great Spanish Empire at the time of Philip II was still known as "little England." The England that trounced the great French Empire of Louis XIV was also called "little England."<sup>9</sup>

### ***Military Strength and "Little England"***

In fact, England dazzled the world with its military feats only when it was still called "little England." If imperialists today are so concerned about the shortcomings of national defense, why don't they grant independence to all of the British colonies? If they did so, they would be able to sleep more secure in the knowledge that they are well defended; what's more, inhabitants of British colonies would welcome such a move with joy and at last be able to enjoy freedom and happiness.

### ***The Reasons for England's Prosperity***

Consider that the prosperity and development of England do not result from the power of its arms but rather from the number of its coal and iron ore mines, not from its military aggressions and plunder of foreign lands, but rather from the peaceful development of its industries and commerce. In the course of its development, England committed the error of giving free rein to its animal instincts and following in the path of the empires of antiquity by applying the ruinous economic policies of Tamerlane to rule its colonies. But such policies provoked the United States to rebel and break away from the mother country. Chastened by this experience, England later adjusted its policies and permitted self-rule in its colonies. As a result, England does not directly rule these vast territories, which do not make up an "empire" in the sense that imperialists tend to use this word. Rather, since the English are linked to their former colonies by ties of blood,

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<sup>9</sup> Philip II (1527–97) ruled Spain at the zenith of the absolutist period. Louis XIV, known as the Sun King, ruled France from 1643 until his death in 1715.

language, and culture, they remain bound together by sentiments of mutual sympathy. Since both sides benefit from commerce, their community will likely last forever, bringing limitless prosperity to all.

### ***The Fall of the British Empire—A Question of Time***

Will England succeed in maintaining its greatness if it repeats its past exploits and, drunk with vanity in its military force, extends its influence on the European continent? England remains a great power today, but if it continues in the future to oppress its colonies and expose them to danger in the name of its national flag and the glory of its military, it will in short time forfeit their sympathy and consent. In that case, I believe that the break up of the British Empire will simply be a matter of time.

The ambition of the present Prime Minister Chamberlain, as the heir of the doctrines of Pitt and Disraeli, is to lead this great peaceful people into the abyss of imperialism and militarism.<sup>10</sup> I can hardly help but grieve for this honorable nation, which is set to follow earlier military empires along the path to inevitable decline and decadence.

To be sure, the military officers and politicians who seek fame and the speculators who pursue profits in unexpected places are the ones who deserve the blame for this situation. However, what is one to think of poets and men of letters, who bear a great responsibility for the spiritual education of the people. It is deplorable that many of these men of learning and education have betrayed their mission and become the champions of military expansion. In England, Kipling and Henley offer the worst examples.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Kipling and Henley***

They praise the hunt for new prey by the bestial patriots of their country, the glory of the national flag, the merits of great men, and the rise of national thought. Some take pride in being citizens of the country that gave birth to Cecil Rhodes, while others pay homage to the great achievements of Kitchener. The former expanded the borders of the empire by a distance of several thousand leagues, while the latter wiped away the humiliation that the British army suffered in Khartoum. They justify these actions by claiming that these men implanted peace and civilization in the place of savage and barbaric customs. However, if the mission of imperialism were to institute peace and civilized rule by subjugating and annihilating the barbarians, then it would have no reason to last any longer than the period when barbarians ruled and would come to an end with them. The hunter only continues to make his living while there are animals and birds free to run and fly in the fields and mountains.

### ***Imperialism and the Hunter's Way of Life***

As soon as South Africa is conquered, won't Rhodes set off in pursuit of some other South Africa? Once Sudan is subjugated, won't Kitchener leave to chase after another Sudan? When

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<sup>10</sup> William Pitt (1708–78), also known as Pitt the Elder, was a British statesman who contributed to the building of the British Empire, most notably during the French and Indian War in North America. Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), a political leader during the Victorian period, was an enthusiastic supporter of the expansion of the British Empire.

<sup>11</sup> Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), English poet and novelist, was perhaps the most celebrated literary champion of British imperialism. William Henley (1849–1903) was a poet, novelist, and critic.

they reach the point where there are no longer any barbarians to conquer, then the national flag will lose its glory, the national thought will disappear and the deeds of great men will go unrewarded and unrecognized. Is this the dismal fate that awaits imperialism?

I consider that men like Kipling and Henley, who rant and rave to stir up the belligerent feelings of the masses, are really just childish thinkers. Those who truly desire to advance the well-being and civilization of society will have to look elsewhere for their guiding ideas.

## PART 6

### *The Present and Future of Imperialism*

If we consider the foregoing analysis, it is easy to understand the present course of imperialism and to predict its future developments. Imperialism is just a name that is given to a policy based on a despicable patriotism and a reprehensible militarism. The predictable consequences of such a policy are decline and destruction.

The construction of a so-called empire is not based on any real necessity but simply on the free reign of greed, it confers no benefits but results in disaster, it is not an expansion of the nation's people but an expansion of a small minority's vanity and love of fame, it does not develop trade but only stimulates speculation, it does not encourage production but only pillage, it does not signify the implanting of civilization overseas but rather the destruction of other civilizations. Can this be the aim of a truly civilized society? Is this the real objective of national governance?

How can people say that imperialism serves the cause of emigration? Emigrants do not require that the national territory continue to expand in size. How can people claim that it advances the cause of world trade? The development of commerce does not depend on increasing the lands controlled by the nation. The only ones who really desire the expansion of national territory are the military caste and the politicians, who feed their vanity by such exploits, the speculators who chase after profits from gold mines and railroads, and the merchants who make their living from catering to military procurement orders.

### *The Prosperity and Happiness of the People*

The affluence and the happiness of the people of a country bears no relation to the size of its territories, but depends instead on the nobility of its virtues; it is not decided by the strength of its armies, but rather by the righteousness of its ideals; it has nothing to do with the number of its warships and the size of its armies, but rather with the abundant production of foodstuffs and clothing. The prosperity and the well-being of England up until now were not caused by its control of the enormous empire of India. Carlyle has not deceived us when he asserts that a single line of Shakespeare is worth much more.<sup>12</sup>

### *Germany: Great Nation, Small People*

Sir Robert Morier has written of Bismarck that he made Germany into a great nation but that he made the German people small.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the greatness of a nation's territories is inversely

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Carlyle, English poet and critic (1795–1881).

<sup>13</sup> Sir Robert Burnett David Morier, English diplomat (1826–93).

proportional to the greatness of its people. The construction of a great empire is based on the expansion of its armed forces and the incitement of animal instincts among the masses. In order to make the country rich, Bismarck had to impoverish the people. In order to make the country strong, he had to make the people weak. To make the prestige and the influence of the nation shine far and wide, he corrupted and depraved the people. That is why Morier is correct to note that imperialism makes the nation look bigger but it also makes the people small.

### ***An Ephemeral Bubble***

How can a nation hope to maintain its grandeur when the people who inhabit it are diminished by the very policies that are intended to enhance its greatness? Such grandeur can only be ephemeral, like foam on the surface of the water, a tower standing in a void, a house built on shifting sands. At the first gust of wind, it will scatter and disperse like a cloud and it will vanish without leaving a trace behind. Since ancient times, history offers countless examples that prove this general rule. However, the great powers of the world today, which compete with one another to add to their ephemeral expansion, do not realize that they are thereby courting the danger of annihilation.

### ***Japanese Imperialism***

Now our country Japan has lost its reason and turned into a fanatical adherent of this ideology. It already possesses an army of thirteen divisions and a naval fleet of three hundred thousand tons, which is certain to grow in the years ahead. It has recently annexed Taiwan to the nation's territory and dispatched an expeditionary force to repress the Boxer Rebellion in China. It has undertaken all these actions to raise the prestige of the nation, to project its power, and to decorate the chests of our military officers with ribbons and medals. The National Diet acclaims these actions and poets and men of letters sing their praises. But in what way do these actions add to the grandeur of our people? How do they contribute to the welfare and the well-being of the masses?

### ***The Results***

A national budget that stood at 80 million yen only a few years ago has since tripled in size, the expenses of ruling Taiwan have already cost our nation 160 million yen, while the 200 million indemnity received from China has already gone up in smoke. The finances of the nation are in a parlous state, foreign imports grow uncontrollably, and the government imposes one tax after another to pay for its current expenses. Our markets languish in recession, public morality is in sharp decline, and the number of crimes increases daily. In spite of this disastrous situation, proposals for social reforms are met with ridicule and dismissed with insults, and calls to expand the diffusion of public education are greeted with cynicism. The life forces of the nation are wearing out with each passing day while the life span of our people grows shorter. If we allow this state of affairs to continue and fail to reverse course, I firmly believe that this Eastern country,



with a monarchy two thousand five hundred years old,<sup>14</sup> will vanish like the dream of Kantan.<sup>15</sup> This is the fate that imperialism reserves for our nation.

Accordingly, I affirm that the policy of imperialism sacrifices the well being of the majority to satisfy the appetites of a small minority. It puts a brake on social progress by inciting barbarous emotions. It is a scourge that destroys the liberty and equality of the human race, flouts the justice and morality of society, and ruins the civilization of the world.

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<sup>14</sup> According to the early Japanese history *Nihonshoki*, the first Japanese emperor Jinmu descended to the Earth and acceded to the throne in 660 B.C.E. This date, marking the mythical start of Japanese history, acquired an official status during the Meiji period.

<sup>15</sup> The "Pillow Tale" of Li Pi (722–89), better known as "Rosei's dream" in Japan, is the story of a poor student who goes to the capital to make his fortune. He stops at an inn where he meets a sage, who gives him a pillow. As his meal is cooked, he dozes off on the pillow and dreams that he enters public life, is promoted, demoted, recalled to office, endures the hardship of distant campaigns, is accused of treason, condemned to death, saved at the last moment, and finally dies at a great old age. Awaking from his dream, he discovers that his meal is not yet cooked. Convinced that in the great world "honor is soon followed by disgrace, and promotion by calumny," he turns back towards the village from which he came.

## Conclusion

Alas, the brave new world of the twentieth century! What can we do to reform this world? We aim to establish world peace, but imperialism provokes war between nations. We seek to foster a universal morality, but imperialism puts morality to death. We wish for the realization of freedom and equality, but imperialism destroys both. We hope for the fair distribution of the fruits of production, but imperialism exacerbates the inequalities in the world. There is no greater danger to civilization than imperialism.

This is not merely my own personal view. Last year, the *New York World* conducted a survey of thinkers in Europe and the United States on the dangers facing the twentieth century. Among those who responded, many denounced imperialism and militarism as the greatest peril of the day. Frederick Harrison wrote that the buildup of excessive military forces, whether on sea or on land, whether in terms of number of men or of armaments, represented a political danger for the future.<sup>1</sup> He asserted that political leaders and the people they represented would be dragged into wars to establish hegemony in Asia and Africa as a result of this arms buildup. Zangwill noted that the upsurge of reactionary militarism, an ideology rooted in the archaic past, is the greatest danger for the twentieth century. Keir Hardie called militarism the greatest threat. Karl Blind stated that the greatest threat to the world is imperialism.

Like the spread of plague, imperialism is truly a horrible disease that infects everything that it touches. Indeed, so-called patriotism is the microbe that causes the disease while militarism is the means by which the microbe is transmitted. At the end of the eighteenth century, the French Revolution, like a great purifying torrent, drove this infection away from the lands of Europe and temporarily wiped it out. The revolutionary movement was prolonged in the 1832 Reform [Act] in England, the 1848 Revolution in France, the unification of Italy, and Greek independence, and all of these events served to check the spread of this epidemic.<sup>2</sup> However, this same historical period also produced men like Napoleon, Metternich, and Bismarck, who have all spread the microbe again and contributed to the outbreak that is occurring today.

The patriotic microbe today contaminates the government and the opposition and indiscriminately infects the humble and the mighty. An imperialist plague spreads throughout the entire world and is destroying the civilization of the twentieth century. The time has come for righteous and honorable men, who are still healthy and uninfected with the illness, to mobilize their numbers and to minister to the sickness of nation by undertaking social reforms.

But what are the projects and plans that will bring a remedy to our current crisis? There is only one solution. We must launch a great cleansing of the state and society, or, in other words,

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Harrison (1831–1923), a biographer and critic, established the English Positivist Association. Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) was a British author, poet, and member of the World Zionist Organization. Keir Hardie (1856–1915), a labor activist, founded an independent labor party in England. Karl Blind (1826–1907) was a German politician and writer who participated in the 1848 Revolution, was imprisoned, and later found refuge in England. He wrote an anthology of German folktales.

<sup>2</sup> The independence of Greece was officially recognized at the Conference of London in 1830.

start a revolutionary movement worldwide in scope. Let us transform the few nations of the present time into a vast number, free the nation from the iron grip of the army and navy and transfer it to the peasants, workers, and merchants, reform our societies where an aristocracy rules autocratically into one where the common people rule themselves, change our economy, now monopolized by capitalists, to one in which the workers own all in common. The spirit of justice and humanity will overwhelm narrow chauvinism, scientific socialism will destroy barbaric militarism, and cosmopolitanism and universal fraternity make it possible to uproot and eliminate predatory imperialism.

Only by undertaking this task can we succeed in reforming our present world, which is unjust, immoral, barbaric, and unscientific, ensure the continual progress of society, and contribute to the general welfare of humanity. However, if we fail to eliminate this scourge, let it pursue its ravages, and do nothing to rectify it, then we face a future as bleak as the darkest circle of hell in which demons prowl by night.

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Shūsui Kōtoku  
Imperialism  
Monster of the Twentieth Century  
1901

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Translated by Robert Thomas Tierney. All footnote annotations of Kōtoku Shūsui's *Imperialism* are by the translator. Note that Shūsui Kōtoku wrote *Imperialism* before he became an anarchist, so references to state power in the text should be read with that in mind.

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