PART 24

Authoritarian and Totalitarian Experiments in Asia

24.1 Kita Ikki, Outline for the Reconstruction of Japan

Following World War I, Japan experimented with parliamentary democracy at home and pursued internationalism abroad. But Japanese radicals, both right- and left-wing, had little confidence in parliamentary solutions for social problems. Radical nationalists, particularly ultranationalistic young army officers, found inspiration for the future in the thought and writings of Kita Ikki (1885–1937). This advocate of national socialism was implicated in the abortive military coup d’état of February 26, 1936, and was executed in 1937.


THE EMPEROR OF THE PEOPLE

Suspension of the Constitution: In order to establish a firm base for national reorganization, the Emperor, with the aid of the entire Japanese nation and by invoking his imperial prerogatives, shall suspend the Constitution for a period of three years, dissolve the two houses of the Diet, and place the entire country under martial law.

The true significance of the Emperor: We must make clear the fundamental principle that the Emperor is the sole representative of the people and the pillar of the state. . . .

Abolition of the peerage system: By abolishing the peerage system, we shall be able to remove the feudal aristocracy which constitutes a barrier between the Emperor and the people. In this way the spirit of the Meiji Restoration shall be proclaimed.

The House of Peers shall be replaced by the Deliberative Council which shall review decisions made by the House of Representatives. The Deliberative Council may reject for a single time only any decisions of the House of Representatives.

The members of the Deliberative Council shall consist of men distinguished in various fields of activities, elected by each other or appointed by the Emperor.

Popular election: All men twenty-five years of age and above shall have the right to elect and be elected to the House of Representatives, exercising their rights with full equality as citizens of Great Japan. Similar provisions shall apply to all local self-governing bodies. No women shall be permitted to participate in politics.

Restoration of people’s freedom: Existing laws which restrict people’s freedom and circumvent the spirit of the constitution shall be abolished. These laws include the civil service appointment ordinance, peace preservation law, press act, and publication law.

National reorganization Cabinet: A national reorganization Cabinet shall be formed during the time martial law is in effect. In addition to the existing ministries, the Cabinet shall establish such ministries of industries as described below and add a number of ministers without portfolio. Members of the reorganization Cabinet shall be selected from outstanding individuals throughout the country, avoiding those who are presently connected with military, bureaucratic, financial, or party cliques. . . .

Granting of imperial estate: The Emperor shall set a personal example by granting to the state, the lands, forests, shares and similar properties held by the Imperial Household. The expenses of the Imperial Household shall be limited to thirty million yen per annum appropriated from the national treasury. However, the Diet may authorize additional expenditure if the need arises.

LIMITATION ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Limitation on private property: No Japanese family shall possess property in excess of one million yen. A similar limitation shall apply to Japanese citizens holding property overseas. No one shall be permitted to make a gift of property to those related by blood or to others, or to transfer his property by other means with the intent of circumventing this limitation.
Nationalization of excess amount over limitation on private property: Any amount which exceeds the limitation on private property shall revert to the state without compensation. No one shall be permitted to resort to the protection of present laws in order to avoid remitting such excess amount. Anyone who violates these provisions shall be deemed a person thinking lightly of the example set by the Emperor and endangering the basis of national reorganization. As such, during the time martial law is in effect, he shall be charged with the crimes of endangering the person of the Emperor and engaging in internal revolt and shall be punished by death.

THREE PRINCIPLES FOR DISPOSITION OF LANDS

Limitation on private landholding: No Japanese family shall hold land in excess of 100,000 yen in current market value. . . . Lands held in excess of the limitation on private landholding shall revert to the state. . . .

Popular ownership of lands reverted to state: The state shall divide the lands granted by the Imperial Household and the lands reverted to it from those whose holdings exceed the limitation and distribute such lands to farmers who do not possess their own lands. These farmers shall gain title to their respective lands by making annual installment payments to the state. . . .

Lands to be owned by the state: Large forests, virgin lands which require large capital investment, and lands which can best be cultivated in large lots shall be owned and operated by the state.

CONTROL OF LARGE CAPITAL

Limitation on private property: No private industry shall exceed the limit of 10,000,000 yen in assets. A similar limitation shall apply to private industries owned by Japanese citizens overseas.

Nationalization of industries exceeding the limitation: Any industry whose assets exceed the limitation imposed on private industry shall be collectivized and operated under state control. . . .

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE STATE

No. 1. Ministry of Banking: The assets of this ministry shall come from the money expropriated from large banks whose assets exceed the limitation on private industry and from individuals whose net worth exceeds the limitation on private property. . . .

No. 2. Ministry of Navigation: Ships and other assets expropriated from private lines in excess of the limitation on private property shall be utilized mainly for transoceanic voyages in order to attain supremacy of the seas. [The ministry shall also] engage in shipbuilding (naval and commercial) and other activities. . . .

No. 3. Ministry of Mines: Large mines whose assets or market values exceed the limitation on private industry shall be expropriated and operated by this ministry. . . .

No. 4. Ministry of Agriculture: Management of nationally owned lands; management of Taiwan sugar industry and forestry; development of Taiwan, Hokkaido, Karafuto (Southern Sakhalin), and Ch’osen (Korea); development of South and North Manchuria and colonies to be acquired in the future; and management of large farms when acquired by the state.

No. 5. Ministry of Industries: Various large industries expropriated by the state shall be reorganized, unified, and expanded to form a truly large industrial combine through which all types of industries may acquire competitive advantages now possessed by comparable foreign industries. The ministry shall also operate industries urgently needed by the nation but not undertaken by private parties. Naval Steel Works and Military Ordnance Factories shall be placed under this ministry’s jurisdiction and be operated by it. . . .

Railways whose assets do not exceed the limitation on private industry shall be open to private operation.

Vast income of the national treasury: The vast income realized by the industrial ministries shall be sufficient for the expenditures of various service ministries and guarantee adequate living conditions for the people as described below. Therefore, with the exception of basic income taxes, all other inequitable taxes shall be abolished. Without exception, all industrial ministries shall be taxed in a manner similar to all private industries. . . .

RIGHTS OF WORKERS

Functions of the Ministry of Labor: A Ministry of Labor shall be established within the Cabinet to protect the rights of all workers employed by state-owned and privately owned industries. Industrial disputes shall be submitted to the Ministry of Labor for arbitration in accordance with a law to be enacted independently. . . .

Working hours: Working hours shall be uniformly set at eight hours a day. Wages shall be paid for Sundays and holidays when no work is performed. Farm workers shall receive additional wages for the overtime work performed during the busy farming seasons.
Distribution of profits to workers: One half of the net profits of private industries shall be distributed to workers employed in such industries. All workers, mental and physical, shall participate in the profit distribution proportionate to their salaries or wages. Workers shall elect their own representatives to participate in the industry’s management planning and bookkeeping. Similar provisions shall apply to farm workers and landlords.

Workers employed in state-owned industries shall receive semi-annual bonuses in lieu of the profit distribution.

Establishment of employee-shareholder system: Every private corporation shall set up a provision under which physical and mental workers in their employment shall have the right to become stockholders of the corporation.

Protection of tenant farmers: The state shall enact a separate law, based on the basic human rights, to protect tenant farmers tilling the lands owned by small landlords whose holdings do not exceed the limitation on private lands.

Women’s labor: Women’s labor shall be free and equal to that of men. However, after the reorganization, the state shall make it a matter of national policy that the burden of labor shall not rest on the shoulders of women. In order to prepare women to replace men in providing needed labor in a national emergency, women shall receive education equal to that of men.

PEOPLE’S RIGHT TO LIVE

Children’s right to live: Children under fifteen years of age without both parents or father, having rights as children of the state, shall be uniformly supported and educated by the state.

Support of the aged and disabled: The state shall assume the responsibility of supporting those men and women sixty years of age or over who are poor and not having their natural born or adopted sons. Similar support shall be given to those disabled and crippled persons who are poor, unable to work, and without fathers and sons.

Rights to education: National (compulsory) education shall last for a period of ten years from ages six to sixteen. Similar education shall be given to both male and female. There shall be instituted a fundamental reform in the educational system.

English shall be abolished and Esperanto shall become the second language.

RIGHTS OF THE STATE

Continuation of the conscript system: The state, having rights to existence and development among the nations of the world, shall maintain the present conscript system in perpetuity.

Positive right to start war: In addition to the right to self-defense, the state shall have the right to start a war on behalf of other nations and races unjustly oppressed by a third power. (As a matter of real concern today, the state shall have the right to start a war to aid the independence of India and preservation of China’s integrity.)

As a result of its own development, the state shall also have the right to start a war against those nations who occupy large colonies illegally and ignore the heavenly way of the co-existence of all humanity. (As a matter of real concern today, the state shall have the right to start a war against those nations which occupy Australia and Far Eastern Siberia for the purpose of acquiring them.)

Questions:
1. Why would Kita Ikki urge that the study of English be abolished?
2. Are there any parallels between Kita Ikki’s and Mussolini’s views of war and violence?
3. Compare and contrast national social socialism advocated by Adolf Hitler with Kita’s ideas of restructuring Japan.