

Ultra-Nationalism & Socialism-from-Above in the Early Kita Ikki

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Abstract

This thesis argues that pre-war Japanese intellectual history has been fundamentally misunderstood in English language scholarly literatures hitherto – especially in relation to the critical importance of political concepts of ‘left’ and ‘right’ in Japan reaching back to the Meiji era (1868-1912). To clarify the validity of such concepts in Japan and beyond, this thesis offers a new treatment of early 20th century political thinker, Kita Ikki, to resolve, in particular, the controversial question of whether he hails from the right or the left on the political spectrum, whether he was an ultra-nationalist or a left-wing socialist.

Kita is famous as one of the most important ‘radicals’ of the pre-Second World War era and has been ascribed various status: fascist, ultra-nationalist, militarist, imperialist, Pan-Asianist, national or state socialist, and leftist-socialist (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Maruyama 1969; Tanaka 1971; Matsuzawa ed. 1977; Tankha 2006; Hagihara 2011). He is also often seen as an ‘enigma’ (Szpilman 2002) or as expressive of how right and left ‘hardly apply’ in Japan (Wilson 1966).

Breaking with standard accounts, this thesis critiques the idea that the early Kita stemmed from the left of the political spectrum (Martin 1959). A careful and close reading of salient early texts by Kita (from 1903 and 1906) firmly suggests he expounds a concept of socialism stemming from the far right. This thesis argues that Kita’s early anti-internationalist and explicitly anti-Marxian national socialism (*kokka shakaishugi*) from late Meiji is key to understanding his overall thought, which is also steeped in an early Platonic statist socialism bound up with his Sino-Japanese Mencian-statist rebellion.

The thesis concludes by comparing Kita’s early ultra-nationalist (but non-fascist) socialism-from-above with late 19th and early 20th century European extreme nationalisms – e.g., Barrès, D’Annunzio, Corradini, and Mussolini – and helps to clarify similarities and differences between ultra-nationalism and fascism generally, using an original political scale developed herein.

Keywords or key orientations: Kita Ikki; left and right in Japan; socialisms; ultra-nationalism; fascism; political scales; Hegel-Marx; East Asian and black radicalism as method; deep inclusion versus varieties of exclusion; complex, mediated, transnational, overlapping universalities *contra* both abstract static universalisms & purist, absolute relativisms

I dedicate this thesis to my *'family'* in its widest sense (viz. kith and kin, which includes friends and other allies named in the Acknowledgements below, plus the globally excluded, exploited and oppressed): thus, not only to my brother and mother, and to the memory of my father, but also to you, HSH (I send you my love and have never forgotten you) – as well as radically and inclusively beyond all family *qua* patriarchal relic.

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As a matter of sociological and other fundamental principles, I have always tried to be of practical support to refugees and asylum seekers as well as to defend those unfairly treated no matter where or who they are – while I had time to do so while studying. This history and practice entirely inform my own radical philosophical politics and political philosophy *from below*. Hence also in this thesis, my orientation towards *the excluded, the exploited and the oppressed* remains decisive, which was manifested in the way I tried to support 'the least of those' at the University: the low paid, in the form of the cleaners, security and other non-academic staff, as well as those who found themselves *persona non grata*. This orientation derives from my stress on *deep inclusion* (cashing out as a full internationalism-from-below) towards the aforementioned 'triumvirate' I privilege in this PhD. This demands the unending struggle of the academy from below with that from above, in order to fashion a

University of and for the education and inclusion of all – with the goal of provoking comprehensive and radical critical thinking, which is utterly necessary in these times of unprecedented crisis for our world and the complex and vulnerable web of life on this planet.

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Lastly, this thesis has involved staking itself on *the possibility* (not necessarily the specific *probability*) of a qualitatively richer socio-political inclusivity – and a better and more inclusionary form of life more generally – at the global level: beyond our current dire, catastrophe-indexed world-historical conjuncture. Yet, tragically and ineluctably, what is viable or achievable going forward now is, by that very same token, potentially unrealisable, too. Progress-Regress (e.g., for this planet and all its species) is an entirely *empirical* question – meaning, as they say, that it is radically open-ended as to any and all possible outcomes: better scenarios but also the direst. If we think'n'act upon complex universality and radical inclusion *from below*, worlds (I think) can still be won.

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Chapter 1. The Introduction: Why Another Full-Length Treatment of Kita Ikki?

This thesis offers a new treatment of early twentieth century Japanese political thinker Kita Ikki, who, having penned three significant books, plus numerous articles, from the Meiji era (1868-1912) to Shōwa (1926-1989), is famous for being one of the most important ‘radicals’ – fascists, ultra-nationalists, militarists, imperialists, Pan-Asianists, state socialists, or socialists – of the pre-Second World War era, according to kaleidoscopic views taken of him in the scholarly literature (Wilson 1969; Matsuzawa ed. 1977; Hagihara 2011). He is most well-known for his purported ideological influence on the young officers who almost succeeded in toppling the Shōwa state via *coup d'état* during the February 26th Rebellion of 1936. For this, he was subsequently tried by military tribunal and executed in 1937. Given the controversies, contradictions and complexities that the various labels as attributed to Kita above invoke, he is often seen as an ‘enigma’ (Szpilman 2002). The view taken herein argues that Kita’s early anti-cosmopolitan and anti-Marxist national socialism – infused with a rather statist Sino-Japanese penchant for rebellion or insubordination and combined with his pro-war imperialism from late Meiji – is key to explaining his mostly far-right thought with its largely only apparent contradictions. Accordingly, this constellation of ideological forces amounts to a largely far-right socialism and ultra-nationalism, albeit (as will be explained in the final chapters) not any fascism.

The original contribution of this argument is staged on two interlinked fronts. First, *empirico-hermeneutically*, this thesis offers extended and close readings of (a) his early pro-war articles published in 1903 on Sado Island as well as of (b) previously under-emphasised sections from Kita’s first book, *Kokutairon oyobi junsei shakaishugi* (On the National Polity and Pure Socialism; 1906). The second front is both textual-hermeneutical as well as expressly theoretical, highlighting and clarifying his ‘unusual’ notion of ‘socialism’ transcending any possible leftist construal thereof. The theoretical

aspect involves the thesis in chapter 2 originating a new political scale to capture unequivocally how certain *self-designated socialisms* can be located on the far right, too.

This chapter sets out the main research question to be examined in the thesis, introduces Kita in historical-intellectual context, and presents critical outlines of other interpretations of him. It then spotlights how a crucial yet not so well-known theoretical split in conceptions of socialism opens up more nuanced ways of reading him. The chapter critically analyses several specific readings of Kita by a selection of political scientists and historians, and suggests that high-level politico-philosophical reflection on Kita's important yet understudied political writings has often been wanting. The question of how Kita is to be seen ideologically is broached: does he hail from the right, centre or left of the political spectrum? Or is there something entirely different and uniquely Sino-Japanese at work? Thus, it is important to examine concepts of right, centre and left in the Japanese politico-ideological and historical context. The thesis argues for their relevance only when carefully and subtly applied. Yet, as the political scale developed herein implies, *all* left-centre-right political diagnosis requires nuance in adjudication.

i. The Main Research Question

The primary aim of this thesis is to study important early works by Kita (his early pro-war articles and under-explored sections of his first book) in order to explicate his notion of socialism, how he understands this and where it lies on the political scale. Thus, it examines textually whether he was a – and what he meant by – ‘national socialist’ (*kokka shakaishugisha*).¹ This is crucial to understanding the political and ideological location of socialism and national socialism not only in the thinking of Kita Ikki, but in modern Japanese political thought and global political ideologies more widely.

¹ Sometimes this is translated ‘state socialist’. Given this is the first decade of the 20th century, ‘national socialism’ in no way implies links with National Socialism in the later German sense.

To grasp Kita's ideas on socialism and their alignment on the political scale, it is necessary to understand more about what kinds of socialism existed historically, both in Japan and beyond. It is noteworthy that many new political ideas and ideologies were imported into Japan in the Meiji era, which is true for concepts of socialism, as much as for other important ideological-philosophical precepts.

The usual understanding of Kita is that he was a figure of the Taishō (1912-1926) and early-Shōwa (1926-1945) eras. This is only enhanced by his having been identified with the radical right young officers' movement of the 1920s on – not least because he was executed, albeit entirely questionably, as the dominant ideological influence on those who led the above-mentioned attempted *coup* of 1936. Yet Kita's career extended far longer than this focus on Taishō and Shōwa Japan implies – with his writings dating to late Meiji (first decade of the 20th century). Similarly, as is argued herein, Kita's ultra-nationalism and militarism date to much earlier – from 1903 – than the English-language scholarly literature suggests. Moreover, Matsumoto's discoveries of early writings by Kita that open up manifold new vistas (see Kita 1972, vol. iii) remain vastly untapped and under-explored. Scholarship also needs to be more careful than the English literature has managed hitherto, with pivotal political concepts receiving insufficient attention. While more recent work – Brij Tankha (2006) – has treated various early articles by Kita, his focus de-emphasises Kita's racialised ultra-nationalism and lacks analytical rigour.

Some of the *lacunae* in studies of Kita's early articles have arguably now begun to be filled in the Japanese scholarly literature over the last 10-15 years – with attempts at treating various early articles appearing alongside discussion of Kita's three books (see Okamoto 2010: e.g., 46-52; Hagihara 2011: e.g., 15-29). However, while new work has emerged, no synthesising new theoretical interpretation seems to have been forthcoming, except what might be termed a Japanese revisionist or neo-Pan-Asianist Japanese right-wing or conservative perspective (e.g., Matsumoto 1970; 1986; 1996).

This thesis develops an overarching explanation of Kita's politics that helps elucidate the life-long coherence Kita ascribed to himself. It argues that if one does not pay close empirical *and self-consciously theoretical* attention to the ultra-nationalistic aspects of his ideas in late Meiji (which Kita identifies as *underpinning* his notion of socialism), one can miss Kita's fundamental ideological positioning and orientation. Moreover, if insufficient theoretical scrutiny is made of *Kita's* ideas, similar stances within pre-Second World War Japanese political thought and behaviour may likewise be misunderstood – even thought seen as 'traditionally' on the 'left'.

In other words, this ultra-nationalism overlapping with 'socialism' from above (see discussion below) – so discernible in the early Kita – requires closer examination. Once undertaken, much light is shed upon pre-Second World War Japanese political thought purporting to be of the left, but which, instead, is often of the right (or a mix of centre and right). Thus, analysing the early Kita's combination of these overlapping ideologies (ultra-nationalism and national socialism – and thus socialism-from-above) can help cast much light upon later strands of 'national or state socialism' (*kokka shakaishugi*) so common also in early Shōwa. These later strands were deeply interlinked with mainstream 1920s and 1930s ultra-nationalisms, including Kita's. An important claim herein is that such 'national or state socialisms' (whether in late Meiji or in Taishō-Shōwa) constitute slippery centrist to right-wing doctrine. They are all susceptible, under crisis, to mutating in the direction of militant ultra-nationalism. In 1903, Kita became one 'ideological father' of this co-emergence of ultra-nationalism and national socialism, and thus socialism-from-above.

Like Kita Ikki, leading members of the late 1920s-early 1930s Communist Party Sano Manabu (1892-1953) and Nabeyama Sadachika (1901-1979) also deployed forms of national socialism and thus socialisms-from-above. They provided – via talk of 'socialism-under-the-emperor' – *the* classic instance of 1930s *tenkō*: a 'conversion' or 'major shift in political direction' (see Wagner 1978). However, like Kita in Meiji itself,²

² See discussion of Mencius's socialism (Kita 1959, vol .i: 421-6).

their socialism-under-the-emperor not only invoked discourses of Sino-Japanese national-imperial socialism (socialism-from-above) – where well-known socialists like Kōtoku Shūsui and Abe Isoo agreed that ancient Chinese emperors (e.g., Yao and Shun) displayed forms of classical imperial virtue and benevolence they too called imperial socialism. They also revealed the strong tendency within, one, the Japanese socialist movement from Meiji to Shōwa; and, two, the Japanese Communist movement (e.g., Kawakami Hajime; see Bernstein 1976) to remain frequently dependent upon *far-from-always-wholly-left-wing* socialisms.

In sum, various iterations of socialism-from-above were rife within many Meiji to Shōwa Japanese ‘socialisms’ and ‘communisms’ – where various nationalisms and much elitist-technocratic-‘benevolent’ high-handedness predominated (plus predilections toward sexism and other oppression, marginalisation or exclusion).³ Kita’s socialism is an early case-in-point, as argued herein, and even surely accounts for why he was curiously misrecognised as a ‘Communist’ by some (see below).

There is indeed something that links late Meiji socialism-from-above in general, Kita’s socialism in particular, and that of even such national socialist, socialist-in-one-country, imperial socialist, or socialist-from-above-like purported *tenkōsha* (apostates) as Sano and Nabeyama. Hence who Kita was and how we see him and the kind of socialism he represents *matter* historically, politically and philosophically. In short, this thesis argues Kita was a seminal Japanese progenitor of socialism-from-above/national socialism and, with that, a foundational ultra-nationalist. Kita was a foundational ultra-nationalist because he afforded a mediating bridge between more traditional ultra-nationalists like the Kokuryūkai and more modernising ultra-nationalists who mixed their ideas with national, imperial and other socialist-from-above-like forms of socialism.

³ Subordination to Stalin’s chauvinist, socialist-in-one-country Comintern inflected Japanese Communism in strikingly similar ways (on Stalinist patriarchy, see Voronina 1993). The later Kita restricts women to patriarchal Meiji conceptions of them as *family raisers excluded from politics* (Tankha 2006: 134).

ii. Perspectives on Kita

a. *Ultra-nationalist, fascist, heterodox socialist?*

Kita Ikki (1883-1937) was a seminal ultra-nationalist ideologue in 1920s and 1930s Japan. Based on how often he has been examined in English and Japanese, he is clearly modern Japan's most important ultra-nationalist.⁴ He is also the most complex, unorthodox and enigmatic of Japan's pre-war ultra-nationalists (Szpilman 2002), as well as a heterodox species of socialist (Kuno 1956; Wilson 1969; Fujita 2013). Decades ago, a question-mark was raised, especially in English, whether he was an ultra-nationalist at all. This question became focused on his early 'socialist' writings (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969). Together, these reasons explain why Kita has attracted greater attention than any other Japanese ultra-nationalist (*or* extremist ideologue) in the English scholarly literature hitherto and why he boasts an undimmed fascination in Japan (for diverse recent treatment, see Yakashiro 2017; Shiba 2016; Koga 2014).

Kita is pivotal to an interpretation of Taishō and early Shōwa Japan, especially given the turn towards 1930s ultra-nationalism – sometimes termed Japanese, or emperor system, fascism (Gordon 1991). According to Maruyama Masao's celebrated claim, Japanese fascism succeeded only *after* the failure of a *coup*-from-'below' (the February 26th Incident, 1936) by the Kōdō-ha (Imperial Way faction). This led to what Maruyama calls 'fascism-from-above' by the Tōsei-ha (Control faction) within the political, bureaucratic and military establishment.

Citing Kita's alleged ideological influence on young officers instigating the (failed) *coup*-from-'below',⁵ Maruyama classically called Kita "the ideological father of Japanese fascism" (Maruyama 1969: 28). The young officers were shaped by Kita's most famous

⁴ In English, there are three to five significant full treatments (depending on how you count this) and in Japanese dozens upon dozens. No other (far-left or far-right Japanese) 'extremist' ideologue – across Japanese and English – has received such treatment.

⁵ Herein '*coups*-from-below' are oxymoronic. Inherently elitist, *coups* issue from the *status quo* and thus are not mass-insurrection-from-*below*. The notion of a '*coup*-from-the-middle' may be fruitful.

book, which Kuno Osamu has called “the *Mein Kampf* of the Shōwa ultranationalist movement” (Kuno and Tsurumi 1956: 165) and Hori Makiyo “the *Mein Kampf* of the *Yūzonsha*” (‘Those who yet remain’) – a short-lived Taishō organisation that Hori describes as “a well-known ultra-nationalist and fascist group” (1995: 36). It included leading Japanese right-wing (ultra-)nationalists like Kita, Ōkawa Shūmei (1886-1957), and Mitsukawa Kametarō (1888-1936). Thus, under Maruyama’s post-Second World War intellectual impact till the late 1950s, Kita had overwhelmingly been identified as a fascist. Scholarship within this Maruyama line offers arguably the most complete overall contribution on Kita in any language hitherto (Tanaka 1949; 1971).

b. *Early ‘leftist-socialist’, later covert ‘Communist’, ‘beyond left and right’?*

Following Harris Martin’s pioneering English-language Kita treatment (1959), in which he claimed the early Kita was a ‘socialist’, the 1960s brought palpable shifts in Kita interpretation. Discussion at that time (Kuno 1956) tended to bolster the aura of mystery surrounding Kita’s politics and intellectual legacy – something only enhanced by earlier secrecy surrounding Kita’s arrest-prosecution-execution as a ‘thought criminal’ and as ‘ringleader’ to the young officers leading the 1936 February mutiny. Yet Kita was no such ringleader (Wilson 1964: 155; Kinoshita 1951), albeit he partly influenced the officers via his book and disciple Nishida Mitsugi (Humphreys 1995). While Kita’s socialism was further investigated during the early sixties (as, debatably, a leftism⁶), suspicion swirled within the 1930s military establishment that Kita was even a covert ‘Communist’ (Hori 1995: 79).

Praising Martin’s account of Kita as an early leftist-socialist (1959), George Wilson (1969) argued Kita caused many problems for conventional left-right analysis, with left-right deriving from the French Revolution and reflecting only *Western* politico-historical experience. This point raised the quasi-postmodern or relativist thought that to argue for the applicability of left-right concepts in the Japanese historical *milieu* might even be Eurocentric (Wilson 1966). Yet, as Brown observes *vis-à-vis* ‘fascism’

⁶ E.g., Kuno (1963), Matsuda Michio (1964). See also Wilson (1966; 1969).

(2018: 71): neither applying, nor repudiating, fascism concerning Japan need imply Eurocentrism.

Most accounts that appear before the early 1970s, and many after, have less relevance, given their failure to discuss sufficiently Kita's 1903-06 work. Until 1959, the *complete* text of Kita's *Kokutairon oyobi junsei shakaishugi* (Japan's National Polity and Pure Socialism) had not been published in Japanese since original publication (1906), albeit sections had been issued subsequently and there existed elite library availability (Szpilman 2013).

Martin had no access to Kita's complete *Kokutairon* upon finishing his 1959 PhD thesis – having access to only three sections: 1, 3 and 4, with 2 and 5 unavailable. As importantly, Kita's crucial articles advocating war with Russia, among other early texts, were accessible only post-1970. Hence neither Martin nor Wilson had seen the early pro-war texts.

c. Early pro-war articles, non-leftist national socialism and ultra-nationalism

The late 1960s led to a critical discovery – by now prolific Kita interpreter Matsumoto Ken'ichi – of various important articles and poems that reveal Kita in a fresh light, including three 1903 articles arguing for urgent war with Russia (the early pro-war texts). These pieces (Kita 1972, vol. iii) spotlight the early Kita's bellicosity, expansionism and ultra-nationalism. Hitherto – it was thought – such leanings only emerged *after* the Russo-Japanese war (Kuno 1956) or from Taishō onwards (Wilson 1969). But these early pro-war articles demonstrate conclusively Kita had adopted ultra-nationalism from the beginning, albeit this was paraded by him as his distinctive *socialism* and always blended with Pan-Asianist, anti-*Western-imperialist* rhetoric.

This constitutes an important empirical contribution herein, in which Kita's early political thought – what Fujita Masashi (2013: 49) calls Kita's own 'peculiar' (*dokuji no*) socialism and nationalism – is deeply inflected by imperial expansionism, militarism and ultra-nationalism.

Despite the decades-long availability in Japanese of Kita's early work (the early pro-war articles *and* the complete text of *Kokutairon*), no English language scholar has filled this important *lacuna* in our understanding of the geo-political thrust of Kita's early output. This thesis begins to fill this gap. Considering no-one has seriously disputed Kita's *late ultra-nationalism*, if it is shown here Kita's early 'socialism' affirms ultra-nationalistic, anti-cosmopolitan thinking, plus militaristic imperialism and expansionism, then the purported 'change' claimed to have occurred from the early to the later Kita evaporates. As does the 'enigma' that hangs over Kita's ideological orientation.⁷

The stance here is *not* Wilson's claim that the later Kita remains a leftist-socialist – albeit a rather 'right-wing left extremist' (Wilson 1969: 93).⁸ It is the opposite: that Kita began and remained an *ultra-right* socialist (combining rightist ultra-nationalism and a right-wing form of socialism) throughout his life.⁹ Only mainstream scholarly inattention to the possibility of such widely divergent *socialisms* (from far-left through to far-right) explains the failure to recognise that both Kita's national socialism and, separately, any fascism stem from a more encompassing *far right*. In short, all fascisms are of the far right, but not all of the far right is fascist. The far right is a broad church.¹⁰

The focus on Kita's ideological output, 1903-06, constitutes one important contribution of this thesis, in which Kita's early political thought is seen as militarist and ultra-nationalist. Moreover, Kita identifies imperialism as essential to his very 'peculiar' socialism – something examined carefully herein. Thus, Kita's non-leftist socialism is not only entirely compatible with his early ultra-nationalistic and Pan-

⁷ It is not that Kita is without tensions, but no fundamental change occurred from early to later Kita.

⁸ Wilson places Ōkawa Shūmei, Kita, ultra-rightist Akao Bin and national socialist Takabatake Motoyuki in this 'right-wing left-extremist' camp. This thesis contests Wilson's reliance on S.M. Lipset's *conflation* of socio-economic positionality with political orientation (1960) – resulting in socio-economic *reductionism* (political ideas flow passively from the economic class an individual hails from). For Lipset and Wilson, fascism stems from the radical 'political centre' due to a claimed preponderance of middle-class supporters – an analysis epitomising the *above-mentioned conflation*.

⁹ To attribute fascism to Kita, 1903-1906, is anachronistic. Yet his early pro-war articles are demonstrably far-right. I agree with Wilson (minimally) that Kita was never fascist (1969).

¹⁰ Fascism, ultra-nationalism and the far right are examined in the final chapters of the thesis.

Asianist vision, but is based on imperialism and militarism. On this view, concepts of left and right need not be discarded as 'Eurocentric'. Instead, there is reason to assert the left-right split has been systematically mischaracterised, and requires meticulous re-drawing.

In sum, this thesis aims at nuanced analysis in two main areas. Firstly, it offers a fuller hermeneutic grounding in Kita's political thought in his earliest period, not least after assiduously translating various Kita texts into English. Secondly, it articulates a methodological and politico-philosophical perspective attentive to fundamental differences in the term 'socialism' – one rarely evidenced in either English or Japanese scholarly literatures (alternatively, see Takimura 1987). Therefore, in examining Kita's national socialism (*kokka shakaishugi*) and touching on arguments over fascism's (im)possibility in late Meiji, the contribution of this thesis is largely twofold.

First, it offers in-depth political analysis of Kita's early ideological output in late Meiji (1903-06), placing in high focus the early pro-war articles published on Sado Island and his first book written while studying in Tokyo.

Second, it provides an attentive and nuanced politico-philosophical methodology that enables us to think a *plurality* of socialisms – involving a series of quite distinct ideologies¹¹ – running from far-left to far-right. In the light of this, Kita's early ideas make more sense as an instance of far-right thought – and not, *contra* Wilson (1966; 1969) and Martin (1959), as *any leftism*.

To get some purchase on Kita's ideological take on socialism, it is important to have a clear idea of what different forms of socialism there are in a pithy, overarching way. The next theoretical section provides this.

¹¹ Albeit there is also confused permeability on this spectrum (not least because multiple distinct *and overlapping* ideologies are encompassed by the unqualified term 'socialism').

iii. Socialism-from-below and socialism-from-above¹²

The philosophical core of global ideological socialisms is now delineated – with due politico-historical exemplification.

(a) Socialism-from-below

Firstly, socialism-from-below is a left-wing political philosophy, where ‘left-wing’ indicates the (most inclusive possible) ideological stance of the mass outsider ‘class’ (called here the proletariat, plus the ‘trans-proletariat’¹³) in its political, economic, social and emotio-ethico-philosophical modes of striving towards *global self-liberation*. In Marx’s *Communist Party Manifesto*, socialism-from-below requires worker solidarity *internationally* – a prerequisite for radical-global system change. Hence, “proletarians of all countries, unite [yourselves]” in the famous, more accurately translated slogan (Marx 1848: 67).¹⁴

Secondly, socialism-from-below is grounded in the work of a specific class, or constellation of classes, or class fractions, from below. It is enacted by a self-consciously global working class alongside oppressed or excluded forces. These cut across other categories (e.g., gender and race), although only in the late ‘Ethnological Notebooks’ does Marx fully explicate questions pertaining to nationalism, race and ethnicity.¹⁵ This matters since, without Marx’s late reflections, the impression is he saw class and economic forces as the only real motors driving human history. Yet even

¹² This section, and the distinction here set out, is also informed by the important entry – in Raymond Williams’ *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* – on two *radically-differing* socialisms (liberal versus alternative sorts). However, my criticism of Williams is: various self-identifying alternatives could also be far-right, hard-right, soft-right, centrist, *et cetera* – not just alternative-leftist sorts.

¹³ What I call the excluded and the oppressed. Emblematic of ‘the excluded’ are autistic ‘outsiders’ like Greta Thunberg with her principled ecologism (see Thunberg 2019: 36). Trans-proles also = ‘emotio-proles’, signifying those with emotional deprivation or those subject to prejudicial-emotional exclusion – a normal Freudo-Marxist proposition (e.g., Reich 1933; Fanon 1952; Fromm 1955; Zizek 1989).

¹⁴ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>

¹⁵ See Anderson 2010. On women and the family, see Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

in *Capital*, Marx identified the slave trade and other racialised ‘obscenities’¹⁶ as factors in how ‘primitive accumulation’ developed within capitalism historically.

Marxian socialism-from-below is about emancipation that wells up from Gramscian ‘subaltern agencies’ (see Zene 2012; Smith 2010) termed here the excluded, exploited, oppressed. These agencies are stressed to mitigate dangers in economic reductionism, whereby worker activity is privileged over other strands within progressive movements (race, gender, embodiment *et cetera*). Marx tended to prioritise worker self-activity, albeit he supported anti-imperial, liberationist rebellions like the 1857 Indian sepoy mutiny.¹⁷

Thirdly, socialism-from-below defines itself via its intended *radical break* with global capitalism. Thus, struggles by workers – and the excluded and oppressed – must lead to radically new socio-political forms of life internationally, opening up a global post-capitalist horizon.

Lastly, it is of two broad possible sorts: revolutionary and reformist, with even the latter usually being of a fairly radical kind. There is a spectrum *between* (and across) these two types of socialism-from-below.

(b) Socialism-from-above

Socialism-from-above is – albeit even more composite-diverse in its possible incarnations – mainly at the opposite pole of the spectrum to socialism-from-below, though socialism-from-above sometimes dresses itself in leftist garb. It is a highly protean ‘ideology’ (or *portmanteau* term epitomising wide variability) ranging from the purported ‘centre-left’ to the far right. A common function, often, is to derail

¹⁶ See *Capital*, chapter 31. Marx points to how, in 1866, “more than a million Hindus died of hunger in the province of Orissa alone” due to British capitalists having bought up all the rice and re-sold it at astronomical prices (Marx 1976 [1867], vol. i: 916-917).

¹⁷ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/09/16.htm>

socialism-from-below seemingly from within, leaving the latter susceptible to shifts rightwards – not always consciously.¹⁸

First, socialism-from-above is often anti-internationalist – whether national-chauvinistically, oppressively-externally nationalistically or ‘merely’ patriotically. ‘Oppressive nationalism’ is distinguishable from ‘national-liberationism’, which occurs when an oppressed state/people is consistently threatened or embargoed (e.g., a US-resisting Cuba).

Socialisms-from-above appear when individuals, organisations or states find themselves complicit with the aims of rich states or of elites. One example is post-Second World War Labour Party foreign policy aligning itself with American imperial interests: from Attlee through Gaitskell (Saville 1980) to Tony Blair and beyond. Other cases occur when national liberationism calls itself socialism and, with freedom gained from the colonial master, the political aftermath goes sour, entrenching a counter-revolutionary/reformist dictatorship reproducing aspects of microcosmic Stalinism (e.g., Zimbabwe, North Korea, Cuba).

Second, unlike socialism-from-below’s orientation on popular-democratic control, socialism-from-above is elitist, with agency enacted from above. Whether such agency is exercised by an authoritarian-conservative, non-democratic leader wanting to derail a wide radical movement (Bismarck); by a nationalist social-Caesarist wishing to self-promote within the Labour movement (Lassalle); by a (Saint-Simonian or Fabian imperial) elitist technocracy; by MPs (without possibility of popular recall); by trade union elites (union bureaucracies); or by Stalinist-style party bureaucracies dictatorially imposing plans-from-above – this is empirical, typological detail. Nonetheless, they embody a mixed, confused or highly permeable socialism-from-above.

¹⁸ This strategy is observable in Lassallean-Bismarckian state socialism, but also in how the UK Labour Party centre/right (embodying varying socialisms-from-above) persistently undermined Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership from 2015 to 2019.

Third, socialism-from-above has limited (or no) radical credentials, offering no serious break with global capitalism. Given the national-level orientation within this highly protean meta-ideology, it is analysable alongside another Marxian concept: *opportunism*. With an eye to solidifying his *and* party-cadre power (double-dose opportunism), Stalin (plus Russian-chauvinist-nomenklatura-elites) cannily-cunningly skewed Marxian internationalism. Stalin's refrain that revolution could be built in Russia alone was thus an 'in-one-country', anti-internationalist deviation. China, too, broadly followed this national-chauvinist track (e.g., Mao 1966: 53).

In formally liberal-democratic systems (also under Bismarck; see, e.g., Schäffle 1890), socialism-from-above deploys 'moderate' reforms discourse, arguing for gradual, 'rational' change with these terms speciously equated (moderate=gradual=rational). Socialism-from-above is often indistinguishable from liberalism (even conservatism) – with much conceptual overlap or *permeability* (Freeden 1996; 2003). Often simply termed 'socialism', such divergent ideologies meld in and out of each other on a scale from so-called 'centre-left' at one end to far right at the other.

The Japanese political context may complexify the above spectrum concerning concrete historical divergence. However, there appears no exception to this *fundamental* (heuristic) *bifurcation* within global socialisms. Japanese socialisms have often had peculiar rightist propensities – with Kita's being an exemplary version of such ultra-nationalist and far-right socialisms-from-above. Like Bismarck who first introduced pensions, Kita in 1906 offered limited *progressive-centrist* elements: including universal male suffrage plus criticism of the ahistoricism of bansei ikkei as a viable modern constitutional-monarchical system.¹⁹

¹⁹ This is the late 19th century Japanese oligarchy's quasi-sacred, pro-*tennō* (pro-Japanese emperor) ideology, encompassing: Meiji constitution, sacralised Rescript on Education and civil code (Gluck 1985). Bansei ikkei – the kokutairon view that the emperor system was a family state (kazoku kokka) with an everlasting line of sacred imperial rule – was rejected by Kita. He called the kokutai something *crushing Japanese people's skulls* (Wilson 1969: 27-28).

iv. Calls for Wider Angles: Views from the Discipline of Politics

I have touched upon the political-cultural context of Japanese socialism-from-above and ultra-nationalism, as well as having expressed a critical theoretical distinction for this thesis regarding ‘socialisms’. Discussion now focuses on how Kita has been appropriated within disciplinary frames. I offer here some unusual angles on Kita that prime us for the close re-reading of his early texts pursued in the main body of this thesis.

One of the problems of English-language Kita interpretation is disciplinary, insofar as that interpretation has been overwhelmingly undertaken by empirically-minded Anglo-American-style-trained historians (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Szpilman 2002; Tankha 2006; Godart 2009; Skya 2009; Orbach 2011). Few political theorists, much less philosophers, have written about, or had material translated that relates to, Kita Ikki in English (excluding Maruyama, yet he nowhere provided any extended reading of Kita). Yet, curiously, those who have written on Kita in English using a politico-theoretical frame have largely been *Japanese* (or Japanese-background) Kita scholars. That identifies this thesis as a singularity, working as it does in political-philosophical borderlands – and roving across global and trans-national intellectual history, with East and West seen as inextricably imbricated, while not flatly ‘the same’.

I examine four Japanese-scholarly, insight-bestowing pieces on Kita in the field of politics below:

a. Hiroshi Osedo

Osedo (1973) furnishes various insights – the first being: “Kita was never an orthodox socialist, even in his early years”. Wilson (1969: 11) reached this insight earlier, albeit he left it inchoate, merely suggesting a similarity between Kita and the originally German liberal, then founder of the first German workers’ association (ADAV, 1863) Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle was a romantic Fichtean nationalist (see his *Arbeiter-Programm*, 1862; translated by Edward Peters, 1884). In Marx’s diagnosis, Lassalle was

a 'Royal Prussian government socialist' (Draper 1966).²⁰ By analogy, Kita is viewable in this thesis as an imperial-parliamentary, Sino-Japanese, moralistic state socialist. Building on an ancient Mencian-Platonic, monarchical-imperial, moralising state socialism (see chapter 7 herein), he argued to overturn the *government* and for a moralistic, imperial, *ideal-state* socialism.

"[N]or [was Kita]", in Osedo's second insight, "a fascist of any kind, even in his later years" (1973: iv). Accordingly, Osedo criticises weaknesses within Maruyama Masao's theory of fascism, highlighting how Maruyama's *moral criticism* of Kita ignores any serious analysis of Kita's *oeuvre*. However, in other ways Osedo's analysis misses much.

Although arguing *Kita's* thought was no 'Japanese fascism', Osedo concludes Ōkawa Shūmei's thought *was*, since Ōkawa supported military expansionism into Asia, while Kita advocated no Asian expansion, championing "the Asian proletariat..." (1973: 37-40). However, from mid-to-late 1903, Kita textually urged expansion into Manchuria, Korea, and Siberia, appealing to social-Darwinist 'might is right'-like doctrines and 'Asian Monroe doctrine', invoking 'the justice of the [Japanese] state' and 'saving the yellow race'. Kita regarded Japan as 'proletarian' or a 'poor nation', thus having the right, not simply the might, to *take land*: to compensate for Japan's relative impoverishment compared with Great Britain and Russia.²¹ Hence, Osedo has not seen Kita's 1903 essays – where Kita regards only *Japanese* as 'the Asian proletariat', deriving Japanese 'proletarian status' by comparison with Western powers. In sum, Kita looks to the West and takes no cognisance of China or Korea. If Japan was truly a 'proletarian nation', then what of China and Korea? Such awareness is absent in Kita.

Regarding the 1903-05 period (as earlier than this), Japan can be characterised as a 'strongly aspirational petit bourgeois' nation. Its upwardly mobile yearning for inclusion among the Great Powers from the Meiji Restoration on and its subsequent mimicking of Western imperialism strongly suggest this.²² *Contra* David Williams'

²⁰ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1966/twosouls/5-lassalle.htm>

²¹ See Kita's *chosakushū* volume iii: 73-75; 76-84; 85-98. These are where the three relevant essays are.

²² See Eskildsen on Japan's mimetic imperialism (2002).

(2004) claims that Japanese victory over Russia signified Asian liberation – meaning such only by half-hearted default²³ – Japan’s complex *petit bourgeois* positionality in the ambitious ‘rising middle’ of international society is a more accurate take on Japan’s status then.²⁴

While some of Osedo’s initial insights seem sound – Kita’s unorthodox socialism and his being no fascist – his wider conclusions are questionable. Specifically, it does not follow Kita was no *ultra-nationalist*. First, for Osedo, Maruyama’s analysis of fascism applies to Ōkawa Shūmei – with Ōkawa a key figure in Maruyama’s ‘fascism-from-above’, but not to Kita. Nonetheless, as the empirical evidence about Kita supporting expansionism above shows (and this is a major thesis theme below), there is little substantial difference between Kita’s and Ōkawa’s ultra-nationalisms.²⁵ Second, there are ‘unorthodox socialisms’ on the far right, too: not just Nazism, but burgeoning far-right national socialisms far preceding that: e.g., that of Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras and the Action Française (Soucy 1972; Mazgaj 1979).

b. Hori Makiyo

Hori presupposes Kita is a fascist (1995: 1, 10) and takes a Maruyama-esque stance on him. Thus, Hori is vulnerable – by extension – to criticisms of Maruyama’s ideas on fascism.

One idea in Hori inspired by Maruyama is the idea of ‘fascism-from-above’. This is the notion that “topmost sections of society” (Hori 1995: 107) – or *aristocratic* fascists (“a sort of ‘aristocratic fascism’”; *ibid*: 109) – *imposed a fascist polity* after the February

²³ This is not to dismiss the joy on the part of Asia seeing a European power defeated by an Asian one. It is simply to make the point that liberation would never, and did not, flow from Japanese regional-imperial successes.

²⁴ This Japanese elite-led ‘petit-bourgeois aspiration’ existed from early Meiji. Note the treaty port system Japan imposed on Korea in the Treaty of Kanghwa (1876), plus Japan’s 1869 annexation of Hokkaido (e.g., Sidney Xu Lu 2016; John A. Harrison 1951). For more on such ‘petit bourgeoisdom’, see chapter 8 herein.

²⁵ Sadako Ogata sees Kita’s and Ōkawa’s ‘national socialisms’ (1964: 23-5) as on the far right, while teasing out the tensions leading to the 1920s breakdown between both. Ōkawa seems later to have regretted this break (‘Kita Ikki-kun o omou’ in Hashikawa Bunzō, ed., *Ōkawa Shūmei shū*; Tokyo, 1975).

mutiny was suppressed. This rubric is open to challenge, as it fails to understand the complex social composition and dynamics of fully-fledged fascism: its status deriving largely from a mix of 'the lower-middle' (petit bourgeois layers) and from what I term 'the lowest' (those, like the *Lumpenproletariat*, who are socially reproduced as unorganised, unemployed, lowest-of-the-low criminal layers or quasi-underclass).

As the Hegel-Marxist account in this thesis submits, fascism most saliently entails a *reactionary mass movement-from-'below'* – which I subtly re-configure as stemming largely from the jeopardised and collapsing economic and political *middle and 'lowest'* of society (Renton 1999; see also Hegel's 'die Pöbel' or 'rabble' in Ruda 2011). In contrast to this fundamental pre-condition of what fascism is (a reactionary mass movement-from-the-middle-or-lowest), Maruyama's 'fascism-from-above' implies full continuity in power by an elite establishment. This, contradictorily, is redolent of a more traditional (or relatively more 'softly' modernising) authoritarianism, not any violent and reactionary mass movement. This more softly-slowly modernising-authoritarian quality is *precisely neither so radical nor can it be fascist*, for, in its system-continuity, it is different from very tightly centralised or (relatively) more quasi-'totalitarian'/fascist political forms. In the latter case, mass street violence is unleashed to smash the defence organs of the workers and citizens' mass democracy or independent civil society. Fascism is herein conceived as involving a palpable break, often violent, *away from* more classical (or softer) forms of elite establishment authoritarianism. In short, a reactionary (initially *non-state*) mass mobilisation from the lower-middle class and 'the lowest' is constitutive (see Paxton 2004: 42-52).

The fascist takeover can happen via victorious election, but fascism *itself*, once in power, will involve violent upsurge from the lower-middle classes and the lowest, demanding the smashing of the organs of mass social democracy: the trade unions, the left and the liberal-democratic parliamentary system. Such destruction usually precedes the (systemic) enforcement of its racial and other violent conspiracy theories upon society (Trotsky 1989 [1930-35]; Renton 1999). It is based in a mythos of exclusion, deploying violence against ethnic, quasi-ethnic and/or other targets, with

vitriol pouring onto the streets against anyone who stands for/with this multi-cultural, multi-coloured, multi-propensity trans-proletariat, for this is fascism's activist, street-fighting core (see Mazgaj 1979: 14-15, on *action*). In sum, fascism is inseparable from mass-reactionary *praxis* with its violent-exclusionary suppression of the progressive movement and the mass outsider agencies in all their forms (Billig 1978).

In comparison, Hori's staid conservative tightening of controls-from-above – they were “aristocratic, ‘constitutional’ conservatives whose main goals were to defend the established social and economic elites, hierarchies, within a political system dominated by themselves” (Hori 1995: 109) – just does not match up to the historical realities of Mussolini's Italy, much less Hitler's Germany. There are too many salient differences here and Hori's elision of these is typical of this kind of thinking, where what is *exacerbation* of establishment conservatism-from-above is deemed qualitatively new and ‘fascist’.

c. *Nomura Kōichi*

Nomura reads Kita's first book in two ways. First, he records the originality, for a Meiji Japanese, of Kita's critique of the standard interpretation of Japan's emperor system: “Kita was thoroughly critical of the theory of the national polity (*kokutairon*) which dominated the academic world, the press, and both government and non-government circles” (1966: 233). Instead, Kita adopts a state sovereignty concept regarding the role of the emperor: as (following Japanese legal thinker Minobe Tatsukichi) an organ – the *highest organ* – of the state. Kita, however, amends Minobe's account, since it is not the *emperor alone* that forms the highest organ of the state, but also the *people* (as embodied in the national diet). In short, Kita broke with the *bansai ikkei* position held by the established (government, administrative, senior bureaucratic and military, plus academic) system. Hence, for Kita, both emperor and people (via parliament) formed together the highest, composite state organ.

Second, Nomura's reading focuses on Kita's *brand* of socialism. Hence, rather than being a more ‘straightforward’ or ‘conventional’ socialist, Kita was committed to the

“ideals of social evolutionism” (Nomura 1966: 232). Nomura also observes that Kita’s version “savoured very strongly of state socialism” (ibid: 234) and grasps that Kita, even early on, was advocating a socialism as ‘might-is-right’ statism not placeable on the *left*. And this resonates with the present thesis’ argument.

d. *Kuno Osamu*

Kuno (in Koschmann 1978) presents a ‘brilliantly imaginative’ interpretation of Kita, as Wilson notes (1963: 174), as it provides a plausible explanation as to when Kita welded socialism and nationalism. Unfortunately, it is empirically entirely questionable, since Kita advocated ultra-nationalism, imperialism and expansionism in 1903, *not* after the Russo-Japanese war or co-terminus with the mass Hibiya riots against the war terms (see Kita 1972).

Thus, there is, in English, a paucity of theoretical analyses that take cognisance of Kita’s early Sado essays in favour of war and imperial expansion. For this reason, Kita remains such an ‘enigma’ and justifies another extended treatment. Perusing Kita’s chosakushū (collected works and Kita’s ‘spiritual diary’, see below) reveals much material by Kita has never been seriously studied in English. This includes, first, many parts of Kita’s *Kokutairon* book (vol. i); second, many early essays and poems written by Kita (vol. iii); third, Kita’s less known second book (on the 1911 Chinese revolution; vol. ii), plus materials pertaining to the Chinese revolution and contact with Uchida Ryōhei and the ultra-nationalist society, the Kokuryūkai (vol. iii); fourth, Kita’s under-studied mystical volume or *Reikoku nikki* (‘Diary of spiritual revelations’; edited by Matsumoto Ken’ichi, 1987); and fifth, Kita’s third and most well-known book (*Nihon kaizō hōan taikō*, vol. ii; see Tankha 2006: 161-229 for an English translation).

It is this thesis’ broad contention that Kita Ikki’s thought has often been misunderstood, whether more subtly (as a fascist rather than ultra-nationalist or right-wing populist/radical) or more overtly (as a ‘left-wing socialist’ rather than right-wing ‘national’ socialist). This is partly due to the relative lack of *philosophical and politico-theoretical* focus in scholarship on Kita’s early work. This has implications for how

empirical-hermeneutical work is handled. Hence, this is a call for more careful reading and translation and especially for rigorous theory – for example, pertaining to concepts like socialism, fascism, ultra-nationalism. There is still much work needed on Kita before all the above-mentioned material is exhaustively analysed, empirico-theoretically. Only after that long labour can the fullest picture of the early Kita (or Kita more generally) emerge. Until more such work is completed, my own contribution also remains limited and only indicative, albeit based on close reading of important strands of Kita’s early thought, which is a *sine qua non* of advancement in Kita studies.

v. The Kita ‘Enigma’: Entering from the Left or the Right of the Political Stage?²⁶

Before turning to discuss the salience of right and left as ideological categories in Japan (sub-section b.), let us first examine various important scholarly arguments as to where the early Kita hails from: left, centre or right. After arguments are delineated defending political concepts of left-centre-right as pertinent to the Japanese politico-historical context, we move back to assess where Kita should be placed ideologically. Pre-emptive pointers to chapter 2 are made where it is indicated what this thesis’ methodological orientation is.

a. Kita as enigma

Kita “remains an enigma” for the historiographical literature (Szpilman 2002: 467).²⁷ For many Japan specialists in English, Kita Ikki completely eludes any simple categorisation on a left-centre-right scale, with his political orientation proving decidedly complex (Byas 1942: 85; Wilson 1966: 89; Hoston in Benewick 1998: 129; Shillony n.d.²⁸). Indeed, the specialist on Japan’s far right, Christopher Szpilman, has

²⁶ The ‘political stage’ phrase is Hugh Byas’s (1942).

²⁷ See also, however, Szpilman’s reliable *empirical* exposition on Kita as far-right activist in Taishō-Shōwa in: ‘Kita Ikki and the Politics of Coercion’, *Modern Asian Studies* 36, 2; May. Pp.467-490.

²⁸ See Shillony’s review of Brij Tankha: <http://www.japansociety.org.uk/992/kita-ikki-and-the-making-of-modern-japan-a-vision-of-empire/>

argued that whether Kita was left or right misses the point and that ideology is largely irrelevant for him (Szpilman 2002: 467-469). Ironically later in the piece, Szpilman is *empirically* unassailable in locating Kita *de facto* as on the political far right. Thus Kita was, as Szpilman suggests, an inheritor to the “tradition of political intrigue, blackmail and extortion... which stretches from Tōyama Mitsuru, Uchida Ryōhei, and Sugiyama Shigemaru down to Kodama Yoshio and, most recently, Koike Ryōichi [sic: Ryūichi]” (ibid: 468). Yet Szpilman seems to overlook *theoretically* how this is a decidedly far-right tradition. Ideas may not matter *subjectively* to these individuals (though this is moot concerning Kita), but this is not the point, insofar as ideas need not be *explicitly formulated*. Instead, they can be *immanent* – as the embedded logic – within a set of practices. It is only by understanding the connection between such often embedded theory and practice that a political figure can be better understood.

Symptomatically, therefore, the individuals cited by Szpilman are firmly on the far right, with the famous contemporary-style *sōkaiya* (corporate extortioner) Koike having been taught by an aide to Kodama Yoshio, the well-known corrupt “political fixer”.²⁹ The others are all well-known ultra-rightists who belonged to such organisations as the Genyōsha and/or the Kokuryūkai, two traditional ultra-nationalist bastions of violence, blackmail and intimidation.

b. The pertinence of left-right concepts

Having just indicated Kita’s far-right placement, the question whether left and right apply in Japan is now examined. Scholarship on Japan has variously contested, or relativised, the issue of the validity of left-and-right *qua* political terms as applied to Kita or Japan (Byas 1942; Wilson 1966; Szpilman 2002; Gotō-Jones in Kersten and Williams 2005; Orbach 2011). Over the last several decades, the left-right distinction

²⁹ For Koike, see <http://www.economist.com/node/90728> or Kaplan and Dubro, *Yakuza, Japan’s Criminal Underworld*, (1988: 215-217). On Kodama Yoshio, see Tim Weiner: <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/10/09/world/cia-spent-millions-to-support-japanese-right-in-50-s-and-60-s.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> See also Chalmers Johnson, ‘The Looting of Asia’ (Vol. 25, No. 22; 20 November 2003): <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n22/chalmers-johnson/the-looting-of-asia> For more on Kodama, see Kaplan and Dubro (1988: 50).

more generally has come under sustained criticism in the Western political arena and in academia (Bell 1960; Giddens 1994; Cliff, Morris-Suzuki & Wei 2018: 4). Thus, talk has now long prevailed about Japan proving resistant, for historico-cultural reasons, to left-right political categorisation. In contrast to both trends, this thesis argues that such a left-right split in Japan *matters* just as much as anywhere else, though thorough scholarship, theory, nuance and phronesis are required to make judgements that may look paradoxical at times, which is true anywhere.

Japan was already, by the first decade of the twentieth century, a newly industrialising country – and thus already a capitalist polity. Moreover, it was a burgeoning imperialist country fresh from victory over Russia in 1905, with new acquisitions of territory in South Manchuria and an increase in dominion over Korea. In that context, to argue that Japan historically eludes left-right distinctions – or that they should not be stressed as the most important variable in a range of other categorisations (Gotō-Jones 2005: 7-8) – is open to challenge. Why such replacements as East-West are envisaged as more meaningful than left-right tends to miss, I submit, the actual subtlety of left-centre-right analysis if executed carefully.

One reason for this failure to engage with the subtlety of such distinctions is highlighted when we consider the example of the *converse case* in relation to trying to understand Japan circa 1900-1910. That is, if we assert Japan was *not* a species of capitalist society at this time, the question arises: what sort of state or society did it constitute instead, politico-economically speaking? If class analysis (with various qualifications added thereto) is not valid in Japan circa 1900, why did Japan have coal miners, “tenant farmers, male iron and steel workers, and female cotton and silk spinners in the newly mechanized textile industry” (Elyssa Faison 2007: 11), among other kinds of workers, eking out existences in conditions not unlike those Engels described in *The Condition of the Working Class in England?*³⁰ Consequently, if separate and more or less modern classes exist on the socio-economic level and Japan

³⁰ See Yokoyama Gennosuke’s *Nihon no kasō shakai* (1899). This prompted a Japanese government report (1901) – *Conditions of Factory Workers* – “deriv[ing] much of its methodology from Yokoyama Gennosuke’s book-length exposé” (Faison 2007: 23).

was a developing capitalist society of some kind,³¹ why should left-centre-right categories not be viable? Furthermore, subtle and complex use of such concepts concerning any party/movement/organisation that attempts to deploy and fight for such modern classes (with their concomitant and ineluctable class consciousness) is surely inescapable.

Class is by no means the only – or necessarily the overarchingly *hegemonic* – tool of methodological analysis. However, to think that class is *less* important than other analytical levels (those involving race, gender, culture, geography, embodiment, disability) is to go from a class *reductionist* methodological frame to *de facto* methodological *extinction* or *suppression* of class analysis. The onus in dismissing class analysis is indisputably on those who deny the relevance in Japan's pre-war era, as in other times and climes, of such analytical tools – not vice versa.

Let me now examine a salient example of how class has been relativised in the way criticised above. One such argument has appeared in an article on Japanese philosopher Miki Kiyoshi by Christopher Gotō-Jones (in Kersten and Williams 2005):

In the case of interwar Japan, intellectuals and political leaders were striving to make sense of a new universe of political ideas and organisational models, largely imported from Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. For many such thinkers, the most salient and useful directions in political thought were 'East' and 'West'... .. 'Left and Right' appeared to be internal concerns or subdivisions of the 'West,' and it took a number of years for the Japanese academe to really appreciate the substantive ideological and philosophical distinctions between these two stances. Even then, there remained little consensus about how the Right–Left spectrum might be mapped onto the political formations of the 'East.'

The following criticisms offer themselves. First, I think the passage understates the

³¹ Waswo (1996) calls Japan a NIC (newly industrialising country) circa 1920. For me, Japan was that twenty years earlier.

extent to which political understanding of inclusion-exclusion was latent in Japanese society. An awareness of the differing sorts of politics that a state/society can assume was present, whether or not this was always articulated explicitly: feudal-tributary, conservative-authoritarian, absolutist-monarchical, constitutional-monarchical, social-monarchical, republican, statist-liberal, liberal-democratic, social-reformist, anarchist, Marxist, *et cetera*. Marxism was barely understood, but the Japanese were far from exceptional in this. Certainly, the distinction between a conservative ruling elite versus socio-political layers engaged in critique was entrenched in Japanese society and culture at this time – and both sides of this divide were inherently heterogeneous and contesting.

If this did not involve degrees of understanding of levels of conservatism as opposed to levels of liberalism at the very least (which constitutes a clear spectrum from ‘right’ to ‘centre’ or ‘centre-left’), this is surely to argue Japanese were far more naïve or gullible about politics than they actually were. Moreover, the politics of elites versus commoners did not begin with the 1868 Meiji Restoration and nor did (implicit or other concepts of) inclusion/exclusion and thus progress/regress, either – not to mention proto-left and proto-right concepts or politics (in my senses of inclusion/exclusion; see chapter 2 herein).

Only two more criticisms of Gotō-Jones (2005: 4) follow here. First, the passage effectively *concludes* that ‘East’ and ‘West’ were *in fact* more basic categories in the Japanese context than concepts of ‘left’ and ‘right’, when all Gotō-Jones *argues* is that they were *deemed so* – yet he does not say ‘by whom?’. This hints at the essential *non-neutral*, politico-philosophical contestation over class (and *by* classes) going on here.

Second, as Gotō-Jones insists, ‘many’ of Japan’s ‘intellectuals and political leaders’ of the inter-war period may have believed that “the most salient and useful directions in political thought were ‘East’ and ‘West’” (in Kersten and Williams 2005: 2). Yet, if so (and Gotō-Jones has not even tried to corroborate this point), this will have been over-determined – at least partly – by their own ideological, philosophical, political and economic proclivities. The fact remains that, for many others, left and right – despite

a number of confusions, conflations, overlaps and incompletely inclusive steps forward and some or many back – clearly meant much in the Japanese, Korean and Chinese historical context: to millions of people, especially those who were excluded, exploited or oppressed.

Thus *denials* of salient internal political differences within the ‘East’ (all too often in Japan’s case) often *came from elites*, invoking such ideas as ‘Pan-Asianism’, ‘regional communitarianism under Japanese leadership’ (Miki in the late 1930s) or nationalism (as Kita did in relation to all these) – which effectively were weapons of *mystification* to corral the masses in behind what were conservative or reactionary political strategies. Thus, any denial or playing-down of class analysis shows its true colours, since it also denies the possibility of alternative socio-political arrangements more conducive to mass flourishing and, *ipso facto*, deeper forms of democracy.

The methodological frame adopted in this thesis critically challenges such denial – be that academic or political-historical – and invokes the excluded Japanese, Chinese and Korean pre-war masses as *important method*³² – to expose class privilege and other salient invidious difference or, indeed, facile ideological over-homogenisation.

c. Re-conceptualising ‘socialism’ and ultra-nationalism: re-thinking right and left in the early Kita

One of the many contested and controversial issues about Kita Ikki is the provenance of his politics. Indeed, the English scholarly literature has almost universally seen Kita as a ‘socialist’ and as of the left – with this as the dominant view taken regarding his early period (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006; Godart 2009; Skya 2009; Orbach 2011). As a student of Kita who takes the view that he was an ultra-nationalist (at least

³² Alexis Dudden 2005.

in Taishō and Shōwa), Benjamin Freeland (2003)³³ argues that Kita is the most important Japanese pre-war radical right-wing political theorist/activist.³⁴

From the perspective of the overall scholarly literature, there is a problem with the interpretation of Kita as a 'radical rightist' – if this is equated with 'fascist'. Despite the fact the mainstream view in the literature (if one includes the Japanese) still seems to be that Kita is of the far right, there is the strange situation in the English literature where, in terms of full treatments (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006), the young Kita (circa 1901-1906) is seen as a leftist-socialist – albeit with insufficient qualification of what 'socialist' means. Yet without a clear sense of this in Kita's case and also in others, the term signifies little. This is why I focus on this essential aspect herein and expound Kita's ideas and *socialisms* at much length (for a distinctive outline of various Japanese socialisms, see chapter 4; for extended exposition of Kita's early ideas, chapters 5, 6 and 7).

To be clear, the overall argument being advanced herein is that 'socialism' is not simply a term used by the left, but rather, as even Marx effectively argued as far back as the *Communist Manifesto*, it ranges across a spectrum from the far left and the left on the one hand through to the centre and even to the right and the far right on the other. Freeland (2003) succumbs to the prevailing theoretical ambiguity in the literature and follows Martin and Wilson on the early Kita, agreeing that he was indeed a 'socialist' in his earliest period (duly without any qualification). No-one disputes that Kita is indeed such a 'socialist', but it is necessary to know more precisely what this involves in Kita's and in comparable cases.

The rationale behind the claim that Kita is a leftist-socialist can be presented thus:

³³ See Freeland (2003: 30), 'Turbulent Priests and Millenarian Protest: Outside Voices of Religious Nationalism in Interwar Japan': https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/14540/ubc_2003-0647.pdf?sequence=1

³⁴ Rivals for this position include: Tōyama Mitsuru, Uchida Ryōhei, Ōkawa Shūmei, Ishiwara Kanji, Kanokogi Kazunobu, Nakano Seigō. Or even Saigō Takamori.

Since Kita associated with socialists like Kōtoku Shūsui and other late Meiji socialists who were unequivocally of the left, Kita must have agreed with them on a large range of issues. Secondly and as a result, he must be placed, like them, on the political left.

In this thesis, all of the above claims, implicit and explicit, will be directly or indirectly unpacked and interrogated. However, not only Freeland's account (and many others), but also the three full-length treatments in English – those by Martin (1959), Wilson (1969) and Tankha (2006) – to the extent that they assert that the early Kita was a 'socialist' without defining that term adequately, all take similar question-begging stances regarding the early Kita's politics.³⁵

The uncriticised assumptions in the literature set out above include the following: (1) 'socialist' always means 'left-wing'; (2) Meiji Japan's socialists were straightforwardly 'left-wing'; (3) Kita mostly agreed with this 'Japanese left'; and (4) it can be concluded that they should all straightforwardly be classed as 'left-wing'.

None of these four assumptions stand up to rigorous theoretical and empirical scrutiny. This thesis aims to provide a more cogent and subtle historical, empirical and theoretical resolution of the problem of interpreting the meaning of Kita Ikki's 'socialism' alongside his ultra-nationalism, from the Meiji period on. Yet it is clear that if my arguments concerning Kita go through, there will be wider ramifications transcending Kita studies to domains like general political theory, philosophy and the study of global political ideologies.

³⁵ This thesis specifies what is 'socialist' across a spectrum from far-left to far-right. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

vi. Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 describes the methodological approach, which ultimately derives from a species of *grand theory*.³⁶ I deploy this, *contra* Lyotard's now classic counsel against grand narratives (1979), in an entirely *positive* sense. Such grand theory might be called a meta-philosophical system of theoretically justified, radically internationalist and left-wing ethical and philosophical inclusion. From such meta-philosophical heights, there cascades down a way of separating out inclusionary or liberationist political ideologies (political economy, sociology, *et cetera*) from any politics (*et cetera*) of exclusion.

This is linked to the deployment of the conceptual pair of 'socialism-from-below' (on a spectrum of inclusion) and 'socialism-from-above' (on a sliding scale of exclusion) I introduced earlier in this chapter. As a result, what can be witnessed (potentially or actually) are degrees of major and minor *inclusion* – as well as minor and major *exclusion* – on a spectrum going from highly inclusive at one end (e.g. radically inclusionary internationalist leftism) to highly exclusive at the other (a virulent species of exclusionary fascism – e.g. Nazism). Chapter 2 delineates in detail this political spectrum, enunciating a scale from left to right, inclusionary to exclusionary.

In chapter 3, I offer important background on Sino-Japanese rebellion and the ambiguous meaning thereof in the Japanese political context and Kita's work. In the process, I offer detail on Kita's background, educational formation and crucial aspects to the Sino-Japanese ideological heritage (strands of dogmatic-intuitionist *Yōmeigaku*) that help over-determine Kita's pro-war ultra-nationalist thrust in his early work.

Chapter 4 examines socialism in the Japanese politico-historical *milieu* – with the aim of providing context to Kita's late-Meiji trajectory toward his ideas on socialism(s). Thus, the origins and development of socialisms in Meiji Japan are explicated and an

³⁶ Grand, global holistic theory's importance arises from micro-focuses' predilections to fracture and ghettoise the excluded, exploited and oppressed – itself a reflection of late-capitalist social, political and economic processes. *New grand theory* must encompass inclusive identities *and difference*, however.

appropriate narrative furnished as to where Kita fits within that picture. In short, the question will be asked as to where Kita was ‘coming from’ or to whose socialism in the West he can be considered closest. Thus, in Japan as elsewhere, there are at least two souls of socialism (Draper 1966³⁷). And in fact, rather more, as the spectrum for *socialisms* is very wide, since socialism-from-above and socialism-from-below are heuristic meta-concepts/ideologies embodying a pivotal qualitative division, not a reductive set of only two empirical possibilities.

The fifth chapter offers essential reading of Kita’s early pro-war articles from 1903. This sets out in a number of different sections just how militarist, expansionist, imperialist, Pan-Asianist, ultra-nationalist, social Darwinist and essentially ‘right-wing reactionary’ or ‘far-right’ Kita’s exposition of national-state socialism is in the three foreign policy articles I analyse there.

In chapters 6 and 7, I offer both generic and more specific readings of Kita’s first book of 1906 – especially in terms of themes essential to Kita’s ideas that have been distinctly underemphasised and ignored and that follow on from the reading of his early essays of 1903. The particular areas in Kita’s book I focus on shed peculiar light on how, even in this early book and following his 1903 articles, Kita was a thoroughly national or anti-cosmopolitan, anti-Marxist socialist and still decidedly pro-war. I show, too, how he was critical of Japan’s leftist socialists in the form of Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, editors of the Commoners’ Newspaper and the leading lights in that movement who strongly opposed the Russo-Japanese war – the same one Kita vehemently called for as crucial to his own socialism and to Japan’s ascent to global racial hegemony.

Chapter 8 discusses the famous Japanese political scientist Maruyama Masao’s work on both Kita and fascism more widely – to offer a more panoramic and overarching assessment of Kita over the course of his life and specifically in terms of his overall ideological position with its class, biographical and other underpinnings.

³⁷ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1966/twosouls/>

Finally, the conclusion draws together my orientation herein on Kita and on who or what he was ideologically – plus those in Europe he may be validly compared with. It also sets out the limitations of my work and calls for further research that can help assess just how widespread Kita's ultra-nationalism was in his writings (the early ones in particular but also in his middle-late texts). For this, close reading and more translation of Kita's early and middle texts are both clear desiderata, since they will likely enable a take-off in assessments of Kita beyond those with facility in Japanese. It also calls for more comparative work on Kita and his texts in relation to famous European and other ideologues of the far-right and their works, as this has not been entirely possible to accomplish systematically herein.

Chapter 2: On Inclusionary Method, and Methodology, From Below

In this chapter, I first elaborate the methodology deployed in this thesis in the context of a set of wider grand-theoretical commitments. These commitments involve a brand of radically inclusionary Hegel-Marxism that engages what I term complex overlapping universalities concerning questions of political ideology. These follow on from arguments set out in the context of Japanese history and society in the Introduction. This specific hermeneutics of reading is undergirded by ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’ as essential criteria pertinent to locating Kita Ikki in particular, and global political phenomena in general, on a spectrum from far left to far right.

In the second titled section, I set forth the political scale offered in this thesis and compare it with others. The importance of the associated open-ended subtlety or granularity of this spectrum is also expounded upon there. In the third section, I examine some of the political implications of this scale. And in the fourth, I spell out the strategy of reading that I intend to apply to Kita Ikki, the subject of this research, which leads to a discussion, prefiguratively, of substantive elements of what is to be examined in this thesis.³⁸

In the fifth section, I expound further the ultimate contrast on which this thesis’ new political scale is based – between a politics of radical inclusion (the Hegel-Marxism expounded here) and Hitlerian radical fascist exclusion (Nazism). Kita is adjudged as *neither* of these in this political scale and thesis, and yet he appears on the far right of the spectrum and a node or two away from Mussolini-style fascism. Though this judgement pre-empts the exposition made in the thesis as a whole, this *immanent and embedded* grand theory emerged *in and through* the empirical research and not abstractly or in advance of it.

³⁸ This is based on the Hegelian principle that methodology is substantive, and substance also methodological.

I conclude by arguing that left and right are derived from criteria of inclusion and exclusion and, furthermore, that Hegel-Marxism, understood as one example of radically inclusive, internationalist and complexly universal philosophy (and buttressed by various recent insights), is one of the best forms of inclusionary political discourse within modernity. Most importantly for this thesis, the Marxian frame also sheds light on the political diagnosis of Kita Ikki: as neither Marxist (farthest-left) nor Nazi (furthest-right), but as a less radical form of ultra-right extremism (far-right, but far from furthest-right).

Methodology Out of a Grand Theory of Inclusion

The hermeneutics of reading that informs the methodology offered in this thesis derives originally from what is termed *grand theory* – as all methodologies ineluctably are. Deploying a grand theory of *inclusion*, this particular form of critique synthesises and extends ideas from Hegel (1807; 1812), Marx (1848; 1867), Gillian Rose (1981; 1992; 1996), seminal radical black theory (CLR James 1950; Fanon 1961; X and Haley 1965; Crenshaw 1989, 1991), plus original contributions herein. One of the most important aspects of this grand theory is that it is a species of left-wing, non-dogmatically Hegel-Marxist thought-device that is political, ethical and philosophical, as well as economic, in orientation. In sum, it seeks to expand the practico-theoretical co-ordinates of Hegel-Marxism toward being an ideology and philosophy of *inclusion* beyond its usual association with economics or political economy *alone*.

Hegel, as explicated by Gillian Rose (1981; see also McCarney 2000; Houlgate 2005; Pinkard 2000), is a thinker of radical inclusion who proposes a philosophical and ethico-political notion of inclusive dynamic universality that *complements* Marx's economically oriented approach and which, in transcending any exclusively economic focus, helps us achieve a subtler understanding of left and right *as politico-ideological concepts*. 'Left' and 'right', then, are derived from 'higher-level' ideas deployed in this thesis: inclusion/exclusion, liberation/oppression, co-operation/competition and

nurturing development/exploitation. Without being able to set out the full grand theory here, this concept of radically inclusive universality helps found the political-ideological scale deployed in this thesis – by means of which the thought of Kita Ikki can be accurately situated on a left-right (inclusion-exclusion) spectrum. This scale is not restricted to the Japanese or East Asian context, but is applicable, with a subtle-Hegelian phronesis, to political thinkers, ideologies, institutions, parties, party factions and so on across the globe.³⁹

This grand theory, and the hermeneutics of reading derived from that, stipulates an attentiveness to questions of exclusion/inclusion. Hence the nature and degree of both helps determine where any thinker will likely be placed on a political spectrum ranging from the far left to the far right. In the case of this thesis, what is involved is an interpretation of various early textual outputs by Kita Ikki in order to assess what or whom he deems significant and important – and what *not* – in relation to his concept of socialism. For example, at a basic level and across his early work, Kita asserts a nation-based or an explicitly anti-cosmopolitan form of socialism (see the Preface to his *Kokutairon* book of 1906, and also the last chapter). This therefore illustrates one of the main features of Kita's early texts pertaining to his idea of socialism: it is fundamentally pro-Japanese state and nationalist. Simply put, Japan and Japanese subjects are clearly front and centre in terms of what is considered essential to the notion of socialism set out in Kita's texts. Moreover, given this national or nationalist orientation, what is left outside that frame is in some sense downplayed, treated as less significant or is 'excluded' (and this degree of exclusion/inclusion – as well as the quality to such – is clearly on a relative spectrum or scale).

Let me clarify here what is meant by inclusion. First, optimal inclusion directly fosters the non-harming flourishing and liberation of self and other toward the very best they can be. Hence, this is no abstract, homogenising equality whereby all are reduced to authoritarian sameness. It is instead an equality that actively challenges prejudicial and genuinely exclusivistic discrimination/marginalisation/ghettoisation – of whatever

³⁹ While true that the left-right scale has not been extensively explored in the literature on East Asia, there is some work in this area (Willy Jou 2010).

sort. It embodies the empathetic consideration, fertile richness and co-operative complementarity within and across sameness-difference. Second, inclusion in this sense is not the mechanical containing of anything and everything lying inertly in some mathematical set, but rather an organic-dynamic *modus operandi* that is ethically and politically welcoming of the equal, different, singular and complementary value of all, with the proviso that no-one exploits, excludes, oppresses or otherwise harms others/self. Third, to include is to recognise and foster self/other *in tandem*, not as a zero-sum game. Consequently, and seemingly paradoxically, to exclude or outlaw exclusion may often be preliminary to establishing a deeper inclusion (Rose 1981). Inclusion is awareness that egregious economic and political disjunction *damages* and it acts to eliminate such dangerously debilitating *disjunctive powers*. Lastly, deep inclusion heals alienation/isolation and effectuates an openness in wonder, care, leadership and nurturing encouragement-provocation-inspiration toward the truth, beauty and justice of sameness and difference in all their myriad complexity and detail. It recognises 'perfection' is a mirage, albeit undergirded by the sense that 'better' is always achievable – this being the ever-latent *possibility* (but far from inevitability) of dynamically inclusive-expansive universality.

In extreme cases of politico-ideological exclusion, such as Nazism, various pariahs or objects of vilification are targeted – involving advocacy of violent suppression or extermination. Given the vituperation viscerally unleashed by Nazism (e.g., in its antisemitism as displayed in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*), it is clear such exclusion was premeditated, extreme, and *acted upon*. Consequently, placing Nazism at the extreme-right end of the political scale is apt. There are also examples of exclusion in the works by Kita we shall be examining – much of which is strong, albeit there is no evidence of similar degrees of antisemitism.⁴⁰ While this is not the place to expound Kita-style exclusion at great length, to flag how such exclusion and inclusion broadly function, three overarching instances are furnished:

⁴⁰ Jewishness is identified with 'rootless cosmopolitanism' in the last chapter of Kita's first book (1959, vol. i: 431), where he states: "you become Jewish when you forget your own country".

First, Kita is strongly against Western imperialism and, in particular, the imperialism of such 'landlord states' as Russia and the UK. This is revealing in respect of how Kita sees Japan as a 'proletarian state', which heralds its own exclusion (and thus its deep lack of consideration) of China and Korea (see below). Second, there is a strong anti-Russian, anti-Slav quality to Kita's hard-nosed pro-war stance against Russia from 1903 on. Thus, for Kita, the Russians were to be racially excluded as 'red-bearded' 'Slav barbarians' (for more, see chapter 5 below). Third, Kita also repudiates all pro-Western, anti-war socialisms and derides Japanese writers like Kōtoku Shūsui, Sakai Toshihiko and the Heimin shimbunsha (the Commoners Newspaper group). Kita criticises them heavily as *utopian* and as *servicing Western aims*, not those of Japan and the Japanese.

In short, through instance one above I shall argue that Kita excludes not only Western imperialism (no problem there) but also, in the concept of *Japan* as 'proletarian state', any taking seriously of the roles, for instance, of China and Korea. I shall ask what these two countries are in Kita's international relations class terms (viz. backward or 'decrepit' states). We shall analyse the logic and meaning of this *failure to think* (and thus Kita *excludes*) China and Korea as autonomous agencies. For Kita, why is it that Japan can take land from China (Manchuria) and control or annex Korea? Siberia may make more sense, given Kita's landlord nation thesis, but not China or Korea, unless other reasons can be supplied for this within Kita's texts. That is the Asian Monroe doctrine and the social Darwinism apparent within his socialism from 1903 onwards. Both strands highlight Kita's rightist exclusionism and his penchant to affirm this power disjunction ignoring China-Korea, despite his professed Pan-Asianism that purports to 'save the yellow race'. Hence well before the lead up to the Second World War and even as far back as 1903, Kita's Pan-Asianism was a tool of his elitist and exclusionary nationalism. In other words, Kita's Pan-Asianism can be unpacked as the hauteur and high-handedness of a 'civilised' Japanese leadership *over*, and of its 'peaceful' expansion *into*, Korea and China. Moreover, we can validly construe this from a close reading of the exclusions and antinomies visible within his early pro-war essays and first book. Consequently, a placing of Kita on the far right of the political scale as set out below is warranted.

The above manner of interpretation (in microcosm) – which is dispensed systematically in the empirical-substantive chapters that carefully decipher and unpack Kita Ikki’s thought – encapsulates the nuts and bolts of the hermeneutical approach laid out in this thesis.

The Political Scale

Let us now turn to the political scale. While ‘left’ and ‘right’ – the basis of the present scale – have been contested as valid political terms, the majority of commentators and academics still use them, however guardedly. Some people regard them as ‘inexact’ or ‘shorthand’ (see Heywood 2015: 119), while others (including former British PM Tony Blair in *The Economist*, 2007) insist on two axes: e.g., ‘economic left-right’ on the one hand and ‘open-closed’, ‘libertarian-authoritarian’, or ‘tender-tough’ on the other.⁴¹ A now classic defence of the left-right distinction was made by Italian philosopher and political theorist Norberto Bobbio (1996), which partly informs (rather *post hoc*) the stance here. Bobbio derives the distinction between left and right from those who argue for political equality and those who embrace inequality respectively. Eschewing economic-egalitarianist construals of equality (Thomas More’s sameness for all, which *is* authoritarian; 1516),⁴² Bobbio sees equality as more than merely economic. In a similar spirit, ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ are deployed herein, which makes the disjunctions of *political power* more explicit.

The scale developed here has 16 nodes on it. It takes a different line from Bobbio on the matter of his conclusions on moderation and extremism. Following William F. Stone (1980), I diverge on the idea of any significant meaning to the notion of ‘left-wing authoritarianism’ that often pervades academic and other elite discourse. Thus

⁴¹ This ‘two axes’ approach originally stems from the British psychologist, Hans Eysenck (1954). The Nolan Chart (1969) and The Political Compass (2001) are dual-axes based scales.

⁴² “Throughout the island they wear the same sort of clothes, without any other distinction except what is necessary to distinguish the two sexes and the married and unmarried. The fashion never alters...” See: http://www.literatureproject.com/utopia/Utopia_4.htm

a scale is deployed that spans left to right in a way that sees far left and far right as radically divergent from each other.⁴³

Many recent scales employ a kind of horseshoe figure to represent the political spectrum (see Heywood 2015: 120, figure 7), where communist and fascist ‘totalitarianisms’ would meet *in extremis*. Again, I challenge such academic orthodoxy – but cannot do so systematically here (see chapter 9 for my clearest statement) – via a repudiation of the notion that established-bureaucratic Stalinism remained *of the left* at all (his socialism-in-one-country is a socialism-*from-above*; Draper 1966). Hence, I reject the concept of ‘totalitarianism’ (e.g., most egregiously, *qua* overarching/total control) as applicable to the Stalin epoch in Russia (on this *empirically*, for example, see Gill 1998). There are many possible spectra to consider here, but much scholarship now prefers two dimensions over one. The scale in this thesis stands on a single linear spectrum, since I repudiate the notion that the far-left (or Hegel-Marxian revolutionism) is inherently ‘totalitarian’, authoritarian or anti-democratic.

After elucidating this scale with comments and examples of the kinds of things that fit the said 16 nodes, we proffer an explanation of both the spectrum itself, as well as some general remarks on the nature of ideology as a phenomenon – which are reflected in the scale. Thereafter, we set forth in straightforward terms, firstly, how this scale flows from the inclusion-exclusion discourse that in turn derives from the grand theory and, secondly and in more detail, how this is used in practice in this thesis, as a strategy of *reading*, to place Kita Ikki on a left-right spectrum. I already argued in the previous chapter for the relevance and validity of this distinction/spectrum in the context of Meiji era Japanese history.

Before setting out the scale, it is worth noting that the very theoretical and empirical foundation of this thesis rests upon the thought that socialisms are complex and come in many different shapes and forms right across the political spectrum. Consequently,

⁴³ This may seem self-evident, but a clear corollary of the thesis of ‘totalitarianism’ (of both ‘left’ and ‘right’) is that such ‘extremisms’ ultimately *coincide*. I critique the validity of the *concept* of ‘totalitarianism’ throughout this thesis. See, in particular, chapter 9.

political scales of *socialism* also advanced here straddle the far left to the far right. The rationale behind citing political-ideological comparisons from the Meiji period, as well as up to the contemporary context, is because the political reality of capitalist modernity frames all these thinkers and their ideologies over this large tranche of historical time (the last 100 to 150 years).

This spectrum begins at the ‘far left’, moves towards the left and the centre, and then extends right through to the extreme ‘fascist right’. The 16 positions on this scale are as follows:

FAR LEFT

Positions (P.)1. and 2. occupy a mini-spectrum, involving more than two positions, but two suffice for our purposes here. This mini-spectrum goes *from* an internationalist left-wing Hegel-Marxism of radical inclusion involving a heterodox, open-ended stance of the most inclusively universal ilk (the position implicit to this thesis, but see also Gillian Rose 1981; 1996) *through to* internationalist left-wing Marxisms of varying local flavours and colours. Examples of the latter are Marx’s industrial working class-focused international socialist revolutionism as well as other so-called ‘classical Marxisms’ – like Rosa Luxemburg’s. For various ‘dissident’ Marxisms – amongst which can be found David Widgery (1986) – situatable at various places along this P.1.-P.2. scale, see David Renton (2004).

P.3. Left-wing populist radicalisms (what Jeffery Webber calls “the 2000 to 2005 period of left-indigenous insurrectionary revolt” in Bolivia [ISR, March 2011]; Emiliano Zapata/Pancho Villa; Che Guevara; Hugo Chavez at his peak).

In relation to the Japanese historical scene, the closest to a far (or populist) left in Meiji was Kōtoku Shūsui, on which see the next node.

RADICAL LEFT to SOFT LEFT

P.4. A stricter or clearer left (than certain reformist-parliamentary brands) extends *from* various quasi-revolutionary strands through ‘Seattle-style anti-capitalism’ *to* some more radically reformist left styles, which tend to blur and overlap (e.g., Zapata, Villa and Guevara again; Stop the War Coalition; Jean Jaurès; Tony Benn once out of parliament; Corbyn especially before he was leader of the Labour Party).

P.5. Softer or middle brands of reformism on the left (Stop the War; Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party; the NHS-founding UK Prime Minister Clem Attlee; Jaurès).

P.6. Centre-leaning left reformism (Jaurès;⁴⁴ Attlee’s overall stance; Bernie Sanders’ democratic socialism; Caroline Lucas’ Green stance/Greta Thunberg).

The nearest to any such *radical to soft left* in the Japanese Meiji context is Kōtoku Shūsui’s anti-imperialism and anti-war socialism of the early 1900s, but that, and he, was very uneven in its/his expression (note his ‘imperial socialism’ – see below).

CENTRE

P.7. The left shade of the centre: This includes aspects of current Fabianism and classic Fabian Beatrice Webb’s Minority Report to the Royal ‘Poor Law’ Commission, plus minimum wage-installing Chancellor Gordon Brown’s strand of New Labour, including Ed Miliband. This strand includes *The Guardian*, too. Figures/Institutions/Groups in this node are often rather protean, insofar as sometimes the Fabians, current *and* classic, as well as New Labour, tilted both to the so-called ‘centre-left’, but also to the centre or right. Thus, all degrees of New Labour, like classic and current Fabianism (plus *The Guardian*) involve(d) some or other political plasticity/pragmatism/opportunism.

⁴⁴ The Marxist historian and French studies specialist Ian Birchall has made the point to me that Jaurès may display an even wider scalar spread (going rightwards) than I manage to convey above. I thank him for this.

P.8. Mid-centre encompasses current and classic Fabianism; Eduard Bernstein's revisionism and social reformism; Ed Miliband/Brown/Blair/once new Blairite leadership option David Miliband; pro-NATO Attlee; *The Guardian*; Kōtoku and Abe Isoo's pro-ancient emperor-style socialism; Japanese Fabian 'Karl' Kawakami Kiyoshi.

P.9. The right shade of the centre, including David Miliband/Bernstein/classic and current Fabian technocracy/(later) Kawakami.

In Meiji Japan, socialism was frequently seen as compatible with this sort of backward-looking, benevolent-seeming or utopian imperial socialism – a quite different species of ideology from any leftist socialism (see also the next node).

SOFT RIGHT to HARDER RIGHT

P.10. Centre-leaning right: This includes classic Conservative grandee 'wets' (Michael Heseltine/Ken Clarke); Blair's pro-war rhetoric of 'restoring democracy to Iraq'; Blair's PFI support; Ferdinand Lassalle's state-supporting socialism/ Kōtoku and Katayama Sen's pro-Lassallean predilections; Bernstein's pro-German imperialism/influence from imperial Fabianism; Bismarck's (Lassalle-influenced) conservative state socialism's paternalist social welfare policies.

P.11. Middling to harder conservatism: Pertinent to this are Lassalle's social Caesarism, elitist romanticism, and Fichtean glorification of the state, but also classic imperialist Fabianism in its pro-imperialist, pro-war and pro-eugenicist forms. Also included in P.11. are the Islamophobic, anti-immigration, imperial-civilisational chauvinist aspects to the Blairite-Labour right. Also relevant here are the pro-war and financially corrupt tendencies at play during (and after) Cameron's Premiership. Similarly, British Home Secretaries with anti-immigration, quasi-authoritarian and quasi-right-wing-populist views can be cited here: on a trajectory of deterioration going from Straw-Blunkett (New Labour) to May-Patel (harder-to-hard conservative).

P.12. Harder authoritarian conservatism, albeit often permeable with P.11., encompasses the Conservative Party's ERG (European Research Group); the Republican Tea Party; US Neo-conservatives (Cheney, Rumsfeld, Perle and Wolfowitz); Boris Johnson/Dominic Cummings; Farage (UKIP then Brexit Party); Trump; Bismarck's repressive and left-suppressing conservative state socialism.

P.13. UKIP: UKIP's ideology is highly permeable, runs from P.12. to P.13. and touches on P.14. below, helping build bridges to organisations within P.14. organically, as do Johnson-Cummings, Farage and Trump – yet all 'uphold' parliamentary government (more or less) and so barely reach P.14., but they sometimes do reach there and they certainly encourage and embolden P.14. in their discourse/actions (e.g., Capitol Hill riot).

A comparison of the Meiji Japanese socialist context with 19th century German strands of conservative, statist and nationalist socialisms would be a fruitful one.

FAR RIGHT

P.14. Exacerbated right-wing populisms including the late 19th century Pan-Germanist movement; antisemitic, *Völkisch* German Christian Social Party leader Adolf Stoecker; various 19th century social Darwinisms, eugenicist movements and national socialisms (Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, H.S. Chamberlain; Georges Boulanger, Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras); Marine Le Pen's *Front National*; the Proud Boys (of Trump fame) or the 'alt right/lite';⁴⁵ and Japanese ultra-nationalists (e.g., Genyōsha/Kokuryūkai); militarist dictatorships, right-wing autocracies (Pinochet in Chile).

In the UK, the EDL/Britain First extend from P.14. to P.15., finding themselves more within P.15. than P.14. Historically, Francoism was surely P.14., yet this was also uneven and in flux.

⁴⁵ On this distinction, see: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/from-alt-right-to-alt-lite-naming-the-hate>

From P.13. to P.15. can be found populist to far-right nationalisms, ultra-nationalisms, national socialisms and fascisms – with high permeability/fluidity. Japan’s polity and imperialist foreign policy during the 1930s/1940s were mostly P.14., yet Japan was historically complicit for years with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy (Reynolds 2004).

Kita Ikki was surely P.14., yet he could be P.13., too, given his pro-parliamentary adherences before (or alongside) his ideas on martial law and the suspension of the Japanese Diet. Akamatsu Katsumaro and many other Japanists or Japanese national socialisms were P.13. to P.14. – yet these must be differentiated from *fascism* (Italian Fascism or German National Socialism). At P.14. were also Pan-Asianists and radical rightists Ōkawa Shūmei and Kanokogi Kazunobu, one-time Kita colleagues.

FASCIST RIGHT

P.15. Fascism: Mussolini; classic Italian Fascism stands here, insofar as it smashed the poor peasants’ and workers’ movement from the *biennio rosso* (2 red years in the early 1920s) on, crushing the left/liberal democracy there. Japan-in-this-era was P.13-P.14, not P.15, since smaller-scale state-suppression-from-above of the left, labour, socialist and communist movements occurred – and more slowly.

P.16. Extreme fascism or National Socialism involving Hitler’s NSDAP with the implementation of a labour- and civil society-smashing, viciously racist-ideological and activist-eugenicist-style liquidationist holocaustism.

Contra the claims of Maruyama Masao, this thesis argues that neither sort of fascism was victorious in 1930s-1940s Japan (or in Kita), despite the prevalence of ultra-nationalist extremism (see chapter 8 herein), which was brutal (e.g., Japanese rule in China and Korea).

(End of scale)

The Spectrum and Its Political-Ideological Implications

This scale is indicative, not exhaustive. The above invokes 16 different exemplary positions, while it also indicates – in the way that Blair, Corbyn and Fabianism cross categorical nodes, for example – how there is much political overlap, just as Michael Freeden’s work on political ideologies (1996; 2003; also in Leopold and Stears, eds. 2008) clearly establishes. Very strong on the aspect within ideologies that involves features of openness, plurality and multiplicity, Freeden bends his analytical stick in the direction of what he calls the permeability or overlap of ideologies one with another. This flows from certain facts about language, both the semantic and structural (or what he calls ‘morphological’) elements to it. In other words, Freeden sets limits to what might be said: by pointing out the “restrictions on the meanings political thought can embody and convey”. These “result from the permanent properties of political concepts: ambiguity, indeterminacy, inconclusiveness, and vagueness” (2008: 198). In the end, Freeden is led to conclude that, while needing to avoid any relativism, nevertheless “we can never nail down the intricate meaning of political concepts for once and for all” (ibid: 200).

While Freeden stresses the importance of ambiguity and the three other above-mentioned concepts he accents in his own work, this is not the only aspect to political ideologies salient in the context of socialisms in Japan or ‘socialisms’ generally. Socialism is no univocal or homogeneous concept but both complex and deeply contested. This point is not Freeden’s argument that socialism permeates into social democracy on one side and communism on the other, though Freeden is right that any implicit notion of socialism as a leftist ideology does that, too. Instead, I argue socialism is a far more widely and complexly used ideology than can simply be placed on ‘the left’, as historical usage, the above political scale and this thesis (chapter 4 herein) all suggest. As we see in Japan and indeed elsewhere, ‘socialisms’ fit vastly differing positions that often run *from far-left to fascist and furthest Nazi right*. Consequently, socialisms in the *plural* are an *array of different ideologies that span the full breadth of the political spectrum*.

If true, the salient fact is that both overlap (so-called 'collection') *and* differentiation ('division' and splitting) are at work in the complex processes within and across ideological forms. In short, socialism is not one, but *a manifold of hugely different socialisms in deep conflict with each other*. Marxism (revolutionary leftist *internationalist* socialism) fights against fascism (a self-styled far-right strand or brand of *national* socialism) and vice versa. In other words, there is no such thing as 'socialism in general' – it is a chimera.

This is why the cleavage of socialism-from-below and socialism-from-above is deployed in the Introduction. It enables us to consider the difference between left-wing socialisms and right-wing socialisms, not to mention centrist socialisms. Given some people tend to affirm that socialism is 'of course' and 'quite straightforwardly' on the *left* of the political spectrum (on a limited and restricting *soft to hard left* scale), this thesis' way of designating the split between leftist socialism and all the rest is most critical here, notwithstanding the fact even socialism-from-above encompasses a wide variety of different socialisms within itself (centrist to extreme right). The distinction of socialism-from-below and socialism-from-above embodies that split and the nature of these 'meta-forms' of 'socialism' were explicated in the previous chapter. Hence here this is applied to reading Kita Ikki.

Consequently, difference or division is fundamentally important. Especially if one is to account for such facts within the spectrum of 'socialism' as Marxism's fight with fascism – or Corbynism's struggles over its differences with what is crudely called 'Blairite' (and other) centrism. Given the salience of this aspect within the thesis, let me now introduce a political ideologies theorist who stresses the importance of 'division' as opposed to the current scholarly penchant for 'collection'. James Alexander (2014: 1) excoriates big figures in the field such as Freedman (see above), yet also Andrew Heywood and Andrew Vincent who are well-known for collections treating, from chapter to chapter, different and distinct ideologies. However, while Alexander affirms important distinctions between the three 'major' ideologies (liberalism, socialism and conservatism), he according to this research ends up being overly univocal or homogenising in his understanding of each ideology, since he sees

them as views “about what ought to be thought, said and done about politics in terms of a sole ... criterion” (ibid: 3). This static and ahistorical approach – one that lacks contextual richness, suppleness or dynamism – not only does not work with ‘the socialisms’, but it also undervalues ideologies like feminism and environmentalism calling them merely ‘minor’.

What the above discussion entails is that this thesis takes a kind of *subtly or dialectically mediated* stance: it refuses to affirm any simple static differentiation or division on the one hand (Alexander 2014) or the overwhelming dominance of ambiguity, overlap and indistinction on the other (Freedden 1996, 2003). Instead, it incorporates insights from both ways of thinking about ideologies. It seeks to do this while aiming to overcome, in Hegelian fashion, other limitations. This it does in the practical and concrete way it sketches out the 16-node political scale adopted within this thesis. Division or breaks are stressed in the above instances cited (the whole point of having different nodes or positions on the scale), while overlaps are accented, too. Thus, in relation to ‘permeability’ or overlap, as Freedden (2003) is often right to stress, an individual figure is sometimes cited in the scale as *spanning various nodes*: two or three at most usually, yet Blair spans *four*. His break from liberal centrism (Blair’s self-styled ‘social liberalism’) to a middling- to hard-ish right stance (his foreign policy, Neo-conservative-supporting neoliberalism) mirrors the kind of ground traversed in the shift of a *tenkōsha* (ideological convert or heretic) from liberal centrism to a *harder* (or the *far*) right – in the context of pre-war Japan, which is the main focus here.

There are three last points to make before the strategy of reading adopted in this thesis is addressed further. Hence, first, due note should be taken of the fact that there are 6 nodes on the left (3 ‘far’ and 3 ‘less radical’); 3 in the centre; and 7 on the right (4 ‘softer’ to ‘middling’ to ‘harder’; 1 militarist, autocratic, strong populist far-right; and 2 for fascism: 1 fully Fascist and 1 ‘extreme’ fascist). This may indicate something about the right itself or something about the focus in this thesis: surely the latter, since my

main focus in this thesis is on the hard to far right. Second, I have left Stalinism⁴⁶ off this scale, but a fuller spectrum would need to address this carefully (agreeing with CLR James on Stalinism [1950] I would provisionally place it one node to the right of Bismarck, with Stalin's socialism-in-one-country as a 'radically exacerbated Bismarckianism' or maybe even further to the right). The main point for our purposes is that, thirdly, Kita comes out as P.13. or P.14. In view of the above, perhaps more nodes could be added to this political spectrum, yet that is a different project. In accordance with this thesis' non-dogmatic Hegel-Marxism, this scale is open-ended, experimental, provisional.

The Strategy of Reading

Let me return to the strategy of reading employed in this thesis more explicitly. The radically inclusionary grand theory posited here gives rise to the focus in my reading on what remains excluded and included in Kita's writing as these manifest themselves in the texts chosen for examination and *vis-à-vis* the ideological orientation such 'manifestations' uncover. The grand theory begets a political scale from far-left (aiming at the fullest possible economic and socio-political, plus ethico-philosophical inclusionary perspective) to extreme far-right (embodying the most virulently exclusionary stance on the furthest right of the political spectrum hitherto attained). 'Extreme left' in the sense of revolutionary internationalist Hegel-Marxist socialism-from-below is posited, once it is properly expounded, as *the most inclusionary frame*. In contrast, the 'most extreme fascist right' orientation deploying a virulently National Socialist-from-above-like murderous-exclusionary, racist-eugenicist conspiracy theory is also derivable as the ultimate antagonist to the inclusionary grand theory. This grand theory and its practitioners would also be something that Nazism wished to suppress first, before the latter might implement its full exterminationist politico-ideological programme. It is important to note that radical inclusion is only a *possible result* to be

⁴⁶ Stalinism in its myriad forms and offshoots is a complex phenomenon and cannot be treated seriously or systematically here. I treat it succinctly elsewhere in an article I have written on internationalism and Marxism.

striven for as an explosion of all narrow-mindedness, chauvinism and exclusion – and it is in no way any kind of inevitably resulting endpoint of ‘History’ supposed to come whether we like it or not, or fight to realise it or not. In this way, one of the most inclusive and expansive political philosophies potentially could and can, in partial or grander ways, also *fail or lose*. Yet it aims always to learn and constantly overcome any one-sidedness. In short, nothing is inevitable; and the future is radically open.

Hence all the above results in *a set of possible, geo-historically mediated differences* from least inclusionary or most exclusionary on the furthest right to most radically inclusionary on the furthest left. This, then, is the spectrum deployed in this chapter. In a provisional way, this spectrum has 16 nodes of differentiation. The political scale and its own commentary internally establish the validity (or not) of all this, though there are admittedly major assumptions embedded within the grand theory that cannot be fully laid out here.

As Kita Ikki has been located within nodes P.13. to P.14. as a harder – or a far-right and ultra-nationalist, but *non-fascist* – stance, he rests one or two nodes away from Mussolini’s fascism. The latter appears within node P.15. How did this proximity happen? It was construed via readings offered in relation to texts/policies closely examined for their degrees of exclusion or inclusion.

In other words, the reading enacted here will be attentive to what is being included and what excluded in Kita’s weaving of his ideological web of Japanese expansionism, militarism, imperialism (a ‘good imperialism’ as it is enacted by the ‘justice of a [good] Japanese state’, Kita avers), and Pan-Asianism. And all these flow from his *national socialism*. This excludes independent national Chinese and Korean autonomy and self-agency, despite their being precisely the kind of ‘yellow races’ that Kita sees himself and his ideas-in-praxis as ‘rescuing’. What is it that Kita’s conceptions of ‘socialism’ and ‘statism’, ‘imperialism’ and ‘Pan-Asianism’, ‘pro-war’ militarism, ‘humanity and justice’, and so on, truly include and exclude? The argument is that careful attentiveness to this in Kita’s ideas about socialism reveals the nature of the ideas that underpin Kita’s political conceptions: ‘*Asian Monroe*’ doctrines that call for dominance, not equal co-

development with fellow Asian peoples; a *social Darwinism* that cynically or naively places Japanese above all other peoples; and a relentless focus on *Japan's national hegemony* hardly to be differentiated from programmes proposed by such latter-day ultra-nationalist shishi (Japanese loyalists) as Tōyama Mitsuru of the Genyōsha (Dark Ocean Society) and Uchida Ryōhei of the Kokuryūkai (Amur River Society).

Thus a careful mapping of many of Kita's most important early foreign policy and state-socialist concepts – both as set out within the early articles that have not been studied sufficiently in English language scholarship hitherto, plus aspects of Kita's first book that have not been foregrounded, either – provides us with a new lens on some of the most foundational aspects of Kita's actual early politics. This, alongside the radically inclusive to virulently exclusive nodes on the political scale delineated above – not to mention the thesis' already articulated distinction between socialism-from-above and socialism-from-below – enables us to diagnose, in what follows from this Hegel-Marxian grand theory of inclusion, the diseased heart of Kita Ikki's highly, albeit not fascistically, exclusionary political logic in his early period. Therein lies his *ultra-nationalist socialism*: an ideology of socialism largely of the hard or far right.

To sum up this method, then, the degree of inclusion and exclusion determines the place on the political spectrum ranging from far left to far right that is deemed apt in any given case. Kita will be determined thus but this can be applied, subtly in all cases, to other political discourses and praxes around the world.

Here I focus overwhelmingly on Kita's *written texts* to detect what kinds of thought orientations he possesses, which has the weakness that there may potentially be a certain cynical deception going on in various writings of Kita's, yet our attention to these 'obscure' pieces tends to lend verisimilitude to their correspondence to Kita's views. This is so just in virtue of the fact that there was no wide audience envisaged for these articles and hence I think Kita could set out his romantic ideas of ultra-nationalism with a starkly honest and youthful boldness, decisiveness and impunity.

Marxism (qua principle and praxis of radical inclusion) and fascism (qua principle and praxis of radical exclusion)

Why is Hegel-Marxism vaunted here as so radically inclusionary? And why are Fascism and the exacerbated fascism that was Nazism so virulently exclusionary? This can be set out quite simply, but they require further short discussion on the essence of the expanded, inclusive, and dynamically-processual universality of a subtly-dialectical, open-ended, anti-reductionist Hegel-Marxism⁴⁷ on the one hand and the nature of fascism as a political ideology and lethal reactionary mass praxis from the middle/belowest of radical exclusion on the other.

To do this, the three overarching agencies of excluded, exploited and oppressed require examination, as well as what might be called the pyramidically exclusivist *social totality* under capitalism. Hegel-Marxism and Nazism are radically mutually antagonistic reactions to the social totality that is capitalist-racist-ableist patriarchy (see Forstater 2002; also, bell hooks 2000⁴⁸).

The first question to be asked here is: why are these three agencies seen as privileged sites for apprehending the nature of the social, political and economic world in which we are inserted? The claim is this: only by understanding the standpoint of the excluded, the exploited and the oppressed can we shed light on the fundamental sociological and political structure of our world (for the debate on standpoint theory, Harding 1991, 1997, 2004, 2008; see also Hekman 1997; Rolin 2009; Kokushkin 2014). This is what informs this thesis' reading of Kita Ikki – replete with an understanding and critique of Kita very much *from below*, from what is intensely excluded by his own discourse. Let us finish by quickly going through them.

⁴⁷ This thesis' Hegel-Marxism is developmental, open-ended, anti-reductionist – excluding all one-sided economisms or other base-superstructure tendencies. Rather than opposing violent pseudo-universalisms (opposing which often leads such reasoning to posit itself dangerously *outside* 'rationality'/'universality', rendering justice impossible *a priori*), this thesis offers complex, developmental universals. Progress is not *inevitable*, but fallible, to be achieved. Only dynamic-developmental, ever-inclusive universalities make possible higher and deeper justice, ethics and truth beyond ecocidal-'racial capitalism', patriarchy and all exclusivistic social totalities.

⁴⁸ hooks (2000: 6) refers to "transnational white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" in her book on *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. As hooks herself uses *lower-case letters*, I respect that usage here.

First of all, the agency of the exploited tells us about how the economic world, internationally speaking, is largely as Marx stated it was in *Capital*: a world of exclusivistically economic and competitively extractive exclusion, insofar as the exploitation of labour lies at the heart of one crucial pillar of our world with its consequent plethora of alienations: from each other, from our work and from nature (Saito 2017). Descartes believed in the foundational salience of ‘I think, therefore I am’, yet a deeper truth is inevitably: ‘I am classed, therefore I am’ – with all the unevenness and duality of the specific restrictions, as well as formal and other freedoms, that very much accompany that. If we took an x-ray of the body economic of the social totality, we would see it is irreducibly shot through with *economic class difference*. This is fundamental, going all the way down.

Secondly, following on from the previous point, there is no such thing as a one-sidedly objective or material economic fact or phenomenon that is not political (in a broad sense) simultaneously and to its core – or not soaked through with a consciousness that is also inevitably political. Economics is *not* the *only* base or foundation – somehow subsequent to which politics is purportedly set in secondary motion. On the contrary, politics too goes all the way down. It is *immanent to* any economic fact or phenomenon, not naively ‘outside it’ or ‘construed from it’. If someone is a worker, this involves an immediately ethical, philosophical *and* political predicament. This is because the job/function always already implies a latent ethico-political orientation. Her situation will, to her, either embody, say, a conflict between her own interests or needs on the one hand and one who is possessed of a certain nexus or quantum of socio-political power on the other hand who almost literally ‘lords it over her’. Within that, some will surely systematise that into a solidarity of all those so ‘lorded over’ and others will play this conflict out more individualistically (that too is on a spectrum). Or indeed, there will be those who never see such a disjunction (between boss and worker), but only *feel* a familial or regional or national (or some other) bond or situatedness. Inclined to accede to the ‘naturalness’ of economic (that is ineluctably

political) power, emperor, boss and/or *senpai*⁴⁹ appear *in loco parentis* (as if all were *en grande famille*) in the workplace or the nation.

In other words, although *economic class power* is immediately *asymmetrical political class power*, too, there are those for whom such a frame is otiose. Though it may be clear to many that, for those in charge or who are employers, the one in charge is and was somehow always already (*or precisely came to be*) materially, emotionally, mentally (and so on) in a more advantageous position than the worker and that this is *political* and has a history as to how and why it came about, some will see this as natural and inextinguishable. If economic power gives as well as implies political power, the contrary also holds. In short, the politics and the economics go all the way down and unavoidably intertwine.

It follows that the excluded cannot be radically separated from the exploited, but analytically, we can still make the distinction. This is because, clearly, the agency I call the exploited is never just a worker, but also a politically degraded, marginalised or excluded citizen, an embodied subject, an ethical being with choices, no matter how formed, de-formed or (mis-)informed they may be by over-determining 'common-sense' ideas propagated and circulated by ruling class media – by what Althusser famously called *ideological state apparatuses* (1971) or Gramsci, *hegemony* (1971). Hence the agency of the *excluded* is the *Ur-Gestalt* or shadow – or rather the prototype – of the exploited, from which the clearly delineated contours of the exploited in modernity receives its more concrete manifestation or specification: in short, its ethically, politically or philosophically excluded form manifests itself as primarily economic exploitation or as some other kind of oppression (racial, sexual, gender-based, ableist and so on). The excluded as an agency is more philosophically or ethically determined or constituted on an *overarching or slightly higher order* to the specifics of exploitation or oppression, and yet it is always *latent* – immanent to the mode of exploitation or oppression in question.

⁴⁹ *Senpai* refers to a senior (or senior colleague) in an often very age-hierarchical Japanese social context.

Exclusion is the original ethico-philosophical form, which all exploitation and oppression take – with economic exploitation being the form of exclusion that the modern proletarians undergo by means of extraction of surplus value when they labour. Oppression, however, while being a form of exclusion, is not economic as such: a peasant or a person of colour, as they say in the United States, may be oppressed for any number of reasons – say, on account of her being discriminated against for her Catholicism rather than her Protestantism; for being Muslim rather than Christian; black rather than white; female rather than male; autistic rather than neurotypical and so on. Exclusion is the most broadly generic kind of *original formation* that a more specific sort of exclusion like exploitation or oppression undergoes under definite conditions. Exclusion is the idea that enables a complexly unified imbrication or overlap of exploited and oppressed to be explicitly thematised – such that no philosophical reductionism (or hierarchy) need occur (or be theoretically justified) as between class, racial, sexual, gender, embodied and other kinds of discrimination, albeit in any definite situation one of these may be more determinative in concrete circumstances. Addressing one or more exclusions – as *de jure* basic by comparison with all the others – will only weaken and debilitate the progressive movement and enfeeble its rich complex unity and variegated strengths: if class is stressed over all other aspects, then sexuality and gender will be sidelined, as well as race and other aspects (like able-ism and the like), too (Crenshaw 1989). This in turn will prevent the progressive movement from succeeding at the highest level, since the exclusion of one group will weaken the force of all – especially when they try to bring themselves to the very acme that is the greatest macro-level of inclusion/liberation. Such (even partially) exclusionary tactics can become the means whereby the excluded are divided against each other through competition over ‘scarcity’ and thus this will only block and hold back the development of all: the fullest inclusivity will have been abrogated.

As a result, it is only on the basis of a perspective that strives for the fullest inclusivity for all – in short, one that includes and has a clear focus on the masses *from below* in all their unity-in-radical-diversity – that any thought and thinker can in turn be fully and most accurately comprehended as to their politics on a left-right spectrum. It is this ultimate standpoint that informs the present thesis and it is this principled and

progressive quality to the ‘from-below-ness’, as it were, that encapsulates the essence of that deep inclusivity, too. For, to win, the inclusive movement needs the best of the masses from below to enact the most inclusive, and thus the most radically democratic, politics it is possible to develop and implement.

In sum, to best apprehend Kita Ikki’s socialism and his role as a political thinker, this thesis offers the following basic radical tools: attentiveness to what is excluded/included in Kita’s writings; and a genuine standpoint theory from below that privileges the masses in such overarching agencies as the exploited, the excluded and the oppressed. While not so much in the way of ‘the exploited’ will be looked at here (except by means of deflection onto an implicit international relations setting), the nuts and bolts of our reading – in focusing on who or what is truly *from below*, as well as discursively and actively excluded, exploited and oppressed – can nonetheless unlock a new Hegel-Marxian interpretation of the political thought of Kita Ikki.

This, finally, is why fascism is the sick and twisted mirror-image of Hegel-Marxism apprehended through a distorted-distorting looking glass. And these two ideologies-in-praxis must be mutually defined as deeply radically opposed breeds: as reactionary-exclusionary versus progressive-inclusionary *mass movements*. It is also why when Marxism goes awry, dies and retreats within the borders of a paranoid, privileged *nomenklatura*-run counter-revolutionary nation-state, it results in a ‘quasi-totalitarian’⁵⁰ national socialism that seems to morph into a kind of kith and kin of fascism (achieved via a very different historical path).⁵¹ Kita’s, crucially, was a *national socialism*, yet without the pivotal accoutrements of a mass movement. Hence neither Marxist nor fascist. Instead, and all this notwithstanding, the shape of *his* exclusionism was still largely ultra-nationalist and far-right.

⁵⁰ See Graeme Gill (1998) on why even Russia under Stalin was not a totalitarian state. Hence my usage of ‘quasi-totalitarian’ here.

⁵¹ With *fascism*, violent suppression of a mass-revolutionary, internationalist left-wing movement appears at the *beginning* – orchestrated by an organised party violently intruding from *outside the establishment*. With *quasi-totalitarian socialism-in-one-country*, in contrast, such suppression takes eventual hold as an *immanent deviation* – and only *after* a progressive revolutionary movement has grown up, seems to win for some time and then dies or is extinguished/suppressed. In Stalin’s Russia, a new class (the *nomenklatura* or party apparatchiks) entrenched its rule.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a methodology and close readings that can help us understand the political complexity of Kita Ikki, as well as the political ideologies of socialism, fascism, ultra-nationalism and the left-right political scale more generally. I have done so through a hermeneutics of reading that relies upon an explicitly and honestly grand-theoretical approach, albeit I claim that all approaches in fact are grand-theoretical, as this is an unavoidable predicament of political-intellectual argument and commitment. The nature, structure and logic of exclusion and inclusion are critical to this manner of reading Kita Ikki and my claim has been that we can better understand his position as on the radical but non-fascist right – P.13-P.14 on my scale – if we offer this kind of nuanced political scale by which I have navigated through Kita's work over many years. Careful reading – and, in this case, meticulous translation from the Japanese – has been at the heart of this approach to reading political ideologies – one informed by a non-dogmatic, radically anti-reductionist Hegel-Marxist dialectics of identity and difference (including ideological collection and division; plus permeability/overlap and separation).

Chapter 3: The Origins of Sino-Japanese Rebellion and the Early Kita Ikki

American academic George Wilson persistently argued that Kita Ikki was a rebel or ‘malcontent’ who cannot be understood outside traditional Sino-Japanese political thought (1966: 89, 97; 1969: vii). There is some validity to Wilson’s claim, despite the fact that Kita also absorbed much Western thought: especially legal-constitutional theory, diverse statisms, various socialisms, social evolutionism and ‘Darwinisms’ biological *and* social. He blended Sino-Japanese and Western concepts in his work. However, only by understanding the complexity and diversity of what ‘rebellion’ signified in Japan and in Kita’s earliest background can the thrust of Kita’s ‘rebellious’, ‘socialist’ politics be better grasped.

To begin to chart Kita’s political development and its background influences in earlier Sino-Japanese thought, this chapter outlines various important lines of Sino-Japanese rebellion in relation to its effects on modern Japan. A sense of Kita’s ideas on rebellion is then briefly delineated with a focus on various early influences on Kita, too. A summative coda is also offered on such mid- to late Meiji right-wing, nationalist-Japanist phenomena as the Genyōsha, the Kokuryūkai and Kokusuishugi (national essentialism). This brings the backdrop here outlined up to Kita’s time regarding the response of the populist right to the unfolding Meiji decades, thus enabling a direct comparison between Kita and the Japanese populist to far right in late Meiji.

Sino-Japanese-Style Rebellion in Modern Japanese History

As the work of Tetsuo Najita (1971, 1974), Harry Harootunian (1970, 1988) and much other scholarship (Wakabayashi 1986, 1988; Steben 2002, 2004) indicates, Japan’s intellectual and political history – certainly from the Edo or Tokugawa era (1600-1868) on – has witnessed rebellion as a many-hued activist-intellectual tradition. This was mainly as an alternative source *from above* and *within elite discourse or action*, flowing

from what I term an *alternative establishment* with its implied radicalism. Since they saw the Tokugawa house as having usurped imperial rule, this ‘alternative establishment’ – and its historic activist-ideological purveyors during the Bakumatsu (late Edo) era – centred on the imperial house and on ‘restoring’ power to it. Thus Japanese modernity prior to Western incursion in the mid-19th century had a split practico-ideological heritage: a bureaucratism (*kanryōshugi*) represented by the Tokugawa pre-modern military regime versus an emperor-centred restorationism or idealism prone to invoke the purity of the human spirit (see Najita 1974: 2, 6-8, 14-15). While things are more complex than this, Najita’s formulation provides a good heuristic measure for orienting the discussion on rebellion within Japanese history.

The bureaucratic side tended to favour a more orthodox, rationalistic and hierarchical Neo-Confucian political-legal order, where a worldview often closely aligned to *shushigaku* (the study of Zhu Xi [1130-1200]) in the Japanese intellectual-historical milieu is affirmed. This was not always so, since Buddhism and Shintō also functioned as accepted parts of establishment thought for long periods (Ooms 1985). In contrast, the emperor-centred restorationism that grew during the Tokugawa era, while drawing on various intellectual traditions and ideologies like *Kokugaku* (Japanese nativism or national learning) and *Mitogaku* (Tokugawa scholarship in Japanese history and Shintō studies), can be seen as essentially originating from a more rebellious-intuitionist, alternative elite strand of Neo-Confucianism: Wang Yangming thought (Jp. *Yōmeigaku*). It is this often Shintōist, emperor-centred, *Ōyōmei*-influenced alternative elite who, by Bakumatsu, drove Japan towards revolution in the 1860s – one led by Japanese *shishi*, men of high national purpose (see Huber 1981; Jansen 1961 and 1994).

Rather paradoxically for one who repudiated the Shintōist elements of this ideology, it is arguably something of the *shishi* spirit (with its slogan of *sonnō jōi*=revere the emperor, expel the barbarian) that pervades Kita’s views on restorationism and the Meiji restoration revolution (*Meiji ishin kakumei*). Thus, something of what had in the 1860s constituted ideas from alternative elite restorationism had, by mid- to late Meiji, become significantly codified into constitutional law. Core ideas from restoration

ideology (the 'kokutai' or national essence) had been adapted to form a kind of neo-establishment legal-constitutional doctrine. This, however, Kita repudiated.

Intimations of Kita's Earliest Ideas on Rebellion: Departing from Shishi Kokutai Thought

Though holding a positive view of the restoration as a 'social democratic' revolution, Kita rebelled from a young age against theocratic and patriarchal constitutionalism (Minear 1970: 1) – the at least partially institutionalised restorationism of the standard state, constitutional and top-down legal, moral and political ideology of the mid- to late Meiji era (Gluck 1990). According to this doctrine, the kokutairon (national polity myth) involved bansei ikkei ('a single imperial line to all ages eternal') and the idea of Japan as a quasi-Confucianised, loyally filial kazoku kokka (family state) watched over benignly by the national paterfamilias (Japan's 'sacred and inviolable' emperor). Due to his outspoken criticism of this part-Neo-Confucianist, Mitogaku and Shintō-inspired kokutairon (seen as extending back to Japan's 'age of the gods'), the early Kita has been understood as a *left-wing rebel*, especially in full English language scholarly treatments (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006). This thesis offers a different explanation for Kita's Sino-Japanese-style rebellion and his ideas on such – one based in close readings (chapters 5, 6 and 7) facilitated by the author's translation of pivotal early Kita texts (translations not yet in the public domain).

Here we focus slightly more widely on how Kita formulated his ideas on *the Japanese* as rebels, not as loyal-filial subjects, as per the established part-Neo-Confucianist state doctrine. Kita's ideas certainly clashed with this state-imperial ideology – important strands of which were propagated originally by many Japanese thinkers including the Bakumatsu, alternative elite shishi (Koschmann 1987: 3-4; Wakabayashi 1988; Harootunian 1970). Later, the new constitutional order was devised by Japan's Meiji oligarchs (with their often oyatoi-gaikokujin [hired foreign worker] advisers/assistants) – under the leadership of the first prime minister in the new constitutional polity of the 1880s: Itō Hirobumi (Itō 1889; Ladd 1908; Beasley 1990; Dudden 2005; Ogawara 2010; Takii 2016).

Kita's ideas also explicitly clashed with establishment lawyer-jurist-constitutionalists like Hozumi Yatsuka (1860-1912), who expounded the kokutai from the 1890s on (Hozumi 1896, 1910; Minear 1970; Sims 1972). Kita's lengthy ideological-constitutional critiques of bansei ikkei are not interrogated herein (for such, see Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006). Yet Kita's views on, and as an instance in, rebellion *are indeed presented* – in contrast with previous English works where such rebellion is seen *as leftist socialism* (in Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006). In classical Sino-Japanese terms, Kita, however, was neither emperor-centred restorationist (pro-bansei ikkei) nor any simple pro-bureaucratic thinker (following Zhu Xi or shushigaku in Japanese). Nor yet, any straight Ōyōmei (Wang Yangming) thinker. Instead, he synthesises elements from Zhu and Wang and their Japanese followers, to which he adds considerable Western learning, too. In short, he is Eclectic school (setchūgakuha), as seen below.

Kita consistently argues in his earlier writings – not only in his *Kokutairon* book (1906), but also in 'Kokumin tai kōshitsu no rekishiteki kansatsu: iwayuru kokutairon no daha' (1972 [1903]: 36-38)⁵² – that rebellion, as opposed to imperial-restorationist *loyalism*, has been a fertile tradition throughout Japanese history. Kita calls this Japanese tradition one of rebels and traitors or 'ranshin zokushi' (乱臣賊子). The article, appearing serially in Sado shinbun (Sado News), suddenly breaks off – and was banned – where 'our [i.e. Japan's national] ancestors' were all called 'rebels' and 'traitors' (gojin no sosen wa subete 'ranshin' 'zokushi' nariki; Kita 1972: 38).

Moreover, especially in the second section of the article, Kita cites various classically famous historical rebels and traitors. He mentions Yoshitoki (1163-1224) who "boldly captured the three fathers and sons of the imperial family and banished them separately and one by one to a remote place near the seaside" (ibid: 37), and Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), "the so-called 'king of Japan', [who] obtain[ed] the chancellorship of the realm... He took the role of emperor, furthermore, and intimidated everyone into obeying him" (ibid: 38; my translations and insertions in

⁵² My translation: 'Historical Observations on Japanese Nationals in relation to the Imperial Family: Smashing the so-called Theory of the National Polity'.

square brackets, as hereinafter). Yet another of the important historical figures Kita references was Hideyoshi (1537-1598):

‘the honourable descendant of Ame no Koyane (or Amaterasu no Ōmikami), [who] unabashedly claimed absolute right for military force by means of the following extreme assertions: ‘One can be an emperor if one wishes it. One can be a king if one wishes it’ (ibid).

There should be no surprise at such salient facts of rebellion Japanese-style, for these traditions go right back to Japan’s classicism, which is ancient China – a Mencius-centred classicism in Kita’s case in which he was unusually well-schooled (see Tankha 2006). Hence, even prior to famous Chinese philosopher Mencius (Ch. Mengzi; Jp. Mōshi), who advocated the policy of righteous remonstrance with rulers, rebellion had long been prized as a way of re-instituting political virtue – when a regime had become evil, corrupt or simply unviable. Consequently, *rebellion* in the context of the rise and fall of various Chinese dynasties could accord with the so-called *mandate of heaven*. This, however, was also used as simple pretext to overturn any dynasty, good or bad. Most importantly, there were hangyakusha (rebels and traitors) aplenty in Japan. Japanese-style rebellion flourished while the imperial house was marginalised and manipulated by powerful figures outside it, as the above cases Kita cites in ‘Kokumin tai kōshitsu’ demonstrate.

A foundational rebellion, for Kita (the usurping of imperial-court power by the Tokugawa), was bodied forth in the Tokugawa house’s dynastic dominance itself – what the alternative-elite, emperor-centred restorationist critique was reacting against. Albeit rebellion in Kita’s sense transcends Tokugawa bureaucratism versus imperial-restorationist loyalism. Kita never repudiated the imperial house – yet neither did he endorse any imperial-line, ahistorical continuity thesis (*bansei ikkei*), as per the quasi-Shintō-based doctrine, offering instead a state-sovereignty and state organ constitutional view.

For Kita, the highest organ of state was dual, residing in both emperor *and* the ‘Japanese people’ (as represented by the Imperial Diet-parliament; see Nomura 1966;

Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006). But in rejecting the ‘uniquely unique’ (van Wolferen’s useful phrase; 1990) modern oligarchical construction of Japan’s imperial system (tennōsei) and, consequently, its framing of the emperor as essentially divine, Kita was being classically Sino-Japanese and Mencian, insofar as the whole critical Confucian tradition going back to the Duke of Zhou accepted the idea of *conditional monarchical power*. Having lost the mandate of heaven, a king could be justly toppled for various malfeasance. Mencius is a significant reference point for Kita in the construction of his own national/state socialist (kokka-shakaishugiteki) political ideas (see chapter 7).

Unsurprisingly, Japan has witnessed rebellious traditions beyond those identified by Najita. As this thesis suggests, Kita’s own brand affords a distinctive understanding of the 1868 restoration-revolution as a national-statist-socialist revolution – ranged alongside a *prima facie* more classical-Mencian view of the emperor’s role than the one proffered as kokutai (national essence) by the Bakumatsu shishi and the oligarchs during the 1880s, culminating in the new imperial-constitutional system from 1889.

Ōyōmei, Ōshio Heihachirō and Ideological Ambiguity in Japan

Before placing Kita in his more youthful rebellious Sado context, historically earlier forms of rebellion must be broached, providing crucial background that cannot be left out. Thus Ōyōmei-style rebellion will now be considered. This will facilitate a firmer grasp on Yōmeigaku’s significance in modern Japan, too – and its radical political ambiguity ideologically. This is important because Ōyōmei thought is a pivotal ideology (or array of intellectual styles) that was influential among such movers and shakers in the Meiji restoration-revolution as the shishi, as well as in the 1930s (see, e.g., Najita 1971). Kita had been deeply impressed with their sonnō jōi orientation. In terms of the Sino-Japanese elements to his thought, moreover, the so-called Eclectic School in which this chapter later places Kita – building on Tankha (2006, chapter 1) – was undoubtedly moulded by Ōyōmei thought, which accounts for why this ideological background is deemed significant here. The most important figure in Ōyōmei-style rebellion in the 19th century was Ōshio Heihachirō (see Najita 1970). Due to this, I now

turn to him as an exemplar of the influence of Wang Yangming in mid-19th century Japanese idealist radicalism.

Ōshio was a thinker and former police official who opposed the unjust treatment of the peasantry by the Tokugawa regime. This culminated, in Osaka in 1837, in a revolt he led against it (Steben 2004; Najita 1987: 293-300). However, due to the authorities receiving early warning, Ōshio began the rebellion prematurely, leading to inevitable failure.

Steben⁵³ illustrates how Ōshio blended Sino-Japanese politico-spiritual ideas at a profoundly synthesised level common in early-modern to modern Japan. The role of inner light or intuition was deemed most basic to Wang Yangming (Ōyōmei) idealism. Remaining true to that while downplaying learning – Zhu Xi’s so-called ‘investigation of things’ (Ch. gewu) – were central aspects to Ōshio and Wang’s thought and practice. Furthermore, a fusion between thought and practice underpinned all Ōyōmei radical critique. Accordingly, how could the idea that the Tokugawa system was unjust not result in immediate rebellion? Ōshio embodied this intuitive-instinctive response to injustice.

Yet Ōshio’s thought combined these Chinese strands with a proto-Japanese-nationalist side. This is visible in his *Senshindō sakki* (Reading Notes from the Cave of Mind-Cleansing) of 1833, the writing of which Ōshio consecrated as an offering to the Sun Goddess (Amaterasu Ōmikami) and which, also in other ways (worshipping on Mount Fuji), placed his writings and actions in a very Japanese, spiritually symbolic context (for more, see Steben 2004: 87-88).

Thus, despite Ōshio’s ‘uprising’ against the Tokugawa, the trope of *rebellion* becomes a multivalent concept that stretches in many directions whether politically, ethically or religiously – as able to be deployed by ‘left’ or ‘right’ (yet *de facto* mainly right) *within*

⁵³ See Vincent Shen and Willard Oxtoby (ed., 2004). Barry Steben’s essay, ‘Wang Yangming Learning and the Path to Wisdom in the Philosophy of Ōshio Heihachirō (1793-1837)’ appears in Chapter VII (pp. 83-104).

the national-historical context, as the most cursory glance at Japanese political history evinces. Rebellions of the right have been witnessed aplenty in Meiji (culminating in 1877) and in Shōwa (especially in the 1930s) – and Ōyōmei is not infrequently invoked as cause (e.g., Najita in Craig and Shively [ed.] 1970; also in Morley [ed.] 1971; see also van Bremen 1990).

However, the main source of political ambiguity lodged deep within pre-Meiji rebellion derives from the fact that late Tokugawa Japan left unaddressed any test of *internationalism* – one crucial to identifying any would-be *fully modern* left-wing. The ambiguity-ambivalence factor in Ōshio also stems from *positionality*: he was a policeman and hero *from above* sacrificing himself *on behalf of* the people, yet because he could not possibly mobilise sufficient numbers to win in rebellion, a mass movement of *a modern, radically inclusionary leftist kind* was hardly viable in any Ōshio-informed frame. Hence, he remains ambiguous and partly undecidable *in terms of any full political modernity*, since the question of a truly progressive mass movement alongside a global-internationalist left-wing *had not yet been posed in Japan* (or elsewhere essentially). (This is also why Ōshio appeals to both left and right in Japan.) In Kita's day in contrast, this was no longer so and his negative response to questions of internationalism provides a decisive criterion enabling *ideological diagnosis* of Kita – or any thinker who espouses such *exclusionary national socialism* – as on the *right or far right* of the political spectrum, not the left (for more specifics, see chapter 5 herein).

Just because Ōshio or Kita were rebels does not mean they stand necessarily on the *left* of the political spectrum, since far-right rebels like Uchida Ryōhei (*Roshia bōkoku ron*; 1901⁵⁴) had publications banned, too. While Kita was strongly critical of the *historiographically*, and for him *scientifically, outdated* notions of bansei ikkei, his espousal of a very highly nationalist-statist construal of socialism repudiating all internationalist concepts marks him out as an ideologue of the (far) right. So does his stereotypical, anti-Semitic definition of Jewish people as 'those who forget their

⁵⁴ On the ban, see Saaler (2014: 137).

nationhood’ – with ‘Jews’ effectively essentialised as anti-national people *par excellence* (Kita 1959, vol. i: 431; see also the last four chapters of this thesis).

Before finishing this section, four similarities between Ōshio Heihachirō and Kita Ikki should be noted, invoking Najita’s account of Ōshio (1987). The full significance of these points becomes clearer later in this chapter:

First, Ōshio was renowned during his time at the academy for his ‘stubborn and defiant temperament’ (Najita 1987: 294). Kita was similar – even to the point where he, like Ōshio, exorbitantly censured others for what he saw as reprehensible ideas or behaviour. Note Ōshio’s ‘harsh criticism’ of Satō Issai (ibid: 294-5) and Kita’s coruscating and unfair attack upon Japanese socialists like Kōtoku and Sakai, plus upon pacifists like Uchimura Kanzō (see chapter 5 herein). Such fulminating excoriation was a common feature of Ōyōmei-style intuitionist moralism.

Second, there was Ōshio’s stance on “the fusion of ideal in action” (Najita 1987: 295). As Najita comments further: “Idealism in this sense was not a ‘dream’, but objective ‘righteousness’ itself, given solid shape by human action” (ibid). Or, as in Kita, by ‘righteous *state* action’ such as waging ‘justified war’ against Western imperialism: Japan’s *ōdō* (good kingly-imperial way) against the West’s *hadō* (evil hegemonic way). Kita also heavily criticises empty dreams or utopianism, which is why he commits to his more ‘realistic’ political method: justice-seeking and reconfigured *state military action* as against any *radical internationalism from below*. This, *contra* Kōtoku, Kita repudiates (see ‘Totsu, hikaisen wo iu mono’ [1972: 85-98] and chapter 5 herein).

Third, like Ōshio, Kita ‘distances himself from the present political order’: another system is necessary post-revolution. Hence, like Ōshio, he was a politically “alienated eccentric” (Najita 1987: 295). Yet, as stated, just because he critiqued the status quo, this does not mean Kita embraced leftism. We know this better than ever in the age of the so-called alt-right.

Fourth, Ōshio and Kita shared a ‘dogmatic or radical idealism’ pointing towards a “theory of revolt” (ibid: 296, 299) – Ōshio against the bakufu and Kita against the new Meiji oligarchical establishment. Moreover, if Ōshio’s space for critical action was the ‘public realm itself’ restricted to Japan, Kita’s canvas extended beyond: to include the global white world order (in Kita’s racial views). Violent imperial war was Kita’s self-avowed tragic but necessary method for transcending that (see ‘Nihonkoku no shōrai’, I and II [1972: 73-75, 76-84] and chapter 5 herein).

Kita on Rebellious Sado

Kita was born on Sado Island above Niigata in the Japan Sea. This moulded his rebellious spirit in two ways. First, Sado’s isolation and harsh environment meant it became a place of exile – with various famous individuals banished there, including Emperor Juntoku (1197-1242) and the Buddhist leader and militantly dogmatic proto-nationalist Nichiren (1222-1282). Identification with exile lent an air of resistance against authority to the island. Even one of the great rebellious-restorationist Bakumatsu shishi (Yoshida Shōin) had once visited Sado (Honma 1998: 201) and paid homage by leaving a poem at Juntoku’s (unofficial) imperial mausoleum in Mano (on Sado’s west coast).

Second, gold and silver were discovered there in the early 17th century – reinforcing Sado’s special status. This led to direct central control. A system of effective slavery was introduced to mine the precious metals, thus enhancing the sense that Sado and its people reflected outlawdom, since high numbers of criminals, exiles, homeless people and slave workers were brought there (see Isobe 1992, and Tsumura’s ‘Commentary’: 388-9). The harshness of this regime only fostered feelings of rebellion against oppression. The Kita family had itself fled to far-off Sado for some ‘questionable’ reason (Wilson 1969: 9), so his family line offered no exception regarding associations with past ‘outlawdom’.

Sado effused resistance to authority, epitomising isolation and rebellion. All this, plus a formation (*Bildung*) fostered by distinguished rebel-personages, ended up

generating on Sado not only a rugged sea-swept independence, but a distinctive political and aesthetic culture of autonomous development (Brazil 2009; Waycott 1996). Kita absorbed this Sado psychology, fully assuming the mantle of the politico-aesthetic romantic rebel.⁵⁵ Over his life, Kita had two books, plus a few articles, banned. In the early Taishō era (1912-1926), he was expelled from China, and was unable to return for three years (Wilson 1969: 52).⁵⁶ Finally, since Kita was executed as an ideological outlaw by the Shōwa state in 1937, his lifelong rebel status is ‘secure’ – albeit he was barely involved in the February 26th Incident prompting his arrest.

To understand what drove Kita, his ideological development toward early rebellion must be probed. Here Tankha (2006) is useful, since he tentatively traces some of the eclectic origins of Kita’s ideas to a number of his teachers on Sado Island.

After reviewing passages from Tankha regarding Kita’s background – as bolstered by additions or correctives⁵⁷ from Matsumoto Ken’ichi – I shall briefly pursue some of Kita’s Sino-Japanese roots. The aim is to spark further research into the so-called Sino-Japanese Ōyōmei and Eclectic School (*setchūha*) backdrop to Kita’s earliest ideas.

Kita’s Sado Educational Background

Crucial to the intellectual foundations of thought on 19th century Sado Island is Maruyama Meihoku (1818-92) – so-called ‘father of education on Sado’ (Yamamoto 1972), Confucianist head of the old Tokugawa school (the Shūkyōkan) and “teacher in the government middle school” from Meiji (Tankha 2006: 5). Though Kita was never taught by Meihoku, numerous educationalists and Maruyama disciples (e.g.

⁵⁵ Kita published many poems and some literary-romantic criticism (see examples of poems in Kita’s *chosakushū*, vol. iii; 1972). I have translated at least one of Kita’s longer poems. As for literary-romantic criticism, he commented on the Yosanos: Akiko and Tekkan, the famous Meiji poets (Kita 1972: 40-52, 53-64, 64-66).

⁵⁶ Kita’s belief that Song Jiaoren, founder of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party), was assassinated by jealous colleagues in 1913, and not by Yuan Shikai or his associates, meant that Kita was deemed a nuisance by the Japanese consulate and even by President Yuan himself (Wilson 1969: 52).

⁵⁷ As Satō Minako (2007: 312) points out, there are multiple careless mistakes in Tankha’s book: regarding, e.g., spellings, persons’ names and also the accuracy of certain dates.

Wakabayashi Gen'eki [1841-1895] and Ishizuka Terashi [1865-1910]) – *did* teach Kita (see Tankha 2006: 8-10; Matsumoto 1970: 49-60).

One 'major influence' was Hata Miki – Tokyo Imperial University (TIU) graduate and head at Kita's middle school, teaching him from 1897 to 1901. Hata had been involved in Sado's Jiyū minken and was also influenced by social Darwinism at TIU. Social Darwinism "found a highly receptive audience in Japan, as the rapacity of the powerful Western nations was clearly visible" (Tankha 2006: 9). This underscores the importance of social Darwinism to Kita's thought and his 'socialism' (see also chapters 4, 5 and 6 herein). Hata arrived at Sado Middle School in October 1898 and, the following October, an inspection occurred (Matsumoto 1970: 49). The school's focus was on classic texts, having more Sino-Japanese than Western books. The inspectors commended Hata for his pedagogical philosophy and supported the school's policy direction: comprehensive knowledge of things was better than narrowly scientific or analytical knowledge. This fits Kita's *Kokutairon* emphasis upon systematic knowledge (Kita 1959, vol. i; Preface: 1) – with Hata's broad-based knowledge orientation undoubtedly influential on Kita.

Saitō Keikichi (荊藤惠吉) – or, in Tankha, 'Saito Shinkichi' – was a Christian with "close connections through relatives to the conservative The [sic] Great Eastern School (*Daito juku*)" (Tankha 2006: 9). Having not attended *kōtō shōgakkō* (higher elementary school), Saitō embodied self-study, making it as a schoolteacher. He was 'young', 'passionate' and inspiring (Matsumoto 1970: 38-39). Most importantly, when Saitō was teaching Kita, the Sino-Japanese War was just starting and "teacher and pupils together competed to outdo each other in their expressions of patriotism" (ibid: 39).

Similar to Saitō, Kita became a quasi-autodidact, writing his 'virgin work' having never been a full university student. Secondly, fervent patriotism and nationalism in class were powerfully transmitted to Kita. The war – including the competitively patriotic classes – only fired Kita's nationalism. Thus Saitō and the school's impact was palpable. Kita later exuded similar emotions in what became his ultra-nationalistic and highly

militarist-expansionist early tracts concerning potential war with Russia (see chapter 5 herein).

Wakabayashi Gen'eki (Tankha: 2006: 5, 10) taught Kita Chinese classics for two years (Matsumoto 1970: 12, 38). Alongside other Maruyama students, Wakabayashi “played a crucial role both in articulating a political agenda and in regenerating the economic life of [Sado] island” (ibid; my square brackets). That this active *political* sensei was an *academic* mentor to Kita is telling, not least because Chinese classics (e.g., the *Mencius*) conditioned Kita's political rebelliousness.

Matsumoto (ibid: 38; my translation) adds:

Through the Confucian Wakabayashi, Kita had his eyes opened to the world of the ancient classics [koten] and began to construct [for himself] the [beautiful] dream of Mencius' ideal world. While hearing stories via Wakabayashi (a freedom and people's rights activist) about the Liberal Party fighting with the autocratic clan politics of the officials [yūshi sensei no hanbatsu seiji], these were only underlined by the heroic quality of people on Sado like Ukai, Takahashi, Maruoka, Honma, and so on. And about these people his father surely would have told Kita, too. [My clarificatory additions in brackets]

Consequently, in Wakabayashi's political activism Mencian ideals mixed with his freedom and people's rights politics. Unsurprisingly, this mix appears in Kita's first book: with Mencius featuring repeatedly – being called ‘the Plato of the East’ and an early *socialist* – just as Plato was the ‘Western Mencius’ (1959, vol. i: 421; 425-6; 431). Yet this is no leftism, as Kita's socialism involved the assertion of *imperialism* (Kita 1972, vol. iii: 86-87) and Marx plus Rousseau are unceremoniously rejected, too (Kita 1959, vol. i, Preface: 4).

Ideas from Wakabayashi and figures within Sado's freedom and people's rights movement (including his father and uncle) would have incubated in Kita's mind as he studied, helping him complete his first book. They formed part of Kita's 1903 *imperial socialism*, which constituted ‘an enemy (teki) to both left and right’ (see ‘Totsu’ in Kita

1972, vol. iii: 87) – and which was opposed to establishment conservatism. This imperial socialism was Mencian, Plato-inspired, and part-derived from Japan's freedom and people's rights movement (with its *kokken* or state-right aspects). Kita's so-called 'pure socialism' (*junsei shakaishugi*) inherited all such strands and more, as will be seen later herein, with rebellion discernible in at least two of the traditions (the Mencian and *Jiyū minken undō*). Thus rebellion – like socialism – appears from the left (or far left), centre, right *or far right* of the ideological-political spectrum.

Tankha then makes important claims regarding purported leftist influences on Kita:

Kita read Dickens, Marx's Theory of Surplus Value, and... Kidd on evolution as well as George's *Land Nationalization*. Hasegawa went on to become a journalist... he came into conflict with the authorities over an article... on women (July and August 1910 in *Hokai shinbun*) ... banned for insulting the emperor. ... in 1919, he was charged for writing on Trotsky in *Hakodate shinbun*. (Tankha 2006: 10)

It is uncertain, however, if Kita read much Dickens, Marx, and Kidd, albeit he refers to Marx and Kidd several times each in *Kokutairon*. Moreover, Matsumoto (from whom Tankha purportedly gleaned the above) writes that: *Hasegawa*, not Kita, excelled at writing, was a skilful writer of *waka* (Japanese poetry), was well-acquainted with world history, and, around 1900, had finished studying Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value*; Kidd's *Social Evolution*; and George's *On the Nationalisation of the Land*. In addition, *Alfred Wallace* (1882) wrote *Land Nationalisation*, not George, albeit George wrote on similar themes. Yet, most importantly, it is unlikely Kita read Marx and certainly not primary sources. In terms of impact on Kita, therefore, Matsumoto (1970: 54-56) stresses Oka Asajirō's evolutionary theory – with its social Darwinism – and Dickens' 'History of England', a children's book.

Mori Chiki (1864-1913) is cited – a major local civil rights (*minken*) figure on Sado, a pioneer of local autonomy and decentralisation, plus important in Burakumin (hamlet villager/'untouchable') liberation struggles (Mori Chikashi 1988). Following studying at the *Shūkyōkan* (Meihoku's school) and in Tokyo, Mori returned to Sado in 1890,

becoming editor of *Hokumei zasshi* (Northern Ocean journal). At the *Shūkyōkan*, Mori had drunk deeply of Edo-era *keisei saimin* (governing the nation, providing relief to the people) – a traditional ideology that wove together ethics-politics-economics. Ideationally, Mori – extremely eclectically – blended *keisei saimin* with Tokutomi Sohō-style *heiminshugi* (liberal commonerism) alongside a rejection of party cabinet politics in favour of the oligarchical *status quo* (Tankha 2006: 10). Tankha states this was part of the old ‘*Jiyūtō-Seiyūkai*’ position: two political parties – the Liberal Party and a section of the government forming a party – that temporarily joined forces in 1896. Though Mori wanted to end society’s class divisions, he held to conservative, contradictory and not fully democratic means for realising this – while campaigning for universal male suffrage (Tankha 2006: *ibid*). Kita similarly synthesised an updated Mencian monarchism; state sovereignty and ‘emperor-and-people-as-organs’ theory; commitment to biological evolutionism; social Darwinism; universal male suffrage – alongside ‘might-is-right’ theory and social-evolutionary imperialism with Japan as focus, while embracing Pan-Asianism (Kita’s ‘*Totsu*’, ‘*Nihonkoku*’ I and II; see chapter 5 herein).

Given this, it is unsurprising Kita’s first book at 23 was filled with ‘a truly chaotic content’ (Nomura 1966: 232). Kita, steeped in learning from ‘East’ and ‘West’, was seeking a way to integrate this in *Kokutairon* – via a synthesis of natural science, social science, politics, morals, religion, critique of mythology, a new mythology, and more. Thus, seeing who taught him and what, truly eclecticism is reflected as a very Meiji-like predicament – with a chaotic substance sometimes only half-digested (e.g., Szpilman 2002). Unlike Szpilman, however, this thesis argues that, when understood ideologically subtly, even the chaotic early substance has genuine consistency overall.

The Sino-Japanese Ideological Line of Succession on Sado Island Leading up to Kita Ikki
As stated at the beginning of this chapter, George Wilson argued that Kita could not be understood outside Sino-Japanese traditions of thought. Curiously, he then largely proceeded to ignore most East Asian influences on Kita. In a limited way, this section traces Kita’s line of succession from *sensei* (teacher/master) to *deshi* (disciple) going

back to the Tokugawa era. As Kita was taught by disciples of Maruyama Meihoku, Kita can be regarded as a mediated disciple of Meihoku.

According to the Sado Study Centre (within the Sado Board of Education; personal communication), after being educated by his adoptive father (Gakuko/Sonkyō) Kangakusha (Sinologist) and educationalist Maruyama Meihoku was taught first at Satō Issai's school (Honma 1998: 200), then later by Kameda Ryōrai (1778-1853). Ryōrai and his father, Kameda Bōsai (1752-1826), were Eclectic school (setchū-ha) thinkers. Bōsai is recognised for his association with Satō Issai – eclectic Confucianist and inspiration to rebel restorationists (Jansen 1981: 151), who blended Shushigaku with intuitionist-rebellious Yōmeigaku. Having lectured on Sado, Bōsai apparently achieved great influence (Sado Study Centre, personal communication).

Meiji Japanese historian Yamaji Aizan (translated by Squires 1999: 46) states:

The Eclectic school (Setchugakuha [*sic*]) was a school of thought that combined nativism, the Zhu Xi school, and the Wang Yang-ming school of thought. Its principal exponents were Inoue Kinga (1732-84), Katayama Kenzan (1730-82), and Hosoi Heishū (1728-1801).

In the light of this information, the 'line of factional ascent' can be visualised as follows: Kita himself was educated by Wakabayashi, Ishizuka, Saitō, Mori, *et cetera*, who were disciples of Maruyama Meihoku. Meihoku was educated by: Maruyama Sonkyō/Gakuko and Kameda Ryōrai. Ryōrai was the disciple of Bōsai, who himself was educated by Satō Issai. Issai was a disciple of Inoue Kinga.

Although systematic scholarship on the Eclectic school in either English or Japanese is minimal (Ravina 1999: 90), Robert Armstrong identifies such leading Eclectic school figures as Hosoi Heishū; Uesugi Yōzan; Katayama Kenzan; Inoue Kinga; and, briefly, Yamamoto Hokuzan, Kameda Hosai (i.e. Bōsai), Ota Kinjo, and Taki Keizan (Armstrong 1914: 277-79, 277-82, 283-84, 284-85, 285-86). Consequently, Armstrong helps us discern the ideologico-factional line of descent from Inoue Kinga to Kita, insofar as he identifies 'Kameda Hosai' (Bōsai) as the disciple of 'Inouye Kinga'.

Anyone who knows Kita well will have little doubt he fits into Japan's Eclectic school. Not unlike Kita's anti-status quo, anti-elite academic thrust, Hosoi saw his role as distilling the best nuggets from highbrow Confucianism and bringing these to *ordinary people*, not just to the high-born or samurai elites. Again like Kita, Hosoi "admired practical rather than speculative teaching" (Armstrong 1914: 278-9). Moreover, the stress in the Eclectic school was on rugged independence of thought ("too independent to be a slavish follower of any of the great teachers of China or Japan"; *ibid*: 279) – arguably a rare thing back then. Finally, Kinga's point about the clannishness of scholarly thought could easily be something Kita himself wrote (say, regarding bansei ikkei): "The disease of present-day scholars is to follow any teaching whatever without thought" (*ibid*: 284).

Theoretical Angles on Kitaesque Ōyōmei and Rebellion

Here I highlight two papers that help spotlight important points here: one by Okada Takehiko on Wang thought and its 'six interpretations' (1973: 139) and the other by Thomé Fang on Wang historically considered (1973). Merging insights from both, it is striking how one particular reading of Wang Yangming scholarship in Ming China resonates with the way Kita takes up his own ultra-nationalism. Given the Eclectic school largely derives from Yōmeigaku, while also fusing Shushigaku and nativist elements, this is a significant likely indicator of intellectual influence on Kita. Kita, then, paradoxically approaches a nationalist radical subjectivism prone to arrogating to itself – and to the hard militarist right – immediate knowledge of absolute intuited truth or the 'Supreme Good' of, in Kita's case, a *crisis strategy of global war* (see chapter 5 herein). I argue why below.

Okada (1973) refers to an existentialist or realisation school within Ōyōmei or Wang Yangming thought. The Ōyōmei-eclectic activist in Kita fits such a school exceptionally well. In its worst caricature of itself, this school leads to a supreme confidence in its hard-line views. In its intensely existential lamentations (憂い/urei; nationalistic distress), it everywhere stokes a sense of crisis regarding 'the parlous state of the

nation', leading to a penchant for absolutist dogmatism regarding immediate, short-term, irrationalist, hot-headed solutions; or to powerful assertions of utter truth and reason on the part of the partiality that takes itself for the whole, holding up immediate intuition and (often) falling into illusion (Okada 1973; Fang 1973).

With such hot-headed predilections observable on Kita's military-political plane, a swift and 'mad' frenzy towards radical nationalist revolution or rebellion appeared a strong likelihood, with his wild rhetoric fomenting 'sly stratagems' and *a second restoration* to seize Japan. In more global-strategic terms, Kita's plan for Japan, given its 'historic, military strengths', would be for it to 'conquer the white race', one country at a time, beginning with war against Russia, expanding to Siberia, Manchuria and Korea and then ultimately taking the 'Anglo-Saxon race' head-on in the 'coming final race war' (see Okada's 'mad' offshoot description in 1973: 140-2; see also Kita 1972 [73-5, 76-84], and chapter 5 herein). This is nothing, then, if not an *intense national existentialism* with much crisis awareness ('it is now or never').

Given how he fits these descriptions above, Kita is viewable as a radically exclusivist, nationalist, intuitionist, realisationist-subjectivist offshoot of Wang Yangming or Ōyōmei, from which the Eclectic school tradition splintered off. This was so, insofar as it welded together its own useful truths or mix of such truths in an immediate effulgence of 'realised or manifest [national] truth' – rather than seeking to comprehend the field of wider, mediated and global truths in a more inclusively rational manner. In sum, what ties Kita to a complex brand of rebellious Ōyōmei is the immediately intuited irrationalism and nationalist subjectivism (hoisted up as obvious 'supreme good') – all this despite his having been less narrowly nativist-Shintōist than bansei ikkei thought. Thus, no matter how he fused 'East' and 'West', the quality to that thinking, though eclectic, was like an arrow shot for the sake of an exclusivist Japanese hegemony.

Immediate Intuitionism, Ōyōmei and the Striking Compatibility with Heigaku (Military Studies)

In this section, I argue – and detect within Kita – that immediate intuitionism (Yōmeigaku) is prone to lead to hot-headed militarism.

It is well-known that Wang Yangming’s philosophy is based on the centrality of intuition in the mind.⁵⁸ Consequently, to be a good moral subject, the complex subtleties of knowledge and intellect are downplayed in Yōmeigaku. Instead, mere sloughing off ‘selfish desire’ or instantaneously accessing one’s true unselfish being, as well as entirely ‘perfect’ innate knowing (liangzhi), is ‘all that is needed’ to act upon true morality.

It is hence unsurprising that *confidence* is seen as essential to this recovery of one’s true self (purportedly *beyond* the selfish self). Yet misplaced over-confidence, as is inevitable in many instances, seems an inherent danger of Yōmeigaku intuitionism. This confidence stems from the fact that, for Wang: “There is the sage in everyone. Only one who has not enough self-confidence buries his own chance” (quoted from Kim: *ibid*).

Applying this to Kita, this realisationist strand of Ōyōmei thought can easily lead to political misjudgement and, in worst-case scenarios, political-ethical disaster.

This provokes a connected idea: namely the deep compatibility of such intuitive-style thinking, as emphasised by Zen and Yōmeigaku, with *military-irrationalist* forms of consciousness. The tie between Zen and Ōyōmei on one side and military forms of thought (or heigaku in Japanese) on the other is evident in the way such thinking often short-circuits extended reflection or developed and subtle intellectual ratiocination. A brusque concretion or robust, down-to-earth practicality (within a ‘bunker mentality’) are far more common forms of military consciousness. In short, the complex, subtle

⁵⁸ See Youngmin Kim’s IEP essay, n.d. <https://iep.utm.edu/wangyang/>

mediations of politico-philosophical reflection may often be dispensed with. Hence the following are not surprising in relation to well-known Yōmeigakusha: that Wang was a military commander; Ōshio Heihachirō was a police official; Yoshida Shōin's family background was steeped in Yamaga Sokō-style heigaku; Saigō Takamori was a military leader or general 'gung-ho' for invading Korea; and Kita Ikki saw imperialism and war (justice via the sword) as Japan's best apocalyptic strategy for achieving the millennium of some future peace – that is, *after* the ravages of a global racial war in which the 'Anglo-Saxon race' would be subdued, if Heaven willed this and Japan's preparedness made it possible.

The point here is that any method that relies on intuition concerning the kinds of activity or judgements it prescribes for itself – ones specifically that extol the perfection and virtue of immediate intuition over more long-term and mediated forms of methodical-systematic reflection and consideration – are bound to show a high risk of falling into the wilder species of ethical and political misjudgement, self-deception and delusion.

Ōyōmei intuitionism values *immediacy and feeling* over mediated knowledge and careful reflection, underscoring the *sudden bright illuminations of a bold and brash self-confidence* rather than what Rose on Hegel (1981; 1992) might have called reason's motile reconstructions with their penchant for highly nuanced and balanced grey-in-grey. In fact, there is value here in re-visiting Hegel's classic critique of Schellingian immediate intellectual intuition in the famous Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* – where he castigates Schelling for elevating the absolute into an immediacy of *intuition* (that infamous-romanticist 'night in which all cows are black') rather than deploying the careful, laborious and nuanced explications required by the mediations of (a radically inclusionary) reason and the (complex, inclusively-universal) concept.

Kita's own Ōyōmei predilections seem of this 'mad' hot-headed ilk (Okada 1973; Fang 1973): the sword of righteousness and justice (his advocacy of bloody racial-imperial global wars) is apparently wielded in much self-intoxicatingly hot-headed anger or

febrile patriotic lamentation. In short, Kita's ultra-nationalism was surely, at least partly, over-determined by his Ōyōmei-Eclectic school origins.

A Coda on the Far Right (Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai) and National Essentialists (Kokusuishugisha) in Mid- to Late Meiji

In trying to estimate the degree of influence upon Kita Ikki of these ultra-nationalist and national essentialist groups in the Meiji era, such an assessment is rendered more difficult by the diffuse nature of such impact. I begin by offering some background on each organisation and then point to similar orientations, which I see as indicating either salient influence or parallels that strongly indicate they share several common right-wing values.

i. The Ultra-Nationalists (Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai)

Contra the Genyōsha's own history (its 'shashi'), which cites 1881, the organisation was founded in mid-1880 (see Lakser 2015: 104) by a 'disciple' of Saigō Takamori, Tōyama Mitsuru (1855-1944). Saigō was one-time general and leader in the Meiji Restoration, turning rebel in 1877 to support alienated samurai social forces. He had earlier led (discursively) such predatory-reactionary forces during the 1873 Seikanron (dispute over whether to invade Korea). After the Korean expedition was blocked by two Restoration leaders (Iwakura and Ōkubo), Saigō retired-from-office to live on Kyūshū. Tōyama Mitsuru had been incarcerated during the Satsuma Rebellion and learnt a salutary lesson: no outright rebellion would threaten the newly stabilised Meiji socio-political system. After Tōyama's release from prison, he established a Kyūshū branch of the People's Rights Movement, but, as Jansen puts it, he "soon turned to lead opposition to the government's slow progress on treaty reform" (2000: 604).

Thus, one way the ultra-nationalists exerted influence was through allegiance to the popular rights movement (Jiyū minken undō), giving as nationalist/statist a reading of 'popular rights' as possible: 'minken' was about people's rights; people implied

country; country implied nation; and thus people's rights meant the rights of the nation/state (*kokken*). In short, *minken* was *kokken* (on *Jiyū minken*, see chapter 4 herein). Hence, they supported much foreign intervention and bellicosity abroad, especially regarding Korea leading up to war with China in 1894.

Regarding their impact on (or similarity to) Kita, I will examine four overall stances the ultra-nationalists possessed and compare these with Kita's stances on the same questions.

I state, first, how these ultra-nationalist organisations both built on aspects of *Jiyū minken* and specifically the notion of *minken* as pre-eminently *kokken* or, in Richard Storry's words: Genyōsha's ideal as popular expansionism (1957: 10). The Genyōsha's ideological creed is summarised by Storry thus: a. they swore to 'revere the Imperial Family'; b. to 'respect and honour the fatherland'; and c. to 'guard strictly the rights of the people' (*ibid*). Or, in other words, they swore to uphold *kinnōshugi* (imperial loyalism); patriotism; and *kokken* (state rights).

On the second important area, regarding patriotism and pro-Emperor-ism, the Genyōsha adhered to the traditional *bansai ikkei* notion of the *kokutai*, whereby the imperial line was unbroken going back to the world's foundation: to the age of the gods and of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu.

Regarding the Genyōsha and the Kokuryūkai's *Dai ajishugi* (Greater Asianism) – the third area – Tōyama and Uchida Ryōhei (founder of the Kokuryūkai) supported various Asian nationalists at this time, including Sun Yat-sen, Ras Behari Bose *et cetera* (Saaler 2014: 136), albeit hardly disinterestedly. Tōyama/Genyōsha had supported both *Seikanron* in 1873 and Kim Ok-kyun and Ōi Kentarō's *putschism* in Korea in the mid-1880s, as well as going to war with China over Korea (1894). Consequently, whether this *Dai ajishugi* was much more than a cover for predatory nationalism is moot.

Finally, the fourth important point was far-right anti-Russianism. In fact, this was the reason the Kokuryūkai was founded in 1901: as an organisation targeting Russia when

the situation with Russia was worsening and Japan wanted to ensure its interests in the Far East.

Turning now to compare this with Kita's ideas: First, on the Jiyū minken undō or popular rights movement, how did Kita read the relation between minken and kokken? While he was in favour of universal suffrage by 1903, it is interesting how Kita *sequentialises* minken and kokken. Minken (domestic policy) appears as a phase modern Japan must undergo. Once achieved, kokken became more important, including the fight for national or state rights internationally (for Kita, state expansion was crucial to Japan's social Darwinist vibrancy). Criticising Marx (and class struggle) as out-of-date, Kita's 'own originality' saw that once the modern state was strengthened by democratic rights and universal suffrage, the *truly* 'proletarian' would become discernible: the impoverished Japanese state with its future, decided by *state competition*. Thus the state and racial struggle inaugurate a higher phase of history *above mere class struggle à la Karl Marx*. Consequently, imperialism is *crucial* – specifically, an imperial brand of national socialism that transcends left and right. Thus in Kita, kokken trumps minken. While details differ, the effect in both Kita and the Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai was to see kokken as more important.

Second, on strong patriotism and pro-Emperor-ism, while the former is present in Kita – his strong nationalism is a leitmotif of his three books – his pro-Emperor-ism seems absent, as he repudiated bansei ikkei. Whereas Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai were pro-emperor in the romantic, alternative-elite Japanese sense of the imperial line being unbroken to all ages eternal (bansei ikkei), Kita saw this image of the imperial line as backward. While Kita respected the royal house, he valued science, modernity and Japanese national 'face' at least as much and so did not want Japan to appear backward. Kita's emperor loyalism – while deep (his brother reports Kita's early adherence to the kinnō-ha/pro-loyalist faction; Kita Reikichi 1937) – was more *Mencian* than bansei ikkei (Mencius saw overthrow as possible only if the emperor violated heaven's will). Accordingly, Kita was less Japanese and more classically-Chinese in emperor reverence. As to how much of a divergence this constituted between Kokuryūkai ultra-nationalists and Kita, according to this thesis it strikes this

thesis as mere *factional disagreement among ultra-nationalists*. Albeit of these things, many splits are made (see Uchida Ryohei's comments on Kita's 'one-eyed' limitations as quoted in Nakamura Takehiko [ed.] 2003: 309).

Third, Kita, like Tōyama and Uchida, professes Pan-Asianism and discusses 'saving the yellow race' (chapter 5 herein). Similarly, the Kokuryūkai gave succour to Asians fleeing oppression by foreign states (e.g., Sun Yat-sen). However, both Kita's and the Kokuryūkai's sincerity are questionable and chime more in their assertion of Japanese hegemony than in any will to save their 'fellow Asians'. Their Pan-Asianism appears similarly self-interested, since both clamoured for expansion to East Asian and Russian-Siberian lands.

Fourth and lastly, both the Kokuryūkai and Kita are virulently anti-Russian. Uchida wrote on Russia's ruin (*Roshia bōkoku ron*; 1901), while Kita called for overarching war with Russia plus imperial purloining of land. Both Uchida and Kita talk of colonising and developing Siberia, coruscating Russia for failing to do this itself.

Kita matches three (or three-and-a-half) similar policy positions to the ultra-nationalists (Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai) – out of the four areas examined above. It strongly suggests Kita, too, was an ultra-nationalist, albeit more modern, social Darwinist, and, paradoxically, with an ancient-Mencian twist, albeit the Mencianist-monarchist concept of the mandate of heaven is surely more progressive than Japanese bansei ikkei notions of monarchy.

ii. The National Essentialists (Kokusuishigisha)

Similarly to how Kita's ideas were compared to those of the Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai, a structured comparison is attempted in relation to Kita and the Kokusuishigisha – to see if some influence, or a certain parallelism in political ideas, can be discerned. Kita was indisputably a voracious young reader of Seikyōsha journals (Martin 1959).

Thus, the contribution of the new Meiji generation, as Pyle (1969) calls them, are examined, those who sought to preserve the core of Japanese tradition – unlike those in the same generation, like Tokutomi Sohō the famous journalist, who aimed after wholesale Westernisation. Like Sohō, Kokusuishugisha had Western teachers, seeing themselves as much indebted to Western influence (ibid: 53), yet they did not kowtow to the West or see it as the only future for Japan. Kokusuishugisha can be seen as (Sino-)Japanese rebels, who repudiated Tokutomi’s total Westernisation thesis for Japan’s future as culturally-environmentally remiss.

As Pyle (1969: 53-75) argues, the nub of their argument was that: “a strong national spirit was essential to self-defense in an age of imperialism” and that “national independence demanded the preservation of cultural autonomy” (ibid: 54), especially against the backdrop of the various semi-colonial acts of subjugation from Western powers: extraterritoriality, access to various Japanese ports, variegated tariff restrictions. If even the various European states took pride in their cultural variation and stressed this in competition with each other, then Japan should follow (ibid).

Hence, rather than import wholesale from the West no matter how trivial this ‘fanatical faddism’ for things Western had become, and rather than capitulate to the Western powers over treaty revision, which embodied weak-willed subservience and ongoing humiliation, these Japanese national essentialists instead wished to preserve a ‘distinct Japanese culture’ and a ‘cohesive national spirit’ (ibid).

It is for this that a number of thinkers in 1888 (ibid: 64) and beyond came together to write for the famous journal *Nihonjin* and to form the Seikyōsha (Political Education Society) who included in its ranks such writers as Miyake Setsurei, Shiga Shigetaka and, *de facto*, Kuga Katsunan (ibid: 54-5, 63-4, 71-73).

To give a sense of the ideas of these three pertinent to this thesis, Pyle offers a revealing quote from Shiga regarding his attitude to ‘the white race’ (ibid: 57-8):

Shiga was impressed by the perils as well as the potentialities for Japan in the South Pacific. He observed that “the white race” dominated these islands

because the natives too often had no will to resist invaders or to preserve their own independence. “If the colored races do not now exert themselves” he warned, “then ultimately the world will become the private possession of the white race”. Japan must rouse herself to her destiny, which was no less great in the Orient than England’s was in the West.

Thus, like Tokutomi, Shiga envisaged a powerful industrial-commercial future for Japan, yet unlike Tokutomi and in an article written for *Kokumin no tomo* (Sohō’s journal), he stressed Japan’s “superlative natural beauty” and urged “the development of affection for the nation” (ibid). Shiga’s focus on Japan, its culture and ‘national character’ was tied to its unique and beautiful environment. Given these thoughts by Shiga, the latter discursively homogenised both Japan and Japanese, as well as – as witnessed so dramatically in Pyle’s quote above – the ‘white race’ and ‘whites’: *as if all white people were homogeneous and benefited from colonialist-imperialism*. As we know Kita to have read *Kokumin no tomo* and also *Nihonjin*, he was likely impacted by such stereotyping elitist-Japanese racial discourse – of a kind that Kita reproduces in his early work.

Miyake was interested in both Eastern and Western philosophy and happened also to study under the Harvard graduate and American scholar Ernest Fenollosa based at Tokyo University. Having set up a Spencer Club at Harvard while studying there, unsurprisingly Fenollosa spent much time teaching Spencer in Japan, too. Pyle sums up Miyake’s reading proclivities by stating that he spent much time “delv[ing] into the writings of Spencer, Hegel, Guizot, Buckle, and Carlyle” (ibid: 61).

Here what stands out from Pyle’s account is how negative and critical Miyake was of both ordinary Japanese and, albeit arguably in a relatively indirect way, of notions of bansei ikkei (insofar as he emphasised the Mongolian origins of the Japanese; ibid: 62). Words like ‘haughty toward those below and currying toward those above’, ‘untutored and lecherous’, ‘people who find no enjoyment in reading’ and various other negative epithets pepper quotes from Miyake cited by Pyle (ibid: 61-2). He even calls the Japanese people ‘mean and ugly’ (ibid: 62-3) – in a way that strikingly prefigures Kita

Ikki (Kita uses the term 'ugly' about the Japanese people, too; see 'Totsu' and chapter 5 herein).

Like Shiga, however, Miyake laid early stress on the environment as crucial to forming Japan's 'national character' (Pyle 1969: 62). Moreover, it gave Miyake hope that the Japanese would overcome the 'weaker' 'Mongolian characteristics' he identified as accounting for prior Japanese failings (ibid).

Shiga denied that his stance was either reactionary or conservative, since he saw himself as a 'reformer' (ibid: 67). Yet even he admitted he was a gradualist in terms of reform, no radical. This was "because the kokusui had developed organically" and thus "only innovation of a gradual kind was permissible" (ibid: 68). In his early *Nihonjin* articles, Shiga saw the kokusui as an 'artistic concept' (bijutsuteki no kannen) – as opposed to the West's more analytical predilections. Art is harmony while in the West most social forms depended on analysis, which Shiga perceived as 'selfish, commercial and mercenary' (ibid).

The kokusui, however, was susceptible of diverse definitions – precisely due to its profound vagueness. Most tellingly, after being defined by one writer (Kikuchi Kumatarō) as 'a particular national spirit that cannot be copied in other countries', Japan's kokusui was for him essentially "the people's feeling toward the Imperial Household" (ibid: 69), which effectively drew near to more traditionalist concepts of bansei ikkei. Even more generally, the ambiguity surrounding what the kokusui might be led to all manner of unequivocal traditionalists joining the Seikyōsha and claiming the notion as their own. While the Seikyōsha themselves were unerringly clear on how Japan could and should still borrow (yet had to make all such borrowing its own through assimilation [ibid: 71]), those who joined the movement (its 'partisans') were far from always the reformist sort that Shiga saw himself as. Indeed, many 'Confucianists, Buddhists, Shintoists, and unreconstructed samurai' (ibid) simply saw 'kokusui hozon' as repudiation of all change. Thus, the phrase 'kokusui kenshō' (promotion of nationality or the national style) was adopted instead.

The third important Seikyōsha figure was Kuga Katsunan, who effectively became an affiliate to the group – so close was his connection to Shiga and Miyake (ibid: 71-2). Pertinent herein is Kuga’s primal grounding in the ideas of deeply conservative French philosophers such as Joseph de Maistre (ibid: 72-3). This gives the lie to the notion held by Shiga that the Kokusuishugisha were not conservative. Yet there are other reasons for concluding thus, since all three saw the *nation* as the privileged site through which Japan should be observed. Rather than challenge the right to invade and oppress other nations colonial-imperialistically, Shiga preferred to see Japan among the great powers. Kita clearly saw likewise, given his own definition of Japan as a proletarian polity as compared to Britain and Russia, while simply ignoring comparisons to Korea and China.

Accordingly, Kita may be seen as a species of Kokusuishugisha himself. For Kita in his early pro-war articles (see chapter 5 herein), Japan’s ‘*kokusui hozon*’ was its strong capability in fighting and war – which was also Japan’s best strategic defence: what Nitobe Inazō or even Nitobe’s friend Uchimura Kanzō might have called *Bushidō* (the way of the samurai) – albeit side-by-side with Christianity (see Nitobe 1900; Hurst 1990: 513).

Unsurprisingly, Kuga seems to have been, despite some rhetoric on his part to the contrary, *more traditionalist* than closer to the Westernisers. This emerges where Pyle notes how Kuga “began his effort to formulate a viable national identity by turning to the major national symbol---the Imperial Court” (1969: 94). As Kuga asseverates: “One unique characteristic of the Japanese nation was that Japan had ‘possessed an unbroken line of imperial rulers since its founding 2500 years ago’” (ibid). Given *bansei ikkei* is asserted here, this is very traditionalist – something Miyake had effectively repudiated, as seen above.

To sum up, diversity within the Kokusuishugisha is also clear – with degrees of new conservatism and old across an ambiguous spectrum. Kita likely learnt (or similarly asserted) both the robust autonomy from the ‘white race’ that the national essentialists everywhere displayed, but also that classic-eclectic mix of reformism and

conservatism from the Seikyōsha – a reformism that Kuga preached, yet surely practised less than Miyake regarding concrete political commitments. Kita may also have learnt from Miyake the style of lamenting critique of Japanese weaknesses that accompanied his otherwise deep commitment to the national essence. Kita could easily be seen as his own brand of Kokusuishugisha: one who saw Japan's greatest strength as lying in its martial capabilities and virtues – in its long history of pre-modern, early modern and modern militarism, fighting and war. And there is no doubt that what Kita learnt from the national essentialists was radically rightist to the core.

Conclusion

What has been suggested in this chapter is that, taking a cue from Wilson (1969), Kita's ideas must be understood in the context of his Sino-Japanese-style rebellion and that this can be traced in a number of ways. One of these ways relates to the Sino-Japanese sensei-deshi tradition in which Kita too can be placed, which was traced in the Ōyōmei-Eclectic school line of succession from Kita back to Inoue Kinga.

As part of the above point, I have argued that this Eclectic school is a separate faction in Japanese history blending Ōyōmei, Shushigaku and Japanese nativism-nationalism, alongside a certain militarism fed by the irrationalist proclivities within particular appropriations of Ōyōmei and Wang Yangming specifically. I offer reasons for placing Kita in these various overlapping schools: Ōyōmei, the Eclectic school and heigaku (militarism).

I tried to intimate at a number of ways in which Kita fits the heigaku element stemming from its irrationalist-Ōyōmei traditions and beyond. Saigō Takamori and Yoshida Shōin also both fit within this imputed profile – both concerning militarism and regarding intuitionist Ōyōmei. I began to intimate at Kita's own Ōyōmei proclivities via a reading of Ōshio Heihachirō – the pro-peasant ex-police rebel *par excellence*.

I have also argued in this thesis and chapter that not all rebellions are from the left and not all alternative-elites are socialist or left-wing socialist. This idea also prepares the ground for the stance in the next chapter: that not all socialists are left-wing.

Finally, I have offered at least three reasons why Kita can be seen as having been close to the ultra-nationalist groups, while having also learnt conservative-nationalist-rightist lessons from Miyake and other national essentialists. The next chapter moves on to examine many and various Meiji-era 'socialisms' and how this impacted Kita's rather statist and right-wing understanding of his own socialism.

Chapter 4. Toward Kita's Imperial Japanese Socialist Statism: the Origins and Development of Socialisms (and Associated Ideologies) in Meiji Japan

In the previous chapter, I set out aspects of Kita's Sino-Japanese formation – both regarding his general schooling *and* his Sino-Japanese Ōyōmei and Eclectic school background. Here we identify certain 'Western' influences upon his early thought: variegated liberalisms, populisms and, mainly, socialisms, all heterogeneous forces impacting Kita that circulated widely in mid- to late Meiji. These overlapping liberal, populist and socialistic influences also display Mencian and Confucian impact.

The main aims here are, first, to give a brief overview of Kita's brand of socialism – located in a rather statist-socialist reading of the Meiji restoration-revolution (as Kita calls the 1868 revolution); second, to delineate a limited, yet multifaceted history of liberalism and of the so-called Jiyū minken undō (freedom and popular rights movement) from the early 1870s onward; third, to offer sustained reflection on crucial figures in the liberal, populist and socialist movements, who impacted the socialist scene in Meiji Japan, plus examples of the more rebellious practical activities engaged therein; fourth, to attempt a nuanced reading of varying heterogeneous but sometimes overlapping phenomena that socialisms clearly represented both within and well beyond Japan, albeit Japan is the focus here and foreign socialisms are alluded to only with a view to comprehending the impact on the Japanese context; fifth, to give an account of how socialism was first introduced and used in the Japanese context; and lastly, not only to abstract from this the main concepts, practices or traditions of socialisms in Meiji, but also to identify the socialisms that had most impact on Kita and to which his ideas/practices might be most closely compared.

The goal is to be true to the methodological-historical-philosophical point argued for herein that socialisms are not only of radically diverse hues, but also span the political-

ideological divide from far left to far right. Consequently, it is important to engage in historical definitions (not simply static and abstract philosophical ones) as to how the term socialism is to be used in each individual case, while also offering an explanation as to how the differing topologies of socialism can be encompassed in largely two overarching heuristic types (socialism-from-above and socialism-from-below). This embodies the claim herein that socialism is not one homogeneous ideology.

Kita's View of the Meiji Restoration of 1868

Before expounding the origins of *socialisms* in Japan more generally, the first thing to be mentioned about socialism in Kita Ikki is the connection he envisaged between that ideology and the Meiji restoration (*ishin*). Kita – not unlike a number of important Meiji thinkers, journalists and intellectuals (e.g. Tokutomi Sohō and Yamaji Aizan) – regarded the Meiji *ishin* as a popular-national (Kita, Tokutomi and Yamaji) and/or a statist-socialist (Kita) revolution that instituted legal equality between all subjects in modern Japan (Nomura 1966; for Tokutomi and Yamaji, Pyle 1969). The aftermath witnessed a regression, for Kita, with an economic aristocracy taking over and undermining the equality at the heart of this modernising national revolution. Consequently, a renewed economic *ishin kakumei* (restoration or renovation revolution) became necessary (see Kita 1972, vol. iii: 99).

This was an idiosyncratic view, and, especially if he had seen socialism as a leftist ideology, a naïve conception on Kita's part. Yet, from the limited available direct written or verbal evidence, he did not view his own socialism as left-wing at all (he talks instead of being an 'enemy of both left and right'; see 'Totsu' in Kita 1972, vol. iii: 87). Nonetheless, even the narrative that full equality was achieved as a gain of the Meiji revolution only to be undermined by the counter-revolutionary regression imposed on Japan by the Meiji oligarchy's departure from the revolution's 'original aims' bespeaks a huge idealisation of the Meiji *ishin* itself. This move may also remind us of the fact of radical ideological overlapping (what Freedman calls permeability: 1996, 2003) in a Japanese context – the kind of thing witnessed in the case of Mori Chiki in the previous chapter. Mori had imbibed *keisei saimin* thought, professed Tokutomi's

heiminshugi (commonerism) and seemed to oppose party politics in favour of oligarchic control, but also believed in universal suffrage. Kita held a number of similarly tension-laden or overlapping ideas, insofar as he combined an updated form of Mencian-Platonic, legal-constitutional organic national-state socialism and social Darwinist evolutionism with belief in universal male suffrage and a constitutional monarchical form of government. The latter doctrine specifically involved the *people* (represented in the Diet) and the *sovereign* forming the two parts of the state. Kita held this view while simultaneously urging upon Japan and the Japanese that they embrace a 'good' form of imperialism. This ultimately legitimated Japan's expansionism – in an equivalent of the 'white man's burden', except with Kita calling this an orientation on the 'yellow race' (*ō jinshu*) or a form of 'Pan-Asianism' (on these various points, see Kita 1972, vol. iii: 86, 87, 89, 91-92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97).

Hence in the early Kita, his socialism was national-statist and organicist, assertive of (male-suffragist) formal democracy, imperialist, monarchical-constitutional, evolutionary social Darwinist and expansionist-militarist, couching this regional and global power-drive in the discourse of a yellow man's burden of salvationist hegemony over Asia and ultimately the world. Thus, the polar opposite of any form of leftist or Marxian internationalist socialism and, in a way well-trodden on the far right, a kind of thinking that even denies the validity of the left-right split in regard to itself.

Precursors Leading to Socialisms: The Freedom and Popular Rights Movement Including Kokken (National or State Rights)

The seeds that would eventually develop into various concepts/practices of socialism in Japan were sown in the liberal ideals "touched off in 1874 by Itagaki Taisuke's memorial calling for the establishment of an 'elective assembly'" (Totten 1966: 17). This represented the ideological beginnings of Japan's early Meiji Jiyū minken undō (freedom and popular rights movement). From Bakumatsu onward, many ideas, movements and institutions from Western political society had streamed into Japan and one of them was that of liberal-democratic parliamentarism in varying forms, including diverse ideological strands and class layers. The liberal movement formed

itself into a political party: the Risshisha (Society for Fixing One's Aim in Life). While the party movement began as an elitist phenomenon, according to Totten, by the 1880s it "gained a measure of mass support by representing the peasant discontent over the government's heavy-handed collection of the burdensome land tax" (1966: 17). Subsequently, this fostered elements within the Jiyūtō (Liberal Party) that were even (proto-)proletarian or oppressed social layers.

The Risshisha were originally a society for the mutual aid of the shizoku (former samurai) class (Ike 1950: 61-62). It was only when the Jiyūtō was founded that lower layers began to push their own agendas from below, but even then, there were subjective limitations to their inclusivity. Some of the seemingly more radical liberals, like Ōi Kentarō (1843-1922), had adventurist foreign policy predilections – for invading and reforming adjacent states. This is interesting here due to Kita's later similar strong foreign policy orientation. This, like Kita's extreme nationalism, placed Ōi not *against*, but rather *in effective cahoots with* early ultra-nationalist, far-right forces in Japan: the Genyōsha and the Kokuryūkai met with in the previous chapter.

Hence these purportedly radical liberals' impatient penchant for the 'reform of Korea' played into the hands of more powerful reactionary organisations, which people like Ōi could neither guide nor control, but only become *effective policy adjuncts to* (see Jansen 1952; 1954). Ōi surely believed that schemes like the Osaka Incident (a plan for Japanese toughs to invade and reform Korea) were aimed at bettering and modernising Korea rather than being in Japanese expansionist interests. Yet it was the shizoku and samurai toughs (sōshi) who would be the agents of such 'modernising Korean reform', thus bolstering elements within the Japanese government or, worse, the Genyōsha with their own Japanese-state-benefitting plans for Korea. These would be quite different from any ideal ones for *Korean* advancement that Ōi or Kim Ok-kyun (the well-known Korean reformist-activist in favour of Japanese-style modernisation) apparently represented. After the Gapsin 'reform' coup in Korea of 1884 failed (in which elite Japanese officials were involved), Kim was eventually assassinated by Korea's old reactionary, pro-Chinese forces, thus providing a *casus belli* for the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-5). Ironically, or maybe fittingly, Kim's death helped advance

Japanese interests in Korea, launching Japan further toward East Asian regional-imperial hegemony by defeating China.

In sum, far larger forces were at work than any mere aspiration for 'reform' implied, whether they were Japanese or Korean. The situation post-Gapsin coup fostered growing suspicion on all sides. Simultaneously, it intensified economic and political power-play between a declining traditional Chinese empire and a rising modern Japanese imperium – in which Korean needs from below became marginalised or forcibly hitched to the wagons of either the Japanese state, the Qing court or Russia. Given suspicions against Japan and the so-called progressive-reform faction in Korea (Kim Ok-kyun, Park Yeong-hyo and others) had been amplified due to such events as the Imo Incident of 1882 and the 1884 Incident, after this time and into the 1890s Japanese interests and Korean modernisers were on the defensive in Korea – with the Japanese state yet to dominate or fight the still quasi-traditional empire of China. Not even by 1892 was Japan ready for military confrontation with the Qing court (Suzuki 2015⁵⁹). By summer 1894, Japan was ready and war was engaged.⁶⁰

Paradoxically, the original intention to give support to Korean reform ultimately ended up enabling Japanese intervention, defeat of China and eventual takeover of Korea, plus victory against the Russians, which also sparked Western elite fears. All this enabled the painting of Japanese colonialism-imperialism on a broader canvas than had been possible in early Meiji with its Taiwan expedition; anti-Korean sabre-rattling (*seikanron*); gunboat diplomacy in wringing the unequal Treaty of Kanghwa out of Korea; 'opening' Hokkaidō; and incorporation of the Ryūkyū islands. Yet even such limited early imperial-colonial incursions prefigured Japan's later ambitions. All the talk of Korean reform, therefore, only gave civilian (*minken*) succour to either the cautiously expansionist-national rights (*kokken*) government elements or the bolder *kokken*-expansionists (or both).

⁵⁹ See Suzuki Yu's thesis here: <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3391/>

⁶⁰ For especially the 1884 Incident, see Cook 1972; also Hulbert, as edited by Weems, 1962; see also Ch'oe 1982.

If Kim Ok-kyun and Ōi's intentions *had been* for the sake of Korea's wider population, this story provides another tale of the irony of inversion of the best intentions. Thus, even (perhaps especially) liberal reformism demanded of another country can often objectively push forward imperialist or national-expansionist ends – rather than reflecting some 'pure-hearted desire' to improve the state one is suggesting progress, democracy or modernising reforms be advanced in. From the Osaka Incident to intervention in Iraq, such intentionality from above can be at best a complex, subterranean swamp or at worst a subtler tool of imperialist aggression or expansion – in Japan's case hidden within an ideology of Pan-Asianist soteriology that only deluded Japanese elites (and forces beyond) as to their own motives. This is potentially one way of accounting for Kita's own Pan-Asian predilections: naïveté mixed with self-delusion plus 'national' self-interest.

Yet ideologically, what this attests to is the interpenetration – in especially Ōi Kentarō – of what is called, in Japanese, *minken* (people's rights) and *kokken* (national or state rights) in the *Jiyū minken undō*. This connection was observed in the case of the *Genyōsha* and the *Kokuryūkai* in the previous chapter and it occurs in Kita, too. What this attests to is the thoroughgoing penetration of socialism in the Meiji era almost exclusively by socialism-from-above-like characteristics – with Kita an extreme version of this tendency, this thesis shows.

Bunmei kaika and Meiji liberalism, aspects of the early freedom and popular rights movement, display some trends useful to understanding Kita Ikki – not least in these discourses of *minken* strongly suffused with *kokken*.

Bunmei kaika (Civilisation and Enlightenment) and Jiyū minken undō (Freedom and Popular Rights Movement): Continuity from Liberalisms into Socialisms

Liberalism received one of its first impulses within Japan from the so-called *Meirokeisha* (the Meiji 6 society) and Japan's civilisation and enlightenment movement of the 1870s. Westernising figures – like Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901), famous writer, educator and founder of Keio University; Nakamura Masanao (1832-91), translator of

Samuel Smiles and J.S. Mill; Nishi Amane (1829-97), so-called ‘father’ of modern Japanese philosophy (Hane 1969: 353); and Mitsukuri Rinshō (1846-97), statesman and legal scholar influenced by French law – all contributed to a culture in which things Western and liberal appeared destined to have far-reaching impact upon Japanese society and politics. However, it has been argued Western liberalism did not sink very deep roots (Hane 1969). Yet widespread political ferment with its “remarkable awakening of political consciousness” (Sims 1991: 53) is undeniable given the extensive scholarship of Japanese local historians (ibid: 50).

These liberal Western trends fused with native traditions – rather than being directly imported from the West (Irokawa 1985). Consequently, amalgamations of Western socialisms (of especially statist kinds) with East Asian theory like Confucianism and Confucian-imperial Mencianism spawned new variants of liberalism, socialism and statism in Japan, albeit they are also locatable ideologically from the centre to the right and far right of the political spectrum.

The Jiyūtō (Liberal Party) itself was a political avatar of the bunmei kaika movement and there were direct continuities – with Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901) providing one instance. Nakae was the famous liberal-nationalist theorist and translator of Rousseau who studied under Mitsukuri (a founder of the Meirokusha). Ōi Kentarō, another example and so-called radical political and social activist (Jansen 1952), showed genuine empathy for the labouring and rural poor, yet also passion for Korean reform (see above). Despite such relative continuity between the early liberal bunmei kaika and Jiyū minken figures like Nakae and Ōi, their national-level chauvinism (working with the Genyōsha and other strong Japanese state or rightist forces) leave them open to the accusation they were more focused on Japanese national interests than on the rights of ordinary Japanese people *and especially those of oppressed Koreans both in Japan and Korea* (Jansen 1952). Consequently, they were not motivated by any *internationalist* minken truly *from below*, in this thesis’ phrase.

Despite its various social layers, the Jiyūtō – established from the end of 1880 into 1881 – was largely a rural-based party, with Ōkuma Shigenobu’s more conservative

Constitutional Progressive Party stronger in urban areas. This does not mean the urban working classes were ignored by the politically ‘radical’ in the Jiyūtō, for in 1880 some intellectuals in Tosa “spent a month or so pulling *jinrikisha*” (rickshaws; Ike 1950: 107) with the aim of organising urban workers and prompting awareness of their rights. Two years later, a more serious attempt was made to organise Tokyo-based rickshawmen. Some radical Jiyūtō members founded the Shakaitō (literally, the Rickshaw Party), the sound of which formed a homonym with that for the ‘socialist party’ – albeit using different Chinese characters for ‘Sha’ (not ‘society’/‘social’ but ‘car’/‘vehicle’). Thus the Jiyūtō tried to build up its connections with urban workers and various oppressed and/or proletarian political and social groups (ibid: 108).

Continuity between the Liberal Party and Japan’s later socialists was real. Kōtoku Shūsui – famous socialist (and, later, anarchist) in late Meiji – passed along this trajectory (Notehelfer 1971). Yet this was more than merely any ‘obvious’, unidirectionally progressive ideological bridge from centrist liberalism to leftist socialism, since Kōtoku was a disciple of Nakae Chōmin. If Chōmin had nationalist tendencies, then Kōtoku also held to his own hardly leftist, ancient-imperial, idealist-socialist deviationism (by clearly *leftist* standards) for several years of his thinking life (ibid) – even while confusedly mixing that with his *anti-imperialist*, reformist-leftist socialism.⁶¹ Liberalism as much overlapped with statism and nationalism as certain variants of socialism and modern anti-imperialism often shaded into (or developed from) a socialism full of ancient, benevolent imperial-moral idealism. One reason for this is the huge impact of Mencian idealism and Ōyōmei on Confucian and Neo-Confucian Japanese traditions – and on Japanese political thought generally. The early Kōtoku was hardly immune to this, nor to the influence of his sensei Nakae Chōmin (Notehelfer 1971).

One interesting point regarding Sino-Japanese and Western ideological fusion is that Jiyū minken radical-turned-later-socialist Okumiya Kenshi (1857-1911)’s father was a *han* (domain) lecturer (Jikō) to Yamauchi Toyoshige (Yōdō), a major tozama daimyō

⁶¹ See Tierney 2015, which includes a translation of Kōtoku’s 1901 *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century* (ibid: 133-206).

(less trusted vassal ‘feudal leader’) subordinate to the Tokugawa regime. Okumiya’s father was a first-rate Yōmeigakusha (Ōyōmei scholar) within the Tosa domain. Perhaps Ōyōmei influenced Okumiya junior’s trajectory away from the Mitsubishi economic establishment and toward entering the Jiyūtō, which mixed political establishment and anti-establishment elements. Nonetheless, acting upon a political ideology certainly trumped his economic career at Mitsubishi, and apparently cost him his life in the High Treason Incident – an event constituting a legally-sanctioned framing of the 12 people executed in that infamous incident of 1911 (Plotkin 1990), in the sense that it had been ‘legally’ codified that even *considering* assassinating the emperor was a death-penalty crime.

Thus diverse socialisms were being prepared within bunmei kaika, the Jiyūtō and Jiyū minken undō. Writing more generally, or in the ‘line of succession’ of teacher and pupil – from Mitsukuri to Chōmin and from Chōmin to Kōtoku – the pattern of eclecticism between Western and Eastern ideas observed so often among educated Japanese, and seen in Kita, once again manifested itself. As Sievers comments, “Under Nakae’s tutelage, Kōtoku began to acquire a solid background in European political thought and institutions, and to spend more time with the Chinese classics as well” (1969: 22). Kōtoku developed a more left-leaning synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas, and Kita a harder, far-right kind, yet both displayed unevennesses across the political spectrum (Kōtoku largely left to centre; Kita possibly centre/centre-right to, largely, far right).

Radical Revolts as Instances of Revolution or Socialism

Abstract political-philosophical ideas passively expressed in party-political affiliations were not the only province of the freedom and people’s rights movement. Direct political rebellion and active political struggle played an important part, too. In Japanese, the relevant phrase is gekka jiken (violent incidents), and the most famous Jiyūtō instances in Meiji were: the Fukushima Incident; the Kabasan Incident; and the Chichibu Incident.

The first lasted for almost the whole of 1882 with mass campaigns, protests and demonstrations among many layers of Japanese society as represented within the Jiyūtō – including farmers, teachers, businessmen and local-governmental officials. These were finally violently suppressed by the government (Brown 1984: 23).

The second incident of intensified violent conflict happened two years later and was led by samurai – not wealthy farmers, as in Fukushima. This accounts for the ‘adventurist style’ (Vlastos 1981: 473) characterising the Kabasan rebellion. ‘Dramatic’, ‘suicidal tactics’ involving political assassination were deployed – no ‘large-scale mobilisation’. The operation was entirely bungled with arrests occurring before anything even began. Such bungled idealist strategising prefigures various incidents from the Shōwa era. The tactics were highly elitist in this rebellion – similarly to Shōwa events involving attempted assassinations of individuals: the 26th February Incident (1936), October Incident (1931), League of Blood Incident (early 1932) and May Incident (1932).

The third incident, which also took place in 1884, was, according to Vlastos (ibid), an ‘armed uprising’ more resembling late Tokugawa peasant revolts than more modern rebellions. Led by a ‘sympathetic gangster recruited as their commander-in-chief’ and organised by the local Konmintō (Poor People’s Party, a Jiyūtō offshoot), the rebels hoped their success would provoke similar revolts, sparking radical governmental change.

Perhaps partly due to the perceived radicality of these incidents – certainly of those that *tried to engage in mass revolt* – the designation ‘revolutionary’ is often applied to them and to the thinkers whose ideas helped build them. Yet such words by themselves can be vague. Ienaga Saburō (1955) refers to Meiji popular rights thinker Ueki Emori’s ‘Kakumei shisō’ (revolutionary thought), albeit it seems unclear in what Ueki’s ‘revolutionism’ consisted. Deploying the term ‘revolutionary’ without clear qualification engenders conceptual confusion. Moreover, when ideas from different traditions combine, potential for obscurity rises considerably.

The dangers of eclecticism or combinationism (generically, not specifically in terms of Japan's early-modern Eclectic school) are higher-than-usual political obfuscation or mystery, deliberate or unintended – highly pertinent in the febrile Meiji context. Kita, though an unusual thinker and activist, was not *sui generis* or completely unique – and his main thrust is discernible. Yet, unsurprisingly, he is best understood via his concrete policies: e.g. his strong pro-war imperialism and expansionism (see chapter 5 herein).

If the Jiyūtō is fairly unreflectively seen as 'revolutionary', then it is evident how certain party segments may be regarded as leftist, even as it seems at best centrist and often conservative, while, in *foreign policy*, there were strains lending themselves to far-right ultra-nationalism. That both Nakae and Ōi were founding members of the Kokuryūkai (see Saaler 2014: 132) suggests Nakae-Ōi's 'liberal radicalism' was more populist (or far-right) than 'left-of-centre' – a term that is extremely ambiguous, as the political spectrum offered herein can account for (see chapter 2).

Beyond the Jiyūtō: An Overview of Several Socialisms in Japan

As the foregoing indicates, the *origins* of socialisms in Japan and globally – like the various socialisms themselves – are radically heterogeneous. And plurals attached here are only intended to reinforce essential points within this thesis: the wide diversity of socialisms and the prevalent inability to think beyond the idea that because someone uses the term 'socialism', a form of leftism was being invoked. I argue Kita did not intend socialism in any leftist sense. Explaining how 'socialism' came to (or was imagined in) Japan helps us understand the ideological complexity and diversity of socialisms – everywhere, not only in Japan.

'Soshiarisume' was first used in writing by Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916) (Crump 1983: 33), a founding Meirokusha. This transcription into Roman letters (*rōmaji*) of the Japanese pronunciation derives from the French word 'socialisme' (Calvetti 1984: 30) and appeared in *Shinsei taii* (1870; The Substance of True Government), which basically expounded natural right theory. Later, Katō's thought considerably shifted towards statism and social Darwinism – in *Jinken shinsetsu* (1882; A New Theory of

Human Rights). This book surely influenced Kita – not least via his above-mentioned Sado-based teachers. Perhaps Kita perused *Kyōsha no kenri no kyōsō* (The Struggle for the Rights of the Strong; 1893) – in which Katō offers unmitigated support for the rights of the powerful in full social Darwinist garb, even making a ‘scientific case’ for Japan’s ‘right to East Asian hegemony’ (Abosch in Huffman, ed. 1998: 111; also Sako and Steinmetz, ed. 2007: 36).

One well-known usage of ‘socialism’ was in economics lectures at Dōshisha University from around 1877-79 by Dwight Learned (Ike 1950: 118). Taking a laissez-faire view of economics, Learned was critical of ‘socialism’, albeit he recognised evils within capitalism, too. He saw the remedy as ‘true humanism’ and ‘true Christianity’ (ibid) – both of which ironically have been called socialism (then and now; see Johnson on Keir Hardie 2022, but also Benn 2020⁶²). In late 1870s and 1880s Japan, the best source on socialism was surely journalism:

... a number of news dispatches describing the activities of the Social Democrats in Germany and the Nihilists in Russia. Bismarck’s attempts to suppress the Socialist party, for instance, were reported. One item intimated that the Iron Chancellor was seeking absolute powers under the guise of putting down the socialists. (Ike 1950: 119)

Treatments by journalists were rarely thorough with people receiving limited – even jaundiced – perspectives on more radical socialisms. Often only caricatures of socialisms were presented in the early to mid-Meiji press. This led to much trepidation regarding socialism generally among liberals and conservatives, who caricatured it as ‘too doctrinaire’ – as, e.g., demanding the abolition of ‘private property’.

⁶²For Neil Johnson’s article, see: <https://www.independentlabour.org.uk/2022/02/16/hardies-creed-the-religion-of-socialism/#:~:text=For%20Keir%20Hardie%2C%20socialism%20was%20the%20Christianity%20of,from%20Jesus%20to%20Robert%20Burns%20and%20Karl%20Marx.>

For Benn’s well-known lecture, see a re-publication here: <https://tribunemag.co.uk/2020/12/tony-benn-on-revolutionary-christianity/>

Democratic forces in Japan then were critical of this supposed left-socialist rejection of 'private property'. This point was often confused, as even Marxism only ever opposed privatisation of *means of production* (e.g. factories, larger tools, raw materials), not individual-personal items of property (clothes, books). Contemporary reformist socialisms hardly opposed private property – with many people having barely heard of Marx's subtler argument about means of production. Yet many Japanese believed various over-hyped and confused stories in the 1880s – such as 'socialism' would inevitably spread to Japan (Ike 1950: 119-120), with growing inequality engendering its embrace. Some even contended socialism could only be blocked by establishing constitutional government (ibid: 120). As the above registers, socialism meant very different things to wide varieties of people.

The agrarian question was something more definite on which landowners felt exposed: "Consequently, they were sensitive to pressure from landless tenants demanding cheaper rents and a more equitable distribution of land" (ibid). Such ideas pointed towards agrarian socialism. And the Oriental Socialist Party (for more, see below), formed in 1882, provided an outlet for peasant discontent.

Figures like Kita much later even offered a unique application of such 'agrarian socialist' ideas as a 'more equitable distribution of land', reading this in classic 'proletarian-state' fashion *internationally*, albeit he resiled from any international land re-distribution. In such cases, Japan would hardly warrant receiving more than, e.g., the more truly proletarian Korean state.

Consequently, concepts of 'socialism' were, and remain, two a penny. Their exposition and praxis are where the serious matters of much-needed categorisation and differentiation begin.

Intellectual and Radical Trends

Russian variants in political ideologies – populism, Nihilism, and various socialisms – were introduced into Japan in the 1880s via translations of assorted political Russian novels (see Crump 1983; Ike 1950). This made Russian Nihilism in particular rather well-known in Japan, which matters here in two ways: it solidified the image of ‘socialists’ and ‘revolutionaries’ as ‘violence experts’; and it also affected Kita’s ideas.

The content of Russian novels (on Nihilism) influenced various revolts in Japan in the early to mid-1880s – with Vera Zasulich’s attempted assassination of General Trepov (a powerful Tsarist police official) resulting in one such book: *Rokoku kibun retsujo no gigoku* (An Unusual Russian Heroine’s Arrest) translated by Somata Sakutarō (Crump 1983: 38). In 1883, Miyazaki Muryū published, *The Real Story of the Nihilist Party* (or *The Devil’s Cry*). This was based on various books, but mainly Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky’s Nihilist classic, *Underground Russia* (Ike 1950: 122) – first published in the Jiyūtō press (Eiri jiyū shinbun or Illustrated Liberal Paper). Subsequently, Miyazaki was imprisoned for months.

Yano Fumio, a “prominent member” of the Kaishintō (Ike 1950: 123), published a classic that influenced Kita: *Keikoku bidan* (A Beautiful Story of Statecraft). Ike (ibid) writes: “The novel featured the struggle of Thebes to throw off Spartan domination. The central figure, Epaminondas, became a popular hero in Japan...” with many young men trying to emulate his speeches. Similar novels also depicted the “glorification of resistance to oppression” (ibid), with this kind of writing mirroring both Japan’s domestic situation under oppressive oligarchical government, plus imperial power semi-colonial subjugation from the 1850s onwards. These novels exuded, and fostered, a broadly rebellious, ‘socialistic’ air.

Russian populism had directly political outlets in Japan. One example was an 1882 Tarui Tōkichi speech in Nagasaki (Crump 1983: 39). Tarui not only seemed aware of the Russian assassination scene – unsurprisingly, since, in 1879, even Fukuzawa Yukichi had published regarding Russian current affairs, writing on socialist Alexander Herzen, plus the Nihilists (Togawa Tsuguo in Rimer 1995: 222). Tarui also compared Western

nihilism to Buddhist and Taoist ideas of ‘nothingness’ (kyomu) (Crump 1983: 39), thus establishing a link between ancient East Asian religio-moral ideas and assorted socialisms.

Also in 1882, the Tōyō Shakaitō (Eastern Socialist Party) was founded – the first in Japan to call itself ‘socialist’ – but it was soon banned (ibid). Quoting Ōsawa Masamichi, Crump (ibid) points to how the Tōyō Shakaitō was ‘considerably stimulated by the assassination of the Russian tsar in 1881’, gained money for the party by intimidating the rich, organised peasant struggles, and engaged in secret meetings – making it comparable, at least superficially, to a ‘Japanese version of the Narodniks’ (Russian populists/nihilists). It also mirrored many Japanese revolt-oriented organisations.

This point about populism is important – even as this relates to Kita Ikki. One reason for this is connected to another Stepniak book (*Career of a Nihilist*) that was translated and serialised in the *Kokumin shinbun* (The National News) in 1896. Given common Japanese laxity in translation – with translators afforded much leeway – the novel became a story about a shishi (man-of-high-purpose) revolutionary living in Japan prior to the 1868 Meiji restoration revolution (Crump 1983: 39-40).

Stepniak’s romantic *Underground Russia* also moulded conceptions of socialism, yet its commitments are vague and elitist, offering various ‘revolutionary profiles’ (Zasulich and Peter Kropotkin) while also calling for universal suffrage, freedom of the press, free speech, plus freedom of assembly and of electoral address (Crump ibid). This vagueness is prevalent in Kita, too. Stepniak’s, and Kita’s, romanticism may account for their appeal in Japan, with elite romantic rebellion possessing long traditions there (aimed against China and the Western powers).

What was the core of the alternative-establishment restorationist tradition other than that seen embodied in the greatest-ever ‘pure-spirited hero’ Saigō Takamori – epitome of elite bellicose-romantic revolution? And note how this tradition was hallowed by the Genyōsha-Kokuryūkai. Two quotes citing Stepniak on socialism sum this spirit up – both not dissimilar to what Kita penned in early political poems, too (1972, vol. iii: 121-

126). First: “A new world, based upon the fraternity of all men, in which there will no longer be either misery or tears, ... All hail to the Revolution, the sole means of realising this golden ideal” (Crump 1983: 40). Second, epitomising this thinking’s existential tenor: “Full of his sublime idea, clear, splendid, vivifying as the mid-day sun, he defies suffering, and would meet death with a glance of enthusiasm and a smile of happiness” (ibid: 41). Crump comments witheringly: “Among the ill-informed, socialism became synonymous with terrorism...” (ibid). And Russian populist terrorism in particular, yet on the Japanese scene socialism (in Kita and others) became synonymous with nationalist or shishi terrorism, which is highlighted in the above-mentioned translation of Stepniak’s book. Much ideological overlap resulted, moreover.

Yet the core method is similar – and that is the elitism deeply entrenched within both Russian populist terrorism and Japanese shishi terrorism. The mass movement does not move things, but rather the individual vanguard hero deploying individual-moralistic violence, as indicated in the treatment of Ōyōmei (chapter 3 herein). Kita’s violent propensities are transmuted onto the international plane, however, as domestically electoralism prevailed in Kita then, albeit he obscurely hinted at the provocation of domestic instability in ‘Suicide and Assassination’ (1906) (Kita 1972: 137-140).

Hence ‘socialism’ in Japan often meant the vaguest moralistic rebelliousness, inspiring anything from: peasant rebellion (e.g. the Kabasan incident); the ‘left’ of the Jiyūtō (often ultimately radically rightist nationalists or naively guided by such); elitist-terrorist strategies against high-level figures in oppressive regimes; or Kita’s national-socialist, war-mongering revolutionism. ‘Socialism’ often also involved adherence to ‘bourgeois revolutionary’ articulations: formal-legal equality; abstract fraternity, liberty and happiness; a mix of the aims of the English, French and American revolutions. This is partly visible in Kita (1903) – in places where he praises Washington and Bunker Hill in ‘Totsu’ (Kita 1972, vol. iii: 97), albeit what he admired in them is the violent rebellion against what he saw as nasty, interfering British colonialism (‘that oppressive landlord state’). Consequently, Kita’s socialism was consistently multi-

sourced, yet everywhere a state-infused, bloody-bellicose, moralistic-intuitionist nationalism.

Tokutomi, Christianity, the Early Katayama and the Significance of Ferdinand Lassalle

Further strands of influence that sculpted various softer Japanese socialisms were Christianity and Tokutomi Sohō's concept of *heiminshugi* (commonerism), as adapted by Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko within their so-called Heiminsha (Commoners Newspaper) socialism, of which more below.

In his earlier liberal phase, Tokutomi was emblematic of mid-Meiji Japan (the late 1880s). First, at a youthful age (Scheiner 1970: 80, 108), he became a Christian convert and follower of L.L. Janes, charismatic Christian teacher in Kumamoto (Notehelfer 1975). Second, he became an influential liberal thinker from the 1880s on, writing the important *Shōrai no Nihon* (The Future Japan, 1886), which gauged the effects of liberal global-historical trends upon Japan, urging it to transform itself into an industrial, democratic country. Third, he founded the Min'yūsha (Society of the People's Friends), which distributed the famous journal, *Kokumin no tomo* (The Nation's Friend). Tokutomi was a prolific, popular writer who articulated heiminshugi, heralding the commoner while seeking to abolish Japanese feudal statuses. However, beginning with his pusillanimous response to the novel conservative ideology (Gluck 1985) – that was instituted along with the new constitutional system of 1889 – and extending up to his reaction to the First Sino-Japanese War and especially after the Tripartite Intervention by Russia, Germany, and France (who blocked Japanese gains in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War), Tokutomi switched from an optimistic view of the global liberal order to a darker, decidedly more nationalistic, dog-eat-dog one (Pyle 1969; Pierson 1980). Given the lugubrious new dawn this heralded for Japan, Tokutomi began his permanent shift toward a narrow, militant nationalism and expansionism.

The scandalous quality to this spectacular *volte face* likely influenced Kita, as he certainly read not only contemporary Japanese romantic literature, but explicitly political fare like *Kokumin no tomo* and, on the political right, Seikyōsha (Political

Education Society) literature. The latter society – led by Miyake Setsurei and Shiga Shigetaka, as seen in chapter 3 – was oriented on preserving what they termed the national essence (*kokusui hozon*), as was Kita after his own fashion.

As Tokutomi and many others attest, Christianity significantly impacted the samurai (plus his own rural samurai or *gōnō*) class in Meiji Japan. Yet Christianity was also crucial in introducing ideas around social reform and a largely pacifist-moral missionary socialism (or Christian socialism generally) to Japan. Illustrating how Christianity contributed heavily to the development of Japanese socialisms, five out of the six founders of the Japanese socialist party in 1901 were Christians (Duus and Scheiner 1988: 659; Howard 2002: 41).

The Christian religion heavily moulded social protest, social reform and the fledgling labour and socialist movements in late Meiji Japan. Kublin has noted about Katayama Sen that the latter points to his being “socialist” from his time at Grinnell College in the US onward (1964: 69). Yet Kublin argues it is futile to point to Katayama’s assertions he became a socialist at college. The real question concerns the *specific socialist influences to which he was exposed* “and the type of socialism toward which he leaned” (ibid: 69-70). Thus Katayama’s socialism was “but a further evolution of his Christian creed” (ibid: 70).

One seminal influence on Katayama, and many self-identifying Japanese socialists, came from Christian social thinker Richard T. Ely’s *The Social Aspects of Christianity* (1889). Rather than class struggle, Ely stressed Christian duty and morality. Hence the “social gospel of American Protestant Christianity” (ibid: 71) initially moulded Katayama’s socialism – not Marxism nor, even, Utopian socialisms well-known to earlier Western political thought.

Kublin identifies Romantic nationalist and German-Jewish labour organiser Ferdinand Lassalle’s impact. Lassalle was a foppish dandy “with the elegant ruthlessness of Byronism” (Schirokauer 1931 [1928]: 39) – a one-time liberal revolutionary (in 1848), then ambitious social chauvinist who posited the ‘cult of the idea of the State’

(Bernstein 1893: 29). Lassalle conspired with Bismarck to social Caesarist ends, with Marx terming his ideology 'Royal Prussian government socialism' (Draper 1990: 54-71; the phrase, 63-64). Lassalle is important, not least since Kita's younger brother, Reikichi, saw his elder brother as a would-be aristocratic Japanese dandy like Lassalle (Wilson 1969).

Katayama became fascinated after reading about Lassalle in the *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1888), later writing a book about him (Kublin 1964: 71, 95). It was sometime before Katayama shifted from his Christian social-gospel affiliations towards a fuller labour movement or trade union focus, even had Lassalle represented such a pure strand, which he clearly did not – since, like Walt Whitman in 'The Song of Myself', Lassalle was far too broad and multitudinous to be encompassed on one limited dimension. This constituted his grave weakness politically, but also his grand romantic attraction – a strength Lassalle deployed opportunistically and behind the back of the movement, plotting with Bismarck to join the workers' movement to social monarchy and royalist reaction (Schirokauer 1931). Kita, too, possessed the quality of a romantic dandy, while not being nearly as oriented as Lassalle on arousing the masses – a highly pertinent point when the final assessment takes place over whether Kita can seriously be termed fascist (see chapters 8 and 9 herein).

Toward the Labour (and Socialist) Movement: Katayama and Takano

Before trying to find a berth in the Kumiai (Congregational) Church once back in Japan, Katayama's next move was toward the study of social problems, looking specifically at the settlement house movement (Kublin 1964: 81-87, 90-91). He absorbed some 'municipal socialism' on the way (ibid: 84; also Kishimoto 1953: 34-36), in which city problems, including gas and water, were in high focus.

From March 1897, he worked in a settlement house in Kanda, Tokyo, aptly called Kingsley House, given its basis in Christian socialism (ibid: 96-101) – and insofar as Charles Kingsley was a leading 19th century Christian socialist. Katayama's writing output was tremendous then, writing for *Rikugo zasshi* (Cosmos), *Shakai zasshi* (Social

Journal), and *Kokumin no tomo* (Nation's Friend) (ibid: 102). That such socialism was only unevenly progressive is illustrated via Kingsley's ideas and activities – specifically how he defended brutal-racist Jamaican governor Edward Eyre (Fraser 2011⁶³), his racism against Irish and black people, plus his strong support for Anglo-Saxonism (where, e.g., the British royals – for whom he had worked – were seen as descendants of the god Odin; Frankel 2007; Horsman 1976). This was no surprise given Henry George's infamous anti-Chinese racism – with George influencing socialisms in Japan, the US and the UK.

This is not necessarily to say that Katayama subscribed to Kingsley's or George's views on such matters, but the moral and political hauteur with which Kingsley and many individuals like him approached the workers or ordinary people 'from above' had a deep impact on Katayama and many similar figures in the Heimisha. These figures were very much a part of the from-above-like statist, moralist, Christian or professorial *elitist socialisms* and spirit of the age. Few brushed against this grain, yet the leftist-internationalists did.

The next phase in Katayama's life up to the period with which we are concerned is his time as labour organiser from 1897 onwards – with the foundation of the young journalist Takano Fusatarō's Society for the Promotion of Trade Unions. This was a kind of 'trades union school' (Kublin 1964: 115), which promoted the development of unionism in Japan. Yet, since this body did not encourage strikes when various were then ongoing, this did not impress the workers. Earlier, Takano had distributed to factory workers his pamphlet, 'A Summons to Workers' – a piece infused with a mix of "moderate, non-political" (Large 1989: 358), Samuel Gompers-style ('American Federation of Labor') unionism on one side and a Japanese national-chauvinistic appeal on the other (Marsland 1989; Large 1989). Katayama largely shared the young journalist Takano's ideas then: to develop Japanese capitalism's striving for "a healthy and harmonious growth of capital and labour" (Kublin 1964: 117). Or, in Takano's

⁵⁷ <https://victorianweb.org/authors/kingsley/rfraser2.html>

phrase taken from Gompers: ‘trade-unionism pure and simple’ – with the politics purportedly taken out.

After some effort, various trade unions were set up with the assistance of the Society for the Promotion of Trade Unions: e.g., the Iron Workers’ Union. In December 1897, *Labour World*, a union-based newspaper, was also founded. One clear strategic failure came when the textile mills were not expanded into, which could have prompted a plethora of unions to emerge (Kublin 1964: 123). However, after the failure of the Factory Act to pass in 1898, that resulted in a definite deflation of the movement from 1899 (ibid: 128).

What is relevant in the above to the progress of socialism in Japan are the varying complex strains that developed, entwined, side-by-side: Christian socialism, moralistic socialisms (Ely), Lassallean state socialism, Christian charity work and the settlement house movement, and last but not least, Gompers-style simple trade unionism. Yet all these were largely socialist-from-above-like phenomena, to use Draper’s term, thus (partly) overdetermining the trajectory taken by Kita’s conception of socialism, too, in his familiarity with the trends of Japanese and other socialisms.

Socialism-Studying and Socialism-Propagating Organisations in Quick Succession: What is ‘Left’ in Japan and Its Severe Limitations

The next period for Japan’s Christian, labour and socialist movement – after repression by the Japanese government in the form of the Public Order and Police Law of 1900 – amounted to what Kublin calls an era when Katayama became a ‘Socialist Agitator’ (ibid: 129-156). This involved, first, the Shakaishugi kenkyūkai (Society for the Study of Socialism) being founded in Tokyo for the first time in November 1898. The aim was to be a study association, not a propaganda organ.

“Taking their cue from the English Fabian Society”, as Kublin puts it, they met monthly in the Unitarian Church library in Tokyo to discuss up-to-date ideas and to hear lectures on the lives and thought of Western socialists (1964: 133), including Saint-Simon,

Fourier, Proudhon and Marx, plus American Christian social reformers and Fabians like Henry George, Richard Ely, and W.D.P. Bliss. Two of the most informed individuals present were the academic and Christian Abe Isoo plus Katayama himself, while most members had similarly Christian backgrounds. Moreover, the guiding root was often informed by a Confucian-style humanism blended with strong patriotic concern for Japan (ibid: 132).

In 1900, a 40-member Socialist Society was born from the Study Society. And then, a year later and rather optimistically – given the highly restrictive financial rules over who could vote – Japan’s Social Democratic Party was formed. By the time of the founding of the Socialist Society, one non-Christian had appeared among its leaders: journalist and activist Kōtoku Shūsui. The other leaders or founders were all Christians: Katayama, Abe Isoo, Kinoshita Naoe, Nishikawa Kōjirō and Kawakami Kiyoshi. Kawakami tellingly referred to the Japan-based Party as a kind of Fabian Society (Kawakami 1903), another unequivocal instantiation of socialism-from-above. The Social Democratic Party seemingly proved a futile endeavour, being banned a day after its founding.

Christian socialism was often hardly left-wing, even though the vast majority of commentators (in Japan or beyond) seem to see the ‘s’ word and assume it to be more or less leftist – without any cogent, corroborating argumentation. From my perspective, this movement – miniscule as it was – was largely liberal-centrist or romantically conservative-statist and only unevenly left-wing. A few figures in this movement fell in and out of, or approximated to, a certain leftism, albeit others evinced degrees of reformist leftism some of the time. In any case, the main (reformist) left-wing figures – Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko, and Katayama, too, at times – were rather uneven in their leftist principles and praxis.

Kōtoku is the best candidate for being considered a consistent and unequivocal leftist among these three. He, inescapably, has elements of leftism about him, but sometimes, and highly problematically for any leftist, his ideas fall into an obsessive sectarianism seemingly stemming from a variety of personality- and control-based

issues. Thus Kōtoku proceeds to attack the Christian socialists, whose hearts and minds, instead of trying to win, he prefers to make jibes at rather than understanding religion/Christianity generally as the ‘heart in a heartless world’ (as per Marx himself; 1843-44). Kublin calls this predilection in Kōtoku an “almost morbid hatred of Christianity” (1964: 144). Kōtoku’s wanting to “obliterate Christ” indeed verges on the obsessional (see his last book; *Kirisuto massatsu ron*; 1911).

Another important failing in Kōtoku was his broader socialist-anarchist sectarianism. This not only related to religion, but to his largely standing aloof from the workers’ movement. In doing so, he did not seem to stand with workers (or the excluded, exploited and oppressed) to show in practice the validity of his species of socialism by fighting back together with the masses against Japan’s authoritarian state. Instead, Kōtoku’s tendency was, from 1906 onward (after prison and his US trip), to seek the points of disagreement and raise those as the latest (dogmatic) truth in the social ‘movement’. Divisive sectarian splits ensued. Sievers (1969: 68) explains Kōtoku’s would-be:

[radical] attitude [toward revolutionary tactics] finally helped to split a young socialist movement which, fragile and weak as it was, would have had great difficulty achieving many of its aims [even] had it been completely united. [My last square brackets]

Third, he omitted to work with other oppressed ethnic groups – say, Chinese and Koreans – to further various progressive ends. Lastly, Kōtoku was rather patriarchal in outlook and his attitudes to women reflected prevailing male chauvinism. His frequenting places of prostitution is just one indicator and the heartless way he divorced a wife another (not face-to-face but by letter after he had told her to visit her mother).

Kōtoku at his best, however, was a man of strong left-wing principle and creative leftist intelligence – with his anti-war, anti-imperialist stance one clear instance. He argued passionately how it was not in the interests of different national workers to fight each other, as this served Russian-Japanese ruling classes. Katayama wobbled on the Russo-

Japanese war, but Kōtoku went to jail for principled opposition on multiple occasions – as did Sakai. To show such courage on such matters has inspired many left-wing socialists and internationalists up to the present (Crump 1983; Howard 2002).

Kita's attitude to such principled leftist stances is instructive. In late 1903, Kōtoku, Sakai and Uchimura Kanzō resigned from their jobs at the Yorozu chōhō (Kuroiwa Ruikō's newspaper) over the paper shifting its stance on the Russo-Japanese war – with Kuroiwa opportunistically turning pro-war. When assessed from a leftist-socialist stance, Kita's response was to pour scorn on these journalists, calling Kōtoku, Sakai and Uchimura fame-seekers 'turning their backs on their consciences' (see chapter 5 herein). Accordingly, Kita's stance offers a good indication of his anti-leftism.

The Social Policy School

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx famously argued there are many different brands of socialism on an implicit spectrum from leftist international socialism through more or less leftism to centrism till one reaches strongly rightist-statist socialism. One of the right-wing socialisms Marx names was 'conservative socialism'. Unsurprisingly, Marx in his life-time was faced with the need to combat a number of the very forms he had diagnosed and repudiated back in the late 1840s and afterwards: Lassallean-Bismarckian *state socialism*. In 1890s Japan, there was a similar conservative-elitist socialism following on from Bismarck's band of so-called professorial socialists (*Kathedersozialisten*) involving Gustav von Schmoller and Adolph Wagner. Von Schmoller and Wagner had founded the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Social Policy Association), which influenced the Japanese offshoot therefrom in 1896: the Shakai seisaku gakkai (with the same meaning as the German). Both associations advanced a *Staatssozialismus/kokka shakaishugi* (state or national socialism) when the term was applied to Bismarck or to various Japanese elites: such as Teidai [Imperial] University types in the form of Kanai Noboru and Kuwada Kumazō.

These conservative social policy schools in Germany and Japan would deploy a number of state socialist policies from above or by means of state welfare reform (e.g.

pensions, health benefits). This was done partly in order to stave off a more radical-seeming mix of socialisms (leftist, quasi-leftist and pseudo-leftist) within the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany), which was making numerical and electoral advances. The SPD was an uneven coming together of various strands (mostly Lassallean, Rodbertus-type statisms; Bebelian and Liebknechtian strains; or small radical leftist-internationalist Marxian strands). In Japan, the professorial socialists or *kōdan shakaishugisha* were arguably an even more elitist group than the Bismarckian sort of 'Staatssozialist'. Enconced in their Tokyo Imperial University ivory tower, the professorial types saw things thus:

It may well be appreciated that, to scholastics surveying the industrial-labor scene from the Olympian heights of Tokyo Imperial University, the energetic Christian socialist was a dangerous rabble-rouser and potential troublemaker. That they held no respect for Katayama's intellect was made clear by the well-known pundit, Yamaji Aizan [himself someone who set up a *Kokka shakaitō* (State Socialist Party) in 1906]. Katayama has the patient, plodding 'mind of a cart-horse', he sneered. (Kublin 1964: 138; my insertion in square brackets)

This is quintessentially exclusionary class discrimination. Yet it goes to show that class-otherness accompanied by even the softest possible, de-politicised trade unionist reformism can appear threatening to the Yamajis, Kanais and Kuwadas of this world in the upper echelons of elite academies.⁶⁴ Yamaji surely despised Katayama's lack of refinement and sophistication – with the subliminal class link evident: the *cart-horse* just *is* a *worker-horse*.

After this empirico-historical expatiation of varying overlapping *and* divergent socialisms, the main strains as they appeared in Japan at that time can be summarised thus:

First, there was an *Eastern agrarianism* that, at least in Tarui, was both expressed as an ideal of the collectivity or of co-operation, of freedom and equality, yet also as something that involved expansionism regarding Korea. To quote Tarui:

⁶⁴ All lecturers/professors at Tokyo Imperial University were state bureaucrats.

When I first heard of this uninhabited island,... I felt it was very lucky for the country. I had been of the opinion that unless our country were to conquer Korea first of all, she could not open the way for development. If we were fortunate enough to discover an uninhabited island, we would be able to make it into a center of our operations, to which we could draw comrades one after another to build a base for our Korean expedition. (Suzuki 1968: 82)

Such a combination of seemingly contradictory ideas appeared not only in Tarui, but in Ōi and Nakae (seen above). The only thing enabling such a combination is a kind of Japanese *national* socialism, in which the 'all' or collectivity is limited to the Japanese alone – as in Kita. Given this, this distinct ideological strain finds itself on the hard, populist or far right of the political spectrum.

Second, there were Kōtoku's *anti-imperialist views* (Tierney 2015), which are clearly of the reformist left. This is predicated upon a largely pacifist-internationalist conception that sees war as dividing ordinary people of one nation from another. This, moreover, was the left-wing Heiminsha editorial line that got Kōtoku and Sakai jailed.

Third, there is a softer version of Confucian, traditional or ancient imperialism (a conservative ideology) that sees the world as consisting of benevolent polities in which those from above are there to serve and be beneficent to those below. This ideology is self-evidently shot through with elitism and royalism, requiring ordinary people to buy into it for its maintenance. This is also termed: Confucian/Mencian ancient imperialism; the ancient way of the kings; the age of the legendary five emperors (Bernal 1976: 12); the datong (the Great Harmony); or the jingtian (well-field) system (see Bernal 1976: 7-8, 11-32). Much modern socialism in East Asia has been at least in part indebted to such traditional ideas (in China, Japan, Vietnam and the DPRK).

Fourth, another kind of conservative/ultra-conservative national-state socialism exists – as with Bismarck or Japanese imperial university professors. The objective is to offer benefits, pensions and support of varying kinds from above to convince workers that that is the best they can possibly get, while maintaining capitalism and its intrinsic

socio-economic exclusions and hierarchies. This is a national/state socialism of a political establishment that realises it may be on slippery turf unless it offers reforms from above. It represents the carrot, but stands alongside the state's harder tool: the repressive stick.

Fifth, there were varying sorts of social-evolutionist socialism or social Darwinism. This often takes a more or less racialised form – and does so in Kita (see chapters 5 and 7 herein). It may also take more benign forms in developmental-stage-ist socialisms – as observed in forms of political economy over time, going from ancient socialist collectivisms through to more modern socialisms (usually seen as pertaining within one country, as in various more or less benign reformist socialisms with which it sometimes overlaps).

Sixth, some socialisms borrow from Russian populism and terrorism, yet they end up affirming not the importance of the people-from-below or the masses (e.g., the peasantry or workers), but instead, some species of late Tokugawa or early Meiji restorationist shishi terrorism. While the Russian brand may have aspired toward being left-wing (even this was sometimes illusory), once this entered the Japanese scene with its powerful conservative-nationalist impulses and traditions, a more populist, far-right complexion was often assumed.

Seventh, various shades of Christian socialism exhorted fellow support and sympathy between human beings and other such moral notions – another being that greed/money breeds sin/corruption and that capitalism, since it encourages this, must be repudiated. This sometimes involves seeking state aid from above. Hence why it can be combined with Fabianism or other such state socialism-from-above-like ideologies (Lassalleian statism, Bernsteinian revisionism and certain other strains in the SPD are locatable here). Gradualist Fabianism belongs here, as it can be both moralist and statist, and certainly looks to the state or elites from above to enact its socialist programme. Thus it often blends with imperialist, and/or conservative-collectivist, reformism – or potentially takes partly progressive (albeit largely rising middle class) land-nationalising forms (Mill, Alfred Russel Wallace and Henry George).

Eighth, there were various trade unionist socialisms. Some were more radical, some very conservative and, like Takano Fusatarō's ideas, shot through with nationalism and patriotic appeal. House settlement work, social work and other ameliorative social policy socialisms can be placed in the same (diluted) category.

All of the above are (self-designated) socialisms – from left (or far left) to the far right, as analysed herein. And all can be assigned to a node (or more) on a spectrum from far left to far right (as in chapter 2).

Conclusion

What remains for this chapter is to assess which socialism(s) Kita Ikki displayed or was influenced by. This is a task to be accomplished across this thesis, but to engage in some provisional allocation to categories is helpful as a guide going forward. It also usefully prefigures what comes later.

Kita is unequivocally a strong national or state socialist, as already registered in the literature on Kita (see Nomura 1966; also Wilson 1969). Alongside this, social Darwinism is fiercely present in Kita's *Kokutairon*. This underpins his discourse on imperialism and the might-is-right quality accompanying this. Yet, proceeding further on this, Kita construes his entire socialism via the biological theory of evolution (see chapter 7 herein, but also Wilson in Goodman 1967). Moreover, there are aspects of racist thinking in Kita. I have alluded to one aspect – a certain antisemitism – yet more manifests later (chapters 5 and 7 herein).

On questions of religious influence regarding Kita's socialism, while he was no Christian, there are religious-mythological elements in his opus. Thus, while critical of Shintōist mythologising (*bansei ikkei*) centred on the *kokutairon*'s interpretation of the emperor and the role and origins of such in Japanese history, his own socialism is

deemed 'almost a religion' for him. Similar strains appear later in his eschatological proclivities.

In Kita's socialism, imperialism is regarded as a prior condition or basis. Thus Kita means it when he states his socialism is 'neither left nor right'. This is an archetypal move of the popular or far right – especially when aiming at left-leaning constituencies (the excluded, exploited and oppressed, as such broadly outsider-type social forces are termed here).

Kita exhibits parliamentary orientations in his early thought, since he called for universal male suffrage. This fits his family background within the Jiyū minken undō (his father and uncle Honma's ideas), albeit he saw this as compatible with a constitutional monarchical system – what he idealised as essentially (Mencian) Ōdō (the just, kingly way). The latter is broadly compatible with liberal-bourgeois-democratic ideological and legal-constitutional norms. Kita did not stop at parliamentarism, as this is only his early *domestic* political programme, which constituted a *rebellion* against the oligarchical *status quo*. His foreign-policy pro-war militarism is where his decidedly far-right predilections were first revealed, as is argued across this thesis.

Kita also followed in the tracks of Pan-Asian or Oriental/Eastern socialism first laid down in Japan by Tarui Tōkichi – no wonder Kita had a kind of annexationist attitude to Korea, parts of Siberia and Manchuria in his early pro-war essays, to which we must turn next. Accordingly, his national socialism rhetorically asserted a Pan-Asianism.

To conclude, there were evidently kaleidoscopic socialisms in Meiji Japan, as expounded here, yet the ones that impacted Kita were decisively right or far-right-leaning socialisms – except for the strain of centrism-to-soft rightism that may be seen as apparent in his early parliamentarism. In the majority of socialisms he adopts, a strong statism, racism, elitism and social Darwinism manifest themselves, as is shown in subsequent chapters. Consequently, Kita largely fuses influences from Tarui, Ōi and Nakae (the expansionist-Pan-Asianist predilection) with European far-right strains

added, too: national socialism and social Darwinism. Hence, while he borrows from many of the eight socialisms above, he draws in a very rightist direction.

In the next chapter, the following claims will be substantiated, showing Kita had far-right social-Darwinist, strong statist, imperial expansionist and militaristic national socialist proclivities.

Chapter 5. Kita's Social Darwinist 'National' Socialism coupled with Ultra-nationalist-Militarist Imperialism in His Early Work

In this chapter, the main question of Kita Ikki's socialism in combination with imperialism, plus attendant other overlapping concepts, will be examined hermeneutically in the context of his three early pro-war articles in the *Sado shinbun* (Sado News) – one of two main newspapers on Sado Island at the turn of the twentieth century. These pieces by Kita were all published in 1903 in the run up to the outbreak of war with Russia in early 1904.

It is argued here that Kita's strong views that war was inevitable not only broke with the ideas of the main socialist grouping (and, in particular, with the leaders of the Heiminsha) in Japan but also formed a crucial part of an expansionist and *right-wing* ideology he referred to as a rather national or anti-internationalist brand of 'socialism'. As I demonstrate in this chapter, Kita saw this 'national socialism' as deeply permeated with his own notion of imperialism and assorted other concepts gleaned largely from the far right: from Pan-Asianism through militarism to a predilection for racial, geopolitical, social Darwinist and social evolutionist thinking.

Kita's articles examined here are: 'Nihonkoku no shōrai to nichiro kaisen' (The Future of Japan and the Outbreak of War with Russia; hereafter Nihonkoku I); 'Nihonkoku no shōrai to nichiro kaisen: futatabi' (The Future of Japan and the Outbreak of War with Russia: part two [literally, 'once again']; hereafter Nihonkoku II); and last, 'Totsu, hikaisen wo iu mono' (Tut, tut! Those who Oppose the War [with Russia]; hereafter, 'Totsu').

The focus here is on the following themes. First, the role of war in Kita's apocalyptic militarism – with this being the main fulcrum within his self-conscious melding of imperialism and socialism. Second, the expansionism that flows from his own idea of 'good Japanese' imperialism again bound up with socialism. Third, Kita's Pan-Asianism and anti-Russianism, which evince an ethnic or racial exclusivism that obfuscates the

role of class difference for specific ideological ends. Fourth, Kita's articulation of a fundamental geo-political orientation. Fifth, further instances of anti-Russianism and its ties to ideas of Japan as highly civilised. Sixth, more geo-politics – with this time Kita's ideas on population and an implicit desire for Japanese *Lebensraum* (living space) being set forth, not to mention how Kita followed in the path of that strand of social Darwinism⁶⁵ that has been called 'external social Darwinism'. What is meant by this is a form of non-Spencerian social Darwinism stressing inter-state struggle that largely grew up in the 1880s and 1890s under the pen of Benjamin Kidd as well as of the more extreme purveyor of that doctrine, Karl Pearson.⁶⁶ While Spencerian social Darwinism was of an internal (i.e. domestic), individual and *laissez-faire* variety, Pearson and Kita were very critical of *laissez-faire* policies (with the internal social differences and unrest that followed therefrom). Instead, they focused more on internal social harmony and extra-group struggle – on the struggle *between* nations, not *within* them.

In the concluding section, I offer an overarching summative analysis of these themes in Kita and what they mean for his political ideological orientation on a left-right scale. In doing so, I situate Kita's ideas in the context of European and American thought in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Let me now turn to the idea of war in these texts by Kita and how they intimate at something of the logic of his militarism – with this being absolutely foundational to Kita's ideas on 'national' socialism mixed with imperialism.

⁶⁵ 'Social Darwinism' is not an entirely apt term, but it is employed in the literature to refer to a reductive biologicistic-organismic scientism that stipulates that conflict (whether between individuals or states) is foundational, and not, say, co-operation/mutual aid. Spencer coined the phrase 'the survival of the fittest'. On problems with 'social Darwinism' as an epithet, see Thomas C. Leonard (2009: e.g. sections 3. and 4., pages 39-41).

⁶⁶ See Bernard Semmel's treatment of these ideas in his chapter on Benjamin Kidd and Karl Pearson (1960; on external social Darwinism, see p.31 and p.44; on Pearson's being against working class internationalism and for 'national socialism', see p.38; on racial struggle, see pp.41-43; on eugenics, see p.44 and onwards).

i. *War and Militarism as Crucial to Kita's Socialism*

The first salient theme that can be derived from an overview of these articles concerns *war and its apocalyptic significance* for Kita. This relates to how Kita Ikki took an affirmative view of war with Russia and how this differed from that of the 'current socialists in Japan' (yo no shakaishugisha), as Kita referred to them (1972: 90). These were, in short, the Heiminsha (or Commoners' Newspaper members), the closest thing to a leftist socialist movement in Japan at the time: one that was less a movement than a collection largely of students and intellectuals⁶⁷ with a range of views from Christian socialism at one end to more atheistic and radical versions at the other. Despite these differences, however, both sides (Abe Isoo's or Kinoshita Naoe's decidedly Christian brand,⁶⁸ plus Kōtoku Shūsui's 'atheist' kind) had developed out of elitist Mencian-Confucian concepts of ancient kingly loyalism or imperial socialism, plus various Western state socialisms (see chapter 4).⁶⁹

As only Brij Tankha (2006: 19-20) in English refers to this in any detail, it has largely been overlooked that Kita, from the summer and autumn of 1903, completely disagreed with the Heiminsha and their well-documented left-leaning, anti-war line on the prospective war with Russia. Both editors of the *Heimin shinbun* – Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) and Sakai Toshihiko (1871-1933) – robustly opposed any outbreak of war with Russia, and were even jailed for their opposition (see Tierney 2015: 111; see also Notehelfer 1971: 106-109). Kita on the other hand repudiated the 'more conventional' opposing of socialism to imperialism (a conventional opposition implicit within Kōtoku's growing anti-imperialism and clear in his eventual ideological destination:

⁶⁷ John Crump estimates the number of socialists in Japan in the summer of 1904 to be around 200, among whom the leaders were largely journalists (e.g. Kinoshita, Kōtoku, Nishikawa and Sakai). The majority of the 200 were students. See Crump (1983: 142).

⁶⁸ This strand accounted for the vast majority of early Japanese socialists, including such otherwise rather different people as Katayama Sen, Nishikawa Kōjirō and Takabatake Motoyuki. All three (and many more) came to accept some conception of socialism originally via Christianity.

⁶⁹ On Kōtoku's elitism, see Notehelfer (1971: 81); on his slow "rejection of nationalism" and his 'imperial socialism' right up to 1903, see *ibid* (pp.85-87). Thus, in his books on *Imperialism* (1901; see Tierney 2015) and on the *Quintessence of Socialism* (1903; see Sievers 1970), Kōtoku was still a supporter of 'imperial socialism'. On similar ideas of ancient Japan's early emperor socialism, see Abé Isoh's [Abe Isoo's] piece in Count Shigénobu Ōkuma, comp. (vol. II, edited by Marcus Huish; 1909: 495, 510). See Crump (1983: 124-136).

anarchism). For Kita, these two notions would need to be *combined*, with *his* particular kind of socialism being only possible on the firm base provided by imperialism. This is attested by the following essential quote on this coupling of socialism with imperialism and how this was connected to Kita's views of war as both justified and inevitable:

I openly declare that I advocate socialism. For me, socialism is everything. It is almost a religion in my eyes. While I still breathe, I must never give up my advocacy of socialism. I believe that my advocacy of socialism should be the one and only thing in my life that I, worthless as I am, should hold on to till my very last breath. Moreover, at the same time I must again openly declare: Precisely because I advocate socialism, imperialism cannot be dispensed with either. No, it is because of my socialism that I resolutely advocate imperialism. For me, the advocacy of imperialism is the premise upon which the realisation of socialism is based. From my point of view, if one does not embrace socialism, one should not advocate imperialism either. The reason why I call for the outbreak of war with Russia based on imperialism is because imperialism is the vehicle whereby the ideal of socialism is to be achieved.⁷⁰ (Kita 1972: 86-87)

War was the essential concomitant of Kita's commitment to socialism coupled with imperialism – albeit he also stated that war with Russia was so essential that it should be prosecuted irrespective of any affirmation of socialism or imperialism (see Kita 1972: 86-87ff). Such a stance shows just how important Kita considered war to be for Japan – a matter of national life and death. “If war is not entered into with Russia, the downfall of the Japanese Empire will ensue” (Kita 1972: 73). This constitutes Kita's extreme or *apocalyptic* conception of the importance of the Russo-Japanese war to Japan's very being. It represented, for Kita, an *existential threat*: if no war with Russia, then Japan *will fall*. This very notion encapsulates Kita's provenance from the hard or far right, since negotiation and diplomacy, as initially advocated by Itō, were reasonable alternatives.

⁷⁰ Here, as throughout this thesis, translations of Kita are mine, unless otherwise stated.

Let me now draw chronologically from the first of the three articles treated in this essay: in short, from Nihonkoku I. Hereafter, I shall not mention the specific essay of the three essays focused on here when quoting Kita. Instead, I shall simply reference his collected works.

For Kita, Japan's choices are very stark: either war is waged on Russia as soon as possible or Japan will certainly be ruined. To establish an ideological benchmark of comparison showing just how hawkishly right-wing Kita's views here were, the position of the vice chief staff of the army Kodama Gentarō is offered up as a straightforward means to achieve this.⁷¹ Katō Yōko presents Kodama's peremptory interpellations as follows, with accompanying explanations (by Katō) out of quotes:

...at a meeting in Army headquarters around December 10 [1903], vice chief of staff Kodama Gentaro [sic] remarked, 'No doubt negotiations will go smoothly because of Russia's financial deficit. However, this probably means that the war may be delayed three or four years, during which Russia's military power would be strengthened, putting Japan at a disadvantage.' Even men like Kodama who believed Japan should go to war right away, were concerned that the peaceful solutions might yet prevail. (Wolff, Steinberg *et al.* 2007: 209-210; my additions in square brackets)

Kita thus mirrors Kodama in his hawkish, rightist stance. Neither, then, see either compromise or peaceful negotiations as wise in view of their unwavering commitment to Japan's grand strategy of defeating the Russian bear as soon as possible – seen as a *sine qua non* of Japan's success in imperial expansionism. For both these Japanese ideological militarists, war would only be delayed by any tergiversation. Both believed that any delay in beginning the conflict would place Japan at a strategic disadvantage with Russia. While contemporary Japanese elites – including figures like Kodama – were fearful of the advance of Russian imperial power, they were also interested in

⁷¹ The point of this comparison is not to claim that Kita was, at this time, famous like Kodama. Rather, it is simply to suggest the kind of *right-wing ideological company* Kita kept.

gaining further hegemony over Korea and extending Japan's web of influence deep into Manchuria. Hence the context was not about defence, but involved two rising regional imperialisms in direct competition for power on a collision course.

Such considerations lead to the second main theme to be focused on in these articles – one deeply overlapping with the first. This second theme is *expansionism* – and its connection to Kita's concept of imperialism.

ii. *Imperial Expansionism in Kita*

The quotes from Kita and Kodama in the previous section show that, for both men at their respective levels, immediate war was necessary. However, further stances by other elites on the issue of expansionism can also be cited, providing further benchmarking. As Sandra Wilson points out, contemporary Japanese Prime Minister Katsura Tarō certainly found the proposition of losing control over Korea unacceptable because one of the original goals of his cabinet from the outset in 1901 had been to make Korea a protectorate of Japan (Wilson in Wells and Wilson 1999: 164). Indeed, Katsura was apparently convinced by around April 1903 that war with Russia was inevitable (ibid: 163).

Thus, Kita in 1903 was far from alone in thinking that war, with its goal of Japanese imperial expansionism, was unavoidable. Indeed, the Japanese nation most widely was becoming increasingly vociferously pro-war with Russia, as is epitomised by the seven academic doctors, who “lobbied for a hard line” (Wolff 2008: 74) with the Japanese press almost uniformly following suit. However, the strength, virulence and urgency of Kita's argument is noteworthy: if one looks at this at the level of ideas again in order to derive conclusions about *Kita*, he had placed himself decisively, especially for such a young man, in the vanguard of the pro-war faction. Unlike Katsura, for whom the securing of Korea was the main aim and priority, Kita took a qualitatively harder

line.⁷² As he puts it near the beginning of *Nihonkoku I* and aimed at Genrō Itō Hirobumi and Yamagata Aritomo:

Damn the exchange of Manchuria and Korea! In the name of the honour of an independent country, which bears the fate of the East Asian race on its shoulders, it is shameful for us even to have reports of such rumours floating around. (Kita 1972: 73)

Kita then proceeds to draw the consequences of such ‘weak-kneed policy’ by Japan:

The day the limitless vast plains of Siberia are exploited and developed [by Russia] through the plundering of Manchuria and Korea, I declare this to be the day that the Japanese archipelago – of the size of a small fist – will be swallowed whole by the Great Russian Empire. (ibid; my clarificatory square brackets)

It is striking just how closely Kita is ideologically and political aligned with well-known ultra-nationalists, such as Uchida Ryōhei (1874-1937) and Tōyama Mitsuru (1855-1944), and the far-right Seiyūkai politician Ogawa Heikichi (1869-1942). No exchange of Korea for Manchuria would have been acceptable for any of these figures.⁷³ Kita’s stance, moreover, even sacralises the dead at Liaodong (1972: 73). He, ideologically agreeing with radical rightists like Uchida and Tōyama, saw it as important to avenge the blood of the spirits who were made to die in vain for their original victory back in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. This was because the Triple Intervention by Russia,

⁷² Again, my point is not that Kita was active leading the cry for war on the national stage or that he knew these figures – these criticisms would miss the point. Albeit he *was* presenting his ideas in a regional public domain (on Sado) at the tender age of twenty. Instead, it is to argue that Kita was, on questions of war in 1903, singularly hawkish. He can thus be determined as on the hard to far right of Japan’s political scale. Given that Kita held to such militaristic and expansionist ideas in various iterations and at different times over his career, it is implausible to argue ideas flatly ‘did not matter’ for him or were ‘for mere effect’ (see Szpilman 2002). The reality is: he was advancing what he believed in passionately.

⁷³ For Ogawa, see Kato in Wolff, Steinberg *et al.* (2007: 214). For Uchida’s views, see Uchida (1977 [1901]).

Germany and France had deprived Japan of its victory spoils and, in particular, its biggest prize: the Liaodong Peninsula.

For Kita, this was pivotal and his political 'instincts' here place him on the furthest reaches of the contemporary ideological right in Japan – baying on Sado island for 'barbarian Russian' blood and for revenge. Accordingly, his views entirely mirror, or parallel, those of such ultra-nationalists as Uchida and the Kokuryūkai, surely the strongest and most organised ultra-right pro-war group in Japan at the time Kita was writing.

As regards these central themes in Kita of war and militarism, as well as imperial expansionism, we can see from the quotation below Kita's urgent *willing* of war against Russia into reality:

The war should start in less than ten days. In this moment now as I write, the breaking-off of negotiations may occur at any time. We cannot even know whether warships stationed out at sea have not already clashed. The crisis is coming. Yes, the crisis is indeed coming. But no, it is not a crisis. It is an opportunity. An opportunity for the Empire to make a great leap forward. An opportunity to rescue the yellow race. An opportunity to chastise the savage tribe of the Slavs, who are the enemies of civilisation. This opportunity flashes inches before our eyes. (Kita 1972: 86)

The above passage demonstrates, in part, why 'war' and (Japanese and other) 'imperialism' are master concepts in Kita's early essays as well as decisive for identifying Kita as of the far right. This is because war is seen as an opportunity for Japan's empire to expand and advance, an opportunity to lead East Asia and a chance to punish what he deems to be the 'barbarian' or 'savage' imperialism of the Russian Slavs. It is this Pan-Asian tone, therefore, that will be the focus of a rather shorter next section.

iii. Kita's Pan-Asianism

War is not only 'good' for Japanese imperialism, as Kita understands this, it is 'good' for – *or central to* – Pan-Asianism, as well. This is because Pan-Asianism embodies a grand opportunity to 'strengthen Japan's empire' and to 'save the yellow race', as Kita argues (Kita 1972: 86). *Pan-Asianism*, therefore, is the third main theme of these articles to be stressed herein – with all these themes consecutively helping to unpack the specific logic of Kita's 'socialism combined with imperialism'. It is also clear from the quote at the end of the previous section that Kita's Pan-Asianism embodies and reflects his underlying anti-Russianism and anti-Slav *racial* propensity. In other words, Japan is a state that will chastise 'red-bearded' *Russians* for their 'savagery' and for embodying the utter antithesis to all civilisation. That is, not merely making a point about *the Russian state or its imperial dominion*, as Kita *could* have phrased this, were he advancing a more nuanced or a left-wing position. Hence Kita's stance is not a leftist one that distinguishes people and state, but rather a form of racially homogenising, stereotyping criticism that displays his own prejudices and falls vastly short of any politically subtle position on class and race. Not just *lacking in* civilisation, then, the Russians were the very *enemies* thereof, which makes the crime here a far more actively 'savage' one – and inescapably a prejudice on Kita's part that is *racial*.

How, in view of the first sentence of this section above, is war 'good for' Japanese *imperialism*? This is self-evident for Kita, since war allows the simple assertion of "Japan's [viz. 'our'] rights" in different parts of East Asia, while following the lead of Peter the Great, curiously – whose policy was in 'Totsu' in the autumn of 1903, to be denounced by Kita as ferociously 'barbarian' (see Kita 1972: 92).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ In 'Nihonkoku (I)', Kita talks of the 'greatness of Russia' while referencing Peter the Great's policy of imperial expansionism: "...basing ourselves on the greatness of Russia, which obeys Peter the Great's last instructions, we must simply assert our rights. ---- In Manchuria; Korea ... [and so on] ..." (Kita 1972: 73-74). What squares the circle is surely Japanese national interest. While Kita undoubtedly admired Peter the Great's power, ambition and expansionism, where any of this *threatened* Japanese state/national interests, Kita called Russia and Peter *barbaric*.

Moreover, Pan-Asianism is also an *alternative and better imperialism*, as is borne out at various points, but also by the following quote, where Kita claims Japan's 'rights':

In Manchuria; Korea; and then in the south-east region of Siberia. With these three places as our first steps onto the continent, we will assert what must be placed under our flag. (ibid: 73-74)

Once more we see just how *expansionistic* Kita's plans are. There can be little doubt how self-consciously expansionistic Kita is. Hence, he alludes to Peter the Great a number of times across at least two articles and takes Peter's early Russian imperialism as a kind of model. These are not, in *Nihonkoku I*, to be negated as part of the 'ferocious Russian barbarism' that he, rather contradictorily, later identifies it as being.⁷⁵ In short, Kita's Pan-Asianism – his 'saving of the yellow race' – is a brand of imperialism that has self-advisedly learnt from *Western* imperialism (in this case, Russian); and Kita revealingly asserts this, even as he denies it elsewhere, claiming instead an imperialism that constitutes *the justice* of the Japanese state (see below). Here is a quote encapsulating such Pan-Asianist themes and contradictions in Kita – taken from his 'Nihonkoku no shōrai (futatabi)' (1972: 74):

In order to adapt to the challenge of today's imperialism, we must migrate from these islands and via whatever means necessary we must establish a new state in the home country of our ancestors. And similarly to the way Russia strengthens its predatory desires by taking advantage of China's lack of development, we must place under our command the great fertile plains of Siberia by exploiting the fortune for us in the fact of Russia's own barbaric backwardness. This limitlessly proliferating population can be accommodated in these endlessly developable [literally, 'developing'] great plains. In the great decisive battle between the races that is to come, is it really the case that another Chinggis [Genghis] Khaan or Tamerlane ['Timur the Lame'] is

⁷⁵ It is also contradictory not least since Kita argues Japan is more civilised than Russia (with Japan possessing a *benign* imperialism).

impossible?⁷⁶ On the question of Manchuria, there has never been an opportunity – nor will there ever be one presented to our Empire of Japan – such as this. It is a chance that comes only once in a thousand years. We must fight with Russia over the life and death of our state [*kokka*] and of our race [*minzoku*].

Neo-Chinggisian militarism, expansionism and imperialism, as well as a hegemonic, strongman or ‘Timur the Lame’-style Pan-Asianism coupled with anti-Russianism are all themes located by Kita as at the heart of his philosophy or ideology of ‘national socialism coupled with imperialism’. Moreover, this indicates Kita’s socialism is clearly of the right, not the left. To underscore further such a reading, let me now set out the rather geo-political motifs in the early Kita’s pro-war essays.

iv. *Geo-Political Motifs (I)*

In various places in these early essays, Kita demonstrates within his thought a decidedly *realistic* aspect – an aspect of *Realpolitik* or of more judicious tactics within his overarchingly hot-headed strategising. Unlike many a more ‘traditional’ ultra-nationalist firebrand – to deploy something of Wilson’s distinction between Uchida Ryōhei on the one side and Kita on the other (see Wilson 1963)⁷⁷ – Kita argues that Japan, “unfortunately”, “is not a terribly superior race” (Kita 1972: 74). While the Japanese are proud of their independent three-thousand-year history, Kita attributes this more to luck and to the specific quirks of Japan’s surrounding geography – as well as to its long-term policy of *sakoku* or national seclusion. This refers to how, from the Edo era on, Japan largely closed itself to trade with the wider world. This continued

⁷⁶ Chinggis was a Khaan (in Mongolian) – the head of all khans or princes representing the Mongolian tribes. See Tsegmediin Natsagdorj, *Mongolia of Chinggis*; Monsudar Publishing, Monsubi Foundation; Ulaanbaatar; 2004: 23.

⁷⁷ Wilson draws a distinction between ‘traditional nationalists (or ultra-nationalists) in Meiji’ (Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei) and such ‘radical nationalists of the 1930s’ (Kita Ikki and Ōkawa Shūmei). While traditional (ultra)-nationalism in Meiji (the Genyōsha/Kokuryūkai) was ‘externally oriented’ and ‘expansionistic’, ‘radical nationalism’ was “internally oriented, [with] national reform plots [being] hatched by enthusiastic young military officers” (ibid: 139). Wilson, however, had never seen Kita’s radically *externally oriented and expansionistic* early pro-war articles of 1903, where Kita combined internal and external aspects.

for two hundred years, involving the barring of intercourse with most states except China, Korea and the Netherlands.

In similar fashion, Kita asks realistic-sounding, self-critical and probing questions about Japan's prospects in its current difficult predicament, as he sees this:

In this age of imperialism, with us squeezed onto these islands the size of a grain of rice [literally 'foxtail millet'], how on earth is it likely that we Japanese – who are small, ugly, feeble, highly strung, and early to mature and quick to degenerate⁷⁸ – will manage to triumph over the highly unified Anglo-Saxons and outrival the developed Slavs? The only thing [in our favour] is that, on account of our having come through a past and present history of much conflict and strife – and fortunately so in terms of the world today – the Japanese race, while lacking political, legal and governing skills, excels supremely in war. (Kita 1972: 74; my clarificatory square brackets)

This quote clearly reflects the prevalent use of racial discourse in 19th and early 20th century thinking and ideology. We know that Kita was familiar with Benjamin Kidd's ideas. He surely knew Kidd saw the Anglo-Saxons as a highly 'socially efficient' race – a view Kita mirrors in his comment on 'the highly unified' (powerful) Anglo-Saxons. Kita here comments again on the 'developed Slavs'. As for the Japanese, albeit 'weak' in various ways, they, too, have their own outstanding advantage: they are great warriors, luckily for them, in a world of war and of racial struggle. Japan, therefore, has a real and literally *fighting chance* at this time. This is the only saving grace for an otherwise 'not so superior Japanese race'.

Given indeed that "the world is a world of war", with the current *status quo* or 'peace' being effectively an illusion – or rather a 'statue' that is being 'propped up', as Kita evocatively puts it, "by nothing more than the intersecting bayonets of the Powers" –

⁷⁸ Some of these epithets used by Kita to refer to the nature of the Japanese seem reminiscent of Miyake Setsurei's own comments on Japanese people, as set out in chapter 3 of this thesis (and the section entitled, 'The Coda on the Far Right...').

Japan now had an opportunity to take advantage of this. Insofar as Russia had taken its own bayonet away, thus resulting in the toppling of the statue of peace, Kita saw the present time as a “heaven-sent moment of fortune” (1972: 74). Hence, for the sake of the continued existence of the Japanese Empire, Kita urged war with Russia *as part of a peculiarly fateful and important long-term grand strategy*. This, if boldly implemented, could end up strengthening the Japanese nation for the larger racial struggles and more decisive battles to come.

To sum up what has been said on the dominant theme of war in Kita’s early essays that runs through all the four themed sections I have treated hitherto, Kita envisages roughly five overlapping kinds of war:

First, there is *apocalyptic* war: a war of all or nothing, in which Japan itself could be lost or destroyed, yet especially if Japan prevaricates any longer.

Second, war at this juncture involves a *specifically targeted immediate mortal enemy* whom Kita directs his fulminating wrath against: the ‘barbaric clawed beast’ he sees in the form of *Russia*.

Thirdly, the concept of war Kita proffers involves clear *imperial expansionism* to the Asian continent (to Korea, Manchuria and part of Siberia).

Fourthly, this war is merely *preparatory* in relation to later and much larger conflagrations Kita predicts the need for – unless Japan perishes. Such ruination seems a real possibility for Kita, as he in no sense underestimates Russia. Nor yet does he overestimate Japan.

And, fifthly, Kita sees such war – no matter how self-servingly that may (or may not) be, given Kita’s conceptions as witnessed under point three above – as *righteous defence*.

In other words, Kita assesses Japan’s actual chances in both a moralistic-righteous way and in other ways, too: in as *Realpolitik*-deploying a fashion as he can muster. That is,

‘realistically’ and in accordance with what might be called by Marxist internationalists ‘national-bourgeois’ and nationally opportunistic sets of assumptions. The latter assumptions privilege *raison d’état* (interests of ‘the nation-state’), patently implying a brand of ‘might is right-ism’, a social Darwinist-style survival of the fittest-type scenario as applied to nations and/or a pragmatic geo-political realism. This might-as-right motif reveals itself in relation to states on the same level or below them in the power hierarchy on the one hand, while in contrast Kita simultaneously adopts a moral frame invoking justice and oppression when facing the advanced imperialist great powers on the other – with Japan and Russia ambiguously switching between different frames in Kita’s discourse: from *model* to *demon*. When demonising what Kita calls the Russian claw, he *ipso facto* humanises (or whitewashes) Japanese ambitions both in Asia and in terms of the final conflagration with the white race, as he sees it.

Defeating Russia is explicitly thematised by Kita as a geo-politically strategic stepping-stone for Japan. Similarly, Japan’s expansionism to Korea, Manchuria and (part of) Siberia respectively can be seen as further important stepping-stones. Moreover, Japan’s dramatic showdown with Russia is, should Japan win, simply the curtain-raiser to a far greater set of conflagrations of an increasingly global kind, culminating in an inevitable showdown between all the races (Kita 1972: 74). In this final ethnic and military showdown, one race will be victorious and all the others shall perish or become subordinated to the victor. The war with Russia, then, is the testing ground for Japan’s mettle. ‘Are the Japanese up to this national geo-political task?’ asks Kita peremptorily, with his philosophy resembling a kind of national geo-political existentialism or a ‘preparedness unto death’ eminently at stake in war. The self is the nation; and the nation (or state) is precisely a larger self. The stakes are high, but the choice is stark and making no decision for war would be the worst, by Kita’s lights, for the enemy will only in the meantime mobilise and strengthen itself. In the evolutionary geo-political struggle for survival, the fittest state will win out globally and Kita plans to maximise Japan’s chances. If heaven wills it, Japan will overcome all obstacles.

v. *Intermezzo on Anti-Russianism, Uchimura Kanzō and a Civilised Japan contra the West*

The account offered above has emphasised Kita's militarism and bellicosity – tellingly *contra* the Indian scholar Brij Tankha's less full treatment of the early pro-war articles of 1903. Tankha tends to play down the role of Kita's *socialism* in the way this is stressed as a whole by Kita in his three pro-war articles of 1903 – as precisely entailing *a distinctive kind of militarism and an alternate (Pan-Asian) imperialism and expansionism*. Yet there is also Kita Ikki's *ethnic hatred for the Russians* (or 'red-bearded' 'Slav barbarians') to consider as an essential adjunct to his hierarchical and soteriologically informed Pan-Asianism. This hatred, plus sense of superiority, Tankha again tends to downplay in his own account: namely, in the first chapter of his book (2006: 3-24).

However, in accentuating his *anti-Russianism*, Kita clearly detested what he saw as the "barbarian Slav tribe who were the enemies of civilisation" (Kita 1972: 86). During his bitter vilification of Russian people (on the basis of an otherwise apt condemnation of the infamous pogrom against Jewish people at Kishinev⁷⁹), Kita goes well beyond the facts at hand to an effective ethnic slur against *all* Russians. He does this instead of providing a critique targeting those responsible for these acts of violence and those, like the Tsarist authorities, that stood idly by while Jewish people met unprovoked violence, rape, injury and death (Penkower 2004). As Kita writes while also excoriating Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) for opposing the war:

China may be backward or uncivilised [mikai] but just look how extremely barbaric [yaban] the massacre at Kishinev was! I will not say a lot about this.

⁷⁹ Kishinev – then in Bessarabia and now in Moldova – was the site of an infamous pogrom against Jewish people that occurred in early April 1903. Nearly 50 people were killed by rioters, as the government stood by and simply watched while Jewish people died, as 'In The City of Slaughter' indicates (a classic poem by Chaim Bialik). See Penkower in *Modern Judaism* (2004); alternatively, see Klier (2003); Judge (1992).

Merely that, from Uchimura's point of view, if he really has the intention to do things in accordance with justice and humanity, I believe that, possessed of a still more ferocious anger, he must assume the same stance as the one he took over the Sino-Japanese War. Is it not the case that, if he is truly to have a proper notion of justice, Uchimura – who compared the uncivilised nature of China to the barbarism of Persia – must compare Russia's tyranny to that of a gang of savage beasts? (Kita 1972: 89)

Thus, in accusing both Russia and China (and implicitly, Italy, too, albeit elsewhere in the *third* of these early pro-war articles, viz. in 'Totsu') of being uniformly backward and barbarian, Kita by default identifies Japan as a *civilised* country – one that was in a position to teach these two vast countries a lesson *for their own good*. This, for him, meant *war* – a war that would be launched by a civilising Japanese state and one based upon humanity (*jindō*) and justice (*seigi*) (*ibid*). Japan, for Kita, had also defended civilisation in the earlier war against China (1894-95). Thus, by way of buttressing his position here, he cites favourably at the time of this first Sino-Japanese war, as partly seen in the above quote, the early Uchimura Kanzō's comparisons between Japan and a 'progressive' and 'freedom-loving ancient Greece' on the one hand and China and a 'decrepit and despotic' Persia on the other (*ibid*: 88). Japan was Greece and China/Russia mere 'barbarian tribes', with Russia partly developed (or developing), yet despotic and antithetical to civilisation. Japan, implicitly and explicitly, is a step or two up the hierarchical ladder from both – and war will take it still higher, as well as enable it to 'teach a lesson' to these decrepit and despotic states. And all this in the name of civilisation, even as it imposes its justice and power over these countries.

To understand Kita's relationship to Uchimura, some background on Uchimura is required. Uchimura Kanzō was a famous Christian thinker in late Meiji Japan, who has often been identified with Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko in opposing the coming war with Russia. This association certainly existed, albeit it is not the full story.

Uchimura came to formulate explicitly the principles underlying his thinking and action throughout almost all his adult life in terms of his love for Jesus and Japan (Tsunoda *et*

al. 1958: 349-350). Thus, despite Uchimura being most famous for his refusal to bow properly before the Imperial Rescript on Education around the time of the establishment of the Meiji constitution⁸⁰ and irrespective of his being seen as opposed to Japan's *status quo* as a result, as well as being seen as a pacifist in the context of the Russo-Japanese war, Uchimura was in fact a far more complex figure than these generic images imply. It was this more complex Uchimura that had clearly inspired Kita.

As intimated at already under the notion of 'Jesus and Japan', there are two aspects within his own body of thought Uchimura found difficult to reconcile: his more Western- or internationally-derived Christian religious ideology on the one hand and his national feeling for Japan on the other. Uchimura was deeply conflicted between his foreign-derived religious ideas and his own samurai background and strong Japanese nationalism. Furthermore, Kita clearly deeply respected Uchimura's earlier nationalism in the context of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95. During this war – as Kita reports in 'Totsu' (see section three of that article for his extended treatment) – Uchimura had defended Japan's right to make war on China in the name of bringing much progress and civilisation to that 'backward' country.⁸¹ Yet Uchimura subsequently changed his mind about the war with China, becoming disillusioned with the aftermath of the conflict. Consequently, he ended up making a complete *volte face* on questions concerning its justifiability.⁸² This resulted in his developing after this his famous later strong liberal-pacifist stance regarding war with Russia. Naturally, and as Kita pointed out repeatedly in 'Totsu', this does not negate the fact of Uchimura's originally strong pro-war stance against China in the 1890s and why Kita originally saw himself as a kind of admirer or disciple of Uchimura the strong nationalist.

⁸⁰ On the matter of *de facto* emperor worship in the Japan of the time, including in schools, see Carol Gluck (1987) concerning the links between Japanese common morality in Meiji and its ideological, political and theological ramifications in her *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*.

⁸¹ The original article was written in English. The title of the piece by Uchimura (August 1894) is: 'Justification of the Korean [sic] War'. See Doron B. Cohen (2004: 78). The original article itself appears in Uchimura's *Eibun chosaku zenshū* (1971-72; Collected works in English), Vol. 5, pp. 66-75. See also John F. Howes, 'Kanzō Uchimura on War', *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, Vol. 24, 1958, pp. 290-292.

⁸² This is illustrated by the following quotation from a letter from Uchimura to an American friend: "A 'righteous war' has changed into a *piratic* war somewhat, and a prophet who wrote its justification is now in shame" (quoted in Cohen 2004: 78).

Kita severely criticised Uchimura for this lapse or ‘inconsistency’ – without allowing for the fact that Uchimura might validly *change* his mind about the earlier war in the 1890s to one of belated opposition, as he in fact did. Instead, Kita simply excoriates Uchimura for now opposing war with Russia – while having previously supported the war against *China* as a righteous battle for the furtherance of civilisation. Kita ends up asking in dismay why Uchimura had previously concluded that the war with China was just and a conflict *in support of* civilisation, while now in stark contrast he regarded war with Russia as quite unjust and to be opposed (Kita 1972: 88). Accordingly, in these three early articles on Japan’s foreign policy, but especially in ‘Totsu’, Kita revealed his own *de facto* bias against Uchimura’s later ideas. This in turn meant that Kita could only see the Russo-Japanese War as both inevitable *and* desirable, with justice on the side of Japanese imperialism.

Very similarly to the way in which Ukita Kazutami (1859-1946) – a well-known politics and law professor – had argued in 1901 for the existence of an ‘ethical imperialism’ (see Tierney 2015: 45),⁸³ according to Kita *Japanese imperialism* was a *good, benign* and *very civilised* phenomenon fundamentally different from the rapacious *Western* variety. It was only this latter variety that, as Kita put it, akin to the United States, took Cuba and snatched the Philippines or, like Britain, conquered the free state of South Africa (Kita 1972: 94). This perceived duality to the nature of imperialism in the form of good and bad strains (civilised and Pan-Asian on one side and barbarian, barbaric and Western on the other) forms an important theme here, as already noted. Yet, almost as soon as it was formulated, this neat distinction unravels as a contradiction or salient *aporia* in Kita’s ambivalent views of Russian imperialism: as, first, a civilised one to be pursued (following Peter the Great’s concept and praxis); and, second, as the very same one (Peter’s or Russia’s) that was strongly denounced for its rapacious barbarism and lack of civilisation. In short, Kita’s idea of imperialism both *followed*

⁸³ Kita audited Ukita’s lectures at Waseda some four years later (Wilson 1969: 18). Not only Ukita’s, but also those of the legal scholar Ariga Nagao and of the well-known Christian socialist and later parliamentarian Abe Isoo.

Peter the Great's imperialism and simultaneously *repudiated* it (and Russia generally) as barbaric.

Concerning civilisation, humanity and righteousness, Kita thus defined and defended Japanese imperialism as the justice of a powerful and independent state (ibid: 90) – all of which, Kita also insisted, was necessary to defend Japanese and other Asian subjects from being trampled upon by Russia (or other despotic and imperialist Western states). Moreover, such a Japanese 'defence' was also necessary to facilitate the emigration of Japanese people to the Asian mainland (peaceful expansion if possible; defended by gunfire, if necessary) – especially if they so happened to be interrupted in their 'peaceful' egress to the Asian continent. The crucial reason for this policy, Kita further opined, was all on account of the exceptionally fast growth of Japan's population size (ibid: 92), to return here to the matter of Kita's geo-political thinking.

Yet this was surely also influenced by such early 'bio-social' and 'bio-political' thinkers as Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin, among various others (on whom, see the section that follows below). Adherence to the idea of 'overpopulation' in Kita led him, in turn, to a commitment to what such German geo-political thinkers as Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) and Karl Haushofer (1869-1946) saw effectively as the need for *Lebensraum* (living space). This term *Lebensraum* – most closely associated with Nazi ideology – was in fact coined in the 1890s by Ratzel, the famous German geographer and organic-state theorist. It was then given its most cogent formulation in an article by Ratzel of 1901 (K. Bücher, K.V. Fricker, *et al.* 1901; see also Woodruff D. Smith, 1980: 52), despite Haushofer being more associated with the term.

vi. *Geo-Political Motifs and Influences (II): Population and the Latent Concept of Lebensraum alongside Kita's Predilection for External Social Darwinism*

While Kita was unlikely to have been directly influenced by such geo-political thinkers as Ratzel (or Haushofer), his work overlapped – or was in various ways coterminous – with Ratzel's. Hence, the early Kita can also be regarded as an original Japanese geo-

(plus bio-)political thinker. It is more likely, however, that Kita, having been influenced by thinkers who inspired Ratzel, came independently to his ideas on Japanese overpopulation and to his subsequent articulation of *Lebensraum* as a *de facto* notion in his writings.⁸⁴

As for such thinkers, who inspired these ideas, they were, most notably, Charles Darwin (1809-1882); Herbert Spencer (1820-1903); and Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), all of whom are referred to repeatedly in Kita's first book – especially in Section Three (daisanhen), 'Seibutsu shinkaron to shakai tetsugaku' (The Theory of Biological Evolution and Social Philosophy). Besides these, important thinkers – e.g., the clergyman, political economist and demographer Thomas Malthus (1766-1834); the biologist and comparative anatomist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) affectionately termed 'Darwin's bulldog'; the social evolutionist writer Benjamin Kidd (1858-1916); and, last but not least, the famous Japanese biologist Oka Asajirō (1866-1944) – all certainly registered an impact on Kita. All make a number of appearances in this same Section (Three) of Kita's first book and appear frequently in Kita's expositions of evolutionary, social Darwinist and related concepts.

To lodge the pertinence of *social Darwinian* concepts in Kita's early pro-war essays, a few relevant quotes from 'Totsu' are cited. First, given that the word 'population' is employed six times in this essay and, typically, Kita regards war as *the* solution to the massive 'social problem' of Japan's population explosion at this time:

The outbreak of war between Japan and Russia is not a matter of national sovereignty but of national interest. It is not an issue of national vanity, but a matter of basic food and clothing for Japanese subjects. It is a question of the livelihood of forty-five million Japanese subjects. It is a matter of saving from death by starvation thousands of living souls in a population that is increasing

⁸⁴ Kita does not expressly formulate any clear and distinct notion of 'living space' in Japanese, albeit there is no doubt that he demanded such space and saw it as crucial for what he regarded as the continued existence and evolutionary-organic expansiveness of the Japanese as a race. Accordingly, for Kita, without such space on the Asian continent, the Japanese would be surrounded, isolated, defeated and doomed.

by five hundred thousand every year. It is not a state problem but a social problem. As for the chilling statistic that, within ten years, the population will outstrip levels of food production by a ratio of three to one respectively, how on earth can this issue be ignored by Japanese socialists who are seen as interpreters of social problems? The outbreak of war between Japan and Russia, in short by means of gunfire, provides the solution to all this. (Kita 1972: 92)

Apart from its clear articulation of Kita's social imperialism (see also below), this partakes, at least in part, of some classic-style population theory argumentation, of which Malthus would have been proud. Kita in no way takes on board Malthus's arguments in their entirety, for, unlike Malthus, Kita ultimately sees the perfectibility of humanity as a real and likely eventuality (this is later set out in his *Kokutairon* book of 1906). And yet Malthus's ideas – especially those articulated in his classic work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) – had strongly influenced Darwinian natural selection, which was one important and increasingly powerful stream in the larger maelstrom of ideas that constituted the wider theoretical course of *social evolution*.

The latter wider course of such ideas of social development and of life evolving originally included the thought even of those “philosophic historians of the Scottish Enlightenment, most notably Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and John Millar” (Burrow 1966: 10), as well as Hegel, Auguste Comte, Marx, Herbert Spencer – and this was all well before the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. Hence many an 18th and 19th century thinker had begun to register dynamism and progression in human life. The ultimate political question, however, lay in how such change, growth and strife were theorised. A hint of one salient strand stands out if we note the full title of Darwin's famous tome: *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, Or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Given that Darwin's ideas were later *racialised*, such a title seemed to give such racist construals of Darwinism a fillip when applied to human society – albeit Darwin was referring mostly to ‘races’ of *cabbage* (as was the idiom then) than to humans there.

Nonetheless, Alfred Russel Wallace – the other biologist who independently came to hypothesise the existence of natural selection as the mechanism for how species evolved over time – published in 1864 an essay addressing what Durant (1979: 42) has referred to (following Semmel 1960) as ‘external social Darwinism’. As opposed to *internal* (or classic) social Darwinism, which posited a divisive domestic and more *individually* based struggle-for-existence, this *external kind* was instead predicated of competition between *peoples, nations and states*. This is the kind Kita himself takes up. Yet, in terms of their provenance, as Durant comments tellingly in note 58 of his essay on Wallace:

Semmel is concerned chiefly with the ideology of ‘social imperialism’ at the turn of the century, but he traces this ideology back to the ‘external social Darwinism’ of men like Carlyle, Kingsley, and Dickens, who opposed the individualism of the political economists at the same time as they condoned a racist attitude towards ‘inferior’ breeds of man (ibid: 55).

This ideology of ‘social imperialism’ essentially references the ‘fuller flowering’ of external social Darwinism in the ideas – later than the three mentioned in the quote – of British ideologues such as Kidd and Pearson. As for the US, Hofstadter mentions very pertinently the thought of John Fiske. Parallels with Kita are noteworthy. First, there is Fiske’s as well as Kita’s “Faustian urge to devour the entire realm of knowledge” (Hofstadter 1992 [1944]: 15); second, Kita displays an early Japanese sense of superiority over the Chinese, the Russians and the Koreans, for example, albeit not towards the Anglo-Saxons; and third, there is their both being “synthesizers of evolutionism, expansionism and the Anglo-Saxon myth” (ibid: 176), with Kita’s hope that a Pax Japonica (a Japanese-neo-Chinggisian dominium) will manage to develop strongly enough over time and prevail through his strategy of incremental strength built up through war and by war.

Kita was undoubtedly an heir to this kind of thinking – in both respects: firstly, *negatively*, since he strongly opposed *laissez-faire* ideology (see Kita 1959; vol. i, chapters 1 and 2); and then, *positively*, in his adumbration of racial/state competition.

He saw the *opportunity* for Japanese superiority to be achieved over time. That is, while Kita did not conceive of Japanese superiority as an already attained fact, he nonetheless saw the need for Japan to strive for such dominance, as the alternative (loss in the race struggle, plus possible extermination of the Japanese altogether, in Kita's surely exaggerated apocalyptic thinking) did not bear contemplating.

Years later in 1915, and by way of furnishing another benchmark for comparison in terms of similar sorts of ideas that Kita and these German officers espoused, the profoundly social Darwinist-influenced elite German high command in the First World War – as reported by the contemporary American zoologist Vernon Kellogg in his *Headquarters Nights* – saw war as natural selection, albeit relating to states/races. On this view, winners showed themselves as the 'fittest' (to use Spencer's famous term) in the struggle-for-survival and in the 'progress of civilisation'.

Kita *shared* such a right-wing, *external* social Darwinist *Weltanschauung*. This radical perspective gave Kita, as he saw it, insight as to how Japan would need to overthrow the *white Anglo-Saxon imperialists* (Kita 1972: 74). This could not happen all at once, but only gradually for this to prove realistic, to Kita's mind. The first step was for Japan to defeat Russia and to expand into particular countries in Asia and, after that, wholesale onto the Asian continent and into Siberia. This would enable Japan to build up its power in smaller doses and move slowly and organically towards the most difficult phase of all: waging the final ethnic showdown against the white race (the Anglo-Saxons).

Yet, returning to the passage quoted before the discussion just entered into, Kita's wider geo-political point is: although peace may have been 'ideally' desirable, due to Russia being a 'ferocious animal' (Kita 1972: 92) such an outcome was but a pipe dream and a useless, self-defeating strategy. Consequently, the solution to saving Japan's excess population would be through warfare. Hence, 'gunfire' (*hōka*) alone could work, as this would ensure both Japanese emigration to the Asian mainland and thus the survival of Japan's poor people, who would be afforded opportunities aplenty on the Asian continent.

Accordingly, what mattered was *Japanese* people – not only as opposed to the Russians, who were all simply *barbarian* and did not count for Kita, but also, logically, regarding people from Asia, too, to whose territories Kita proposed that the Japanese expand. That is, and in spite of Kita's claims to support the 'yellow race', the Japanese were patently rather more than 'equals' in such relations. The Japanese would be privileged in getting their new land at the expense of others – with Korea, Manchuria and Siberia all being deprived of the right to control or possess *their own land*. Not only that, but the act of war necessary for Kita's Japan to achieve such dominion would be, as with most wars, devastating for ordinary people when waged on or near the territories in question.

It is also noteworthy how Kita's ideas about overpopulation and land ownership fed directly into his 'alternative notion' of imperialism as 'justice of the Japanese state' – that ends up, ineluctably, not so different from Western hegemonic brands. The following quotes from Kita are indicative:

The justice of the state lies in the protection of the rights and freedoms of Japanese subjects who, while spilling over from the cramped territory of Japan, are being prevented from being trampled under the feet of a cruel and tyrannical foreign imperialism. My kind of imperialism is precisely this. I ask earnestly: Where on earth does this contradict with socialism? (Kita 1972: 94-95)

Note, first, how Kita identifies 'the justice of the state' with 'Japanese subjects' 'spilling over from the cramped territory of Japan'. In short, *Japanese* imperialism is a brand of *socialism*, since it protects *Japanese subjects* who are at this juncture fleeing the consequences of a cruel and foreign imperial tyranny. The implication here is that 'the rights and freedoms of Japanese subjects' consist precisely in taking or occupying Korean, Manchurian and Siberian land. Moreover, this is exactly what his *socialism* is – something quite compatible with his alleged 'good imperialism' for Japanese subjects or, quite literally, a species of national *Japanese* socialism. This is 'good' for

Japanese subjects, then, insofar as they get to benefit from more space – from this new *Lebensraum* for *them* – no matter how this impacts the people already living there, which Kita does not discuss. He continues:

The outbreak of war between Japan and Russia involves precisely this kind of imperialism. The due rights of the Japanese state [amount to] the principle of justice. America's commercial and industrial invasion is no imperialism that advocates justice. The swallowing of Manchuria and Korea by Russia is no imperialism that advocates justice. The Japanese state is like a poor person with many children. In small islands amounting to only 160,000 square ri,⁸⁵ Japan is full to overflowing with forty-five million people, a population which is unacceptably vast. How on earth can Japan possibly incorporate an increase on the scale of five hundred thousand each year? (ibid: 95; my clarificatory square brackets)

Kita affirms (above) that starting war between Japan and Russia involves precisely this kind of positive and beneficial Japanese imperialism – one that, since it is *good for Japanese subjects*, it is also clearly a desirable *socialism for the nation* (or national socialism) on Kita's view. Moreover, these are the 'due rights' of the Japanese state (*kokka no tōzen no kenri*). After this, Kita contrasts this brand of imperialism with unjust American and Russian forms. Given, too, that Japan is poor with vastly many subjects, it is only fair if Japan takes more space for its subjects' use of land owned by nearby states. It is entirely reasonable, in Kita's eyes, for Japan to do this.

Furthermore:

... the Japanese state is encircled by the economic imperialism of the great powers. It is inevitable that Japanese subjects move to adjacent countries like Manchuria and Korea to claim their subsistence. It is also a reasonable right, according to the principle of 'the public ownership of land', for them to do that. (Kita 1972: 95)

⁸⁵ One ri is equivalent to about 2.44 miles.

Here Kita reiterates the point regarding Japan's being encircled by great power imperialism. In response, Kita argues it is both no surprise and entirely reasonable for Japanese subjects to occupy parts of Manchuria and Korea. This constitutes subsistence for them, a basic right to a living. Last but not least, this accords with the principle of 'the public ownership of land'. Further comment is offered below, but first, let me cite the last tranches of this long passage:

The imperialism that advocates justice is different from America's swallowing of Cuba and the Philippines. It is different from Great Britain's conquest of South Africa. It is different from Germany's Far Eastern policy. It is different from any invasion by Russia. How is it really possible that, without protection by gunfire, things can be confined to peaceful emigration? (ibid)

After repeating his criticisms of further injustices committed by American, Great British, German and Russian imperialisms, Kita then reveals the essential intention lying behind this form of Japanese imperialism. It is evidently not peaceful, since 'protection by gunfire' will certainly be needed – despite the fact Kita *claims* such 'spilling over' will amount to no more than 'peaceful emigration'. Finally, Kita rounds off his arguments thus:

Against the imperialism of world conquest by the Slav barbarians, the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia is the state's due right of protecting its emigrants – a matter of the assertion of justice. Against the imperialism of the Slav barbarians, [the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia] amounts to a defence of the organs of the state and its guiding function. It is this state and its institutions that should be supported by the best efforts of the socialists. It is the justice of the state that will protect the rights and freedoms of the five hundred thousand Japanese subjects who will overflow to Manchuria and Korea from our cramped national land of an insufficient size of 160,000 square ri. This will protect these Japanese subjects who will not be trampled underneath the feet of Slav barbarian imperialism. Should [Japan's] socialists not rather be at the spearhead of those who preach

the outbreak of war between Japan and Russia? (1972: 95; my own clarificatory square brackets)

Here Kita argues that, in the face of a tyrannous and barbarian Russian imperialism set on dominating the world, it is entirely just for Japan to protect its own emigrants ‘overflowing’ to the Asian continent. It is also fair for Japan to defend its own state and state functions. Kita then takes the argument a step further and claims that any Japanese socialist worth their salt must be focused on protecting the Japanese state and its institutions. Socialists, accordingly, should also defend his plan for five hundred thousand Japanese subjects to overflow to Manchuria and Korea. It is precisely this justice-seeking Japanese state that will protect and nurture these emigrants and, in fact, *all* Japanese subjects – the claim seems to be – to prevent any Japanese from being trampled under the feet of the Slav barbarians and their imperialism. Kita concludes this passage by urging all of Japan’s socialists to call loudest for war with Russia. This war goes to the heart of Kita’s ideas regarding both socialism and imperialism, which, consequently, entirely interpenetrate.

Some careful analysis is important here. First of all, Kita *naturalises* the spilling over of Japanese subjects from what he regards as a ‘super-cramped’ Japan. No matter, then, that Japan’s current population (in the 21st century) can easily be fed at nearly three times the population of what it was when Kita Ikki wrote back in 1903. In other words, Kita’s claims about overpopulation being ‘natural’ are not at all self-evident and are clearly contestable.

Second, Kita claims that Japan’s case is different from Russia’s, insofar as the former is not a ‘tyrannical and cruel foreign imperialism’, but instead, simply like a poor person with vastly many offspring. This idea is strikingly similar to the notion of ‘a proletarian nation’ that appears more explicitly in later Italian Nationalist and proto-fascist thinkers like Enrico Corradini.⁸⁶ Japan’s expansion is therefore sheer justice for Kita,

⁸⁶ On Corradini’s ‘proletarian nation’, see Roberts (1979: 118). There are strong parallels to Kita here: “The class struggle, said Corradini, was real enough, but it pitted not workers against capitalists within the nation, but poor proletarian nations against rich plutocratic nations on the international plane”

and represents an appropriate level of correction in terms of how much land Japan should be owning as compared with the great powers. Yet, if this is so, then why is Japan taking land from *Korea*? Or wishing to take over Korea as a whole? Surely, if justice requires that Japan has insufficient land, then, surely *a fortiori*, Korea deserves at least to keep *its* own land. It is at this point Kita falls into contradiction, for he wants to argue, at some level, *both* that justice matters, such that land should be fairly parcelled out, *as well as* that might is right and Japan's dynamic growth ensures it possesses the power to do as it sees fit. Kita's point here seems to be that, due to the very growth of Japan, unlike with a 'stagnating' Korea, the right to expansion is enshrined in such modern dynamism and expansiveness and it is precisely this form of might that *makes* right. Growth and dynamism, expansion and ambition are precisely what *entitle* Japan to such territories, the argument seems to run, albeit that would mean that the great powers clearly have such rights, too. What resolves this contradiction is Kita's national-socialist far right politics and its self-regarding nationalist rhetoric, which by definition applies only to itself. It is exactly this that Semmel calls *external* social Darwinism, pitching nation against nation and race against race in a *de facto* national 'survival-of-the-fittest'.

Thus, as against Russia, Kita conveniently invokes the notion of *justice*, while playing down Japan's own 'ferocious beast'-like ambition for East Asian domination (and beyond). When it comes to Korea, Manchuria and Siberia, Kita earlier admitted that Japan has very much learnt from Peter the Great's Russia – precisely the kind of imperialism that he here excoriates moralistically as 'tyrannical and cruel'. Hence Kita's position is literally Janus-faced or simply 'schizophrenic'. It reeks even of the lowest and most unprincipled of hypocrisies or opportunisms.

Thirdly, Kita outlines very lucidly the kind of political ideology he advocates. It is a geo-political and distinctly *nationalist* affirmation of imperialism (one that he effectively terms the *justice of a statist socialism*) and, while in fact advocating an expropriating

(1979: 118). Kita, too, saw "international proletarian solidarity as a sham" (ibid) and denounced Japan's socialists (the Heimisha) for this error, deriding them for engaging in mere 'bankokushugi' (internationalism). Such strong nationalism comes from the right to far right of the ideological spectrum.

political violence against what he would term his Asian brethren's land, he nonetheless still invokes such regional, or Pan-Asianist, 'brotherhood' on the ideological level. Kita's socialism and imperialism, therefore, either ends up delusional in its profession of 'goodness' or merely deeply cynical.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the argument has challenged current English language scholarly literature perspectives on Kita as on the left of the political spectrum, indicating instead how a close reading of Kita's actual ideas demonstrates a salient far-right slant. The point in explicating Kita's three early pro-war or foreign policy articles of 1903 is that this case can be made most starkly. Thereafter, this is further entrenched when applying this reading to the larger canvas provided by Kita's first book of 1906 in the next two chapters.

Here I examined Kita's views on war as the main fulcrum around which what I argue to be Kita's far-right thought moves. This leads to an understanding of the essence of Kita's anti-cosmopolitan or anti-internationalist notion of national socialism, alongside overlapping other themes. Whether this was his neo-Chinggisian-imperialist expansionism, Pan-Asianism, anti-Russianism, geo-political thinking or social Darwinism, Kita's thought in these essays assumed the mantle of ideas highly prevalent on the far right, not on any recognisably classical or unorthodox left.

Not only racist ideas such as Kita's generic anti-white or anti-Russian predilections, but also similarly overt far-right nostrums – like Kita's chronologically earlier adumbration of Corradini's later idea of 'the proletarian nation' – appear as leitmotifs in Kita's three exemplary texts. And these have been used as key to unlock the latent totality of Kita's romantic-nationalist thinking. Moreover, we see an argument over war that attempts to pit one set of oppressed and exploited agencies (in Japan and Russia respectively) entirely against each other, as if any leftist socialism could ever be brought about via

gunfire that supports a land-expropriating expansionism in relation to even poorer states or countries than its own.

Social Darwinism runs through Kita's pro-war texts and adds to the nature of his exclusivistic Japanese national-statist socialism. Given, then, that Kita reflects or parallels so much European rightist thought around the turn of the 19th into the 20th century, this presents a significant challenge to the thought that Japan or Kita might be *sui generis*.

Kita's geo-political orientation clearly signals his stance on the far right – with the explicit geo-political equation between 'excess population' and 'natural overflow' immediately involving the need to defend and prosecute Japanese interests over that of Russia 'the tyrant' and Korea and China 'the weaker regional victims'. The result is an imperialism that is 'different' (from white-elite Western imperialisms) only insofar as it is *Japanese*. It is subsequently *socialist* only because it asserts the interests of what Kita would call an organic Japanese *state* that is 'poor' (*vis-à-vis* other advanced capitalist countries). In this way, Japanese geo-political interests, according to Kita, trump those of any other territories or nationalities. Kita's ideas mirror exactly the kind of external social Darwinism that Durant commented on (see above).

While Kita does not assert an already given (or immediately or abstractly universal⁸⁷) sense of Japanese superiority, his ambition for Japan is that the latter should achieve such hegemony *through his war strategy* – with war with Russia as the first step on the road to a long victory against 'the white race' in which Japan would lead 'the yellow race' to world domination. Naturally, Kita fully realises there is no guarantee of Japan and Asia's success. Yet the fact he shares the *same-kind-of vision* as the social Darwinist German high command of the First World War is not in doubt, precisely because questions of racial superiority and inferiority pervade his early thinking. For – instead of entering onto the path of radical internationalist Marxism (as opposed to Stalin's rather nation-based or 'socialism-in-one-country' vision) or indeed any softer left-wing

⁸⁷ Albeit, for Kita, Japan is certainly more developed and civilised than China and Russia.

social democratic ideologising – Kita remains embroiled in that species of racialising and colonising social Darwinism very much based on strong nationalist, ultra-nationalist or far-right currents all too prevalent in the late 19th into the early 20th century.

Chapter 6. Introducing Major Themes from Kita's First Book, plus a Critique of Previous Interpretations

In the next two chapters (chapters 6 and 7), I offer a new, radical and fine-grained appreciation of Kita's first book of 1906 entitled, *Kokutairon oyobi junsei shakaishugi* (On the Theory of the National Polity and Pure Socialism; hereafter, *Kokutairon*).⁸⁸ Readings are provided of Kita's *Kokutairon* that balance previous interpretations' limitations. They also highlight a genuine and powerful continuity of ideas between his 1903 pro-war essays (treated in chapter 5) and his first book of 1906. In the book, Kita offers a wider political frame and an evolutionary eschatology or theodicy in terms of which the pro-war ideas from the earlier essays may be seen to make greater sense.

I set out here how Kita's *Kokutairon* book has been examined in the three full-length English-language works published so far. I add to these treatments a few other relevant readings from elsewhere. I then go on to furnish a preview of important themes that first appear in the book's Preface, which constitutes Kita's own summary of his entire first book.

Two main tasks are attempted. First, to review and critique the most essential English scholarly literature on Kita's *Kokutairon* book, giving an appreciation of the import of the three full-length works on Kita that stand out within that literature. And second, to provide an overview of the book via a presentation of various salient themes that Kita identifies in the Preface as central to the whole volume.

⁸⁸ Kita's book is referred to by its shorter name, the *Kokutairon*. This is to be distinguished from the *kokutai*. The latter refers to the 'national polity' – the so-called 'structure' or 'essence' of Japan's polity itself.

The Hegemonic Reading of Kita's Kokutairon in English

Hitherto in the English language scholarly literature, Kita Ikki's first book has largely been presented as offering a set of pivotal legal-constitutional and Japanese evolutionary-historical arguments (Martin 1959; Wilson 1969; Tankha 2006). These have been perceived as forming part of Kita's purported 'radicalism' and thus the overwhelming impression offered of the Kita of 1906 (and his early period generally) has been of a political thinker who was significant due to his having been critical of the conservative myth of Japan's national polity (or kokutairon). Hence Kita has up till the present been portrayed in his earliest phase as an establishment-defying 'socialist' of one stripe or another. To be clear, what is meant by this is an argument to the effect that Kita hailed from the *left* of the political spectrum. Harris Inwood Martin (1959) inaugurated such an intellectual presentation of Kita with the first full-length contribution to the English language scholarly literature. Providing extensive contextualisation for Kita's writings and situating Kita's first book within the social, political and intellectual milieu at the time Kita was growing up in mid- to late Meiji, Martin's thesis argued that the early Kita can be placed firmly as a member of Japan's socialist movement in late Meiji and is to be located very much on the left in Japanese political thought terms.

In view of the above, it is particularly noteworthy that, in the second chapter of his thesis on the early life and thought of Kita, Martin gives an important overview of the 'Meiji Climate' from the late 19th into the early 20th century. In doing so, he splits his material from that chapter into three sections: 'The Impact of Western Thought'; 'Reaction to the Western Impact -- Nationalism'; and 'Reaction to the Western Impact -- Socialism'. What is telling in understanding how Martin apprehends the meaning and nature of socialism as an ideology is that he prefaces the third section of his chapter with words implying that while nationalism consisted largely of a rejection of Western thought, socialism in Japan on the contrary embraced a very particular kind of Western and specifically Marxian impact:

...[O]f special interest was the development of Western socialist thought, clearly a result of the conviction among some Japanese that Karl Marx had

propounded a truth for Japanese society no less than for the West (Martin 1959: 28).

As I have set out in chapter 4 above, this perspective is open to challenge – with an array of many other socialists (or socialisms) proving far more impactful in Meiji Japan than Karl Marx, including figures like Ferdinand Lassalle, Albert Schäffle, Henry George, Richard Ely, Thomas Kirkup, and W.D.P. Bliss (see Crump 1983; Bernal 1976). Martin’s view of the situation was partially true to the extent that Marx wielded a degree of influence on such famous late Meiji journalists as Kōtoku Shūsui or Sakai Toshihiko. Yet even here this was rather less than half the story in relation to radicals like Kōtoku (see chapter 4 herein). Thus, matters are far more complex than Martin’s view of there being any supposed socialist group in Japan predominantly impacted by Marx – other writers were of greater relevance.

For the sake of our purposes here, the impact on Japanese socialism might be summed up under seven convenient headings, all of which diverge and overlap:⁸⁹ a Christian or moralist strand of socialism; an anarchistic populism (deriving mostly from Russia); a kind of social evolutionism or social stage-ism often informed by recent 19th century biological theory; various political or economic brands of liberal, land-taxing or *de facto* nationalising middle-class socialisms; a liberal anti-imperialism à la Hobson; a degree of Marxian or Marxisant input (largely focusing in the Japanese context on worker exploitation or the question of imperialism); and diverse kinds of stronger statism – stronger even than the nationalising/land-taxing sort (above) implies, one salient brand of which would involve rather top-down statist or strongly nationalist forms of socialism (e.g. Bismarckian socialism; Karl Pearson’s state socialism).

Therefore, what matters is that the assumptions contained within Martin’s quote as cited above show that he saw socialism as overwhelmingly a doctrine on the left or far left of the political spectrum, insofar as he rather one-sidedly highlighted Marx’s impact in that context. However, the seven strands briefly alluded to above (mixed

⁸⁹ As well as exist on a scale from left through the centre to the right of the ideological and political spectrum.

with East Asian kinds including Confucianism, East Asian statisms and the like) are largely not doctrines one would place on the left of the political spectrum, as chapter 4 herein strongly argues. To make such a case, that would require more explicit argumentation than Martin advances. This thesis fundamentally questions such underlying assumptions *vis-à-vis* socialism as a general unitary ideology and this applies, *a fortiori*, to the early thought of Kita Ikki.

It is no exaggeration to say that Martin has been highly influential on the trajectory taken by the English language scholarly literature – and this accounts for the extended presentation and rigorous questioning offered here. This influence was evident in terms of his impact on George Macklin Wilson, the next important intellectual biographer of Kita Ikki in the literature in English. Wilson’s book (1969) was published a decade after Martin’s doctoral thesis (1959) and remains the best full-length work on Kita in the English language to date.

Wilson’s work in many ways sets out from an apparent paradox that Martin left hanging. Thus, how was it that Kita had begun as a socialist and purportedly on the left of the political spectrum but ended up as one of the most infamous, important and influential ultra-nationalists in pre-Second World War Japan? Wilson’s *oeuvre* is focused expressly on this seeming contradiction in Kita and it is one that demands to be faced and resolved in one way or another. This is because the literature has tended to remain caught in analytical confusion and has omitted to adequately examine the history and trajectory of all the varying sorts of socialism (what I call the socialisms from far left to far right) to which this thesis is highly attuned.

‘How do we account for this seeming oddity?’ is the main (paraphrased) question Wilson repeatedly asks throughout much of his writing on Kita. In doing so, he offers different conclusions not entirely consistent with each other. Moreover, as this is certainly the most fundamental problem in Kita interpretation, it accounts for why writers from Harris Inwood Martin to Christopher Szpilman often tend to argue that Kita Ikki was an enigma, mercurial or a maverick (Martin 1959: 2; Szpilman 2002: 467). As Szpilman points out, the diversity of interpretations of Kita are both notorious and

legion in the literature, especially in Japanese,⁹⁰ and this has only increased since Szpilman's 2002 piece.⁹¹ This is the reason why this thesis analyses Kita's early texts – and in a number of cases has benefited from this researcher's translations of various significant early articles or passages by Kita. This makes possible a level of independent critical evaluation of Kita's ideas, which enables us to see if anything important or essential has been missed. My argument is that *it has*, systemically, and the methodology adopted here attempts to fill the gaps that led to this over-emphasis upon reading Kita as an 'enigma'.

The argument herein is that there is a fundamental ambiguity in the political-ideological conceptuality adopted in the literature. Consequently, it is no surprise that Kita's underlying politics have not been better understood – especially when trying to use such inherently unclarified and multivalent political terms (viz. 'socialism') as Martin and Wilson do.

Wilson's interpretation of Kita's first book devotes considerable space to an analysis of Kita's treatment of the kokutai or Japan's 'unique national polity'. One way of looking at Japan's national polity itself is via the prism of bansei ikkei (literally, 'a single unbroken imperial line existing to all ages eternal'). This is the doctrine – or 'orthodox myth', to use Martin's felicitous phrase – that Japan's imperial household, and the purportedly single line of emperors down the ages, was unique in having governed without break and for all time going back to the epoch of the Japanese gods, as set out in Japan's ancient (yet mythological) classics, *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* (B.H. Chamberlain 1981; W.G. Aston 1972). In addition, this purportedly unbroken line would pertain in perpetuity. Such an exposition of Japan's rather particular national polity involved Wilson, and Martin, in extended nuanced presentations of Kita's legal and constitutional ideas. They also set out much in the way of Kita's understanding of

⁹⁰ See notes 1 and 2 in Szpilman (2002: 467).

⁹¹ Looking on WorldCat – a global online library catalogue of books – 666 references appeared when 'Kita Ikki' was inputted. While some are not relevant to Kita and a very significant quantity are repeat references of one kind or another (or films), at least 200 references are to books and articles on Kita in English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian and German. I have logged about 20-30 new works on Kita published in the last ten to fifteen years (most are in Japanese), which, inevitably and due to lack of space, cannot be listed here.

Japanese history and his view of that history's ineluctable teleological forward thrust. In doing so, they also furnish much explication *vis-à-vis* Kita's social evolutionary – and socially and politically stage-ist – ideas that accompany this.⁹²

In the above interpretative context, the stress upon Kita's strong criticisms of the Meiji oligarchy and of the conservative-authoritarian doctrine of the kokutairon (national polity myth), as well as the emphasis upon his radicalism and anti-status quo predilections - not to mention the stress placed upon the virtues of the young Kita's critical capabilities and extraordinary knowledge - seem to dominate the picture Martin and Wilson present. This is not without a certain validity, for, undoubtedly, such a critique of the kokutai was a brave achievement on the part of Kita and for the absolutist-authoritarian Meiji political era in which he was living. Kita had only recently turned 23 years old when he published his *Kokutairon* tome in May 1906. Hence his boldness and academicchutzpah – especially given the limits of his schooling – in facing down major scholars in the Japan of his day were surely unique.

However, such a reading seems, on balance, to overestimate, firstly, Kita's rationalism – and I wish to rectify this impression in my general overview of Kita's book here – yet it is also to make the overt presumption that his strident criticisms of many scholars and of multiple ideologies were launched from a leftist or a radical left-wing socialist stance. While Wilson and Martin are aware of some of the wilder and more extravagant aspects to Kita's ideas, the argument herein is that Kita's imperialism, nationalism, Pan-Asianism and strong racialised social Darwinism – plus his Mencianism, Romanticism and religio-politically chiliastic strains⁹³ – have been downplayed. This has occurred through the overwhelming emphasis by such figures

⁹² Stage-ism involves a fixed, determined, rigidly necessary and univocal pathway as regards historical phases to be passed through. Stage-ism thus involves strict historical determinism, which finds it hard to incorporate different socio-historical and geographical paths into its abstractly universalist philosophy of history.

⁹³ Orbach's (2011) focus on Kita's eschatological arguments is important, but his methods are contestable. a. He overdoes Kita's religious side while downplaying his politically reactionary strategies. b. Orbach's views on Marx as a religio-millennial thinker are dubious *qua* Marx scholarship (Anderson 2010), as Orbach bowdlerises Marx/Marxism and thus misses Kita's clear differences from Marx and internationalist socialisms. Orbach's claim regarding Kita's 'following' Marx therefore falls. Instead, Kita conforms to a chiliastic politics derived from his own evolutionary thinking and his dogmatic will to transcend the science, as this thesis will suggest.

as Martin and Wilson upon Kita's radically modernising criticisms and repudiation of the established imperial myths. The one-sided conclusion they draw from this is that Kita was a leftist socialist or Heiminsha not unlike other Japanese socialists of the day. For example, the imputed association with the Heiminsha is one that Kita intellectually repudiated and is thus empirically questionable, as is shown herein.

I have already set out in chapter 5 (on Kita's three hawkish essays of 1903) that his pro-war militarism and imperialism have been almost entirely missed in any serious expatiation in the English language scholarly literature hitherto. I make a similar claim for a reading of Kita's first book that all too tellingly seems to miss out the important *dénouement* to his overall argumentative symphony in the tome currently under consideration: viz. the final fifth section where he makes crucial conclusions regarding his Platonic-Mencian socialism and, much earlier on in the book, how the age of the gods is ushered in. It is the fifth 'symphonic movement' that basically represents his exposition of *the beginning and the end of human history*. Hence it matters inordinately, like all imagined religio-political beginnings and endings – especially given Kita's somewhat wildly chiliastic evolutionary-political 'extrapolations'. This hardly represents any 'rationalistic' side to Kita, but rather a retreat into the whimsies of religio-political mysticism.

What is left to do now before I set out various important themes of Kita's *Kokutairon* is to furnish an evaluation of the third full-length work on Kita in English: namely, that by the Indian scholar Brij Tankha.

Despite making a limited departure from the Martin-Wilson line (that sees Kita as an early leftist), Tankha attempts to situate Kita more in relation to an Asian or Asianist context. His treatment and exposition of Kita nonetheless ultimately falls in line with Martin and Wilson because Tankha situates the early Kita by comparing him with his purported 'fellow socialists' or 'comrades'. This involves Tankha's contextualising Kita's ideas in relation to the two well-known early Japanese socialists Katayama Sen and Kōtoku Shūsui (Tankha 2006: e.g., 47-54). It is this situating of Kita within the

supposedly ‘leftist’ socialist movement⁹⁴ that leads Tankha to miss important elements not only of Kita’s early development but also of Kita’s early criticisms and attacks upon the Heiminsha – and specifically upon all late Meiji anti-war socialism.

While providing valuable biographical material in English in relation to Kita’s early educational influences on Sado Island in the first chapter of his book (2006), Tankha proffers only rather limited readings of the early pro-war articles of 1903. Critically, these readings by Tankha miss – as we set out in chapter 5 above – the virulence of Kita’s anti-international and anti-internationalist socialism, his anti-Slav and anti-Russian racial views, his anti-Western yet pro-Japanese imperial orientation as well as his strong statism and his powerful advocacy of military expansionism into Korea, Manchuria and Siberia.⁹⁵ Not only do these aspects that are downplayed in Tankha’s account of the early Kita throw light on the latter’s thought, they also surely end up leading any open-ended inquirer to question whether Kita saw himself as on the left of the ideological spectrum at all – not to mention his actually being coherently locatable there ideologically. Note that Kita himself saw his own views in ‘Totsu’ in autumn 1903 as *transcending* the conventional opposition between left and right (Kita 1972: 87).

Usually, any critique of left and right as purportedly *transcended options* all too often plays out as a move of the radical right – or, more recently, of a strand of Blairism (Giddens 1994; 1998). Yet such moves are highly controversial. Thus, ‘overcoming’ left and right usually implies *abolition of any left stance* (not infrequently from *within* a position that claims to be on the left, yet that can be centrist, right-leaning or far-right) – rather than being anything that genuinely occupies a ‘new place’ politically or that

⁹⁴ That the Heiminsha (those from the Commoners News) were meant to represent, but this is questionable, as I argue in chapter 4.

⁹⁵ Note, too, his identification of Jewishness with a kind of essence of anti-statism (or anti-nationalism) in the final chapter of the *Kokutairon*. Hence the racism in the early Kita: anti-Jewish, anti-Russian, anti-Slav. Regarding his clearly negative ideas on Jewishness, Kita writes thus in the *Kokutairon*: “Utopian cosmopolitanism/globalism (*yutopiateki sekaishugi*) stands on the assumption of individualism. When individualism ignores other states, it becomes [a kind of] Napoleon. And when forgetting its own state, it becomes Jewish” (Kita 1959, vol. i: 431). Thus, Kita’s socialism is inherently statist-nationalist and all ‘socialism’ that is not statist or nationalist is one-sidedly individualist and consequently suspect: internationalist, Marxist as well as ‘Jewish’. Kita’s assumptions are unveiled in their radical rightist core.

actually transcends such ‘normal categories’. In other words, ‘abolishing left and right’ forms an organic part of a stance that, as in the very early pro-war Kita, is only occupying a new and quasi-radical (or populist) right ideological frame – and one that often embraces imperialist war.

Tellingly, Martin, Wilson and Tankha all fail to recognise the importance of Kita’s early pro-war ideas (1903-06) and what this is ineluctably bound up with in Kita – a logic that places him first, last and always on the radical right and not on the left. To get a preview of how these interpreters of Kita in English have underestimated this, we now turn to the main themes in Kita’s important Preface to his *Kokutairon* book of 1906. The Preface sets out starkly and in a limited space how Kita’s 1903 pro-war stance was no passing whim but goes to the heart of his national socialist, anti-internationalist and anti-Marxist political views.

The Preface to Kita’s Kokutairon

Kita’s Preface to *Kokutairon* provides a useful overview of how he understands his first book, as well as of its main themes and contributions. These are treated section by section under five headings (sections i.-v. as follows):

i. Holism, evolutionary thinking and social democracy as a ‘religion’

The first theme Kita references in the Preface is the importance of systematicity, comprehensiveness or holism. He does this in what might be termed a rather Spencerian way – and Herbert Spencer was indeed a major intellectual presence in late 19th century Japan – by referring to the importance in ‘the current age’ of a “unified mental capacity to traverse across everything” (Kita 1959, vol. i: Preface, 1).⁹⁶

⁹⁶ This refers to the late 19th century philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) – profoundly influential not only in Europe and America but also in Meiji Japan. For recent treatment of Spencer, see Douglas Howland (2000). For an attempt to re-think the role and influence of Spencer in Meiji Japan, see G. Clinton Godart’s ‘Spencerism in Japan: The Boom and Bust of a Theory’ in *Global Spencerism* edited by Bernard Lightman (2015).

One of the broadest aims of Kita's book is to seek "to found social democracy on the basis of a unified knowledge incorporating all of the various social sciences: namely, economics, ethics, sociology, history, law, and politics, in addition to biology and philosophy" (ibid). Though 'social democracy' was certainly no Spencerian theme, it was not at all against the spirit of those who, like the Fabians (e.g., Sidney and Beatrice Webb) as well as many others at the time, learnt much from Spencer and took up his stress on holism and organicism. This, *contra* Spencer's own intentions, fed strands of statism often connected to 'social democracy' as it was variously understood and advanced in the late 19th century.

The foundations of much modern holistic thought can often be seen in the impact from evolutionary strands of thinking. Spencer again is of crucial import here and it is Spencer who was responsible for the notion that Darwin himself later took on board to express his own concept of 'natural selection': viz. 'the survival of the fittest'. The latter phrase first appeared in 1864 in Spencer's *Principles of Biology*. Spencer's maxim, as translated into Japanese especially (*jakuniku kyōshoku*; literally, the weak are meat and the strong eat them), exerted a potent impact upon Japanese social thought in the late 19th and the early 20th century. It held a strong appeal for Kita, too, given the rather clear 'might is right' predilections that manifest themselves in Kita's thinking (throughout the period this thesis focuses on: 1903-1906; for Kita's social Darwinism, see chapter 5).

Kita's own debt to evolutionary thinking is entirely self-evident and can be adequately summed up in the following quote from very early on in the Preface:

The third section called 'The Theory of Biological Evolution and Social Philosophy [*shakai tetsugaku*]' investigates social philosophy from the perspective of the theory of biological evolution. That is, stating this precisely we should call it 'The theory of social evolution as one argument [*setsu*] within the wider theory of biological evolution' (Kita 1959, vol. i: Preface, 1).

Kita, then, sees social philosophy, and therefore socialism itself of whatever brand, as fundamentally based upon the biological theory of evolution and hence, by extension, upon natural science. Yet Kita's project was by no means predicated merely upon the idea that natural or positivist science had all the best hypotheses. Again, the Preface shows that Kita had something far more grandiose in view involving clear extrapolations well beyond the current level of the natural sciences:

...today's theory of biological evolution, despite having profoundly developed in certain limited areas of research since Darwin, when looked at overall it remains in a state of chaos. That is, it lacks a system or structure as well as a proper conclusion. This book, therefore – albeit its main study is social philosophy – neatly systematises what has been gradually passed down to us as a discovery of the facts of biological evolution. And it does so in such a way that a system underpins, or is placed at the foundation of, all the various social sciences (ibid).

The aim, therefore, is “to begin to articulate a conclusion to the theory of biological evolution” (ibid). This involves “binding everything to a teleological philosophical genealogy [mokutekiron no tetsugaku keitō], and thereby making inferences with respect to the present and future of humanity” (ibid). In view of the lack of “materials for a sufficiently secure inference” and given “the author will invariably be captive to his own particular tendencies [in such conclusions as are drawn], especially as this is something that has still not been attempted by careful European and American thinkers” (my explicatory square brackets), this means that a different kind of realm needs to be broached. In short, Kita intends to approach the matter “by calling the realisation of social democracy a form of religious belief” (ibid). The rather surprising leap implied by these bold affirmations is only underscored when Kita adds: “Being a kind of religion of social democracy, then, it follows that this must constitute the first step in the direction of progress towards paradise” (ibid).

It appears that Kita is staking out a politico-religious theodicy here. This is a place where his thought departs from the more scrupulous empirical work of ‘careful European and American thinkers’, as he refers to them, and instead takes bold yet wild

flight high into speculation regarding the ascent of humanity into godkind. This is very clearly what Kita is intimating at here (as we can see once we get to this central sphere of Kita's social philosophy as political religion). Given that this too is an evolutionary process for Kita, human beings will first become half-human and half-god-like, and then (after a time) fully god-like, as will be looked at again in the following chapter – viz. in relation to reading Kita's *Kokutairon* via a number of arcane ideas propounded there by Kita.

It is as well to stress Kita's distinctiveness here, albeit this kind of thinking existed among the Fabians beyond Japan and in the wider world, too. The idea of generating a kind of 'superman' – perhaps viewable transitionally as half-man, half-god – was of course well-known around this time, not least given the impact of Nietzsche's ideas on the *Übermensch* or 'Overman' (see Deleuze 1983 [1962]) or of Gaetano Mosca on *The Ruling Class* (1896). Many writers and theorists were offering various political or literary disquisitions on elites, supermen/overmen, genius or oligarchies from the late 19th into the early 20th century, including Dostoyevsky, Barrès, D'Annunzio, Shaw, Pareto and Michels. A sense of transcendence of ordinary 'mediocre' humanity constituted something of the spirit of the age, which also took in and was linked to ideas concerning social Darwinism, eugenics and stronger races – envisioned as racial (and otherwise as class) elites or supermen (see Dan Stone's *Breeding Superman*; 2002). Kita constituted one peculiar Japanese instance of this spiritual air or *Zeitgeist*, with Takayama Chogyū (among other Japanese) debating Nietzschean individualism, heroism and genius in relation to Japan in the early years of the 20th century (see Maraldo 1985).⁹⁷

Yet here a word of caution is necessary with regard to such holism, evolutionism and organicism. By themselves, these ideas do not help us differentiate, say, Marx's predilections (his honouring of Darwin, for instance) from those of the Fabians or other thinkers running from left to right and including such politically diverse figures as

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<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2384772.pdf?refregid=excelsior%3Acfc002d3c553c6038c769df4e9d713bb>

Hegel, Fichte, Lassalle, Bismarck or members of the German historical school (Albert Schäffle included). Or even figures on the far right and, much later on, the extreme far right (Fascists and Nazis respectively). The point here is that the nature of any organicism or holism must be judged concretely and case-by-case in terms of how the ideas (as well as the practices flowing from or alongside them) are expounded in their specific detail, not abstractly or generically.

The same is just as true of the term 'socialism' – as the methodology outlined in this thesis demonstrates. While Kita was indeed a holist who traversed across the disciplines in a number of ways, this by itself does not tell us much about the nature of that holism. He could potentially have been a Romantic rebel (itself a heterogeneous category); a Hegelian (whether left, centre or right, albeit Kita never seriously mentions Hegel); a Japanese equivalent of the German historical school (though Kita criticises the Japanese Social Policy School linked to this); a Spencerian (which, *qua* evolutionist, Kita clearly was); an Aristotelian (as he deploys Aristotle's classic systematic political terms: monarchy, aristocracy, democracy⁹⁸); a Fabian or Lassallean (a nation-based elitist electoral-democratic statist socialist-from-above combined with support for imperialism); and so on.

I have not mentioned holistic East Asian varieties of thought in Kita, albeit he was in some sense a self-identified modernised Mencian (see the final chapter of the *Kokutairon*). Kita's brother compared Kita to the 'dandy and prig' Ferdinand Lassalle (Wilson 1969: 42) and given the context of influence in Meiji Japan, Kita was much more likely broadly impacted by Spencerian ideas as to his stage-ism than he was by any other figure – except perhaps Aristotle. His thinking was also shaped by the famous lectures of Dr. Ariga Nagao, a law and politics expert who lectured at Waseda University when Kita attended classes there (as a *chōkōsei* or external auditor). While accepting certain Aristotelian basic political categories, Kita rejected any *cyclical*

⁹⁸ And historicises them, turning that into a rigid teleological stage-ism in which social-democracy (in Kita's very specific sense) triumphs – albeit all as mere prequel to the *sekai renpō* (or world federation) – one prepared and fashioned out of a ferocious struggle of all the races and imperialisms – where genius and the gods steal the victory. If heaven wills it, Kita says, that will be Japan.

thinking, for as indicated earlier, Kita was a stage-ist (what Popper terms an historicist) believing largely in an inevitable upward evolutionary development.

Other facets to this evolutionism that combined with a tendency towards holism in Kita include an orientation towards understanding the *polis* or the political in its evolutionary development(s) rather schematically or reductively, as stated above. This, therefore, can involve a brand of holism in understanding the polis or the political state *through time*, which is also linked to the question of stage-ism in Kita, but the spatial or geographical question seems less addressed in Kita's earliest work. In short, Kita cites approvingly a classic set of stages for Japan that are no different from those that apply in any other state (Kita 1959, vol. i: 243-244) – just before and after the following sub-heading: 'See the evolutionary process of Aristotle's three state forms' (Arisutōtsuru no kokka sanbunrui wo shinkateki ni mi yo). Kita calls these state forms 'evolutionary' or 'developmental' when, to deploy a distinction from Gillian Rose (1984), Aristotle's conception is clearly a *circle without a result* while Kita's is not a circle at all, but a *line* – a largely unilinear trajectory from lower to higher phases of historical, social, economic and political being.⁹⁹ The very apex of this (social democracy) is arrived at – whereupon radical inter-state war and imperialism are set in motion, and a cross-over to a higher species of being takes place through competition, catastrophe and the effective destruction of humanity *upwards*: towards what Kita calls first *shinjinrui* (a kind that is part-man and part-god) and then god-kind itself (*shinrui*).

Here, then, Kita sets out the three classic political stages *all countries go through*. Hence Kita modernises Aristotle through a rigidly and simplistically stage-ist evolutionism. The stages themselves are named in the main part of Kita's text as: *kunshukoku* (a monarchical country or *polis*); *kizokukoku* (an aristocratic country or *polis*); and *minshukoku* (a democratic country or *polis*). Kita remains true to this conception of the necessary development of the *polis* in his own thinking, albeit he

⁹⁹ Rose implies the best meta-philosophical conception is a *circle with a result*. I nuance this, according to my aporetic, zetetic and anti-reductionist dialectical frame, as 'a circle with the possibility of many results, from inclusively progressive at one scalar end to exclusivistically reactionary at the other'.

applies a specific kind of interpretation, and Japanese context, to that developmental triad and especially to the last stage of internal or domestic politics. That stage is *social democracy*, and he comes to identify this as ‘socialism’, a kind of state socialism or ‘pure socialism’, to reference the second half of the title of Kita’s book (the ‘*oyobi junsei shakaishugi*’ part, which means ‘and pure socialism’). Yet this is only a precursor to the most advanced stage of politics hitherto: state struggle, race war and imperialism, through which the role of the ultimately hegemonic state and race will be decided (Kita hopes for Japan to be in this role: having won the necessary racial war between the ‘yellow’ and the ‘white’ races). This, too, will receive its proper exposition in the following chapter.

Yet all this itself prefigures the move thereafter towards the end of history and of humanity as such. Ultimately, social democracy only seems to be a system that is intended as preparation for the kind of total or final war that Kita’s imperial state struggle with a racial aspect at its heart necessitates and which itself will usher in the global federation he invokes – his *sekai renpō ron* or theory of the world federation (Kita 1959, vol. i: Preface, 3). The various aspects of the struggle for existence as Kita envisages all of this – and this is something that Martin expounds at some length in his thesis on Kita – serve to prepare humanity for its own destructive self-overcoming onto a higher plane (first, of the half-man, half-god stage; and then only after that, onto the plane of the full god-kind itself). While Martin carefully sets forth humanity’s evolutionary ascent to the level of the gods in Kita’s thought, this was hardly understood by Martin in its ultimate determinations. This is because the latter did not have access to the final section of Kita’s five-part ‘symphony’ of the human-historical process – read eschatologically as ultimately (and hopefully) a *Japanese state-determined* one (yet subject to the will of heaven, plus Japanese will, skill and speed in war and expansionism) – in which, finally, the post-human, neo-historical, god-engendering aftermath would manifest itself.

It is this narrative, however, that ultimately determines the species of socialism that Kita Ikki espoused and that was in no sense any leftist or internationalist story from below about Marxism, but rather, an elitist evolutionary process of imperialist state

and racial endeavour from above. It was one bathed in the deeply Japanised radical right and ultra-nationalist light of a new dawn and in which Japanese imperialism is re-configured as 'Japanese proletarian state justice' (see 'Totsu'). Kita's nationalism makes this clear and his stage-ism and will for a Japanese hegemony at the end of history also starkly necessitates this. Yet in 1903, the course of history was still open; and it was possible for Japan to lose, since Kita was worried about this and hence why he urged Japan to fight Russia soon or else all would be lost.¹⁰⁰ By 1906 with his explicit engagement of evolutionary theory, this may have led Kita to have come to wish the necessity of ultimate Japanese hegemony into the very fabric of history.

Similarly, the theme of social democracy as a religion is something that seems rather a *leitmotif* in Kita's thought, as Kita did refer to socialism in 1903 as 'almost a religion to him' (see 'Totsu'), albeit this may not have been the same idea as is present in the Preface. This is because Kita was effectively arguing there that social democracy is not just something he firmly clings to in terms of his beliefs, but something that *leads necessarily to paradise*, as is quoted above. It is, then, a kind of theodicy or immanently developing eschatology that Kita is identifying in the Preface. If Kita's extensive focus on strong criticism of the kokutairon has led commentators to stress the Apollonian – and highly rationalist or scientific – side to Kita Ikki, to borrow this classic split from Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, it is equally evident that this is far from the only aspect to Kita. His penchant for the wild, mystical and Dionysian is, if anything, more pronounced in terms of his religio-political evolutionary extrapolations beyond the level of the human.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ For Kita, fighting Russia and gaining new land in Korea, Manchuria and Siberia, as envisaged in his pro-war essays of 1903, constituted crucial first steps in the chain of events that would lead ultimately to attaining a secure and sound basis for waging the coming final racial war. This would determine the future course of history for Japan, the Japanese and the whole world.

¹⁰¹ For Buddhist elements to this, see G. Clinton Godart (2017: chapter 4: e.g., pp.135-144). The weakness of Godart here, however, proves similar to that of Orbach (2011), since they both focus on the importance of religion in Kita's opus. While this is a welcome partial rectification of earlier one-sidedly political interpretations, the problem with Godart is that he rather astonishingly whitewashes Kita at some length. No mention is made of all the violence, racism (anti-Russianism and anti-Semitism), race theory/racial war and what I call neo-Chinggisian imperialism that Kita espouses.

Yet even this theme ties in with an idea of the whole in Kita. Giving an imaginative extrapolation that aims to reach up to the ultimate truth of all things seemed to (re)present a finishing off to history in the most systematic sense – that of a total *Weltanschauung* – albeit in such extrapolations, Kita lost sight of the fact that Kant’s *questio quid juris* (the question as to ‘by what right?’ Kita had for affirming this as a valid construal) had been entirely lost in such an arbitrary procedure. Science had now collapsed in Kita’s brain into the most hoary, quasi-theological forms of old metaphysical and *de facto* irrationalist or mystical speculation – something hardly akin to the Kantian critical project as Kita had once implied (see Wilson 1969: 37-39). Maybe Kita wanted a new religion, but why should anyone wish to follow such a dogmatic leap? In the next chapter, we look further into this.

ii. Concepts of socialism and individualism

The next salient theme to appear in Kita’s Preface comes where he alludes to the various types of socialism and individualism he briefly treats there, but about which he says more throughout the book. In particular, he notes the ‘one-sided socialism of ancient times and of the mediaeval period’ (kodai chūsei no henkyokuteki shakaishugi). After that, a ‘one-sided individualism’ (henkyokuteki kojinchugi) is mentioned, too – one that both ‘is prior to and comes after the revolution(s)’ (kakumei zengo no). It is unclear what Kita means by ‘revolution(s)’ here (the Japanese can be plural or singular), but perhaps it refers to what might be called – albeit the Preface did not use this expression – ‘modern bourgeois revolutions’. This might mean the English, American and French ones – possibly also Japan’s modern revolution of 1868, though this may be less likely given his focus on *individualism* when talking of the context of such revolution(s).

What is important to note here is twofold: the variety of notions of socialism and individualism to which Kita is attentive, as well as the significance of his invocation of the ‘revolution(s)’ – no matter how Kita conceives such. In short, Kita is indicating early on that ‘socialism’ is not a univocal ideology. Instead, it is highly variant. He is flagging

up how we must pay careful attention to what is meant by ‘socialism’ – in relation to his own, yet also that of other thinkers. This may provide an indicative confirmation of the aptness of the methodology deployed in this thesis – one predicated on a plurality of different socialisms to be given careful attention, just as Kita does in a more limited way. This is in order to differentiate how his own concept is (or so Kita postulates) quite separate and distinct from others: not only ancient and mediaeval sorts, but also various contemporary kinds – Western as well as Japanese.

In conclusion, Kita’s sense of conceptual pluralism as regards his understanding of ‘socialism’ should put us on notice that much care must be taken to differentiate the various socialisms that Kita discusses in this tome. This is a salutary lesson indeed, as it will encourage us to do the same, both with respect to Kita’s divergent notions of socialism, but also in relation to that huge array of socialisms that have prevailed in the wider world of modernity.¹⁰²

iii. Statism

A third salient theme in Kita’s book flows from the argument made above. It emerges that within his special concept of socialism or social democracy, ‘the demands of statism cannot be ignored’. Moreover, Kita underscores how the statism of the present day as well as the ideals of liberalism must be thought of as inheriting to, or as only comprehensible in terms of, the evolution of these prior ideologies of socialism from ancient and mediaeval times – plus the individualism from before and after the modern revolutions. Recall that Kita was writing in 1906 and so the only revolutions he would have been aware of were ones that might largely be described, if a little crudely, as ‘individualist’ in orientation (if we read ‘individualist’ more specifically here as ‘revolution of the bourgeois class’). It seems unlikely that he would have known

¹⁰² Can the ‘array of socialisms’ set out in this thesis be further ‘factor-analysed’ down in some sense to a narrower range of such? Possibly, but this cannot be undertaken here.

much about the abortive workers' revolution in Russia of 1905 (and workers' councils set up there). Most likely, he was totally unaware of it, for he never alluded to it.

Yet just as with the words 'socialism' and 'individualism', it is clear from Kita's critical attitude towards a wide array of thinkers in this Preface that we must be wary how we attribute to Kita any 'statism'. While it is evident that Kita did subscribe to a brand of statism, he was keen to separate this concept – his own ideas – from those of other well-known forms of statism from the late 19th into the early 20th century. As he asserts, it is important to criticise not only any lingering confusion as to the proper role of individualism within Japanese socialism, but also to “demolish the chimerical thinking characteristic of the so-called 'socialists of the chair' and of those who are dubbed the state socialists” (Kita 1959, vol, i: Preface, 1). As a result, individualism is a target of Kita's critiques as well as, by his lights, all *specious* brands of state socialism. And as to the former, he is referring to Japan's Heiminsha (the Commoners Newspaper) and what he calls their individualism derived from a kind of thinking prevalent during the French revolution. In doing so, he even questions whether these so-called Japanese socialists can be deemed socialists, in his sense, in any real or modern sense at all. The Heiminsha and indeed all such 'current Japanese socialists' (yo no shakaishugisha) are more like mere precursors to socialism, he concludes. As to the state socialists that he repudiates, he is alluding to Gustav von Schmoller (a well-known German 'socialist of the chair') and his ilk – or rather, to their equivalent in the Japan of Kita's day: the likes of Kanai Noburu, not to mention well-known state socialists like Yamaji Aizan (the founder in 1906 of Japan's Kokka shakaitō or State/National Socialist Party).

Hence Kita is keen to offer his own (often passing) critiques of many and various ideologies contemporary to him – and these all inform his own readings, critiques and articulations of statism, socialism and individualism. As we see below, Kita makes it eminently clear that his own statism constitutes a form of social democracy (shakai minshushugi) – one that he will go on to expound directly and indirectly within the various parts of the book, as set out in the next chapter.

iv. Kita's anti-internationalism, pro-war militaristic stance and anti-Marxism

Another important theme within Kita's early work, which also appears very strongly in the Preface, is his profound anti-internationalism. This manifests itself in the criticism Kita makes of the so-called international socialist congress (bankoku shakaitō taikai; 1959, vol. i: Preface, 4). Kita is surely referencing the Amsterdam Congress of the Socialist International of 1904 at which, famously albeit no doubt infamously for Kita, Katayama Sen and the well-known Russian socialist Georgi Plekhanov shook hands as a way of showing some form of international proletarian solidarity in view of the then war raging between Russia and Japan (Katayama 1918).¹⁰³ Such articulation is entirely in keeping with Kita's bellicose line in relation to the Russo-Japanese war that we witnessed earlier in Kita's 1903 pro-war articles. Unsurprisingly, this anti-internationalism is also once again combined with his continuing assertion of the justness and rightness of that war with Russia and his opposing the Japanese socialist, or Heiminsha (Commoner) anti-war line (Kita 1959, vol. i: Preface, 4).

On the same page immediately after articulating this point, he declares his opposition to Marx and states how his own socialism is no Marxian brand of socialism (chōsha no shakaishugi wa motoyori 'Markusu no shakaishugi' to iu mono ni arazu). Instead, he 'naturally' has his 'own' form of socialism – his concept of social democracy (chōsha wa tōzen ni chōsha jishin no shakai minshushugi wo yū su).

These three sub-themes are placed together here, as they are intertwined: Kita's anti-internationalism requires both a Japanese-style national socialism and means that Kita must reject Marxian internationalism. From this it naturally follows that Japanese interests supersede those of other countries (and we see this thread running throughout Kita's ideas on socialism in his early works). In short, state competition or 'might is right' goes to the heart of Kita's ideas on national socialism and such competition will bring war and militarism, insofar as ensuring gains for Japan is pivotal.

¹⁰³ See here: https://www.marxists.org/archive/katayama/1918/labor_movement/intro.htm

Yet a supplementary premise is necessary here and Kita supplies it elsewhere. Thus, in view of Kita's ideas about how fighting is one of Japan's historic strengths (as indicated in chapter 5 on Kita's 1903 pro-war essays), a predilection for militarism must be seen as subtending Kita's planned method for bringing about advantages for Japan and the Japanese. Hence in 1906, as in 1903, Kita was in favour of war as a crucial tool of Japanese geo-political strategy and imperial hegemony.

v. Kita's criticisms of the Heiminsha and other Japanese socialists

On account of all these positions that Kita stakes out – as intimated at in these previous sub-sections – it is quite clear that Kita considers himself to differ very radically from what he terms Japan's socialists (or: *yo no shakaishugisha*). According to Kita, the latter – by whom he mostly means the anti-war editors (Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko) of the *Heimin shinbun* (the *Commoners News*) – dogmatically and emptily parrot Western socialist discourse. In this way, their ideas only amount to a form of individualism typical of the French revolutionary period, not socialism as such – or rather, certainly not socialism in Kita's '*pure*' (*junsei*) *statist* sense. Kita, then, claims that these Japanese socialists were merely 'pioneers' or precursors to any fully blown socialism – and simply "drew attention to the social question" (1959, vol. i: Preface, 4). Underscoring the above, Kita writes:

Most of Japan's socialists act simply on the basis of emotion and dogmatism, and what they say is also a direct translation from Western socialist discourse. In particular, the very basis of their thought lies in the individualism characteristic of the French revolutionary period (*ibid*).

Kita then concludes his coruscating criticism thus:

Precisely because the author is a faithful servant of social democracy, it must be regretted that the author is forced to display no sympathy for the socialist party in Japan but on the contrary, he must criticise them mercilessly (*ibid*).

Hence the notion in the three major English language scholarly works that Kita was a straightforward ‘comrade’ or ‘fellow thinker’ standing alongside Japan’s socialists (Kōtoku, Sakai or Katayama) seems misplaced or at least deeply questionable.

Hence it is only the kind of fine-grained textual readings offered herein that can separate the wheat from the chaff as regards scholarly claims made about Kita not based on what he states in his writings. If it can be shown in what follows that Kita never saw himself as a comrade of Japan’s socialists, then the enigma of Kita’s own thinking becomes much less opaque and other interpretations offer themselves, including the possible idea, as argued consistently throughout this thesis, that Kita is of the radical right.

Conclusion

Kita has too often been misapprehended as a ‘comrade’ of Japan’s socialists or the Heiminsha – of Katayama Sen, Kōtoku Shūsui and Sakai Toshihiko – and thus as a leftist socialist. This thesis is examining and probing this on two counts: first, does Kita identify himself as one of these socialists or as a comrade of theirs? *Prima facie* evidence from the Preface points to the fact that things are likely otherwise. Second, even if they hold areas in common, what are these areas they share? If it is statism or nationalism, was what they share at all leftist? This chapter has suggested points at which the Lassalleanism or imperial state socialism of the three vaunted ‘comrades’ (that is, Kita, Kōtoku and Katayama) indicates that the reality is otherwise.

The chapter has assessed themes in the Preface: first, it asked whether Kita’s holism and systematic traits – including the worldview lodged within his ‘social democracy as a religion’ idea – necessarily meant that Kita shared ideas with Marx or other left-wing thinkers. I suggested how such ideas not only show Kita’s tendencies towards a limited rationalism, but also a decidedly religious or, in some ways, a Dionysian and rather irrationalist side (of gross extrapolation to how humanity would be destroyed, transitioning to god-kind). In other words, Kita’s thinking is shown to have strong chiliastic and eschatological elements. These were dictated by Kita’s wishes (or an

essentially pre-Kantian religio-political speculative dogmatism), not any compelling rational basis. *Pace* Orbach (2011), this has nothing to do with Marxism or Marx, whom Kita repudiates in this Preface; and moreover, Kita is self-avowedly *political*, not just religious.

Second, the chapter has highlighted how Kita deployed various notions of socialism and individualism and used this as justification for the present researcher taking a methodologically pluralistic account of 'socialism'. This supports my view that socialisms are not one, but multiple – across a spectrum from far left to far right. Kita did not propound the latter idea, yet it is valid to explore this possibility, not least because socialism has been deployed historically in ways that precisely span the ideological spectrum from far left to far right.

Third, it has pointed to how Kita self-identified as a kind of statist socialist. Albeit maybe different from a variety of state socialisms in Japan he tended to reject, he clearly was a strong nationalist who believed in the importance and the purported justice of the Japanese state nonetheless (Kita 1959, vol. i: 431-435).

Fourth, the chapter has provided compelling initial evidence that Kita was a committed anti-internationalist, pro-war and anti-Marxist – all based upon quotes provided here from the Preface to the *Kokutairon*. This should make us attentive to what Kita actually meant when he expounded his ideas on socialism. In this respect, all these themes completely chime with the views Kita took in 1903: there appears no change at all here. Given that in the pro-war positions Kita took in 1903 he was a socialist and thus an imperialist, pro-war and anti-Russian, as well as saw the Japanese state as having the right to take over Korea, Manchuria and parts of Siberia, I think we should clearly begin to take the actual ideas of Kita more seriously – rather than simply posit he was a leftist socialist without compelling empirical support for this. Ideologically, he is consistently an *anti-leftist brand of socialist*: neither an internationalist, nor pro-proletarian, he embraces imperialism and the 'justice of the Japanese state' and of no others. No thought is given to actual and specific liberation for China and Korea. Even as he argues that Japan was standing up for the 'yellow race', was aiming to win against

white imperialism and would defend these East Asian peoples and states, too, he simultaneously belies this by his intentions for Japan to expand to the Asian continent.

In sum, Kita can be seen criticising rather heavily Japan's socialists, whom he compares to French revolutionary individualists and not to socialists in the fullest sense of the term (his own). Rather than agreeing with Japan's socialists, Kita espoused radically different views from those like Kōtoku who affirmed militantly anti-imperialist and anti-war views – the closest positionalities to Marx (or left-wing views) that can be discerned in Japan's very early socialist movement. Yet this is despite Kōtoku deriving concepts of imperialism more from Hobson than from Marx, as already stated above – and the more benevolent and naïve concept of imperialism in his earlier work, from a mix of ancient Chinese emperors, Confucius, Yoshida Shōin and Ferdinand Lassalle.

Finally, this leads us to have more than the merest suspicion that Kita is far from a socialist in some classical (or even unorthodox) leftist, internationalist socialist or Marxist sense. Instead, he seems rather closer to the sort of national socialism that began to develop in the late 19th and early 20th century in the thought of writers on the radical right in France like Maurice Barrès or Charles Maurras or in Italy like D'Annunzio. Barrès talked explicitly of 'national socialism' in the 1890s in ways that approximate far more closely to Kita's conceptions, albeit in a quite different geographical and political-cultural milieu. My argument will be that Kita and such thinkers bear various family resemblances to each other. I shall return to this idea – of Kita as a member of the ironically rather internationally prevalent radical right – and make various suggestive comparisons in the conclusion to the thesis between Kita on one side and Barrès and other European ultra-nationalist activist intellectuals such as, in particular, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Benito Mussolini on the other.

Chapter 7: The Continuity of Kita's *Kokutairon* with the Early Pro-War Essays

In this chapter, I shall examine representative areas of Kita Ikki's *Kokutairon* – his first, self-published (*jihī shuppan*) tome of May 1906 – with high focus on the last chapter (i.e., 16). Doing so extends my re-reading of Kita's early work as a whole. A strong continuity is identified between positions held by Kita in 1903 (see chapter 5 herein) and stances adopted in 1905-06. I argue that Kita's early work from 1903 to 1906 has not been read carefully enough and that it is largely this – rather than any enigma in Kita's political ideas – that accounts for scholarly confusion regarding Kita's location on the politico-ideological spectrum. Such confusion has engendered the perception of a 'radical shift' in Kita between his Meiji 'leftist socialism' and his supposedly 'only late Taishō ultra-nationalism'. The claim here is that Kita's ultra-nationalistic far-right socialism – akin to that of *fin-de-siècle* French far-right nationalists Maurice Barrès and Charles Maurras – was already in place in the 1903-06 period. Barrès branded himself a 'national socialist' in 1898 (see Soucy 1972: 13, 34), as did Kita five years after. The evidence proffered buttresses my overall argument that Kita's socialism was strongly statist, his ideas racist-social Darwinist and his position hard to far-right.

Given the main aim of this thesis is to explore Kita's self-proclaimed socialism to ascertain his location on the political spectrum (see chapter 2 of this thesis), the strategy in this chapter runs thus:

Primarily, chapter 16 (plus 5 and 8) of the *Kokutairon* will be in high focus with its anti-Marxist, pro-Platonic and pro-Mencian statism (plus racism, social Darwinism, and so on). A reading of the first section of 'Shakaishugi no keimō undō' (The Socialist Enlightenment Movement) from December 1905 is also offered. This formed an organic part of Kita's thinking in the lead-up to the *Kokutairon's* publication and will be treated as coterminous with that. This chapter strongly suggests how Kita's thought in 1903 is effectively isomorphous with ideas held in 1905-06.

Kita's use of Platonic and Mencian state socialism to counter Marx and Marxism will be the most dominant theme within this chapter, but racism and social Darwinism/social evolution manifest, too. Accordingly, Kita's Platonic-Mencian statism will be seen as an early form of what Szpilman (2013) calls Kanokogi Kazunobu's 'Platonic fascism' – except with the crucial emendation that, as argued herein, Kita was never a fascist and certainly not in the 1903-06 period, albeit he *was* a life-long ultra-nationalist.

Finally, the chapter confirms an overwhelming recurrence of those themes in Kita's *Kokutairon* as appeared earlier – as articulated in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. This powerfully suggests Kita's strong rightism – and simultaneously mirrors themes strikingly similar to those in Barrès: strident nationalism; social Darwinism, anti-Semitism and racism; pro-militarism and imperialism; opposition to liberal individualism; and repudiation of the political *status quo* (Soucy 1972: 33-34).

Section One of 'Shakaishugi no keimō undō': Socialism and the Meiji ishin kakumei

It is important to place Kita's own concept of socialism in the context of his understanding of what he called the Meiji ishin kakumei (or renovationist revolution).¹⁰⁴ Kita begins this essay with the following central claims:

Socialism was attained [in Japan] through the [Meiji] renovationist revolution [ishin kakumei] and does not aim to revolutionise today's national polity – which is based on state sovereignty. On the contrary, socialism should protect today's national polity [kokutai] against a reactionary or backward-looking revolution [fukkoteki kakumei] commonly referred to under the name of the theory of the national polity [kokutairon]. Such a socialist revolution, then, must try to fundamentally abolish today's economic feudalism [keizaiteki hōken seido] and institute a renovationist revolution [ishinteki kakumei] on the

¹⁰⁴ The official-governmental translation of 'Meiji ishin' was of course 'Meiji Restoration'.

economic level. Thus revolution comes about entirely through power [kyōryoku], and such power involves combined authority gathered under the guidance of truth [shinri no moto ni atsumaru danketsuteki kenryoku]. Due to this, the socialist movement is a genuine exercise in enlightenment (Kita 1972, vol. iii: 99).

Kita here asserts the rather controversial proposition – if understood as a form of *leftism* – that socialism was already attained in Japan by the time of the Meiji restoration/renovationist revolution in the late 1860s. Hence, in the first sentence, Kita is either holding to the highly idiosyncratic claim that Japan was a leftist-socialist polity around 1868 or he is adhering to a notably different thought as to what socialism means.

Kita adds that socialism is compatible with the national polity, which he sees as based on state sovereignty concepts. In the next sentence, he argues that there is a clear difference between the then *actually existing* ‘national polity’ (in Kita’s understanding thereof based in state sovereignty) on the one hand and the hegemonic ‘reactionary or backward-looking revolution’ referred to commonly in Japan as the theory of the ‘kokutairon’ (national polity myth) on the other. By the latter Kita essentially means the standard view of the national polity or bansei ikkei (‘one imperial family line to all ages eternal’, in the more or less official translation used in this thesis).

In the quote’s second and third sentences, the main point is that Kita views socialism as not yet achieved at the economic level and, moreover, that what was holding things back was an ‘economic feudal system’ (keizaiteki hōken seido). Additionally, at this *economic level*, socialism did not exist in Japan at all. Curiously, what existed at this economic level was not ‘capitalism’ but ‘feudalism’. This is an odd claim, not least because, for so-called ‘classical’ leftist socialists, socialism (at the national level) can follow only *capitalism*, not feudalism.

The question then arises: on what level does Kita think socialism *has been* attained? If not on the economic level, where? In the next paragraph of Kita’s essay, he asserts:

A state based upon formal-legal principles [of equality] was attained in fact through the renovationist revolution. When, however, we turn our eyes to the real economic conditions of such a state, there is almost the unavoidable feeling that we are falling from heaven down to hell. Thus, even if, on the formal-legal level, we seem to be acting in accordance with the purposes and interests of the state [and thus in accord with the purposes and interests of society as a whole], economically and substantially speaking we are in fact nothing more than an object conforming with the purposes and interests of the rich economic daimyō [feudal lord] class and the wealthy aristocrats (ibid; my explicatory square brackets).

It follows from this that socialism, for Kita, occurs *within a state* that manages to achieve the *formal-legal principle of equality*. Thus, at the level of the state or of legality, Japan was a socialist polity during the Meiji renovationist revolution, albeit when examined from the point of view of the economy, ‘socialism’ still had some way to go and ‘feudalism’ continued to prevail. As Kita colourfully puts matters, if state legality was socialist heaven, then dominance by a ‘rich economic daimyō class’ or ‘wealthy aristocrats’ meant that most ordinary people were largely ordered about like ‘objects’ in economic hell.

There are consequences to this economic departure from legal, state-level socialism in Kita’s analysis:

People are more and more being treated not as persons, but rather as lumber or freight to be disposed of in accordance with the orders of the economic aristocracy. While, legally speaking, we are persons, on the economic plane we are mere objects. On the legal plane, we are Japanese nationals [Nihonkoku no kokumin]; however, economically we are slaves who are tied to our wages and serfs who are bound to the land. We are not Japanese state subjects [kokka no shinmin], but privately owned persons belonging to the plutocrats or modern economic feudal lords [ōgon daimyō]; we are peasants (Kita 1972, vol. i: 99).

Here, economic feudalism and heteronomy for most people are seen as increasing – even as Japanese nationals or state subjects were indeed legal persons with full equal rights and autonomy. Full persons nationally and legally or at the state level, yet nonetheless, mere objects economically.

If such formal-legal equality is indeed socialism – and, moreover, with this being first and foremost granted by the *state* – this implies that socialism must surely be a form of statism and nationalism, too: a national socialism. This is because the socialism of formal-legal equality that Kita points to only obtains in relation to *Japanese nationals* (Nihonkoku no kokumin) and is exactly at the level of the state or of being a state national. This is evidenced in the above quote: “We are not Japanese state subjects [kokka no shinmin], but privately owned persons belonging to the plutocrats.....” (ibid). Legally, Japanese people were autonomous state subjects or proper Japanese nationals, while, economically, they were mere heteronomous objects of manipulation by the rich. This is effectively equivalent to saying Kita’s socialism *just is* such formal-legal statism and nationalism.

Furthermore, for Kita, private persons who are rich are the embodiment of *private interests*, while the state is the embodiment of *the interests of all*. In short, private interests are selfish and feudal, Kita claims, and the public interests of the state are collective, unselfish and socialist or truly statist-national. Consequently, a way of overcoming this preponderance of private ōgon daimyō (economic feudal lord) interests – to put this in *economic terms* – would be effective *nationalisation* of such interests.

That these views flow from Kita’s ideas is suggested by the following:

This [present] feudal system is constructed strictly in accordance with legal equality. The existing feudal plutocracy [i.e. the current government and its allies in business, for Kita] do not form part of the organ of the state. On the contrary, just as this existing plutocracy divides the state and turns it into this group’s own private property, so too do the land and capital – which should be maintained as the very life of the state – end up being mere private property

divided up by the modern economic feudal lords (ibid; my explicatory comments in square brackets).

Thus, in particular, Kita argues that the state should not be captive to private interests. Yet Kita only really disallows this by assumptive fiat. Thus it is this private feudal cabal or plutocracy that 'divides the state' and corrupts it, making it the play-thing of private feudal interests. While it is not clear why 'capitalists' are not identified by Kita as being the ones who dominate the scene, what is most revealing is Kita's attribution to the *state* (in contrast to the then present government) of public and collective *purity*. Hence the *state* is all that is ethical: it is that which is public, unselfish and undeniably good and beneficent – no matter how corrupt the *government* may be.

Kita's reversion to normativity tells us much, for land and capital *belong to the state*. If so, nationalisation should follow from this or at least what Marxist Hal Draper called 'statification' (Draper 1966).¹⁰⁵ This distinction is helpful since it indicates two trends within 'nationalisation'. The first commonly occurs where an elite state bureaucracy (under capitalism) runs large industries (e.g. coal). This can be called nationalisation-from-above – or 'statification' – for unless there is clear democratic control, the transfer of coal from private to *state* hands in no way means a clear transfer from private to *public* hands. For Draper, it is about whether *strong democratic public control by the masses* is exercised. If it *is*, it is progressive nationalisation-from-below; if not, then that constitutes mere 'statification' or nationalisation-from-above, since bureaucratic state elites still determine what happens to the relevant nationalised industry.

Kita makes no distinction between state and democratic control, or state and public, or indeed state and society, so for him, it follows, effectively tautologically, that the

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1966/twosouls/0-2souls.htm>

state is social, public and unselfish, and private interests are opposed to that.¹⁰⁶ Given such failure to distinguish these two, an authoritarian blur ensues.

Given, also, that 'land and capital' should be 'the life of the state' in Kita's ideal sense, it follows the state is merely a normative ethical concept for him: ethical, just, social, public and unselfish. Accordingly, Kita simply ordains by fiat that the state is all the aforementioned adjectives as well as 'the good'.

Kita argues, moreover:

A feudal system is clearly in existence here. And where on earth is the renovationist revolution anymore? Moreover, where is the state that demanded things in accordance with the slogan of 'for the sake of the nation' and which was strictly established by the renovationist revolution? Where is the state that we can rely on [tame ni subeki kokka wa doko ni ariya]? (ibid: 100).

Kita's renovationist revolution has here been subverted by private interests. If the system remains in the hands of the state forces themselves – and out of the control of Japan's economic feudal lords – then self-evidently that state is ethical and will ensure that socialism and formal-legal equality are maintained.

The above analysis also explains why private interests and individualism are critiqued and rejected in Kita Ikki more widely (see section one of Kita's *Kokutairon*). This is because public rights are *social – and, for Kita, thus also state – rights*. Consequently, the state is a collective body of public ethics and virtue; and private individual interests – and thus, individualism – are all inherently suspect, narrow and partial. In sum, 'for the sake of the nation' or 'for the state' are just what Kita means by 'socialism'. Socialism in Kita, therefore, is a nationalism and a statism, too – both of which are thoroughly idealised in the process. This is because the state or nation of Japan

¹⁰⁶ Kita, however, does rely on a distinction between state (the ideal ethical state organ) on the one hand and government (or any given actually existent party or group that rules, running the affairs of state and deciding public policy) on the other. We saw this in the above exposition of Kita's ideas.

(Nihonkoku) was certainly not at the time Kita wrote a *state* in Kita's ideal sense. However, the state (or rather, the *government*) in its present condition, as Kita sees matters, was, instead, one captive to private plutocratic interests – beholden to the rapacious private interests as represented by the ōgon daimyō (feudal economic lords).

Yet there is hope:

This notwithstanding, the state at the time of the [Meiji] renovationist revolution still strictly exists at the legal-constitutional level. It is only the *economic feudal system* that has not undergone a revolutionary shift. Just as North American people do not know how to hold their ground against 'emperors' in the shape of the modern plutocrats and are intoxicated by the idea of a free or liberal country, the Japanese state – that only leaves what remains of the renovationist revolution in the form of its *legal legacy* – has retrogressed to feudalism (Kita 1972, vol. iii: 100; my italicised emphasis).

This means that *only* an economic revolution is necessary, for the 'socialist' legal-constitutional structure remains in place, despite, however, the legal-constitutional anachronism that Kita identifies at the heart of the bansei ikkei obfuscation (which Kita sees it as his task to demolish intellectually, legally, constitutionally).

Various questions are raised politico-philosophically by Kita's ideas here, not least doubts that pertain over why Kita sees the stage before 'socialism' as being 'feudalism'. The interim answer to this – given what we know of Kita's commitments generally (see chapter 6 herein) – seems to stem from two main intersecting sources: his Mencian-Confucianist-Platonist state socialist predilections and his Lassalleian statist-socialist proclivities. The most important point is that various nuanced aspects to Kita's socialism can already be set down: Kita's socialism is national and statist; it supports the renovation revolution (*ishin kakumei*), not bansei ikkei's establishment, conservative, backward-looking, reactionary revolution; in 1868, Meiji Japan was legally socialist, needing economic nationalisation to complete its socialism at the

national level; and, lastly, Kita's socialism is not about individual private right, but social, national and public right oriented on the state.

An Interim Understanding and Recapitulation of Kita's Ideas on Socialism

Before Kita's ideas on Mencius, Plato and Marx are set out in more depth, it is necessary to clarify some aspects of his socialism that Kita expounds at the beginning of chapter 16. Near the beginning of the chapter, Kita reiterates that "even the Japanese race [Nippon minzoku ni oite mo], through the path of historical evolution, has reached the stage of social democracy [=socialism] in terms of its legal ideas and moral beliefs" (Kita 1959, vol. i: 411; my clarifications in second set of square brackets).

In other words, by 1868 and after, the Japanese had, morally and legally speaking, already attained social democracy or socialism, according to Kita – who uses these two terms interchangeably. The force of 'even' (ni oite mo) is interesting here: was it the case that Kita saw various European and Western states as having already attained socialism, given his idiosyncratic definitions witnessed above (see especially the reading at the beginning of this chapter of section one of Kita's December 1905 essay)? It would seem so, insofar as social democracy – following the Aristotelian triad seen earlier – constitutes Kita's highest stage at the level of the nation-state. If this is so, he evidently had a different notion of socialism from that of any leftist socialists. Or he *conflated the stages of capitalism and socialism*. For Kita, the phrase 'social democracy' appears to be some kind of parliamentary liberal democracy in a manner close to ours today, albeit with a darkly conflictual foreign policy twist – with that twist defining the end of history and the final method for the attainment of Kita's '*global socialism*' (the sekai renpō or world federation) itself. Global socialism, as witnessed earlier, is to be attained, tragically and ineluctably, through relentless imperial-racial extermination in war over long periods of historic time (as seen in chapter 5 of this thesis).

Kita then goes on to argue that:

public ownership or nationalisation of the land and of capital would be quite sufficient, legally speaking, to make the economic structure of the state reach the level to which the law had already attained (Kita 1959, vol. i: 411).

“That is to say,” Kita continues:

I said in relation to the coming social democratic revolution [kongo ni okeru shakai minshushugi kakumei] that it involves an economic renovationist revolution [keizaiteki ishin kakumei] based on legal struggle [hōritsu sensō]. In this way, a new social power will represent the will of the state and the aim is for the economic class state [keizaiteki kaikyū kokka] to evolve into an economic citizen state [keizaiteki kōmin kokka=literally ‘economic, public-imperial people’s state’]” (ibid; my own clarifications in square brackets).

Deriving a kind of formula from Kita’s quotations, the following results: full socialism (at the level of the nation-state, *not* hundreds of years later once ‘global socialism’ is achieved through bloody wars and imperialism) = legal and moral social democracy (a stage *just after* feudalism, for Kita) + economic nationalisation. Adding a further nuance to this, it is clear that even the economic revolution is ultimately legal, too, given how Kita defines the ‘coming social democratic revolution’ in relation to its *evolution* into a ‘keizaiteki kōmin kokka’ (a fully equal economic and imperial-citizen state). There is some equivocation in Kita as to how this state would treat or manage equality and if so, what kind: equality of opportunity or of outcome, but Kita does not seem moved by such distinctions. (More important is the next phase: the bloody racial war and violent imperial route to ‘global socialism’ – the world federation).

My presentation above constitutes a useful underlining of Kita’s views, which also suggests the strong continuity of Kita’s ideas from December 1905 till May 1906 and which remains consistent with Kita’s ideas from 1903. However, some have characterised Kita as someone for whom ideas did not matter and as if, for him, any ideological exposition would surely be rather ‘irrelevant’ (e.g. Szpilman 2002: 468-9). The continuity of his ideas from 1903 to 1906 (and well beyond this) strongly suggests that ideas *do* matter for Kita. And this continuity exists in relation to an array of issues

from his views on war to his ideas on the Meiji ishin kakumei or on national socialism. As Wilson (1969) also argues, Kita sticks to these ideas over a number of decades with only relatively minor tactical and other changes. Accordingly, this thesis contests the claim that ideas did not matter for Kita.

Kita on, Mostly, Mencius, but also on Plato and Marx

Perhaps Kita's most striking thought on the matter of his political ideology or understanding of socialism relates to a connected series of theses in the important concluding chapter of the *Kokutairon*. As Kita states the first aspect to this: "The ideal state theory of Confucianism is at the root of Eastern socialism" (1959, vol. i: 411). Yet, how is this so? Essentially, Kita argues analogously at this point: Just as in the European context, Plato's *Republic*, in the form of an ideal state, is said to be at the origin of later socialism in the Western context, so Confucianism – another brand of ideal state theory, as Kita tellingly sees this – was at the root of socialism in China and Japan (ibid: 411-12).

Kita continues:

In Plato's ancient Greece, the discipline of politics (not in today's meaning of policy studies, but also including the study of the state or of the polis more widely) had not yet split off from ethics. And with respect to Confucianism in ancient China, the situation was the same (ibid: 412).

The reason for such was clear, as there is only one heaven, Kita underscores, that incorporates all: even large national polities and their respective life principles and evolutionary principles of the struggle for survival in society. He goes on, "through the process of later evolution, a one-sided development occurred that ends up making East and West opposed to each other" (ibid).

Kita here argues that it is Mencius' ideal state theory that makes Mencius entirely analogous to Plato. Kita puts this in a way very revealing of his own understanding of socialism as ineluctably statist and elitist: "In the same way that we trace the origins

of European socialism to Plato, so let us talk in piecemeal fashion [danpenteki ni=fragmentarily] about the ideal state theory of Mencius, the Eastern Plato” (ibid). In short, Mencius “inherited the doctrines of Confucius, the Socrates of the East, and developed these ideas” (ibid). Thus:

In the same way that Plato inherited the teachings of Socrates – the Western Confucius – Mencius proposed the theory of an ideal state of ancient human beings at the beginning of philosophical history. Hence his arguments reveal in the opening pages of Eastern intellectual history how the ideal socialist state was seen as the highest goal of humanity from deepest antiquity (ibid).

Accordingly, Kita situated himself clearly within the tradition of this ideal state theory going back to Mencius and Plato, and saw modern socialism as needing to build on that, not as something that hailed simply from modernity, as Marx argued. In this way, Kita’s ideas about socialism had radically different foundations from those of Marx. This is because Kita saw socialism as a universal, ancient ideology stretching back to Socrates and Plato in the West and to Confucius and Mencius in the East – which, as we saw in the Preface to the *Kokutairon*, Kita used as a way of *opposing Marxian socialism*. Moreover, he saw that ideology as unquestionably and irreducibly statist – which Marxism, as Kita saw, was not. And furthermore, Kita saw himself as a moderniser of Mencius and Plato’s ideology and in blending this ancient statism, socialism or ‘ideal state theory’ (Plato’s and Mencius’) with modern social evolutionism and social Darwinism, this meant that such an ancient “ethical socialism” would be both updated and set on an even more “scientific” and *ethical* footing. Significantly, in an important sub-heading, Kita alludes to the “ethical foundations of Mencius’ socialism” (ibid), yet just before quoting Mencius at some length in his text (Kita 1959, vol. i: 412-13), he returns the compliment and, going in the other direction, he also talks of “the ethical foundations of scientific socialism” (ibid: 412).

As Kita stresses at this point: “The following speech by Mencius explaining about the kingly way to King Xuan of Qi clearly expresses the ethical foundations of scientific socialism [kagakuteki shakaishugi no rinriteki kiso]” (ibid). Conversely, modern

socialism is, according to Kita, an ‘ethical state theory’, plus an ‘ideal state theory’ (risōteki kokkaron).

A salient bias stands out in Kita here. As he has already stated in the Preface to the *Kokutairon*, Marx is ‘out-of-date’, given that, for Kita, Marx’s economic theory is restricted in its understanding of capitalism to the time period of ‘machine industry’ around fifty years earlier (i.e., in Marx’s day). In contrast, Plato and Mencius’ ethical state concepts are both eminently relevant and can *indeed* be updated. In view of this difference in treatment of Mencius and Plato on one side and Marx on the other, it is questionable whether such a stance shows any actual *scientificity* (as Kita calls it) or whether it simply displays a strongly *pro-statist* (and anti-Marxian) bias. Undoubtedly, Kita was rather pro-Mencius and pro-statist, as is illustrated below.

The first long quotation from Mencius that Kita provides – and there are several very extensive ones in the last chapter of the *Kokutairon* – is a famous one, which begins with the following sentence (in Legge’s classic translation): “They are only men of education, who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart”.¹⁰⁷ Yet what is important here is not the long quotation from Mencius itself, but the question of ‘land nationalisation’ Kita comments on after it:

In this way, he [Mencius] made [motome] these ethical demands [rinriteki yōkyū] in addition to the political institutions he insisted on. And this was set as the basis of the theory of land nationalisation [tochi kokuyū ron]. Land then was classed differently from how it is with today’s land and capital. And, according to the socialism of the time [tōji no shakaishugi ni torite], this was an economic resource that had to be owned by the state [kōyū ni subeki; literally, ‘owned by the emperor’, and ‘emperor’ here also indicates ‘that which is public’] (1959, vol. i: 413; my explicatory comments in square brackets).

In other words, land nationalisation (tochi kokuyū) – viz. being owned by the state or, effectively, being in the hands of the emperor – meant that this was an early or ancient

¹⁰⁷ <https://ctext.org/mengzi/liang-hui-wang-i/ens>

form of state socialism, for Kita. What is interesting about this is that this whole concept of socialism was redolent of a 'from-above'-like quality, as we have called this in relation to nationalisation-from-above. The reason for this is clearly because there was little democracy at this time. There was, however, a concept of benevolence on the part of what Mencius called 'superior men', which meant that so long as those above were moral, benevolent and just, ordinary people would passively or actively follow the lead of this moral elite.

Now, while some of this stress on benevolence was sheer moral obfuscation or lip service, it undoubtedly led to some ability to criticise and rebel. It also led to a propensity to insist on various basic moral demands that were expected to be fulfilled by any just and benevolent emperor, one of which was the satisfaction of the people's economic needs. Kita writes: "It was assumed that, before engaging in any moral action [rinriteki katsudō], what comes before this is the satisfaction of the people's economic needs [keizaiteki yōkyū no manzoku]" (ibid).

Kita then proceeds to state Mencius' most famous fundamental positions: that human nature is basically good and that the social instinct is hereditary. Furthermore, the surrounding environment is crucial, Mencius stresses, in relation to whether any given individual will end up virtuous or get caught up in vice and crime. Or, as Kita illustrates this, whether a person ends up a bandit (zanzoku) or can cultivate himself fully (ibid).

Quotations that display a significant facet of the Confucian-Mencian or Sino-Japanese tradition need to be referenced here, as they pertain to Kita's own propensity toward a certain traditional elitism, yet also some understanding of the concrete context of people's lives. Mencius summed up such complexity thus: "One's position alters the air, just as nurture affects the body" (ibid). In short, status and position influence the development of the individual profoundly, but also the environment or social context impacts how one behaves. Consequently, Kita argues that conscience itself is a product of society (ibid: 414). Accordingly, "an arrogant as well as a slavish conscience is produced in a society of government officials. Moreover, in lower class contexts where

language is used as in a barbarian village, a cruel, barbarous and slovenly conscience is produced akin to that of barbarians” (ibid).

Kita follows Mencius in stating that the consciousness and being of a sage is commensurable with that of ordinary people and of ordinary consciousness (ibid: 415). Thus far, this might be seen as a relatively progressive position on Mencius’ and Kita’s part. However, this also leads Kita to argue more generally, following Mencius, that moral betterment and excellence can only ultimately come from above (from the king, aristocrats, the state, men of education and geniuses), not from below or from *heimin* (commoners/ordinary people). For Kita, as for Mencius, the latter need to be *led* – or if they see themselves as unworthy of such, then they too must engage in strenuous ethical or political self-overcoming in order to render them worthy of such leadership. Hence Kita stood firmly within the classical Confucian-Mencian ethico-political tradition and it is this that accounts for his high praise for Mencius: “Truly, then, Mencius can be called a magnificent ancient sage!” (ibid).

Another noteworthy facet to Kita’s reading of Mencius relates to the question of elitism or ‘superior men of education’. This aspect concerns how Kita interprets Mencius’ ideas as if they were almost a modern form of developmentalism and evolutionism. The reason for this is evident. Mencius was a genuine optimist in believing that the influence of superior men on the wider populace could be profound. If such superior men struggled hard enough to have a benign impact on the emperor and, thus also, on the wider mass of people, there was no doubt in Mencius’ mind that conditions would improve and the mass of people would be raised up accordingly.¹⁰⁸ Kita saw this means that Mencius discerned the possibility of evolutionary or developmental improvements in society: “He [Mencius] in fact grasped – on the level of simple intuitive ideas – the ideals and laws of social evolution” (1959, vol. i: 415).

At this point in the explication of Kita’s ideas on Mencius, it is important to point out that Kita himself does not see any complex duality of progression-regression politically

¹⁰⁸ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Chinese_Classics/Volume_2/The_Works_of_Mencius/chapter07

in Mencius (revolving around notions of ‘from-above’ and ‘from-below’), but can only identify what he sees as Mencius’ revolutionism (kakumeishugi in Japanese):

Recognising ideals in the journey ahead, those who discover law in what must come to be can never accept [the ugly compromises of] *kōbu gattai* [the union of the court and the bakufu/shogunate in the late Tokugawa or Bakumatsu era] or of any harmony between capital and labour. [Instead,] Mencius went on a speaking tour around the realm setting forth the most radical and fundamental of revolutionary ideas [mottomo kyūshinteki konpontekinaru kakumeishugi] (Kita 1959, vol. i: 415).

Kita regards this radicalism¹⁰⁹ as in deep continuity from ancient times:

Although ‘Mencius discoursed to him how the nature of man is good, and when speaking, always made laudatory reference to Yao and Shun’ [Legge’s translation here], oh how we should yearn [to see] how he unfurls the total argument from its socialist core like a ball of string! In relation to ‘the theory of humanity’s essential goodness’ and to discussion about ‘Yao and Shun’ [the ancient model emperors] – which are similar to the conclusions drawn by today’s scientific socialists – what Mencius explains and sets out intuitively is that human nature is based in the social instinct of socially oriented animals. And that this was a form of sociality that also existed in the primitive age of Yao and Shun where peace and equality reigned (ibid; my explicatory square brackets).

Following this, Kita reiterates how Mencius’ ancient socialism – or what Kita calls here “[Mencius’] fundamental thought in relation to human nature and society [kono jinsei to shakai to no konpon shisō]” – is similarly imbued with the “spirit of contemporary social democracy [konnichi no shakai minshushugi no iki wo motte]”. For Kita, this means that Mencius “thoroughly despised [tettō yori daki shitari]” both “what is called

¹⁰⁹ Which Kita in the above quote implicitly identifies with what he would undoubtedly call shishi revolutionism from the time leading up to the Meiji renovationist revolution. This comes out in Kita saying Mencius would have repudiated *kōbu gattai* – a late Tokugawa policy seeking to stave off full system change.

reformism [kairyōshugi]” and also “what is called any harmony theory [chōwashugi, i.e. between capital and labour]” (ibid; my clarifications in square brackets).

What is clear here is that Kita saw both himself and Mencius as ‘revolutionary’ thinkers who were equally opposed to ‘reformism’, but also to any capital-labour harmony thesis. What might seem to lessen the contradiction in all this – as Kita was hardly a fundamentally *progressive* thinker in such matters – is if we bear in mind at this time that this applied to *Japan*, not internationally. Thus he was assuredly not alluding to any internationalist socialist revolutionary upheaval, which for Kita was merely utopian. His vision was for a radical *national-statist* revolution – and in these terms, any reformism or tinkering with parts and not the *whole* as Kita envisioned that (the level of the nation or state) was entirely remiss. The repudiation he envisages in relation to any ‘harmony thesis between capital and labour’ must be viewed similarly as only at the national level. Thus nationalisation(-from-above) was, for Kita, a revolutionary thesis to radically shift the governmental-plutocratic *status quo*.

Accordingly, for Kita, the present illicit Meiji governmental cabal (the Meiji hanbatsu seiji or Meiji clan-based government) would be replaced by his *national framework for radical revolution*, in which the state would be renovated and released to assume its proper ethical function. In Kita’s mind, such a change in government – with a revision in the nature of the state back to its proper function – was *fundamentally revolutionary*, as well as something that went beyond merely entrenching the positions of capital and labour in some form of static co-operation between stations that would otherwise remain the same. This was Kita’s self-identified revolutionism he updated from Mencius – which can then be counterposed to the ‘reformism’ he so despised in relation to the professorial socialists Kita often vituperates throughout *Kokutairon*. Hence it was reformism versus revolutionism considered from *within different notions of statism*: namely, *status quo* statism versus Kita’s radical ethical-statist, Mencian-Platonic brand.

Kita's Criticisms of Mencius

Kita's whole stance on Mencius and modern social democracy or socialism – which he uses interchangeably – can be summed up thus:

Nevertheless, it goes without saying that not everything that Mencius had to say can be considered as one with today's social democracy. That is, within the history of Eastern thought he alone envisioned most clearly the theory of the ideal state. And his most important achievement is that he devoted his whole life and much effort in order to realise this vision. The theory of the imperial control of the land is in this way immediately one step away from being identical to the [modern] theory of the nationalisation of the land (1959, vol. i: 416).

Kita explains how Mencius' notion of imperial control over the land – sometimes referred to as the well-field system¹¹⁰ (as does Kita at this juncture) – was not so different from “the [modern] state management system of scientific socialism with its machine agriculture” (Kita 1959, vol. i: 416; my explicatory square brackets). It is noteworthy here that the concept of ‘public’ in Chinese and Japanese originally derives from the character for ‘duke’ or ‘emperor’. Most importantly, Kita is explicit in stating that Mencius' ancient form of socialism is an early version – or more literally, a ‘germ’ or ‘bud’ (hōga) – of modern scientific socialism (ibid).

Kita, in chapter 16 of *Kokutairon*, proceeds to set out first the tripartite nature to the history of the domestic state and its evolution across the possible political forms (or *seitai*: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy). There are, additionally, two overarching *kokutai* (state forms): the patriarchal state form and the democratic one – a distinction which partly implies criticism of Mencius in the sense that democracy is not explicitly thematised in Mencius' thought. In Japan, the *kokutai-seitai* distinction stemmed basically from chapter 7 of Katō Hiroyuki's *Kokutai shinron* (The True Nature of the National Essence), which appeared in 1874 (see Brownlee 2000: 5). Fundamentally, this distinction allowed Kita to re-define the *kokutai* (national essence/structure) as

¹¹⁰ On the well-field system and its connection to socialism in Japanese and Chinese thought in the early 20th century, see Martin Bernal (1976: e.g., 8, 47-8; 52-73).

mutable, not mythologically eternal and transcendent of all history – as the elite Meiji governmental concept of the kokutai posited. This meant that, in accordance with *Kita's* definition of the kokutai, socialism fitted the kokutai without any issue whatsoever. The kokutai problem, therefore, only arose when a false, religious and superstitious-fundamentalist – or the standard Meiji oligarchy-imposed – conception of the kokutai was deployed, as per Japan's state Shintōists (on this, see Hardacre 1991).

Second, there is a clear re-affirmation of the importance of land nationalisation and statism to *Kita's* concepts of socialism/social democracy:

Just as the [Meiji] renovationist revolution absorbed into the state the sovereign powers held by the various patriarchal-monarchical orders, so the economic renovationist revolution must absorb into the state the production rights of the various economic patriarchal-monarchical orders. In addition, the state must manage the land and production organs that constitute the sovereign organisation of all the state's economic resources (1959, vol. i: 417-8).

Hence *Kita* insists that the state must become much stronger and be in a position of both legal and economic predominance – or at least certainly achieve a more powerful position than it possessed in late Meiji. *Kita's* socialism was significantly statist at this time, while, he also underlined, it was no *bannōkokkashugi* (all-powerful statism), since individual freedom was assured on the legal plane.

A pivotal criticism of Mencius follows this (*Kita* 1959, vol. i: 418-9). There *Kita* makes a distinction between an emperor-focused democracy, which occurred in Mencius' time and the democracy in modern times focused on canvassing the people, not just the monarch. *Kita* indicates that, by modern standards, Mencius' ideas are in no way democratic, since Mencius' focus was simply to affect the emperor (and the great

families), who would then influence the people.¹¹¹ Yet, even when critical of Mencius, Kita still compliments him. First, Kita argues: “it is not good enough to make only the emperor a socialist, as Mencius tried to do”, which is a compliment in the sense that he saw Mencius as aiming to create socialism or the good life within a state (the ideal state theory, Kita underlines) – and the best vehicle for achieving this was imperial guidance and having the emperor as a role model. Second, Mencius was fundamentally a socialist in Kita’s broader (but state-focused) sense – who saw virtue as inexorably linked to state action and guidance. Finally, Kita followed Mencius insofar as he affirmed the emperor’s role even in modern socialist constitutional statehood. Japan’s modern state-organ was part-imperial and part-popular/Diet-based (deriving its legitimacy from parliament). Accordingly, this provides solid evidence of Kita’s multiple debts to Mencius, Plato and ‘ideal state theory’ – while this was no fascism, as stated in the previous section and as is fully articulated over these next few chapters.

Nationalist and Ultra-Nationalist Themes near the End of Chapter 16 of the Kokutairon
Since this analysis of chapter 16 has mostly focused on Mencius, how can one go from there to conclude Kita was seriously an ultra-nationalist in a more modern sense? While Szpilman (2013) makes a good case for arguing that advancing Plato-style state theory in modern 20th century Japan was intrinsically authoritarian, I argue how Kita’s deploying Mencius entails a strong (and still authoritarian) defence of statism in the early 20th century. In what follows, I underline this point learnt from Mencius and Plato – one also argued by Kita in the face of Marxian criticisms, which Kita never takes seriously – that socialism is a statism and a nationalism. This is the doctrine elaborated earlier, moreover, that the state in its pure form is ideal-ethical, just, and benevolent. This characteristic that Kita identified as essential to understanding the modern Japanese state was one, however, that would only truly pertain once the oligarchical

¹¹¹ See here, for example:
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Chinese_Classics/Volume_2/The_Works_of_Mencius/chapter07

system or clan-based politics had been overthrown (or voted out, given Kita's then legal qualms: chapter 5 herein).

Yet we do see, emerging alongside this indubitably statist view of socialism Kita holds, aspects of strong nationalism and ultra-nationalism. This takes five forms: i. it asserts the prime importance of modern Japanese (ideal-ethical = purely moralistic) statism; ii. it asserts the essential role of Japanese imperialism in the future development of any global socialism many hundreds to thousands of years down the line; iii. it assumes a racial/racist world-view buttressed by social Darwinism; iv. it is profoundly elitist; and v. a bloody set of racial-wars are identified as the means to facilitate the birth of Kita's future peaceful global-socialist world. (In doing this, he *naturalises* the present and the *pathway* to peace via ideal sweet-talk about the end of history in which he deploys Buddhist ideas to his own political ends.¹¹²)

Kita highlights the true meaning of 'state socialism', which, when others expropriate it illicitly, for Kita, they engage in something that egregiously misrecognises the nature of the state and, in doing so, they miss the core of ethics and proper political theory:

According to what is set out above, it should be known that the basic core of so-called "state socialism" possesses not only nothing in the way of socialism, but in particular it has no trace of the idea of the "state", despite the fact the phrase is prefixed with that word. Thus, as regards this assertion, what is these days termed so-called "socialism" is really a form of pure utopian cosmopolitanism – that is, a form of individualism. Similarly, such [utopian-cosmopolitan] assertion ends up blindly negating the state without even properly understanding what "the state" is (ibid: 430-31).

¹¹² Crudely, his own Utopian, pie-in-the-sky ideas run essentially thus: transcend your 'smaller selves' (shōga or individuality and individualism); identify now with the 'larger self' (taiga or nation); as a consequence, and in hundreds of years' time, humanity shall eventually attain the Utopian Buddhist level: the 'no-self' (or muga). This is not a critique of religion *per se*, but a rejection of all pie-in-the-sky sorts (as in Kita). I have compressed my views on Kita on religion in this note. I see his politics as clearly more fundamental.

Thus true socialism is *Kita's statist* sense of that ideology and ethico-political theory. Hence both so-called professorial socialism (for Kita, a pseudo-state socialism that supports the established government) and also Heimisha socialism (an individualist pure utopian cosmopolitanism) distort *true socialism* by Kita's lights. Next in his line of fire is anti-war theory or pacifism – and Tolstoy's brand of passive resistance in particular. That this has directly bellicose consequences in Kita's early thought has been discussed in chapter 5 herein. Here I only need mention Kita argues individualism is intrinsically an invasive and expansionist kind of doctrine, buttressed by a Napoleon-like cosmopolitanism akin to a kind of 'Jewish' national self-hatred, in Kita's gloss:

Utopian cosmopolitanism presupposes individualism. When individualism ignores other states, it becomes like Napoleon. And when forgetting its own state, it becomes Jewish [yuda minzoku to naru] (ibid: 431).

The trope of 'anti-national Jewish cosmopolitanism' on which this phrase draws is evidently dangerously anti-Semitic, whether intentionally or subconsciously. Yet this is not the first instance of Kita's engaging in ethnic stereotyping of this sort. Kita used this against the 'red-bearded' 'Russian Slav barbarians' – as shown earlier (see chapter 5).

When, in close proximity to these anti-Semitic comments, Kita makes the following *anti-Marxian* and anti-war comments, the significance of his pro-war stance is hardly in doubt:

The renouncing of the Russo-Japanese war at the World/International Socialist Parties' Convention was utterly insignificant. This resolution was arrived at through the words and deeds of the individualists and the like within Japan's socialist party as well as through preconceptions inculcated by Marx's fiery agitation in the form of the Communist Party Manifesto. As merely a humble young person writing this piece, I surely cannot resist a resolution advanced by the socialist parties of the whole world. However, it is a serious mistake for today's socialist parties of the world to be so intoxicated with the greatness of Marx. His greatness is limited to the field of economics in which he made historical explanations regarding the capitalism of early modern machine

industry and to that part of the study of history in relation to which he discovered that social evolution is determined by class struggle. Moreover, his theory of value is in error. And his theory of class struggle lacks a psychological dimension (ibid: 431).

The anti-Semitism, the pro-war passion, the strong nationalism and statism, as well as the anti-Marxism here, all indicate one overarching pattern: attachment to the purest ultra-nationalism in Kita Ikki. They certainly display no leftism in Kita's brand of socialism, but only the opposite. Thus, in *Kita*, an ingrained anti-cosmopolitanism is deeply implicated in, as well as imbricated with, a form of anti-Semitism and racist, pro-imperialist-statist anti-Marxism.

Kita's distinctive social evolutionary views – in short, his social Darwinism bound to statism and racial competition – are also seminal: "In relation to social evolution, aside from class struggle there is state competition" (ibid: 432). In *Kita*, these ideas are strongly wedded to a wider ethnocentrism. This expresses itself as a form of racism, which his casual racial stereotyping of Jewish people, black people and workers generally (see below) only underscore here. Immediately after the 'state competition' quote, he uses Plato to buttress such thoughts:

Plato hardly advocated the theory of nationalisation of land for the sake of a state that should be negated! Hey all you members of the socialist parties of the world! If the phrase "outside the state there are only gods or beasts", as stated by Plato,¹¹³ does not reject what conforms with today's scientific socialism – which holds that all thought, morality, races, ethnicities are socially produced – how on earth is it possible to renounce the state and state competition? All the members of the socialist parties throughout the world are all gods or cannot but be beasts (ibid).

¹¹³ Kita surely means Aristotle here – as taken from *The Politics*, section 1253a. See the following link, which is part of an online translation of *The Politics*:
<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0058%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D1253a>

Kita quotes Plato (or rather, Aristotle) to endorse a curious brand of ‘demonisation’ here, as well as a strong and insistent statism, which takes a variety of forms: first, in his theory of land nationalisation and, second, in his idea of state competition – insofar as it transcends class struggle. Thus class struggle, while important, belongs *de facto* to a *lower level of historical truth*. Hence Kita strongly hints that, like the rest of Marxian theory, class struggle is *passé*. Accordingly, Kita is basically asserting that, having reached the level of social democracy on the domestic or intra-state front, it is now *all about the state and racial competition*.

Not long after Kita expressed the thought that state competition is where history has finally arrived at and we can expect a dark transitional age of imperial, racial and military struggle, Kita proffers a salient thought he underlined repeatedly in the summer and autumn of 1903: that socialism can only develop by means of imperial strife and struggle: “Socialism clearly inherits the evolutionary developments of imperialism...” (ibid: 434). Or as Kita put things in one of his sub-headings: “Without statism, there can be no world federation”. It is this notion of the ‘world federation’ I termed ‘global socialism’ in a positive sense in Kita earlier. Thus there can be no transition to global socialism (the world federation) unless and until imperialism and the authority of states fighting with each other have had their long aeons in battle.

Statisms, Social Darwinism and Elitism in the Kokutairon

Beginning with Kita’s social evolutionism and social Darwinism, *Kokutairon* chapter 5 discusses the seeming “contradiction between biological evolutionism and socialism” (1959, vol. i: 95-97). Kita calls this ‘a major problem indeed’ (jitsu ni daimondai nari; ibid: 96). Socialism as a valid concept can only be grounded in the theory of biological evolution. If not, it would be unscientific (hikagakuteki). In short: “socialism cannot place itself outside or beyond the theory of the struggle for survival” (ibid).

Critical to Kita’s politics here is the idea of a more important unit of the competitive struggle for existence; namely, the society/state (Kita conflates these, as seen earlier).

Thus the proper unit of evolutionary analysis, for Kita, is the social organism itself, not the individual human being. This unsurprisingly chimes with Kita's claim that a specific kind of socialism holds true – predicated upon the importance of the state/society. Outside this structure, for Kita, the individual is relatively insignificant, albeit it is also important for him that he finds a middle between pure, abstract or one-sided individualism and any one-sidedly dominative socialism (he rhetorically asserts as much throughout *Kokutairon*). As a consequence of this focus, "socialism recognises both the state and state competition" (ibid: 95). Moreover, "state competition and racial struggle expand the scale of the relevant individual units in accordance with historical evolution" (1959, vol. i: 95). Hence Kita's reading of the *lacunae* in the individualist construal of the biological theory of evolution is overdetermined by his own ideological predilections towards national socialism and statism.

Likewise, there arises another consequence of his social – or ideal state – theory: "The destruction of inferior races is a natural part of social evolution" (ibid). This is a clear concomitant of Kita's ideas, insofar as the state and state competition is everywhere asserted as essential to, and flowing naturally from, the biological theory of evolution on his understanding thereof. Given, moreover, Kita's identification of statism with nationalism and minzokushugi (ethnocentrism or racism, depending on how one translates this), the falling of Kita's theory into 'might-is-rightism' seems inevitable. For Kita, this is just how history progresses. Recall how imperialism is seen by him as the basis or pre-condition of socialism (see chapter 5 herein). This occurs in *the very movement* of real history – via war and imperial struggle – toward global socialism or the 'world federation' (sekai renpō).

This strand to Kita's thought can be encapsulated as a paradox. What begins as some purported ideal state theory – positing justice, truth and goodness as at the core of the state's proper meaning – ends by making the sheerest assertion of state might-is-right as one may find during Kita's life. The vaunted purity of Kita's normative theory (the so-called ethical state) descends quite quickly into the most darkly realistic of real-world conditions: legitimising state violence. But then one's chosen normativity conforms to one's sense of ontology: Kita's statist conception of the world resolutely

pre-determines the necessity of the racial-imperial struggle he purports to ‘neutrally’ find in the world – or as something that ‘neutrally’ flows from his socially evolutionary perspective ‘simply’ derived from the biological theory of evolution.

Three important senses of elitism are identifiable in Kita’s thought in 1906. First, a kind of nationalisation-from-above or a statism he at least partly derived from Mencius; second, a focus on genius or superior men (again, in part taken from Mencius); and third, one result of Kita’s distinctive answer to the biological theory of evolution is his elitism: how he posits god-men and gods as deriving from the teleologically inevitable thrust within his conception of evolutionary development. Alongside this, we see the ‘hero’ as arising from similar evolutionary-historical forces.

Here I focus on genius, the hero and the teleological development towards god-kind. Kita sees humanity evolving toward. In *Kokutairon*, chapter 4, Kita conveys his argument about evolution into god-kind (*shinrui*): “The changeability according to which one can degenerate into beasts is the very same changeability that allows the possibility of evolution into gods” (1959; vol. i: 86). Kita here suggests the general *possibility* of transcendence into ‘gods’. Naturally, such words depend on definitions of ‘god’, and, a little paradoxically for one like Kita who seems to disapprove of outdated Shintōist beliefs concerning the emperor, he wields a more expansive concept of ‘god’ here.

For Kita, whether an individual becomes a bestial animal on one side or a cultivated, almost god-like figure on the other is a matter of social background and the environment. At this point, Kita lambasts two important (overlapping) subjectivities: workers and black people. Kita argues we are our social circumstances, since even children raised by wolves act like wolves, while, conversely, he criticises both rough and ‘bestial’ workers, plus black people, as *degenerate* – as somehow less than those who received better social, economic and cultural opportunities in life. Tellingly, without qualifying this, Kita writes: “And when it comes to the lower classes and the poor, they raise their children entirely *as* wolves in the [barbarous and brutal] fashion *of* wolves” (1959, vol. i: 87; my explicatory comments in text). In similarly exclusionary

and racially motivated fashion, Kita equates such 'brutal and barbarous', 'wolf-like' workers with black people: "...we have no doubt that these [wolf-like] children will have consciences like black people [kokudo; literally, black slaves]" (ibid; my explanatory remarks in square brackets).

Kita's problem here is not merely one of tone, for despite on occasion seeming to understand the actions of individuals as products of society in a more progressive way, he nonetheless shows no ultimate sympathy for those who are impacted by adverse social circumstances. Kita could have refused to engage in moralistic, racial-elitist excoriation. Instead, he acts one-sidedly and does not similarly criticise those who maintain such conditions or, better, the global, racially oppressive, exclusivist patriarcho-capitalist system that produces both elite 'virtue' and oppressed 'vice'. Revealingly, he says nothing about slavery outside of a rather narrow critique of Tokugawa 'slave mentality'. Hence his inadequate understanding of such *international* social conditions – and of the violently exploitative, oppressive and exclusivist social forces of feudalism, proto-capitalism and capitalism that brought these into being – *epitomises his failure to identify real and global social causes*: one of these being, ironically, the whole epoch of Euro-American slavery. Consequently, Kita's focus merely on *Japanese* social conditions is a profoundly limiting factor in his analysis – one precipitating his tragically blinkered national socialism and overdetermining his rejection of Marx, who understood Western colonialism as well as black slavery and its history as instances of murderous primitive accumulation in the bloodily expropriating transition from feudalism to capitalism.

In all this, Kita seems to touch upon, with Mencius, some crucial causes of poverty and social exclusion – seeing how this is created by society and socio-environmentally – while he also upholds a form of snobbish social elitism. Unsurprisingly, Kita follows Mencius in this, who pointed to the difficulties of ordinary people in harsh concrete social circumstances and yet who still saw elite leadership as the solution – with, for Mencius, the actions of the emperor and the grand families being pivotal to making virtuous the habits of the masses.

It is in this context that Kita sees genius and the 'hero' (eiyū) as most significant. Quite consistently, given Kita's top-down scheme, it is the aristocrat, king, leader, capitalist or landowner who are identified as being 'more cultivated'. Consequently, they are deemed closer to god-kind. They are the locus of cultivation in all their 'good looks' (another leitmotif in Kita's pro-elitist focus on the aristocrat, the genius-hero or the well-off) and in all their purported developing intelligence and virtue. Kita discloses his elitist predilections in *Kokutairon*, chapter 8:

Hence why we have said in Section One entitled 'The Economic Justice of Socialism' that socialism will not drag the upper classes down to the level of the lower classes. Instead, because socialism makes the lower classes advance to the level of the upper classes, social classes will be swept away and in this way the process of social evolution takes place. As a result, it goes without saying that socialism is no so-called 'commonerism' [heiminshugi]. (1959: vol. i: 176; my explicatory square brackets)

This quotation may seem mere 'common sense'. The 'lower classes' (kasō kaikyū) – no Marxist category – are to 'improve' themselves by emulating their seniors and 'betters': by advancing themselves to the 'higher level' already attained by the 'upper classes' (jōsō kaikyū). Accordingly, for Kita, the process of *eliminating all classes* can only be achieved by the lower classes 'raising themselves' to the 'same higher level' the upper classes are purportedly occupying. Yet it is only from the point of view of *the upper classes* that one could see the overcoming of class as being about generalising the leading or ruling class position and making that the norm for all. In fact, this is self-contradictory. If *all* achieve the elite rank – whether as king, emperor and so on – how can such status make sense any longer?

Kita reveals his own assumptions by deriding others and attributing to them positions it is questionable left-wingers ever held to. It is because Kita is no leftist, but a right-wing ultra-nationalist-elitist-statist at a deep emotional, practical as well as ideological level that he makes such telling statements.

'Genius' appears as the mirror-image to his views on black people and workers. Hence Kita stresses the 'beautiful *appearance*' of the 'noble or upper classes' – all of which are intimately linked to the elitism displayed within his text. First, Kita cites what he sees as the beauty, good looks and other virtues of the noble or 'upper' classes:

As a result, generally speaking, the knowledge, morals and appearance of the upper classes are seen as that class's ideal and, insofar as it aims to offer itself as something to be imitated by the whole of society, it becomes the ideal for that society. Not even a mere country girl fails to fall in love with a philosopher's intellect. Not even prostitutes who lead a life of licentiousness fail to fall in love with a Taoist's [dignified] whiskers (1959, vol. i: 177).

The nobility or the upper classes, for Kita, represent in their various ways (as philosopher, Taoist or moralist) an ideal type of individual that everyone should aim to emulate in order to develop themselves, even where the lower classes may often despair of ever having such worship or unrequited love reciprocated from these ideal personages, as Kita also states in this chapter (*ibid*).

Second, here is Kita on workers and black people:

The ugly faces of workers, their rough hands and feet, as well as their servile attitudes were the same [and fixed by concrete historical circumstances]. They are determinate forms derived from both their social experience and formation in the present age and also from what they inherited from the social experience and formation of their ancestors. Due to the hardship in their lives, they do not look rich like so-called upstart businessmen, nor do they have the dignified whiskers that politicians who are favoured by fate possess. These workers' skin looks like that of black people [kokudo; literally, black slaves] affected by the summer heat and assailed by wind and snow. Since they possess no knowledge, no hobbies, nor any noble conception of morality, and they function like machines, they are pure barbarians akin to skeletons [or mere physique] (*ibid*: 179; my explicatory square brackets).

On the first quote, Kita asserts that philosophers, moral thinkers and/or Taoists will inevitably become objects of adoration by the humble, 'morally' decadent and machine-like working ignorant poor. On the second, Kita's racist conflation of worker, black people and black slaves (re-)appears.

Yet the reason why Kita sees this kind of stereotyping of whole swathes of people as apt is very specific. He holds a 'scientifically fatalistic' conception of history, according to which: "In terms of the natural principles surrounding the law of evolution, no mistakes are made" (Kita 1959, vol. i: 204). In view of Kita's identification of science and fatalism, all is clearly well with the world, according to his social theory, even as that world and the people and other species that animate it constitute a constant, socially evolutionary struggle to survive. As Kita argues throughout *Kokutairon* chapter 8, the petty struggles at the lowest level of the evolutionary ladder, as above that, are crucial to forging that which ultimately overcomes that. Consequently, all is necessary in the struggle for the realisation of social ideals, which, for Kita, gives the impetus to evolutionary development. Tellingly, it is the impetus for the reason why, one day, both defecation and sexual intercourse will be gradually transcended, evolutionarily speaking. When we reach the social ideals we set ourselves, we will go beyond things that cause us shame. And the attainment of the godhead will be closer. Social democracy develops us ever further, as it creates the possibility for the flourishing of genius, which helps create higher levels of being enabling us to forge new beings – god-kind – beyond humanity.

However, as the state level is that at which social democracy is attained, the larger self of the social organism and the state/society (which are organically and directly one) are also the highest levels on which further development accrues. Consequently, imperialism, fighting and war are the highest level of the struggle for existence and it is on this plane, and only by these means, that the level of the world federation and 'global socialism' will be attained. In the final analysis, if socialism, as Kita puts matters, is a principle of genius, then that genius is also not only on the level of a particular individual self, but also in terms of the very largest self, which is first a *state* – and then the world federation of *all states*. Accordingly, the manifold struggles required to allow

us to attain such levels are ineluctably bound up with the necessary fatalistic process of racial and state wars, until such time as the necessity for such is concretely transcended.

This process is tragic, and yet it is only through such (holy) struggles that the ultimate world of peace and the Buddha, of the very highest love at the world level can be attained. However, the meaning of Kita's ultimate ideas right here in the present is: while social democracy has already been achieved, the next phase of world history demands inter-state and inter-racial strife, for it is only through the direst war that the dawn of an ultimate metaphysical peace of all the nations can later be achieved. While it is left rather ambiguous as to how this final peace comes to pass, the growing trajectory over Kita's *opus* is to see the end-point as unequivocally forged by the power of a Pax Japonica. Of course, it is Kita who qualifies this by saying 'if heaven wills this', for finally, as is clear from many important ideas in Kita, heaven's true will is an enigma to ordinary human beings and thus, all that can be done is to inhabit the moment and affirm our states and assert our nationalisms. Or at least, this is the only non-utopian and concrete way to bring about heaven's will. No matter what happens, then, all is heaven's will – and it is in this sense that Kita's philosophy is grounded in a total scientific fatalism: "The evolution of truth, goodness and beauty by means of the male-female sexual struggle is how the world of geniuses is fashioned" (Kita 1959, vol. i: 179). The trajectory towards a world of genius will also give rise to species of god-kind. And the ideals that we set in relation to the successive steps of development are the pathway, for Kita, whereby humanity is overcome and the age of the gods is certain to be inaugurated. This is why struggle is essential on all the levels set out in the above summary of Kita's views in *Kokutairon*, chapter 8.

Consequently, we see how Kita identifies and conflates the social with the national – since socialism clearly merges genius at both the individual and national-social level (ibid: 192, 194). Once these levels have gradually evolved and played themselves out fully, only then will the genius of the whole world be achievable. This, effectively, would be the ultimate, god-like level of the world federation. This gradually and persistently evolutionary view explains why Kita sees himself as older and wiser than

both Marx and Darwin (see the Preface; and chapter 6 herein). That is because history, for Kita, is necessarily upwardly-developmental. Those coming after Marx and Darwin, on Kita's naïve frame, are certainly older and wiser than these two thinkers. However, given the self-evident fact that there remain deep disagreements in relation to the interpretation and taking up of Marx and Darwin, Kita's comments here are too simplistically uncritical and only beg further questions.

Further stressing how Kita was a fatalist, he writes regarding humanity and the gods: "‘Human-kind’ will be destroyed [‘Jinrui’ wa metsubō shite] and the world of ‘god-kind’ will arrive [‘shinrui’ no yo wa kuru]". This sort of literally emergent theodicy (Jp.: shingiron; benshinron) entirely justifies the historical process that, on Kita's terms, evolves out of suffering and pain. Veritably, for Kita, and in order to give birth, in Nietzschean idiom, to a dancing star – one must necessarily go through and experience chaos, violence and historical tragedy. In this sense, as in embracing the Buddha of love at the end of human into divine history, Kita's socialism is a kind of philosophical religion with scientific pretensions: "This is socialism's philosophical religion [Kore shakaishugi no tetsugaku shūkyō nari]" (ibid: 204). Moreover, "Heaven takes place on earth where god-kind destroys ‘human-kind’" (ibid).

If one combines these thoughts with Kita's other notion that 'inferior races' need to be extinguished, then the terrifying logic of Kita's ideas can be understood in their fullest force. Summing up the final stage and the pathway to it, the following can be asserted, paraphrasing Kita: The road to the absolute love of the Buddha is paved not with good intentions exactly, but the opposite – with a feral, violent and wild state; with racial competition in which socialism on the most international plane can only be achieved through bloody wars, conquests and other levels of struggle outlined at much length in the *Kokutairon*. Given nature makes no false, useless steps (ibid: 204), Kita 'reassures' us, he follows Leibniz as lampooned by Voltaire in *Candide*: even in the heart of this infernal historical beast of war, violence and imperial-racial competition, 'All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds' (Voltaire 1758). Accordingly, the path of Kita's imperialism, statist socialism and elitist ultra-nationalism is metaphysically and fatalistically vindicated – as in all theodicies.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out how essential motifs demonstrating Kita's socialism in its statism, racism, social Darwinism and elitism diverged from any left-wing socialism. It was certainly opposed to any internationalist, Marxian socialism. Thus Kita was a national-statist socialist of a modernising Mencian-Platonic elitist-top-down-authoritarian brand.

This chapter has demonstrated how Kita's socialism does not and did not make sense as a form of leftism, but rather fits the mantle of a species of national-statist socialism instead. With this kind of socialism, Kita argued for statification or nationalisation-from-above. And following his exposition of a unique split between government as it was and the state in his ideal concept thereof, Kita came to articulate and *de facto* hallow a form of statist, ultra-nationalist-rightist socialism.

This chapter has also showed how Mencius and Plato were crucial fulcra in terms of the origins of Kita's ideas on modern state socialism. Mencius' and Plato's ideal state theory were invoked as early precursors to Kita's own ideas on state socialism. Moreover, it was seen how Kita opposed Marx in all critical respects: his internationalism, his views on workers' struggles, the state and his economic ideas, seeing Marx as outdated and only belonging to a previous era.

Kita's elitism was highlighted with his focus on genius and rejection of any pro-worker or pro-racial minority philosophical position. In addition, the chapter pointed to how Kita indulges in anti-Semitic strains of thought to complement his earlier anti-Russianism, as this was set out in chapter 5 herein. It also spotlighted Kita's anti-cosmopolitanism and anti-internationalism, noting how this fitted his espousal of state and racial competition – and even of the social Darwinist extermination of 'inferior races'. This chapter also showed how Kita prioritised genius and the development into

a sort of godkind, while tending to portray as lesser beings both workers and black people.

All of this cumulatively points to how Kita was already on the national-socialist far right in Meiji – well before he has been seen as such in any other work in English. It is mostly believed he evolved into an ultra-nationalist only sometime in Taishō-Shōwa. Given all this, we have suggested very strongly how Kita was an ultra-nationalist, racist, elitist social Darwinist even in his first book published in 1906. In short, these far-right strains dominate significant parts of Kita's earliest work. This thesis thus refutes the misconception that Kita was a leftist-socialist in late Meiji.

Chapter 8: Kita Ikki as 'the Ideological (Fore)father of Japanese Fascism'?

This chapter examines whether Kita Ikki was ever a fascist, i.e., not simply considering late Meiji, but more generally. Reflecting on this question enables us to offer an overview of the later Kita, too. The focus here is twofold. First, Japanese political scientist Maruyama Masao's now classic readings of fascism and Kita are treated. Second, a more 'class-analytical' line on Kita is adopted thereafter, albeit one repudiating economic reductionism (see also the Methodology in chapter 2).

The sections below follow these two overlapping trajectories and offer important overarching insights on Kita and his ultra-nationalism via an engagement with Maruyama's bold and influential views. In the first section, I introduce the seminal importance of the work on Japanese fascism by Maruyama and how that has affected immediate post-war Kita reception. In the second section, a brief account of Maruyama's reading of fascism and Kita is provided. In a longer third section, Maruyama's more distinctively Japanese conception of fascism is expounded, which is then tested to see if the criteria proffered there fit Kita. In the fourth, the pertinence of Kita's *petit bourgeois* class origins as regards his being fascist is examined. In the following sections (the fifth and sixth), I apply to Kita two sets of distinctions from Maruyama's analysis of fascism and ask whether these have merit as regards Kita: first, the couplet of radical fascism versus completed fascism and, second, the effectively co-extensive distinction between fascism-from-below versus fascism-from-above. In conclusion, I offer the argument that Kita, while clearly a far-right ultra-nationalist, was no fascist – in what I see as the best pre-conditions to be placed on the meaning of that term. The far right is thus an expansive camp, straddling a wide spectrum, where the early Kita is *less proximal to the zone of fascist precursorship*¹¹⁴ than, for instance, the Italian poet, high priest of ultra-nationalism and irredentist-activist Gabriele

¹¹⁴ This issue is taken up in the concluding chapter and will assist us in understanding Kita's proximity to fascism or otherwise as compared to relevant other early figures.

D'Annunzio (1863-1938) – the so-called 'John the Baptist of Fascism' (Ledeen 2002: xiii).

Introducing Maruyama Masao

Maruyama Masao (1914-1996) was the doyen of Japanese political science as well as the most influential writer on fascism and Japan. His status as archetypal post-war critic of *Kita* derives from the fact he was the most high-profile, insightful commentator on fascism in Japan's post-Second World War era. Moreover, it was this post-war context of devastation, loss and defeat – coupled with the profound moral condemnation he added to this – that undergirds Maruyama's reading of *Kita* and fascism. At once a peculiarly impassioned and committed interpretation, it remains – around three quarters of a century on – an academically challenging and fertile one.

The foundational role being assigned to Maruyama in relation to *Kita* interpretation stems from the former's interventions in Japan's post-war political history regarding so-called *sensō sekinin* (war responsibility) and Maruyama's attempts to break intellectually with Japan's pre-war *tennōsei* (emperor system) as well as to define and help entrench post-war Japanese democracy. Maruyama executed part of this via a reckoning with how Japanese ultra-nationalism and catastrophic war had emanated from Japan's pre-war democratic deficits.¹¹⁵

Maruyama's ideas have indisputably come to shape *Kita* reception profoundly, for ideas on fascism and ultra-nationalism – which Maruyama saw as co-extensive terms – are central to debates on *Kita*'s life and work (Tanaka 1949, 1971; Wilson 1969; Kobayashi 2006). However, this thesis challenges the notion that *Kita* was a full-blown fascist. As shown in earlier chapters, even during late Meiji *Kita* was a far-right *ultra-nationalist*, but of course no fascist, as it would be anachronistic to suggest otherwise. Yet neither his ideas nor his political-organisational orientation had changed much

¹¹⁵ For the post-war era, see J. Victor Koschmann's, 'Intellectuals and Politics' in Gordon 1993: e.g. 400-403, 407-408. For fuller treatments of Maruyama, see Kersten 1996; Karube 2008; Sasaki 2012.

from his early to his later periods: the only significant change being that Kita later joined elitist ultra-nationalist grouplets such as the Yūzonsha, which can in no way be compared even to active fascist groupuscules, let alone any fascist party. Hence, theoretically de-coupling ‘ultra-nationalism’ from ‘fascism’ – even as they can sometimes overlap – is critical to properly grasping various far-right phenomena, not simply in pre-war Japan.¹¹⁶ Despite such weaknesses in Maruyama, the latter made significant contributions to ‘Japanese fascism’ studies and to work on Kita, notwithstanding his exaggerated claims that post-1936 Japan was a fascist polity and Kita was also fascist.

Maruyama’s reading, therefore, offers an influential appropriation of Kita and a foundational treatment of ‘fascism’ in pre-Second World War Japan. Hence this chapter is devoted to examining Maruyama’s reading of Kita to probe whether his famous claim that ‘Kita Ikki is the ideological (fore)father of Japanese fascism’ is sustainable. Consequently, I examine here all of Maruyama’s allusions to Kita as set forth in his seminal work, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (1969 [1961]). A close reading is made of crucial sections of the important essay, ‘Nihon fashizumu no shisō to undō’ (The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism).

Maruyama on Fascism and Kita Ikki: the Basics

In *Thought and Behaviour* (1969: 28 [1961: 29-30]), Maruyama famously alludes to Kita as ‘the ideological (fore)father of Japanese fascism’ (Nihon fashizumu no kyōso/教祖). The Japanese here (with ‘kyōso’ consisting of ‘teach’ 教 + ‘forefather’ 祖)

¹¹⁶ This point is pertinent not only to Kita. Strong forms of (ultra-)nationalism appear not just in Japan from the late 19th to the early 20th century (the Kokuryūkai), but also in many Western states. Following much discussion of whether right-wing populism is fascism or not (e.g., Eatwell & Goodwin 2018), similar limited (i.e. non-fascist, viz. *idea-heavy yet mass praxis-light*) right-wing populisms can be seen to have *pre-existed* fascism from the late 19th century on (Berlet & Lyons 2000). Thus, albeit these largely non-fascist political forms can be in flux and intersect with fascism (if extant yet), some can also remain separate – or not proceed towards fascism: back then and now. For this thesis, Kita was exactly such a figure. We cannot just lump all hard right to far-right tendencies together based on shared *ideas* shorn of any reactionary mass praxis. I treat this as a scalar issue in chapters 2 & 9 citing Barrès in France and D’Annunzio in Italy. I also indicate how to distinguish between fascism and such right-wing populisms.

literally means: the 'doctrinal (or ideological) progenitor (or forefather)' of Japanese fascism. It can also mean Japanese fascism's 'guru' or 'founder (of a sect)'.

In the same paragraph, Maruyama adds that Kita had, in 1919, inaugurated the Society of Those Who Yet Remain (the Yūzonsha) – with Ōkawa Shūmei and Mitsukawa Kametarō, Kita's well-known fellow ultra-nationalists. Maruyama saw this as an organisation he terms "close to fascism in the true sense" (*Thought and Behaviour*: 28; literally, 'honrai no fashizumu ni chikai', *Gendai seiji*: 29).

To cap this short portrayal of him as a fascist, Maruyama calls Kita's most famous third book the *Mein Kampf* of the Yūzonsha. For Maruyama, this book (*An Outline Plan for the Reorganisation of Japan or Nihon kaizō hōan taikō*) had a great impact on the young officers who led the February 26th Incident – a failed military rebellion from 1936. Kita's book allegedly inspired them to institute 'fascism' via a *coup*.

What defines fascism 'in the true sense', for Maruyama, can be summarised under the following points: first, engagement in reactionary (anti-red and anti-union) activity; second, its positive programme of domestic (right-wing) reform; and lastly, its international demands for expansionism (or, as often couched, for '*Asian liberation*'). Using these rather vague criteria, Maruyama judged Kita a fascist: Kita was not only anti-red and anti-trade union, he was also possessed of a positive programme for domestic reconstruction, such that he called for a *coup d'état* and for the implementation of martial law. Lastly, Kita was for '*Asian liberation*' alongside a policy of Japanese expansionism. For Maruyama, therefore, Kita was demonstrably fascist.

Yet Maruyama's claims can be challenged. First, a comparison of Kita's third book and *Mein Kampf* has, as far as I know, never been attempted. Without that, comparing the two books remains polemical. Second, the Yūzonsha was no fascist party aiming to move the masses. Nor did it have any 'political soldiers' – elite or otherwise: *viz.* Hitler's SS (*Schutzstaffel* meaning 'Protective Echelon', as they were originally Hitler's bodyguards and grew massively thereafter) or any *Sturmabteilung* (Brownshirts or SA: *viz.* violent paramilitaries). Instead, the Yūzonsha was a highly elitist and solely

intellectual group barely engaged in political activity of any kind. It was certainly no leadership cell directing a body of organised street-fighters striving for state hegemony. Third, is *all* imperial expansionism fascist? Was the Scramble for Africa *fascist*? This surely lacks cogency.¹¹⁷ Thus, even if Maruyama's various points above are granted, these criteria still do not prove Kita was a fascist. Let us now turn to salient other definitions of fascism in Maruyama.

Kita as an 'Ideological Fascist' and Rightist 'Petit Bourgeois' 'Pseudo-Intellectual'?

In Section III of 'The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism', Maruyama focuses on various 'distinctive characteristics' (p.34ff) making the Japanese case something of an outlier in studies of international fascism. Maruyama's analysis of Japanese fascism, therefore, does not foreground features it shares with the mainstream European brands like the Italian and the German cases,¹¹⁸ which are only briefly flagged up in this particular essay of his.¹¹⁹ It is to Maruyama's discussion of these distinctive characteristics of Japanese fascism that we turn.

In the following, we condense Maruyama's three pivotal points that enable him to designate a thinker or activist a specifically *Japanese* 'ideological fascist' (for the full argument, see Section III of Maruyama's essay):

¹¹⁷ In view of the historical birth of fascism in post-WWI Italy, all fascism only appeared on the scene *once mass formal democracy with universal suffrage was already set in train alongside the modern institutions of civil society*. This is not to *ignore or downplay* the deep, systemic and long-term oppression and violence by the leading white imperial powers in modernity for many centuries prior to the onset of fascism, but simply to affirm that clearly *something other than fascist oppression was afoot there*. While fascism is evidently a form of white supremacy, not all white supremacy is fascist.

¹¹⁸ Controversy rages over whether 'generic fascism' actually exists and, if so, what it is. See, for example, Eatwell 1996; Griffin 1998; for authoritative recent treatment of fascism, see Paxton 2004.

¹¹⁹ On commonalities, see Maruyama as follows: "the rejection of the world view of individualistic liberalism, opposition to parliamentary politics ... the political expression of liberalism, insistence on foreign expansion, a tendency to glorify military build-up and war, a strong emphasis on racial myths and the national essence, a rejection of class warfare based on totalitarianism, and the struggle against Marxism" (Maruyama 1969: 35). Such criteria could also pick out a Bismarckian authoritarian system or a case of strong militarism. Why should these criteria be considered to identify *fascism* specifically? See the discussion at the end of this chapter for my own answer.

First, there is “the family-system tendency” (ibid: 36) that is deemed fundamental to an activist or ideologue in Japan being regarded as a fascist. What Maruyama alludes to here is the pre-war state-imperial ideology that sees the nation as a *kazoku kokka* (or family state). On this view, the emperor – in august *loco parentis* – is seen as father to his unique Japanese child-subjects. The latter are connected, though more diffusely than the emperor and the head family, to Japan’s founding gods of yore – in an ‘unbroken imperial line to all ages eternal’ or *bansei ikkei* (literally, ten thousand years, one single family lineage).

Second, Maruyama points to the strong colouring of ‘agrarianism’ (*nōhonshugi*) in Japanese ‘fascist’ ideology. One example is Tokyo Imperial University-trained Ōkawa Shūmei’s statements on agrarianism after he broke with Kita, when founding the Society to Carry Out Heaven’s Way on Earth or *Gyōchisha* (ibid: 38). This strain also appears in such crucial 1930s *Nōhonshugisha* – adherents to the principle of agriculture as the base – as Gondō Seikyō and Tachibana Kōsaborō.¹²⁰

Maruyama regards Kita as a clear exception on such matters in far-right thought, because he offers the “palest colouring of the agrarian principle” (*Thought and Behaviour*: 42) and is seen as the most centralising of far-right thinkers (ibid: 37, 42). Maruyama subsequently details the ways Kita may be construed to be centralist or centralising (ibid: 42). I mention here but three: the suspension of the constitution by the emperor; the dissolution of the Diet; and the *coup* to bring all this about, as carried out by a national reorganisation cabinet instituting martial law (for Maruyama's full list, see ibid: 42).

¹²⁰ See Havens 1974. See also Byas 1942. For *nōhonshugi* in Japanese, see Haga Noboru 1982 or Mori Hiroshi 1972. For more in Japanese, see Havens 1974: 7-8. For more recent work, see Funato Shuichi 1999: https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/kantoh1988/1999/12/1999_12_119/pdf

The third distinctive characteristic of Japanese fascist ideology is the idea of emancipation Japan claimed to be fighting for – on behalf of the Japanese and Asian masses, and for liberation from Western imperialism (ibid: 51).¹²¹

This Japanese self-identification as the saviour of Asia led to a religio-politically fundamentalist and sanctimonious violent vaunting of Japan's own power with multiply disastrous consequences. The idea of Japanese imperialism as 'liberation' – despite its clearly anti-Western *and* imperialist sides – finally offered little better than a damaging replacement mirroring white elite, albeit this time a rather pressured regional-imperial, hegemony. After such discussion, the question arises once more as to whether these three criteria for being termed an 'ideological fascist' apply to Kita. Each criterion is taken in turn.

First, was Kita strongly committed to the 'family-system' tendency?

Maruyama highlights that Kita's thought partially contains family-system tendencies, however much Kita repudiates bansei ikkei mythology. To begin with the latter point (as Kita is occasionally shockingly glossed as pro-bansei ikkei), the following quote is simply one strong indication of Kita's anti-bansei ikkei stance: "Having had their skulls done in by the imperial myth of a single family-line stretching to all ages eternal, Japan's imperial subjects have become entirely idiotic" (*Kokutairon* in 1959, vol. i: 220; my translation).

Despite this consistent repudiation of bansei ikkei on Kita's part, the issue of family-system tendencies is still moot. Maruyama makes the subtler point that Kita's third book refers to Japan as an "organic and indivisible great family" (1969: 37; Kita 1923: 111). Hence, true to social Darwinist form, as observed earlier herein, Kita adopts a biologicistic, organic conception of Japanese state-and-society relations and thus of

¹²¹ Note also Japan's 'support' for black nationalism. See Ernest Allen, Jr., 'When Japan was "Champion of the Darker Races": Satokata Takahashi and the Flowering of Black Messianic Nationalism' in *The Black Scholar* 24 (Winter 1994): 23-46: <http://www.umass.edu/afroam/downloads/allen.tak.pdf>

individuals as hierarchically bonded within these relations (as, effectively, a succession of families connected right up to the imperial family itself).¹²²

Given Kita's critique of bansei ikkei as mythology and thus unscientific, Kita regards his great family notion as “a modern theory of the social organic body” (Kita 1923: 111) – the mythological version of which Kita's 'scientifically modern view' sublates (both preserving and cancelling aspects of the old view). Thus, though Kita subscribes to a duly updated ‘great family notion of the state’, Maruyama does not mention this, albeit it is clearly argued for in the relevant passage in Kita.¹²³

Second, is Kita Ikki highly committed to agrarianism (nōhonshugi)?

Maruyama's claim is that Kita's predilections for centralism and industrialism refute any instance of nōhonshugi – considering the latter ideology's ‘obvious’ penchant for localism. However, there *are* instances of early statist or bureaucratic nōhonshugi (see Havens 1974: chapters I-IV) and, for Smith, nōhonshugi as a doctrine derives from Tokugawa ‘Confucian’ ideology and is thus fully bureaucratic in origin (1975: 144).

Furthermore, there are real synchronicities between Kita Ikki's thought and that of Tachibana Kōsaborō and Gondō Seikyō in regard to all three thinkers' attachment to a reactionary nationalism and militarism, which had a strong social base in the countryside (Byas 1942: 65; Smethurst 1974; Smith 1975).¹²⁴ Such similarity is explained by the fact that, as Smith points out, “the very conception of Nōhonshugi itself emerges as rooted in a bureaucratist political order” (1975: 144) – one that is highly statist as well as enmeshed with modern state re-configurations of emperor-ism

¹²² The point from Maruyama appears on the second page of references to Kita in Maruyama's 'The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism', p. 37.

¹²³ Maruyama quotes p.111 of Kita's *Outline Plan* thus: “The view of Japanese subjects towards their state forms part of a unitary belief present consistently from ancient times up to the present that can be expressed in accordance with both deep and learned philosophical speculation as well as in accordance with religious faith. The modern version of this, as articulated in social organic theory, is expressed in the view that the state is an organic and indivisible great family.”

¹²⁴ For correctives to the assumption agrarianism always led in regressive directions in Japan, see Sho Konishi's, 'Ordinary Farmers Living Anarchist Time: Arishima Cooperative Farm in Hokkaido, 1922-1935'; *Modern Asian Studies*, August 2013.

(tennōshugi). Such an ineluctably modern, statist and bureaucratized emperor-ism we also witness in Gondō and Tachibana (ibid: 145).

Not only that, but Kita's social origins lay in the countryside – on Sado Island in the Japan Sea. Despite Kita's overt statism – albeit one requiring toppling the current political establishment¹²⁵ – there is also in Kita a stress upon the rather locally autonomous, active role of the Zaigō gunjinkai or the Army Reservist Association (Tankha 2006: 178-179).

These highly agrarian social origins surely predisposed Kita to see 'ordinary Japanese people' through a rural-provincial lens – not entirely dissimilarly to a nōhonshugi perspective mediated through the outlook of local elites, of which Kita and his family were examples (see Smith's discussion of Sasaki Ryūji's work; 1975: 138-139). This perspective – whether in Kita or Japanese agrarianism itself, depending on class configuration and political tendencies – often displayed the following features: a rather rural, peasant or owner-cultivator stance; a small to medium business orientation; a populist-nationalist mindset; a militarist perspective; and at times an overly mystical and idealist view. Kita showed signs of all of these, but he was also a consistent critic of central officials (the Meiji oligarchy). Like Gondō, Kita regarded them as kunsoku no kan (君側の奸): 'evil officials around the throne' (see Barclay 1991: 9). Accordingly, Kita often agreed with Gondō, the agrarian thinker *par excellence*.¹²⁶

Maruyama talks of Gondō being anti-official and anti-big industry. Yet Kita, suffused with a classic *petit bourgeois* – combined with his Sado – rebelliousness against Japan's centres of power, had also adopted these stances in a limited way ('Ideology and Dynamics': 40). Moreover, since Kita conflated state and society, his 'state' was as much a big society or community (kyōdōtai) as 'society' was a state microcosm (Kita's

¹²⁵ Kita rejects 'anarchism' – by which he means an anti-statist brand of socialism. Kita never countenances questioning the 'compass needle of the state' (kokka no rashinban; Kita 1972: 96).

¹²⁶ Kita even had his own version, to cite a title of 1932 by Gondō, of kunmin kyōji ron (君民共治論). Kita saw the emperor and the people (mediated via the Diet) as two foundations of the state.

organic family state ideas reflect such identification). In this way, Kita often also criticised Prussian or Bismarckian forms of statism and offered his own hybridic or eclectic conceptions – involving arguably a provincial populist-nationalist dialectic.¹²⁷

In Kita, then, there often prevails a rather narrow provincialism and restricted *petit bourgeois* mindset (to invoke one of Maruyama's well-known judgements) – perhaps reminiscent of a conservative local country preacher or teacher well-known for his dogmatic sermonising on some moral or political issue of the day. Even Kita's angry, frustrated and anti-academic bent might be readily submitted to such analysis, yet any *reductive ad hominem* criticism here must be avoided. Nonetheless, powerful emotions run strongly through his *Kokutairon* and early essays, where Kita fulminates against academics, Japan's socialists and foreign thought in a fashion exceeding intellectual critique (1959, vol. i: the Preface; see also 1972: 85-98, 137-140; on Kita's penchant for invective, see Szpilman 2002: 470).

Third, does Kita manifest in his ideas any claim to be liberating Asia alongside an expansionist or imperialist agenda?

Kita typifies such a stance. On the one hand, he asserts that Japan will be the saviour of the 'yellow race' (1972: 86) and that Japan's 'good' and 'justice-affirming' imperialism (ibid: 94-95) stands in contrast to the rapacity of the West's 'plutocratic imperialism' (*fugō no teikokushugi*; ibid: 87). On the other hand, Japanese interests are systematically stressed at the expense of China and Korea, of Manchuria and south-eastern Siberia, to all of which Japan will expand (ibid: 73-74). Although years later Kita criticised Inukai Tsuyoshi and Tōyama Mitsuru over the issue of Chinese independence (Arima 1999), his own stance can be seen as hypocritical – given his earlier (and later) work manifested precisely the same adventurism as these famous nationalist political figures. Thus, when he criticised Inukai and Tōyama's

¹²⁷ Kita's 'dialectical' analyses remain subordinated to the Japanese *nation-state* and its imperium, because he offers a limited (i.e. Japanised) dialectic. Thus Kita follows Lassalleian statism (1884 [1862]) and Fichteian (2011 [1800]) autarkic nationalism.

expansionism, Kita was likely simply being more guarded about his long-range goals: that Japanese evolutionary and social Darwinist 'national' interests must effectively trump those of Korea, China *et cetera*. Or, with splendid obfuscation (at which Kita certainly excelled), that any victory for Japan was simultaneously a victory for 'the yellow race', because the great enemies were Britain and Russia, and all must be subordinated to the attempt to defeat them.

A number of arguments articulated in the idiom of Japanese national interests (e.g. Japan as 'proletarian nation') curiously miss how such a claim surely better applied to Korea or China. Consequently, Kita likely either had a blindspot on such matters or instead was merely cynical. Cynicism suggests itself in the way Kita argues in favour of Asian liberation while simultaneously demanding that Japanese '*proletarian*' national interests are prioritised.

If Korea or China at this time are more justly describable as oppressed or 'proletarian' in their national predicaments, not late Meiji Japan, then *contra* Kita, Japan's role was surely more akin to a *petit bourgeois* nation shot through with ambition and clambering to 'catch up with and overtake the West' (欧米に追いつけ、追い越せ → 'ōbei ni oitsuke, oikose' is one of the most famous slogans in Meiji). Or a second rank imperial nation aiming to turn itself into a large hegemon and capitalist. It is remarkable that Maruyama suggested, without developing the theme at any length, precisely such a frame of analysis, arguing that "the international position of Japan closely resembled the social position of this stratum within the country" ('Ideology and Dynamics': 64). 'This stratum' (above) refers to Maruyama's so-called *petit bourgeois* pseudo-intelligentsia, including "primary school teachers, petty officials, Buddhist and Shintō priests, masters of small workshops, and small land-owners" (ibid).

Once again, Kita appears to fit *Maruyama's* criteria for being a fascist, albeit with what Maruyama saw as a limited agrarianist or *nōhonshugiteki* quality. However, the argument herein is that Kita was more agrarian and more 'intensely anti-bureaucratic and anti-zaibatsu' (see *ibid*: 64) than Maruyama allowed for, though later on (by the 1920s and 1930s), Kita was happy to live in some luxury as a result of the extraction of

regular bribes from Mitsui (Szpilman 2002: 468, 469). This is not simply an example of Kita contradicting himself on the level of self-conscious belief here, for this would be too easy and abstract an account of the situation. It is, instead, surely indicative of a right-wing *petit bourgeois* class location, economically and politically understood (see below), and thus of a consequent desire to seek to improve that *petit bourgeois* individual's own rather middling and by that time consistently outsider status in society.

Indeed, as the very early Mao Tse-tung¹²⁸ has argued in an excessively economic vein (though if adjusted, it offers genuine insight), the *petite bourgeoisie* is not a homogeneous class, either.¹²⁹ What is valuable about Mao's argument here is not simply its historical value, it also consists in the point that the *petite bourgeoisie* has a left wing, a middle section and a right wing. Against Mao, such *political* differences cannot be immediately and mechanically read off from the *economics* or from *class location*. The politics, and thus political consciousness and social behaviour, matter profoundly, too, which cannot be collapsed into *mere economic positionality*. In short, politics goes 'all the way down'. (See the next section for fuller exposition of this.) Thus, happy to be 'supported' by default by big business as he was in his later days, Kita was clearly a very right-wing kind of *petit bourgeois* – especially perhaps during this later juncture of his life, although Kita was pretty consistent throughout his *ideological* career in his politically right-wing vision, if one peruses his early 1903 articles and first book of 1906.

In summary, the argument above is that his class location *and* the fractured and tortured political consciousness that Kita develops both account for such salient predicaments and contradictions as prevail in Kita's *petit bourgeois* thought and behaviour – contradictions that are social and intellectual-political in nature as much

¹²⁸ At a time when he most approximated to a *Marxist* – as opposed to a *de facto* guerrilla-peasant-nationalist or, post-war, broadly a Stalinist (see Molyneux 1983).

¹²⁹ No class is homogeneous. For a creative analysis relating to Chinese conditions, see Mao's essay of March 1926 entitled simply, 'Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society', especially the section on the *petite bourgeoisie*: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_1.htm

as economic. It is important to stress that nothing is inevitable in respect of political consciousness *or* economic location. Politically left-leaning (or rapidly moving leftward) sections of the *petite bourgeoisie* may decisively throw in their lot with the workers, even though, when looked at in terms of any classic ‘economistic-mechanical’ class analysis, they may seem to hail from more ‘economically right-wing (or advantaged)’ sections of the *petite bourgeoisie*. Certain strands of radical political intellectual or teacher or priest (of one rather leftist stripe or another) can do likewise and indeed proceed to do precisely that and in fact join the workers. Yet not Kita Ikki – who limited his thought and behaviour on an exclusivistic (male and national) chauvinistic basis. He committed himself to what might be called a kind of Japanist nationalism or ultra-nationalism, situating himself on the far right of the *petite bourgeoisie* and also of the general political spectrum itself.¹³⁰

Finessing Kita Ikki’s Class Origins in the Light of Maruyama’s Views on Two Fractions of the Petite Bourgeoisie and Fascism

We ended the previous section discussing the importance of class (and the *petite bourgeoisie*) for an understanding of Kita and fascism. For Maruyama, social origins play an important role in detecting who is fascist. Thus, highly pertinently in terms of Maruyama's conviction that Kita was a fascist, Kita was from a classic *petit bourgeois* – lower or middling middle class – background (see Maruyama 1969: 57-58). Yet, for Maruyama, such a characterisation of the *petite bourgeoisie* is in actual fact too generic, as is seen in the following.

Maruyama’s discussion in Section V crucially distinguishes between *two fractions of* the Japanese lower middle class or *petite bourgeoisie*. In the first type, there are “the small factory owners, building contractors, proprietors of retail shops, master

¹³⁰ I use ‘petit bourgeois’ – in Marxist (or quasi- or pseudo-Marxist) circles – beyond mere *insult*. I point to the historical (thus concrete and changing) role of the *petite bourgeoisie*. It is seen as possessed of fascist *predilections* – within the right or middle sections of the *petite bourgeoisie* (after economic and political ‘factors’ have been ‘combined’ in understanding that class) – but is, in no sense, *immediately* fascist. In short, the proposition ‘if petit-bourgeois, then fascist’ offers a specious equivalence.

carpenters, small landowners, independent farmers, school teachers (especially in primary schools), employees of village offices, low-grade officials, Buddhist and Shinto priests” (ibid: 57). In the second, by contrast, we find “urban salaried employees, so-called men of culture, journalists, men in occupations demanding higher knowledge such as professors and lawyers, and university and college students” (ibid: 57-58). Maruyama argues that it is “mainly the first type that offers the social foundation of fascism”, not the second (ibid: 58). The split between the two also represents the distinction alluded to above separating the sub- or pseudo-intellectuals from the true intellectuals, according to Maruyama, with the first type again (the pseudo-intellectuals) most dynamic in moulding the 'voice of the people' (ibid). For Maruyama, the (true) intelligentsia offered only a passive or inner resistance to fascism with their opposition only hesitant. In contrast, the pseudo-intellectuals formed the 'backbone' of the Japanese fascist movement (ibid: 60), being “far more practical and active” in support of it. Maruyama continues: “These small 'bosses' and 'masters' ... served as the executives of town and village councils, agricultural, religious, educational, youth, and reservist associations, acting as transmitters of local opinion distilled in these places” and “had the authority of petty emperors” (ibid: 60).

Given the background of the 'first type' of the *petite bourgeoisie* that forms the 'backbone' of fascism, Kita's own social background, if Maruyama were right, placed him *there*. Thus, Kita Ikki's father was a local mayor of his hometown of Minato-machi (Tanaka 1971: 14-15). He was also a small businessman who ran a saké brewery – a classically first-fraction-style *petit bourgeois*, small-scale enterprise. Furthermore, Kita's family came from a background of only moderately well-off landowners, who owned 2 mountains and forests and around 2 hectares of cultivatable land or rice paddies (“山林二カ所、田地二町余”; Tanaka 1971: 15). If we use Havens' criteria (1974: 32-33), Kita's father was a *small* landowner. Such facts all locate Kita's family within the first fraction of the middling middle class and *petite bourgeoisie*, except that, in the 1890s, his father had problems with the saké-brewing enterprise and, consequently, family circumstances became more straitened (Tanaka 2006: ix). A profound fall in fortunes ensued with the collapse in his father's business in 1900

(Martin 1959: 48) and, more so, with his father's death in May 1903 (ibid 1959: 53; Wilson 1969: 15).

Given that Kita also criticises large capital, what Maruyama says regarding certain kinds of attitudes among the first-fraction-style *petite bourgeoisie* may not be so inapt in relation to Kita – albeit whether such propensities for elitist-style looking-‘downwards’ or any resentfully looking-‘upwards’ constitute fascist ideology or not is what Maruyama needs to persuasively demonstrate. For him: “In the fascist ideology of Japan, ... the industrial workers were always slighted in comparison with the small and medium merchants and farmers. This was already so in the radical fascist movement, which came closer to representing the lower stratum” (ibid: 48). Yet, once more, can looking down on workers be said, by itself, to be distinctly fascist? This seems extremely questionable.

Irrespective of such emotional and attitudinal characteristics, which can often seem rather speculative in nature, as already indicated, what might be seen as significant about such arguments as Maruyama presents in respect of the *petite bourgeoisie* is this: the specific tendency towards reductionism. While this form of mechanical argumentation is commonly attributed to *Marxists as such* and a number of Marxists (including on occasion Marx himself) have been known to commit similar forms of economic reductionism, this form of reasoning begs many questions, not least regarding the determinism that flows from it. Thus, regarding Maruyama, his attempt to identify a purely *economic* fraction of the lower middle class with the main instigators of fascism in Japan lacks subtlety, mirroring Mao's own economism. It crucially misses out on that which is *political* – including *political consciousness* – not to mention empirical specificity. The full contours and implications of this argument cannot be set out here, as it involves a rather extended exposition of the nature of the *petite bourgeoisie* and of class and class ascription in general.

Here what *can* be said is that Maruyama's separation of the ‘pseudo-intelligentsia’ and the ‘true intelligentsia’ itself seems valuable to us to the extent that it highlights Mao's indirect insight alluded to above. Mao's insight, then – as, to a lesser extent,

Maruyama's – consists in the fact that the *petite bourgeoisie* undoubtedly possesses different fractions within it (thus Mao 3, Maruyama 2). Hence, Maruyama's distinction may have *some* purchase (shorn of any social snobbery invalid for Marxism), albeit a teacher or a priest is no more necessarily pseudo-intellectual than any other role. The salient split here is one of a politics of inclusion versus a politics of exclusion: in short, left versus right impulses *within* the *petite bourgeoisie*.

How this relates to Kita Ikki is as follows: We advance the view that in order to judge whether Kita was a member of the *petite bourgeoisie* or lower middle class, and in particular as to whether this predisposed him towards taking a *fascist* political stance (which Maruyama attributes to him), we must not only look at class origins in the narrower economic sense, but we should also accompany that with a nuanced engagement with Kita's philosophical, ethical and political positions – as has been practised herein – as well as with his political praxis and behaviour. Maruyama fails to do either at any length and, consequently, his argument suffers for it. It falls into an abstract and lazy moralism. Such a stance may perhaps be contextually comprehensible on account of Kita's vocal, life-long advocacy of militarism and expansionism, both of which brought the Japanese nation to ruin, but it is a moot question as to whether this is sufficient to label Kita *fascist* with any expectation of either accuracy or fairness.

Hence, to conclude this section we should point out that, although Maruyama makes some rich and interesting broad suggestions as to how we might categorise Kita Ikki's social background, his own account of the *petite bourgeoisie* – as of fascism itself – is not convincing, for it is too unmediatedly economic. In other words, we cannot easily read off from Kita's being of a first-fraction-style *petit bourgeois* background that he therefore is, one, *merely* a member of the 'pseudo-intelligentsia' and, two, *automatically* possessed of a predilection for fascism. On a more positive note, Maruyama makes a compelling, if sometimes inadvertent, case for the argument that subtle class analysis matters. Let us now explore further Maruyama's ideas on fascism and how he theorises this and categorises Kita.

'Radical Fascism' versus the 'Completed Form of Fascism'?

In *Thought and Behaviour*, Maruyama distinguishes between 'radical fascism' (what he calls 'fascism-from-below' or fascism as a movement) and 'a completed form of fascism' ('fascism-from-above' or fascism in the governing structure or as a regime) – the latter allegedly occurring when Japan turned into a 'fully fascist polity' in the wake of the crackdown on the February 26th Incident (1969: 71). This is a pivotal strand within Maruyama's musings on 'Japanese fascism'. So, is this distinction successful? In addition, which was Kita? A radical fascist or a completed fascist? One from below or from above? Is this split sustainable – both regarding Kita and in general? To answer these questions, we provide a relatively brief presentation of the most important points made in Section VI of Maruyama's 'Ideology and Dynamics' essay entitled 'The Historical Development of Japanese Fascism', also corroborated with a combination of references to 'radical fascism' and the like from other sections of the essay.

Maruyama argues that the most distinguishing feature of Japanese fascism is that it occurred not "in the form of a fascist revolution with a mass organization occupying the State apparatus from outside the administration". Rather, fascism in Japan took place by means of "the gradual maturing of a fascist structure within the State, effected by the established political forces of the military, the bureaucracy, and the political parties" (Maruyama 1969: 65).

Having argued thus, Maruyama adds that this should not be understood as detracting from the historic influence of 'radical fascism' itself – not least because: "The trend towards fascism in the lower strata of society and the spasmodic outbursts of the radical fascist movement were a continual stimulus to the advance of fascism from above." There was for him, then, an *organic or insidiously dialectical connection* between the growth of fascism from above on one side and the more radical fascism developing from below on the other. As the social crisis in early-1930s Japan escalated, various incidents erupted. Maruyama points to a number of attempted assassinations, *coups* or *putsches* from 1931 onwards that both scarred Japanese society and pushed it towards fascism.

The first major attempted *coup* was the so-called Sangatsu jiken (March Incident). This was planned for March 1931 by Hashimoto Kingorō and the Sakurakai based in the imperial Japanese army. It was also supported by Ōkawa Shūmei (another famous Japanese ultra-nationalist). The plan envisaged a *coup* at home prompting military action abroad. Such far-right activity in the army helped spark the Manchurian Incident, which then provoked the October Incident (Jūgatsu jiken). “[A]t about the same time the movement towards fascism from within the established political parties also became marked in the movement of the Home Minister, Mr. Adachi [Kenzō], for a coalition cabinet” (Maruyama 1969: 65; my addition in square brackets).

The above is just one instance of the procedure of the *slow advance* of ‘fascism’, as Maruyama sees things. I do not treat here his rather broadly painted political-historical arguments (see pp. 65-83), yet this account is suggestive of the weaknesses of his comparative framework that go to the heart of the distinction between fascism-from-above and fascism-from-below. On the one hand, Maruyama wishes to identify Japan as having been fascist, yet on the other, he sees important differences between, first, the Japanese case and, second, the Italian and the German cases, with nothing that unites them *qua* overarching concept of ‘fascism’. The German and the Italian cases, for him, are pure instances of fascism-from-below, involving specific fascist *coups* or mass-organised ‘revolutions’ (see Maruyama 1969: 52). However, given the factor of Maruyama’s slow ‘fascization’-from-above, the point at which a military junta is different from an authoritarian conservative establishment on the one (softer) hand and from fascism on the (far-harder) other becomes occluded in Maruyama’s account. Such distinctions in Maruyama all seem to slide into a flat sameness: with authoritarian conservatism, militarism and fascism all blending indissociably together. While reality is uneven and dynamic, nonetheless something still seems untoward in Maruyama’s analysis when such distinctions become so blurred and porous. Overlaps there may be, but as for some all-homogenising sameness on Japan’s hard to far right, that is not convincing.

Let us focus on the distinction between fascism from above and that from below and look for instances where Maruyama expounds what these are: to help clarify where the crux of the problem lies. After that, I shall see if these ideas from Maruyama apply to Kita.

First, then, a quote from Maruyama from Section IV:

What mainly characterizes the formation of the Japanese radical fascist movement from the Blood Pledge Corps Incident until the February Incident is that until the very last its practical managers had no mass organization and showed no particular zeal for organizing the masses. Rather they made it from first to last a movement of a limited number of patriots. (Maruyama 1969: 52)

Thus, effectively, this elitism among patriots or radical nationalists tended to block off the success of 'radical fascism' from below, which Maruyama is implicitly also defining as meaning, in a sense, precisely the 'mass movement'. However, if the mass movement was weak or little in evidence, how was it even fascism? Further, how did it come to so influence fascism-from-above? How possibly could the radical fascists have had such purchase and influence, according to Maruyama?

Yet, leaving these questions pending for the moment, let us continue Maruyama's exposition: Fascism in Japan developed as "the visionary idealism of a minority" (Maruyama 1969: 52) and, as such, it came to possess another specific characteristic, *viz.* "its extreme fantasy, abstraction, and lack of plan", taking on a "mythological optimism" that ensured that, by means of some kind of a destructive *via negativa*, a positive way forward would inevitably and automatically become clear (Maruyama 1969: 53).

Maruyama cites various concrete instances that need not concern us here, but they do tell us how fantastical and without plan those who planned the uprisings actually were. Our example will be limited to the famous priest and radical rightist Inoue

Nisshō¹³¹ who seemed to sum this spirit up during his trial (for the role he played in the Blood Pledge Corps Incident): “It is more correct to say that I have no systematized ideas. I transcend reason and act completely upon intuition” (Maruyama 1969: 53).

Apart from reminding us of distinctly East Asian Ōyōmei predilections, what this indicates is that ‘radical fascism’ in Japan appears to have been more mystical, idealist, and fantastical and less planned or specifically organised as a mass movement. It might even be seen to be more religious and moralistic in tone (with Confucian and Buddhist nostrums being commonly articulated within the movement). If this is so, one could even say that traditional moral and religious ideas might have led the political movement of radical fascism in Japan away from a sufficient degree of realism, even to the extent of preventing its ultimate success in capturing the state. Put otherwise, one might say there were limitations in the degree to which Japanese ultra-nationalism had been unremittingly *modernised*. A still further way of putting this is that there was a limitation in the degree to which what Maruyama terms ‘Japanese fascism’ had become or can actually be termed ‘radically fascist’.

In this regard, what Maruyama calls the radical *fascist* movement in Japan looks more like a relatively limited updating of the traditional ultra-nationalism of the Genyōsha or the Kokuryūkai – at most, strongly authoritarian and militaristic in a more or less modernising way, albeit with *no mass movement* on the scale and organisational prowess of the Nazis or Mussolini’s fascists. In short, though the levels of the involvement of the military had certainly increased significantly, no complete or radical break with more traditional forms of Japanese ultra-nationalism, nor with more establishment forms of politics, had ultimately occurred. The only real conclusion here is that this constitutes a failure of *Japanese fascism itself*. This is not easily remediated by the kind of *deus ex machina* that appears in the form of Maruyama’s idea of ‘fascism-from-above’. Thus, to be rigorous, it is the failure of fascism *itself* in Japan that should be Maruyama’s conclusion here. But he seems not to want to countenance this.

¹³¹ On Inoue, see Stephen Large (2001).

Let us approach this in another way. Maruyama himself points to the more traditionalistic quality to the Japanese 'radical fascist' movement, too. As he puts it:

This point also marks a clear difference between fascism in Japan and Germany. As a result of the strong survival in its ideology of a medieval Bakumatsu patriotism of the type employed by Kumoi Tatsuo, this sort of patriotism came to appear in the concrete fascist movement as well. Democracy was flatly rejected by Japanese fascism, but not by the Nazis. (Maruyama 1969: 56)

Maruyama then proceeds essentially to point to how Nazism was a doctrine of and for the masses that assumed the occurrence of a bourgeois revolution in the German context, but effectively not in Japan (ibid: 57). For this, Maruyama cites Hitler and *Mein Kampf*, it being stated there that "the previous Pan-Germanism was splendid as an ideology but failed because it did not possess a mass organization" (ibid).

All the above leads Maruyama to conclude: "The differences in the degree to which these were held in Japan, however, are so marked as to amount to qualitative differences" (ibid). If these are indeed *qualitative differences*, what exactly binds German and Japanese 'fascisms' together, such that they can both indeed be called fascism? What, therefore, Maruyama needs to demonstrate is that there can be some definitive connecting thread between fascism in Japan on the one hand and fascism in Italy and Germany on the other – and that, moreover, there exists something *between* fascism-from-above and fascism-from-below that knits these two streams together as both being species of *fascism* as a generic concept and not merely two rather different sets of, in his own words, 'qualitatively different' phenomena. Maruyama does not deliver a persuasive account here. To repeat, *if* these types of fascism are so qualitatively different, then either Maruyama must somehow make a case for overarching unity (there is no argument for this in *Thought and Behaviour*) in relation to the *different strands* of fascism he analyses, or, in the absence of such an argument – or of any decent argument being presented or being presentable in principle – he must surely drop usage of the term 'fascist' in application to Japan. This latter line is what I think is required and now we can proceed to make this case stronger by applying Maruyama's analysis to Kita Ikki.

Was Kita Ikki a 'Fascist-from-Above' or One from Below? Kōdō-ha or Tōsei-ha? A 'Radical Fascist' or a 'Completed Fascist'?

Aside from the matter of whether Maruyama's concept of 'radical fascism' as used in *Thought and Behaviour* is coherent (see above),¹³² there is the small matter of whether the so-called 'ideological (fore)father of Japanese fascism' himself can even be said to be a 'radical fascist' or 'fascist-from-below'. It is this issue we plan to clarify here.

In the fourth page of references to Kita Ikki in 'Ideology and Dynamics' (Maruyama 1969: 42), Maruyama argues very clearly that Kita seems to have a concrete set of more or less coherent plans, as adumbrated in his third political book or *Outline Plan*. Maruyama also calls Kita's ideas "an expression of pure centralized authoritarianism" (ibid). Furthermore, he highlights how the officers leading the February 26th Incident "unanimously denied" in court that this uprising was aimed at realising Kita's *Outline Plan*. Instead, they described their orientation similarly to Inoue Nisshō as indicated above: mystically, with a strong vein of idealism and lacking a plan, as Maruyama argued earlier. The problem for Maruyama, however, is that, if Kita *had a plan* and the mystical 'radical fascists' did not or had only very vague ones, then how is it coherent to place Kita as one of the so-called 'radical fascists' or Kōdō-ha?

Incidentally, Maruyama himself problematised the crude distinction¹³³ between Kōdō-ha and Tōsei-ha (Maruyama 1969: 66). Yet, curiously, as regards the February Incident (to which, as Maruyama argues, Kita had little connection; ibid: 68) Kita Ikki has often been misunderstood as a member of the Kōdō-ha – as a 'radical fascist' or fascist-from-below. Now, although he had something resembling a plan (his last political book, which finds deep roots in his early imperial-expansionist pro-war

¹³² To sum up, was it a mass movement or merely a set of intuition-fuelled hot-headed idealists without a plan? Were there indeed qualitative differences between Japanese fascism and Germano-Italian fascisms? And if so, what bridged them such that both sets might be encompassed under *the same concept of fascism*? Finally, were the radical fascists even acting *from below*? Right-wing *petit bourgeois* demi-elites as they were, they appear to issue *from-the-middle* – thus, neither above nor below.

¹³³ Still now in common use – despite the brilliant demolition carried out by James B. Crowley as far back ago as 1962.

articles we have critically examined herein), Kita was an elitist and did not attempt to organise a mass movement. These facts may lead in the direction of seeing him either as an inconsistent ‘radical fascist’ or as having Tōsei-ha or, in Maruyama’s terms, fascism-from-above-like predilections, alongside his association, via his disciple Nishida Mitsugi, with the young officers.

Yet Kita Ikki, arguably, is a case of *both-and* as well as, simply, *neither-nor*. It is this hybridic and eclectic quality that marks Kita and many other Japanese ultra-nationalists as being decisively different from European *fascists*, in my view. The fact of distinctions being unclear and nebulous like this is a quintessential feature of a not sufficiently ‘modern’-mass-oriented-*fascist* style of ultra-nationalism. In short, there is something missing when it comes to any distinctly mass democracy-smashing and truly coldly strategic or hardened far-right aspect to Kita, as well as to various other so-called ‘Japanese fascists’. Kita blended morality, religion and politics; ultra-nationalism and ‘fascist ideas’ (whatever one of those is); a statist centralism and an agrarian and anti-bureaucratic quality; and an imperialist and an anti-imperialist aspect, too. It is this *compromising quality* – or one insufficiently breaking beyond or lacking the requisite fully revolutionary aspect – that seems to sum up the kind of middling, eclectic mind of a right-wing *petit bourgeois*, in the politico-economic sense, that Kita Ikki undoubtedly was. And, *ipso facto*, no fascist.¹³⁴

Why might one call Kita Ikki to some degree a Tōsei-ha-like figure? To argue this, one needs to explain a little of what the Tōsei-ha were about. In ‘Japanese Army Factionalism in the Early 1930s’ (1962), Crowley cited three points that identify the Control Group, as Crowley calls this ‘faction’: first, the economic planning aspect – planning for total mobilisation in times of war, with its emphasis on the modernisation

¹³⁴ Far right and ultra-nationalist, yes. A fully modern fascist organising – or preparatorily *aiming* to organise – a surging mass movement, no. *Contra* George Wilson, who sees Kita as at odds with the aims of Japan’s traditional ultra-nationalists (1969:49-50), I think Kita could be more productively compared and contrasted with these traditional ultra-nationalists, with the Genyōsha and the Kokuryūkai (I made a limited attempt in chapter 3). For interesting comment on possible connections between Kita Ikki and Japan’s ultra-nationalists, see Matsumoto Kenichi (1970). Similarly, international far-right comparisons offer themselves. I try this pathway in the concluding chapter.

of equipment and on widespread mechanisation; second, an orientation on the ‘German School’ in the War Ministry that, in terms of its ideas and actual plans for modernisation, had its origins in the late 1920s general mobilisation plan and the associated plan for national defence; and third, the group’s tendency to wish to extirpate regionalism and hanbatsu (former Tokugawa domain) factionalism and deepen the on-going processes of professionalisation focusing on performance and ability, not (or not overweeningly) clan background or social origins. One more point is relevant: Opposing the reckless desire on the part of the Kōdō-ha to embark on war with the Soviet Union, it was a trademark of the Control Group that they only considered an outbreak of war with the USSR as a possibility once full plans for national mobilisation were well underway.

There is no doubt that Kita was a kind of moderniser, in a limited number of respects. He was an evolutionary thinker, saw his species of statist socialism as scientific and rational, critiqued the outdated notions in Japan’s kokutairon (bansei ikkei) and generally updated, or simply dispensed with, various old or outdated ideas. To this extent, Kita was also a centraliser, since the modern state needed to be centralised – not least in order to wage war, which Kita saw as inevitable and to be embraced. All these aspects chime profoundly, not with the radical idealists and traditionalists in the Kōdō-ha (Imperial Way Faction), but with the Tōsei-ha (Control Group). Even Kita’s plans in his book for a *coup*, and then a reorganisation cabinet established under martial law, are examples of Kita having a plan to transform Japan in a number of forthright ways, including militarily and imperialistically occupying lands in order to strengthen the Japanese imperial government – all quite unlike Inoue Nisshō, whose court-room paeon of praise to intuition and spontaneity is quoted above.

In addition, there is the small matter of what Maruyama calls *shōshō hikkin*: ‘accepting the absolute authority of the Emperor and submitting humbly to his wishes’ (Maruyama 1969: 69; see also the asterisked note). Such a reverential attitude summed up the mentality *par excellence* of the Kōdō-ha, purportedly quite different from the Control Group. Not only was Kita Ikki ‘relatively’ rational (at times), critiquing the mythological proclivities of the Kōdō-ha, but Kita is also famous for not necessarily

considering the emperor as having the last word on everything, with his even refusing to raise a banzai to the emperor before Kita's execution in 1937 (for, at best, a peripheral role in the February Mutiny of 1936). Against *shōshō hikkin*, Kita believed in loyalty in a more modern (and ancient Chinese) constitutional sense, with his refusing to see the emperor as infallible.

Even Kita's propensity for a *coup d'état* may be seen as working from above, in one sense, though this is not how Maruyama Masao saw matters: for him, this was a radical strategy *from below*. But is it really such? Elsewhere, Kita called this strategy of the *coup d'état* as borrowing the sword of rebellion from the waist of the ruler. Thus, a *coup* involves deployment of the present establishment's military, turning that weapon to the leader's (or leaders') own ends in bringing down the current government. Even the radical young officers always looked up to Mazaki Jinzaburō (one-time Inspector General of Military Education) or Araki Sadao (War Minister in the Inukai and Saitō Cabinets) as their *Kōdō-ha* leaders who would guide and lead the nation from high-above in the wake of any *coup* (Crowley 1962; Maruyama 1969).

Hence, whether Kita is a fascist-from-above or one from below is not easy to determine, even following Maruyama's own terms and apparent logic. Kita, perhaps, is a 'fascist' from the *petit bourgeois* middle – in short, neither from above (the conservative establishment) nor from below (a radical revolt of the organised masses), albeit there is arguably something of the 'belowest' (or *Lumpenproletarian*) about him at times. Thus, there are various inconsistencies within Maruyama's argument, yet ultimately, his analysis is unpersuasive regarding Japan having become a fascist state and Kita having ever been a fascist.

In Conclusion: Was Kita ever actually a Fascist?

This chapter has examined issues relating to Kita being an ultra-nationalist and Maruyama's criteria for labelling Kita a fascist. Maruyama's discussion highlights several strong motifs that firmly support the notion that Kita Ikki was a rightist-ultra-nationalist, not least in terms of Kita's profound commitment to expansionism,

Japanese imperialism and his attachment to the *coup d'état*. While this might make Kita Ikki a militarist ultra-nationalist, why also a fascist? If we define fascism, as many Marxists do, as requiring the involvement of a reactionary mass movement (or for a fascist to be oriented on *building* one), it is clear why Kita is not a fascist in this sense. Furthermore, he never engaged in mass propaganda, but always confined himself to working in a small group as a self-selecting member of Japanese ultra-nationalist elites. Even the strategy of mobilising parts of the army involved letting Nishida Mitsugi organise the young officers (see Hori 1995). No engagement directly among rank-and-file soldiers, or rank-and-file workers, is ever considered important by Kita. And these are basic pre-conditions.

Kita lacked any fully-radical mode of far-right modernisation and mobilisation at all – with their requisite orientation on smashing the organs of mass democracy. Hence, in Maruyama's terms, Kita might be seen as half-fascist-from-below and half-fascist-from-above. However, the argument herein concludes that such terms are not cogent. If, moreover, as James B. Crowley indicates in an important footnote, politicians like Nagata Tetsuzan and Hayashi Senjūrō were architects of fascism-from-above within the ranks of the military establishment, “it is ironic that both men had exerted a moderating influence during the Minobe crisis” (1962: 320) – that is, concerning Tokyo University Professor Minobe Tatsukichi's notion of the emperor as the highest organ of the state being seen by ultra-nationalist hotheads as, suddenly in 1935, an act of *lèse-majesté*.

Using Maruyama's own criteria for Kita to be a fascist, the charge of fascism is neither convincing nor entirely coherent.

The second point relates to Kita being a *petit bourgeois*. There seems no doubt that Kita was of the (right-wing) *petite bourgeoisie* and Maruyama illustrates this in a credible way in terms of the criteria he sets out. My attempt to further nuance the criteria around the term makes for a less reductive argument: Kita can be of the right-wing *petite bourgeoisie*, while not necessarily being seen as a fascist. Yet Maruyama

did not even stage the argument that Kita was of the *petite bourgeoisie* – clearly an omission of some significance, given his claim Kita was *petit bourgeois thus a fascist*.

A critical point relates to a quote from Maruyama: “the fascist movement from below was completely absorbed into totalitarian transformation from above” (Maruyama 1969: 72). While it is true that the Control Group were only a little less militaristic than the Imperial Way Faction, to argue that the former – which slowly and legally planned all their actions at elite levels – was somehow *deploying or absorbing radical fascism* is surely to stretch the meaning of fascism much too far, even on Maruyama’s terms. On this definition, fascism seems to mean little more than it was a terrible and brutal regime or that the speaker using this as an epithet or an insult *disapproves of* a regime’s authoritarianism, viciousness and violence. There is no denying both the pre-war Japanese state *and Kita’s* intended *violence*, both planned and actual. Yet the term ‘fascism’ must mean something more definite than this. Kita, no matter how reactionary he may have been, was *not a species of reactionary oriented towards building a mass movement from below*, from the (mass) middle or even from what one might call a murder of the lowest¹³⁵ – which, once strong enough, would then be used to smash or suitably radically undermine (by deploying forms of mass, often street or paramilitary, violence) the modern democratic forms of Japanese political life: gutting or bypassing parliaments; eliminating trade unions and trade unionists; picking off Marxist organisations and Marxists; and nixing all-or-most other civic freedoms.

In this way, and there is no comparison, Kita was never a fascist. As to whether, *under other circumstances*, he might have become so or whether, ideologically, he might be seen as a possible precursor directing others, intentionally or otherwise, on a path towards fascism – that is, as leading the way towards some species of *ideological proto-fascism* – these are different and potentially fruitful questions. A useful lead to

¹³⁵ On analogy with a murder of crows.

follow lies in something Maruyama makes (in a quote cited above): an implicit comparison of Nazism – yet now substituting in Kita – with Pan-Germanism.¹³⁶

Another way forward would be to examine where Kita lies on the so-called F scale (indicating the degree of potential for ‘fascism’ or ‘authoritarianism’ in an individual) as classically developed by Adorno *et al.* (1950). Yet it is not clear if that scale is as applicable to adjudicating fascist *leadership* or proximity to such, which is essentially what we are dealing with when we ask this question of Kita Ikki. It can well be asked whether Kita is more or less distant from what I term the zone of proximal precursorship to fascism. If the ‘poet, seducer and preacher of war’ (Hughes-Hallett 2013) as well as irredentist at Fiume Gabriele D’Annunzio is regarded as highly proximal and even arguably shades into areas close to fully-blown activist fascism, then Kita is clearly rather less proximal in his *precursorship* to fascism (if we might put things this way) than D’Annunzio. Yet there are similarities that exist between Kita and D’Annunzio – not least in their overarching stress on war as a strategy – albeit Kita is rather less grandiose, extreme, prolific in his ultra-nationalist writings or violent in his *actions* (see Hughes-Hallett 2013; Ledeen 2002).

The first point that such a treatment of Kita as something *approaching* an ideological proto-fascist would have to raise would be his arch-reactionary notion of Japan as a ‘proletarian nation’. In Italy, such ideas took root and helped give birth to D’Annunzio/Mussolini’s black shirts. In Japan, the idea was conceptualised earlier, but

¹³⁶ Another way of assessing whether something or someone is fascist that has held sway in academia in recent decades is the so-called ‘fascist minimum’ approach (Eatwell 1996; Payne 1980; Nolte 1968). This tends to treat fascism largely as an ideology. Thus, Nolte stipulates (Payne 1980: 5-6): “antimarxism, antiliberalism, anticonservatism, the leadership principle, a party army, the aim of totalitarianism”. Sternhell’s is even shorter (Eatwell 1996: 306): “nationalism + socialism = fascism” – taken from ‘national syndicalist’ Georges Valois (mixing Sorel’s revolutionary syndicalism and Charles Maurras’s integral nationalism). The problems with this – *idealist one-sidedness and reductionism* – seem clear: if someone merely *states* they are anti-Marxist, against liberalism, anti-conservative, believe in the all-powerful-leader, assert the need for a party army and totalitarianism, is that enough to capture what is meant by ‘fascist’? Especially if they just sat around merely mouthing such nostrums. Even more so for the Valois quote. Much is missing here and that something is, one, the mass reactionary praxis I allude to in the main text, and, two, the salient importance of exposition, detail and nuance. Thus, *any methodological minimums* are dangerously reductionist. With fascism, they end up seriously underestimating it or, even worse, taking fascists at their often slippery, silver-tongued, whitewashing word.

was still-born.¹³⁷ Yet the point that Japan was not fascist should never be used to detract from just how bad Japan's 1930s bureaucrat- and military-led regime was: the people of Korea, China and other East Asian states were all put through appalling suffering on account of Japanese imperialism, ultra-nationalism and militarism, albeit this cannot be used, as it often is, to legitimise or whitewash the Western colonialism that systematically preceded, helped engender *and* fostered it.

If we conclude that neither the political system nor Kita were fascist in pre-war Japan, then we *might venture* they were *not* blood-brothers-in-arms with their Italian and German counterparts – albeit a family resemblance certainly existed (within the 'family' of the far right). If not such brothers, then perhaps *cousins* would be an apt analogy. In helping demonstrate these *undoubted family resemblances*, Maruyama's work proves of lasting value, even though its express conclusions seem often rather questionable. Kita was 'forefather' to a never fully developed 'fascism': neither in himself nor in pre-war Japanese governance. That a more diffuse, yet exceptionally powerful, phenomenon like ultra-nationalism indeed pervaded the Japanese archipelago – whether spatially, militarily, politically, aesthetico-philosophically or in still other ways during the 1930s-1940s – is absolutely undeniable, albeit I agree with Maruyama when he admits that this was something *qualitatively different* from Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. Perhaps a better name needs to be found for it, albeit that name would not include 'fascism'. In this interregnum between concepts, this thesis deploys 'ultra-nationalism' (*chōkokkashugi*).

¹³⁷ The point is: Kita's later ideas also never went further than his earlier excesses. If he was an 'ideological fascist' (even if such one-sidedly idealist construals of 'fascism' are valid) in the 1920s or 1930s, then, he was *ipso facto* similarly 'fascist' in 1903-06 – a surely absurd position to hold.

Chapter 9. Conclusion: Kita Summed Up – in Context of European Ultra-nationalisms and Fascism

Recapitulating the Thesis' Main Argument

This thesis has examined the early political thought of Kita Ikki – beginning from claims made, especially within English language scholarly literatures, that Kita was a socialist. A central focus of this thesis, therefore, relates to the strength of this assertion. Embedded in such complex claims, however, are a variety of notions of socialism hitherto under-theorised in that scholarly literature on Kita generally – including socialisms, historico-conceptually speaking, that straddle the political spectrum from far left to far right. The political spectrum¹³⁸ was the subject under discussion in chapter 2 herein – with various overlapping and separate socialisms in Meiji Japan treated in chapter 4. Chapter 3 focused on the evident fact that rebellion is not the province only of the left in Japan but also relates to Kita's complex, underexamined Sino-Japanese heritage ideologically. Summatively put, he surely belongs to Japan's Eclectic school and represents, moreover, an irrationalist, hot-headed strain of Ōyōmei. Hence the pertinence of left and far right to the examination of Kita's *socialism* or otherwise – and, if so, how exactly? – has been afforded its due weight and gravity throughout this thesis.

Consequently, the analysis herein has been self-consciously focused on whether Kita can be seen as a national or state socialist (he frequently identified himself thus, as has been repeatedly observed in this thesis) and hence as *one very particular kind of socialist*. Thus, Kita's rebellion or socialism has needed examining as much in relation to socialisms on the right to far right of the political-ideological spectrum as in relation to ones on the left or 'left-of-centre', in the ambiguous, commonly used journalistic terminology¹³⁹ – as was clear from the need in chapter 4 to broach the far-right

¹³⁸ This gives examples beyond Japan, as comparability across global capitalist modernity is asserted as an express proposition *within* this thesis (see chapter 1).

¹³⁹ This term is usually deployed with the rhetorical aim of identifying the centre with the left – or the left *as centrist*. This thesis' political scale challenges this. Hence my use of 'left-of-centre' in scare-quotes here.

expansionist predilections within Japanese socialist history as much as the (rarely) leftist and (more often) centrist strains. As this thesis indicates, what has been deemed 'socialist and thus leftist' in Japan, as elsewhere, is often not clearly such at all. Hence the attempt to resolve this matter via an important delineation of the pivotal ideological divide between *left* and what is *not left* – by means of the foundational split between socialism-from-below and socialism-from-above, as advanced in chapter 1.

Undoubtedly, the thesis' attempts to apply this split to the most complex and (in)famous case of ultra-nationalist socialism in pre-Second World War Japan (in the shape of Kita) – and thus to clarify these issues in relation to Japanese intellectual and political history more generally – will be unlikely to bring resolution to this matter, as ideas and arguments in this field are hugely contested. Yet what this thesis aims to ensure, at the very least, is that straightforward deployment of the term 'socialism' as 'obviously of the left' should no longer be possible – whether in Japan or elsewhere. This essential point is evidently as much to target the simple identification of all socialisms with leftism – which occurs *in some left-oriented academic and other discourse* – as it has in view simplistic and egregious critiques of left-wing thought (e.g., via attempts to identify it with Hitlerite National Socialism; or 'far-left' positions with 'totalitarianism'¹⁴⁰) launched from centre, 'centre-right' or right-wing academic entrenchments.

Given that the careful reading in this thesis firmly suggests ultra-nationalist tendencies manifest themselves in Kita's very early work of 1903 (based upon various critico-hermeneutical-style analyses offered for the first time; see chapter 5), this only reinforces the insight that taking a more thorough look at Kita's early writings has

¹⁴⁰ 'Totalitarianism' as a concept was first widely deployed by Italian Fascists like Mussolini and by the far-right political philosopher, Carl Schmitt, in the early 1920s. While the concept of 'totalitario' was originally explicitly used by Giovanni Amendola to criticise the forced imposition of lists of Fascist-supported candidates in elections in Sanza in southern Italy with no possibility of other lists to be put forward (Bongiovanni 2005), Fascist political philosopher Giovanni Gentile had already reached proto-articulations of his own *later* expositions of 'totalitarianism' (which followed in 1928 – in the wake of Mussolini's own *ad hoc* co-option of the term from Amendola, much like Bismarck earlier accepted the 'state socialist' epithet applied to him). Gentile had effectively already outlined the substance of 'totalitarianism' in *The Reform of Education* (1923).

helped – and when deployed going forward will further help – disentangle what has been regarded as the knotted threads (the so-called ‘enigma’; Szpilman 2002) of Kita’s main ideological propensities. Accordingly, it highlights how he deploys a distinct ideology of socialism in a *specifically far-rightist* manner.

In chapter 1, it was argued that comparison across (politically distinct yet broadly capitalist) cultures is viable, albeit only carefully and in a subtly mediated universal manner – meaning that differences as well as similarities of geo-historical tradition are considered important herein. In this account, transnational intertwining and political cross-feeds are endemic. Such an emphasis suffuses this thesis, but manifests prominently in chapters 3 and 4. As indicated briefly above, Western-derived ideas are seen to commingle with Eastern thought in overlapping, manifold ways, albeit ways in which ideological distinctions of a left-right nature are still ultimately discernible. I have aimed to show *how* this is so herein with Kita as the main exemplar. The intended nuance and subtlety deployed – always based in careful engagement with both Japanese (language and people) and the Sino-Japanese context, as well as similarly for Europe and America – enable the thesis to spotlight how Kita, alongside other Japanese, can be placed on a variegated, mediated universal political spectrum, hence one that remains flexible and open-ended. Consequently, instead of making a move that rules out cross-cultural or transnational political comparison, this thesis embraces its inevitability. In view of this and with due care taken when handling cross-cultural complexities, the main thrust of any specific politics is in principle identifiable – especially with this thesis’ focus on inclusion and exclusion, plus the other hermeneutic tools deployed herein.

Accordingly, the thesis has indicated how Kita blended Sino-Japanese traditions with more Western-derived ideologies in *one main direction* (on, largely, the far right) and Kōtoku, for example, *in quite another* (on, unevenly, the left and centre of the spectrum). This can be applied more generally, since it implies taking such *mélanges* of ideas seriously, indicating a political significance that is wider than merely *for their own culture* – whatever that means, given the always already synthesised and synthesising, mutually borrowed and borrowing nature especially of our global yet

complexly furrowed modernity, with the late Meiji era constituting simply an earlier version of the syncretic, hybrid or eclectic syntheses now so prevalent in the 21st century.

Closing Out on the Vexed Question of Kita, Fascism and Socialism, plus Issues of Left and Right

While Kita was found to be largely on the far right of the political spectrum in my exposition of themes in his texts, this thesis concludes that even the later Kita cannot be regarded as a fascist (see chapter 8). Kita was no fascist in his early work, which is unsurprising as even Kita's ultra-nationalist-imperialist-pro-war writings entirely precede developments in European practical-political fascism by well over a decade. This is not the only reason for coming to such a conclusion as to Kita's ideological proclivities. It reflects the fact that, according to the main body of this thesis, Kita does not orient toward *civil society mass mobilisation* – whether from the middle (say, the *petite bourgeoisie*) or from what I identify as the belowest (e.g., the *Lumpenproletariat*) in society, much less from sections forming part of the organised, internationalist working class: what limited numbers of such there were, whether in late Meiji or right up till Taishō and Shōwa in the 1920s and beyond.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ See chapter 8 for more on mobilisation, modern mass democracy and its smashing or radical suppression, which in fact is self-consciously aimed at, in my view, the still too abstract work of interesting Japanese theorists of Japanese fascism like Furuya Tetsuo (see Ethan Mark's valuable discussion of Furuya in Yoshimi 2016). While I cannot do justice to important work by Furuya here, the latter focuses on the importance of mobilisation and suppression both domestically and at Japan's imperial outposts abroad (i.e., at the metropole and the periphery, to use the commonly-used, development-studies terminology). While a truly original argument, I think it fails because, first, Japanese parliamentary democracy was not entirely suppressed during the 1930s-1940s. Second, because, while national-liberationist movements from the periphery were pivotal in defeating Japanese military imperialism, in none of these sites in the periphery had *modern mass-democratic institutions* been established. *Ergo*, there was no formal democracy to smash. Hence, Japan's violence at the peripheries cannot be seen as *fascist*, either. Thus, home or away, Japan was violently-oppressive, but not fascist: using that term, then, I see as a *category error*. As for Yoshimi (2016), it seems to me he outlines what this thesis terms a rather diffuse ultra-nationalism, albeit one very virulent and powerful for all that, among different social layers living within the metropole as well as at the periphery. *Grassroots Fascism* is an important work, yet I think it proves the existence of *something like ultra-nationalism*, not any state- and modern mass-democracy-smashing *fascism*.

This proposition regarding mass mobilisation from civil society (and not state or top-down mobilisation, which has a different tenor, structure and significance) formed a crucial part of the argument offered in chapter 8. In this sense and given this lack of such mobilisation in his practical politics, Kita straightforwardly remained attached to strains of *traditional political elitism* more akin to that still present in such turn-of-the-century Japanese ultra-nationalist organisations as the Kokuryūkai. Such a strategy of action entailed practical-political work centring on only a few *confrères* in an elite political group of friends, who then all too often (e.g., in the Taishō era) vied for power, fell out and could not sufficiently unite, much less even consider (let alone organise) a mass party on Italian or German lines. This sums up one of *the pivotal differences* between Kita's politics and those of fascists like Mussolini and Hitler. Indeed, I showed earlier in this thesis just how much Kita shared ideologically with such forces as the Kokuryūkai and their ilk (see chapter 3), albeit with differences *vis-à-vis* the emperor.

Kita may, in 1920s Japan, have had a disciple (Nishida Mitsugi) who diligently spread his ideas among young officers, but the latter did not see Kita's writings as even necessarily pre-eminent on the far right, let alone as their *Mein Kampf*, as has been suggested, without any exposition, by various Japanese scholars (Maruyama 1969; Kuno 1956; Hori 1995). There is, for example, clearly no serious similitude between the Yūzonsha on one side and either Mussolini's Fasci di Combattimento or Hitler's NSDAP on the other – with Kita's small, elite club being on a quite different scale from the dynamic reactionary parties (and previously small, albeit very active sects) oriented on *drawing in masses of disgruntled ordinary people* during a growing socio-economic and political crisis.

Maruyama Masao's famous writings on 'Japanese fascism' (1969) were interrogated in chapter 8 to see if his ideas of fascism-from-above versus fascism-from-below pass muster when examined through the prism afforded by Kita's early work. However, even in Maruyama, such a distinction is not only somewhat difficult to disentangle (the 'from-aboveness' and the 'from belowness'), but this split creates a conceptual breach that Maruyama cannot ground in one single, overarching concept of *fascism*. Consequently, Occam's razor demands fascism must be understood as a *specific beast*

that gets conflated with other phenomena on the broad far right at our peril.¹⁴² As chapter 8 argues, this split cannot coherently be defended, even on Maruyama's terms. Hence his project for *such sorts of difference* in 'fascism' (essentially, establishment 'fascisms' versus mass-based reactionary civil society ones 'from below') therefore fails.

It might be countered: it is inconsistent to claim as acceptable an apparent expansion in the use of the terms 'socialist' and 'socialism',¹⁴³ while simultaneously wanting to strongly restrict wider employment of 'fascist' and 'fascism'. Yet such a criticism misses the disjunction in the two cases. Vast populations over the 19th, 20th and still now in the 21st century have variously laid claim to 'socialism'. 'Fascism', by contrast, was largely claimed as a (mass) ideology only from around 1920 till 1945. Despite limited exceptions, usage of this term has been systematically eschewed by vast masses of people. Accordingly, this thesis is not against the fact of *plurality* in the typology of fascism, but simply that, for the stated reasons, socialism and fascism must be given differential treatment, not least because *fascists* are well-known for wanting to proclaim (or obfuscate) their ideology as *on the left*. If someone calls themselves *fascist* nowadays, a fair idea is obtained as to where they stand ideologically (albeit not necessarily if *someone else* is called fascist). Historically and even now, if someone calls themselves a *socialist*, the term can be very opaque, as is evident in Japan (see chapter 4).

The Utility and Academic Applicability of the Thesis' Political Spectrum

The aimed-for nuance of this thesis' political scale (see chapter 2) is an attempt to *render explicit* salient differences on the political spectrum that should not be ignored, even where an ideology is commonly associated with only one limited tranche of the spectrum, but where the actual spread of the ideology's name is wider (or narrower)

¹⁴² Involving a complex mix of civil society mass mobilisation from the middle and the lowest – while, if it is to get into power, it receives support from establishment forces, too, as the Italian and German context show.

¹⁴³ This thesis' stance is only a *response to historical usage* by many and varying claimants to socialism.

than is currently understood. The claim is not that this is some dogmatically complete and definitive scale in all its details, but rather an indicative account seeing itself as shedding new light on various matters hitherto deemed ‘enigmatic’ as well as on a wide variety of thinkers’ positions, including those within Japanese intellectual and political history. I think it illumines both the left-right political scale as well as aspects of political ideology that do not fit more ‘normal’ political criteria nowadays. The scale – based on a commitment to subtle, granular criticality – is thus useful in challenging current thinking.¹⁴⁴

The broad intellectual thrust of this scale is something that will enable those who study politics to get a better grip on why hitherto fascism, ultra-nationalism and socialism in Japan, as elsewhere, have all too often proved conceptually elusive. And to do so without mobilising the problematic concept of ‘totalitarianism’.¹⁴⁵ The overall claim is that this political spectrum has fewer weaknesses and not only fits the facts of left and right better, but it also explains how thinker-activists like Kita can be far more plausibly understood than on competing political scales. Given the prevalent confusion hitherto, unbalanced ideas about ‘enigmas’ and ‘Japan being uniquely different’ have proliferated.

This thesis’ scale implies judgement regarding political differences *as well as* ideological overlap. On Freeden’s account (1996; 2003), ‘permeability’ pervades ideology. However, decisive differences on the scale are subtle yet also fundamental. Consequently, it will not do simply to stress permeability – no matter how far-reaching.

¹⁴⁴ Moreover, it implies that anarchism also appears *across* the left-centre-right spectrum, not simply ‘on the far left’. See below for why this matters.

¹⁴⁵ See note 140. While John Connelly (2010) states how the frame of totalitarianism fails to account for “development across space and time” and hence has “been dead for decades”, he spotlights how dissidents used ‘totalitarianism’ to critique *actual totalitarianism*. However, like the phrase ‘*omnipotent god*’, ‘totalitarianism’ is moot, making a monolith of certain states/regimes and missing how state and citizens interact dynamically (Ross Terrill 1968). This fetishises homogeneous and rigid totality thinking, albeit wholes are never totalitarian (Eagleton 1996). Using ‘totalitarianism’, moreover, entrenches our own political-existential passivity. Connelly values ‘totalitarianism’, highlighting dissident experience *against actual totalitarianism/tyranny*. Yet asserting harm derives from *total control* misses the *complex dialectical actuality* – possessed of *both extreme powers but also porosity and fragility* – of real and violent regimes. Lastly, ‘totalitarianism’ was largely a rhetorical weapon (of the stronger hegemon) in a cold war long since deceased.

Hence, there is a boundary where fascism ends and something else comes into view, even while still on the far right. The argument herein is that Kita occupies precisely such *ultra-nationalist* space.

Kita as Ultra-nationalist (in the sense proposed) and as in Apt Company with European fin-de-siècle Ultra-nationalists

This idea is illustrated below by comparing Kita with writers or political figures in France and Italy of the same time-frame and who appear to share common cause with him as regards their ultra-nationalist, but non-fascist (or sometimes *pre-fascist*), practical-political persuasion. One figure in particular, Gabriele D'Annunzio the ultra-nationalist 'poet-warrior' (Ledeen 2002: 58, 60, 62, 67) who held on to Fiume for 16 months with a rebellious unit of the Italian Royal Army plus assorted nationalists and irredentists, is interesting as a protean boundary case, yet *in this point of comparison* he is a more radical case of proto-fascism shading into quasi-fascism than Kita ever was, partly because he instigated and led a military rebellion (and Kita did not; he merely wrote about it).

D'Annunzio is argued herein to be an important liminal instance of fascism or how proto-fascism helped to light the way for Italian Fascism. Ultra-nationalism, national or statist socialism, Italian Fascism as well as National Socialism (or Nazism) all find their place on the far right, yet this thesis contends that *far from all* of these ideologies (or sub-strands thereof) are easily assigned to *fascism*. This fact (the *different shades* on the hard and far to the fascist far right) must be accounted for, even though some cases are hard to assign to one node on the scale than another, given Freedén's ever-salient caveats about permeability, strong unevenness or overlap. Unstable hybrid (*ultra-nationalist-to-fascist*) cases surely exist. D'Annunzio may fit such, but not Kita.

A clear tension exists between actual, full-blown fascist practice on the one hand (Mussolini's full Fascism and Hitler's extreme fascism) and its strongly resonant aesthetico-psychological roots – or the more individual pre-conditions for fascism's full development on the other (out of which D'Annunzio spun his quasi-fascistic artistic

death-cult and iconography; Hughes-Hallett 2013). While the latter concerns are fundamental to identifying how fascism developed *historically* in any given *individual case*, such psychological or cultural predispositions are insufficient to the story of *what fascism had to be like in order to assume its full shape* – as this manifests itself in a series of post-WWI practical-political activities on the part of de-mobilised military squads (the infamous *squadristi*). *Fascism as such* arose in the aftermath of WWI out of Italy's 'mutilated victory' – notwithstanding the complex origins embedded within strands of pre-fascist phenomena across parts of Europe prior to this period.

Kita Ikki can be found on the following far-right sub-spectrum: from a more diffusely far-right *ultra-nationalism* (Kita) to *pre- or quasi-fascism* (D'Annunzio) and then *full fascism* (Mussolini) with *extreme fascism* even further right (Hitler). Kita by comparison with D'Annunzio was a mere (diffusely) ultra-nationalist writer and observer of events using intimidation he farmed out largely to various thugs close to him in Taishō/Shōwa. Given the fact that this far less active level with much mere exposition of ideas is not where fascism ultimately resides – or rather, not *primarily* there – Kita falls short of such anti-democratic mass reactionary activity. D'Annunzio's agitation acted directly upon the masses, Kita's never did.

Such a perspective – that sees fascism as engaged crucially upon *mass reactionary activities* to suppress democracy and the vibrancy of civil society and which requires such suppression to be acted upon from within the most reactionary sections of that civil society – necessarily means that state action from above is, by itself, never sufficient to qualify as fascism. This mass perspective indicates why, for this thesis, Adorno *et al.*'s contribution to the debate over the F scale in their *The Authoritarian Personality* is too focused on individual personality traits, which is to limit the dimensions on which fascism most saliently works. While Adorno's *opus* identifies quite well *those who were more or less likely to be attracted to fascism* (1950), it still sidelined what fascism was as a mass activist political and social phenomenon.

Accordingly, we must not conflate fascism on one side with its (admittedly dangerous and disturbing) developmental pre-conditions on the other, as is common. Instead,

‘ultra-nationalism’ is a term that can be employed to designate this form of development *towards* fascism, which may not always end up *as* fascism – as the case of Kita attests.¹⁴⁶ Confusingly, as always – for no term in ordinary language is ever impeccably scientifically precise – ultra-nationalism, for some, exists arguably as (or within) fascism, too (see Maruyama 1969). This is because ‘ultra-nationalism’ is employed in at least three distinct ways: first, as a broad notion on/for the far right that includes all instances of hard to extreme far-right (including fascism itself); second, as a weaker or more diffuse case (than fascism) on the far right; and third, as does Maruyama, as co-extensive with ‘fascism’. The usage in this thesis repudiates this third definition, and deploys ‘ultra-nationalism’ in the second sense above – while it also recognises that ‘ultra-nationalism’ will naturally be commonly used as a catch-all or less specific term, as in the first sense.

In the more empirically expository chapters in this thesis (primarily chapters 5, 6 and 7, plus, in a more limited way, chapters 3, 4, and 8), a number of regular themes were pinpointed in Kita’s work. In order to identify what Kita was ideologically in the crucial 1903-1906 period via close readings of salient early texts, some comparison with a number of European instances sheds much light on both Kita’s thought and politics on the one hand but also on what are often seen (usually later) as the *precursors to fascism* that existed in France and Italy on the other.

Having re-capitulated the main arguments and ideas within this thesis as well as having offered some necessary conceptual clarifications, I thus turn now to focus on a comparison of Kita with cases of what I initially called here developmental pre-, proto- or quasi-fascism, but which is better termed *ultra-nationalism in the second sense above*. The problem consists in the simple fact that these cases are better described not *reading or anticipating forwards* – and calling something ‘fascist’ or even ‘pre-’;

¹⁴⁶ Faulkner *et al.* (2019) effectively call this *creeping fascism*. However, this mistakes what may be *antecedents* to fascism – the *hard right, right-wing populism* or even *ultra-nationalism* – with full fascism itself. Moreover, it speciously over-identifies all forms of Brexit, plus Trumpism, with fascism. While this thesis far from fully accedes to the analyses on the matter by Eatwell and Goodwin (2018), their work is, *in limited doses*, a salutary corrective to the all-too-excessive use of the term ‘fascism’ these days.

‘quasi-’ or ‘proto-fascist’, as this is technically quite anachronistic and hence somewhat ahistorical in nature (in the period of late Meiji with which this thesis is largely concerned) – but rather using ideas and concepts employed by historians and that were also furnished at the time (if possible or even applicable). These are likely to be somewhat more apt descriptors. Ultra-nationalism (or extreme nationalism or ‘hypernationalism’ – see Ledeen 2002) – in sense two given above – is one such term used of D’Annunzio, as well as of an array of French and Italian figures part of the *fin-de-siècle* rightist avant garde (Sznajder in Golomb and Wistrich 2003: 242; Hughes-Hallett 2013). It can soon be seen that to place Kita in this milieu is apt. First, however, a re-capitulation of some of Kita’s salient rightist themes.

I have argued for the existence of a number of salient themes in Kita, which indicate his ideas were not of the left but rather identify him as of the far right (see chapters 5, 6 and 7). These include Kita’s stress on the urgency of war with Russia as well as his wider war strategy; his racial views not only of Russians as ‘red-bearded barbarian Slavs’, but also of Jewish people as *anti-national people*; his statist (*non-laissez-faire*) version of social Darwinism, elitism and focus on heroism and genius rather than on ordinary workers or on the masses; his idea (instead of any focus on actual proletarian human beings) of a kind of poor or proletarian *nation* intimated at (in 1903) well before the Italian Nationalist Enrico Corradini treated this concept from about 1910 on; his anti-white imperialism and his affirmation of a Pan-Asianist expansionism onto the wider Asian continent with its trope of ‘peaceful emigration’ to Manchuria, Korea and Siberia (yet supported by ‘gunfire’ [hōka; Kita’s term]). These themes, *and more*, clearly resonate within far-right contexts across Europe.

Enrico Corradini in the Italian Nationalist political context developed the unequivocal notion of proletarian nationalism in December 1910 (e.g., Cunsolo 1993: 763; Lyttelton 1973). Before this, an aggressive Italian nationalism had come to prominence after the humiliating defeat for Italy in 1896 at Adowa, Ethiopia. Out of this wound suppurated the cause of the ANI (Italian Nationalist Association) that was eventually to furnish one stream *into* fascism in 1920s Italy. The concept of the *proletarian nation* was simply one staging post on the way to what has been termed the fascist synthesis (see

Sternhell 1994 [1989]: 8, 29, 31, 102, 106, 236, for example), although it should be obvious from the stance taken herein that this thesis contests the idea that the forms of socialism-from-above in general that informed fascism and the forms of a nationally-or-nationalistically-moving syndicalism in particular can be deemed *leftist*. Rather, libertarian anarchism, or more precisely anarcho-syndicalism moving towards nationalism (Roberts 1979), is a better way of describing that other strand within the roots of the Italian and French far right that wended its way into fascism as it finally manifested itself in 1919 and from the early 1920s, plus various non-leftist socialisms-from-above. The roots of such are complex and cannot be properly treated here, but suffice to say that both Proudhon and Bakunin had more influence on such Latin countries as France and Italy than Marx did, as well as the fact that they both advocated for forms of *nationalism* for far longer and in a rather different and more problematic way than did Marx (see Anderson 2010 on Marx; and Marshall 1993 on Proudhon and Bakunin).

Extending this comparison between Corradini and Kita, they both desired to build up lands for Italian and Japanese appropriation respectively.¹⁴⁷ Intriguingly, Corradini also combined his notion of proletarian nations with a certain kind of national socialism, too (Pagano 2004: 71, 74; see also Corradini 1911: 67). In a direct parallel with Kita's idea that socialism was 'like a religion to him', where socialism was always statist and nationalist, Corradini comments that 'national consciousness is conceived as a religious sentiment' (Pagano 2004: 71). Moreover, Corradini, resembling Kita, called for the unity of syndicalism (the most 'revolutionary' form of socialism, for Corradini) and his own *radical nationalism* (see Ernest Ialongo 2015: 237). Both Kita and Corradini also regarded their respective philosophies as fulfilling the earlier 'great revolutions' each country had gone through in the mid-19th century – the Meiji *ishin kakumei* and the *Risorgimento* (Ialongo 2015: 237). Moreover, both Kita and Corradini respond in similarly reactionary ways to Japanese and Italian military-political humiliation: Italy's at Adowa and Japan's at the hands of Russia, Germany and France in the Tripartite Intervention (*sangoku kanshō*) of 1895.

¹⁴⁷ For Corradini's imperial expansionism, see Pagano (2004: 69) and Corradini himself (1910 and 1913).

Corradini saw revolution as war, and war as the coming revolution, while Kita wielded the notion of the great racial and national wars as a reactionary equivalent of Marx's great proletarian uprising. Yet such ideas of racial or state war were then rife in the thought of various *fin-de-siècle* radical nationalists. D'Annunzio was one, and Futurist F.T. Marinetti, another.

This conclusion is clearly no place to offer a systematic exposition of the extent of the similarities between Kita, D'Annunzio, Marinetti, and figures in France like Barrès and Maurras – all clear figures on the far right, despite their all at some stage or another being *associated with* either the left or the radical left¹⁴⁸ or deploying the term socialism or national socialism. The famous far-right writer, parliamentarian and supporter of General Boulanger Maurice Barrès famously invoked 'national socialism' in his 1898 campaign, which was an attempt to unite anti-parliamentary far-right forces with anarchist elements among the previously leftist anti-parliamentarians (Soucy 1972: 33-34). This socialism was national and statist, and thus of the right, not the left. Within Barrès' national socialism was a nationalistic and power-hungry socialism-*from-above*, not any internationalist socialism-from-below – which Kita and Barrès both repudiated unequivocally.

Accordingly, anyone who first espoused internationalist socialism-from-below (as defined herein) and who then broke with this ideology was doing just that – *breaking with* socialism-from-below and taking up a very different position quite discontinuous with any leftism in this thesis' clarified sense. Another 'variety of classical Marxism' was not being created by such a break, as is rather arbitrarily presupposed by Gregor (1979). Thus, there is no evidence many socialists-from-below – in Japan or elsewhere

¹⁴⁸ Ledeen (2002) links D'Annunzio to Lenin, albeit this was more eclectic opportunism on D'Annunzio's part to maintain control of Fiume. Hughes-Hallett (2013) draws out more systematically how D'Annunzio despised ordinary people and was therefore a dyed-in-the-wool elitist-genius-superman willing to sacrifice ordinary Italians for wider 'grand national aims' and due to his wanton obsession with death. *In embryo*, Kita offered a similar pathway, yet with far less civil society-based mass mobilisation, in his statist-imperialist strategy of the final racial war between the 'white' and 'yellow' races.

– subsequently revoked their early stance to later join a fascist party. There were so few systematic Japanese socialists-from-below, with Kita far from one.

In terms of any early *non-Japanese* socialists fitting this mould, there exists – *seemingly* – Mussolini, who is frequently cited as emblematic of this purported ‘continuity’ between ‘left-wing socialism’ and fascism. Accordingly, comparing Kita and Mussolini promises further clarification.

Mussolini and Kita: Illustrating the Difference between Fascism and Ultra-nationalism (in the sense advanced herein)

While here any comparison between Mussolini and Kita cannot be systematically pursued, extended comment is apt. Crucially, even if Mussolini *was* either unequivocally, broadly or partly leftist in his early pre-fascist period, was it in fact the *leftist socialism* that led to fascism and his founding of a fascist party? No such cogent case has ever been argued, notwithstanding A. James Gregor (e.g., 1979) and Zeev Sternhell’s work (e.g., 1994). Yet any account of Mussolini *as an ingrained internationalist socialist-from-below* can be rigorously interrogated via solid scholarship.¹⁴⁹

Gaudens Megaro’s biography (1967 [1938]) of the early Mussolini is attentive to how Mussolini grew up as a mix of opportunist, violent bully and anti-parliamentary anarchist or quasi-syndicalist more influenced by local traditions of political radicalism and violence in Predappio in the Romagna region in central Italy – whence Mussolini hailed – than as some straightforward ‘leftist ideologue’. Later, Mack Smith’s shorter focus on Mussolini’s early life, and Bosworth, too, will reinforce these perspectives.

¹⁴⁹ Time constraints here have meant that I could simply consult what I regard as the best of the English language scholarship in secondary literatures on Mussolini. However, I am currently translating an early article by the Italian Fascist leader (on Nietzsche from 1908) in order to place into the public domain evidence for my arguments made perhaps a little too peremptorily here. However, the main line of argument should be clear in what follows this.

Anarchist proclivities were pronounced in Mussolini's background, argues Megaro, for not only did Mussolini's father, Alessandro, develop out of Mazzinian patriotic radicalism and anarchism (of an elitist-authoritarian, secret society-style persuasion¹⁵⁰), but an early impassioned and 'eloquent' speech by Mussolini *fiils* was tellingly devoted to Pio Battistini, an anarchist martyr (Megaro 1967: 22).

Megaro misjudges the notion that Alessandro Mussolini – who profoundly influenced Benito – was strongly impacted by Costa's purportedly 'Marxian' socialism (Megaro 1967: 26). Costa, never a Marxist, was, earlier on, an anarchist and, later on once influenced by a new partner from 1879 onwards, became a reformist, parliamentary socialist. If earlier he was a classically Italian riot-instigating, 'ultra-leftist' Malatesta-style anarchist (see Marshall 1993: 342, 346, 347), then later on, Anna Kulischov,¹⁵¹ a Russian-Jewish political activist who had been a populist (Narodnik), guided him towards *parliamentarism* in fact, as she moved in that direction, too, albeit with advanced feminist ideas. Hence, Costa's impact on the Mussolinis relates to *his earlier riot-instigating anarchism*.¹⁵² Yet this sort of politics failed to mobilise the peasantry, leading to the rounding-up of anarchist leaders by the authorities. In despair, individual *propaganda of the deed and terror* (methods of Pisacane and Malatesta) prevailed. Further suppression ensued, with Malatesta then fleeing abroad (Marshall 1993: 347). A Japanese parallel is the instigation of riots and smaller or larger uprisings by ex-samurai (shizoku) leaders discussed in chapter 4. These were proto-modern and are harder to assess politically, but, like anarchist-led riots, they were often destructive and backward-looking.

This question is pivotal to an understanding of Mussolini and of Kita – precisely because a political movement is to be defined herein as left or right *by the degree and nature of its exclusion or inclusion*. Mussolini and Kita can evidently be placed on the

¹⁵⁰ Anarchism in Italy is often associated with *Bakunin*, who spent four years in Italy developing his ideas, and *Malatesta*. Both exhibit major contradictions, combining a theoretical and practical *libertarianism* with an equally theoretical and practical *authoritarianism* (see Marshall 1993).

¹⁵¹ See Shepherd 1999. Here: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kuliscioff-anna>

¹⁵² 'Insurrectionism' is not apt. To count as insurrection requires a much larger mass of humanity than the relatively low numbers of people typically engaged in riots alongside anarchists mentioned here.

right-wing because of how they conceive, first, *who matters* and, second, *who rules, or has a right to rule, the movement in question*. Ordinary workers, peasants, young officers as well as other foot soldiers (literal and metaphorical) they connected with (or precisely did not connect with) were grist to Mussolini and Kita's respective control or intellectual and political aspirations. Yet Mussolini (earlier and later) undoubtedly exerted more influential personal leadership than Kita. Their narrow conception of *who matters* is telling – with both cleaving to aggressive nationalisms that excluded, sometimes actively oppressing, those outside their national boundaries. Hence their elitism and brand of nationalism place both on the right or far right, and even the early, more anarchically violent localism of Mussolini (arguably a latent nationalism), not just the early Kita. Their *modus operandi* is authoritarian, elitist, stridently sectarian, plus largely opportunist and founded upon much ambition, with a strong will to dominate. Of Mussolini, Megaro writes: "Looking at his socialist and fascist career as a whole, ... his fidelity to a cause has always been secondary to his love of leadership" (1967: 74). Arguably, Kita shared this orientation, with his brother Reikichi's intriguing view of him as the *Lassalle of Japan*, albeit Kita's leadership was far more limited than that of Mussolini or *Lassalle*, who founded ADAV, the first German workers' union.

Mack Smith (1982: 11) concludes the early Mussolini has uncannily similar predilections to strands within Ōyōmei:

Some of [Mussolini's] fierce talk [about violence, bloody revolution and 'the barbarism of a world war to demolish ... existing European civilisation and produce something more vital'] was an affectation adopted by a person still trying to discover himself, but throughout his life much of the real Mussolini was hidden by a succession of poses The frequent changes of opinion do not necessarily mean that he was an intellectual light-weight, but rather that he placed little value on ideas. He appeared to adopt opinions merely because they fitted some new attitude or would help his career. He sometimes seemed to change his whole philosophical outlook overnight and would justify the fact as inner intuition that he came to consider ... infallible.

Perhaps Kita was more of an opportunist ideationally than this thesis believes, and Szpilman (2002) effectively argues that case. Yet, ironically, what Szpilman attributes to Kita arguably fits Mussolini better, as *ideas* mattered more for Kita than for Mussolini. What was similar, however, was a belief in Kita and Mussolini that revolutionary shifts were achieved via bloody means or a demolition of civilisation. Lastly, the above Mack Smith quote makes Mussolini sound similar to Kita's irrationalist strand of Ōyōmei-intuitionism, albeit Mussolini was far more practically-politically violent than Kita, who himself seems never embroiled in much violence. He encouraged it only on the largest scale (as regards *coups* and wars), and only then as a corollary of his macro-level *ideas*. No mass agitation flowed therefrom, despite clearly false claims by the Japanese state that Kita was *ringleader* of the February 26th Incident (1936). Conversely, Mussolini was endemically violent, as stories about his penchant for stabbing indicate (e.g., Megaro 1967: 43; Mack Smith 1982: 3; Bosworth 2002: 55). Mussolini's insistence on the political priority of brute violence, mirroring Carlo Pisacane's elevation of the 'propaganda of the deed' and Mazzini's 'theory of the dagger', all subordinated ideas to anarchic-style, instigationist violence (Megaro 1967: 104-105; Mack Smith 1982: 5, 7). There appears little of this in Kita, albeit he *flirts with* the dark arts of bribery, intimidation and violence, as Szpilman (2002) at length demonstrates so well.

Finally, Bosworth (2002: 39) pinpoints various deep-seated, yet subtle political influences on Mussolini from his family and his home region, the Romagna:

The family traditions of the Italian peasantry might have suggested the child be called Luigi after his grandfather, but instead the name Benito was chosen in order to honour Benito Juarez, a Mexican revolutionary who had fallen victim to the Habsburg Emperor Maximilian. In the enmity thus declared for the 'German' dynasty, driven out during the Risorgimento but still installed in Trieste and the Trentino, lay a hint of patriotism, but Alessandro insisted on adding two other names : Amilcare for Amilcare Cipriani and Andrea for Andrea Costa. The baptism of baby Benito had indeed reflected something of a historic compromise between the loyal Catholic observance of mother Rosa and the fiery anti-clericalism and populist revolutionism of Alessandro.

As with Kita, Mussolini's background influences were eclectic, ideologically mixed and overlapping. National-liberationist revolutionary, Juarez, whence Mussolini derived his name, is just one figure in this naming 'triumvirate'. The others are Cipriani – an anarchist, popular hero and patriot, who fought alongside Giuseppe Garibaldi during the Risorgimento, Italy's struggle for patriotic national unification – and Costa, the early Italian anarchist mentioned above, as well as later social democratic socialist, founder of the Italian socialist party and parliamentarian. In terms of the ideological range here encompassed, Catholicism, liberal-republican nationalism, national unificationism, patriotism, anarchism, international socialism and social democratic socialism form a vast range. Similarly difficult to pin down are Mussolini's early socialism and later ideas that likely drew at will or necessity, emotionally and intellectually, from many of these traditions, with the sense that violence was key for Mussolini with a strong will to dominate.

One noteworthy feature of all this is just how ideologically and emotionally eclectic and fractured Mussolini and Kita's backgrounds were. Perhaps there is something of a less programmatic quality to the far right that is worth pursuing further, but what is important are the genuine family resemblances between Mussolini and Kita. Most importantly, there appears little substance to the claim that Marxian socialism features as a powerful influence on Mussolini. Instead, a variety of anarchist and regional-radical influences predominate, including a rather Nietzschean philosophy of force or violence and a latent susceptibility to patriotism.¹⁵³

From the above, it can be seen that neither Kita nor Mussolini displayed much, if any, early leftist socialism that can be said to turn later into fascism. Against the Meiji oligarchy, Kita displayed an early parliamentarism – as much liberal-centrist as 'leftist'. Images of the early Mussolini and Kita are of various swirling eclectic influences

¹⁵³ For Nietzsche's significant impact on Mussolini's 'extremely unorthodox socialism', see Sznajder in Golomb and Wistrich (2002: 247-249).

moulding the main trajectory of their life, thought and behaviour, with Kita more definitive on the ideational level than Mussolini. Yet, examined carefully, these eclectic-overlapping influences can be seen to over-determine their forward trajectories.

Let me now sum up the connections and disconnections between Mussolini and Kita analytically by means of this thesis' methodology of inclusion and exclusion, as well as by deploying the terms socialism-from-above and socialism-from-below. These offer a clear view of what both these far-right thinker-activists were engaged in.

First, then, it has been set out clearly herein how Kita fits only rather socialist-from-above-style ideologies: he is clearly a national and state socialist, arguing for war against Russian 'barbarian Slavs' and seeing this as an important first-phase within a grand strategy of racial war between 'yellow people' and 'whites'. Accordingly, Kita advocated violent war as the most crucial feature of his 'activism'. Mussolini, too, founds his policies in violence. The overarching sense from the literature cited here and the case that has been argued from it is that Mussolini is a kind of anarchically driven *violence specialist* (Siniawer 2015: 5-6) who sanctions as well as uses violence throughout his career for projects that match and advance his own aims, much of which was deeply realistic-opportunistic, hence partly the shifts and changes both when young but also in government that were necessary to maintain what success Mussolini showed in the pre-WWII domestic political context. Yet anarchism and the confluence of ideologies from the Italian and regional background going back to the Risorgimento are surely much more stubborn influences on Mussolini than some have stressed. This was so from the very beginning as a foundational imprint from his father, mother and other early experiences.

These traditions of authoritarian, and violent-instigationist, anarchism, in our view, also prompt his orientation towards a certain endemic violence throughout his life – or, as we have stated this, a propensity toward *propaganda of the deed* in anarchist traditions: Bakuninist, Malatesta-style and Pisacane-esque.

Given it is clear from the thesis that Kita is a socialist-from-above, how do things stand with the early Mussolini? It is inevitably difficult – in a figure as tainted by historical Fascism and its oppressive proclivities from Italy to Ethiopia and beyond as he later was – to obtain an unvarnished politico-historical perspective on Mussolini the early man and ideologue, but a number of features of his earlier ideas and behaviour offer clues.

One way of ascertaining the existence of socialism-from-below is to inquire regarding their relation to the masses or to mass democracy. Now, from early on, Mussolini and Kita were both clearly elitists. This has been displayed at length in Kita, but such elitism also pervades Mussolini's thought and ideological outpourings such as they were: he looked down upon the masses, stating he was an 'authoritarian socialist' (Megaro 1967: 102). This Nietzschean elitism percolates much of his writings, and not only his 1908 article on Nietzsche:

Anarchism that is adapted to the masses loses all its grandiose, heroic quality because the mass, be it a crowd or an army, is cowardly. Only these sublime violent people who live beyond good and evil can call themselves anarchists.
(Megaro 1967: 224)

It is such leading heroes and geniuses who will ensure that socialism is brought to Italy (from above), not as a result of any revolutionary democratic action by the masses from below. For the latter conception, this would only be positively fostered by inclusive internationalist left-wing socialist leadership: a leadership subject to recall – something of which Mussolini had no conception.

Again and in a way that echoes Kita Ikki, the younger Mussolini was an early rebel, that much is very true and for sure, but does this mean that he was an early Marxist or early Leninist? No such point can be shown from Mussolini's political praxis or writings or character and way of being in the movement. What he took from Marx, though he took this from anarchism, syndicalism, Mazzini-Garibaldi's national unificationism and his own background all the more, was a very abstract sense of 'violent radicalism'. Does all this imply *strands of a 'revolutionary socialist', as per Marxism or Leninism?* The fact Mussolini wore a Marx-medallion and hated parliamentary and reformist socialism

might indicate so to some, but as suggested, his activities and orientation were much more anarchic than this – with ‘propaganda of the deed’-like instigationist-rioting proclivities featuring more prominently. One concrete example relates to how Mussolini regarded bombs thrown into theatres as justified or somehow inevitable (see Megaro 1967: 218).

Above, it was referenced how Mussolini saw himself as an ‘authoritarian socialist’. It is also routinely observed that Mussolini was *a rather anarchic or quasi-syndicalist sort of socialist*. Is there a contradiction in such a presentation? The answer to this is that there is no reason to regard the words ‘anarchist’ or ‘libertarian’ as necessarily opposed to ‘authoritarian’. This, however, is not about abstract definitions, but rather concerns how someone *behaves* practically-politically in their actual historical engagements. By these criteria, there is a long history of anarchists deploying authoritarian techniques of political action and behaviour – one example of which is Bakuninist secret society ‘conspiritorialising’ or the political actions of famous anarchists like Proudhon and Malatesta. This is notwithstanding any stress on freedom and liberty they make as self-identifying, but in fact often abstractly expostulating, ‘libertarians’. Moreover, many a ‘libertarian’ influenced by figures like Hayek and other *soi-disant* libertarians (e.g., Margaret Thatcher) are entirely happy, *in practice*, to deploy what Marx termed ‘bodies of armed men’ (*qua* police and army) to repress and control populations, especially when these populations are expressing pent-up anger against the enforced injustices and inequalities of every-day modern capitalist (including Stalinist bureaucratic state-capitalist) life.

The point is that anarchist predilections are not intrinsically opposed to authoritarian strains and it is both of these that are displayed very powerfully in the early Mussolini. Both/and, not either/or. I would go a step further and claim that it is precisely in virtue of Mussolini’s consistent attempt to direct the *élan* of his ‘revolutionary socialism’ *in an anarchist direction* (controlled by self-selecting elites) that, in part, accounts for his authoritarianism. It also accounts, at least in part, for the later trajectory towards his eventual pro-war break with any kind of verbally internationalist socialism-from-

below, which clearly did exist, abstractly-ideologically at least, in the early Mussolini's journalistic writings.

In this elitist context, Mussolini's anti-parliamentarism needs careful dissection politico-ideologically. While this is often read hermeneutically as Mussolini belonging to *the 'revolutionary socialist' left*, which is then too easily concluded as being, given the international context, 'Marxist' or 'Leninist', such a purported following of Marx or Lenin's politics was not much in evidence in the Italian socialist party of Mussolini's time.

By the criteria used herein, anarchism – depending on its concrete practico-political tendencies – can find itself not on the political left, but rather on the right or far right. This was especially so when – for Mussolini as for many contemporary syndicalists who, in borrowing from Pareto, were decidedly elitist (see Roberts 1979: 65, 78) – the masses are denigrated as 'cowardly' and 'feeble' and unable to make the right or tough decisions to rule. Only a self-conscious elite could fashion the requisite revolution and, at length, this became an opening for what became the fascist kind.

In short, on the politico-ideological scale, anarchism is as fluid an ideology as socialism itself, apparently stretching from far left to far right. Thus, many of Mussolini's early ideas, just like his essay on Nietzsche of 1908, are clearly to be seen as occupying the right and far right of the political spectrum, not on the side of inclusivity towards the masses. Elitism is, in whatever form it takes, a brand of rightism. On a leftist stance, leadership *can be* a valid phenomenon involving some degree of hierarchy, but *only if it is mobilised toward enhancing the democratic liberation and flourishing of the masses*, and not at the expense of any vulnerable or numerical minorities. Inclusion (or 'progressivity') can only be judged in such terms. But any leadership that hallows only itself or the elite and has no desire for liberating or developing the masses, or excludes or oppresses others/minorities/one gender over another and so on, then that leadership is incompatible with any practical-political leftism, which is premised upon (radical) pro-democratic mass inclusion.

The above points have all been necessary to counter the suggestion that is now often commonly applied to the far right that it had its origins in the far left or in Marxism – in effectively what I call internationalist socialism-from-above: with this then applied formalistically as the truth of Kita’s case. The foregoing heavily suggests that this is a mistaken diagnosis: that, instead of being on the Marxist left, the origins of the far right, ultra-nationalism and fascism itself all lie in anti-mass, anti-democratic and elitist strains of ultra-nationalism, anarchism and a rapidly nationalising syndicalism, plus what patriotic legacy existed from Mazzinian and Garibaldian national unificationism (see Sullam 2015). Where anarchism and syndicalism do not constitute the relevant part of the origins of ultra-nationalism and the far right – and in any case these origins clearly stem, if from socialisms, then from socialisms-from-above – there is some other story often also going on. Kita is one such Japanese story. The comparison with Mussolini that I have furnished at some length in this conclusion is a way of stating that extreme nationalism and socialism-from-above, and on both counts, are what this story is all about, whether that stems from elitist-authoritarian anarcho-patriotism (part of what is going on in Mussolini) or from strong nationalism and statism (what is going on with Mussolini; Kita; and Enrico Corradini’s Nationalists/the ANI).

In Kita’s case, unlike that of Mussolini, far-right ideological strains and ideas are explicit in his earliest discourse, which is then consistently held to over the course of his whole ideological and practical-political career, notwithstanding some shifts in religious and other ideological trends: his conversion to Nichiren Buddhism from around 1915 (which was hardly likely to lessen his strong nationalism and did not) and his prior interest in China and the Chinese revolution from late 1906 onwards and continuing up to and beyond the 1911 Chinese revolution. It is then that Kita went to China as a guest member of the Kokuryūkai (the traditional far-right society for reactionary elites focused on expansionism) to provide reports on the fluid revolutionary situation there.

The reason why Mussolini is focused on at length here is because it is important in this thesis to show Kita cannot be seen as a Japanese instance of some purported general tendency for leftist and internationalist socialists-from-below to eventually and necessarily issue later on in various discourses, theories and practices of *fascism* – not

least because this was not even so in relation to Mussolini, let alone at all accurate in relation to Kita Ikki, as this thesis demonstrates. Accordingly, *leftism* is quite unproven as being at the base of developments towards ultra-nationalism or fascism – and the cases of Kita and Mussolini, if interpreted more carefully (as seen here) than hitherto, indicate the profound lack of cogency in such claims.

Mussolini is more complex than Kita on the purely ideological plane, but not because he was any unequivocal early internationalist leftist socialist-from-below who then somehow spins fascism, rather idealistically, *out of such views*. Instead, Mussolini is more difficult to grasp ideologically precisely because ideas matter far less for him than for Kita. His *raison d'être* is more about power, violence and hegemony (his hegemony *over a movement*) than about any specific ideas he holds to over time, except for those central behavioural-emotional *orientations* like his elitism, love of power and violence-deployment that are just foundational. To argue Mussolini was an early internationalist socialist-from-below (*qua* Marxist or Leninist) is to miss entirely the complex, subtle, yet profoundly powerful influences upon him set out above. It is also to offer an utter caricature of his early ideological, familial and practical-political orientation even well before the purported 'change' in his seemingly erstwhile pro-proletarian, anti-war ideas from autumn 1914 onwards (with his famous gradual shifts away from any pro-peace stance, and towards mere neutrality for Italy and finally into the full-scale pro-war military interventionist camp).

In other words, using the methodological tools deployed herein implies an attentiveness to areas subtly missed or sidelined in recent output on Kita, Mussolini, ultra-nationalism and fascism. Comparison between Kita and Mussolini is illuminating precisely because it sheds light on the differences and similarities both between *them* and between ultra-nationalism and fascism. A fuller analysis of Kita Ikki invites such comparisons, albeit they are commonly all too truncated analytically. Instead of making merely rhetorical comparisons of Kita's works to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, which are then not followed up on in detail, the aim in this conclusion has been to engage more substantively.

Mussolini's violent repression of trade unionists, poorer peasants and the far left during the *biennio rosso* highlight that his aims were to suppress any sort of democratic civil society and to do so from *petit bourgeois* and *Lumpenproletarian* forces in society: e.g., ex-army servicemen and also middle-class and landlord/landowner-supporting social forces. Kita barely engaged in any such violent enterprises. The largest kinds of intimidation and the like he engaged in boiled down to extracting monies for his own living costs from a famous company and for some ongoing limited far-right activities. It was not Kita or the far right who were uppermost in suppressing the left, the communists and the tenant unions in Japan. This role fell to the Japanese state and police themselves, meaning the conservative-authoritarian Japanese political, business, military and bureaucratic establishment remained in the seat of power in a way that Italy under Mussolini did not. A far deeper Fascist dent in the liberal-conservative establishment was made by Mussolini and his movement than was possible in Japan. In Hitler's Germany, given the profound extremism of Nazi exterminationist-racist ideology, for instance, such dents offered an even deeper undermining of normal capitalist establishment control, albeit one that never could be total.

Yet what Mussolini and Hitler's different species of fascism share is this mass-organising reactionary orientation – from outside state-level structures – towards radically-suppressing/smashing social and political democracy in Italy and Germany. Despite the many attempts at intimidation and assassination in Japanese society, no such co-ordinated, joined-up and united party movement – coursing from the middle and belowest in Japanese society and deploying violent Fascist and Nazi techniques to liquidate civil society's political democracy – ever occupied the seat of power. Thus, Japanese society and politics retained a degree of traditional conservative elitism that had been largely subordinated to Fascist and Nazi hegemony in Italy and Germany. In Japan again, this subordination was decisively less.

To put this somewhat differently, what we had in Japan and, in the case of Kita Ikki, were many of the subjective pre-conditions of far-right individual developments and thus for various conditions of possibility, *subjectively or ideationally*, for fascism to be

present and for it to develop. Yet *objective conditions in Japan* – relating to the severe weaknesses of social democracy, unionism and other ‘centre-left’ forces within civil society, plus a clear lag in terms of the religio-political quality that was still attached to the emperor system – *combined with the subjective disunity among far-right forces* meant that the complex collective hold on the part of various elite groups (big business; parliament and the emperor system; the military; and the bureaucracy) was, albeit with civilian control much eroded, still in force.

Returning to late Meiji (and the late 19th into the early 20th century), deeply reactionary and ultra-nationalist ideas were unquestionably present – as seen in Kita and in other figures in Europe we have touched upon who were all clearly on the political far right and, say, in France, where anti-Semitism was rife (in the Dreyfus affair) or where there was advanced, falteringly, a Boulangist putsch against the French republican establishment (note the case of Maurice Barrès and similar sorts of activist on the far right even as early as the late 1880s into the 1890s). What was lacking by the time of the Taishō to Shōwa crisis, however, was the presence of a united fascist party, or even a dynamically expanding sect, seeking to organise mass political discontent. Such a party might have been able to achieve electoral support, as in Italy and Germany, and then, subsequently to that, take over the state.

Conditions were not conducive in Japan – partly because mass democracy was only just awakening. Worse, for any Japanese fascists, arguably the most renowned far rightist (namely, Kita) *did not even offer any serious orientation on the masses*, as indeed Maruyama’s work rightly points out. It is in this sense that Kita was not a fascist, since, within Japanese society, mass anti-democratic suppression of the far left, of unions and of parliament to the requisite degree of ferocity was clearly not present (*or necessary*, as the state was managing the suppression). Yet given Kita’s ideological programme – various war projects, plus expansionism both regionally and more globally, his privileging of the Japanese over all other nationalities and much else – it is clear that Kita was, from first to last, a far-right ideologue, notwithstanding occasional ideological unevenness. In sum, *subjective wishes* – on top of a distinctly

organisational incapacity on the far right – did not make any kind of objectively-and-subjectively practical-political *fascist*.

In both Italy and Germany, the fascists were instrumental in violently suppressing peasant unrest, labour unionism and the far left as well as ordinary left and liberal centre, but in Japan, Japanese state forces from above were entirely sufficient in blocking and suppressing comparatively weak left and centre-oriented forces: state legislation plus arrests from police or the Tokkōtai (higher state police) were enough to squash an *in any case miniscule* Communist Party. Moreover, the ‘left’ generally also tended to get co-opted by the Japanese state – on the emperor, but also on militarism and war (note the case of ‘tenkōsha’ Sano Manabu, plus the role of the Taishūtō or Social Masses Party during the 1930s; see Large 1981).

Naturally, the distinction here between necessary conditions and sufficient conditions has been properly, albeit it could be further, laid out. Yet the sufficient condition is not that any Japanese fascist party would have needed to *succeed* in order to be deemed a fascist party – unless the question is whether Japan became a fascist *polity* in the 1930s-1940s, which is certainly not our main concern here – but rather, merely that the orientation *should be directed towards building a mass party of fascism*. Kita never engaged in such a project, though he did have notable and salient deeply reactionary personal-political views and attitudes indicating he was a far-right ultra-nationalist (in this thesis’ more diffuse sense) – and it is this label that seems about the best one to apply to Kita, finally. Hence, Kita Ikki is best termed a far-right ultra-nationalist socialist-from-above quite opposed to any leftism properly understood.

Further Work

Before ending, it is essential to furnish some sense of what remains to be done or of what arises from this research – whether that flows directly from work undertaken herein or from what this thesis has had to leave undone, due to its inevitable limitations.

Two issues that immediately arise relate to Kita's early literary writings as well as his political commentary on local Sado Island politics. In regard to the literary-type works, what especially comes to mind is Kita's Romantic-style output, which divides into two: first, his literary-Romantic commentary on two important Meiji era poets (Yosano Akiko and her husband Tekkan); and second, Kita's own poetic-Romantic output itself.

As regards the various comments and commentaries he makes on local political figures, this material seems to offer further fruitful micro-research into Kita, albeit this work is quite separate from Kita's foreign policy ideas or his national and state socialism as that is expounded across his early work. In all cases, it is important to state that research examining Kita's early writings, also including work on Kita's first book, has hitherto been found wanting. Hence, further systematic analysis of all elements of Kita's early work appears more important than ever if we are to gain a fuller appreciation of Kita overall, albeit more work is required on his first book most of all. More translation is also called for here, which would facilitate more work on Kita in European and other languages.

In respect of Kita's early Romantic writings, some sense of whether his Romantic predilections at this time tended to drive him – say, like D'Annunzio in the Italian context – towards rather reactionary or far-right sorts of politics is certainly a significant research question. Or, if some are persuaded by the arguments of Christopher Szpilman (2002), these texts may be used as a springboard to test further the notion as to whether this thesis is right to stress the overwhelmingly right-wing quality to Kita's early thought. Kita may have been more uneven than I even think. Therefore, careful reading of Kita's treatments of the Yosanos, husband and wife, may offer fruitful lines of inquiry in ascertaining whether Kita did not enjoy a closer connection to some more *leftist* socialisms, too. Was Kita's position more 'liberal' and 'feminist' when writing on the Yosanos? Following on from Matsumoto Ken'ichi's work (e.g., 1996), can Kita's Romanticism-plus-nationalism be considered 'progressive' in any way? While this thesis somewhat doubts this, in view of the paucity of research attempted so far it is clearly still a fairly open question to be decided empirically.

Other areas in relation to the early Kita that would likely shed light on his ideas would be more local or archival studies into Kita's family and ideological connections. That is, not only in terms of Kita's relations to Jiyū minken on Sado, but also regarding Kita's influence from Sado Confucian educationalist Maruyama Meihoku (and disciples).

Although there is a dearth of writing in English in this area – as indeed on Kita himself – the early Kita furnishes not the only domain to be profitably further explored. If anything, Kita's middle period has been largely overlooked in terms of English language scholarly treatments, i.e. Kita's second book (on the Chinese revolution of 1911). This book is informative about Kita's ideas on revolution and various revolutionaries, which are both undoubtedly pivotal to understanding Kita's political theory and philosophy, but also East Asian socialisms more generally. A perspective oriented towards China might, for instance, look at the influence and role of Chinese national revolutionary and 'father of China' Sun Yat-sen in Kita's thought. Or indeed of Sun and Song Jiaoren, too: the leader of the Tongmenghui (Chinese National Alliance), who was murdered by Yuan Shikai (the first president of Republican China). Song was someone whom Kita believed, rather absurdly, to have been assassinated by Sun and his associates. Yet, regarding areas of interest still within the middle period, other aspects require more study. Two stand out: first, Kita's becoming a Nichiren Buddhist merits further English language investigation; second, Kita's reports back from revolutionary China to the Kokuryūkai when sent there as a guest member of that so-called traditional far-right organisation (in Wilson's gloss; 1963) also look promising in relation to assessing how his politics should be categorised. In a significant personal communication to me of some years ago now, Professor Szpilman once suggested I might translate *Shina kakumei gaishi* (A Private History of China's 1911 Revolution), Kita's second book. I too think this would be important, hence why I repeat this here.

Lastly, a further set of questions arise directly from something I raise in this thesis and yet which has been impossible to treat in this space: namely, the question of a careful hermeneutic reading of Kita's third book often dubbed his *Mein Kampf* – whether by Maruyama Masao (1969), Kuno Osamu (1976) or by Hori Makiyo (1995). In other words, and in order to clarify whether Kita's final political book and Hitler's infamous

to me share much in common, such a focus would certainly be able to answer whether Kita is in any sense comparable to Hitler – ideologically or in practice. Such research might include works by Mussolini and/or Giovanni Gentile, too. Such studies would certainly clarify the relationship between Kita and so-called generic fascism, perhaps providing additional fine-grained discussion of the various similarities *and differences* between Kita’s more diffuse ultra-nationalism on one side and Mussolini-style and Hitlerite fully-fledged fascisms in their differing ways on the other.

Bibliographical and Information Section

First of all, several organisations, scales or charts are referred to and what follows offers limited explanations of or for them:

ADAV refers to the German workers' association that Lassalle founded in 1863 and is an acronym for Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein.

Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, argues that 'open' and 'closed' were just as important as 'left' and 'right' in *The Economist*, 31st May, 2007. Available online at: <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2007/05/31/what-ive-learned>

The Nolan Chart (1969) is a recognised political scale. Diagrams of these two charts I mention here are easily found online.

The Political Compass (2001). This is a purportedly more recent political scale that has become popular, after a fashion, due to its claimed novelty in stressing two axes, not one, as a way of expressing political differences. See chapter 2 for my tracing this back, or likening it, to Eysenck (1954) or to similar right-wing ideological understandings of political positionalities.

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