

Profile of Asian Minded Man II

IKKI KITA

KŌICHI NOMURA

I

The name of Ikki Kita is known in the political history of modern Japan as one of those connected with the "2-26 Incident" of 1936. As need hardly be said this incident was a coup d'état by young officers of the Japanese Army carried out with the aim of setting up a military dictatorship, and at the same time it was an event of great political significance in that it may be said to have performed the function of putting the finishing touches to the establishment of Japanese fascism centred on the Imperial House. Whatever direct connexion Ikki Kita may or may not have had with this incident, he was the theoretician who played the leading role in relation to this reforming movement carried on by the military. A certain section of the young officers regarded Kita's work, *Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō* (An Outline of Legislation for the Reconstruction of Japan), as their Bible, and found within its pages policy directions for their movement. After this incident Japan hastened unheedingly along the road to fascism centred on the Imperial House, and at length embarked on the building of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere"—which has been described as a manifestation of ultra-nationalism of Japan—and the Greater East Asia War. Viewed in the light of these connexions, Kita may be regarded as a typical right-wing "leader" representing modern Japanese expansionism.

However, Kita did not simply propagate the idea of national expansion. Nor did he preach "the subjugation of Asia." What he contended for was rather "the liberation of Asia," or "revolutionary imperialism." It need hardly be said that in the background of these words lay "the penetration into Asia" by Europe and America from the end of the 19th century onwards, that is, "the colonization of Asia." We may describe the situation by saying that in Kita's thought this historical condition of modern Asia was reflected in vivid colours, and that it exercised a strong determining force on his theories of Japanese fascism. Kita's thought was in an inseparable relation with Asia, and in particular with China. Of course, we cannot say that Kita successfully solved the antitheses and contradictions contained in these relations. We may rather consider his life to have consisted of nothing but a series of failures. But nevertheless we may at the least be able to say that in his

thought the historical fate which modern Japan must bear was shown forth in a truly clear and sharply defined manner.

What kind of a life, then, did Kita lead, and wherein are the special characteristics of his thought to be found?

The life of Ikki Kita was run through with the mode of living characteristic of the masterless man or outlaw (*rōnin*), more precisely, of the "continental outlaw" (*tairiku rōnin*). He was neither a scholar nor a littérateur, nor yet a university professor. He never held any position of regular employment throughout his whole life. But in the course of that life he left behind three volumes, each of which exercised a great influence on society. Below we propose to seek out the special characteristics of his thought, centring our attention on these writings.

II

Ikki Kita was born in 1883 on the small island of Sado in the Sea of Japan. Exhibiting a tendency to early maturity from his earliest years, he was already exploiting his extraordinary talents while still at middle school, but at length his eyes became affected, and when in addition to this his family's fortune failed he withdrew from middle school in the fourth year and, going up to Tokyo, enrolled as a student attending lectures (*chōkōsei*) at Waseda University.

The atmosphere of the capital, Tokyo, had a violent impact on the mind of Kita, the youth newly arrived from the small island of Sado in the Sea of Japan. It was precisely in this year that the Russo-Japanese War ended in victory for the Japanese, and this was also the period in which the ideology of socialism was at long last introduced into Japan, the period in which the noted socialists Shūsui Kōtoku (1871-1911), Toshihiko Sakai (1870-1933) and Isoo Abe (1865-1949) began their activities. In the midst of this intellectual climate, and absorbing these new forms of thought whenever they came to hand, Kita first sought to establish himself as a writer. After a year's painstaking effort he produced his first work, *Kokutairon Oyobi Junsei Shakaishugi* (National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism), a voluminous book, approximately one thousand pages, which he published at his own expense.

As befitted the product of a youth of twenty-four, this book was filled with a truly chaotic content. The matters dealt with therein comprised economics, ethics, sociology, historical science, biology, and other branches of knowledge, and the thing which brought unity among them was the "Social Democracy" which Kita himself proclaimed. In spite of the label of "socialism," we will probably be unable to find anything but a mixture of confusion and fancy, imagination and science, in this work if we attempt to view it as a part of the history of the development of what is generally known as the theory of socialism. Rather than being a theoretical elucidation of socialism the work is an expression of the ideals of social evolution which lay in the breast of the youth Kita. Yet like all writings Kita's book was a product of

the historical condition of the times. In particular, it was a product of the historical condition of Meiji Japan following the Russo-Japanese War. In spite of the chaotic manner in which Kita's thought found expression, there shone within it an especially penetrating mode of ratiocination which is very original in the history of modern Japanese thought, and which at length had a profound influence on succeeding generations. We may perhaps summarize this mode of ratiocination into the following two points.

Firstly, 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. As need hardly be said, the theory of the national polity is a form of thought peculiar to Japan, being a way of thinking which finds the unique nature of the Japanese state in the sovereignty of the Emperor, the unbroken succession of the Emperors since the Divine Ages, the unity of Sovereign and Subjects as members of one house, and the belief that Loyalty and Filial Piety should tend to the same end, and indeed it was this theory which provided the ideological basis for the rule of the Emperors in modern Japan. However, in criticism of this anachronistic theory of the national polity Kita says:

"The national polity of the present day is not the national polity of the times in which the state was the property of the sovereign and existed to serve his interests... The Emperor is not an Emperor of the times when the Emperor owned the two constituents, the land and the people, in the form of the state... He is an Emperor who is greatly privileged in the sense that as one element in the state he is an organ of the state in common with the other element in the state, the people. By 'subjects' we do not mean economic objects existing as 'great august treasures' (an appellation of the Emperor's subjects in ancient Japan) and subject to the Emperor's rights of ownership. They are subjects of the state in the sense that as an element in the state they have rights and duties in relation to the state... Therefore the sovereign is not the sole ruler, nor are the people the sole rulers, they are the highest organs applying the ruling rights of the state in the interests of the state as ruler. This is the present national polity as set out in law, and it is also the present order of politics." (*Collected Works*, Vol, I, p.247)

According to Kita society evolves historically from monarchy to aristocracy, and from aristocracy to democracy (or the national state). By the Meiji Restoration we mean precisely such an evolution from a medieval aristocracy to a modern democracy. It is thus a glaring anachronism to set up the theory of the national polity, with its ideals of the sovereignty of the Emperor and the unity of Sovereign and Subjects as members of one house, as the standard by which to regulate Meiji Japan. When all is said and done, the Emperor is no more than one specific element in the state, just as the people are an element in the state. Kita made a head-on criticism on this theory of the national polity, anachronistic for modern Japan, in the name of "socialism."

"There is no reason for the censure that since socialism advocates revolution it offends against the Japanese national polity. The reason for socialism being said to advocate revolution is that socialism would destroy from the bottom the paternalistic monarchical state in the sphere of economics, and for the purpose of securing the existence and evolution of the state would have all the economic resources which are the life-blood of the state designated as interests appertaining to the state as a matter of state rights." (*Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 247)

What Kita is advocating here is, as need hardly be said, the theory of state sovereignty, and the theory that the Emperor is an organ of the state.

Criticism of this kind produced by Kita may indeed be said to have been exceptionally penetrating in the Japan of the late Meiji period, when the theory of the national polity imposed constraints on all forms of belief and ideology. We may say that at this time he offered a head-on challenge to the ideology of the rule of the Emperors in modern Japan.

Secondly, however, the socialism which Kita put forward in opposition to the theory of the national polity savoured, as will already have been easily apparent, very strongly of state socialism. The possessor of sovereignty was not the Emperor, but the state, and this fact also, at the same time, signified socialism for Kita. That is to say, "It is socialism in that sovereignty is said to reside in the state." (*Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 247) Further, in Kita's thought there is no conceptual distinction between the state and society. Since he believed that "a geographically delimited society is equal to a state" (*Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 211) it was the evolution and development of the state which was the ideal of his socialism. Thus the evolution of the state is a necessity of history, and the interests of the state are at once the rights of the state, and become the justice of the state. We may say that the result produced from this would seem to be an extreme form of the theory of state sovereignty, or "MIGHT IS RIGHT."

It is certainly true that Kita's criticism on the theory of the national polity upheld by the Meiji régime exposed in a very penetrating manner the most anachronistic of the ideological weak points in modern Japan. Modern Japan was practically the only modern state in which an ideology reminiscent of the theory of The Divine Right of Kings was still being boldly set out in the textbooks prescribed by the state in the 20th century. Kita criticized this aspect of social reality in the name of "socialism." However, the fact that Kita's socialism inclined markedly towards state socialism was probably inevitable at some points, considering the condition of Japan at that time. Meiji Japan was begotten out of resistance to foreign pressure under the circumstances of "the impact of the West." A sense of national crisis was a universal feeling pervading Meiji Japan. The Russo-Japanese War, too, was conceived as a question which, at the least, powerfully involved the national survival of Japan. All efforts were concentrated on enriching the state and strengthening its armed forces. In this condition of society Kita strove above all else to look directly at reality, and to incorporate it in his thought. Con-

sequently, although he criticized the theory of the national polity in the name of "socialism," and furthermore with views different from the generality of socialists of his day—they either set out from the presuppositions of Christianity or humanism, or depended on the direct importation of European socialist thought—he incorporated powerfully in his thought the tasks of interstate opposition and conflict in international society. Here we may find a truly vivid reflection of the reality of "Japan in Asia" at this time.

Now as soon as this book by Kita, with its penetrating logic and enchanting style, was put on sale, it was met by very favourable reviews. The chief critics of the time, Tokuzō Fukuda (1874–1930), Hajime Kawakami (1879–1946) and others, united in showering praise on the young author of twenty-four. We may say that it was indeed a splendid beginning to a writer's career. Nevertheless, in spite of these praises from one side, it was natural that his violent criticism on the theory of the national polity must inevitably be fiercely attacked. The press called for the publication of the book to be prohibited, on the grounds that it contained passages disrespectful to the Emperor. In this way the work into which Kita had poured his heart's blood was at length made subject to an order prohibiting publication after only a month. Further, what was inflicted on Kita's person at this time was the epithet "socialist," and the fate of being perpetually watched by police detectives.

With such feelings of anguish in mind, and mixing with famous socialists such as Shūsui Kōtoku, Kita spent his days in poverty. We may say that this was the period in which the youthful Kita sought out his future path in the midst of a deep feeling of despair in regard to the established order of society. However, it was at this time that a great object of interest which was at length to have a profound influence on the course of his life at last revealed its form before him. If we take his *National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism* to be the starting-point of his thought, this object of interest provided incomparable material for the application and testing of his ratiocinations in matters of reality. It need hardly be said that this object of interest was the revolutionary movement in neighbouring China, a movement which had been the focus of attention in Asia since the beginning of the 20th century.

III

Kita's connexion with the Chinese revolution begins with his joining the Chinese Revolutionary League (T'ung meng hui) at the end of 1906. As is well known, revolutionaries aiming at the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty had been mounting their activities in Japan since beginning of the 20th century, and in 1905 they formed a "League" in Tokyo with Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) as their leader. This revolutionary body was a coalition comprising three groups, each differing in its ideological tendency, namely the Kuang-fuhui, the Huahsinghui and the Hsingchunghui, but they were all agreed that the Ch'ing dynasty, controlled by the Manchus, should be overthrown,

and that a republican China ruled by the Han race should be set up. Kita became a member of the Chinese Revolutionary League, and formed connexions with Sung Chiao-jen (1881-1913), Huang Hsing (1873-1916), and others of the Huahsinghui group, the group in which Han race nationalism was most strongly represented.

Quite apart from his personal connexions, it is no matter for wonder that Kita should have been connected with the Chinese revolution. At this time positive aid to the Chinese revolutionary movement was being given by a certain section of socialists in Japan. The aim of establishing a republic was thought to be naturally worthy of support by socialists. Among the Chinese revolutionaries there were some, such as Chang Chi (1881-1947), who were influenced by Shūsui Kōtoku and thereafter took to anarchism. On the other hand, again, there were also right-wing "men of spirit" (*shishi*) and "outlaws," with the independence, or liberation, of Asia as their slogan, who adopted the posture of giving positive support to the Chinese revolution. For them, the movement for the overthrow of the tottering Ch'ing dynasty led by Sun Yat-sen and his associates meant the revival of China as a great state in Asia, and their collaboration with these revolutionaries was thought of as being at bottom a means of realizing the aims of "Asianism." Viewing the matter in this light, not only is Kita's connexion with the Chinese revolution not to be wondered at, but rather may be said to have been inevitable and necessary. For Kita the success or failure of the Chinese revolution was profoundly related to the safety of the Japanese state and its future development, and collaboration with revolutionary China was a matter of great importance which would affect the future development of Japan. In this way Kita, while still deprived of freedom of action within Japan, at length began to concentrate all his powers on the Chinese revolution. Thus it came about that when in 1911 the Chinese revolution broke out as a result of the activities of the Chinese Revolutionary League, Kita was one of the first to cross over into China.

Kita's activities in China were of a fair degree of complexity. In the midst of the whirlpool of revolutionary activities, and viewing for himself and experiencing in detail the revolutionary process itself, Kita gave his support to the revolutionary movement, particularly in association with Sung Chiao-jen, a revolutionary of a strongly nationalist colouring. But what is probably of greater importance than tracing his actual activities, is, of course, the question of how he understood the Chinese revolution and what he found therein. The answer to this question is best provided by his *Shina Kakumei Gaishi* (Unofficial History of the Chinese Revolution), which he wrote during the years 1915 and 1916. Let us continue by following up the tasks taken up in this work.

There are two main themes in the *Unofficial History of the Chinese Revolution*. These are a theoretical elucidation of revolutionary China, and proposals for the establishment of a revolutionary Japanese foreign policy.

The outbreak of revolution in neighbouring China was naturally a great

shock to Japan. Much discussion took place in both government and non-government circles in Japan over how the Chinese revolution should be understood. What was the essential nature of the Chinese revolution? In which direction would the Chinese revolution at length go? The democrat (*mimpon shugi-sha*) and champion of the "democracy" movement of the Taisho period (1912-1925), Sakuzō Yoshino (1877-1933), had a profound interest in the Chinese revolution throughout, and he sought to understand this revolution as being a part of "the trend of the times" away from "despotism" and towards "republicanism." He believed that this was a historical necessity, and that no matter what confusion might arise, at length, before long, the republican system should win the victory. Again, Konan Naitō (1866-1934), a historian possessed of incomparable erudition in regard to the history of China, understood this revolution as being inherent in Chinese history, and understood correctly the visible aspect of the collapse of the Ch'ing court, but nevertheless he was unable to make any sufficient prediction as to the future course of the revolution. Both of these views may be considered representative of the discussion which took place at this time. Further, we may say that each of them attained an understanding of one aspect of the Chinese revolution. However, in the midst of all this controversy Kita brought forward a view of the Chinese revolution which was extremely original. Kita understood the Chinese revolution as being, more than anything else, a sudden access of nationalism.

Kita held that the anti-Manchu revolution which was taking place before his eyes was begotten of the question of the survival of Chinese society, and was by no means a mere exchange of one set of power-holders for another. It was the awakening of this national consciousness which was the direct motivating factor in the Chinese revolution. "A revolution in which the established state itself, about to fall from economic and political demoralization, is attempting to struggle back into existence in a situation which offers only survival or destruction"—such was the essential nature of the disorders taking place in China at that time.

Consequently, the anti-Manchu revolution, which was being fought under the slogan of "Drive Out The Manchus" and with the aim of overthrowing the alien Ch'ing court, was no more than a movement presupposing a revolution for the raising up of the Han race. For this reason, too, the revolution had the aims of sweeping away in the most radical manner the feudal intendant type of political administration carried on by the established "nationally pernicious class" and of building "an organically unified state with a modern form of organization."

In arriving at this understanding of the Chinese revolution Kita undoubtedly had the analogy of the Japanese Meiji Restoration in mind. In the midst of the crisis of the last years of the Tokugawa régime Japan had overthrown the Tokugawa feudal system by means of the Meiji Restoration, and developed towards a modern state. According to Kita, if Japan exercised some manner of influence on the Chinese revolution, then this could have

been none other than that of such forms of nationalistic thought and nationalistic movements as appeared at the time of the Meiji Restoration. And so China, too, in the midst of the crisis of its state, must overthrow the corrupt Ch'ing dynasty and advance to a social revolution in order to build a modern state. More than anything else, the revolution represented "an instinctive outburst" from the past of Chinese society itself, from the part of the Chinese nation itself.

But even assuming this to be so, we must surely suppose that the new society, the new institutions, would in all things have to be rooted in the traditions of Chinese society. To express it in other words, we must surely suppose that these things could not take the form of direct imports from foreign countries. As a result, and very paradoxically, Kita undertook a thoroughgoing criticism on the methods employed by Sun Yat-sen. As is well known, Sun Yat-sen was a revolutionary who had learned from the West from his earliest years, and who had acquired a Western culture. He took the ideal of the republican system of government as his starting-point, and this ideal included a strong element of internationalism. But to Kita the methods employed by Sun Yat-sen, the Provisional President of the Chinese Republic, appeared to be a direct importation of the institution of the American presidency, and in his sight they were in the nature of an unpermissible cosmopolitanism. For example, Sun Yat-sen applied to Japan for a loan on the security of the Hanyeh P'ing mine in order to save the financial crisis threatening the revolutionary government. For Kita, however, this was equivalent to the negation of the ideals of the revolution. Before all else, the revolution must spring from an instinctive outburst from the part of the nation, from an upsurge of nationalism, and Kita thought that if those who were carrying through the revolution looked to foreign countries to provide them with funds and made available their national rights in order to acquire these funds, this would be contrary to the very essence of the revolution. In actual fact, too, Kita's closest connexions in the whirlpool of revolution were not with the leader of the Chinese Revolutionary League, Sun Yat-sen, but with the nationalist Sung Chiao-jen.

What manner of counter-measures, then, did Kita envisage, taking his stand on this view of the situation? When we come to consider this task the question naturally develops into the second theme of this work, "the establishment of a revolutionary foreign policy."

Kita held that the Chinese revolution was begotten out of a crisis involving the survival or destruction of the Chinese state. In the natural course of events, this crisis involving survival or destruction created a demand for national unity, and national unity in turn created a demand for the negation of the feudal intendant type of political administration. At the same time it was necessary for revolutionary China to adopt a firm militarism in relation to foreign countries. United China should uphold her national rights in the face of foreign countries. From this, of necessity, clashes with England and Russia would follow. Kita thought that a war with Russia was the only

policy for revolutionary China. Indeed, he held that not only was this the only policy for revolutionary China, but that conversely it was also the policy for the Chinese revolution. "By a war with Russia China will be able to resolve at a stroke all the tasks for revolution which it has accumulated in such quantity. Including the sweeping away of the intendant class. And the reform of fiscal and military administration. And administrative unification. And the establishment of a militaristic spirit..." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 187.) A solution at one stroke by means of a Russo-Chinese war! This was the radical solution proposed by Kita. Further, Japan's revolutionary foreign policy was to be derived from this policy. Japan should take advantage of the Russo-Chinese war to renounce the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and drive England out of south China on the one hand, and on the other should drive back Russia and advance into Manchuria. "In order that China shall continue to exist, and in order that Japan shall cease to be Little Japan and shall become Great Japan" (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 182) it was necessary to fight a Russo-Chinese war. In this way, and with this as its basis, a Sino-Japanese Alliance could be expected to come into being. Kita's contentions negated Japan's traditional foreign policy, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and aimed at putting into effect "the Asian Monroe Doctrine" in co-operation with China.

We may say that Kita's views of the Chinese revolution present a curious mixture, a mixture consisting on the one hand of his penetrating insight into the essential nature of the revolution and on the other hand of his surprising proposals in matters of policy. It is certainly true, as Kita said, that the revolution was not merely an exchange of one set of power-holders for another. It was the beginning of a social revolution in China. It was the beginning of a long and bitter struggle to sweep away all feudal social institutions and produce a new China. In this sense we may say that Kita had been able to go far beyond the superstition that China was a country in a state of stagnation. However, the policies which Kita put forward for the achievement of this Chinese revolution were of a truly extraordinary kind. In the midst of the whirlpool of revolution there was no assurance that a unified military force could be formed in China, while even supposing that a war were fought between Russia and China there was practically no possibility that it would end in victory. The truth would rather seem to be that what stands out very conspicuously in these proposals is merely an adventuristic policy of employing a strong foreign policy as a means of securing national unity at home. At this point, however, we will find ourselves faced with the necessity of thinking once more about the fate forced on Asia in modern times. As a result of the inroads made by Europe, Asia was visited, in greater or lesser degrees, by national crises, and faced the danger of colonialization. While contending with these dangers, China also overthrew the Manchu dynasty and stood up in the cause of the rebirth of China. This being the case, would it not be a natural exercise of reborn China's rights of self-defence if she were to

declare war on those who oppressed her, Russia and England? Indeed, the truth rather was —according to Kita— that the most important mission of the Chinese revolution was none other than that of driving out the influence of the Great Powers of Europe and America. The social revolution, too, was a task which must be carried through for this same purpose. For Kita the social revolution and national independence were a task which was one and indivisible. Thus, with the aim of supporting this Chinese revolution before all else, Kita thought that Japan and China must link themselves together. Japan should abandon the foreign policy which she had pursued since the beginning of the Meiji period, a policy of following the European powers, and in particular should renounce the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and should direct her efforts to driving the influence of England out of south China, while on the other hand China herself should drive Russia out of Manchuria. The result which would be produced by this, as need hardly be said, would be none other than “the Asian Monroe Doctrine.” Expressing it in other words, we may say that Kita was advocating a foreign policy of collaboration between Japan and China, aiming, before all else, at the independence of Asia. Faced by the outbreak of the Chinese revolution, Kita, who in his *National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism* had already shown himself deeply conscious of the inter-state competition, as well as the inter-class competition, which had evolved out of the social reality of modern Asia, demanded that the basis of all policy should be nationalism and not internationalism.

Kita spent about ten years immersed in the Chinese revolution. When the Chinese revolution at length ended with the setting up of the Yüan Shih-k'ai (1859–1916) régime he continued his activities, either receiving refugees in Tokyo, or crossing again to Shanghai. We may say that his stand in relation to the Chinese revolution was consistent in a manner peculiar to himself. He was conscious of the necessary nature of the social revolution in China, and with penetrating insight he perceived that the basic task in relation of the destiny of China was the driving out of the forces of Euro-American imperialism, the task of national independence. Thus, on this one point of the independence of Asia it was necessary that Japan and China should link themselves together. But in spite of these expectations of Kita's, what manner of foreign policy did Japan adopt in relation to China? If anything, since the beginning of the 20th century Japan pursued the policy of following behind the European powers and joined in the fight over the division of the spoils in China, while in the middle of the First World War she presented the infamous Twenty-One Demands to China. This had the effect of summoning up a furious anti-Japanese movement in China. In spite of Kita's expectations, reality moved in exactly the contrary direction. This was the greatest contradiction for Kita, who had kept up so extraordinary an interest in the Chinese revolution. The principal tasks for him now lay in Japan's policies, and in the Japanese political order. In this

way Kita's eyes began to be directed back to Japan again, to the reform of the political order in Japan, to the Japanese revolution. In Shanghai in 1919, while watching the angry crowds of demonstrators shouting anti-Japanese slogans, Kita wrote *Kokka Kaizō An Genri Taikō* (An Outline of Principles for a Proposed Reconstruction of the State), and hereupon his third life began.

IV

An Outline of Principles for a Proposed Reconstruction of the State — later published as *Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō* (An Outline of Legislation for the Reconstruction of Japan) — gives an extremely clear account of a policy for national reconstruction with the Emperor and the armed forces as the nucleus. The ideology of this document exercised a particularly strong influence on the minds of young serving officers and at length led to the 2-26 Incident, as a result of which Kita himself was destined to be condemned to death. In this work dark shadows are cast in the sphere of international relations by the Russian revolution, Wilson's Fourteen Points, The May Fourth Movement: the Chinese anti-imperialist demonstrations of 1919, The March First Movement: the Korean nationalist demonstrations of 1919, and other evidences of the instability of the imperialist order and of the rise of national independence movements, and within Japan by the rice riots, the electoral reform movement, and other contradictions in Japanese capitalism. Reacting sensitively to this condition of affairs, Kita found Japan's future course in a coup d'état aiming at a "revolutionary dictatorship" by the Emperor, and in a new foreign policy, the policy of the "Revolutionary Greater Japanese Empire." In accordance with the ideas he had evolved since writing *National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism*, he conceived the Emperor in terms of his public function of representing the state, and as well as desiring a reform of Japan at the hands of the Emperor he wished Japan to become the leading power in a confederacy of Asian states at a time when the imperialist order was showing signs of instability and national independence movements were increasing in intensity, and to become the leader in the liberation of Asia. But what we must particularly note here is the manner in which the nationalism which is found throughout all Kita's writing since his *National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism* reveals itself in this work.

Regarding his revolutionary imperialism Kita speaks as follows:

"Within the state one stands on the basis provided by the maintenance of distributive justice in the life of the nation, and in inter-state relations one maintains distributive justice in the life of states by the sword. This is one reason why my Social Democracy, when put into effect in the Japanese Islands, takes the form of a policy for the Revolutionary Greater Japanese Empire." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 3.)

Kita holds that the bringing about of distributive justice in international society by a "have-not" country is a state right under which it is allowable to carry this out by means of the sword. May we not suppose that it is

contrary to distributive justice in international society for England to make India into a colony and for Russia to occupy Siberia? In this *Outline* Kita allots a special section to the subject of "The Positive Right of Commencing Hostilities."

"In addition to the right of self defence the state possesses the right to commence hostilities in the cause of other states or nations who are oppressed by unrighteous force (that is to say, in terms of the actual questions with which we are faced at present, it is the state's right to commence hostilities in the cause of the independence of India and the integrity of China)." "The State also... possesses the right to commence hostilities against anyone who unlawfully occupies a great territory and disregards the National Way of Co-Existence among humankind (that is to say, in terms of the actual questions with which we are faced at present, it is the state's right to commence hostilities against those who occupy Australia and Far Eastern Siberia in order to gain possession of these territories)." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 272.)

In these passages the lines along which Kita's nationalism developed further into his revolutionary imperialism are clearly shown. For the state to fight for its existence is the state's right, and in accordance with justice. The international class struggle which the international proletarian class (that is, according to Kita, the "have-not" countries) is waging against the propertied class (that is, the "have" countries) is none other than this. "If this were our aggressive militarism, then Japan might well put it upon her head as a golden crown, amidst the joyous shouts of the whole world proletarian class. Japan demands Australia and Far Eastern Siberia in the name of a rationalized socialism. No matter how abundant harvests she may have, in a few years Japan will not have enough land to feed herself. The social problem in Japan will never be dispelled unless a decision is made in regard to international distribution, no matter how good domestic distribution may be." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 273.) According to Kita, "Euro-American socialism, which, while permitting the proletarian struggle within each country, thinks of the international proletarian war alone as being 'aggression' or 'militarism'" was "self-contradictory in the fundamentals of its thought." (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 273.)

Thus Kita propagated the gospel of the sword as against the gospel of peace. He demanded that Japan, as the leader of a confederation of Asian states supporting "the Asian Monroe Doctrine," should go to war with Euro-American imperialism in the cause of the liberation of Asia. Further, his design for a Revolutionary Greater Japanese Empire disclosed far in advance the vision of the Greater East Asia War — the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere — which was at length to come.

V

Considered either as a thinker or as a revolutionary Ikki Kita was a truly

mysterious person. As early as the latter years of the Meiji period he had sharply criticized in the name of socialism a form of ideology peculiar to modern Japan — the theory of the national polity. He showed not the slightest disposition to recognize the transcendental authority and divine status of the Empror. In this sense we may say that Kita was in very great measure a “modern” thinker. Yet, as we have seen, his socialism was a state socialism of a very original kind. At length this state socialism, in the course of undergoing the experience of the Chinese revolution, proceeded rapidly in the direction of what may be called “fascism.” The things which then manifested themselves in his thought were a worship of force which was naked and unashamed, and the doctrines of ultra-nationalism. But as we have repeatedly observed, in the background of this development of his thought there lay the grievous burden of the fate which all the countries of modern Asia had been obliged to accept. Nationalism was an indispensable factor if one was to be spared the fate of colonialization. To state it conversely, in these circumstances no form of ideology could be effective unless it had first received its baptism of nationalism. In this sense it may be possible for us to say that Kita showed forth the meaning of nationalism in modern Asia in a form in which that nationalism had been carried to the ultimate, and even that he was able to predict, at least partially, the storm of nationalism which blew over Asia after the Second World War. But it would seem that the fatal defect in Kita’s thought is probably to be found in the fact that his nationalism was not linked to democracy in any sense. Kita was completely alien to any feeling for human rights. Since in Kita both society and the individual were conceived in terms of categories which were extremely biological, there was no room for the idea of basic human rights. Although the people were the constituent members of the state, they were never to be recognized as personalities, each possessing his or her own individuality. In this way Kita’s nationalism absorbed all values into the state, and he hastened unheedingly along the road to the state authoritarianism or ultra-nationalism which derives rights and justice from the interests of the state.

Considered logically, Kita’s thought contains many contradictions. What is more, history has proved that in matters of social reality thought such as his could not but come to bankruptcy. Yet within Kita’s thought we find at least the posture of tackling the task of modern Asian nationalism head-on, and efforts directed to this end. It may be possible for us to say that by the very fact of having come to bankruptcy Kita’s thought provides a valuable lesson in the history of modern Japan.

A Short Life History

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| 1883 | Born as the eldest son of a brewer in Sado County, Niigata Prefecture. |
| 1900 | Left middle school at the fourth year. His father failed in the brewing business and became bankrupt. |
| 1905 | Came up to Tokyo and enrolled as a student attending lectures at Waseda |

- University.
- 1906 Published *Kokutairon Oyobi Junsei Shakaishugi* at his own expense, which was eulogized at once by such outstanding scholars and critics of those days as Tokuzō Fukuda, Hajime Kawakami and others. But the sale of this work was prohibited a month later after publication.
- Became a member of the "Kakumei Hyōron-sha" coterie and joined the "Chinese Revolutionary League," where he became very intimate with Sung Chiao-jen, a Chinese revolutionary. Thenceforth was always under detective supervision as a Socialist.
- 1908 Attempted to go to China, but was taken back by detectives from Kōbe.
- 1911 The Chinese revolution broke out. Went to Shanghai to join the revolution. Married Miss Suzuko.
- 1913 Sung Chiao-jen was assassinated. Ordered to leave China for three years because of his attempt to reveal the truth of Sung's assassination.
- 1914 The Ōkuma Cabinet formed, to which he presented his view on China policy.
- 1915 Wrote *Shina Kakumei Gaishi* and began to distribute it to both the government and people.
- 1916 Wrote the latter half of *Shina Kakumei Gaishi* and distributed it. Went to Shanghai.
- 1918 Received a grandson of Tan Jen-feng, one of his staunch friends in the Chinese revolution, and took care of him as a father.
- Wrote *Berusaigyū Kaigi ni taisuru Saikō Hanketsu* (The Supreme Judgment on the Versailles Peace Conference), and *Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō*. Returned from China.
- 1920 Mimeographed *Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō* infringed the Press Code.
- 1921 Published *Shina Kakumei Gaishi*.
- 1923 Joffe visited Japan from the Soviet Union. Published and distributed *Yoffe-kun ni oshiuru Kōkaijō*. *Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō* was published with partial omissions.
- 1926 Brought up the case of the reprehensible documents in the Ministry of Imperial Household and was placed¹ under arrest for six months in the Ichigaya Prison while the investigation was being carried on.
- 1932 Wrote and distributed *Taigai Kokusaku ni kansuru Kempakusho* (Memorial on National Policy in Relation to Foreign Countries)
- 1935 Preparations for the 2-26 Incident began.
- 1936 The 2-26 Incident broke out. Arrested by Military Police and brought to trial by court-martial.
- 1937 Received sentence of death. Execution was carried out in August, when he was fifty-five years old.

A List of Selected Works

- Kita Ikki Chosaku Shū* (Collected Works of Ikki Kita), two volumes, Tokyo, Misuzu-shobō, 1959.
- Volume I: *Kokutairon Oyobi Junsei Shakaishugi* (National Polity Theory and Pure Socialism)
- Volume II: *Shina Kakumei Gaishi* (Unofficial History of the Chinese Revolution)
Kokka Kaizō An Genri Taikō (An Outline of Principles for a Proposed Reconstruction of the State)
Nippon Kaizō Hōan Taikō (An Outline of Legislation for the Reconstruction of Japan)
Yoffe-kun ni oshiuru Kōkaijō (An Open Letter Addressed to Mr. Joffe)