

THE CONCEPT OF THE YAMATO RACE AND THE TANAKA MEMORIAL IN THE IDEOLOGY OF JAPANESE FASCISM

Leila (Ia) Khubashvili)

Doctor of Historical Sciences

Associate Professor at Tbilisi Ivane

Javakhsivili State University

Email: Leila.khubashvili@tsu.ge

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7784-4637>

Abstract. The twentieth century, in the words of Benito Mussolini, became the era of fascism; fascist ideology spread across Europe, the Americas, Britain, and Asia, and took on religious diversity, including Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox, so on. The aim of this article is to analyze the discourse on Japanese fascism, which in recent years has generated wide interest in both Japanese and Western historiography. Did fascism exist in Japan? There is a difference of opinion among historians on this issue. One group of Japanese scholars: Takashi, Takehiro, Takahi, as well as English-speaking scholars, Berger, Garon, Kasza, Brown, Duus, Szpilman, and Okimoto put forward the following arguments: (1) there was no mass fascist movement in Japan; (2) Japan did not have a charismatic leader characteristic of fascism; (3) there was no usurpation of power by fascists in Japan; (4) terrorist acts carried out in Japan at the time were inspired and funded by the state; (5) there was no corporatist system in Japan; and (6) Japan was regarded as a unique country not adequately explained by the traditional historical categories used to interpret other societies.

Japan was considered a fascist country not only by Marxists but also by other Japanese researchers: Kinzo, Hirozumi, Masao, Kiyotada, Tetsuo, and Yoshiaki. This idea is also supported by Bix, Gordon, Reynolds, and Tansman. They examine Japanese “imperial fascism”, analogous situations in Germany and Japan (the cult of power, permissiveness, national uniqueness, dictatorship, and the expansionist policy of the “Yamato race”), and refer to Japan as a “composite fascist state”. According to Reynolds, “an ideology based on the power of the emperor is a form of Japanese-style fascism”. Many researchers in the United States and the United Kingdom have identified a “culture of fascism” and a “fascist aesthetic” in relation to Japan’s modernization and the “management of crises via fascist methods”. At the same time, it is important to note the specific features of Japanese fascism, such as the following: (1) the flag of Japanese fascism, which represented not a party but the emperor; (2) Tanaka’s seven-stage plan; (3) the dominance of the Yamato master race in Asia; (4) the synthesis of the national religion – Shinto – and the samurai code of “bushidō”.

Some researchers have considered Japan to have been fascist since the 1930s and support this position with the following arguments: 1. The entire patriotic cult of militarist Japan was based on the worship of the emperor and service to him; he was regarded as the “Son of the Sun” and the highest authority in Shinto. Similarly, in the Japanese model of power, the emperor was important not as a person but as a function. 2. Emperor Hirohito was called the “Asian Hitler,” and he was not brought to trial largely because Tojo and other generals assumed full responsibility for the crimes. This was regarded as a manifestation of samurai ethics. 3. Japan had a corporatist system: the zaibatsu corporations existed even before the Shōwa era, and some of them – Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo – cooperated with the militarist government as successfully as Siemens, Thyssen, and Krupp in Germany. 4. Japan pursued the same objectives as the Axis powers: the redistribution of the world and the struggle against communism. 5. Japan employed genocidal methods in 1937, when approximately 500,000 people were killed in Nanjing. 6. Shinto played an important role in Japanese fascism, giving a dogmatic character to the concept of Japanese uniqueness. 7. The Japanese

Kyokujitsu-ki flag is still perceived as a swastika in China and Korea. 8. In Japan, the role of a fascist party was fulfilled by military personnel, officers, and generals. 9. The ideology of Japanese fascism was implemented by the fascist organization "Imperial Rule Assistance Association" (1940–1945), founded by Prime Minister Prince Konoe after Japan joined the Axis powers.

Ultimately, a historical analysis of fascism reveals that the debate over Japanese fascism will persist for a considerable time.

Keywords: Japan, Neponism, Shinto, fascism, Tanaka.

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Introduction. The aim of this article is to discuss and present, on the basis of comparative analysis, the most widespread ideology of the 20th century—fascism—and, in the interest of this research, the discourse related to Japanese fascism, including the concept of the Yamato race and the differences of opinion related to the Tanaka Memorial (Memorandum). Religion played an important role in both fascism and Nazism. The Nazis were primarily pagan, although ecumenical Christianity was also characteristic of Nazism. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Austrian, and Latin American fascism had a pronounced Catholic character, while Greek and Romanian fascism exhibited a militant Orthodox orientation. Japanese fascists, in contrast, were Shintoists. The goal of Japanese fascists was to establish a military dictatorship and pursue foreign political expansion. Their ideology, based on the concept of Nipponism, emphasized Japan's special divine mission and the superiority of the Yamato race. Japanese ideology also developed the so-called "Pan-Asian doctrine," the main slogan of which was "Asia for Asians". This doctrine was especially popular within high military circles, which believed that Japan should lead a "race war" for the emancipation. The doctrine was propagated through the press across Japan and was incorporated into kindergarten and school publications. Known as the Tanaka Memorial (田中上奏文, *Tanaka Jōsōbun*), it was published in September 1931 in the journal *China Critic* and caused a major political uproar. General Tada published a political thesis stating, "The Asian race must be united." Although the Japanese government denied the existence of the Tanaka Memorial, its expansionist policies closely resembled the strategies outlined in the document.

Methodology. In recent decades, interest in the problem of Japanese fascism has grown significantly in both Japanese and Western historiography. A key question in this debate is whether Japan can be considered a fascist state. Two groups of historians have emerged on this issue: one argues that Japan was not a fascist state, while the other maintains that it was. We used historicism and comparative-critical analysis to assess these views and present our arguments in the conclusion.

Discussion. When discussing Japanese fascism, we must first consider the foundations and causes of the emergence of fascism as an ideology. The birthplace of fascism is Italy. The basis of fascist ideology represents racism, chauvinism, and aggressive geopolitical doctrines that arose before the birth of fascism for domestic policy purposes. Its characteristics included the strictest government, which relied on military violence, militarism, a system of mass terror and repression, the cult of the leader, and social demagoguery; foreign policy was expansionist and aggressive, characterized by wars of conquest, the ignoring of international law, and other measures. It was also expressed in the genocide of peoples.

Fascist ideas were concentrated in the Nazi image of power, as expressed in Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle," 1925). The first fascist organization was founded in Italy in 1925 by Benito Mussolini and soon spread throughout the world. In the 1930s, fascism became prominent in Italy, Germany (where it

developed into Nazism), Portugal, Spain, Eastern and Central Europe, as well as in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, and others.

The First World War and the Russian Socialist Revolution led to the activation of communist parties. The shadow of communism loomed heavily on the world map. In 1920, when Italy was facing the threat of a communist coup, Mussolini declared that fascism was the force that could stop and defeat communism. The Duce became an idol for the Italians because he saved the country from Bolshevism and paved the way for it to become Rome's heir. The ideology of fascism was characterized by totalitarianism, the glorification of one's own language and culture, the primacy of the state and nation, the emphasis on obedience and self-sacrifice, and the elevation of war as an expression of the greatness of the people. It can be said that Mussolini instilled in Italians a sense of pride and purpose. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that both fascism and Nazism were a resuscitation of the dignity that perceived to be damaged in the First World War. That is why Mussolini's words sounded so natural: "The 20th century is the era of fascism." Fascism was intended to serve as a counterweight to communism. This led to the formation of fascist parties around the world. Fascist doctrines also spread to countries such as Brazil and Argentina.

The Franco dictatorship was established in Spain, Salazar's in Portugal, and similar regimes emerged elsewhere. It can be said that, at that time, there were three main types of fascism: Italian fascism, German Nazism, and Spanish Francoism. These three are often grouped as classical fascism, while other variants are considered non-classical (Tapacov, 2003). However, the differences among these regimes are substantial, and this division should be seen as conditional. I will briefly discuss the countries under fascist regimes, beginning with Portugal, where Salazar's dictatorship lasted almost half a century.

The Estado Novo (also referred to as the Second Portuguese Republic), officially known as the Portuguese Republic, was a dictatorial, authoritarian, autocratic, and corporatist political regime that existed for 41 years (1933–1974). The main ideologist was Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar.

Spain was ruled by Francisco Franco's dictatorship, known as Francoism, from 1939 to 1975. Franco supported Falangism until the mid-1940s. The first phase of the regime, known as "Franco's First Regime", can be characterized as fascist or quasi-fascist and totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian, while the subsequent system was rather authoritarian-conservative.

Austrofascism, a right-wing totalitarian ideology in Austria, was established by Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in 1933–1934 and lasted until the Anschluss in 1938. Its characteristic ideas included Austrian nationalism, clerical fascism, political and social Catholicism, national conservatism, right-wing populism, corporatism, Christian nationalism, and dominionism. The term "Austrofascism" is commonly used by left-wing historians and politicians in Austria and Germany. The state was officially called the Federal State of Austria. Dollfuss's regime largely modeled its practices on the Italian state structure during Mussolini's rule, which is why the regime came to be known as Austrofascism (this term was introduced by the leader of the Social Democrats Otto Bauer).

In 1934, the Heimwehr, followers of Italian fascism, briefly came to power in Austria, but the Nazis staged a putsch and assassinated Chancellor Dollfuss. Ultimately, the period ended with the Anschluss of Austria (Dreidemy, 2014).

In 1920, the communist regime in Hungary was overthrown and a kingdom was declared. The country was headed by a regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy. During World War II, Budapest joined the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, but after the defeat at Stalingrad, Horthy turned to the Allies. After the pro-Nazi coup of October 15, 1944, in which SS units under the command of Otto Skorzen participated, power passed into the hands of dictator Ferenc Szalasz and his party, the Crossed Arrows. Szalasz was proclaimed regent of Hungary. The parliament awarded him the title of Leader of the Nation. Szalasz was an idealist and blindly believed that

only national socialism could save humanity. His dictatorial regime was characterized by brutal repression against Roma and Jews. The battles of March 1945 in the Lake Balaton region brought Budapest liberation from Nazism and Soviet tyranny (Тарасов, 2003).

In France, in the pre-war period and during World War II, several different fascisms competed with each other: the French variant of the Italian "Francisme", the French variant of Nazism "The French Popular Party", the French version of Francoism "The Cagoulards", and finally, the "original aristocratic-elitist, monarcho-fascism, the "Action Française", founded in 1899. The French Popular Party was a fascist party in France during the pre-war period and World War II. It pursued a strongly anti-communist policy. During the war and the Nazi occupation, it took a collaborationist stance and actively fought against the resistance movement.

Oswald Mosley was the leader of the fascists in Britain. The British Union of Fascists was a political group founded by Oswald Mosley in 1932, during the Great Depression in Britain. The Union became the largest fascist organization in Britain, and its activities had a significant impact on the socio-political life of the country in the 1930s. In 1936, the party changed its name to the British Union of Fascists and National Socialists, and in 1937 it became known simply as the British Union, existing under this name until 1940, when it was banned.

In Romania, the conflict between supporters of Italian fascism and the Nazis escalated into a civil war. Antonescu's forces and Horia Sima's Iron Guard fought each other. The Romanian ultranationalist party, the Iron Guard—also known as the Legion of the Archangel Michael and the Legionary Movement—was founded in 1927 by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. The party functioned as a paramilitary order, lived by a clerical-chivalric charter, and performed religious rituals. Its members were also called "Green Shirts" due to the color of their clothing.

Greek fascism is associated with the name of Ioannis Metaxas. The Prime Minister of Greece (1936–1941), Lieutenant General Ioannis Metaxas, founded the authoritarian, nationalist Fourth of August Regime, also known as the Dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas. Some modern historians characterize it as totalitarian and fascist, since Metaxas borrowed some ideas from Italian fascism, but the regime never became fully fascist and pursued a more pro-British and pro-French foreign policy than that of the Axis powers. After Metaxas' death in January 1941, the regime, which was unpopular with the people, collapsed and became completely dependent on the authority of the king.

As for Jewish fascism, Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda equated Zionism with racism and declared it to be modern fascism ("Fascism under the Blue Star," "Zionism Is Modern Fascism"). These ideas have been used in anti-Israel propaganda in the Arab world, including by Islamists, as well as by left-liberal ideologies and new anti-Semites. In the 1980s, the political movement Kach, founded in Israel by Rabbi Meir Kahane, was of a radical religious-nationalist nature. Its program included the forced transfer of all Arabs from the biblical Land of Israel and the annexation of territories controlled by Israel at the time (Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula), as well as the incorporation of elements of Jewish law (halakha) into Israeli legislation. From 1984 to 1988, the Kach movement was represented in the 11th Knesset by its founder, Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Russian fascism, as a type of nationalism, was formed in the 1930s and 1940s. It was characterized by sympathies for Italian fascism and German National Socialism, expressed in anti-communism and anti-Semitism. The roots of Russian fascism lie in the movements known in history as the Black Hundreds and the White Movement. It was widespread among circles of White émigrés living in Germany, Manchuria, and the United States. Some ideologists of the White Movement, such as I. Ilyin and V. Shulgin, welcomed the rise to power of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler and offered their comrades the fascist "method" as a way to fight

socialism, communism, and atheism. At the same time, they did not deny political repression and anti-Semitism and, in some cases, justified them (Tapacov, 2003).

Fascism also spread to the Americas. Brazilian Integralism was a political movement of fascist ideology, founded in October 1932 by the writer Plínio Salgado. The movement borrowed the main characteristics of Italian fascism. However, the Integralists, unlike their European counterparts, had a monarchist political orientation and rejected racism, which was reflected in their slogan, "Unity for all races and peoples." The party accepted people of different races, including Black Brazilians. Ultimately, the political program of Brazilian Integralism rejected Marxism and liberalism. Like European fascists, the Integralists relied on the middle class. They recruited many officers, especially in the navy. The attitude toward Jews was a subject of debate among party leaders: Salgado opposed anti-Semitism, while Gustavo Barroso, head of the Integralist Militia (a paramilitary force), was known for his anti-Semitic views.

The Argentine Fascist Party (PFA) was founded in 1932 by Italo-Argentines. The PFA was based on the ideological and doctrinal foundations of Italian fascism. In the 1930s, the party became a mass organization, especially in the city of Córdoba. Initially, the Córdoba faction of the Argentine Fascist Party was led by Nicolás Vitelli. From 1934, it was led by Nimio de Anquín, who adopted a nationalist course. In Córdoba, the PFA's main political allies were the Argentine Civic Legion and the Argentine Nationalist Movement "Affirmation of a New Argentina." The party ceased to exist in 1936 and was replaced by the National Fascist Union (UNF) (Tapacov, 2003).

It is noteworthy that forms of non-classical fascism are often associated with Thatcherism, Reaganomics, and the regime of Pinochet. Japan was no exception, which is the subject of my research.

Recently, in Japanese and Western historiography, the problem of Japanese fascism has attracted widespread interest. Does fascism exist in Japan? Two groups of historians argue over this issue. One group maintains that Japan was not a fascist state. Japanese researchers —Takashi, Takekihiro, and English-speaking scholars—Berger, Garon, Kasza, Brown, Duus, Szpilman, and Okimoto—support this view. They present the following arguments: 1. There was no mass fascist movement in Japan; 2. Japan did not have a charismatic leader typical of fascism; 3. There was no usurpation of power by fascists in Japan; 4. The terrorist acts that took place in Japan at this time were inspired and funded by the state; 5. There was no corporate system in Japan; 6. Japan is a unique country and was not affected by the traditional historical categories used to explain processes in other countries.

Japan was considered a fascist country not only by Marxists but also by other Japanese researchers: Kinzo, Hirozumi, Masao, Kyoto, Tetsuo, and Yoshiaki. This idea was also supported by Bix, Gordon, Reynolds, and Tansman. They discuss concepts such as "Imperial Fascism" and a "Composite Fascist State," as well as situations analogous to those in Germany and Japan (the cult of power, the permissiveness of everything, national uniqueness, dictatorship, and the expansionist policy of the "Yamato race").

According to the Japanese scholar Masao Maruyama, fascism in Italy and Germany was implemented from below, whereas in Japan it was imposed from above. According to Reynolds, "the ideology that built the emperor-centered government represents a form of fascism, Japanese in style." In the United States and Great Britain, many researchers argue that Japan's modernization has no connection with "fascism," "fascist culture," "fascist aesthetics," or "fascist methods in times of crisis" (Szpilman, 2011). Nonetheless, when discussing Japanese fascism, we cannot ignore the existence of organizations such as:

1. The "Association for the Support of the Throne" (Taisei Yokusankai, Japanese: 大政翼賛会) existed from 1940 to 1945. The organization was headed by successive prime ministers of Japan.

2. Tosei-Yes: The Tosei-ha ("Control Faction") group, led by Hideki Tojo, was actively involved in the fascistization of Japan. It included generals and army officers who supported the establishment of fascism in

the country and advocated an aggressive stance toward other nations. The members of the group were primarily politicians and military leaders. Tosei-ha sought to introduce politically conservative (moderate) elements into the army, in contrast to the radical and ultranationalist Kodo-ha. By 1940, the group had achieved this without changing the government, working in a “conservative” manner. Fascism thus became a national ideology without diminishing the role of monarchism.

3. Kōdōha: The Kōdōha (“Imperial Way Faction,” Japanese: 皇道派) was a radical and ultranationalist group within the Japanese army, often described as a war party. It primarily included members of the junior officer corps. The organization aimed to establish military rule and to promote totalitarian, militaristic, and expansionist ideals. The faction was founded by Sadao Araki and Jinzaburō Masaki. Japanese Prime Minister and Army General Hideki Tojo (1941–1944) was an active participant in Japan's discussions about the war in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. After Japan's defeat in World War II, he was found guilty of war crimes at the Tokyo trial of the International Tribunal for the Far East in 1946 and sentenced to death. He is venerated as a Shinto deity at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo; Tojo assumed the full weight of the emperor's responsibilities during the war, in accordance with the samurai code.

As for Hirohito, he was the 124th Emperor of Japan, reigning from 1926 to 1989. He conferred the motto of his reign, “Shōwa” (“Age of the Enlightened World”), upon the period of his rule. He held the position of Generalissimo of the Japanese Armed Forces and was awarded the honorary rank of British General in 1921, followed by the honorary rank of Field Marshal on June 26, 1930; this rank was later revoked in 1942. In 1979, following the overthrow of the monarchy in the Central African Empire, he became the only monarch in the world to hold the title of “Emperor”. Hirohito's reign, lasting 62 years, remains the longest in Japanese history. His reign brought about a fundamental transformation of Japanese society. Under his leadership, Japan developed military power in the first half of the 20th century, entered World War II, and conquered China and several other countries in Southeast Asia. After defeat in World War II and the American occupation of Japan, the emperor renounced divinity and lost power.

Ultimately, the specific characteristics of Japanese fascism can be formulated as follows:

1. The symbol of Japanese fascism represented not a party but the emperor;
2. Yamato higher race dominance in Asia;
3. National religion – Shinto and samurai, the idea of the code "Bushidō" synthesis;
4. Fascist organizations in Japan;
5. The so-called "Pan-Asian" doctrine, Tanaka's 7-step plan.

Let's consider it separately. From the history of Japan, it is known that it was created on the basis of the Yamato state formation, which arose in the Yamato region (modern Nara Prefecture) in the 3rd-4th centuries. Around the 6th century, the Yamato clan founded Japan's first and only dynasty, the Meiji Dynasty. In the 670s, Yamato's name was changed to Nippon "Japan". According to Japanese legend, the founder of the Yamato state was the sun goddess Amaterasu. She became the ancestor of the Japanese imperial family, and the first emperor Jimmu was her great-grandson. Therefore, the "Yamato race" (大和民族) was considered the descendants of the gods, pure-blooded Japanese, and defined the sense of racial pride of the Japanese as God's chosen people in the world, children of the sun.

The symbol of the Japanese flag is also represented by the sun. In modern Japan, the term “Yamato” (大和) or “Minzoku” (民族) may be considered outdated because it historically carried racial connotations. After World War II, following Japan's surrender, these terms were rejected in many circles. Today, the terms “Japanese people” or “Japanese-Japanese” are more commonly used, although these terms also have ambiguities regarding ethnicity and nationality. In Japan, official statistics count only nationality, not ethnicity, so the actual population of the Yamato people and their proportion of the total population is

unclear (История Японии, 1998, p. 15). The divinity of the Yamato race, Japanese national religion (Shinto), and the samurai code of Bushido together contributed to the ideological foundations of Japanese fascism. Shinto, which focuses on the worship of ancestral spirits, emphasizes religious practice rather than doctrine. After the Meiji Restoration, Shinto was incorporated into official ideology for a time, and the government used it to promote unity among the people and to assert the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture. Shinto has influenced both classical Japanese theater and modern popular culture. Notably, in 1869, Emperor Meiji established the Yasukuni Shrine, which is considered one of the ten most important Shinto shrines in Japan. The shrine is officially dedicated to the kami of the millions of men, women, children, and even pets who have died serving the emperors of Japan. As for Bushido (Japanese: "The Way of the Warrior"), it is a code of ethics for the samurai that originated in the 12th–13th centuries and was fully developed by the 16th–17th centuries. It was a set of rules, recommendations and norms of behavior for the samurai class, as of noble warriors, the code of ethics for the samurai.

For example, the requirements of Bushido include: unconditional loyalty to one's master; considering military affairs as the sole honorable profession of the samurai; committing suicide when a samurai's honor is violated; prohibitions against lying and attachment to money; living when life is appropriate and dying when death is necessary; moderation in food and avoidance of debauchery. A samurai was expected to be not only an exemplary son but also a loyal subordinate. In war, loyalty was demonstrated through the willingness to sacrifice one's life if duty demanded it. Loyalty, justice, and courage were regarded as the three fundamental virtues of a samurai. Japanese fascists were adherents of Shinto, and their goal was to establish a military dictatorship with control over foreign policy and political expansion. Particularly notable was Japanese fascism as an ideology based on Nipponism, which emphasized Japan's perceived divine mission to establish social harmony through a "unified family-state" ruled by the emperor and led by the Yamato people, considered a superior race in Asia. In short, Japanese fascism represented a synthesis of nationalist, militarist, and ideological elements.

Japanese ideology during the early twentieth century gave rise to the so-called "Pan-Asian Doctrine," whose central slogan was "Asia for Asians." This doctrine was particularly influential within the upper echelons of the military, whose members believed that Japan should initiate a "race war" under the guise of emancipation of people of colour. This doctrine was propagated by the press throughout Japan. It was taught in kindergartens and school publications.

Few documents from recent history have provoked as much controversy as the so-called "Tanaka Memorial," which circulated during that period. The "document" is perhaps a misnomer, since the original (assuming it ever existed) was never seen by anyone who would acknowledge its existence. The Memorial is purportedly a 13,000-word secret petition that Prime Minister Baron Tanaka Giitō presented to Emperor Hirohito on July 25, 1927. It outlined a program of economic penetration into Manchuria, China, and Mongolia that would prepare Japan for the subjugation of Asia and Europe. After its discovery by the Chinese in 1929, the document gained worldwide recognition in the 1930s. Despite fierce Japanese objections and denials of responsibility, it was translated and distributed in Europe and the United States. However, following Japan's surrender, Allied war crimes investigators conducted extensive searches for incriminating documents to verify the Tanaka Memorial. Despite large-scale research into Japanese archives, no relevant projects or copies of an 'original' document were ever found (Hoyt, 2001, p. 62). As mentioned above, the 1927 Japanese strategic planning document known as the "Tanaka Memorial" is attributed to General Tanaka Giichi (1864–1929), the 26th Prime Minister as well as Foreign and Colonial Minister of Japan. In this document, he explicitly stated that the basis of Japanese foreign policy was expansion against China, the

USSR, and other states to achieve world domination. He allegedly presented Emperor Hirohito with a strategy for global conquest that can be summarized as follows:

1. To conquer the world, Japan must first conquer Asia.
2. To conquer Asia, Japan must first conquer China.
3. To conquer China, Japan must take control of Manchuria and Mongolia.
4. Once China is conquered, the rest of Asia and the maritime countries will fear Japan and surrender.

Then the world will recognize that East Asia belongs to Japan.

The Tanaka Memorial was first published in the December 1929 issue of the Chinese publication 時事月報 (Monthly Current Affairs) in Nanjing, a Nationalist Chinese journal. On September 24, 1931, it was published in the English-language periodical *China Critic*, which was based in Shanghai. The Memorial's original text is in Chinese. Because its first edition was written in Chinese, some Japanese historians have attributed it to Chinese sources (Schechter, 2003, p. 8). According to some authors, the document was forged by the Soviet Union in China and Japan during the interwar period as part of an effort to advance Soviet interests (Stephan, 1973, p. 740).

These two theories are not mutually exclusive. This is because the Chinese Communist Party was under the control of the Soviet Union as a Comintern member. During the 1930s, Soviet politics depicted Japanese expansionism as a threat and used propaganda to support war efforts. The memorial was first translated into English in the United States by the Communist Party and published in the magazine *The Internationale* in the December 1931 issue. Later, it was reprinted in book format (Stephan, 1973). In 1939, Peter Fleming asserted that he had created an "update" to the Tanaka Memorial by composing a fictional account of a secret Allied strategy conference attended by Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek and intentionally passing it to the Japanese. This incident demonstrates that the British were aware the Tanaka Memorial was a forgery before the outbreak of World War II. While the Tanaka Memorial is often treated as a genuine document in newspapers and school textbooks published in China, most Western historians agree that it is a forgery. An English translation of the document circulated from 1934 and, in February of the same year, served as the basis for an article published by Herbert V. Armstrong in the first issue of his magazine *The Plain Truth*. However, the document had first appeared earlier, in 1931, in the less widely circulated magazine *The Internationale*, published by the Communist Party.

The Tanaka Memorial was widely presented in the United States as war propaganda, often likened to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as a representation of Japanese ambitions. It appeared in Frank Capra's Oscar-winning film series, including *Prelude to War*, *Why We Fight*, and *The Battle of China*, where the Memorial was described as outlining Japan's strategic plan for war against the Allied powers. The Tanaka Memorial was also featured in the film *Know Your Enemy: Japan*, another Capra wartime production, where it was used to illustrate Japan's expansionist policies. According to the portrayal in these films, achieving Japan's objectives required a series of five consistent steps: 1. Conquest of Manchuria; 2. Conquest of China. 3. Conquest of the Soviet Union or Siberia. 4. Establishment of strategic bases across the Pacific. 5. Conquest of the United States.

It is true that today scholars do not consider the Memorial authentic. However, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Tanaka Memorial was widely regarded as genuine because Japan's expansionist policies in Southeast Asia and the Pacific appeared to align closely with the plans described in the document, giving the impression that its authenticity was confirmed as of 1931. The Mukden Incident took place in 1931, the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Japan's battles in China in 1939, the Japanese invasion of French Indochina in 1940, and the attack on Pearl Harbor, followed by the Pacific War in 1941 (Beasley, 1991, p. 185). Historian Barak Kushner declares: "There were several critical historical mistakes in the Tanaka Memorial that clearly demonstrate it

is a fake, but the fact that the message overlapped with Japan's general aims to militarily subdue China coincided with the belief elsewhere that the Memorial was genuine" (Kushner, 2015, p. 173).

It is interesting to consider what Moscow thought about the Memorial, which included plans for the conquest of the Soviet Union. In this regard, the 1940 report by Leon Trotsky is noteworthy, particularly regarding how the document was allegedly leaked. Trotsky observed:

"It is hard to understand why Moscow, which is best informed on this matter, persists in maintaining silence about the Tanaka Memorial. The original photographic copy was received in Moscow under circumstances precluding any doubts whatever about its authenticity. This remarkable document was sent abroad, i.e., to the United States from Moscow, from the Kremlin. The authenticity of the document is strangely enough suspect even today. Moscow keeps quiet... I ask myself: Why didn't I relate this episode before, an episode which throws light on one of the most important political documents of modern history? It was simply because no occasion arose for it. In the interval between the meeting of the Political Bureau in 1925 when the question of the Tanaka document first came up, and the period when I found myself in exile abroad and had the opportunity of following international affairs more accurately – in this interval there intervened the years of the cruel internal struggle, arrest, exile to Central Asia, and then Turkey. The Tanaka document remained dormant in the recesses of my memory. The course of events in the Far East in recent years has corroborated the Tanaka program to such a degree as to preclude any doubts about the authenticity of this document" (Trotsky, 1941 (2008)).

In 1940, a journalist and popular historian Edwin P. Hoyt wrote that "of what Prime Minister Tanaka had said and what the supernationalists had been saying for months." (Hoyt, 2001, p. 62). According to Iris Chang, the Japanese government's intense internal divisions would have prevented any such plan from being carried out. Historian Meirion Harries wrote that the Tanaka Memorial "was one of the most successful 'dirty tricks' of the twentieth century – a bogus document so brilliantly conceived that thirty years later Westerners were still taken in by it". Japan National Defense Academy International Relationships Diplomacy And War History Professor, Doctor Haruo Tohmatsu, states that "The 'Tanaka Memorial' never existed, but the Dalian conference of that year adopted resolutions that reflected these ideas" (Tohmatsu, 2004, p. 18). Similarly, historian William G. Beasley states that "the nature of this document, as published variously in English and Chinese, does not carry conviction as to its authenticity". (Beasley, 1991, p. 185) According to Holt and Schecter, in the summer of 1927 (June 27 - July 7), Tanaka Invited "Far Eastern Conference" Japan Foreign Affairs Ministry, Army Ministry of Maritime Affairs Forces Ministry and Finance Ministry with members. Rather than resulting in a detailed plan for world domination, the conference reached a general agreement that Japan should back the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) government in its conflict with the Chinese Communists. This support was conditional on persuading General Zhang Zuolin to unify his territory into a nearly autonomous Manchuria, which would act as a buffer state and eventually come under Japanese control. Researchers suggest that the Tanaka Memorial may have been a secret record of this meeting. (Holt, 2007, p. 298)

Conclusion. Thus, in conclusion, I argue that Japan during the period under discussion can be characterized as a fascist state. It was part of the triumvirate of the "Axis" countries in World War II and, like Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, had a concordat with the Vatican. In addition, I fully agree with those scholars who consider Japan to have exhibited fascist characteristics since the 1930s. This argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Emperor Hirohito was called the "Asian Hitler" and was not tried. Just because Tojo and the other generals took full responsibility for the crimes, this was a manifestation of the samurai ethic. It should be emphasized that the entire patriotic spirit of militaristic Japan. The cult is built on the worship of the emperor

and his service, not as a person, but as a "Son of the Sun" and the highest hierarch of Shintoism. In the Japanese model of power, the emperor is also important not as a personality, but also as a function.

2. Corporate system: in Japan The corporate association " Zaibatsu" emerged before the Shōwa era, and some of them: Mitsubishi, Mitsui, and Sumitomo, with the same success, collaborated with militarist authorities, such as Siemens, Thyssen, and Krupp in Germany.

3. Japan had the same goals as the Axis powers: the redistribution of the world, the fight against communism.

4. Japan used genocidal methods as early as 1937, when approximately 500,000 people were killed in Nanjing.

5. Shinto played an important role in Japanese fascism, which gave a dogmatic character to the concept of Japanese exceptionalism.

6. The Japanese flag of Kyokujitsu is still perceived in China and Korea as a swastika.

7. The role of the fascist party was carried out by the Japanese armed forces.

8. He was the implementer of the ideology of Japanese fascism. The fascist organization "Association for the Assistance of the Throne" (1940-1945), which The Prime Minister, Prince Konoe Founded soon after Japan joined the "Axis" joined. The peak of fascist influence was the rule of Konoe from 1937-1939 and In 1940-1941.

Finally, in the process of modern globalization, when ideologies buried in the twentieth century have re-emerged in the form of neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, neo-Marxism, neo-Liberalism, and others, a historical analysis of fascism suggests that debates about fascism in Japan will continue for a long time. Thus, even today, long time after its publication, the memorial remains a controversial and disputed document.

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