

Introduction

In 1934, a Japanese businessman in Osaka hit upon a clever advertising gimmick. He applied to trademark “Hitler” in the Latin alphabet and Japanese kana as a brand name for bicycles and tricycles. The Patent Office publicized his application in early June. Within days, the German Embassy reacted to the taking of the Führer’s name in vain by asking the Japanese Foreign Ministry to intervene. It invoked Japanese laws barring trademarks that infringed personal names or might disrupt public order. It asserted that Chancellor Adolf Hitler had not authorized such use of his name. Moreover, “in Germany the name ‘Hitler’ enjoys a reputation and profound veneration that far exceeds the typical significance attached to the name of a leading statesman. Approving the registration would thus provoke widespread resentment in Germany . . . but also upset Japan’s international relations.”¹ The embassy pressed its case in person the next month and designated its general counsel to follow up.² It reported to Berlin in November that the application had been rejected and the issue resolved.³

This book explores how nationalists in Japan and Germany became mutual admirers in the 1930s. The Hitler bicycle affair is a small but telling illustration of Germany and Japan’s political and cultural entanglements before their entente through the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936. It also exemplifies two major arguments of this book. First, many Japanese shared Germans’ excitement about Hitler. The word Hitler was evidently popular enough in Japan to be considered a marketing ploy. The bicycle maker proposed the trademark not to offend but to claim a valuable brand from fellow Japanese admirers of Hitler. I argue that this admiration is evidence of a “transnational Nazism” that enabled Japanese and Germans to identify with each other and imagine a binational

¹ Bundesarchiv (hereafter: BArch), R 43II/1454, German Embassy’s *note verbale* to Japanese Foreign Ministry, June 12, 1934.

² BArch, R 43II/1454, Herbert von Dirksen to Foreign Office, July 27, 1934.

³ BArch, R 43II/1454, Willy Noebel to Foreign Office, November 21, 1934.

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community before their governments forged the alliance. Transnational Nazism was an ideological outlook. Its Nazism centered on Hitler's personality and elemental National Socialism as a worldview that combined emphasis on the nation and communal sharing of benefits and sacrifice. This Nazism was transnational because Hitler and his messages resonated with non-Germans on the one hand, and because German Nazis and their movement allowed for the limited accommodation of non-Aryan foreigners, in this case the Japanese, on the other. Transnational Nazism's emergence in both countries was eased by reciprocal cultural appreciation in their media throughout the interwar era.⁴

This last point brings forth the second major argument: words and activities in civil society helped shape German-Japanese mutual perceptions and so promote transnational Nazism. Christening bicycles, a luxury good, "Hitler" was meant to be honorific and convey Hitler's atypical significance; other models included "Hegemon" and "Tokyo Fuji."⁵ But the bicycle maker's clumsy, even if sincere, adulation did not amuse German officialdom. The Third Reich could not countenance any profaning of the "Hitler myth" and touchily defended the Führer's honor, even against an irreverent but harmless commercial appropriation far away.⁶ Yet Germany only had tenuous control of Hitler's image in Japan because Japan also invested words with importance. The embassy had to act indirectly through politely petitioning the foreign ministry and citing domestic laws. In denying the registration, the patent office conceded the violation of an individual's name, but not the transnational disorder that naming rides after the Führer would allegedly spark.

Public discourse and perceptions mattered in interwar Japanese-German relations because few could afford firsthand interactions. To move between the countries, one needed 46 hours on an experimental flight, 102 hours on a zeppelin, 12 days by rail, two weeks via Lufthansa, or one to two months by ship.⁷ A Friedrichshafen to Tokyo ticket on the

⁴ There appears to be only one other use of "transnational Nazism," defined as "a dialogue between Nazism's classic form (Nazi Germany) and its various reformulations." Rebecca Wennberg, "Ideological Incorrectness Beyond 'Political Religion': Discourse on Nazi Ideology among Scandinavian National Socialist Intellectuals" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2015), 159–160. This definition approximates mine in that Japanese commentators attempted to interpret Nazism. But it also differs because German and Japanese Nazis did not debate ideological correctness.

⁵ *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* (hereafter: TA), June 8, 1933.

⁶ Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Rudolph Herzog, *Dead Funny: Humor in Hitler's Germany*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Melville House, 2011).

⁷ Joachim Wachtel, *As Time Flies By: The History of Lufthansa since 1926*, rev. ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Lufthansa AG, 2002), 44–47; Deutsche Lufthansa AG Firmenarchiv, "Lufthansa pioneers paved the way to the Far East," 1959.

zeppelin in 1929 cost almost ¥20,000, or 38,000 Reichsmark (RM).⁸ Junior office workers in Japan and Germany earned about ¥70 and 150 RM monthly in the 1930s.⁹ Steamships were more common but their prices were still prohibitive. On the day the zeppelin landed near Tokyo, Norddeutscher Lloyd advertised its 55-day service from Yokohama to Hamburg on the “intermediate class” for around ¥500.¹⁰ Germans could travel to Japan and China, “from time immemorial full of mysteries to us Europeans,” on the tourist class of Canadian Pacific in 1934 for approximately 770 RM.¹¹ Hamburg America Line offered a discount fare of roughly 270 RM for passengers’ “colored domestic help” in 1939; European servants counted as family members and so were charged full prices.¹² The Trans-Siberian Railway, since reopening for international traffic in 1927, was touted by the Soviet travel agency Intourist as “the shortest, most comfortable and cheapest way between Europe and the Far East” with “considerably reduced fares.”¹³ Still, intercontinental rail journeys were expensive. An unpadded cot on an eastbound train in 1935 set one back about 370 RM, a padded berth 590 RM, and a bed 630–870 RM, while the westbound third, second, and first classes cost ¥333, ¥600, and ¥877.¹⁴ The higher westbound fares indicate that demand for traffic from Japan to Europe was heavier than vice versa.

Germans and Japanese could connect through words – handwritten, spoken, or printed – but long distances hampered communications too. Sending a postcard from Japan to Germany via the zeppelin cost ¥2.50 and a letter ¥5.00.¹⁵ Regular international mail cost as little as ¥0.20 but moved only as fast and frequently as surface transportation.¹⁶ Telegraph was typically reserved for exigencies, commerce, or government

⁸ *Yomiuri shinbun* (hereafter: Y), August 22, 1929.

⁹ Obama Toshie, “Shoninkyū shirabe,” *Chūō kōron* 45, no. 7 (1930): 295–301; Landesarchiv Berlin A Rep 001–02/1278, Grundvergütung in Jahres- und Monatssätzen für Angestellte im Alter von mehr als 20 Jahren, June 23, 1938.

¹⁰ *The Japan Times and Mail* (hereafter: JTM), August 19, 1929.

¹¹ *Über Kanada nach Ostasien und Australien: Der neue Expresßdienst mit Riesenschnelldampfern* (Hamburg: Canadian Pacific, 1934), 3, 13–14.

¹² *Überfahrts- und Gepäckbestimmungen: Ostasien, Niederländisch-Indien, Australien* (Hamburg: Hamburg-Amerika-Linie, 1939), 5–6.

¹³ Intourist, *Der transsibirische Express ist der kürzeste, bequemste und billigste Weg zwischen Europa und dem fernen Osten* (Moscow: Wneschtorgisdats, 1935), 6–7; JTM, June 24, 1935.

¹⁴ Westbound ticket prices dropped to ¥313, ¥499, and ¥713 in 1937. *The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book 1937* (Tokyo: The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book Co., 1937), front leaf.

¹⁵ TA, August 22, 1929.

¹⁶ Shūkan Asahi, ed., *Nedanshi nenpyō: Meiji Taishō Shōwa* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1988), 26.

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business. Technology enabled conversations across continents by 1935, but at a price.¹⁷ To facilitate year-end greetings in 1935 and 1936, the Japanese Communications Ministry cut telephone rates to Europe by half, so the first three minutes of a call to Berlin cost just ¥50.¹⁸ Of course, these stipulations applied only to the privileged few with acquaintances abroad. Those without personal ties had to settle for two-way radio broadcasts, available from late 1933. Audience sizes were limited by radio prices, then about ¥50 in Japan and up to 400 RM in Germany before the Nazi regime introduced the “People’s Receiver” starting at 35 RM.¹⁹ Western classical music permeated the programming because few Japanese and even fewer Germans understood each other’s language.

Space, time, and money made mass media the primary tool with which Japanese and Germans related to each other. Opinion makers with command of foreign knowledge and the means to propagate their views influenced their countrymen’s mutual impressions – the bicycle maker must have been swayed by the Japanese media’s portrayals of Hitler. It may seem doubtful that words could paper over the gulf separating the nations, but such leaps of imagination are actually performed rather blithely. The phrase “German-Japanese” visually and conceptually bridges the two with a hyphen. At once convenient and dangerous because of its power to condense distance, the hyphen can summarize transnational bonds (personal, cultural, ideological, commercial, etc.) but also mask difficulties, ambiguities, contradictions, and transformations in interactions. Tokyo and Berlin were so mindful of public words and perceptions that each put itself first in its version of the “Japanese-German/German-Japanese Agreement against the Communist International.”

As the bicycle maker’s scheme suggests, many Germans and Japanese were already united by their enthusiasm for Hitler before and independently of their governments’ compact. Both states had long guarded diplomacy as a prerogative. But conditions in Taisho Japan and Weimar Germany were especially conducive to the proliferation of public rhetoric and imagery that affected popular views of the world and even foreign relations. Political liberalization, cultural experimentation, and technological innovation in the 1920s and early 1930s created an opening for

¹⁷ JTM, March 1, 1935.

¹⁸ TA, December 12, 1935; TA, December 16, 1936, evening edition (hereafter: EE).

¹⁹ Morinaga Takurō, *Bukka no bunkashi jiten: Meiji Taishō Shōwa Heisei* (Tokyo: Tenbōsha, 2009), 214; Wolfgang Schneider, ed., *Alltag unter Hitler* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2000), 78; Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919–1945, Volume 2: State, Economy and Society 1933–1939* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 192.

civil society to engage in public affairs. Neither in Germany nor Japan could the authoritarian regime of the 1930s shut that door completely. Official neglect of bilateral ties until the Anti-Comintern Pact left latitude for determined individuals and organizations to advance their foreign-policy agendas, maintain contacts abroad, and conduct foreign relations. Whether in the democratic 1920s or the authoritarian 1930s, access to foreign knowledge and mass media was also a tool for international liaisons.

Opinion makers' discourse and activities in both countries reflected and propagated transnational Nazism. In Japan, the media shifted from appreciating Germany to admiring Hitler and his ideology in the early 1930s as the Nazi movement expanded and attained power. Commentators emerged from previous indifference toward Germany, converted from the political left, or radicalized from the traditional right to promote rapprochement with the Third Reich. Before 1933, journalists across the ideological spectrum already obsessed over a rightist Germany and downplayed Weimar's achievements. From 1933, successive newspapers abandoned misgivings about Nazism to lionize the Führer and gravitate toward Germany's viewpoints. Pamphleteers catering to the masses embraced Nazi populism wholeheartedly, while lecturers speaking to the elites found Nazi anticommunism reassuring. Authors and translators imported German knowledge in all fields. As Nazism gained currency, publishers inaugurated a trend in nonfiction about Nazi deeds and in Hitler biographies. And linguists, already overwhelmingly partial to a conservative Germany, increasingly incorporated Nazi-speak in language textbooks from the mid-1930s. The Japanese media succumbed to Hitler and Nazism's appeal much as the Germans did: a galvanized minority acclaimed the Führer; ever more conservatives and centrists joined the approving chorus; and only diminishing leftist outlets remained hostile. The media celebrated Nazi exploits even if they did not benefit Japan. Thrilled by Nazi attacks on liberal democracy, communism, and capitalism, many pundits missed the rhetoric's racist undertones and only superficially grasped the content of National Socialism. Overt Nazi racism was sporadically criticized, deemed inapplicable to Japan, or simply ignored.

In Germany, transnational Nazism took shape as Japan's elevation to a respectable, nuanced, and visible niche within the Nazi worldview and Nazified public sphere. The media affirmed Japan's status as a great power like Germany throughout the interwar era. But in the last Weimar years, domestic polarization began to fuse with external affairs and politicize attitudes toward East Asia: leftists sympathized with China while rightists sided with Japan. At the Nazi regime's outset, the media

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replaced a generally apolitical, positive stance toward Japan with ideological partisanship. Formerly fringe voices that heroized Japan and urged collaboration entered the mainstream or semi-officialdom. Before 1933, newspapers of different political leanings covered Japan as a noteworthy nation. From 1933, the Nazi-dominated press cheered Japanese aggression and challenges to the Versailles–Washington system. Interwar German film tended to present a stereotyped vision of Japan. But Third Reich cinema magnified aspects of Japanese culture that aligned with the Nazi glorification of war, martial ethos, and masculinity. Popular and academic nonfiction articulated Japan favorably and described modern traits familiar to Germans. Writers influenced by Nazism selectively highlighted this modernity and old clichés as proof of the two peoples’ shared characters and destinies. And voluntary associations founded to foster civil society bonds mutated under Nazi rule into power-hungry organizations lobbying for Japan and themselves. Nazi media outlets demarcated a position for Japan within their *weltanschauung* by praising its racial purity and admitting its superiority to Germany in certain areas.

Transnational Nazism contributes to several historiographies. The history of German–Japanese convergence deserves and has attracted attention. Ever since the Anti-Comintern Pact, interpreters of the entente have underscored the members’ similarity. Contemporary Japanese and German publicists boasted of common values and struggles.²⁰ Critics branded the two regimes equally cynical and mutually exploitative.²¹ The American wartime documentary *Why We Fight* declared of the Axis: “Although these countries are far apart and different in custom and in language, the same poison made them much alike.”²² Postwar trials, memoirs, and opening of records provided sources for diplomatic histories that remain standards today.²³ Written in the totalitarian theory’s

²⁰ Erin L. Brightwell, “Refracted Axis: Kitayama Jun’yū and Writing a German Japan,” *Japan Forum* 27, no. 4 (2015): 431–453; Danny Orbach, “Japan through SS Eyes: Cultural Dialogue and Instrumentalization of a Wartime Ally,” *Yōroppa kenkyū* 7 (2008): 115–132.

²¹ Freda Utley, “Germany and Japan,” *The Political Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1937): 51–65; Freda Utley, *Japan’s Feet of Clay* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937).

²² *Why We Fight: Prelude to War*, dir. Frank Capra, Department of War, 1943; Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 157–159.

²³ F. C. Jones, *Japan’s New Order in East Asia: Its Rise and Fall, 1937–45* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954); Frank Iklé, *German–Japanese Relations, 1936–1940* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1956); Ernst L. Presseisen, *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy, 1933–1941* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958); Theo Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten, 1935–1940: Vom Antikominternpakt zum Dreimächtepakt, eine Studie zur diplomatischen Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1962); Haruki Takeshi, *Sangoku Dōmei*

heyday, several such histories describe the two states' diplomacy as similarly authoritarian. Other scholars, often but not only Marxists, argue that both regimes were fascist.²⁴ Since social history's rise in the 1960s, the "latecomer" theory identifies Italy, Germany, and Japan as late modernizing, "have-not" upstarts that jointly assaulted the entrenched empires.²⁵ From the 1970s, neorealists in international relations further reduce differences among nations by treating them as quantitatively defined "like units."²⁶ After new diplomatic history's emergence in the 1980s, researchers have been examining culture's role in Japanese-German rapprochement through public opinion, ideology, and knowledge transfer.²⁷

But narratives that revolve around the diplomatic alliance and attribute it to national commonalities can introduce a hindsight bias and skew our

no hyōka (Tokyo: Aoyama Gakuin Daigaku Hōgakukai, 1964); Johanna Menzel Meskill, *Hitler and Japan: The Hollow Alliance* (New York: Atherton Press, 1966); Miyake Masaki, *Nichi-Doku-I Sangoku Dōmei no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Nansōsha, 1975).

²⁴ Karl Drechsler, *Deutschland-China-Japan, 1933-1939: Das Dilemma der deutschen Fernostpolitik* ([East] Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964); Xunhou Peng, *China in the World Anti-Fascist War* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2005).

²⁵ Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Robert A. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan: The Failure of the First Attempt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), 396–397; Peter Weber-Schäfer, "Verspätete Demokratie: Parlamentarismus in Japan und Deutschland," in *Japan und Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Klaus Kracht, Bruno Lewin, and Klaus Müller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984), 137–149; Mark R. Thompson, "Japan's 'German Path' and Pacific Asia's 'Flying Geese,'" *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38, no. 5 (2010): 697–715; Akira Kudō, Nobuo Tajima, and Erich Pauer, eds., *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers on the World Stage, 1890-1945*, 3 vols. (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009). Curiously, the original, Japanese, edition of the last work does not mention "latecomers": see Kudō Akira and Tajima Nobuo, eds., *Nichi-Doku kankeishi 1890-1945*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2008).

²⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

²⁷ Josef Kreiner, ed., *Deutschland-Japan: Historische Kontakte* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1984); Nakano Yoshiyuki, *Doisujin ga mita Nihon: Doisujin no Nihonkan keisei ni kansuru shiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sanshūsha, 2005); Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich, eds., *Japanese-German Relations, 1895-1945: War, Diplomacy and Public Opinion* (London: Routledge, 2006); John W. M. Chapman, *Ultranationalism in German-Japanese Relations, 1930-45: From Wenneker to Sasakawa* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2011); Nichi-Doku Kōryūshi Henshū Inkaï, ed., *Nichi-Doku kōryū 150-nen no kiseki* (Tokyo: Yūshōdō Shoten, 2013); Qinna Shen and Martin Rosenstock, eds., *Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Joanne Miyang Cho, Lee Roberts, and Christian W. Spang, eds., *Transnational Encounters between Germany and Japan: Perceptions of Partnership in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Sven Saaler, Akira Kudō, and Nobuo Tajima, eds., *Mutual Perceptions and Images in Japanese-German Relations, 1860-2010* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

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understanding of German-Japanese relations overall. Many works confine their accounts of the entente's origins to the span of the Third Reich's existence.²⁸ The years between the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 and the Tripartite Pact in 1940 enjoy particularly dense coverage.²⁹ The individuals directly responsible for the Anti-Comintern Pact, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Ōshima Hiroshi, and even those marginally involved, the geopolitics theorist Karl Haushofer and the military intelligence chief Wilhelm Canaris, are topics of books.³⁰ In contrast, socio-economic studies take a decades-long view beginning in the late nineteenth century, when Germany's impact on Japanese Westernization was palpable and both powers pursued aggressive imperialism. They then skip to the mid-1930s, when talks and moves toward cooperation intensified.³¹ Whether seen from the short- or long-term perspective, a narrow topical focus on the strategic partnership enhances an appearance of historical inevitability or teleological determinism on the route to joint Japanese-German world domination.

²⁸ Gerhard Krebs and Bernd Martin, eds., *Formierung und Fall der Achse Berlin-Tōkyō* (Munich: Iudicium Verlag, 1994); Bill Maltarich, *Samurai and Supermen: National Socialist Views of Japan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005); Iwamura Masashi, *Senzen Nihonjin no tai Doitsu ishiki* (Tokyo: Keiō Gijyū Daigaku Shuppankai, 2005); Till Philip Koltermann, *Der Untergang des Dritten Reiches im Spiegel der deutsch-japanischen Kulturbegegnung 1933–1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009); Hans-Joachim Bieber, *SS und Samurai: Deutsch-japanische Kulturbeziehungen 1933–1945* (Munich: Iudicium, 2014).

²⁹ Tokushirō Ōhata, "The Anti-Comintern Pact, 1935–1939," in *Deterrent Diplomacy: Japan, Germany, and the USSR 1935–1940*, ed. James William Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1–112; Chihiro Hosoya, "The Tripartite Pact, 1939–1940," in Morley, ed., *Deterrent Diplomacy*, 179–258; John P. Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern Crisis 1931–1938: A Study in Diplomacy and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Wolfgang Michalka, "From the Anti-Comintern Pact to the Euro-Asiatic Bloc: Ribbentrop's Alternative Concept of Hitler's Foreign Policy Programme," in *Aspects of the Third Reich*, ed. H. W. Koch (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 267–284; David Stuart Morris and Robert H. Haigh, "Japan, Italy, Germany and the Anti-Comintern Pact," in *Rethinking Japan, Volume II: Social Sciences, Ideology and Thought*, eds. Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, and Massimo Raveri (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 32–42.

³⁰ Wolfgang Michalka, *Ribbentrop und die deutsche Weltpolitik, 1933–1940: Aussenpolitische Konzeption und Entscheidungsprozesse im Dritten Reich* (Munich: W. Fink, 1980); Carl Boyd, *The Extraordinary Envoy: General Hiroshi Ōshima and Diplomacy in the Third Reich, 1934–1939* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980); Christian W. Spang, *Karl Haushofer und Japan: Die Rezeption seiner geopolitischen Theorien in der deutschen und japanischen Politik* (Munich: Iudicium, 2013); Tajima Nobuo, *Nachizumu Kyōkutō senryaku: Nichi-Doku Bōkyō Kyōtei wo meguru chōhōsen* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997).

³¹ Bernd Martin, *Japan and Germany in the Modern World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1995); Miyake Masaki, *Nichi-Doku seiji gaikōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1996); Mochida Yukio, ed., *Kindai Nihon to Doitsu: Hikaku to kankei no rekishigaku* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2007).

Transnational Nazism builds on but also departs from the extant scholarship. It devotes full attention to the medium-term interactions between Germany and Japan from the end of World War I through the mid-1930s. Because the two governments did not conduct vigorous bilateral diplomacy or exchange voluminous documents then, the period is usually dismissed as uneventful or tangential. The one exception is analysis of the 1927 commerce treaty based on evidence from its archival record.³² Otherwise, diplomatic and military histories refer only cursorily to the years between the Versailles Treaty and the diplomatic maneuvering that led to the Anti-Comintern Pact. Studies grounded in political-economic structures or the latecomer theory also downplay the 1920s. Interpretations that argue that both states implemented generic fascism or met a “fascist minimum” pay some, but not much more, attention to these years.³³ Weimar and Taisho democracies and internationalisms, however flawed, do not fit well with accounts that highlight long-term authoritarian tendencies. Frank Iklé identified this lacuna in our knowledge in the 1970s:

Weimar diplomacy toward Japan and Japan’s interest in Germany in the 1920s are unknown factors . . . There is need for research on Japan’s interest in a revived Germany and Japan’s attitudes towards Hitler’s *Machtergreifung* [seizure of power] in 1933. Especially important might be an attempt to see what connections, if any, existed between the rise of Nazi ideology in Germany and nascent militarism in Japan, and to what degree, consciously or otherwise, there was some kind of intellectual cross-fertilization.³⁴

Since then, scholars have only partly filled this gap.³⁵ Moreover, some comparative and analytical frameworks have been overturned in the newer literature. Few studies still call mid-1930s Japanese or German policy making totalitarian. Fascism’s historical presence in Japan remains contested. And the latecomer theory’s assumption of a model modernization from which Germany and Japan deviated on their own “special

³² Akira Kudō, *Japanese-German Business Relations: Cooperation and Rivalry in the Inter-War Period* (London: Routledge, 1998).

³³ Joseph P. Sottile, “The Fascist Era: Imperial Japan and the Axis Alliance in Historical Perspective,” in *Japan in the Fascist Era*, ed. E. Bruce Reynolds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1–48.

³⁴ Frank W. Iklé, “Japan’s Policies toward Germany,” in *Japan’s Foreign Policy, 1868–1941: A Research Guide*, ed. James W. Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 305–306.

³⁵ Peter Pantzer, “Deutschland und Japan vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis zum Austritt aus dem Völkerbund (1914–1933),” in Kreiner, ed., *Deutschland-Japan*, 141–160; Josef Kreiner and Regine Mathias, eds., *Deutschland-Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990).

paths” has been questioned.³⁶ If either nation was not totalitarian, fascist, or late-developing, interpretations hinging on these theories must be revised. Certainly, Tokyo and Berlin had overlapping goals. But they do not account for the mutual esteem and solidarity that arose between Germans and Japanese in the 1930s. Similarities in development did not bring Meiji Japan and Imperial Germany together. Just the opposite. The Kaiserreich reversed Japanese expansion through the Triple Intervention in 1895 and Wilhelm II warned Europe of the “Yellow Peril.” In World War I, Japan conquered Germany’s Asian-Oceanic colonies. Likeness and common interests are not sufficient to explain the rapprochement of Nazi Germany and Showa Japan.

This book argues that a cultural-historical perspective that focuses on the entire interwar era helps make sense of the diplomatic entente. The turn to culture leads the historian to rich, diverse sources created in the relatively liberal, open 1920s and early 1930s. Opinion makers in each country expressed their views in newspapers, pamphlets, lectures, films, books, language textbooks, and interest clubs. These outlets reveal the reciprocal interpretations and ideological adaptations by Japanese and German journalists, speakers, writers, translators, and filmmakers as they encountered information from the other country. *Transnational Nazism* consults these sources to present an ideologically and culturally contextualized history of German-Japanese convergence rather than a narrative focused on short-term power politics or reliant on generalizations of structural similarity. Essentially, for diplomatic history the Anti-Comintern Pact is the cornerstone of the Axis, but for cultural history it is the keystone capping years of ideological resonance and positive mutual depictions.

The case for transnational Nazism’s existence intersects with debates on 1930s Japan’s transition from liberalism to authoritarianism. Adventurism overseas, insurrectionary junior officers, and their suppression by the military establishment subverted parliamentary democracy and pushed Japan rightward even before the onset of full-scale war against China. Researchers concur that from the mid-1930s Japan was militarist. Alfred Vagts’s 1937 definition of “militarism” fits Japan: “a domination of the military man over the civilian, an undue preponderance of military demands, an emphasis on military considerations, spirit, ideals, and

³⁶ Bernd Martin, ed., *Japans Weg in die Moderne: Ein Sonderweg nach deutschem Vorbild?* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1987); Wolfgang Streeck and Kozo Yamamura, *The Origins of Nonliberal Capitalism: Germany and Japan in Comparison* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

scales of value.”³⁷ The Anti-Comintern Pact itself materialized from militarist diplomacy – Major General Ōshima overstepped his authority as military attaché and bypassed regular channels to negotiate with Ribbentrop. Yet scholars disagree about whether Japan ever turned fascist. Guided by Maruyama Masao’s thesis of “fascism from above” imposed by the state after it crushed radical officers’ “fascism from below,” academics trained in Japan generally conclude that Japan, especially in wartime, was fascist.³⁸ Western opinions vary: specialists on fascism mostly rule against its existence in Japan while Japanologists are divided.³⁹ The Tokyo–Berlin–Rome Axis and the similarities enumerated to explain it have been cited as causes or effects of Japanese fascism.⁴⁰ As the war escalated, the state became more compulsive, expansive, and intrusive, but many Japanese, commoners and apostate Marxists in the “conversion” (*tenkō*) phenomenon alike, rallied of their own volition around the “national polity” (*kokutai*).⁴¹ Ascertaining fascism in Japan is difficult because armed conflict erupted in 1931 when Japan conquered Manchuria and triggered repercussions that can be seen as fascist or war-related regimentation and mobilization.

³⁷ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 14.

³⁸ Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris, expanded ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 25–83.

³⁹ John Weiss, *The Fascist Tradition: Radical Right-Wing Extremism in Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 130–132; Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991); Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 336; Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 200; E. Bruce Reynolds, ed., *Japan in the Fascist Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). For an excellent overview of the debate on fascism in Japan, see: Stephen S. Large, “Oligarchy, Democracy, and Fascism,” in *A Companion to Japanese History*, ed. William M. Tsutsui (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 156–171.

⁴⁰ There is no precise definition of Japan’s membership in the Axis, an inexact label. Benito Mussolini first described Italian–German accord as an “Axis” after a secret memorandum in 1936. Berlin and Rome were not treaty-bound until 1937 when Italy acceded to the Anti-Comintern Pact or 1939 at the latest through the Pact of Steel. Japan called itself an Axis power after it joined the Tripartite Pact in 1940. I think “Axis” can be applied broadly to German–Japanese convergence from 1936 just as it is to Italian–German rapprochement. Japan and Germany closed ranks officially, publicly through the Anti-Comintern Pact, which grew to be a Rome–Berlin–Tokyo alliance before the Tripartite Pact.

⁴¹ Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Grassroots Fascism: The War Experience of the Japanese People*, trans. and ed. Ethan Mark (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Patricia G. Steinhoff, *Tenkō: Ideology and Societal Integration in Prewar Japan* (New York: Garland, 1991); Germaine A. Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Max Ward, *Thought Crime: Ideology and State Power in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

In contrast, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany spent more time at peace than war and demonstrate what “unadulterated” fascism looks like.⁴² Because wartime Japan – without a charismatic leader, mass movement, and comprehensive ideology – differs markedly from the European fascist regimes, scholars who argue that fascism existed in Japan qualify it as “imperial,” “bureaucratic,” “military,” or “restoration” fascism.⁴³ But any “fascism with Japanese characteristics” seems so sui generis that the label “fascism” loses its synthesizing purpose.

To paraphrase Vagts, I posit that the essence of fascism is a domination of the ideological man over the civilian and even military man.⁴⁴ Miles Fletcher, Alan Tansman, Janis Mimura, and Aaron Moore have established that there were such ideological men among intellectuals, writers, and the technocrats who administered Japan’s empire.⁴⁵ They were Japanese fascists even if they did not necessarily make Japan fascist. *Transnational Nazism* argues that just as there were Japanese fascists, some Japanese became adherents of Hitler and Nazism, though of course Japan did not turn Nazi. Just as Japanese fascists adapted generic fascism or Italian Fascism, Japanese transnational Nazis purposefully tailored Hitler’s personality and National Socialism so they shed their native and nativist baggage to resonate in Japan.⁴⁶ Without prompting from Germany, Japanese opinion makers sold Hitler and the “Nazi brand” to media consumers.⁴⁷ These intermediaries were not powerful enough to make Japan Nazi, but their pro-Nazi discourse and activities laid the cultural groundwork for Tokyo’s accord with Berlin. The Anti-Comintern Pact resulted also from transnational Nazi diplomacy – Ōshima, characterized by William Shirer as “more Nazi than the Nazis”

⁴² Cf. Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴³ Large, 167; Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Rikki Kersten, “Japan,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R. J. B. Bosworth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 543.

⁴⁴ The military remained a source of some resistance in Italy and Germany, unlike in Japan.

⁴⁵ William Miles Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Alan Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Janis Mimura, *Planning for Empire: Reform Bureaucrats and the Japanese Wartime State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Aaron Stephen Moore, *Constructing East Asia: Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan’s Wartime Era, 1931–1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ Reto Hofmann, *The Fascist Effect: Japan and Italy, 1915–1952* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁴⁷ Nicholas O’Shaughnessy, *Selling Hitler: Propaganda and the Nazi Brand* (London: Hurst & Company, 2016).

and nicknamed in Japan “the German ambassador to Germany,” was not only a Germanophile but an advocate of the Third Reich.⁴⁸

Transnational Nazism also complicates our understanding of interwar German external affairs and ideology. In light of World War II and the Holocaust, pre-1945 German views and behaviors toward those deemed alien are subjects of a vast literature. The Kaiserreich’s imperialism, war, and genocide in Africa, and especially the Third Reich’s own in Europe, have drawn the most scrutiny.⁴⁹ German interactions with Asia have only recently begun to be discussed concertedly in conferences and publications. Asian-German studies emerged alongside the global turn in the early 2000s to add a dimension to Germany’s international history beyond transatlantic ties and imperialism. Suzanne Marchand and others have shown that German orientalism was a distinct variant derived more from imagination and projection than contact or experience.⁵⁰ Cultural interest and intellectual study predominated because Germany had limited presence beyond its infiltration in the Near East and short-lived empire in China and Oceania.⁵¹ Todd Kontje observes that German postures toward “the east,” stretching from Eastern Europe to the Far East, fluctuated historically between estrangement and identification.⁵² Such was the case with India, whose mystery and history elicited broad curiosity in the Kaiserreich and Weimar Republic.⁵³ The xenophobic

⁴⁸ William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 872; Hayashi Shigeru, *Nihon no rekishi 25: Taiheiyō Sensō* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1967), 119.

⁴⁹ Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Lee M. Roberts, ed., *Germany and the Imagined East* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009); Veronika Fuechtner and Mary Rhiel, eds., *Imagining Germany: Imagining Asia: Essays in Asian-German Studies* (Rochester: Camden House, 2013).

⁵¹ Malte Fuhrmann, *Der Traum vom deutschen Orient: Zwei deutsche Kolonien im Osmanischen Reich 1851–1918* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2006); Peter H. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railways: Art, Empire, and Infrastructure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Nina Berman, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Patrice Nganang, eds., *German Colonialism Revisited: African, Asian, and Oceanic Experiences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Joanne Miyang Cho and Douglas T. McGetchin, eds., *Gendered Encounters between Germany and Asia: Transnational Perspectives since 1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁵² Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

⁵³ Douglas T. McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India’s Rebirth in Modern Germany* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009); Perry Myers, *German Visions of India, 1871–1918: Commandeering the Holy Ganges during the Kaiserreich* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Joanne Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander, and Douglas T. McGetchin, eds., *Transcultural Encounters between Germany and India:*

Third Reich continued this fascination but subsumed it under occultism and Aryanism.⁵⁴ Such was also the case with Japan, which through its breathtaking rise impressed Germany alternately as the Yellow Peril or “Prussians of the East.”⁵⁵ The racist Nazi regime even invented the extraordinary label “honorary Aryan” for Japan and treated it as a counterparty, though not quite a counterpart.

Transnational Nazism expands these insights on German orientalism. It argues that Nazism’s complex conceptualization of Japan prepared the cultural and ideological groundwork for bilateral convergence. I have been particularly inspired by Kris Manjapra’s work on German-Indian intellectual entanglements in response to British hegemony and by Andrew Zimmerman’s on German cooperation with African American experts on an imperialist venture.⁵⁶ Transnational Nazism resembled but also exceeded the traditional German engagement with Asia. German opinion makers and “Nazis of the East” jointly imagined a community for the Nazi project of German-Japanese collaboration. Nazi racist arrogance was tempered by admiration for and envy of Japanese homogeneity, because there can be no racial hierarchy without racial purity.⁵⁷ Unlike other “undesirables,” the Japanese did not seek integration into and so did not threaten the “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Nazi commentators recognized Japanese Westernization both for its progress and essence as confirmation of Western leadership. They replaced some stereotypes of Japan such as geisha, beauty, and refinement with others such as samurai, physical fitness, and fighting spirit for ideology’s sake. What under Weimar had been outlandish foreign policy

Kindred Spirits in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: Routledge, 2014); Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, *The Nay Science: A History of German Indology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elija Horn, *Indien als Erzieher: Orientalismus in der deutschen Reformpädagogik und Jugendbewegung 1918–1933* (Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 2018).

⁵⁴ Stefan Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols: Indo-European Mythology as Ideology and Science*, trans. Sonia Wichmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Wolfgang Kaufmann, *Das Dritte Reich und Tibet: Die Heimat des “östlichen Hakenkreuzes” im Blickfeld der Nationalsozialisten* (Ludwigsfelde: Ludwigsfelder Verlagshaus, 2009); Eric Kurlander, *Hitler’s Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

⁵⁵ Sepp Linhart, “Dainty Japanese” or Yellow Peril? *Western War Postcards 1900–1945* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2005); Sarah Jordan Panzer, “The Prussians of the East: Samurai, Bushido, and Japanese Honor in the German Imagination, 1905–1945” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015).

⁵⁶ Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁵⁷ Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1996), 180–181.

thinking was implemented by Nazism. Contrary to realist interpretations of Nazi diplomacy, I stress that the entente with Japan was ideologically driven and consistent, not pragmatic. Germany did not merely grant Japan practical concessions, which all Axis powers received. Rather, and significantly, the “racial state” created a niche for Japan – perhaps only Japan – in its worldview.⁵⁸ To be sure, Japan was not always depicted positively or as Germany’s equal. But it only needed to be perceived as good enough to be a collaborator. Few, if any, other Axis states occupied a comparable position in Nazi ideology. The minor members were an afterthought. Hitler’s affection for one Italian – Mussolini – but not the Italians, dictated Germany’s attitudes toward Italy.⁵⁹ In contrast, Hitler did not know any Japanese leaders but thought well of the Japanese collectively.

Transnational Nazism was a nationalistic reaction to existential concerns. Japanese transnational Nazis believed approaching, though not necessarily emulating, Hitler’s Germany would deliver Japan from its predicament. German transnational Nazis fancied engaging but not mingling with racially pure Japan. My depiction of transnational Nazism as an “imagined community” invokes Benedict Anderson’s thesis on nationalism.⁶⁰ Germans and Japanese did not jointly build a nation, but factors essential for nationalism identified by Anderson facilitated their transnational solidarity. Print capitalism empowered opinion makers in presses and publishers, amplified by radio stations, lecture circuits, film studios, and interest clubs, to share and spread ideas across continents.⁶¹ Transnational Nazis admired one leader – Hitler, adhered to one “political religion” – National Socialism, and adopted one imagery and vocabulary – Nazi symbols and Nazified German.⁶² Global history’s rise in the early 2000s has caused nationalism to be examined in

⁵⁸ Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Devin O. Pendas, Mark Roseman, and Richard F. Wetzell, *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁵⁹ F. W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship: Mussolini, Hitler, and the Fall of Italian Fascism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Rome–Berlin Axis: A Study of the Relations between Hitler and Mussolini* (London: Collins, 1966).

⁶⁰ Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991); Max Bergholz, “Thinking the Nation: Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, by Benedict Anderson,” *The American Historical Review* 123, no. 2 (April 2018): 518–528.

⁶¹ Cf. Nicholas O’Shaughnessy, *Marketing the Third Reich: Persuasion, Packaging and Propaganda* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁶² Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

international contexts.⁶³ The inherent tension can be challenging but also generate exciting results, including John Fousek's "nationalist globalism" and Jens-Uwe Guettel's "imperial liberalism."⁶⁴ Transnational Nazism describes a similarly tension-filled, paradoxical phenomenon; I use "transnational" to capture Nazism's mobility, direction, and fluidity.⁶⁵ International movements are usually associated with the political left, such as struggle for liberation, world peace, or communism.⁶⁶ But as Manjapra, Zimmerman, Fousek, Guettel, and others demonstrate, transnational engagements are not inevitably progressive or cosmopolitan.⁶⁷ Fascism also travels, through universal fascism or imitative regimes.⁶⁸ Nazism, with its dogmatic anti-Semitism, German chauvinism, and adoration of Hitler, may seem too peculiar to resonate outside German circles. But the Nazification of some Japanese proves that its tenets crossed borders and adapted to local habitats.⁶⁹ *Transnational Nazism*

⁶³ Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 79–89.

⁶⁴ Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 15–16; John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Jens-Uwe Guettel, *German Expansionism, Imperial Liberalism, and the United States, 1776–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁶⁵ Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Perspectives on Global History: Theories and Approaches in a Connected World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 76; Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 16–18; Conrad, 44–48.

⁶⁶ Michael Seidman, *Transatlantic Antifascisms: From the Spanish Civil War to the End of World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁶⁷ Paul A. Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011), 1348–1391; Martin Durham and Margaret Power, eds., *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Daniel Brückenhaus, *Policing Transnational Protest: Liberal Imperialism and the Surveillance of Anticolonialists in Europe, 1905–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Graham Macklin and Fabian Virchow, eds., *Transnational Extreme Right Networks* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁶⁸ Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013); Madeleine Herren, "Fascist Internationalism," in *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History*, eds. Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 191–212; Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017).

⁶⁹ Cf. Maria Framke, *Delhi -Rom -Berlin: Die indische Wahrnehmung von Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus 1922–1939* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2012); Benjamin Zachariah, "A Voluntary Gleichschaltung? Perspectives from India towards a Non-Eurocentric Understanding of Fascism," *Transcultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2014): 63–100; Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Nazism Across Borders: The Social Policies of the Third Reich and Their Global Appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

sheds light on how extremism can mutate, migrate, disperse, and endure. It offers an “asymmetrical comparison”: German ideas influenced more recipients in Japan than Japanese ideas in Germany, and German Nazis determined who would be incorporated in their weltanschauung.⁷⁰ It is a study of foreign relations but not of diplomacy – political, cultural, or public – that is coordinated and executed by the state.⁷¹ Although it is incontrovertible that in theory perception affects behavior in international relations, attributing any act to an impression is much less straightforward.⁷² Hitler’s belief in Jewish hostility toward Japan and praise for Japan’s imperial system do not conclusively explain the Axis.⁷³ Cultural history does not aim to pinpoint the cause of a specific event but to situate it within a milieu, as Akira Iriye does for Japan–US relations and John Dower for the Pacific War.⁷⁴

Transnational Nazism contextualizes the interwar German–Japanese entente by reconstructing the cultural traffic and ideological projection between citizens that preceded the diplomatic compacts.⁷⁵ Its narrative begins in 1919, with the emergence of a new Japan and new Germany, and ends in 1936, when the Anti-Comintern Pact formalized bilateral convergence as policy and reduced the latitude of civil society therein.⁷⁶ German and Japanese intermediaries deployed specialist knowledge not

⁷⁰ Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*,” *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (February 1999): 40–50.

⁷¹ “Diplomacy” can refer strictly to engagements between national governments and “foreign relations” broadly to interactions between governments, civil societies, economies, and individuals. Some activities of the opinion makers, especially influential Nazis in party publications or organizations, may qualify as “Track Two diplomacy,” defined loosely as non-state actors’ involvement in international relations and negotiations, distinct from Track One or official diplomacy. Peter Jones, *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

⁷² Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, new ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Robert Jervis, *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁷³ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher Nachf., 1927), 723–724; Adolf Hitler, *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1944*, ed. Werner Jochmann (Munich: Orbis Verlag, 2000), 174 (January 3–4, 1942).

⁷⁴ Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture: The Japanese–American War, 1941–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

⁷⁵ Angela M. Crack, *Global Communication and Transnational Public Spheres* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); John M. Owen IV, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510–2010* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁷⁶ Frederick R. Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919–1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

to subjugate but to elevate and accommodate each other. They used diminishing Weimar and Taisho freedoms of expression and association to advocate illiberal ideas such as Nazism and aggression. The revelation that civil society under authoritarianism conducted its own foreign relations illuminates how individuals and groups exerted unofficial influence within and between states.⁷⁷

This book is one of very few monographs on Japanese-German relations that pays balanced attention to both nations. Because of the nature of the subject, most works favor German or Japanese sources, or are edited volumes by multiple authors discussing different aspects of each country. The resulting knowledge landscape is fragmented and uneven, obscures linkages, and hinders comparisons. *Transnational Nazism* uses primary sources from diverse segments of the Japanese and German media. It is divided into two substantive halves: the first examines Germany through Japanese eyes, the second Japan through German ones. Chapters One to Four analyze the portrayals of Germany in Japanese newspapers, lectures and pamphlets, nonfiction and translations, and language textbooks. Chapters Five to Eight study the depictions of Japan in German dailies, films, nonfiction, and interest and advocacy groups. The survey of the media is broad but not exhaustive. The main missing component is periodicals such as *Chūō kōron*, *Kaizō*, *Simplicissimus*, or *Kladderadatsch*. I have replaced them with Japanese lectures and pamphlets and German films because these sources are less frequently consulted. Moreover, contributors to journals also wrote newspaper articles and books so that their viewpoints are expressed through these venues.⁷⁸ The chapters treat outlets that are highly comparable in some cases (newspapers and nonfiction) but less so in others (language textbooks, cinema, associations). They cover media formats of various qualities and with different customer bases. Together they demonstrate the ubiquity and influence of relatively few opinion makers who molded intercultural perceptions through prolific, skillful production of words.

⁷⁷ Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel, eds., *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014).

⁷⁸ Miyake Masaki, “Hitorā seiken no shōaku to Nihon no rondan—zasshi *Kaizō* to *Chūō kōron* wo chūshin to suru kōsatsu,” in *Berurin Wn Tōkyō: 20-seiki zenhan no Chūō to Higashi Ajia*, ed. Miyake Masaki (Tokyo: Ronsōsha, 1999), 191–249. The inclusion of German films introduces a group of opinion makers with a wide-reaching platform who are rarely examined for their influence in foreign relations.

German-Japanese Relations, 1914–1945

Indeed, because of the distance between Japan and Germany, words rather than people or objects were the main instrument for interaction and exchange from just before World War I to the end of World War II. On the eve of the former, the two states maintained formal, correct ties; improving relations was not a priority in their foreign-policy establishments. Germany was far more obsessed with its security in Europe and “place in the sun” overseas. Japan acted in self-interest by maximizing its diplomatic flexibility without violating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Tokyo did not depend on any one foreign supplier for arms, and some in its military and bureaucracy entertained the idea of coming to terms with Germany in the early 1910s.⁷⁹ Outside government, the two populations treated each other with appreciation rather than partiality. Many Japanese studied in Germany, but more went to America. German expatriates in Japan were always outnumbered by English-speaking ones.⁸⁰ Germany’s constitution, army, and universities served as models for Meiji Japan, but America, Britain, and France influenced Japan’s agriculture, industry, banking, commerce, navy, and public administration.⁸¹ For Japan, Germany was just one among several Western competitors. Germany, to the extent it thought of Japan at all, saw it as part of the “Far East.”

Tokyo declared war on Berlin in August 1914, soon after war broke out in Europe. Japan expelled and expropriated most resident Germans. It captured many of Germany’s Asian-Oceanic possessions with little bloodshed. German prisoners of war were interned in Japan and treated humanely.⁸² Germany unsuccessfully explored a separate peace with

⁷⁹ Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914–1919* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 45.

⁸⁰ Naikaku Tōkeikyoku, ed., *Nihon Teikoku tōkei nenkan* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Tōkei Kyōkai, 1919–1937). In the interwar era, the number of Japanese in Germany seldom exceeded 1,000, while more than 100,000 Japanese nationals were in America, many as emigrants. The German community in Japan never reached 2,000 and was smaller than the British or the American one.

⁸¹ James R. Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan: Building a Research Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Gerhard Krebs, ed., *Japan und Preußen* (Munich: Iudicium Verlag, 2002); Karl Anton Sprengard, Kenchi Ono, and Yasuo Ariizumi, eds., *Deutschland und Japan im 20. Jahrhundert: Wechselbeziehungen zweier Kulturnationen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002); Morris Low, ed., *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁸² Narashino-shi Kyōiku Iinkai, ed., *Doitsu heishi no mita Nippon: Narashino Fūryo Shūyōjo 1915–1920* (Tokyo: Maruzen, 2001); Tomita Hiroshi, *Bandō Fūryo Shūyōjo: Nichi-Doku Sensō to zainichi Doitsu fūryo* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2006); Mahon

Japan in 1915 and 1916.⁸³ Then in 1917, Germany, desperate to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic despite American warnings, proposed in the Zimmermann Telegram an alliance with Mexico to deter America from entering the war. The scheme further called for inviting Japan to the anti-American partnership. What negligible chance of the plot succeeding vanished when British Intelligence decoded and published the note.

Japan's contribution to Allied victory earned it a seat at the negotiations of the Versailles Treaty in 1919. Japan received some German warships as spoils and a tiny portion of reparations. Japanese control of the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands was legally confirmed as mandates of the League of Nations. Germany's concessions in China were transferred to Japan, even though China had expected their abolishment upon joining the Allies in 1917. China thus refused to sign the treaty and instead ended hostilities with Germany separately.

Berlin and Tokyo ratified the treaty and restored official ties in 1920. Germany treated Japan as a great power by reopening its embassy in Tokyo – one of Germany's nine embassies and its only one outside the West.⁸⁴ But meaningful relations took much longer to repair. Cooperation came about coincidentally, as when Japanese troops in Siberia and German Freikorps militiamen in Eastern Europe fought the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. Otherwise, the two states had divergent foreign-policy objectives. The Weimar Republic spent its diplomatic capital on rehabilitating and reintegrating Germany in the world. Reconciling distant Japan was at best an afterthought. And it found a like-minded partner, China, which also resented the postwar settlement.⁸⁵ China and Germany, both cash-strapped, developed symbiotic barter arrangements. Germany's loss of colonies gave its merchants and military advisers in China a political and moral advantage over Western and Japanese competitors. Meanwhile, Japan channeled its diplomatic energy into multilateral instruments such as the League of Nations and

Murphy, *Colonial Captivity during the First World War: Internment and the Fall of the German Empire, 1914–1919* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 169–179.

⁸³ Frank W. Iklé, "Japanese-German Peace Negotiations during World War I," *The American Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (October 1965): 62–76.

⁸⁴ Christoph M. Kimmich, *German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: A Guide to Current Research and Resources*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 7.

⁸⁵ Donald S. Sutton, "German Advice and Residual Warlordism in the Nanking Decade: Influences on Nationalist Military Training and Strategy," *China Quarterly* 91 (September 1982): 386–410; William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984).

Washington Treaties, and managing the delicate relations with America and China.⁸⁶ Japanese-German traffic was so neglected that Berlin and Tokyo took until 1927 to conclude a new commerce and navigation treaty to replace the one nullified by war in 1914.⁸⁷

Civil society assumed responsibility for nurturing bilateral ties in this vacuum of official attention. Japanese academics and traders were already returning to Germany to resume studies or commerce in 1919.⁸⁸ In Japan, many released German internees reestablished their previous positions in academia and business. The German Embassy advised the Foreign Office in 1922 that “as we mean little to Japan politically and even our trade with Japan is threatened, it is especially necessary that we do everything to retain our trump card, the respect and love for German culture and science, and to look after the cultural bond.”⁸⁹ It pointed out that of the 425 students abroad sponsored by the Japanese Education Ministry, 130 were in Germany, 55 in America, 80 in Britain, and 58 in France. Although few Germans visited Japan, luminaries who did, such as the Nobel laureates Albert Einstein in 1922 and Fritz Haber in 1924, were received enthusiastically and spoke highly of Japan upon their return.⁹⁰ Haber became an especially vocal, active advocate of German cooperation with Japan.⁹¹ Even Ambassador Wilhelm Solf invested much of his time in Japan from 1920 to 1928 in intercultural endeavors rather than diplomacy.⁹² Several binational voluntary associations were founded in both countries with Solf’s participation or endorsement. Additionally, the 1920s saw the popularization of international tourism for the affluent, facilitated by the Trans-Siberian Railway’s reopening and excess capacities on ocean liners

⁸⁶ Ian Hill Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2002); Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914–1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008).

⁸⁷ Erich Pauer, “Die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen Japan und Deutschland 1900–1945,” in Kreiner, ed., *Deutschland-Japan*, 161–210.

⁸⁸ Wada Hirofumi et al., *Gengo toshi Berurin 1861–1945* (Tokyo: Fujiwara Shoten, 2006), 7–34.

⁸⁹ Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (hereafter: PA AA), R 85846, Martin Renner to Foreign Office, August 11, 1922.

⁹⁰ Ippei Okamoto, “Albert Einstein in Japan: 1922,” trans. Kenkichiro Koizumi, *American Journal of Physics* 49, no. 10 (October 1981): 930–940; Albert Einstein, *The Travel Diaries of Albert Einstein: The Far East, Palestine, and Spain, 1922–1923*, ed. Ze‘ev Rosenkranz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

⁹¹ Hideko Tamaru Oyama, “Setsuro Tamaru and Fritz Haber: Links between Japan and Germany in Science and Technology,” *The Chemical Record* 15, no. 2 (April 2015): 535–549.

⁹² Eberhard von Vietsch, *Wilhelm Solf: Botschafter zwischen den Zeiten* (Tübingen: Wunderlich Verlag, 1961); Peter J. Hemenstall and Paula Tanaka Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

made available by the end of mass immigration to America.⁹³ Technology seemed poised to revolutionize intercontinental traffic when the airship *Graf Zeppelin* flew nonstop from Germany to Japan in 1929.

The outbreak of the world economic crisis the same year marked a turning point in Japanese-German relations. The Versailles–Washington system in which Berlin and Tokyo had sought to operate started to collapse. Most crippling for Germany was the withdrawal of foreign capital, and for Japan the erection of trade barriers. Squabbling politicians seemed incapable of meeting these existential challenges. So radical individuals and ideologies gained a wider following and resonated across borders. Hitler and Nazism's ascent caught the imagination of ever more Japanese observers. They propagated Nazi ideology through the media and called for closer relations with Germany from the early 1930s. In Germany, Hitler's rise gave an opening to loyally Nazi but amateurish diplomats, self-styled foreign-policy experts, or geopolitics theorists who admired Japan, in contradiction to the practice of cultivating China.

Despite the more favorable conditions, rapprochement did not come early or easily. In one of its last diplomatic acts, the Weimar Republic contributed to a League of Nations commission in 1932 investigating Japan's seizure of Manchuria. The critical Lytton Report caused Japan to storm out of the league the next year.⁹⁴ Though Hitler became chancellor in 1933, conservatives who maintained the arrangements with China largely continued to run the Foreign Office and War Ministry. And Hitler very much preferred an alliance with Britain to one with Japan. Only after an accord with London no longer seemed imminent did he authorize Joachim von Ribbentrop in 1935 to bypass the Foreign Office and approach Tokyo in earnest. The Japanese Foreign Ministry likewise had reservations about international reactions to a settlement with the Third Reich, pushed ardently by Japanese transnational Nazis such as Ōshima Hiroshi and many opinion makers. But Japan had left itself few diplomatic options by the mid-1930s. Its incursions into China from 1931, withdrawal from the league in 1933, and abrogation of the London and Washington Naval Treaties in 1934 alienated the liberal democratic West. Its internal suppression of communists and aggressive stance in Manchuria antagonized the Soviet Union.⁹⁵ And civilian rule had been undermined through political violence by radical officers.

⁹³ Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias, *Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁹⁴ Jessamyn R. Abel, *The International Minimum: Creativity and Contradiction in Japan's Global Engagement, 1933–1964* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 25–53.

⁹⁵ Tajima Nobuo, *Nihon Rikugun no taiso bōryaku: Nichi-Doku Bōkyō Kyōtei to Yūrashia seisaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2017).

These factors combined to enable the two regimes to finally converge in the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936.

The agreement, ostensibly a high point in bilateral ties, in fact manifests uneasiness in Japanese-German diplomacy. It was not an exclusive partnership. Italy acceded in 1937. Britain, Poland, and China, too, were invited to join the front. Because neither Berlin nor Tokyo was prepared to confront Moscow explicitly, the Comintern was settled on as a proxy boogeyman – never mind that the suppression of communists in both countries had rendered “anti-Comintern” hollow. The pact was thus a vague commitment they could agree on while risking upsetting the fewest number of nations. Japan still hoped to negotiate with the Soviet Union over Pacific fisheries. Some Germans kept fantasizing about recruiting Britain into the alliance. Even after Japan launched all-out war against China in 1937, Germany still attempted to maintain its pragmatic affair with China while staying politically married to Japan. Oskar Trautmann, the ambassador to China, strained to balance Germany between the belligerents until his recall by the Nazified Foreign Office in 1938.⁹⁶ For both Japan and Germany, prioritizing their ideological partnership incurred negative practical consequences.

The pact encouraged pundits who had agitated for closer cooperation and now churned out more self-fulfilling prophecies explaining and predicting German-Japanese solidarity. Propagandistic pronouncements, high-profile visits, and official exchanges followed. On the accord’s second anniversary in 1938, Japan and Germany signed a compact to facilitate cultural interactions. It coincided with the technological feat of a German aircraft flying to Japan in 46 hours with only three refueling stops. But it crash-landed in the Philippines on its return leg.

German actions before the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939 nearly ruptured bilateral relations. Germany did not inform Japan of its determination to attack Poland despite British and French warnings. In violation of a secret protocol of the Anti-Comintern Pact, Berlin concluded a nonaggression pact with Moscow in August 1939, just when Japanese soldiers were dying in a disastrous clash with the Red Army on the Mongolian-Manchurian border.⁹⁷ Germany’s about-face, along with the Kwantung Army’s defeat, undercut the pro-German faction in the Japanese government and military, altered Japan’s diplomatic stance

⁹⁶ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler’s Foreign Policy 1933–1939: The Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma Books, 2010), 263–270.

⁹⁷ Gerhard L. Weinberg, “Die geheimen Abkommen zum Antikominternpakt,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 2 (1954): 193–201.

toward the Soviet Union, and conceivably made Western possessions in Southeast Asia more attractive targets.⁹⁸

The tide of war in Europe ultimately kept Japanese-German partnership afloat. Germany had defeated the Netherlands and France by late 1940, and seemed on the verge of invading Britain. Japan saw an urgent opportunity to seize their “orphaned” colonies in Southeast Asia, possibly before their eventual annexation by a new, much-expanded German empire.⁹⁹ It browbeat Vichy France into accepting Japanese occupation of northern Indochina in September. The same month, Italy, Germany, and Japan forged the Tripartite Pact, a defensive treaty for mutual military assistance. Tokyo, taking a cue from Berlin, also signed a non-aggression pact with Moscow in April 1941 to secure its continental frontiers.

Yet two months later, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, having again kept its plans hidden from Japan and Italy. The Tripartite Pact did not dictate that Japan join an offensive war, so Japan remained neutral, having resolved to expand southward. Most damaging for Japanese-German traffic, the invasion severed the last unobstructed artery, the Trans-Siberian Railway. The railroad had been shuttling personnel and goods between the ends of the Axis, but from June 1941 both parties had to count on blockade runners. The seas were made even more inhospitable in December when Japan returned Germany’s favor and attacked Pearl Harbor and Western colonies in Asia without forewarning. The Tripartite Pact did not mandate that Germany open hostilities, but Hitler had assured Japan of his support in a hypothetical war against America.¹⁰⁰ Berlin and Rome declared war on Washington four days after Pearl Harbor, and the three main Axis powers pledged not to seek a separate peace. In January 1942, they at last signed a convention to formally coordinate military operations.

⁹⁸ Chihiro Hosoya, “The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact,” in *The Fateful Choice: Japan’s Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939–1941*, ed. James William Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 13–114; Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan against Russia, 1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 1078; Stuart D. Goldman, *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army’s Victory That Shaped World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

⁹⁹ Jeremy A. Yellen, “Into the Tiger’s Den: Japan and the Tripartite Pact, 1940,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, no. 3 (2016): 555–576.

¹⁰⁰ As late as a month before Pearl Harbor, doubts were raised at an imperial conference about Germany’s trustworthiness should Japan attack America – specifically, whether Germany would honor its “paper agreements” with Japan or side with the white race. Nobutaka Ike, *Japan’s Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 237.

But the agreements had no discernible impact.¹⁰¹ The Axis members devoted almost all their resources to what Mussolini called “parallel wars” for the duration of the conflict. Japan diligently observed neutrality vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and watched as shiploads of American matériel flowed to Vladivostok, to be hurled at German forces on the Eastern Front. Germany fought America in the Atlantic largely to destroy supplies for Britain and the Soviet Union. It sent some merchant raiders and submarines to the Indian Ocean with Japanese consent, but they were not there to help the Japanese war effort, only to cut off shipments bound for Britain.¹⁰² Not until January 1943 did Germany and Japan conclude an economic arrangement to organize trafficking technology and materials, long after regular contact had become all but impossible to uphold.

The compacts from 1936 to 1943, one annually except 1939, in fact show that the two regimes were struggling to accept that words – pacts, speeches, and propaganda – could not shrink the distance between them.¹⁰³ Transportation on land was ruled out; grand visions of Axis armies meeting in India never came close to reality. Only one round-trip flight between Europe and East Asia was undertaken, by an Italian crew and aircraft in 1942. Germany and Italy had planned a few more such stunts, but Japan demurred because it did not want to flaunt violations of Soviet air space.¹⁰⁴ Blockade runners slipped supplies into German-controlled ports, but these possibilities dwindled as the Allies established supremacy at sea. The only remaining transportation option was ultra-long-range submarines. Some completed the obstacle course between occupied France and East Indies, ferrying from Europe blueprints and parts for advanced weapons, and from Asia raw materials such as rubber. These voyages took three months each way and became increasingly hazardous as the Allies perfected antisubmarine warfare. But the pile of goods so smuggled was overshadowed by the mountain shipped from the Arsenal of Democracy. A single Allied convoy carried more materials

¹⁰¹ Hugo Dobson, “The Failure of the Tripartite Pact: Familiarity Breeding Contempt between Japan and Germany, 1940–45,” *Japan Forum* 11, no. 2 (1999): 179–190; Richard L. DiNardo, *Germany and the Axis Powers: From Coalition to Collapse* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

¹⁰² Paul Schmalenbach, *German Raiders: A History of Auxiliary Cruisers of the German Navy, 1895–1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979); Hans-Joachim Krug et al., *Reluctant Allies: German-Japanese Naval Relations in World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001).

¹⁰³ The compacts are the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936, Italy’s accession to it in 1937, cultural agreement in 1938, Tripartite Pact in 1940, agreement precluding a separate peace in 1941, agreement on military coordination in 1942, and economic arrangement in 1943.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Herde, *Der Japanflug: Planungen und Verwirklichung einer Flugverbindung zwischen den Achsenmächten und Japan 1942–1945* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000).

than all Axis cargo submarines combined. Particularly detrimental to an alliance that mostly led a verbal existence, word of mouth and the airwaves too were made unsafe. Richard Sorge, a German Comintern operative posing as a correspondent in Japan, relayed to Moscow in late 1941 Tokyo's decision not to attack the Soviet Union, thereby freeing the Red Army to amass around the capital.¹⁰⁵ And Allied code-breakers deciphered Ōshima's transmissions to Japan detailing German defenses in coastal France before D-Day.¹⁰⁶ Fundamentally, the Tokyo–Berlin Axis lived by words and died by words.

¹⁰⁵ Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring*, expanded ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁶ Carl Boyd, *Hitler's Japanese Confidant: General Ōshima Hiroshi and MAGIC Intelligence, 1941–1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).