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The Glorification of War in Japanese Education

Saburo Ienaga

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

War in Japanese Education
Our ultimate target is not so much children at school, as the adults which those children are to become. When we correct a schoolbook, we sow seeds which may bear fruit after a generation. But when we secure publicity for such correction, we contribute to this year's harvest. -E.H. Dance, *History the Betrayer*
The content of Japan's history textbooks has for several decades been an issue both in Japan's domestic debate and in its international relations.² In the early 1980s, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) undertook a campaign seeking revision of some 100 textbooks, with a "thrust toward greater respect, in effect, for State Shinto, big business, duties instead of rights, and the military instead of pacifism." The minister of education asked that high school textbook writers and publishers "soften their approach to Japan's excesses during World War II, the horrors of the atom bombs Saburo Ienaga was professor emeritus of education at Tokyo University of Education. Among his books are *The Pacific War 1931-45*, trans. Frank Baldwin (New York: Pantheon, 1978) (published in Tokyo as *Taiheiyo Senso*

by Iwanami Shoten, 1968); and Senso sekinin (War responsibility) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985). The editors of *International Security* thank Frank Baldwin and the Asia Foundation, Tokyo, for translating this article from Japanese. For help in providing additional notes to English-language sources, all of which were approved by the author, the editors thank Barton Bernstein, John Dower, Ted Hopf, Marc Trachtenberg, and Stephen Van Evera.

1. E.H. Dance, *History the Betrayer: A Study in Bias* (London: Hutchinson, 1960; Westport, Conn: Greenwood, repr. 1970), p. 146.
2. Nationalism and the glorification of war in school texts and university teaching has been an issue in many countries. See, for example, Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised* (Boston: Atlantic, Little Brown, 1979; new ed. 1992); Katherine Bishop, "Bill on Internees Raises New Alarm; Descendants of Japanese Fear Proposal in California on World War II Teaching," *New York Times*, August 28, 1990, p. A19; Paul M. Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 77-100; and on Germany, Holger Herwig, "Clio Deceived: Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany After the Great War," *International Security*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 1987), pp. 5-45; Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon, 1989); Peter Baldwin, ed., *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historian's Debate* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990); Judith Miller, *One, by One, by One: Facing the Holocaust* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

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1994 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

International Security 18:3 1114 . . . and the pacifist requirements of the Constitution (Article 9). More stress was suggested on patriotism, [and] the constitutionality of the Self-Defense Forces.

Japanese critics of these efforts were joined in July 1982 by protests, both public and diplomatic, from North and South Korea, China, Taiwan, and other countries. "Blistering attacks were leveled at Japan's leaders by [other] Asians for insensitivity to East Asian memories of Japan's arrogant and inhumane treatment of its neighbors before 1945 and for outright dishonesty in the textbook presentation of historical fact. The author of this article has played a pivotal role in Japan's debate over the presentation of its history in textbooks[^].

Professor Ienaga has written numerous studies of the war and of modern Japan, and many school textbooks, including (as co-author) one of the first postwar history texts⁶ By the early 1960s, his history textbook for high-school students, *Shin Nihonshi* (A new history of Japan) was one of the three most used in Japan. When, in 1962, the third edition was submitted to 3. "Every detail of the school curriculum . . . is decided centrally by the Ministry of Education. . . . Textbooks must be approved by the ministry. . . . One of the most reactionary and secretive bits of the bureaucracy, this ministry has systematically tried to prevent schools teaching the...

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Our ultimate target is not so much children in school, as the adults which these children are to become. When we correct a schoolbook, we send words which may bear fruit after a generation. But when we secure publicity for such correction, we distribute it into your's interest.

—T.H. Dancy, *History the Betrayer*¹

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