

PARTIES OUT OF
POWER IN JAPAN

1931-1941

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"snapping point." The British military attaché in Peking added in a report of July 13 that "unless the protagonists speedily altered their viewpoints, something in the nature of a serious explosion will surely occur."¹⁴ On September 18, this prophecy was fulfilled when forces of the Japanese Kwantung Army under the direction of Colonel Itagaki Seishirō and Lieutenant Colonel Ishiwara Kanji engineered the Manchurian Incident. The Kwantung Army's actions were widely applauded in Japan, though they breached the constraints of "Shidehara Diplomacy" and propelled the Cabinet's foreign policy into the same limbo as its economic program. Wakatsuki's government was now clearly in danger.

SCHISMS IN PARTY UNITY

If the Minseitō had enjoyed the support of nonparty elites during these crises, it might well have weathered again the storm of Seiyūkai opposition to its policies. As Wakatsuki himself quickly discerned, however, the London Treaty and the growing challenge to Japan's Asian interests posed by a resurgent Chinese nationalism made it unlikely that his government would receive that support. The Minseitō found both military services resolutely committed to seeking a greater voice in the formulation of defense policy. The Seiyūkai, moreover, was now publicly committed to making foreign policy independent of the attitudes of the Western powers in order to assure the security of Japan's continental interests.

Thus, despite the continued support of the *genrō* and a core of Minseitō supporters in the civilian nonparty elites, the government party's ability to formulate an acceptable

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 104 and 82-121; also see Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy 1931-1932* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), and Takehiko Yoshihashi, *Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

DECLINE, 1930-1936

synthesis of national policies to deal with the Manchurian and economic problems had now been called into question. Similar doubts existed within the Minseitō as well, and were coupled to a deep dissatisfaction with the party's efficacy as power broker. The role of Home Minister Adachi Kenzō in forcing the Wakatsuki government to resign gave ample proof of the unhappiness felt even in the Minseitō with the party's policies and distribution of power. Wakatsuki believed his Cabinet and its policies could survive the Manchurian Incident only if the Seiyūkai's support could be won. To prompt the Seiyūkai's defection from the opposition, he was willing, as president of the Minseitō, to surrender a share of his party's power and authority to the opposition party.¹⁵ In late October, Wakatsuki broached the possibility of a Minseitō-Seiyūkai coalition Cabinet to Adachi. The Home Minister, who was vice president of the Minseitō and aspired to the presidency, enthusiastically endorsed the proposal and began to work assiduously for it.

Adachi realized that a two-party coalition would make it possible to abandon the gold standard and reimpose the gold embargo, overthrowing Finance Minister Inoue's policy of retrenchment. Coalition with the Seiyūkai would also imply a rejection of Shidehara's "weak-kneed" policy of defending Japan and her interests through peaceful cooperation with the Western powers. Adachi had not originally favored the policies of Inoue and Shidehara, and he welcomed the formulation of a coalition as an opportunity to reverse them. Furthermore, he knew that a coalition with the Seiyūkai would lead to a reallocation of power within the Minseitō and the Cabinet. Adachi had been denied the presidency of the Minseitō after Hamaguchi's death because Shidehara and Inoue had opposed him. The overthrow of their policies in a new Cabinet would reduce their stature

¹⁵ Wakatsuki Reijirō, *Kofuan kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha, 1950), p. 384. For a detailed analysis of the foreign policy problems underlying and contributing to the Minseitō's difficulties, see Crowley, *Japan's Quest*, pp. 133-49.

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¹⁸ Adachi Kenzō, *Adachi Ke*
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within the party, and would of course mean their resigna-
 tions from the government. Adachi foresaw the possibility
 of becoming premier himself, or the *éminence grise* in a
 coalition government, and believed his position in the Min-
 seitō would be greatly enhanced as well.¹⁶

As Adachi undertook to win approval from the Seiyūkai
 leadership for Wakatsuki's plan, Shidehara and Inoue began
 to voice strong opposition to any inclusion of the Seiyūkai
 in the government.¹⁷ With obvious justification, they sus-
 pected their foreign and economic policies would be sacri-
 ficed in the interests of such a coalition. Wakatsuki could
 not easily ignore the views of these ministers: they repre-
 sented important Minseitō links with business and the
 bureaucracy. The premier promptly decided to abandon
 the coalition Cabinet plan, and announced on November 14
 that he would continue to serve as chief officer in a purely
 Minseitō Cabinet. However, Adachi and an important group
 of Minseitō members refused to surrender the coalition
 plan. Though the Minseitō's elective strength had never
 been greater, the Home Minister went on record publicly
 as willing to support a change in the composition of the
 government.¹⁸ Party advisor Tomita Kōjirō, executive sec-
 retary Yamaji Jōichi, and other leading or promising party
 figures such as Nagai Ryūtarō, Nakano Seigō, and Kazami
 Akira all actively joined Adachi in promoting a coalition
 Cabinet to replace the government dominated by their own
 party. Their rupture with Wakatsuki and the government
 finally came to a climax on December 11, when the home

¹⁶ It has been suggested that Adachi sought the premiership for
 himself. See Maejima Shōzō, *Nihon fuashizumu to gikai* (Kyoto:
 Hōritsu bunkasha, 1956), p. 271. It has also been argued that he
 wished to be the power behind an Inukai regime (*ibid.*, p. 275) or
 an Ugaki government. See Suda Teiichi, *Kazami Akira to sono jidai*
 (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1965), p. 83.

¹⁷ "Nagai Ryūtarō" hensankai (Matsumura Kenzō), ed., *Nagai
 Ryūtarō* (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1959), p. 296.

¹⁸ Adachi Kenzō, *Adachi Kenzō jiyōden* (Tokyo: Shinjusha, 1960),
 p. 263.

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minister refused to attend an emergency Cabinet session or to resign from his post. Unable to unify the Cabinet, Wakatsuki had to submit his government's resignation the following day.

The Seiyūkai was also divided internally at this juncture, although not yet as seriously as the Minseitō. Committed to overthrowing the government party and its policies, the mainstream of the Seiyūkai, under Inukai Tsuyoshi and Suzuki Kisaburō, preferred a new Cabinet they would dominate to a coalition in which they would share power with the Minseitō. However, Kuhara Fusanosuke—the executive secretary of the Seiyūkai—enthusiastically joined Adachi in promoting the creation of a coalition Cabinet. Kuhara was eager to overturn Inoue's financial policies,¹⁹ and might ordinarily have confined his efforts against the Cabinet to supporting the Seiyūkai mainstream's demand for a Seiyūkai government. But while Kuhara's influence within the party was growing, it was not yet equal to that of Suzuki Kisaburō. Kuhara was convinced that Suzuki would be the chief beneficiary in the allocation of positions and influence in the party and government, if a Seiyūkai Cabinet were established. Rather than have his own political ambitions thwarted by a government of his party, Kuhara preferred to work for a coalition Cabinet led by General Ugaki Kazushige.²⁰

Despite the efforts of Adachi and Kuhara, a coalition government was never formed. Prince Saionji named Inukai

¹⁹ Much of Kuhara's personal fortune had apparently been invested on the speculation that the gold embargo would be reimposed in Japan. Maejima, *Nihon fuashizumu to gikai*, pp. 271-72, 275.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275. Others in the Seiyūkai who supported the coalition Cabinet proposal included Okazaki Kunisuke, Mizuno Rentarō, Tokonami Takejirō, Mochizuki Keisuke, Yamamoto Jōtarō, Mitsuchi Chūzō, Maeda Yonezō, Akita Kiyoshi, and Uchida Shinya. These men were the leaders of the anti-Suzuki forces in the party. By 1935, five of them—Mizuno, Tokonami, Mochizuki, Akita, and Uchida—had either resigned or been expelled from the Seiyūkai. See Nashimoto Suke-yoshi, *Suzuki Kisaburō* (Tokyo: Jidaisha, 1932), p. 82.

to succeed Wakatsuki Minseitō from his Cabinet and defect from the party; and in 1932 he formed other defectors from the party in the Seiyūkai, but lost prestige and the influence with the Army.²¹

The first important government was the government of Inukai. As was frequently the case, the government in prewar Japan was formed to confirm its authority in the Diet and the House by calling and dissolving the House. Inukai became premier in 1932. The House was 174 seats, and the 1932 elections held in July. The ruling party garnered 100 seats, and the Minseitō dropped to 74. It was not impossible for Saionji to form a Cabinet with less than half the Seiyūkai support. This possibility was unlikely. The general election, one not held since 1926, demonstrated its popular strength. The precipitous 1932 election thus resulted in an opposition party (Seiyūkai) and a "national unity" Cabinet. The government's commitment to "policy" was tempered finely by a

²¹ He had, of course, previously been successful in recruiting General Inukai.

²² The figures for the 1932 election are based on the figures in the *renmei*, ed., *Shūgin gin* (Tokyo: kabushiki kaisha, 1967), p.

to succeed Wakatsuki as premier, and Inukai excluded the Minseitō from his Cabinet. Shortly thereafter, Adachi defected from the party in which he had been vice president, and in 1932 he formed the small Kokumin dōmei party with other defectors from the Minseitō cause. Kuhara remained in the Seiyūkai, but continued seeking to enhance his own prestige and the influence of his party by promoting close ties with the Army.²¹

The first important political development under Inukai's government was the general election of February 20, 1932. As was frequently the case during the period of party government in prewar Japan, the incoming government sought to confirm its authority and establish control of the Lower House by calling and winning a general election. When Inukai became premier, the Seiyūkai's strength in the Lower House was 174 seats, compared to 273 for the Minseitō. In the 1932 elections held under the Seiyūkai administration, the ruling party garnered 301 seats in the Lower House, and the Minseitō dropped to 146 seats.²² Although it was not impossible for Saionji to turn to the Minseitō in the future to form a Cabinet, the fact that the Minseitō held less than half the Seiyūkai total of Diet seats made such a possibility unlikely. The Minseitō would need another general election, one not held under Seiyūkai auspices, to demonstrate its popular strength and regain the *genrō's* confidence. The precipitous decline of Minseitō strength in the 1932 election thus resulted in a four-year party strategy of opposing party (Seiyūkai) government and supporting two "national unity" Cabinets led by retired admirals. The party's commitment to "parliament-centered government" was tempered finely by a pragmatic assessment of its own re-

²¹ He had, of course, previously indicated such tendencies in successfully recruiting General Tanaka Giichi into the party in 1925.

²² The figures for the respective party strengths prior to the 1932 election are based on the 1930 election results. See Kōmei senkyo renmei, ed., *Shūgin giin senkyo no jisseki* (Tokyo: Toppan insatsu kabushiki kaisha, 1967), p. 137.

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quirements as a minority group holding fewer than one-third of the seats in the Lower House.

The second important incident of the Inukai reign was the appointment of Suzuki Kisaburō as home minister a month after the elections. Suzuki's appointment suggested that he had sufficient power within his party to be selected as the next president of the Seiyūkai.²³ The significance of Suzuki's ascent to the position of Inukai's heir apparent became clear within two months, when Inukai's assassination forced Saionji to consider whether or not to make Suzuki premier.

The activities of Mori Kaku, the fiery chief Cabinet secretary of the Inukai government and influential Seiyūkai leader, were also of great importance in the eventual termination of party government. According to his biographer, Mori's political philosophy shifted in early 1931 to "dictatorial tendencies that would deal with the period of emergency."²⁴ Mori broke with Inukai's continental policy early in 1932, and like Kuhara and Adachi, he looked outside his party for channels through which his ambitions and policy views could be promoted. Despite the overwhelming victory of the Seiyūkai at the polls in February, Mori began to campaign actively for the establishment of a new Cabinet, led by Baron Hiranuma Kiichirō, the vice president of the Privy Council. In Mori's view, a Hiranuma government in which both parties were represented would prove the best instrument for consolidating Japan's position in Manchuria and China. Before Mori's efforts could bear fruit, Inukai was assassinated on May 15 by a group of young radical Navy cadets. He was the third prominent Japanese to die violently in 1932, for Inoue Junnosuke (the former finance minister) and industrialist Dan Takuma had been struck down earlier in the year.

²³ Nashimoto, *Suzuki*, pp. 14-15, and Itō, *Shōwa shoki seiji shi kenkyū*, pp. 217-18, 220.

²⁴ Yamaura Kan'ichi, *Mori Kaku* (Tokyo: Mori Kaku denki hensankai, 1940), p. 788.

SUSPENSION OF PAI

The "May 15th place in early Shōwa end of party government" has been equated with military racy at the hand of militarism.²⁵ Historians have been reluctant to accept this view, but were overwhelmed by the fact that Saionji was reluctantly but was a passionate opponent of nationalist groups. This view, the part but were overwhelmed by nationalist groups. A closer examination of the events of 1932 suggests that

In late 1931 and their followers encouraged parties to the Cabinet or the other of the net, and advocate coalition and a new General Ugaki. None of the mainstream win the approval of the military elites against Inukai as premier party.

By May 1932 changed considerably by Adachi's defeat in February, was in the government of Izawa Takio, an

²⁵ G. Richard Stone, *Nationalism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 100.

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ferred the best available prospect for achieving the "domestic harmony" he so cherished. Conjuring up a picture of a Cabinet and country united in pursuit of this goal, the prince agreed to form a new government.

It became clear immediately that Konoe's "guiding principle" of national unification would be the Army Ministry's May 29 compromise plan for industrial development. For example, the three prime contenders for the important post of finance minister were Kodama Kenji (former governor of the Yokohama Specie Bank), ex-Finance Minister Baba Eiichi, and the incumbent Yūki. Kodama, however, refused to accept the budgetary plans formulated in the five-year plan, and was immediately dropped from consideration. Baba had strong support in the Army, but Konoe did not wish to upset the fragile relationship that had been established with the "tie-up finance" approach of Ikeda and Yūki. To conciliate Baba's backers, however, Konoe appointed him to serve as home minister, with the intention of asking Yūki to retain the finance minister's portfolio. Yūki, however, was unwilling to serve in the same Cabinet with Baba, and thus his vice minister, Kaya Okinori, was promoted to the finance minister's post in order to maintain the "tie-up" between the Finance and Army Ministries.⁷³

Konoe followed a similar formula in the selection of his other ministers. Earlier in the year, he had shown his sympathies for Ishiwara's group by hinting that he would not serve as premier unless Lieutenant General Itagaki and Admiral Suetsugu were appointed to the Army and Navy Ministry portfolios. In June, however, such appointments might well have upset the compromise approved by Army Minister Sugiyama. Konoe thus agreed readily to the retention of Sugiyama and Navy Minister Yonai Mitsumasa in their current posts.⁷⁴ For his commerce and industry minister, Konoe selected Yoshino Shinji, a brilliant career official who held that "it was a matter of common sense in

⁷³ KF, I, 381; SKS, VI, 4.

⁷⁴ Arima, *Seikai dōchūki*, p. 128; KF, I, 381; SKS, VI, 4.

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FIRST MONTH OF KONOE GOVERNMENT

formulating economic policies of a country to strive at all costs for the building up of necessary industries in order to guarantee its independence and security."⁷⁵ Konoe sought to strengthen the Cabinet's position vis-à-vis the Diet by appointing Nagai Ryūtarō of the Minseitō and Nakajima Chikuhei of the Seiyūkai to ministerial posts. It was not by chance that they, rather than other party leaders, were selected to represent the Diet in Konoe's "national unity" government. Nagai belonged to a faction that had advocated the nationalization of the electric power industry for several years; and inasmuch as this policy was an integral aspect of the five-year plan, it was expected that he would prove an effective and outspoken supporter of the new government's policies. Nakajima, on the other hand, was a vigorous advocate of air power, and could be expected to promote the plans for developing Japan's aircraft industry. Not only was he an inveterate supporter of plans to bolster Japan's defenses against the Soviet threat, but as an entrepreneur, he had much to gain from increased government purchases of aircraft. He, too, therefore, was expected to support the Army's five-year plan. The remaining Cabinet appointments were also settled quickly. Hirota Kōki was appointed foreign minister, a decision that gratified Prince Saionji. Hiranuma's forces were represented in the government by Justice Minister Shiono, a hold-over from the Hayashi regime. Yasui Eiji became the education minister, Arima Yoriyasu the minister of agriculture and forestry, and Ōtani Son'yū the minister of overseas development. All owed their appointments to personal ties with Konoe.

Despite the skill with which Konoe had assembled his Cabinet, adroit political leadership would be required to consolidate or even maintain accord among the various forces represented in the government. Following the first Cabinet meeting, Kaya and Yoshino issued a joint statement of the government's "three fundamental principles" of eco-

⁷⁵ IMTFE, *Proceedings*, p. 18207. The new minister of commerce and industry was the younger brother of Yoshino Sakuzō.

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showed an inclination to abandon the attempt to create any new organization. Education Minister Araki, as well, must have been displeased by the threat to his ministry's claims of primary importance in leading the mobilization movement. Amidst the growing disenchantment of the ministers, the Cabinet assigned Home Minister Suetsugu and Araki the task of ironing out the proposal for reforming the Movement to Mobilize Popular Morale.³² In other words, the two ministers most severely at odds in determining who should control the movement were left the job of coming to agreement. The result of this strategy was quite predictable: nothing more was heard of the project before the Konoe government's resignation a month later.

THE HIRANUMA GOVERNMENT AND POPULAR MOBILIZATION

The lessons of the ministerial conferences of late 1938 were not lost on Baron Hiranuma Kiichirō, who succeeded Konoe as premier on January 4, 1939. Having witnessed the failure of the new party and "political reorganization" movements at the end of his predecessor's reign, the new premier quickly let it be known that he would not challenge the parties and their local support groups, but instead hoped to win their support by conceding their importance. Immediately after receiving the imperial mandate to form a Cabinet, Hiranuma moved swiftly to assuage any misgivings party members might have about his appointment. While the makeup of his government indicated a strong sense of continuity with the past regime, Hiranuma conspicuously omitted the strongest advocates of institutional reform—Suetsugu, Arima, and Kazami—from his list of appointees. Moreover, Sakurauchi Yukio of the Minseitō and Maeda Yonezō of the Seiyūkai were given ministerial portfolios, indicating Hiranuma's willingness to work

³² *Ibid.*, entry for December 9, 1938; and Itō, "Shōwa jūsan-nen," p. 178.

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with the parties. The premier was soon even more explicit in affirming the desirability of maintaining the political status quo; shortly after taking office, he issued the following statement through his chief cabinet secretary:

Since we have constitutional politics in Japan, and since the Constitution provides for a Diet, we must give the Diet our respect. Moreover, as parliamentary politics have developed, political parties have naturally evolved in the context of running the Diet. Since they must inevitably exist, we can accomplish nothing by ignoring them. I earnestly hope that the parties will have a healthy development. I have no thoughts of a "restructuring of popular organizations" (*kokumin soshiki saihensei*) or a new political party movement.³³

Hiranuma further conceded that

to realize parliamentary politics, parties—healthy parties—must of course be rooted in the spirit of assisting (*hoyoku*) the throne. Whatever the national policy may be, the parties must obviously decide their own approaches, in order to carry out the overall policy of the state and move towards the successful implementation of this policy. In the process, each party will obviously decide how best to serve the state. The platforms of the various parties will of course differ, but the basic point will remain *hoyoku*.³⁴

In essence, the venerated dean of the "Japanist" right wing declared there was a proper and morally justifiable place in Japanese politics for parties with different platforms and viewpoints. This argument contrasted sharply with Hiranuma's earlier views and with the anti-party positions taken by many right-wing groups. It therefore pro-

³³ Cited in the interpellation of Ogawa Gōtarō in the Lower House, January 22, 1939. See *Kanpō gogai—Shōwa 14-nen 1-gatsu 22-nichi, Shūgin giji sokkiroku dai-3-go*, p. 32.

³⁴ Hiranuma's response to Ogawa, *ibid.*, p. 33.

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serve the state by planting trees, and so on. Steps were taken to maintain the movement's overall disengagement from partisan politics by making the organization supra-partisan, with members from all parties and factions serving on committees running its activities.³⁹

Hiranuma's conservative approach to domestic politics, and Konoe's semiwithdrawal from the forefront of national politics (he participated occasionally in Cabinet meetings as a minister without portfolio, and replaced Hiranuma as president of the Privy Council), brought a halt to the various movements to form a new political mobilization organ. Kido, appointed home minister by Hiranuma, indicated that the government was uninterested in reviving any of these movements. Speaking to the press en route to the shrines at Ise, the home minister observed, "The 'national reorganization' and 'new party' questions can only be understood in connection with former Premier Konoe personally. . . . To me, the words 'national reorganization' seem insulting to the people. I question the wisdom of having the government try to impose this thing from above."⁴⁰ In short, there would be no governmental effort to take up the issues posed during the ministerial conferences of late 1938. The creation of a new popular political organization was contingent on Konoe's leadership, and the prince was clearly unwilling to become involved in such an endeavor at that time. Indeed, for the duration of the Hiranuma government's reign, political interest at the Cabinet level, and among right-wing groups as well, shifted from domestic reform issues to the weighty question of whether Japan should enter a military alliance with Germany and Italy, and against whom such an alliance should be directed.

THE PARTIES AND "PUBLIC" MOBILIZATION

During the latter half of the Konoe government and the entire period of Hiranuma's tenure in office, Cabinet poli-

³⁹ See YKUS, pp. 30-34.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

cies were oriented toward economic structures, projecting them to fit on this lull in the derived powers of the agencies between supporters in *butsu*, likewise extended to the capitalist invoked the Mobilization Council cases obtained the imperial Mobilization Law activity of workers as the state.⁴¹ This resulted in control level of profits production. Official electric power economy found ment controls therefore, party found it relatively advanced new that would end

⁴¹ For a list of was actually in National General 1939), 20-21.

⁴² See, for example, which called for government investment private controls would greatly increase profits be turned in lieu of increase *no kōryō* (Tokyo

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with and support of the party-controlled government and its policies. Strong authoritarian leadership at the apex of the party-council hierarchy would insure that party programs and mobilization campaigns reflect the policies of the ruling elites rather than challenge the legitimacy of their control of the state. The links running from the Cabinet and Diet through the party-councils to the *meibōka* and local communities would thus become the major official channel of popular control and "public" mobilization.

This new emphasis by Seiyūkai leaders on the party as an agency of "public" mobilization implied a new type of party, a new type of election, and a broader range of party activity. The new party would provide channels for popular expressions of support for governments, but not opposition. It also promised to increase political participation in party-sponsored local activities, and to integrate more people (in theory, all the people) directly through its mobilization efforts on the national and local levels. At the same time, the new party would be closely identified with the government, holding a central position in it. As a semiofficial organ of the state, its status would differ from that of other political groups or parties that remained outside of its organization. The new party would enjoy a permanent control of the Diet and the premiership. Diet elections would therefore become again a method of expressing public support for elite government. The party would hence provide a popular affirmation of the legitimacy of the government and policies with which it was associated. On the other hand, elections would no longer serve to articulate popular interests through the selection of one party or another to represent the people in the Diet; rather, their sole function would be to mobilize public support for official policies by the government party. To put it briefly, Kuhara and Nakajima de-emphasized the utility of the old two-party and multi-party models as the means for providing popular ratification of governments and their policies, minimized the party's potential to generate political conflict and divergent popu-

lar interests, and in mass national integration and mobilization.

The proposals of the planning stage representative of the conservative thought. In the Mir to a more balanced committed to the pre- which his personal the conservative vi of January 1940:

In only one year of three changes of government in previous years, the government has been unable to meet the needs of the people with weak political leadership. The government has been unable to deal with the difficulties of the war and the strain of the depression. It has not shown a firm concert of action with the people. Can the government show the will of the people in the political results?

In short, Machida represented a share of Cabinet support. Kuhara and Nakajima represented the support for government policies. They emphasized the need for a national party organization to function any more effectively ("liberal")

⁴⁶ Matsumura I Chūji-ō denki kan

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 and provide channels for popular
 governments, but not opposition.
 political participation in party-
 to integrate more people (in
 ctly through its mobilization
 local levels. At the same time,
 ily identified with the govern-
 on in it. As a semiofficial organ
 differ from that of other politi-
 nained outside of its organiza-
 enjoy a permanent control of
 p. Diet elections would there-
 of expressing public support
 ty would hence provide a pop-
 macy of the government and
 ssociated. On the other hand,
 ve to articulate popular inter-
 one party or another to repre-
 ther, their sole function would
 rt for official policies by the
 briefly, Kuhara and Nakajima
 the old two-party and multi-
 or providing popular ratifica-
 policies, minimized the party's
 l conflict and divergent popu-

"PUBLIC" MOBILIZATION

lar interests, and increasingly stressed the importance of
 mass national integration, local party activity, and "public"
 mobilization.

The proposals of the Seiyūkai leaders never went beyond
 the planning stage in 1939. Moreover, they were not repre-
 sentative of the complete spectrum of "mainstream" party
 thought. In the Minseitō, Machida Chūji remained wedded
 to a more balanced definition of party functions, and com-
 mitted to the preservation of the party organization on
 which his personal political influence rested. He reaffirmed
 the conservative viewpoint at the general Minseitō congress
 of January 1940:

In only one year, we have seen the unfortunate spectacle
 of three changes in the wartime Cabinets. My own experi-
 ence in previous governments has taught me that Cabi-
 nets with weak bases, those which lack a motive force
 absolutely essential in times of war, cannot surmount the
 difficulties of the times. To be capable of truly bearing
 the strain of the situation, a wartime Cabinet must reflect
 a firm concert between the military and parties based on
 the people. Cabinets which are not rooted in the general
 will of the people will of course be unable to produce
 political results.⁴⁶

In short, Machida continued to justify the parties' claim to
 a share of Cabinet power on the grounds that the parties
 represented the will of the people. While he agreed with
 Kuhara and Nakajima that parties must mobilize popular
 support for governments, the president of the Minseitō also
 emphasized the representative function of the parties. He
 saw no reason why politicians should depart from tradi-
 tional party organizations, or why the parties should claim
 to function any differently from in the past. This conserva-
 tive ("liberal") viewpoint continued to hold an important

⁴⁶ Matsumura Kenzō, *Machida Chūji-ō den* (Tokyo: Machida
 Chūji-ō denki kankōkai, 1950), p. 363.