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Department of Germanic Languages
212 Royce Hall, Box 951539
University of California, Los Angeles
CA 90095-1539
ngr@humnet.ucla.edu

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*Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji:
A Comparative Examination of the Concept of Total
Mobilization for Germany and Japan*

Andrew Mills

This essay undertakes a comparative examination of the concept of total mobilization in Germany and Japan during the 1930s and 1940s through the careers and thought of the military officers Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji. Important conceptual similarities and differences are identified in the process of comparing the two men's theories of total mobilization, and the utter demise of the total mobilization project in each country is addressed in an effort to ascertain whether or not Jünger's and Ishiwara's goals were indeed realized. This paper stretches beyond a reading of the two men's military biographies in order to provide a theoretical examination of two particular concepts of total mobilization, and their possible consequences for German and Japanese domestic and foreign policy. The essay is divided into three sections, the first of which undertakes a biographical comparison of Ishiwara and Jünger before leading into a literary-theoretical analysis of their articulations of total mobilization. Finally, the theoretical weaknesses of each theory will be discussed, and linked to the authors' views on the relationship between total mobilization and liberal democracy.

Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji: A Comparative Biography

The military and intellectual careers of Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji are certainly similar enough in achievement and scope to warrant comparative analysis. Each man enjoyed a high-profile reputation in the 1930s and 1940s as a successful and dynamic military officer, highly accomplished in military service and intellectual endeavor. Each man was an accomplished member of the officer corps of his nation's army and upheld a commitment to fundamentally politically conservative ideals that assumed a decidedly anti-liberal, anti-democratic stance. The impact of the First World War as humankind's initial encounter with the all-encompassing destructiveness of industrialized, mechanized combat provided Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji with the essential inspiration for the theories they would both later develop regarding 'total mobilization' as a preparation for 'total war'. The First World War was clearly more of a direct experience for Jünger (1895-1998), who fought in each of the war's four years, beginning in 1914 as one of the thousands of young

enthusiasts who took the advanced school-leaving examinations (*Nobilität*) so as to be able to volunteer for the army out of grammar school.

Jünger's combat experience started on the western front in December 1914, at which point Jünger began an almost immediate, steady ascension through the ranks that was to be punctuated by numerous battle wounds and near-death experiences. By the end of the first year of the war, Jünger had already been badly wounded and evacuated from the front and subsequently promoted to lieutenant. By war's end, Jünger had accumulated the German army's highest honors, including the Iron Cross, the Knight's Cross, and the *Pour le Mérite* as well as the post of company commander in his regiment (Noack 40, 42). When the First World War ended, Jünger was residing in a military hospital in Germany, recovering from a gunshot wound through his lung—the last of seven grave war wounds (Noack 42).

Jünger remained as an officer in the German army until 1923, during which time he was active in revising the *Reichswehr's* regulation and training manuals (Nevin 77). During this early Weimar period, Jünger began to write for publication. His first books dealt with the question of processing the war experience on a personal level, and can be seen as attempting to account for the war in different ways by means of various genres. An account of the war based on Jünger's own voluminous diaries kept in the trenches is his most famous book (*The Storm of Steel*, 1920), while a non-diary work provides an essential interpretation of the war as a masculine, inner experience (*War as Inner Experience*, 1922). To round out the early collection of Jünger's work on war, the 1923 short novel *Storm* represents the respected officer's first attempt at fiction, in which the narrative's three main figures—all of whom are variously accentuated composites of Jünger himself—are killed in a final gun battle while resisting capture.

After leaving the army in 1923, Jünger began a period of flirtation with diverse right-wing political parties, including the National Socialists, and entered a time period of prolific political essay-writing for a large number of conservative-nationalist publications, including such journals as *Ariminus*, *Die Standard*, *Der Stürmer*, *Der völkische Beobachter* and *Der Vorwärts* (Nevin 97-98, 101). During this period of Jünger's writing he appears to have embraced a radical, revolutionary nationalism that thoroughly rejected socialism and communism—as well as any notion of the return of the emperor—while embracing the fascist-oriented *Führerprinzip* in an attempt to isolate and articulate the most salient and promising path for German renewal. In this embrace of the politically radical right wing, Jünger began to politicize his already published war experience books, recasting them in a radical, nationalist framework. Simultaneously, Jünger refrained from committing to any one political party in the form of formal membership or obligation, and rejected Adolf Hitler's offer of a party seat in the Reichstag in 1927 (Nevin 99). Near the end of the

Weimar era, Ernst Jünger is reported to have been thoroughly disillusioned with parliamentary party politics. Though 1932 finds the author officially unassociated with any political party and disappointed in the futility of his previous calls for the German *Fronksoldaten* to revolutionize Germany, Jünger had anything but given up on developing his view of “total mobilization”—what he found to be the key to Germany's national resurgence. Jünger's total mobilization concept is brought to the forefront of his thought in the 1936 essay “Die totale Mobilmachung” (“Total Mobilization”) and in the 1932 book *Der Arbeiter* (*The Worker*).

Ishiwara Kaniji (1889-1949) entered the Japanese Military Academy in 1907, at approximately the same age that Ernst Jünger first experienced combat in the First World War. Though Ishiwara was not an enlisted man, his military career is also characterized by an extraordinary degree of drama and rapid rise up the military ranks as a result of natural talent and personal ambition. First serving as a second lieutenant and infantry platoon commander in rural Tōhoku and the Korean peninsula, Ishiwara graduated from the Army Staff College eight years later as the second-ranked graduate in his class, placing him on track to achieving the rank of general at the age of twenty-nine (Peattie 21). After an assignment to an army garrison in China, a lectureship at the Army Staff College, and three years of study in Germany, Ishiwara achieved the rank of major at age thirty-six, and was assigned to the faculty of the Army Staff College as an instructor in military history (22). At this juncture in 1926—while Ernst Jünger was retiring from official work as a result of his considerable book royalties and supplemental Army pension—Ishiwara began to articulate his own theories about modern warfare through a series of lectures at the Army Staff College (49). These lectures were delivered within the framework of a number of courses taught by Ishiwara on the history of European war, in addition to essays and lectures written by Ishiwara afterwards and delivered to army staff officers in Manchuria and elsewhere. Ishiwara Kaniji's work at this time reveals a steady development of the “complex structure of historical, mystical, strategic, and political ideas” dealing with the “function and development of war” and “the relation of war and human history” (51-52). These were to gradually form Ishiwara's theory of “the Final War.”

When Ishiwara's three-year appointment to the Army Staff College was complete, he sought and received a transfer to the Kwantung Army staff in Manchuria. There Ishiwara's theories on war, expressed in such earlier essays as “Japan's Present and Future National Defense” from 1927, had found a receptive audience among young officers of the Kwantung Army, who were frustrated by the perceived weakness of Japanese foreign policy to counteract the eroding effects of “imported” ideologies such as liberalism, democracy, Marxism, and pacifism on the military's ability to defend Japan (53-54, 93). Once in Manchuria, Ishiwara found much opportunity not only to enhance

his theoretical ideas about warfare and Japanese national security, but to test them in the field of military operations, planning in conjunction with seasoned, sympathetic colleagues. This situation quickly led to Ishiwara throwing his considerable strategic planning and organizational skills behind the view that Manchuria must be fully occupied and administered by the Japanese army. The subsequent secret operational planning for this venture was to a great extent influenced by Ishiwara, who enjoyed the support of Kwangung Army staff officers (105).

The planning reached its zenith in the creation of what became known as the 1931 “Mukden Incident”, a veritable conspiracy that simulated a Chinese attack on the Japanese-administered South Manchuria Railway, which in turn served as a pretext for using the Kwangung Army to seize and occupy large areas of southern and central Manchuria while circumventing—even ignoring—Japanese parliamentary government protests (113, 122). As Mark Peattie writes in his work on the career and thought of Ishiwara Kanji, in the months following the Mukden Incident it was apparently Ishiwara, “aided by a first-rate and fiercely loyal staff” who was the primary inspiration and “driving force” behind the action (122). Soon, hostilities between Japanese and Chinese troops spread to include Japanese attacks on other Manchurian cities, as well as the involvement of the Japanese Army stationed in Korea. Ishiwara was located at the heart of these developments, which had a decisive influence upon the fate of the Japanese nation. Ishiwara’s actions also had a profound effect upon other highly significant events, such as the rebellion of the Young Officers in February 1936, during which Ishiwara is described by Peattie as being the “most effective” of all military officers in suppressing the rebellion, despite his own particular sympathies for a “Shōwa Restoration” and the overthrow of the parliamentary-democratic government (238).

Though this comparative biography between Ernst Jünger and Ishiwara Kanji must necessarily remain abbreviated, it is clear that both men acquired firsthand knowledge and experience of the military situations their respective countries faced in the first half of the twentieth century. The intellects of both Jünger and Ishiwara were well-respected and formally in demand by their respective military institutions. Today, Ishiwara and Jünger enjoy a formidable reputation for not being describable by merely one field of endeavor, denoted by such designations as “writer” or “officer”. Ishiwara Kanji was at once military historian, staff officer, strategist, thinker, plotter, and Pan-Asianist (vip). Ernst Jünger can be similarly described as foot soldier and combat officer, tactical theoretician, entomologist, successful novelist, and voluminous writer of various philosophical tracts and publications.

A decisive aspect of the biographies of Jünger and Ishiwara for the purpose of this project, however, is their theoretical and practical explorations of the concept ‘total mobilization’, as influenced by the notion of ‘total war’.

Both of these terms are products of the modern era of industrialization, which suddenly allowed for drastic increases in the numbers and destructive power of weaponry, which in turn increased the need for large armies and the subsequent necessity of a nation’s economy and society to support the material demands of war. ‘Total mobilization’ commonly refers to a modern state’s attempt to mobilize and rationalize all available natural as well as human resources in order to focus upon “the single end of conducting war in the most efficient, functional manner” (Yamanouchi 3-4). ‘Total war’ naturally walks hand-in-hand with the notion of complete industrial and social mobilization, and as a result was commonly understood in terms similar to those used by the German general Erich Ludendorff, who defined *der totale Krieg* as no longer “a matter of the fighting forces” as in times past, but directly affecting “the life and soul of each member of the 1/2 that is waging war” (Ludendorff 5, my translation). While Ishiwara Kanji was developing and disseminating his theoretical understanding of total mobilization via his theory of the “Final War” from the mid-1920s into the mid-1930s and beyond, Ernst Jünger was espousing his own concept of total mobilization for Germany with the works “Total Mobilization” and *The Worker*.

Comparative Total Mobilization: Reading Ishiwara Kanji and Ernst Jünger

To varying degrees, both Ishiwara Kanji and Ernst Jünger based their theoretical work on the disastrous German experience of the First World War. The lessons each man appears to have garnered from the war differ in interesting ways, for Ishiwara’s and Jünger’s understanding of ‘total mobilization’ is a reaction to the perceived predicament of each writer’s nation. In addition, Ishiwara and Jünger sought to provide the most effective theoretical carrier for their ideas, with the result being in both cases the seemingly contradictory mixture of rational-scientific elements on the one hand, and religious or near-mystical concepts on the other.

Beginning with the formidable body of thought produced by Ishiwara Kanji, it is important to note that Ishiwara’s approach to the topics that occupied his career—military history, the theory of modern warfare, and the future security of Japan—is woven together from four major theories he developed and vigorously pursued until the end of his life: the National Defense State, a Shōwa Restoration, the notion of the Final War, and the East Asian League (Peattie 365). I would like to focus upon Ishiwara’s concept of “Final War”, for not only is this theory considered by scholars to be the most original of Ishiwara’s theoretical pursuits, it also gives us the most direct access to the idea of Japan’s need for total mobilization.

As Peattie points out in his investigation of Ishiwara’s early military career, most Japanese military observers came to the conclusion that Germany

had not lost the First World War as a result of military failure, but as a consequence of lacking the massive production capacity necessary to prevail in protracted, industrialized warfare (12–13). Ishiwara Kanji was a part of the “new Japanese military elite” who became familiar with the latest in European military doctrine through study tours in Europe that lasted multiple years (18–19). During his three-year stay in Germany, Ishiwara utilized the information he gathered from contemporary German debates on military doctrine to inspire his own work on Japan’s strategic situation in East Asia. From this early work emerges a theory of “Final War” which predicts a cataclysmic armed conflict between Japan and the Western colonial powers. This war is precipitated by a Japanese challenge to Western hegemony in Asia for reasons of securing vital natural resources. In Ishiwara’s theory, the Japanese challenge to the United States dominance of Asia was considered essential to Japan’s survival in a modern industrial world, in which Japan was floundering in its efforts to achieve domestic self-sufficiency due to a chronic lack of access to raw materials, problems of over-population, and high unemployment.

What made “Final War” inevitable in Ishiwara’s mind was the thought that the series of aggressive measures which Japan needed to carry out in order to gain access to natural resources—the acquisition of territory in East Asia, most prevalently at the expense of China—were the same steps that would most likely lead Japan to war with the Western colonial powers. Thus the measured, scientific and rational notion of ‘total mobilization’ enters Ishiwara’s theory: in order for Japan to have a chance at prevailing in a total industrial war against Western powers, it would have to consolidate and mobilize the resources of the East Asian continent in such a harmonious and efficient fashion as to effectively counter the industrial weight of the United States. The admittedly complicated and intricate operations necessary to carry out such a plan would be directed by a Japanese “National Defense State” that would be the moral anchor and spiritual guide of the “East Asian League”; that is, an Asian political and economic union that would overthrow Western colonial oppression through armed struggle (317, 320). Finally, Ishiwara’s understanding of a “Shōwa Restoration” included taking a “basic framework for domestic reform in Japan and stretching it to include the reform of East Asia”—making it an “Asian restoration, bringing together all Asian races” (319). These three ideas fall into line behind the flagship idea of the Final War, and only these concepts working in conjunction with one another could allow the inevitable, prolonged industrial war against the West to be won by Japan.

As it has been described thus far, the Ishiwara theory of Final War, like each of the other three theoretical pursuits that made up Ishiwara’s life’s work, differentiates itself little from the professional opinion and personal imaginations of many young Japanese officers who had traversed the same military training and educational landscape. In almost precisely the same time

period, for example, the general army staff member Okawa Shumei was theorizing about the inevitability of a cataclysmic world war between the United States and Japan (Chang 27). It is Ishiwara’s linking of his own highly respected military analysis to a particular Japanese religious tradition—Nichiren Buddhism—that makes Ishiwara’s theorization unique (Peattie 52). Whereas without its religious component Ishiwara’s Final War theory merely outlines the contours of a geopolitical economic struggle between two industrialized nations with vital interests in the Pacific, the Nichiren addition makes the Japanese/American clash into an apocalyptic conflict in accordance with divine will (57). The ensuing struggle would be a part of the great natural tide of human civilization and, after the vanquishing of the United States, would result in a synthesis of human ideals that, in Ishiwara’s view, would be based ultimately upon the Japanese *kokutai*, or ‘national essence’. In this sense the Japanese military victory would be a victory for greater Asia, indeed the world, as all would eventually become united under a harmonious spiritual hegemony of the Japanese Emperor and nation.

Nichiren Buddhism—based upon the Japanese Buddhist priest Nichiren’s doctrines centered around Shakayamuni’s final discourse before he entered into Nirvana (38–39)—proved to be the most suitable religion for Ishiwara in terms of how well it appeared to mesh with his own reflections upon Japan’s destiny. Lacking a strong interest in religious commitment on a personal spiritual level, Ishiwara first rejected a private adherence to Christianity; then discarded traditional Shintō as, in Mark Peattie’s words, “not sufficiently dynamic” enough for the troubled times of the Taishō democracy (38). Ishiwara sought a ‘Japanese’ spiritualism that would allow itself to be integrated with sentiments of Japanese patriotism that could in turn be marshaled to strengthen the nation’s own national values. In his initial mining of Nichiren Buddhism’s pre-Meiji doctrine, it is clear that Ishiwara found and appropriated three elements of Nichiren messianic thought: the linking of religious life and Japanese patriotism, the apocalyptic prediction of an impending human conflict of epic proportions, and the notion that the subsequent regeneration and harmonization of the world would originate geographically in Japan (40–41).

It is important to note that the utilization of Nichiren messianic doctrine depicted thus far is largely restricted to Nichiren Buddhism in its traditional form, based on the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren’s interpretations of passages within it (38). Highly influential aspects of Nichiren thought also enter into Ishiwara’s theories via the transition of Nichiren Buddhism into the national-religious ideology of “Nichirenism” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most notably at the hands of the Nichiren revivalist and religious propagandist Tanaka Chigaku (41). Under Tanaka’s recasting of Nichiren thought, the principles of Nichiren are more strongly tied to the fundamental characteristics of Japanese national life. The merging of these

two boxes of thought provides for a Nichiren world mission that involves the championing of the Japanese *kokutai* in the rest of the world as the ultimate expression of human ideals and values. A Nichirenism that had freshly cross-pollinated a sense of religious destiny and world mission with an adherence to what were viewed as superior Japanese national values was fertile soil in which Ishiwara's theory of impending cataclysmic war against the United States could take root. In this new light, the widely unpopular "foreign" elements of liberal democratic and capitalistic ideology assumed a religious character as threats to the Japanese divine mission—as opposed to being viewed as modern challenges to a young, industrializing nation.

Ishiwara's sense of historical determinism was reinforced by his own reading of the writings of the priest, Nichiren. Convinced that the fifth five-hundred year period after the death of Buddha would be one of great conflict between defenders of 'true' Buddhism and those who sought its destruction, Nichiren prophesied a colossal global conflict that would end in world harmony under the peaceful hegemony of "the Wonderful Law" (46). As it appeared clear to Ishiwara that Nichiren's global conflict was to be between Japan and the United States, it followed logically for him that there was a pressing need for a total national mobilization in preparation for the Final War, one that would wholly rearrange the nation's national priorities (48). In Ishiwara's mind, Japan's national predicament necessitated a total mobilization that involved the seizure and administration of vital natural resources in greater East Asia, the spiritual and political unification of Asian peoples under the Japanese nation, and a domestic political rejuvenation under the auspices of a Shōwa Restoration. For Ishiwara Kanji, the path to total mobilization was thus paved with a mixture of religious prediction and technical military analysis. The driving force of Ishiwara's thought was the theory of the Final War, in which the historical determinism of the inevitable, colossal conflict between East and West was injected with a strong dose of anti-determinist free choice of action that theoretically allowed Japan to prepare for the war in time. The action to be chosen was, in Ishiwara's eyes, a total mobilization of the nation's strength, the "free choice" available to Japan's representative government to embrace or decline this action was continuously contested by Ishiwara and other members of the Japanese officer corps throughout Ishiwara's career until he was eventually retired by the Army in 1941.

In analyzing Ernst Jünger's theorization of the concept of total mobilization for Germany, I wish to examine two works by Jünger that were written in the time period when Ishiwara Kanji was actively enhancing and attempting to implement elements of his own theories involving total mobilization. In Jünger's 1930 essay "Total Mobilization" the author argues for the absolute necessity of Germans to understand and accept the concept of total mobilization as essential to the survival of the German nation.

Beginning with the nearly universal assertion of the time period that the First World War was fundamentally different from any previous war due to its highly industrialized, rationalized character, Jünger theorizes about the European history of conflict prior to the Great War as consisting of so-called "cabinet wars" (125-126). In earlier times, these *Kabinettkriege* could be waged by a monarch using 100,000 of his own subjects placed under "reliable leadership", and if a battle were lost by the monarch "silence could be demanded of the subject as the subject's first line of duty" (125-126).¹ In the era of cabinet wars, the general populace felt themselves a part of the conflict only insofar as they were forced to participate as combatants, or themselves suffered damages in property or life as a result of fighting in their locality. In both cases, the number of subjects that were directly affected often remained relatively low. The era of cabinet wars, Jünger argues, even stretches into the second half of the 19th century, despite the introduction of military conscription (126). During this time monarchs could still plan, conduct, and win "conservative" cabinet wars toward which the majority of the Volk was apathetic or even hostile. While demanding considerable resources, the mobilizations necessary for such relatively limited cabinet wars can only be deemed "partial" in nature. At this point a distinction emerges in Jünger's assessment that is significant to unlocking the logic of his argument: *partial* mobilization corresponds to the essence of monarchy; for according to Jünger, monarchical rulers much prefer the longer-term, professional support of mercenaries in limited conflicts, as these types of military struggles pose little chance of the monarch losing his entire kingdom (127). The modern broadening of participation in a country's mobilization process in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to include the middle classes and "masses" was not embraced enthusiastically by the regents, who saw such a widening of access to weaponry and combat experience as a threat to their power. As a result of the continual technical modernization of German society, the prevention of ever wider participation in national armament became ultimately impossible, resulting in the situation where it is no longer merely professional mercenaries who defend the state, but all men who are capable of bearing arms and being conscripted (127-128).

It is at this juncture that the critical figure of the "Worker" as well as a salient definition of 'total mobilization' enters Jünger's text: just as the rise of industrialized warfare made the monarchically-inspired age of localized cabinet wars obsolete, so too does the need for massive armies and supplies of armaments mark the dawn of the age of the Worker—and the decline of bourgeois man ("Total Mobilization" 128; *W'orker* 23). Modern industrial warfare did not simply signify an increase in the physical capacity for armies to kill each other's soldiers, but more importantly a transformation of war from a mere armed encounter into an gigantic technical operation of war from (*Achtungpanzer!*) that assumes the magnitude of a world historic event,

oustripping even the French Revolution in importance (128-129). For nations to unfold the energies that modern warfare demands of them, Jünger argues, it no longer suffices to have the state's "sword arm" fired and armed, but all of national life itself, even down to its smallest nerves (129).²

The realization of this martial outfitting of the state is the task of Jünger's total mobilization, or "the act through which the widely-branched and diversely-veined power grid of modern life is, by one grasp of the switchboard, fed into the great current of martial energy" (129). The dawn of industrial warfare therefore means at once the simultaneous rise of the Worker as the most essential figure of the state, and the emergence of *totale Aloblichung* as the means by which a state fully utilizes the potential of the Worker in every aspect of his life. In this setting, Worker and Soldier become indistinguishable, as each plies his specialized trade in a rationalized, modern society that is fully outfitted for conflict.

It is interesting to note that Jünger does not consider total mobilization to have yet been accomplished at the time of his writing: the first attempts during the Great War to force all of society to serve the war effort were never as deep and far-reaching as was truly necessary to satisfy the demands of industrialized warfare. Furthermore, the German leadership of the time was dominated by the bourgeois order, and thus prevented total mobilization from being implemented out of the self-interest of its own degeneracy ("Total Mobilization" 129; *Wörter* 40). More significant to Jünger than the inadequacy of earlier policies, however, was his belief that, as terrible as the "material battles" of the late First World War were, never had human society reached such a modern state of being as at the time of Jünger's essay. In contemporary modern life, where "...in its merciless discipline, with its smoking and glowing estuaries, the physics and metaphysics of its traffic, its motors, its aircraft and million-resident cities", there is "not one atom that is not at work" and "we realize that even we, to our very core, are inextricably caught up in its frenzied operation" ("Total Mobilization" 131).

In the midst of this modernity as described by the author, total mobilization is "less achieved than it achieves itself" and is in times of both war and peace the expression of the "mysterious and coercive demand to which we are subjugated in the age of masses and machines" (131-132). This description adds a sense of mysticism and incalculability to the concept of total mobilization that appears to rob the individual, or even the collective, of its agency, thus opening the door for a serious conceptual contradiction. According to Jünger, the "mysterious" phenomena of total industrialized war and total mobilization affect each modern state in the same fashion, regardless of whether the nation is German or non-German, democratically or monarchically arranged, "advanced" or underdeveloped, or a victor or loser in the Great War—total warfare tests the mettle of all nations equally, as an

earthquake does the foundations of buildings (134-135).

The mysterious, determinist character of a Jüngerian, self-mobilizing total mobilization affecting everyone equally conflicts with the author's call for implementing total mobilization policies in order for Germany to be in a position to wage industrial warfare. Jünger's model also appears to conflict with the agency he attributes to the "bourgeois order" when he attacks them for being too decadent to implement total mobilization during the Great War. Jünger argues that in order for all the possibilities of total mobilization to be achieved, the peacetime society must already have molded its societal order to fit the precepts of total mobilization (129-130). The author even includes what appears to be an ominous warning for the ostensibly German reader that "in many nation-states of the postwar period, we see the new methods of armament already being tailored to fit total mobilization" (130). In rounding out the tension between industrial determinism and a call for the engagement of all of modern society to totally mobilize itself, Jünger places an emphasis on the role of the people, claiming: "[T]he technical aspect of total mobilization is not the decisive one, but rather the *willingness* for mobilization" (132-133, my emphasis).

Thus in Ernst Jünger's fashioning and usage of the concept "total mobilization", one finds primarily an embrace of the commonly-used term "Worker", which Jünger utilizes to signify the rise of the modern member of society to strategic significance. The Worker will prove decisive for the survival of all industrialized nations—though the author is of course propagating this view to Germans in particular. In Jünger's theoretical framework, the rational and calculable appear to be integrated with the mysterious and intangible in a fashion that is vaguely similar to Ishiwara Kanji's blending of rational thought and calculation with traditional mystical religious tradition.

Theoretical Weaknesses and the Relationship between Total Mobilization and Democracy

Both Ishiwara Kanji and Ernst Jünger lived to witness the cataclysmic world war that was capable of proving or disproving their theories. Neither man's understanding of total mobilization was ever achieved. Peattie points out that in Ishiwara's case "the industrialization programs of the national defense state never got started, the Shōwa Restoration never took place, [the] dream of an East Asian League was never realized, and [the] vision of Japan and America locked in a Final War for the control of the destiny of the world was dispelled by the realities of a collision between the two nations over the control of the Pacific" (365-366). A close following of Jünger's own description of total mobilization also results in the conclusion that the goals of his project were not achieved in Germany's case, either. If the autobiography of the German Minister of Armaments Albert Speer can be trusted in this regard, Germany's

attempts at wartime mobilization were reported to be rife with "labor problems, unsolved raw materials questions, and court intrigues", as well as the Allied bombing attacks on German cities (278).⁵

Luudolf Herbst confirms in his work, *Der totale Krieg und die Ordnung der Wirtschaft (Total War and the Organization of the Economy)*, that Jünger's precondition that total mobilization first be fully established in peacetime society was never met. The first serious official attempt at full implementation of total mobilization came only late in the war, following the July 1944 attempt on Hitler's life (343). At this point Joseph Goebbels was made "Reich Authority for the Total War Effort" with considerable new administrative powers. But, as Otto Ohlendorf, chief of the Interior Sicherheitsdienst (SD) complained in 1944: "We did not enter this war with a concrete foundation. For example, neither the *Wirtschaft* nor the economy could be newly conceptualized according to National Socialism" (344-345, my translation). Ohlendorf openly expressed regret that Germany had not had the "possibility" or the "time" to proceed in as total a fashion as Josef Stalin was able to in the Soviet Union (345). In addition, Herbst also notes that the acute labor problems mentioned by Albert Speer were not properly eased by the available German women's work force that was especially mobilized for this purpose (119; 123-124).

Regardless of whether the total mobilization projects in Germany and Japan were truly Jüngerian or Ishivarian in final practice, they ended in the shared disaster of widespread urban destruction and unconditional surrender. In addition, they shared a cruel irony: each theory of total mobilization discussed here was developed by a respected, successful military intellectual who believed that, in order for his country to prevail in a future global conflict, his country would have to implement an effective, totalizing mobilization, or all was lost. Germany and Japan became aggressively active in global conflicts before establishing total mobilization in the manner Jünger and Ishiwara claimed to be necessary; however, and both countries lost disastrously as predicted.

This final section is not intended to provide a historiographic review of how Germany and Japan failed to establish the necessary industrial output to defeat the Allies, but to focus instead upon two similar theoretical weaknesses found in Jünger's and Ishiwara's projects. Both theories contain contradictions that are located in the tension between their deterministic character and their militant call for the complete mobilization of society; lest the nation meet with disaster. In the case of Ishiwara's theoretical work, the path to establish total mobilization in preparation for the Final War leads Japan into the ruinous paradox of provoking the very cataclysmic, far-reaching war for which Japan first needed to establish total mobilization to have any hope of prevailing. This Pacific War, essentially brought about by Japan's aggressive military policies in China and East Asia for the acquisition of needed natural resources, assured the ultimate prevention of Japanese total mobilization. The actual result was

a grueling war against the United States in which U.S. industrial capacity to produce vast amounts of military hardware gradually threw Japan back across the Pacific, then buried it under a merciless onslaught of conventional and atomic aerial bombardment.

Ernst Jünger's argument for *total Mobilisierung* contains a similar contradiction: Jünger argues that total mobilization is a process that creates itself through the unstoppable encroachment of modernization and industrialization upon human lives, steadily making "each single life more into the life of a worker" (132). Jünger also argues, however, that Germany must embrace and pursue total mobilization as a nation, and the masses constituting the *Volk* must be characterized by a complete "willingness to mobilize", so as to both be able to compete with other European states, and not find itself again in the situation of fighting a war with only "partial mobilization".

The theoretical weakness of each writer's total mobilization project can be differentiated from one another by identifying Ishiwara's mistake as a performative contradiction, where Ishiwara finds himself theorizing that Japan should pursue precisely a foreign policy most likely to draw itself into a disastrous, industrialized war it cannot win, in order to be prepared for a coming apocalyptic war which it is not yet prepared to fight. In contrast, Jünger's description of total mobilization is a conceptual contradiction, as it fails to remain consistent in outlining total mobilization's nature as either creating itself out of the industrial-productive impulses of modernity, or needing the embrace of the German people in order to be properly achieved.

The contradictions inherent in Ishiwara's and Jünger's theories each result from the mixture of rational, scientifically-minded planning and acknowledgement of the spiritual, prophetic, or mysterious character of human life. Ishiwara's theoretization is clearly much more radically mystical, if one adheres to the conventional notion that there is no scientific reliability in religious prophecy. It must be noted in this regard that Jünger is not at all reliant upon notions of prophecy or spirituality, and instead finds a role for the non-scientific "mysterious" in his assessment of a bustling, industrialized modernity that couples masses with machines. In addition, Jünger refrains from predicting the immediate inevitability of another Great War.

What the two theories share in regards to internal weaknesses, however, is the tendency to demand immediate implementation of total mobilization at the expense of the contemporary parliamentary democratic system. Ishiwara's and Jünger's theories each assumes that the very fate of the nation—in Ishiwara's case, even the world—is at stake in the question of whether or not each country could attain the level of mobilization necessary to survive a future war. Given the gravity of the situation for the theorists, it comes as little surprise that the secured future survival of the nation should be

more highly valued than the continued existence of a parliamentary system for which Ishiwara and Jünger showed little allegiance. Both men's concepts for their nations' futures seem to be necessarily aversive to democracy in order to carry out their desired goal. In the case of Ernst Jünger, one sees the antagonistic relationship between total mobilization and liberal democracy quite clearly when Jünger makes his case for the conformation of peacetime society to the precepts of complete mobilization (130). In this context Jünger singles out liberalism's ideal of individual *liberté* for elimination:

At this point actions can be taken such as the radical destruction of the concept of 'individual freedom', which has been surely [a questionable concept] from the beginning. We see this attack [on individual freedom]—which tendency it is to declare that there should exist nothing that is not a function of the state—first in countries such as Russia and Italy, then in Germany. It is foreseeable that all countries that hold claims on the world⁵ will somehow carry out [this attack on individual freedom] in order to be equal to the task of releasing new types of power. (130)

In this startlingly frank excerpt from Jünger's 1936 essay, Jünger is claiming that the National Socialist attack on individual freedom inside Germany is not only cut from the same wood as those attacks on freedom witnessed in the Soviet Union and fascist Italy; it represents a necessary, productive step in the process of effectively unleashing the strengths of industrialization through total mobilization.

Jünger later connects utter state control over total mobilization (and thus the populace) with the ability to conduct warfare more effectively and avoid the revolutionary situation Germany experienced in late 1918: "The more consistently and deeply the war from the very beginning seizes the sum of all strengths for itself, the more secure and undeviating it will be in its course" (142). (Clearly the eradication of parliamentary democracy and the liberalist interpretation of individual freedom (also advocated in *The Worker*) is not merely the hoped-for result of Jünger's total mobilization, but a prerequisite for its success. The fact that this contention might be the source of another contradiction in Jünger's argument (recall that Jünger argues that the process of modernization and industrialization affects each state in the same way, regardless of whether it is democratically or monarchically organized) is beside the point: The sum total of Jünger's sentiments treat liberalism and its alleged detrimental effects upon German society as components of a 'foreign' ideology.)

Ishiwara Kanji's stance on the relationship between his idea of a Shōwa Restoration and liberal democratic institutions in Japan are similar to those of Ernst Jünger in their anti-liberal sentiment. Like Jünger, Ishiwara saw the "foreign", "imported" liberal ideals of the U.S. and Western European

democracies as serious detriments to his society, quite apart from the question of total mobilization. When the life-or-death question of total mobilization is included in Ishiwara's assessment of Japan's prosperity and security, however, the contours of his anti-liberal position become clearer, for the tenets of liberalism and parliamentary democracy are marked as hindrances to total mobilization. The manner in which Ishiwara viewed liberal ideals as threats to total mobilization included an interest in both the livelihood of the nation's people as well as the makeup of the nation's political system. Ishiwara viewed with disgust the "immediate problems of social injustice" present in the Japan (Peattie 228). According to Ishiwara, the tils of unemployment, the high cost of living, and the low price of farm produce all could be traced back to the inherent exploitative character of liberal capitalism, which had created a tiny, extremely rich class of citizens that enjoyed economic sovereignty over a large class of destitute citizens languishing in poverty.

For this reason, Ishiwara supported revolutionary systemic reforms as a part of a Shōwa Restoration that harkened back to the Meiji Restoration in its "antagonism toward the privileged classes, professed anti-capitalism, concern for the rural population, fervent patriotism and a mystical belief in Japan's unique destiny" (228-229). The significance of this outward concern for the masses and call to replace parliamentary democracy and capitalism with a "newer system" lies in the fact that, like Ernst Jünger, Ishiwara Kanji viewed liberal notions of individual freedom and democracy as being antithetic to total mobilization. On the same token, both writers held that a totalitarian-styled system of government lent itself more effectively to the implementation of total mobilization. While Jünger believed that the destruction of "individual freedom" would greater enable a nation-state to unleash the new powers of industrialization and modernization, Ishiwara envisioned his Shōwa Restoration as "harnessing the nation's political energies along totalitarian lines, including the creation of a single mass political organization and the imposition of a thoroughly regimented economy to increase national productivity" (229).

Both Jünger's and Ishiwara's resistance to liberal democracy appear to find its foundation in an essentially communal understanding of society that runs counter to liberalism's emphasis on individualism, which is perceived to lead to decadence and selfishness. The subsequent totalitarian institutions that arose in Germany and Japan, however—seen by each author as theoretically most conducive to the implementation of their theories—proved to be Germany's and Japan's downfall. Though it is not the focus of this comparison of Ishiwara and Jünger to suggest that the rejection or avoidance of democracy necessarily invites national disaster, it is important to note that the nature of the total mobilization programs theorized by these men during the 1930s were inherently bellicose, given the political context in which they were to be

implemented. Their emphatic rejection of liberal democratic institutions only enhanced the programs' capacity to provoke conflict with the Western democracies of France, England and the United States.

Conclusion

In comparing Ishiwara's and Jünger's conceptualizations of total mobilization in the 1930s, it is surprising to find that neither author lays out in technical detail how Germany or Japan is to go about radicalizing domestic society to most efficiently produce war material or industrial goods in sufficient quantity. Instead each writer approached the topic of mobilization in a much more theoretical and vague manner, attempting to develop the factual, material-based science of industrialization and technology, then blend it with generous portions of traditional spiritualist thought (Nichiren Buddhism), or the intangible mysteriousness of the relationship between modernity and the human spirit's willingness to embrace it (the "willingness for mobilization"). In both cases the authors leave the most difficult, practical calculations of total mobilization to others.

What makes the comparison of these two theorists of similar career experience, intellectual development, patriotism, and ambition most compelling is their parallel search for the answer to the same question—how could Germany or Japan, hopelessly out-produced by the industrial might of a country such as the U.S., implement a program of national organization so as to ensure its survival in a future that is likely to include an even more industrialized war than the one of 1914-1918? In searching out answers to this question, both Jünger and Ishiwara established theories that were meant to simultaneously combat the perceived evils of liberal institutions and completely mobilize their societies in a manner that would enable victory in a future war both men knew would be industrialized and catastrophic. Far from being purely scientific, however, the strong elements of religious or near-mystical concepts in their idea structures give the theories a contradictory character. In the end, no amount of theoretical musing or self-ascribed foresight was enough to spare Jünger and Ishiwara from witnessing the disastrous effects their nations' wars ravaged upon their homelands.

Endnotes

- 1 This and all subsequent translations of Jünger citations are my own.
- 2 "...bis in den feinsten Lebensnerv."
- 3 Albert Speer became Minister of Armaments in early 1942.
- 4 "Reichsbewohnmüchtiger für den totalen Kriegseinsatz"
- 5 "...Länder, in denen Weltansprüche lebendig sind..."

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