

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND AFTER

The Russian design in Manchuria was becoming manifest in 1903 and Japanese papers came out every morning with telegrams from Peking reporting the imminence of a war with Russia. H. G. Wells says in his "The Outline of History" that "Russia was pushing down through Manchuria to Korea, France was already established far to the south in Tonkin and Annam, Germany was prowling hungrily on the lookout for some settlement. The three Powers combined to prevent Japan reaping any fruits from the Chinese War, and particularly from establishing herself on the mainland at the points commanding the Japan Sea. . . . In 1898 Germany descended upon China, and making the murder of two missionaries her excuse, annexed a portion of the province of Shantung. Thereupon Russia seized the Liaoting peninsula, and extorted the consent of China to an extension of her trans-Siberian railway to Port Arthur; and in 1900 she occupied Manchuria. Britain was unable to resist the imitative impulse, and seized the port of Weihaiwei (1898). How alarming these movements must have been to every intelligent Japanese a glance at the map will show".

Whatever suspicion is now cast upon the development of the Japanese Empire by Americans and other nations who had their territory far expanded in bygone days, the true situation which prevailed in the Far East on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 was as described by H. G. Wells and the real cause of the war with Russia was only for the purpose of de-

fence which is clear from the above quoted lines from Wells' work.

Prior to the outbreak of the war, papers began their attack on the arrogant attitude of Russia. In 1902 Russia promised to withdraw her troops from Manchuria but she did not carry it out even though one year had passed. The cry for war was first raised by Peking correspondents of the Asahi and the Osaka Mainichi. These papers in their editorials predicted the imminence of war with Russia. The majority of papers expressed the same view. The only exceptions were the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi, the Yorozu Choho and the Niroku. These three papers opposed the war until the last moment.

There occurred an incident in which seven professors in the Tokyo Imperial University tendered their resignations to the President of the school after publishing chauvinistic opinions. Their opinions obtained popular support while the situation was growing tense. The Russian preparations were becoming extreme. The Tokyo Nichi-Nichi editorially criticised the step taken by these seven professors as rash. The Yorozu was anti-war. It printed editorials, rather sentimental in tone, written by such Christian and Socialist leaders as Kanzo Uchimura, Toshihiko Sakai, now famous as a Socialist leader, and Shusui Kotoku, who was about several years later executed for his dastardly attempt on the life of the late Emperor Meiji. The Niroku was a "yellow" paper owned by Teisuke Akiyama and opposed a war with Russia. Its editorials

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vehemently attacked the Government. Akiyama was a member of the House of Representatives. He fought in the House against an overwhelming majority. At last a motion was introduced in the Lower House to regard Akiyama as a Russian spy, which was clear, the sponsor said, from the leading articles in his paper, *Niroku*. A special committee was organized in the House to investigate the matter but no evidence was obtained to brand him as such. However, although the committee failed to obtain sufficient evidence it reported to the House that Akiyama acted against the interests of Japan and in favour of Russia. The House accepted the report and urged Akiyama to resign. Akiyama had to obey the rule and resigned from the Lower House. Later the publication of the *Niroku* was suppressed by the Government. Then Akiyama issued another paper under the title of the *Tokyo Niroku Shimpō*.

Seeing the national sentiment too strong against Russia to be controlled, and obliged for other reasons to do, the *Yorozu* carried out a shake-up and dismissed Shusui Kotoku, Toshihiko Sakai and other writers who had opposed a war. This tells the character of the late Shuroku Kuroiwa who put his paper's interests ahead of anything else.

Meantime the Russo-Japanese War broke out in February, 1904. All the newspapers in Japan took the chance to test their power and ability and sent a number of correspondents to the front. The *Asahi* and the *Osaka Mainichi* were the two biggest papers at that time and despatched many more war correspondents to Manchuria than other papers. Among those sent by these papers as war correspondents

were many who became famous journalists afterwards. They were Sosen Torii, who later became the editor-in-chief of the *Osaka Asahi* and after quitting the *Asahi* issued a new paper called the *Taisho Nichi-Nichi*; Fusen Okumura, now general news manager of the *Osaka Mainichi*; Kageaki Oba, who recently died in Siberia on his way home from Moscow; Norinobu Matsu-uchi, now the general news manager of the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*; Genzayemon Haruaki, now managing editor of the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*. As the war was the biggest Japan had ever been engaged in, the whole of the nation was at the highest pitch of excitement. Such being the case, competition among papers was the strongest imaginable. The *Osaka Mainichi* attached one of its members as a coolie to the Eleventh Division of the Imperial Army and "scooped" the news of the battle in Nanshan. The paper was also careful to instruct some of his war correspondents to send their telegrams through Chinese telegraph offices. The *Asahi*, which until that time was superior to the *Osaka Mainichi* in funds, chartered a fast ship for the transport of mail reports. The *Asahi*, the *Osaka Mainichi* and the *Jiji* issued extras as soon as big war news was received. This was done irrespective of expense, from their ambition to increase their circulation and also from their consciousness of the mission of papers. Really all the nation was literally on tiptoe to receive any news from the front, victory or defeat. During the war, the *Asahi* and the *Mainichi* issued about five hundred extras.

The *Osaka Mainichi* had sufficiently been prepared before the war broke out. For that reason, the paper secured a great success during the

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war. The news gathering system had been completed by Takashi Hara when he was president of the Osaka Mainichi in 1898, succeeding Ki-ichiro Takagi who had resigned. Hara was invited by the Osaka Mainichi Company to be President. The paper needed an able man like him to manage the whole thing. Hara had been Minister to Korea and also Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. As the president of the Osaka Mainichi, Hara worked hard to improve the news gathering system which is the most important part of paper's organs. Three years after, Hara resigned and entered the political world. Afterwards he became president of the Seiyukai Party. He was succeeded by Ycitaro Komatsubara and the paper had on its editorial staff such able journalists as Rita Takagi, now managing director of the Osaka Mainichi, Yuho Kikuchi, a famous novelist, and the late Minojiro Watanaabe, former editor-in-chief of the paper. Taking advantage of such a fine news gathering net, the Osaka Mainichi succeeded entirely in the war; especially in the later stages, until the Portsmouth peace conference. An American correspondent who was engaged by the Osaka Mainichi when Hara was president was a friend of Colonel Roosevelt's. He was sent to Russia as a special correspondent when the war broke out. His reports from the Russian capital of the real condition of Russia were splendid. They increased the credit of the Mainichi. He gave the editors of the Mainichi tips of the peace conference which was being held in Portsmouth. To compete with the Mainichi, the Asahi, the former's rival, engaged Mr. Dillon, a correspondent of the Daily Telegraph, as its correspondent and got him

to report to the paper from America.

Another paper which was successful in reporting the news of the peace conference was the Kokumin, which was a Government organ at that time and every facility possible was provided to the paper by the Government. The Kokumin lost its fame of being a people's paper, but still was a fine household paper.

On the conclusion of the Portsmouth Treaty with terms unsatisfactory to Japan the Government was unanimously attacked by papers, such as the Asahi, the Nichi-Nichi, the Osaka Mainichi, the Jiji, the Hochi, the Yorozu, and the Nihon. The only paper which supported the Government was the Kokumin. The Kokumin office was stormed by a mass of people assembled in Hibiya Park on September 5, 1905. Enraged at the vigorous methods of the police, the crowd became violent and burned many police stations and public buildings. The scene presented in the city was really dreadful and martial law was proclaimed.

The Katsura Cabinet then enforced a rigid censorship on all newspapers and periodicals, prohibiting them from publishing any articles which threatened the maintenance of order. These rules obtained three months. However, the press continued attacking the cabinet and made impossible the further existence of the ministry. The cabinet resigned on January 7, 1906, and the first Saionji Cabinet was organized.

The nation tested in the Russo-Japanese war became convinced of its strength and ability and never ceased expanding. Ten years later there occurred the world war and Japan became a party to it. The

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world war provided a chance to the Japanese press for full-fledged expansion. When the press came through the stage of the world war, it was not what it had been and its representative ones came to be ranked with the first rate newspapers in Europe and America, such as the Times of London, the New York Times, or Le Matin.

The expansion of the Osaka Mainichi after the close of the Russo-Japanese war was rapid and extraordinary. It bought up a Tokyo paper named the Dempo Shimbun or Telegraph in December, 1906, and changed its name to the Mainichi Dempo or Daily Telegraph. The Osaka Mainichi went further and purchased the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi in 1910 from the Iwasakis in whose control the paper had been since November 1904 when Taka-

aki Kato, now Viscount and President of the Kenseikai Party, owned the paper, the fund for the purchase having been advanced by Kyuya Iwasaki, the multi-millionaire, who was the father-in-law of Kato. Kato put the paper in the hands of Kyuya Iwasaki, when he became Japanese Ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1908.

After purchasing the Dempo Shimbun and the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi, the Osaka Mainichi effected a fusion of these two papers and issued one paper in February 1911 under the name of the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi one of its respect to the history of the paper. It is owing to the fine management of the Osaka Mainichi that the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi has since become one of the best papers in Tokyo with the largest circulation among all the papers in the capital.