
The Fifteen Years War (1931–1945)

In September 1931, the Manchurian Incident took place. The man who wrote out its scenario was Kanji Ishihara. He was a military man. He was in a sense exceptional among military men because he could speak of strategies of war and actually did speak of them. At that time, almost all military men could not even talk about strategies, because they were terribly myopic. He was born on 18 January 1889. He entered the Central Army Cadet School in September 1905. According to his records in school, he seemed good in German, mathematics, Japanese and Chinese classics, but he was poor in apparatus gymnastics and swordplay. He seems to have been a man of brain rather than a man of brawn. He was remarkably inclined towards thoughts and ideas, and he read a lot of books about military history, philosophy, and sociology when he was a student of the Central Army Cadet School and the War Academy. Ishihara had studied in Germany for three years since 1922. He did research there on the great King Friedrich and the military history of Napoleon. He was under the tutelage of Delbruck and others at the University of Berlin. He thought about the reason for the German defeat in the First World War and discussed strategies of position warfare, especially in an economy blocked by the enemy during a continuing war.

When Ishihara came back from Germany, the USSR was in the midst of terrible confusion. In 1917, the Romanov dynasty was taken down and a communist regime was established. In 1924, Lenin, who had promoted the New Economic Policy (NEP), died of a disease, while Stalin and Trotskii were in the middle of a power struggle. Finally Stalin won; Trotskii was dismissed from the communist party in 1927 and was deported in 1929. Thanks to the NEP, the average person's life in the Soviet Union had attained the level it held just before the First World War, which reminds us of the drastic change in China brought about by Deng Xiaoping in the latter half of the 20th cen-