
Introduction: Military Affairs and Modern Society in the Media: Journals, Advertising Design, Public Relations and Museums

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M. Maeda (Research Fellow, Urban-Culture Research Center, Osaka City University), who has studied the process of negotiations on the armor plate of battle ships between the German steel industry company Krupp on the one hand, and the German navy and the Japanese government on the other, proposed this Special Topic “Military Affairs and Modern Society in the Media: Journals, Advertising Design, Public Relations and Museums.” The underlying interest in this issue is linked to the recent research trend in military history which has focused not on the military itself but on its relation to the society in which it was located.

To deepen this interest, Maeda presented the research project “Comparative research of images of the military expressed in the modern media” and this project was accepted for the “Young Researcher Project of the Urban-Culture Research Center” list for the 2019 academic year. In this project, three young researchers specializing in modern German history (Maeda, S. Takaoka, and Y. Nagao) and one young sociologist (S. Nakajima) attempted to discuss the relationship between the military and society, which has been reflected in various media.

Takaoka (Doctoral Student, Department of World History, Graduate School of Letters, Kansai University) has studied the introduction of the modern military system into Prussian society in the early 19th century. Nagao (ex-Doctoral Student, Department of Western History, Graduate School of Literature and Human Sciences, Osaka City University) has analyzed images of the military and war published in family magazines during the time of the German Empire. The research theme of Nakajima (Research Fellow, Urban-Culture Research Center, Osaka City University) has been the relationship between the military and the media from the Russian-Japanese war to the 1930s.

Although this project was conducted for only one year, it produced abundant results which were made public at the Urban-Culture Research Center Forum “Civic Society and the Military Dissolved through Various Media” on February 14, 2020. This Forum was held with the addition of Y. Takeuchi (Faculty of Social Studies, Doshisha University) and T. Hayashida (Faculty of Foreign Language, Setsunan University at the time of the Forum) as guest speakers. Takeuchi has made outstanding achievements in the field of the social and design history of advertising in Japan, and Hayashida recently directed her attention to the British War Museum during World War I. Because the research by these two professors suitably complemented the work of the original members of the project, it is considered to be an appropriate selection here. Thankfully, both speakers actively participated in the preparation meetings for the Forum.

The program of the Forum, which corresponds to the contents of this Special Topic, is as follows:

Reports

- 1) “Prussian Military Reforms and the *Berliner Landwehr* in Local News during the Wars of Liberation, 1813-1815”

Satomi Takaoka

- 2) “Civil Society and the Army from Family Magazines during the German Empire: Army Representation in the Family Magazine *Die Gartenlaube* and *Daheim*”

Yui Nagao

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- 3) “Public Relations Exercises of Firma Krupp in Japan at the End of the 19th Century: The Shooting test and Nichi-Doku-Kōgyō-Kōkoku”

Mitsuhiro Maeda

- 4) “Public Relations of the Japanese Navy in the Prewar Period: The Case of Boarding a Warship”

Shinpei Nakajima

Guest-speakers

- 1) “Museum as Propaganda: War Exhibitions in Britain during the First World War”

Toshiko Hayashida

- 2) “The Influence of Early 20th-Century German Advertising Design on the Modernization of Japanese Advertising from 1921 to 1922”

Yukie Takeuchi

General Discussion

As this Forum was held before the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Japan, the participants enjoyed detailed and productive discussions in a spatially dense room. It is no wonder that this gave rise to a momentum to publish the results of the Forum as a collection of papers.

This special topic consists of six essays written on the basis of the reports and discussions at the Forum and serves as a comprehensive collection of empirical research on the military in the media. This collection will inspire readers to think of the relationship between the military and society in various ways. Under the research trend in military history, now established as a research field, of considering the media, this Special Topic clearly exhibits the range of societies related to the military. This Special Topic reconstructs vividly how through newspapers, family magazines, and trade papers, open days for battleships, advertising design, and war museums, information about and images of the military and war were widely spread. This Special Topic serves as a valuable resource for analyzing certain aspects surrounding the military more concretely.

Although all the essays focus on the image of the military in the media, those by Takaoka, Nagao, and Maeda—who were specializing in this field in the period before World War I—research the information and perception that diffused in the existing media, while essays by Nakajima, Hayashida, and Takeuchi—specializing in the period of World War I and after—analyze the situations in which the media was actively used to promote the military. It will be necessary to be aware of whether this was a timing issue or a difference in the authors’ interests in this issue. This will lead to the question of the impact of World War I on the military-media relationship.