

日本とドイツの士官学校における反軍国主義と再軍備の共存

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Reconciling Anti-Militarism and Rearmament at Japan and Germany's Military Academies

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Abstract

This research project analyses the consequences of the recent changes in defence policy in Germany and Japan by looking at the tensions between anti-militarism and rearmament at military academies in the two countries. In particular, it is concerned with how these institutions deal with the legacy of the war-time militaries. Through an ethnographic study comparing this topic at military academies in Japan and Germany, this report details how although the two countries have remarkable similarities in recent history, the way this history is dealt with differs significantly. This point is made specifically through analysing traditions and customs at military academies, and comparing how they inform the students' views on the past. It shows that at Japan's military academy, customs and traditions that have been passed down from the imperial military continue to be treated as an important part of the students' education. This stands in contrast to Germany, where a policy to emphasise discontinuities between the war-time Wehrmacht and the postwar Bundeswehr make such emotional and spiritual connections politically taboo.

1. Introduction

In the year 2022 both Japan and Germany marked an epochal change in their defence policies. After having been defeated by the allied powers in World War Two, both countries were subjected to rapid demilitarisation, leaving them with only a comparatively small military force throughout the second half of the 20th century. In Asia, China's rapidly accelerating military buildup in the 21st century, as well as the country's growing military presence in the region, led some Japanese leaders to argue that the budget and capabilities of the SDF should be increased to counter this perceived threat. In Europe, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 prompted European governments to increase defence spending, even leading the German chancellor to declare a '*Zeitenwende*', an epochal change in the country's relationship to its military. Since the war has continued raging, calls to increase defence spending across the European continent have only grown louder. Most recently, even the European Union has begun rolling out plans to boost the defence industry across its member states. In the same year that Germany marked its own departure in defence policy, the Japanese government marked a turning point, too, by announcing that it would double its own defence spending, leaving behind a precedent of limiting defence spending to one percent of the

gross domestic product. It also announced that it would acquire new capabilities in the form of long-range missiles, breaking with another precedent. In both countries, then, the two militaries suddenly experienced a rapid increase in their budgets, status, and responsibilities. Given the background of the two countries' expansionist history during World War Two, this change became a hotly debated topic throughout the societies which had in the previous decades not spoken much about military affairs at all. This project is interested in how the consequences of this rapid change played out at their respective military academies, where future officers learn how to think about their profession, the military, and its role in society. In particular, this report offers a case study of student life at the National Defense Academy (NDA), Japan's joint military academy, asking how its students are taught to think about the SDF's relationship to the imperial military.

2. History and War Memory as a Societal Flashpoint

The way that state institutions, such as the SDF and the Bundeswehr, teach their new recruits about the past exists in the context of historical memory in the wider society. In both Germany and Japan, two countries who formed the core of the losing side of World War Two, the question of how to address the past has become one of the defining elements of the two postwar states. In Germany, reconciliation with its neighbours has become the foundation of the European Union, defining the structure of the European economy and security for the past decades. In Japan, likewise, the alliance with the United States, its former enemy, has become the foundation of the Pacific security landscape. Given this weight of history and its effects on the present, the question of how to teach younger generations about what happened leading up to and during the war has been debated hotly throughout different eras. In Germany, historians have argued bitterly about whether the crimes of the Nazi regime were unique to Germany or could ultimately become possible in other countries, too, and whether the memory of the Holocaust should be seen as the central element of the self-perception of postwar German democracy or not. In Japan, bitter debates about the extent to which contemporary Japan should be held accountable for the behaviour of the imperial military and government in South Korea, China and other countries continue to hamper bilateral relationships. Domestically, in both Germany and Japan, there is an ongoing debate about the extent to which these topics should be taught to younger generations in schools. This research project seeks to take these general debates and apply them to the military sphere, a topic which has only received little attention by researchers in both in Germany and in Japan.

3. The SDF and the Relationship to the Imperial Military

The extent to which the German and Japanese postwar militaries are connected to their predecessor organisations has proven a controversial topic in the past years. In both countries, the militaries occasionally make headlines when high-profile incidents lead to the perception that this connection is stronger than previously thought. In the case of Japan, such allegations have been made in the news media at much higher frequency since the announcement of the doubling of the defence budget in 2022. Many of the related scandals that are reported revolve around the Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of Japanese soldiers who fell in past wars are commemorated. Although visits by

uniformed SDF personnel in official capacity are prohibited by ministerial directive, uniformed members often visit the shrine in groups, regularly prompting controversy and criticism. One reason why the issue of SDF members visiting the Yasukuni Shrine looms so large is that it is perhaps the most visible element of the relationship between the SDF its imperial predecessor. But it is certainly not the only way in which this relationship can be observed. For students at the NDA, the imperial military is an organisation that they come into contact with almost on a daily bases in the form of customs and traditions. Flags which were also used by the imperial military, such as the flag of the rising sun and the 'Z' flag, are flown proudly on campus throughout the year, and military songs composed during the Asia-Pacific War are taught to incoming first-year students every year. Each year there are also two major events in which NDA students are confronted with the imperial past on a more personal level. One is a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, to which students march from Yokosuka through the night and without rest. The other is a training trip to the island of Iwo Jima, a notorious battle site during the Asia-Pacific War.

4. Learning to Think About the Imperial Military at the NDA

The NDA was founded in the early years after the Asia-Pacific War with the intention to provide a steady stream of graduates who could go on to serve as officers in the postwar SDF. Because these future officers took some time to climb the ranks, the SDF initially relied on former imperial military officers and soldiers to run the organisation. The NDA was meant to limit the influence of this personnel continuity, considering that a large part of Japanese society was skeptical of rearmament and was critical of former imperial soldiers serving in the postwar SDF. Rather than relying on one of the prewar military academies as a foundation, the NDA was established as a new organisation in Yokosuka. This was done partly with the idea in mind that an officer academy closer to Tokyo might be less likely to develop a politically isolated organisational culture. Likewise, the academy was to be run by civilian authorities rather than the military. It was placed under the control of the Ministry of Defense, rather than the SDF, and the presidency of the academy was given to a civilian professor. This way, the NDA became an academy that educated future military officers, but which was firmly under the control of civilian society.

Despite all the effort to create an officer academy that was distinct from the imperial military and served to limit the influence of former imperial military personnel, there were also continuities. Among them were traditions, such as the annual *bōtaoshi* competition adopted from the Imperial Naval Academy, as well as imperial military songs that students learned to sing as part of their first-year training. But the annual visit to Yasukuni Shrine and the trip to Iwo Jima arguably mark the most important way in which a continuity between the Imperial military and the SDF is emphasised. During these two events, students learn not just about the history of the battle, but they also learn to develop an emotional relationship to the imperial soldiers. Likewise, the events foster a spiritual connection, by treating the two places not just as places to commemorate, but as places to worship. In this way, students learn to think of imperial soldiers not just as historical figures, but as spirits who they are connected to.

5. Germany and the Wehrmacht

While the focus of this research project has been to study the Japanese military academy, there are also lessons to be learned from a comparative angle to Germany. The German counterpart to the NDA can be found both in Hamburg and Munich. The two institutions are called Bundeswehr universities, rather than academies, equally emphasising the civilian elements of the organisations. As in the case of the NDA, the two Bundeswehr universities are headed by civilian professors. Perhaps the biggest difference to the Japanese academy is that their students are not obliged to live in dormitories on campus, which arguably marks the most important element of student life at the NDA. This difference means that daily life outside of the classroom at military academies in Germany is to a much smaller extent marked by rituals and customs than in the Japanese case. These rituals and customs are important ways in which students connect not only to past cohorts, but also to the idea of a military history that connects the postwar and wartime militaries. As a consequence, student life in the German military universities is characterised by fewer occasions through which students can develop an emotional link to past militaries when compared to the Japanese counterpart. Instead, students receive virtually all of their information on how to think about history from their civilian lecturers. Even prior to 2022, scandals regarding the Bundeswehr which emerged in the news media demonstrated that there seemed to be little tolerance among civilian society for continuities even in the form of Wehrmacht memorabilia, which some Bundeswehr personnel who were accused of far-right connections were found to have collected in their homes. But while public sensibilities to such continuities appear to be remarkably comparable in Germany and Japan, the ways in which future officer candidates are taught to think about these continuities differ across the academies in these two countries.

6. Conclusion

This report summarises the results of a comparative study on the way in which future military officers in Japan and Germany are taught to think about the relationship between the SDF and Bundeswehr to the Imperial military and Wehrmacht respectively. It shows that although eighty years have passed since World War Two, a shared history still makes for remarkable similarities between the two countries. Recent changes in the defence postures and budgets of the two countries have accordingly proven similarly controversial and sparked discussions about similar related issues. One of these is the issue of continuity between the current militaries and their war-time militaries. In both countries, the establishment of postwar military academies or universities has been marked by efforts to emphasise civilian control and an organisational departure from the institutions of the war-time militaries. Yet, as the analysis of the NDA has shown, there are also ways in which students are taught to develop a link to the past. This link is developed both emotionally and spiritually, going beyond a factual narration of the events of the past. While showing that there are differences in the way that the link to the war-time militaries are treated in Germany and Japan, this project demonstrates the extent to which the two countries are still facing similar controversies and issues even eighty years after the end of the war.

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