Japan’s “World War II”
Emerging Tensions

• US immigration
  – 1905: “Gentlemen’s Agreement”
  – 1922: Takao Ozawa v. United States
  – 1924: Immigration Act bans Japanese

• 1915: “Twenty-One Demands” to China

• 1918-1922: Siberian Intervention
Anti-Colonial Movements

• March 1 (Korea) and May 4 (China), 1919
Establishment Response

• Compromise and Co-opt
  – 1922: relax ban on women’s participation in politics
  – 1920: Social Affairs Bureau within Home Ministry
  – 1925: universal male suffrage

• Confrontation
  – 1923: Post-earthquake massacre
  – 1925: Peace Preservation Law
  – 1928: JCP crackdown
Establishment Response

• Compromise and Co-opt
  – Accept postwar disarmament: “5 : 5 : 3” naval ratio
  – Cut military spending: 55% (1918) to 29% (1924)
  – Approach to China’s Nationalist government
    • Returns Shandong Peninsula in 1922
  – “Cultural Rule” in Korea

• Confrontation
  – Refuse China’s tariff autonomy
  – Critique of “weak-kneed” diplomacy at home
Crisis of Imperial democracy

• Perceptions of Japan at a dead end
  ■ Vs. reality: not as bad?

• People still saw threats all around: abroad, at home, rural and urban, all connected

• Democracy as means and not an end in itself

• Rising voices from the Left and the Right for a different, more statist kind of modernity
Politics of Terror at Home
Minseitō PM Hamaguchi Osachi assassinated (1930)
More Assassinations

Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi, 1930
“God of Constitutional Government”

Finance Minister Inoue Jun’nosuke, 1932

Mitsui Chairman, Dan Takuma, 1932
MIT ’78, Course 3

Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi, 1932
Signal end of party government
2-26 Incident (1936)

Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo and several other cabinet ministers assassinated

Demand for “Showa Restoration”

Led by “Imperial Way” faction of army
Breaking the Impasse: Manchuria

- Kwantung Army (1906~)
- Ishihara Kanji (1889-1949)
- 1928: Assassination of Zhang Zuolin
- 1931: Manchurian Incident
Popular Response

- Enthusiastic support for war
- Anti-imperialist critics change
- Justice Ministry’s *Monthly Thought Bulletin* see “divine wind”
- Army Ministry report: “Since the Manchurian Incident, confrontational attitudes between social classes have subsided. The incident seems to have bred a spirit of solidarity.”