

H I R O T A

The particulars with regard to him are to be found on p. 323 of the Summary and the additional Exhibits which directly affect him are 2208 A, B, C, 2226-8, 2260.

While ambassador to the USSR in 1931 he advocated a firm policy towards the Soviet Union and readiness for immediate war, not to preserve Japan from communism, but to get possession of Eastern Siberia (Exhibits 692-3). On 31 December 1931 Litvinov offered Japan a non-aggression pact (through Hirota and Yoshizawa), but it was not accepted (Exhibit 744).

He was continually in office, first as Foreign Minister in the Saito and Okada cabinets, and then as Premier, from 14 September 1933 to 2 February 1937, from 9 March 1936 as Premier.

During that period, and especially during his premiership, although his utterances to other powers were often conciliatory enough, his actual policy and the events for which we submit he is responsible were of a different character.

Pu-yi was appointed Emperor of Manchukuo (Exhibits 234, 437A), and the control of Japan over that territory consolidated, especially in the direction of economic monopoly. (e. g. see Exhibits 935, 939, 941, 850, 445, 948.) The Manchurian Affairs Board was established (Exhibit 451).

The policy of controlling and developing Japanese and Manchurian industry for war was initiated and carried on.

The so-called "independence movements" in various parts of North China and Mongolia were instigated and encouraged by Japan. Hirota actively supported this (Exhibit 215). The object was both anti-Chinese and anti-Soviet. The stimulation of the sale of narcotics in China proceeded rapidly.

Japan denounced the Washington Naval Treaty, and put forward at the London Naval Conference the proposal for a common upper limit in place of the 5-5-3 ratio, which of course meant that unless Britain and America neglected their responsibilities in other parts of the world, Japan would dominate the Pacific. When this was re-

jected, Japan withdrew from the conference and Hirota assumed responsibility in Exhibit 222, in which he attempted to cover up the position with fair words in spite of which Japan steadily and secretly increased her naval armaments.

After Hirota succeeded Okada as premier, following the 26 February rebellion, the power of the military was increased, especially by restoring the rule that War and Navy Ministers must be on active service (Exhibit 93).

In the summer of 1936 a most important series of ministerial conferences were held (Exhibits 978, 977, 216, 704, 217, 979), at which national policies were laid down covering the whole gist of the conspiracy we allege. Hirota was personally present at three of them, and of course, responsible for all. They envisage an aggressive policy in China, East Asia, and the South Seas, and steps to be taken against USSR, Britain and USA. This was to be achieved by joint efforts of diplomatic skill and "national defence"- thus showing plainly that in Hirota's mind "national defence" did not stop at defending Japan or resisting attack, but meant aggression. This was the first time that these policies were formally adopted by a government, and show Hirota as their official godfather, if not their originator. Some of them were secret. In the autumn the Anti-Comintern Pact was negotiated and signed on 25 November with secret protocol (Exhibit 36). Its real objects may be better gathered from Exhibits 482, 479, 484, and 485, Privy Council Meeting attended by Hirota, than from its text. It was accompanied by border raids on Soviet territory (Exhibits 753, 751).

The cabinet fell on 2 February 1937 as the result of simultaneous attacks from the Seiyukai party for being too militaristic and bureaucratic (2208A) and from the army (2208 B and C), because of those attacks and because it still contained some representatives of political parties. The army made prompt use of the new powers Hirota had given them to prevent the formation of a Ugaki cabinet.

On 4 June 1937 Hirota was back as Foreign Minister in 1st Konoye Cabinet and President of the first Planning Board, and on 11 July was responsible for the decision to take advantage of the Marco Polo Bridge incident by launching an invasion of China. He was also responsible for the "5-year plan" (Exhibits 841,842 and especially 2227, 239), which elaborated the industrial measures begun in his former period of office.

The whole course of the Chinese aggression of 1937-8 I have already dealt with in the case of Kido and will not refer to here. Hirota was directly responsible from the beginning until he left office on 29 May 1938. As Foreign Minister he was particularly to blame for the rejection of all outside efforts to mediate the conflict (e. g. Exhibits 949, 950), and protests (e. g. Exhibits 988, 955, 957 and innumerable others from then on), and of the interventions of the League (Exhibits 958, 962, etc.) and of the Brussels Conference (Exhibits 954 A-B). The only attempt at mediation which he tolerated was German and that was killed by the intransigent attitude of the cabinet on 16 January 1938 (Exhibits 486 C, 978 A, 260, 268, 2260). The German Foreign Office had no doubt that the oft-repeated experience of Hirota, or other Japanese Foreign Ministers, saying one thing, and the army doing another, was a trick (Exhibit 486 E). They should know.

After this Japan proceeded to set up a series of puppet regimes in the parts of China progressively occupied, and to establish a commercial system by which in China Japan came first, Germany second and the rest might have the leavings, if any. (Exhibit 2268 shows Hirota's personal responsibility for this.)

We have a speech by him about China in the Diet on 22 January 1938 (Exhibit 972 G).

On 18 June 1937 (Exhibit 946), and again on 12 February 1938 (Exhibit 58, Record pages 9230 and 9236) he was taking a hand in Japanese naval plans. On the latter occasion he refused a request by the U. S., Britain and France to disclose or give an undertaking about her building program.

Hirota tried to dispel American apprehensions about Japanese intentions in the South Seas after the occupation of Hainan and Spratley Islands, although this was really the policy he had himself laid down as premier in August 1936.

From 13 March to 3 August 1940 Hirota was a Cabinet Councillor; at this time Japanese moves with regard to French Indo-China and the N. E. I. were initiated.

After August 1940 Hirota's only activities at present known to us are his appearances at the vital ex-premiers' conferences. On 22 July 1940 (Exhibit 532) and 17 July 1941 (Exhibit 1117), he advocated a military premier and cabinet, though Konoye was in fact appointed with army support. On 17 October 1941 (Exhibit 2250) he gave firm support to Tojo. On 29 November 1941, when called upon to advise the Emperor as to the Pacific War he agreed that war was inevitable, but suggested a postponement and possible diplomatic solution after its outbreak. On 17-18 July 1944 (Exhibit 1278) he said the prosecution of the war was first and foremost and suggested a member of the Imperial family as premier but agreed to Terauchi, Koiso or Hata. On 5 April 1945 (Exhibit 1282) he was still emphatically in favour of fighting through to win the war, and thought it could be done. He advocated the War or Navy Minister as premier.

In our submission he was an aggressor from start to finish, and the contrast between his public and private words and acts shows that he was a particularly clever one.