

## Laboratory / Center profile

# The Laboratory for International Politico-Economic Systems

**Representative:** Professor Tomohiko Taniguchi

**Area of Research:** Contemporary History, Politico-Economic Systems, International Relations

**Members:** Yoshiaki Ohkami (Executive Advisor of SDM Research Institute), Taketoshi Hibiya (Executive Advisor of SDM Research Institute), Takashi Kawaguchi (former student of SDM), and many more



The seminar

I have been reading Mark Gayn's *Japan Diary*. Gayn is a foreign correspondent who came to Japan at the time Japan lost World War II. He had been a correspondent for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and was suspected of having leftist views; as a result, like others in his position, he moved to Canada where he spent the rest of his life as a reporter. I asked one reporter who recently came to Japan from Canada whether he knew Mark Gayn. His immediate response was, "He is one of my heroes!" The reporter told me that Gayn has not been forgotten in his country.

His books, which consisted of two volumes, were published by Chikumashobo Ltd., right before the end of GHQ occupation and *raised the price of paper in Luoyang* (i.e., "they sold like hot cakes"; this was literally the case, as paper had been extremely valuable at the time) and has become a bestseller. It was through these books that many Japanese came to know more about the creation of Japan's constitution. The books describe land reform, the dissolution of *Zaibatsu* ("family-run conglomerates") and profiles self-made entrepreneurs who were successful and made strong connections with branches of the imperial family and GHQ, but soon after experienced failure. The translated books are extremely interesting, making them easy to read quickly.

Our book club is composed of members of various backgrounds: the two experts Ohkami and Hibiya (former professors of SDM), who remember how things were after World War II and can imagine how things had been at that time, and graduate students fresh out of college who can only understand the story as that of another distant world. The book club considers the story in more depth whenever members encounter a pronoun that they do not know or an event that they do not understand.

As the saying goes, God is in the detail. Members are often surprised when they learn about the reality of a defeated Japan, which is graphically described using the detail-oriented method of the book club. This is a journey of visiting the origin of systems, by tracing back to the early developmental stage of the current system. As a first observer, I always experience blissful moments when I attend the book club. Chikumashobo Ltd. decided to reprint these books to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II. This laboratory and its quiet dedication were behind the decision on reprinting.



Group photo of the seminar



Japan Diary



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