

Historical Revisionism as Official Policy: Crisis of Academic and Press Freedom in Japan

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Background

- ❑ “Liberal Internationalism” from 1980s to mid-1990s
 - ❑ Revisionist backlash began in the late 1990s
 - ❑ Coordination between a new generation of right-wing politicians, media outlets, intellectuals, and religious right
 - ❑ Revisionists became mainstream within the right under Koizumi in the early 2000s
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Abe Took Japan Back

- ❑ Following the weakening of the moderate right (late 1990s to early 2000s) and the demise of the DPJ in 2012, historical revisionism has finally become the official policy of the government under Abe II.
 - ❑ With no opposition and no alternative in the party system to speak of, Team Abe has largely succeeded in checking and controlling the domestic media as well.
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Interference with Press Freedom

- ❑ Dec 2012 Abe returns to power
 - ❑ Dec 2013 State Secrets Law and Yasukuni visit
 - ❑ Jan 2014 Momii appointed chair of NHK
 - ❑ Summer 2014 Attack on Asahi and Mr Uemura intensifies
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International Revisionist Campaign

- ❑ Oct 2014 NHK “Orange Book” revealed by the Times
 - ❑ Oct 2014 LDP special commission set up
 - ❑ Nov 2014 Yomiuri apologizes for “sex slaves” articles
 - ❑ Dec 2014 International revisionist campaign in manifesto
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Revisionist Campaign Backfires

- ❑ Fall 2014 Abe's revisionist ministers grilled at FCCJ
 - ❑ April 2015 German journalist reveals MFA campaign
 - ❑ May 2015 187 international scholars' open letter
 - ❑ FCCJ freedom of press awards
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Testing US Limits on Revisionism

- August 2015 Abe Statement
 - Oct 2015 Dissemination of revisionist books by LDP lawmaker
 - Dec 2015 ROK-Japan “agreement” on “comfort women”
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Constitution Revision and Press Control

- ❑ Oct 2015 Book fair for freedom and democracy suspended in Shibuya
 - ❑ Nov 2015 “Biased” news advert on Sankei and Yomiuri
 - ❑ Feb 2016 Another advert on Yomiuri
 - ❑ Feb 2016 Communications Minister Takaichi warns of TV shut-down
 - ❑ March 2016 Termination of contract for Furutachi, Kishii, and Kuniya
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On to Suppression of Academic Freedom?

- ❑ Lowering of voting age to 18
 - ❑ High school pupils to submit forms for political activities in Ehime prefecture
 - ❑ Newly approved textbooks to conform to government positions
 - ❑ High probability of “biased” teachers/professors campaign in right-wing press
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End

Thank you.
