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VORTRAG

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“Peace for Our Time?”
The 1937 Nagoya Pan-Pacific Peace Exhibition



The spring 1937 Nagoya Pan-Pacific Peace Exhibition (NPPPE) was the first fully publicly-funded expo held in Japan and the last before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. The expo was the product of conflict and compromise between Nagoya’s regional promotion agenda, local elites’ memories of peace and prosperity through multilateralism, and the Imperial Army’s Orwellian vision of peace through war. The NPPPE was originally planned as a regional promotion event by local commercial and political leaders. Their self-interest was

tied to international trade and who remained enamored of the 1920s’ capitalist peace and internationalist world order, organized the Peace Exhibition. Primarily, the NPPPE was part of the mayor’s “Nagoya-Detroit” and “Great Nagoya” plans to make Nagoya an industrial and tourist mecca. Ultimately, the expo was the product of compromise with the army, its vision of peace badly twisted. However, this result obscures the process. I argue that closer examination of the legacy of “internationalist imperialism,” the expo’s origins in local development and branding campaigns, and its place as regional history raises questions about standard narratives that assume Japan’s near-universal national support for “militarism” after the Manchurian Incident.

Nathan Hopson is a historian of Japan. He is currently a Designated Associate Professor at Nagoya University. His book on the postwar intellectual history of Northeast Japan (Tōhoku) is forthcoming this year from the Harvard University Asia Center. He is currently researching a second book on the Japanese history of school feeding (*gakkō kyūshoku*) in global context. Additionally, he is pursuing several projects on Japanese expos, coediting the spring 2018 issue of *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, and writing about fake food.

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