

Before and After the Army Pamphlet Incident: How Ephemera Served as Mass Media

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This article is an attempt to place the pamphlet publication in the context of Japanese media history. In particular, pamphlets were issued in large numbers during the interwar period from the 1920s to the 1930s, accounting for 30% of the total number of publications at that time, excluding periodicals. Newspaper articles indicate that until the mid-1920s, pamphlets of the socialist and labor movement were considered disturbing documents, but after the passing of the universal suffrage law, it became common for political parties to use pamphlets for political propaganda, and for governments to use them as a means of communicating their policies to the public. Among these, the pamphlet *The Essential Principle of National Defence and Advocacy of Its Strengthening*, published by the Army in October 1934, caused a great stir because it was perceived as an incident that the military used a pamphlet directly to talk about politics and economy to the public, and influenced even those who did not read newspapers and magazines. From this point onwards, the pamphlet's readership expanded, and in 1936, in response, the Law for the Control of Disturbing Documents was promulgated, while the Cabinet Information Committee published a series of national policy propaganda pamphlet called *Weekly Bulletin*. The Army Pamphlet Incident symbolizes the rise of such pamphlets and their turning point.