

THINKING LIKE A STATE

POLICING AND THOUGHT IN INTERWAR JAPAN

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Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department Censorship 1938

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ROOM 301, 3F, BUILDING 10, SOPHIA UNIVERSITY

This paper explores the process in which the Japanese police turned from policing political organizations, their activities and assemblies in the early twentieth century, to policing the ideas purportedly motivating political activists by the late-1920s. My analysis focuses on various police manuals published in the 1930s in which certain ideas were categorized and distributed based on the degree of danger they ostensibly posed to the imperial polity. I argue that once “thought” was

identified as a target for policing, Japanese police agencies were compelled to practice a kind of intellectual history in order to distinguish what could be categorized as “thought crime” (*shis ō hanzai*), understand its origin, and its spread during the socioeconomic turbulence of the interwar period.

Max Ward is Associate Professor of Japanese History at Middlebury College and author of *Thought Crime: Ideology and State Power in Interwar Japan* (Duke, 2019) and coeditor of *Confronting Capital: Rethinking Kyoto School Philosophy* (Brill, 2017). He is currently working on a second book project tentatively titled *Police Power in Modern Japan*.

No prior registration necessary / Lecture in English

This talk is organized by Professor Bettina Gramlich-Oka (FLA)