

Security Maintenance Law

治安維持法

A law to crack down on people and groups/associations/parties that denied the National Regime (=Emperor's rule) or private ownership of property.

Enacted in 1925; revised (strengthened) in 1928 and 1941. Abolished in 1945. Death penalty was introduced in 1928. The definition of illegal activities in this law was so ambiguous that anyone whom government considered undesirable could be arrested.

In mainland Japan, no one was sentenced to death by this law. Richard Sorge (German) & Hotsumi Ozaki were sentenced to death for spying for USSR but in combination with other laws, not by this law alone. However, between 1925 and 1945, over 70,000 persons were arrested by this law, 10% of which were persecuted. Instead of executing socialists, the authorities preferred to convert them into Nationalists with "Japanese spirit", and they had developed a highly elaborate method for persuasion and conversion.

According to post WW2 information provided by the Japan Communist Party, while none was sentenced to death by this law, 194 persons died during investigation due to torture and mistreatment, and additional 1,503 persons died in jail.

In Korea (Japanese colony), over 23,000 persons were arrested and 45 persons were executed by this law. Application of the law was generally more severe in Korea.

Examples of people arrested/persecuted or otherwise cracked down by this law

Communist party members (underground)

Korean people protesting against Japanese rule

Takiji Kobayashi (proletariat novelist, tortured to death)

Omoto (new religious group)

Lawyers defending arrested socialists