

States at War, Business at Stake:

The Question of the Japanese Coal “Embargo” towards China during the Sino-Japanese War (1894)¹

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During the summer of 1894, war broke out between Japan and China over the Korean Question. Within six months, Japan won a sweeping victory on the battlefields, but from an economic point of view, huge issues arose. Up until today, historiography has focused on the aftermath of the war, the so-called “Postwar Boom” and its “management” 日清戦後経営². The economic origins of the war and even the economic dimensions of the conflict in themselves, however, have gained little attention. This bias finds its origin within the broader Marxist debate over the development of Japanese capitalism, and especially Yamada Moritarō’s position, which considered Japanese imperialism as the offspring of the imperial regime promulgated in 1889, and not of the need to export surplus capital³. In this view, the First Sino-Japanese War is not to be considered as an economic phenomenon but must be understood as a *cause* of economic changes. Consequently, in the case of the coal trade, the First Sino-Japanese War has been systemically presented as a major step within the overwhelming advance (*shinshutsu*) of the Japanese coal domination over the East Asian market, arguing that imports of Japanese coal in the Singapore market surpassed other coal in quantities by 1894. But the emergence of this “First Japanese East Asia” actually relied on specific and global trends that had nothing to do with the Japanese coal sector itself or the Sino-Japanese War: British and Australian coal was being bought at ever-increasing scale in Europe and in South America during the 1890s, so these countries were unable to meet the increasing demand in East Asia. This contributed greatly to the “advance” of Japanese coal in East Asia.⁴ But beyond these general dynamics, the question still remains about what

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² For a representative example see Sugiyama’s reference book: Sugiyama Shin’ya, *Nihon keizai-shi*, Iwanami Shoten, 2012, pp. 240-247.

³ The most famous representant of Yamada’s school is Ishii Kaniji; see his *Nihon keizai-shi*, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1990, pp. 263-64 ; and his *Nihon sangyō kakumei*, Asahi Shinbunsha, 1997, pp.289-90 (republished by Kōdansha in 2012).

⁴ On this issue, see Alexandre Roy, “La formation d’une première Asie orientale japonaise à l’aube du Vingtième siècle: une analyse des exportations de charbon japonais à partir du port de Moji (1890-1905)”, Christian Galan, Jean-Marc Olivier (dir.), *L’histoire du Japon et l’histoire au Japon*, Toulouse, Privat, 2016, pp.175-201.

actually happened in the Japanese coal trade during the very moment of the Sino-Japanese War: Did the export business boom thanks to the war as it is suggested by historiography? Did coal exporters welcome the war?

In this paper, we will investigate what happened “on the spot”, in the main coal station in East Asia at the time: the port of Moji in Northern Kyūshū. We will focus on the beginning of the war, during summer 1894 (June-October), when a frantic media campaign in favor of an “embargo” of coal exports to Chinese ports emerged. For the Japanese coal industry, this was a major problem, as for the last decade Chinese markets had purchased nearly the half of the whole national production. From July until October 1894, the press intensively communicated on the subject; to such an extent that the readers must have come to think that an embargo was indeed effective; but it was not. Even more interestingly, as we will see, a kind of a legal embargo officially existed from September (through the Spoils of War Code), but it was never enforced. So, how can we explain such an “embargo mood”?

By examining the press (mainly the local one) as well as the governmental archives and the business world’s primary sources (from the Mitsui and Mitsubishi *zaibatsu* and the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate), we will investigate the political and commercial motivations behind the embargo question. We will also consider the consequences of this “embargo issue” for the business: benefits for the big business as well as for the “small business”, meaning Moji’s local merchants.

Coal for the enemy: a danger for the nation?

A call from the Army (June 1894)

The Japanese imperial state was divided in several administration bodies among which the Army (*rikugun*) and the Navy (*kaigun*) were preeminent, as they were placed directly under the emperor’s authority, not under the prime minister. In early June, as the Japanese forces disembarked near the Korean capital in order to put pressure on the Chinese forces and contain them, the Japanese Navy began to investigate the Moji coal business. The Navy directly solicited the Mitsubishi Branch Office at Shimonoseki to serve as a councillor and a source of information about the general conditions of trade at Moji and about the transactions the Navy would have to do there. The Navy recognized it would be “difficult from a moral point of view to supervise the business of other men in the same activity”⁵ but the company “would not be held liable”⁶ and “rewards”⁷ were promised. Several days earlier, the Mitsubishi Head Office at Tōkyō had already asked its agents in Hong Kong and Shanghai for the current prices and stocks of Australian and British coal as an urgent matter. This coal specifically good as bunker coal for steamers, and so the military forces would be eager to get hold of it. We can assume from this that Mitsubishi’s top executives were clearly informed by the Army about how things were going on concerning the “Korean Question”. This close connection

⁵ 同業者中ノ事業ニ対シ監督杯ノ事ハ徳義上難出来. Takata Masahisa 高田正久 (Shimonoseki Branch Office Director) to Iwasaki Yanosuke 岩崎弥之助 (Mitsubishi President, Tōkyō), 13 June 1894, compiled in *Kōhon* 網本, Year 1894, no. 2, p.980 (Mitsubishi Archives Center at Tōkyō, *mitsubishi shiryō-kan* 三菱史料館 : MA-04298).

⁶ 責任ヲ有セズ. *Ibidem*.

⁷ 弁償. *Ibidem*.

between Mitsubishi and the Army is important to keep in mind for the later part of this article.

Besides this, the army launched several inquiries regarding the coal and warehouse business in Moji and Shimonoseki⁸. The agent sent into the straits to investigate the coal sector encountered serious difficulties in finding out about the goings-on of business there.⁹ He realized that the double-stages-structure of the coal trade (a face-to-face of the *zaibatsu* versus the local merchants) made purchases of coal at Moji by the Chinese military navy very unlikely because big business companies were working only on fixed contracts (*tokuyaku*) so they had no surplus to make new deals quickly enough, while the local merchants were asking prohibitive prices for uncertain deliveries as they hardly had the capacity to get the large volumes likely to be asked by the Chinese Navy. The survey shows without a doubt that there was no serious ground for the Japanese side to fear that coal exports from Moji would feed the Chinese military forces.¹⁰ But the movement in favor of an embargo was not just initiated by the Army, it existed as a broader political movement.

A broader political movement

In October 1894, the Minister of Finance confessed to the press that “a private instruction” (*naiyu* 内諭) had earlier been issued by the Ministry of the Interior towards prefectures of Northern Kyūshū in order to strengthen the monitoring of coal exports.¹¹ We have been unable to find the original document of such a “private instruction” in the governmental archives, and we are unaware of any date of issuance but we think it may have been issued between the very end of June and the beginning of July. We think so because it was on the 30th June that the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate decided to send an “Inspector”¹² in charge of “monitoring the exports”¹³ in the port of Moji, and this was likely to have been initiated by the prefectures much more than by a business association officially not aware

⁸ Regarding the warehouses: cf. Harada Ryōtarō 原田良太郎 (*heitan-ken teihaku-ba shirei-kan* 兵站権碇泊場司令官), *Bakan heitan kanete teihakuba secchi narabini sho-junbi keikyō hōkoku* 馬関兵站兼碇泊場設置並諸準備景況報告, 15 June 1894 (Research Center of the Defence Ministry, *bōeishō bōei kenkyūjo* 防衛省防衛研究所 [BK]: *Rikugun-shō nisshin sen'eki zatsu* 陸軍省日清戦役雑. M27.5-106).

⁹ Hara Hotarō 原保太郎 (Yamaguchi Prefecture Governor) to Yoshikawa Asamasa 芳川顯正 (taijō shihō 大丞司法, Director of Justice Affairs in the Minister of Interior), “Yamaguchi-ken sekitan yushutsu keikyō shinpō” 山口県 石炭輸出景況申報 (Report on the Situation of Coal Exports in Yamaguchi Prefecture), 21 June 1894 (BK: *Rikugun-shō nisshin sen'eki zatsu*. M27.5-106).

¹⁰ The police continued to investigate but focused only on one Korean merchant who eventually made no transaction at all. See the other files jointed to the precedent document cited. “Yamaguchi-ken sekitan yushutsu keikyō shinpō” (BK: *Rikugun-shō nisshin sen'eki zatsu*. M27.5-106).

¹¹ *Moji shinpō*, 2 October 1894. “Private instruction” is the English expression used by the *Japan Weekly Mail* (6 October 1894).

¹² 取締掛.

Chikuhō sekitan kōgyō kumiai 筑豊石炭鋳業組合, “Wakamatsu-hama no midori-ya ni-oite kaikai seru yushutsu torishimari jō ni tsuki iinkai ketsugiroku” 若松濱ノ録屋ニ於テ開會セル輸出炭取締上ニ付委員會決議録 (Minutes of the Meeting at the Midori-ya in Wakamatsu concerning the Monitoring of Coal Exports), 30 June 1894, compiled in “Jōgiin-kai ketsugiroku tsutsuri” 常議員会決議録綴 (Minutes of Ordinary Meetings), n°664, p. 12-19 (Nōgata City Center for History, *nōgata-shi sekitan kinen-kan* 直方市石炭記念館: *Chikuhō sekitan kōgyō kumiai shiryō* 筑豊石炭鋳業組合資料, microfilm no. 1).

¹³ 輸出炭取締方. *Ibidem*.

of the Army's intentions. Moreover, the Mitsubishi Branch Office at Shimonoseki reported on the 11th July to the Tōkyō Head-office that “the [Shimonoseki] city mayor has called every coal business bodies for a meeting today”¹⁴, the purpose of the meeting being to persuade the merchants not to sell any coal to China “as the monitoring is already effective on the Moji's coal exports in the Fukuoka Prefecture.”¹⁵ Passing through the local administrative structure, the Government asked the business spheres not to ship coal to China, but this was indeed an informal “instruction” and there was no legal disposition to enforce it.

At Shimonoseki, sixty-one influential locals launched the “Shimonoseki Patriotic Association”¹⁶, based in the City Hall itself, “to obey the Sovereign and to love the Nation.”¹⁷ Amongst the founders were several important local coal merchants of Moji¹⁸, but no representative from the big business... The absence of Mitsui and Mitsubishi agents may have provided some ground for suspicions regarding their coal exports to the Chinese government. At the very end of July, three police superintendents came to the two companies in order to investigate “contraband” to China (*mitsu-yushutsu*).¹⁹ The Mitsubishi Office Director at Shimonoseki in person was summoned by the Army and even by the Fukuoka Governor to clear the suspicions.²⁰

At the same time, despite the fact there was still no war declared, nor prohibition law concerning coal exports adopted, a very active propaganda in favor of an embargo was spreading widely in the press.

The role of “public opinion” (July)

In the local newspaper, the *Moji shinpō* (Moji News), a campaign to promote an embargo towards China began suddenly on 5 July 1894, with the report of the decision of the *zaibatsu* Mitsui to forbid coal sales to Chinese merchants. The article has a political tone, proclaiming that to sell coal to China was “a thing that no Japanese must do as a subject of Our Emperor”²¹ as “it damages ourselves.”²² An anecdote was also told, relating that a Chinese Maritime Trade Company's²³ envoy had contacted the Mitsui Branch Office in Nagasaki but had been rejected by the company, celebrating

¹⁴ 当地市役所へ市内ノ重要タル石炭商人仲買人等呼出相成. Takata to Iwasaki, 11 July 1894, compiled in *Kōhon*, Year 1894, no. 3, p. 1071 (Mitsubishi Archives Center: MA-04298).

¹⁵ 門司輸出炭ニ對シ福岡縣ニテハ既ニ適當ノ取締モ致居候事故. *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ 赤間閩報國協會. Harada Ryotarō 原田良太郎 (Director of the Logistic Department Office at Shimonoseki 馬関兵站兼碇泊場司令官) to Ōyama Iwao 大山巖 (Army Minister), “Akamaseki hōkoku kyōkai secchi no todokede” 赤間閩報國協會設置の届出 (Registration of the Creation of the Shimonoseki Patriotic Association), 5th August 1894 (BK: *Rikugun-shō. Nisshin sen'eki zatsu*. M27-5-106).

¹⁷ 忠君愛国. *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ For instance Uryū Tora 瓜生寅, Masuya Heizaburō 梶谷平三郎, Isobe Ryōsuke 磯部良介. *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Takata to Iwasaki, and Iwasaki to Yamawaki Masakatsu 山脇正勝 (Nagasaki Branch Office Director), 28 July 1894 (compiled in *Kōhon*, already quoted, p. 1221-23. MA-04298).

²⁰ Takata to Iwasaki, 31 July 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1224).

²¹ 我國力；■陛下の臣民として爲し得べきことあらざる. *Moji shinpō*, 5 July 1894.

²² 我を害せんとする. *Ibidem*.

²³ Zhao shang ju 招商局. *Ibidem*.

“people with a patriotic and loyalist heart.”²⁴ In the same edition, the newspaper also claimed that “the Chinese Navy coal stocks do not exceed one hundred thousand tons”²⁵, suggesting that any Japanese coal exports would feed the Chinese Navy stocks. This was obviously false, but it galvanized some ruffians: a week later, cases of “violence”²⁶ against coal merchants in Nagasaki were reported, perpetrated by “groups of tough guys”²⁷ motivated by “a rumor about people selling secretly coal to the Chinese.”²⁸ They were even supposed to “come to Moji and Kuchinotsu, planning to spread the same kind of threat”²⁹. Two days later, the *Moji shinpō* was reporting the decision of hundred-two merchants of Osaka to cease coal exports towards China³⁰ but it was also relaying some “surprise concerning the embargo”³¹ amongst “foreign merchants and particularly the shipping businessmen.”³² Actually, Osaka was not a market place for coal exports so there was no point in “ceasing coal exports”, but foreigners and shipping businessmen clearly must have been worrying about such a mood.

On 22 July, the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate and several coal merchants were reported to plan a total prohibition of exports, stating that “until nowadays it was only about limiting new deals with Chinese.”³³ Actually, the Syndicate had decided on 30 June to forbid new exports contracts with Chinese customers but to keep on respecting already signed contracts, setting up a system of certificates and sending an envoy to Moji to “watch and control” (*torishimari*).³⁴ At first, the *Moji shinpō* did not seem to be very interested at first in this initiative as no article was published about it during July but at the end of the month, while the first battles occurred in Korea between Japanese and Chinese troops, two editions featured “The Outbreak of Sino-Japanese War and Caution for Collieries” on their front pages.³⁵ The war was supposed to bring “a deep impact on our very important coal exports”³⁶ as the Japanese military demand was said to reach “nearly two million tons”³⁷ so that it “would bring an unbalance in demand and offer (...), and create an inevitable big crisis for our economy and society”³⁸, “mak[ing] hundreds of collieries fall into a death trap.”³⁹ The cessation of coal exports was therefore seen as an obligation. Still, few days later a correspondence from Shanghai

²⁴ 忠君愛國の心ある者. *Ibidem*.

²⁵ 清國貯蔵の石炭は拾萬噸に過ぎず. *Ibidem*.

²⁶ 粗暴. *Moji shinpō*, 12 July 1894.

²⁷ 壯漢連. *Ibidem*.

²⁸ 密に支那人に販賣する者あるやの風聞. *Ibidem*.

²⁹ 口之津及當門司に入り込み同一の脅迫をきくまし；逞ふせん計画の由なる. *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Moji shinpō*, 14 July 1894.

³¹ 石炭禁止の事に驚く. *Ibidem*.

³² 外商殊に航業家. *Ibidem*.

³³ 今日迄は只だ清國人に向て新規契約の取締を停止せしのみにて. *Moji shinpō*, 22 July 1894.

³⁴ Chikuhō sekitan kōgyō kumiai, “Wakamatsu-hama no midori-ya ni-oite kaikai (...)”, already cited.

³⁵ 日清開戦と炭坑業者の警戒. Editorials, *Moji shinpō*, 23 and 24 July 1894.

³⁶ 我一大輸出物品たる石炭の上の及ぼす影響は深く. *Moji shinpō*, 23 July 1894.

³⁷ 二百万噸に近き. *Moji shinpō*, 24 July 1894.

³⁸ 需用供給の不平均を生じ、(...) 一大恐慌を起さしむ是経済社会免るべからざるの因縁なり. *Moji shinpō*, 23 July 1894.

³⁹ 幾百の炭坑業者をして死地に陥らしむる. *Moji shinpō*, 24 July 1894.

signaled that “Chinese merchants” were still “receiving coal from Moji”⁴⁰, wondering “how could it be possible?”⁴¹ The pressure was increasing steadily.

The war and the public denunciations (August)

On 1 August war was declared officially and there was no more room for question, the mood became very radical. The *Moji shinpō* reported that the Chinese Navy was “beginning its preparations, developing its bunker coal provisions”⁴² and, soon, it claimed that “there are more and more reports concerning traitors selling coal to the enemy.”⁴³ It then accused publicly three companies of selling coal to the Chinese Maritime Company at Karatsu: Kashiwa-gumi, Uryū-shōkai and Holme-Ringer.⁴⁴ The accusations were first spread by a newspaper in the Karatsu area⁴⁵ and the *Moji shinpō* echoed it because the Uryū-shōkai was a big coal seller at Moji, where it represented the (British) Holme-Ringer Company of Nagasaki. Its link to this foreign company made the Uryū-shōkai particularly suspected of selling coal to the Chinese side—this was already noticed by the Army. The *Moji shinpō* did not hesitate to heap accusations upon them: “we have to say that these merchants are just seeking their own single profit and are devoid of any sense of duty towards the nation.”⁴⁶

The accused replied without “repentance” but defence, published several days later: “not one piece of coal has been sold, directly or indirectly, to China for many months”⁴⁷ and stating that the incriminated business in Karatsu had begun three months earlier and was not for China but for the Philippines, limited in July to 1200 tons.⁴⁸ Despite the *Moji shinpō* recognizing that the accusations were “integrally contrary to the facts”⁴⁹, it kept on announcing that “the proclamation of the embargo on coal is imminent.”⁵⁰ The newspaper even kept on slandering the coal export business: on 8 August, it claimed that the Chinese Army was passing through Hong Kong (a British territory) to get Japanese coal⁵¹. The following day an article entitled “Where there is some coal smoke, there is a coal fire”⁵² claimed:

Whereas the embargo on coal is about to be promulgated by the government, some strange news has come to our ears. It is said that one coal mine owner has concluded a new special contract with a Chinese customer, while one coal merchant is supposed to have sold coal to the Chinese Maritime Company using an occidental intermediate and one other merchant is said to export its coal to Shanghai

⁴⁰ 支那商人門司石炭の入荷. *Moji shinpō*, 28 July 1894.

⁴¹ 是果たして何の結果ぞ. *Ibidem*.

⁴² 焚料の供給を増加するの準備の着手せり. *Moji shinpō*, 1 August 1894.

⁴³ 賣國奴敵國に向て石炭を賣る者あること ■ 屢々報道する. *Moji shinpō*, 3 August 1894.

⁴⁴ 柏組のみならず瓜生商會及ひホーム、リング. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ *Hichiku nippō* 肥筑日報.

⁴⁶ 一己の私利ありて國家に對する節議なき者と謂はざるべからず. *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ 間接直接を不問數月間以來は支那人に對し一塊の石炭賣渡たる事 ■ し. *Moji shinpō*, 7 August 1894.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ 全く事實相違し居りたる. *Moji shinpō*, 10 August 1894.

⁵⁰ 石炭輸出禁制の布近きにあらん. *Moji shinpō*, 7 August 1894.

⁵¹ *Moji shinpō*, 8 August 1894.

⁵² 炭煙黴處火氣存. *Moji shinpō*, 9 August 1894.

through Hong Kong. Our coal merchants have been full of patriotism and enemy-hating mood, nowadays with the war declared we are sure they ought not fall into flaws such as providing materials to the enemy. However, such strange and repeated news is like coal smoke that must come from some coal fire... (...). [As journalists] we will denounce such vicious and disloyal merchants and we are waiting for their repentances.

石炭輸出制止令も近々の内發布せられんとするに當驚くべき怪聞は荐に余輩の耳朶を衝て到る曰く某炭坑主は清國■■■■と新に石炭輸出の特約をなしたり曰く某々商店は其實際清國招商局の手に渡るべき見込ある某外人に向て炭何千噸を賣渡したり曰く港某炭商は上海行きの石炭を香港行きと詐稱して輸出せり日々何々と我輩は各石炭商が愛國敵愾の氣象に富み開戦の今日に於て敵に糧を輸するが如とき劣等なる舉劾なきを確信ず然かれども斯く怪報の荐りに至たるは炭烟の黷く邊必ず火氣あらずんばあらず (...) 此悖徳不忠の奸商を筆誅するに躊躇せざるべしく記して炭商の反省を待つ

Though no “repentance” never came the newspaper continued its campaign, at the end of August exhorting the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate “to now suspend also old [prewar] contracts in order to fulfill extensively its duty towards the nation.”⁵³ The Uyrū company was blamed once again, as it has realized alone about the half of the Moji coal exports, sending more than 20,000 tons “towards Shanghai, Hong Kong etc.”,⁵⁴ “including sales on contracts and all other types of sales”⁵⁵. Denunciations also spread in Tōkyō against the Mitsui Group: it was accused of selling huge volumes of coal from its mine of Miike in central Kyūshū with direct sales to the Chinese Maritime Company⁵⁶ ... Mitsui could not deny the charges but had its own press to strike back and assert that it has forbidden its agents “to sale coal to the Chinese”⁵⁷ since the end of June. The nationalist mood continued as the Kobe merchants prolonged the suspension of their exports and decided to crash down on the fraud⁵⁸, which was celebrated as “not to dishonoring the Yamato Race.”⁵⁹

The official denial (September-October)

In September, the press began to step down as many resorts to litigation were being made in the Chinese open ports against Japanese merchants who had suspended their coal shipments.⁶⁰ Although the *Moji shinpō* kept on asserting that the embargo would be promulgated soon, it also publicly questioned the “Government’s stance”⁶¹ about it. The answer came less than one week later, from the Finance Minister, Watanabe Kunitake, who declared in a special interview:⁶²

⁵³ 我等は此際舊約定をも停止し以て國民の義務を盡さん事. *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴ 其仕向地は上海香港等なり. *Moji shinpō*, 23 August 1894.

⁵⁵ 約定炭その他を合わせて. *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶ *Japan Weekly Mail*, 18 August 1894.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, 1 September 1894 (vol. 30, p. 336).

⁵⁹ 大和民族に耻ぢざる. *Moji shinpō*, 28 August 1894.

⁶⁰ *Moji shinpō*, 15 and 25 September 1894.

⁶¹ 政府の意向. *Moji shinpō*, 27 September 1894.

⁶² *Moji shinpō*, 2 October 1894.

Not only has China already prepared all her stocks at Port Arthur, but even if we prohibit our coal exports there are the Australian coal imports so we can fear that it would lead to the loss of one important market. Moreover, it would severely hamper our collieries and bring many difficulties for our whole economy. I have already told the Minister of Interior that the position in favor of a global exports embargo is the position of the Military Forces and that there is no legal disposition concerning it. The Minister of Interior has formerly told the governors of Nagasaki, Saga and Fukuoka prefectures to control the exports, but before my departure from Tōkyō I have issued an internal note asserting that the exports are not a problem. I guess that an ordinance has already been published accordingly, and if it is not the case it will be as soon as I come back to Tōkyō in a few days. Anyway, it has already been decided that there is no problem concerning the exports business.

支那は既に旅順口等に相應の石炭を準備せるのみならず我國の輸出を禁するも濠洲炭の輸入あり故に我國に取りては之れが爲めに從來の得意先を奪はるゝの恐れあり而して我坑業者には非常の迷惑を與へ經濟上の影響實に尠ならず、故に輸出差支なきの方針は予が在京中既に内務大臣にも■し置きり全体輸出禁止の説は海陸軍人■■主張すへきとなれとも未だ其事なきのみならず、右の事情なるを以て、一時先進を右憂ふるの年より内務大臣は佐賀長崎福岡三縣知事に内訓して成る可く輸出を制するの方針を取りしも既に予が東京出發に先たち輸出差支なしとの内訓を發する■となり居たれば昨今既に訓令したるならんと思へり若し未だ訓令し居らずは予も近日歸京の筈なれば其の上にて早速右の手數を保すべし、兎に角輸出差支なしとの訓令は既に一定し

With such a disapproval, the newspaper had nothing to do but to announce in its titles “The Restart of Coal Exports”⁶³, explaining that “previously there was no promulgation of a coal embargo” but just “an informal indication from the authorities and the business men’s resolution to do so.”⁶⁴ Still, the same article asserted that “the coal exports towards China have been authorized”⁶⁵, despite the fact it had *never* been “not authorized” legally speaking. The *Japan Weekly Mail* also reported that “the authorities has withdrawn a private instruction”, explaining that “the Chinese are able to procure supplies of coal in any required amount from England, Tonquin, and Australia”⁶⁶. Despite the official denial of any “embargo”, Yokohama’s merchants still claimed that they would keep on not sending coal to China, and the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate sent one of its eminent members, Yasukawa Keichirō, to Tōkyō to check the government’s position⁶⁷, trying to relaunch the embargo.⁶⁸ Finally, the Syndicate decided to put an official end to its own embargo on the 23 October.⁶⁹

Such insistence from the coal big business shows us how much it had an actual interest in obtaining an official embargo, to suspend its contracts and to sell coal at higher prices. On the other

⁶³ 石炭輸出の復舊. *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ 當該官吏の内論と當業者の義心. *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ 清國へ對する石炭輸出公許せられたり. *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ *Japan Weekly Mail*, 6 October 1894.

⁶⁷ *Moji shinpō*, 17 October 1894.

⁶⁸ Still on the 21 October, Yasukawa dared to declare that an embargo was about to be promulgated. Cf. *Moji shinpō*, 21 October 1894.

⁶⁹ *Moji shinpō*, 25 October 1894.

hand, the scandals of public denunciations unveiled some internal dissensions inside the coal business concerning this embargo question.

Behind the curtains of Patriotism

Dissenting voices in the business: the local merchants

During the summer, some articles in the *Moji shinpō* unveiled the existence of some dissidence concerning the embargo policy advocated by the Collieries Syndicate and other business associations. On 4 August, the first article was published, subtitled “Words from One Coal Merchant”,⁷⁰ attacking the “cheerful embargo” mood.⁷¹

Recently there are some peoples to advocate the need of a strict control of the coal exports towards China. Despite there being a self-motivated social and moral trend to diminish exports, there has been nothing done about the current coal contracts in a way that it looks like they are tacitly authorized. The war has been officially declared two days ago, the Chinese Ambassador has been expelled, and as China is considered as the Enemy country, all relations are now cut off. (...) Thus, we receive commands of coal from non-Chinese ports merchants, as Hong Kong, who forward this coal to Chinese. Such a thing is very hard to cope with. To stop the exports there is nothing to do but to tackle the problem at its source by issuing a public and official interdict here in Moji. As Moji is a special export port (...) its life depends mostly upon coal business and such a legislation would bring a deep crisis to the port as well as great damages to the entire national economy, which relies on coal.

本邦より清國各地に輸出する石炭に付ては先般來取締の必要を説くものあり、社会徳義上の制裁ハ自ら輸出を減したるの傾ありと雖とも従前の約條炭は據■なくれか輸出を黙許せし如き姿なりしが既に一昨二日を以て愈宣戰令を公布され我國駐劄の清國公使の勿皇行李を戒しめて■國の途に就きたれど、此上は公然たる敵國となり國際上の交■全く茲に盡きたる次第なり (...) 香港其他清國以外の商人より注文を受けて輸出すともものにして尚ほ轉々清人の手に渡るに至りては之れか停止中々困難にして容易に防遇す可らず、故に此際之を食ひ留る■は其輸出地なる門司港に於て斷然石炭の輸出を禁止する旨の法律を公布して其河源を清むるより外あらざるべし、門司は特別輸出港にして (...) 石炭と其命脈を共にす云ふ可き場所なれば、斯る法律の出つるあらんには非常の不景氣を見るに至るべし且つ石炭に原因する全國經濟上の變動は頗ふる大なるものある

This negative echo remained an exception during August, but the reality of the economic difficulties and its aggravation pushed the newspaper to publish some criticisms of the war. First, it reported that the import business was “obviously fearing the maritime risks”⁷², “postponing the shipments to be made to honor the current contracts or eventually breaking them off”⁷³. The *Moji shinpō* dared to publish a series of articles entitled “War and Business”⁷⁴, asserting that war “not only

⁷⁰ 石炭貿易商某氏の談. *Moji shinpō*, 4 August 1894.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

⁷² 漫然海上の危険を恐れ. *Moji shinpō*, 11 August 1894.

⁷³ 先約定に係る品の積出を見合はし且つ先約定を破談すべし. *Ibidem*.

⁷⁴ 戦争と實業. *Moji shinpō*, 24, 25, 31 August and 4 September 1894

hurts human lives and requires huge expenses but also causes a great mess indirectly in the business, influencing the country as a whole”⁷⁵. Later, another article raised the coal issue: the Japanese industry was facing a “severe coal shortage.”⁷⁶ Ironically, the newspaper kept on arguing that China will suffer a coal famine thanks to the Japanese embargo⁷⁷ whereas this was rather the very case with Japan. At the beginning of September, the press sounded an alarm concerning the coal business: “collieries difficulties”⁷⁸ were severe as the unsold coal volumes grew bigger and bigger, “forming black mountains on the docks”⁷⁹ of Moji while the quality deteriorated (the lower layer being crashed by the weight of upper layer). Japan was “close to a coal crisis.”⁸⁰ Moreover, the military demand for their ships was so high that it came to create a lack for the Japanese national trade: even the traditional trade at Shimonoseki was reported to suffer from this problem.⁸¹

This context and the official denial of any “coal exports interdict” by the Finance minister led the *Moji shinpō* to publish a very original interview of “one gentleman”⁸² entitled “True conversations at the tavern.”⁸³ The tone was very critical, blaming “not only the irresponsible press bodies”⁸⁴ but also “the parliamentarians”⁸⁵, “the most irresponsible of everyone”⁸⁶ and “many businessmen of that sort” too.⁸⁷ Questioning their silence (“don’t they all shut up?”⁸⁸) and their “so many endless impractical discourses”⁸⁹, the interviewed continued about the coal exports issue:

Initially the coal exports are not supposed to be prohibited in such a situation as it is obvious that China had prepared its stocks [of coal] before the declaration of war. So we have heard of private instructions given to governors warning them to be cautious concerning the coal business (...). Afterwards, the press bodies and men in their prime sharply attacked the coal exports as “a national treason”, facing such an ignominious treatment many coal business men were quick to retreat and because of this false charge, the exports ceased almost totally... But it had never been said that no one could not export coal! (*Then drinking one shot*) And the merchants who had signed engagements when coal was at three or four *yen* per ton soon asked the government for an official interdict. But there was no way that coal would become prohibited in times of war and these merchants would not listen to the government and the army officials who knew it would be very difficult to promulgate such an embargo. Despite this,

⁷⁵ 人命を傷ひ巨費を要するのみならず、間接に實業界を攪乱して、全國至る處に影響せり。 *Moji shinpō*, 25 August 1894.

⁷⁶ 石炭の大欠乏。 *Moji shinpō*, 26 August 1894.

⁷⁷ *Moji shinpō*, 29 August 1894.

⁷⁸ 炭坑の困難。 *Moji shinpō*, 7 September 1894.

⁷⁹ 埠頭黒山を築くに至たり。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁰ 石炭の恐慌近にあり。 *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ *Moji shinpō*, 13, 14 and 17 October 1894.

⁸² 一紳士。 *Moji shinpō*, 17 October 1894.

⁸³ 旅停閑話。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁴ 無責任は新聞屋ばかりでない。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁵ 國會議員。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ もつとも無責任の甚だしきもの。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ 有志家なるもの亦皆此の類多く。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ 皆黙りではないか。 *Ibidem*.

⁸⁹ 殆んと出放題の空論が多い。 *Ibidem*.

coal merchants were afraid of public opinion so they decided to realize an embargo by themselves. There were some of them asking for the abolition of the interdict and a governmental authorization... but there would be no reason for the government to abolish a virtual interdict. Thus, here we come to today, and it seems that the ones who have not feared the public intimidations and continued their exports have made a lot of money, while the ones who have stopped have lost a lot.

元來石炭の輸出は其筋にても禁せられて居ると云ふ譯ではないのじやて、尤も宣戦公布の前には清國が必ず戦争の準備として多量の石炭を買ひ入るゝに違ひないから、當業者に対して注意を加へよとの内論とか内訓とかは或る筋より知事などへ育つたと云ふとも聞て居る、(…) 其後石炭の輸出に付新聞や壯士が賣國奴呼ばりて大に攻撃したので當業者も此の諱はしき名義に避易し予を引てツと扣へたものが多かつた、其處で讒が言ふとなく石炭の輸出は殆んど休んだ様な姿となつた、併し誰れも出来ないと言つたものはないのだよ (一杯を酌んで) 此等石炭商人中相場低廉の日に三圓か四圓で約束した向々は輸出を禁して貰ひたいなど言ふものあつたが、其れでも戦時禁制の例なき石炭だから仕方がない、政府でも陸海軍の當局者でも何とも八ヶ間敷言つたとは聞かない、デモ石炭商は輿論の攻撃が恐ろしいので、殆んど禁止せられたるかの如く心得て、一方には解禁とか公許とか願ふものが出て來た、併し禁止せぬ政府が許す筈はない、矢つ張り依然たりで今日に成つて居る、尤も間には世の攻撃を恐れずドツドツ輸出して随分利益うけたものも居るぞらだ、詰り手を引たものが負けとなつたのだ、

According to this “gentleman”, the interdict issue had become to a paradox because of the imbroglio between the public opinion and the political and the business spheres. If we consider the motivations, we understand that in public opinion it was a simple matter of “patriotism” in a time of war, but the government’s officials were not strong enough to impose reason in this problem as coal exports would not benefit China military forces, the businesspeople were cowards as well, quick to follow public opinion and then putting pressure on the government to obtain an official embargo. Amid all the confusion, merchants were prompt to break their engagements in order to sell their coal at the current higher prices, but as there was no legal ground for an embargo this was illegal, exposing the business to trials. Consequently, companies which had not respected the embargo were the winners in this situation. So, what was the reality of doing business during these strange months?

Big gains for the Big Business

The following monthly statistics provide the big picture of coal exports during the war:

The Chikuhō coal business at Moji during 1894

Unit: ton

month	Chikuhō production	Shippings		Exports registered in	
		national	international	Moji	Shimonoseki
1	139 732	75 099	64 633 (46)	50 933 (79)	13 700 (21)
2	114 888	71 119	43 769 (38)	32 294 (74)	11 475 (26)
3	170 297	122 852	47 445 (28)	21 935 (46)	25 510 (54)
4	200 419	132 895	67 524 (34)	40 759 (60)	26 765 (40)
5	170 969	97 015	73 954 (43)	47 354 (64)	26 600 (36)
6	142 540	93 818	48 722 (34)	25 772 (53)	22 950 (47)
1-6	938 846	592 799	346 047 (37)	219 944 (64)	127 000 (36)
7	164 570	118 223	46 347 (28)	17 527 (38)	28 820 (62)
8	84 741	54 840	29 901 (35)	11 123 (37)	18 778 (63)
9	156 986	102 927	54 059 (34)	28 089 (52)	25 970 (48)
10	173 358	138 795	34 563 (20)	22 853 (66)	11 710 (34)
11	171 984	125 796	46 188 (27)	18 678 (40)	27 510 (60)
12	102 053	55 304	46 749 (46)	19 699 (42)	27 050 (58)
7-12	853 691	595 884	257 807 (30)	117 969 (46)	139 838 (54)
1894	1 792 537	1 188 683	603 854 (34)	337 913 (56)	266 838 (44)

Sources: *Moji shinpō*, 1 January 1895 and 1 January 1896.

These figures show that the decrease in coal exports was actually very limited during the period of the embargo question. Looking at the absolute figures, August was indeed at the lowest level, but this was normal as drought and lack of workers in the mines during summer (especially August) were usual problems in the Chikuhō region. Taking the proportional figures, we can notice the low rate of exports in July (28% of the production was exported). Though, this was not exceptional either, as such a ratio had already been recorded four months ago, in March. Moreover, in July the absolute volume of exports was comparable to peace time volumes (February, March and June). According to these figures, coal exports did not suffer that much from the virulent propaganda in favor of an embargo. But we can notice that during the “embargo movement” a shift in the exporting places took place in the straits: whereas Moji used to register nearly twice more exports than Shimonoseki, the proportion was inversed from June to August. Shimonoseki had offices of the biggest companies (Mitsui, Mitsubishi and the Uryū shōkai) while Moji was full of local merchants. This suggests that the big business had a great advantage over the local merchants under the “embargo movement”.

Despite the great pressure put upon the coal export business from June to September, a detailed reading of the *Moji shinpō* unveils the reality of the exports continuing, and even to Shanghai. Even in the midst of the public denunciations of August, the newspaper continued to report on the coal shipments, just as before the war. Out of thirty shipments during this month, eleven were for Shanghai, eight for Hong Kong, and five for Singapore⁹⁰. Who were the sellers? Ten of the eleven shipments

⁹⁰ The rest included two shipments to Manila, two to Bombay, and one to New York. *Moji shinpō*, 14, 18, 19, 22 and 24 July, 1, 5, 7, 12, 14 and 28 August, 6, 7, 14, 26, 27 and 29 September, 4 October 1894.

for Shanghai were ordered by Mitsui and Mitsubishi, the remaining one by Yasukawa Keiichirō, the representative of the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate who had attempted to obtain an official embargo. But the only one company accused by name of being a “traitor” in the *Moji shinpō*, the Uryū Shōkai, did not ship one piece of coal to Chinese consumers—exactly as they had replied to these accusations—whereas the biggest companies just continued their shipments to Shanghai as usual.

To justify their realization of exports under the “embargo”, companies argued that these were made on the basis of regular engagements, and that regular engagements can not be broken unless a proper embargo law is promulgated. The *Moji shinpō* reported that this was the position of the Chikuhō Collieries Syndicate, but there is no evidence of such a decision in the Syndicate archives we have consulted. On 30 June, the Syndicate actually decided to send an “Inspector”⁹¹ to Moji in charge of “monitoring the exports”⁹² but there was no definition of what could be exported or not. The only instruction given to the inspector was “to act after having questioned the president, the members of the council and Tokuhiko Tameaki about difficulties and doubts which could occur.”⁹³ Tokuhiko Tameaki was not a member of the Syndicate but was the permanent Mitsubishi agent at Moji, evidence of the influence of Mitsubishi over the Syndicate. The Syndicate provided their “inspector” (Takahara Tokutarō 高原徳太郎, a secretary at the Syndicate) with a rather big budget for his “social expenses” (*kōsai-hi*)⁹⁴. While we do not know how this money was spent, one suggestion is that it helped to finance the (*Moji shinpō*’s) press campaign concerning the “embargo”. This may explain why the newspaper did not comment on the Mitsubishi’s and Mitsui’s shipments toward Shanghai.

As seen before, Mitsubishi was particularly aware of the military preparations from early June. The company’s inquiries in Hong Kong and Shanghai drew the attention of its own agent (John Tripp), who then questioned the company’s intentions in the event of war.⁹⁵ Mitsubishi answered that “if the authorities require it, we cannot carry out Engagements according to the terms I will do my best to continue to forward supplies but I cannot be responsible.”⁹⁶ Immediately this aroused a panic amongst Mitsubishi’s main customers: The Peninsular and Oriental Company was “very anxious owing to the rumors of war between Japan and China”⁹⁷ while “Butterfield and Swire have been purchasing coal in this market [Shanghai] and at Moji in case of difficulties arising.”⁹⁸ Not only did Mitsubishi not have

⁹¹ 取締掛. Chikuhō sekitan kōgyō kumiai, “Wakamatsu-hama no midori-ya ni-oite kaikai seru yushutsu torishimari jō ni tsuki iinkai ketsugiroku”, already cited.

⁹² 輸出炭取締方. *Ibidem*.

⁹³ 取締上ニ關シ出來スル難事疑問等ハ派出員ヨリ総長常議員及徳弘爲章君ニ相談ノ上決行スルコト. *Ibidem*.

⁹⁴ 交際費. Chikuhō sekitan kōgyō kumiai, “Meiji nijūnen shichi-gatsu mikka jōgiinkai oyobi yushutsu-tan torishimari-iinkai ketsugi-roku” 明治廿七年七月三日常議員會及輸出炭取締委員會決議録 (Minutes of the 3 July Meeting and the Members of the Coal Exports Monitoring Commission), compiled in “Jōgiin-kai ketsugiroku tsutsumi”, already cited, p. 30.

⁹⁵ Tripp (Shanghai) to Iwasaki (Mitsubishi President, Tōkyō Head-office), 28 June 1894, compiled in *Kōhon*, Year 1894, no. 2, p. 1046 (Mitsubishi Archives Center at Tōkyō: MA-04298).

⁹⁶ Uryū (“Wuriu” in the text, Tōkyō) to Tripp (Shanghai), 28 June 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1047).

⁹⁷ Tripp to Uryū, 29 June 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1048).

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

the capacities to fulfil both its engagements and the new military demand, but in its contracts with the big western companies in China “the war clause has been omitted”⁹⁹... so the war excuse could not be used to suspend them either. Therein lied the issue for Mitsubishi: The company had to find a way to avoid legal problems and the only solution was a national embargo enforced by the government.

As such a law was not effective Mitsubishi had to persuade its customers that it was just going to be a matter of time and necessary to prepare it. Mitsubishi’s agent at Shanghai (Tripp) warned his customers: “if war is declared” coal exports would become a “contraband of war” and “the company cannot be held responsible if the export is stopped or other embargo placed on coal by the Japanese Government.”¹⁰⁰ Mitsubishi even wrote directly to its main customers to warn that “in case of an embargo (*Kaigenlei*) we are afraid that we are quite helpless as undoubtedly the entire shipment will then be stopped”: Under such “a law called ‘*Kaigenlei*’ we shall not be allowed to ship any coal to Shanghai and/or Hong Kong.”¹⁰¹ Mitsubishi also invoked the event of an order of requisition (*chōhatsu-rei* 徴発令) so “we shall have to be relieved from the obligation of our contracts.”¹⁰² Mitsubishi top officials repeated that a “martial law regime [*kaigenrei* 戒嚴令] would be promulgated upon Kyūshū as a prior war area”¹⁰³ so they have decided “to reserve all the company owned mines’ coal for the requisitions”¹⁰⁴ and “to fulfil the lack of coal on our engagements by selling coal at cost price to our regular customers we will buy outside the company.”¹⁰⁵ But no requisition, nor martial law, nor embargo, was to be decided by the government, except the martial law regime enforced in the district of Hiroshima from 5 October (the Japanese Army Headquarters were located in the area).

In fact, these declarations were just the officialisation of what was already being practised by the company at Wakamatsu. Several days before, the Wakamatsu Mitsubishi Office already stated “how much it would be regretful to purchase complementary coal, we [have to] buy and sell them at market prices close to ours.”¹⁰⁶ This was acknowledged as “absolutely unavoidable”¹⁰⁷, not because of the war but because of the production decrease in the mines.¹⁰⁸ Mitsubishi’s need for coal was so high at the end of July that its large-scale buyings led the authorities to suspect that they were working for the Chinese side.¹⁰⁹ Of course, the production problems were not disclosed to customers, and Mitsubishi

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁰ Tripp to Ritchie (Agent of Peninsular & Oriental Company at Shanghai), 29 June 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1051).

¹⁰¹ Mitsubishi to Howard (Agent of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and Steamships Co.) and Brown (Agent of the Pacific Mail Co., Oriental Steamships Co. and Ocean Steamships Co.), 13 July 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1116).

¹⁰² *Ibidem*. See also, Kawabuchi (Mitsubishi Sub Manager) to M. G. Sheveleff and Co. (Agents of Holme-Ringer) 19 July 1894; Tanaka (Mitsubishi) to Uryū-shōkai (“Wuriu Shokwai” in the text. Agents of Ocean Steamship Co.; China Navigation Co.; Eastern and Australian S. N. Co.; Green Island Cement Co.; Butterfield and Swire), 29 July 1894 (*ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 1118 and 1140).

¹⁰³ 九州地方ハ臨時戦地トシテ第一ニ嚴戒令実施. Iwasaki (Mitsubishi President) to the Shimonoseki, Wakamatsu and Nagasaki Offices, 5 July 1894 (*ibid.*, no. 3, p. 1179).

¹⁰⁴ 高島其他社有炭徴発内決ノ由. *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁵ 約定供給不足ノ分ハ約定者ニ対スル我好意トシテ他ノ石炭買入実價ヲ以テ積渡候様. *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁶ 他炭購入補欠致候義ハ遺憾ニ不堪候得共市價ヲ以可成類似ノ石炭買入補給致候. Tokuhiro to Iwasaki, 3 July 1894 (*ibid.*, no. 2, p.1060).

¹⁰⁷ 万々不得止候事. *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ The decline lasted all the summer, cf. Wakamatsu Office to Tōkyō Head-office, 25 July 1894 (*ibidem*, no. 3, p.1136).

¹⁰⁹ Takata to Iwasaki, 31 July 1894 (*ibid.*, p. 1224).

used the war as an excuse to cheat on its engagements. Under political pressure, with soaring prices, facing the beginning of the movement in favour of a “coal embargo” and the Mitsubishi’s warnings attitude, customers eventually accepted that difficulties were “unavoidable.” It was preferable for them to negotiate mid-range quality coal through Mitsubishi than to get coal hazardously by themselves in the open market or to face a sudden coal shortage. Even the most difficult customers in Asia, the occidental shipping companies, such as Peninsular and Oriental Co., could not endure such a quandery and eventually accepted lower quality coal.¹¹⁰

In the absence of any martial law regime or coal embargo law, there was no legal basis for breaking international contracts. Thus, thanks to the pressure of the “embargo campaign”, Mitsubishi won on each side of the market: selling its best coal at sky-rocketing price to the army and selling middle and low-quality coal at high-quality coal rates. Overall, the Company never stopped its Chinese shippings, even in August when the war had been officially declared. The local merchants in Moji had less opportunities and did not benefit from the fever in the international market.

CONCLUSION

By observing the situation during the first months of the war. Whereas no legal embargo was ever enforced, the fierce political and medial campaign from onwards June put such a pressure on the business that it faced a matter-of-fact embargo-like situation. We have shown how much Mitsubishi and Mitsui benefited from this “embargo” while local merchants endured hard difficulties. Even after the official denial of any embargo law by the minister of the treasury, in October 1894, the effects of the “embargo issue” continued to be felt. Big business structures succeeded in selling any range of coal quality to their customers in the Chinese open ports, even the middle and low-quality coal, depriving the local merchants at Moji of their main activities and excluding them from the international market. The local merchants then had to focus on the national market while big business was extending its stake on the far more profitable international market. Even though the national market’s dynamics were profitable during the war (between June and July 1894, coal prices grew one third)¹¹¹, the local merchants lost their stakes in the foreign market and then had difficulties reentering the exports market, as the big business competitors had grown bigger than ever during the war. The war permitted the extensive use of fierce nationalism in order to provide opportunities to consolidate the zaibatsu’s position in the business. In conclusion, the war itself can hardly be considered a “booming” opportunity for the whole sector, but it was a great chance for big companies such as Mitsubishi to further advance into the exports market. This very particular and specific dynamic contributed to the more general rise of the big business in the coal sector and in the Japanese economy during the 1890s.

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¹¹⁰ Shipping companies received Namazuta coal instead of Takashima coal from the end of July, and Katsuno and other lower quality coal from the beginning of August. See communications to customers (*ibid.*, p.1141 and pp.1455-64).

¹¹¹ Prices at Ōsaka. *Moji shinpō*, 1 January 1895.

日本資本主義の発展と国家主義の高揚

— 日清戦争中の石炭輸出禁止運動の分析 —

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キーワード：国際貿易、石炭産業、日清戦争、輸出禁止運動、筑豊、中国、門司港、経済史

日清戦争の時点で日本の経済は企業勃興を経て産業革命の最中であつた。産業革命を支えたのは九州北部の筑豊石炭であり、この石炭産業の発展を支えたのは中国市場をはじめとする海外市場であつた。日清戦争の勃発に際し、軍事的には敵国の中国への石炭輸出を停止するのが当然である一方、石炭輸出ができなくなると日本の経済力が弱まってしまうため、けっきょく輸出禁止法が実現に至らなかつた。かくして、明治二十四年六月より十月までに軍部と国家主義者たちの下で極めて激しいプレス・キャンペーンや暴行を含む中国への石炭輸出禁止運動が展開された。本稿では、新聞と政府（外務省・陸海軍）と財界（三菱商事・筑豊鉱業組合）の一次史料の分析によって、その輸出禁止運動はもともと軍部のアイデアであつたが、ただちに三菱のような石炭産業の大企業によつても推進されるようになったことを指摘する。さらに、三菱の事例を分析することによって、三菱が輸出禁止運動の煽りを利用し、それまでの海外市場における経営上問題（石炭の質に対する買い手の不満）を解決することができたのみならず、運動の煽りを受けた門司港の中小輸出者の競争に圧力を加えることもできた点も詳らかにする。結局、日清戦争の際に国家主義が企業の競争手段とビジネス上の問題解決方法として推進されるようになったのである。