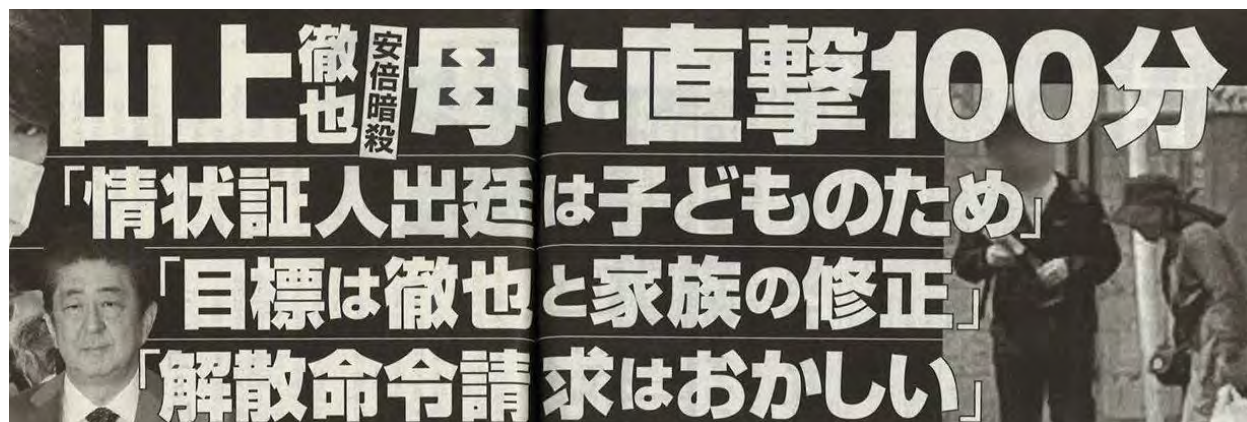


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Strong Left-Wing Bias In Bigoted Anti-Unification Church Article

Knut Holdhus
May 30, 2024



Facsimile from Weekly Bunshun 26th April 2024, page 14-15

Japanese Weekly Bunshun basing sensationalist reporting on strong left-wing bias



Assassinated on 8th July 2022. Here, former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe some months earlier, in March 2022

Ever since the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe by Tetsuya Yamagami (山上 徹也) in July 2022, media outlets have attempted to sit down with Yamagami's mother for an interview. The first known instance of details about his mother being presented by the media, was two weeks after the murder, when she and Yamagami's younger sister were seen taking a taxi to an estate in the mountains owned by one of Yamagami's uncles, presumably to avoid being hounded by the media.

However, on 26th April 2024, Shukan Bunshun (Weekly Bunshun), a large magazine known for investigative journalism and sensationalist reporting, published a lengthy report titled "100 minutes of direct questions to Tetsuya Yamagami's mother".

The Weekly Bunshun is well-known for its sensationalist headlines and narratives that often portray subjects negatively as well as disregarding balanced reporting in favour of grabbing the attention of the reader.

And such a description of Weekly Bunshun is spot on when it comes to its report on the mother of the assassin.

The magazine writes,

"However, as the Bunshun magazine continued to visit Mrs. A's apartment daily, despite her cautious demeanor, she began to open up reluctantly. Over the course of 100 minutes, Tetsuya Yamagami's mother shared what was weighing on her heart."

Shukan Bunshun claims that it interviewed the mother of the assassin for 100 minutes. This is an assertion typical of half-truths. It seems like a feat to have managed to talk to her for more than one and a half hour. But judging by the content of the report, the reporter, or maybe several reporters, had been dogging her.

The Weekly Bunshun admits the mother had an unfavourable impression of the magazine. Journalists managed to obtain her address and literally pestered her by going there every day. The keen reader easily gets the impression that the so-called interview consists of a series of small verbal exchanges with the mother that took place over a longer period of time, whenever the reporters got some feedback from her during their persistent dogging of the old lady. The magazine writes,

"She has hardly responded to media inquiries before, and when approached by the magazine a month after the incident, she simply said, 'It's irrelevant,' and has since remained silent. However, as the weekly magazine continued to visit Mrs. A's apartment day after day, her vigilance began to seep out."

The reporter is certainly trying his best to paint a negative picture of Yamagami's mother, called Mrs. A by the magazine. Even though she had nothing to do with the assassination, she gets the blame. Weekly Bunshun describes her as, "The mother who triggered the madness in Yamagami", and as being "closely related to the motive for the crime."

But the Japanese magazine has a rather weak case here. Further down the article it is pointed out that the "madness" in the assassin may well have other causes. It says,

"Mrs. A gave birth to her second son, Tetsuya, on September 10, 1980. At that time, the couple lived in a detached house in Osaka Prefecture, but they suffered from a series of family tragedies from the beginning of their marriage. The year after Tetsuya was born, Mrs. A's mother, who was her emotional support, passed away from leukemia at a young age.

Furthermore, in 1984, her husband, whose alcoholism worsened, jumped from the roof of a condominium. Two months later, Mrs. A gave birth to her third child (Tetsuya's younger sister), but around the same time, her eldest son was diagnosed with childhood cancer. Due to the effects of chemotherapy, her eldest son lost vision on one side of the eye site."

Those tragedies happened many years before Mrs. A met the [Unification Church](#), which according to Weekly Bunshun is largely to blame for the tragic fate of the Yamagami family.



In Nov. 2022 interview, Kazuo Shii, chairman of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) said the party is fighting the "[final war](#)" against the [Family Federation](#) / [Unification Church](#). Here Shii on 30th March 2023

Because of her beliefs in the [Family Federation](#), she is portrayed as a fanatic, even though the reporter presents little evidence for such a claim.

The reporter is obviously strongly biased. The magazine writes,

"The journalist felt a sense of discomfort with Mrs. A's self-assessment, which showed no introspection about her own fanaticism."

The Weekly Bunshun seems to have completely swallowed the narrative of left-wingers and the Japanese Communist Party, which according to their leadership for obvious political reasons is engaged in a [final battle](#) with the [Family Federation](#).

According to this narrative, echoed by the Weekly Bunshun - and a group of activist leftwing lawyers - Mrs A's relationship to her son turned terrorist, is the key to understanding his motive. The magazine writes,

"Despite the significant impact of the incident on society, Tetsuya Yamagami's mother, who plays a crucial role in understanding the motive behind the crime, remains silent. Why does Mother A continue to believe in the [Unification Church](#)? And has the assassination attempt on former Prime Minister Abe led to any change in her 'brainwashing'? The key

to unraveling these mysteries lies in the harsh and tumultuous life that Yamagami and his mother have experienced together."

A narrative pointing solely to Mrs A, a member of the [Family Federation](#), is of course ideal for taking the focus away from another narrative, which point to a very different motive.

Occasionally, bits and pieces of this radically different story emerges, as when Shukan Bunshun on 19th August 2023 published confessions made by the relatives of Tetsuya Yamagami.

According to the narrative of the activist leftwing lawyers, Yamagami could not enter university because of a difficult economic situation created by the mother's large donations to the [Unification Church](#). But according to Shukan Bunshun,

"Tetsuya took entrance exams for various universities, but was only accepted at Nara Sangyo University, which was not the school of his choice, so he chose not to go to university."

This other narrative points directly quite far left. Soon after the assassination of Shinzo Abe, a former Japanese Red Army member Masao Adachi (足立 正生) directed and produced a fictional-biographical film called "Revolution+1" about Yamagami, premiered in smaller theatres throughout Japan the day before Abe's state funeral. In the film, Yamagami is portrayed as a terrorist hero. Some theatres cancelled the screening after receiving many complaints about justification of terrorism. Yamagami himself had

said before the assassination that he was starting a revolution. And he has been praised openly by many communists after his act of terror.



Masao Adachi (1939-), film producer, scriptwriter, actor and member of Japanese Red Army



Palladium Magazine

The Red Army connection also appears in other media. The San Francisco-based Palladium Magazine, the flagship publication of American Governance Foundation, writes that Yamagami's father was a student at the Faculty of Engineering at the elite Kyoto University. (Article 2nd Feb. 2023 headlined 'Yamagami Tetsuya's Revenge')

There, he became acquainted with revolutionary communism. According to an article by editor Masahiko Motoki in the daily web magazine Cyzo 26th July 2022, he was a good friend of Yasuyuki Yasuda, who studied architecture and became a Japanese Red Army militant, shot dead while carrying out a terrorist attack at Lod Airport in Tel Aviv 30th May 1972. Cyzo wrote,



Japanese daily web magazine Cyzo

"During his [Yamagami's father] time at Kyoto University, he was a mahjong [Oriental tile game] friend with Yasuyuki Yasuda, who later died in the Tel Aviv airport shooting."

There have been several claims that Yamagami was not able to single-handedly construct his home-made gun used to assassinate Abe. He must have had one or more persons assisting him. Who? The obvious answer would be some like-minded person. And there are obvious indications that such a person might belong to the far left.

In addition to all this, we know that the Japanese Communist Party is the largest communist party in the democratic world with its close to 300,000 members. For 50 years the party has been fighting methodically to eliminate the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#).

Besides describing Mrs. A as a fanatic, the Weekly Bunshun also portrays her motherly heart, writing that she has been trying again and again to meet with her son in jail. She has, however, been continuously denied to see him. In spite of this she continues to make the effort to try to get to see him.

The magazine reports,

"A Ministry of Justice official reveals, 'Once a month, Mrs. A visits the Osaka Detention Center where Yamagami is held. Every month, she applies for a meeting with her son, but Yamagami has consistently refused, and they have never met. Each time Mrs. A is denied a visit, she leaves behind a handwritten letter.'"

The magazine describes the situation of the assassin,

"Yamagami, who was once praised as a sharpshooter during his time in the Maritime Self-Defense Force, is being detained in the Osaka Detention Center."

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12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan

October 15, 2023 • Knut Holdhus

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From Japan's history of religious persecution. Here, scene from a painting depicting the 26 martyrs of Japan, a group of Catholics martyred by crucifixion in Nagasaki 5th February 1597. Photo: Abraham / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 3.0 Unp. Cropped

Heads of 12 religious freedom NGOs appalled by Japan's treatment of Family Federation

In an [article](#) published by [Bitter Winter](#), the leading magazine on religious liberty and human rights, 14th October 2023, 12 religious freedom NGOs, both religious and secular, protest the



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Japanese government's recent actions to dissolve the **Family Federation**.

Logo of *Bitter Winter*

May 23, 2024

They all express great concern that the **Family Federation**, formerly the **Unification Church**, has been held responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last year.

The 12 NGOs point out that after the terror attack on Abe, a network of lawyers and others "hostile to the **Family Federation**" used the murder of Abe as a pretext to revive an old campaign started by left-wingers mainly for political reasons. For decades, they had been afraid of the **Family Federation's** "successful sponsorship of anti-Communist initiatives".



From a *Victory over Communism* campaign in Japan in 1969, supported by the *Unification Church*. Photo: IFVOC

In their **letter**, it is described how immediately after Abe had been murdered by a terrorist, "press conferences and an unprecedented media campaign of slander followed."

The 12 voice their concern,

"We note, however, that with respect to the **Family Federation**, they have been reported unfairly and one-sidedly, listening only to the militant lawyers and to 'apostate' ex-members whose stories in some cases have been exposed as false by independent journalists."

The network of activist leftwing lawyers in Japan that is hostile to the **Family Federation**, calls themselves *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*. The **letter** from the 12 NGOs emphasizes that "spiritual sales" is a concept devised by opponents to describe activities by members of the **Family Federation** "that have long since ceased".

Indeed, the **Family Federation** advised "over-enthusiastic members" to stop such sales projects and condemned them in a public statement published 14 years ago, in 2009. In the years that followed, there were only a handful of lawsuits against so-called "spiritual sales" by members of the **Family Federation**. Most cases mentioned in media reports after the Abe assassination, are about occurrences that took place further back than 15 years. There have also been cases when the lawyers from the hostile activist network intentionally have tried to make the sales appear more recent by referring to the date a court case began, years after the alleged "spiritual sale" took place.



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Persecution in China: Tibetan Monks arrested in 2008. Photo (5th April 2008): SFT HQ (Students for a Free Tibet) / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 2.0 Gen. Cropped

In the [protest letter](#) the 12 signatories state bluntly that a dissolution of the [Family Federation](#) will be a step similar to anti-religious measures used in nations like communist China and Putin's Russia, and that do not belong in a democratic country like Japan.

Also, the [letter](#) brings up several important points that must be quite embarrassing for the Japanese government.

1. The dissolution of the [Family Federation](#) is out of proportion with the charges raised against it.
2. The dissolution is not consistent with the [Family Federation's](#) law-abiding behavior.
3. The dissolution will pave the way to similar action against other religious minorities.

The signatories deplore the measure taken by the Japanese government, saying that it may "forever taint the image of Japan "as a country committed to democratic principles, including FoRB" (freedom of religion or belief).

At the end of the [statement](#), there is a quote from a commentary on *RealClearPolitics*, an American website for political news, authored by two religious freedom authorities – Suzan Johnson Cook, who served as the *U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom* from 2011 to 2013, and Katrina Lantos Swett, former chair of the *U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)*. The two compare Japan to totalitarian regimes,

"where unpopular religious minorities are 'liquidated' after the ground has been prepared by slanderous media campaigns."

The [statement](#) was signed by

Marco Respinti, Director-in-charge, [Bitter Winter](#), a daily



Thierry Valle.
Photo: [FOREF](#)



Dr. Massimo Introvigne.
Photo: [FOREF](#)



Eric Roux.
Photo [FOREF](#)



Marco Respinti.
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magazine on freedom of religion and human rights

Thierry Valle, President, CAP-LC – Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience

Massimo Introvigne, Co-founder and Managing Director, CESNUR – Center for Studies on New Religions

Eric Roux, Chairman, EIFRF – European Inter-Religious Forum for Religious Freedom

Francesco Curto, Co-founder, Fedinsieme [Faiths Together]

Alessandro Amicarelli, President, FOB – European Federation for Freedom of Belief

Aaron





Aaron Rhodes.
Photo: [Bitter Winter](#)



Willy Fautré.
Photo: [FOREF](#)



Camelia Marin.
Photo: [FOREF](#)

Rhodes, President, FOREF – Forum for Religious Freedom Europe

Hans Noot, Director, Gerard Noodt Foundation for Freedom of Religion or Belief

Willy Fautré, Co-founder and Director, HRWF – Human Rights Without Frontiers

Raffaella Di Marzio, Managing Director, LIREC – Center for Studies on Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Conscience



Alessandro Amicarelli.
Photo: [Screenshot](#)

Rosita Šoryté, President, ORLIR – International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees

Camelia Marin, Deputy Director, Soteria International

Featured image above: From painting depicting the 26 martyrs of Japan in 1597, Chapel of the Martyrs of Nepi in Katowice Panewniki, Poland. Photo: Abraham / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped

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