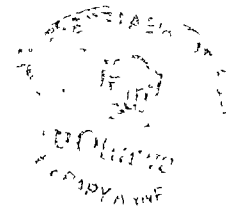


**THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTY POLITICS
IN JAPAN**

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Social, Economic and Political Sciences
of the University of Ottawa in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
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INTRODUCTION

The Meiji Restoration is, generally, regarded as the dawn of Japan's modern history for it earmarked the beginning of Japan's modernization. Japan had, however less success in adopting Western political ideas and systems than she had achieved in the material field. Unlike industrialization, which can be introduced by way of learning and adopted by means of imitating the most advanced technology within a relatively short span of time; democratization is a thing of spirit, which to be lasting and durable must impregnate the very roots of society. It is not to be instilled merely in form; it must have its origin in the understanding and capability of the common people. Therefore, the lack of a popular basis for a democratic political process had seriously handicapped the efforts to improve Japan's political life in the prewar period. If a healthy democratic society is difficult to germinate, it is equally difficult to upset the roots of feudal institutional influence. In this respect, the Japanese military caste long entrenched in politics was confident enough to succeed in an effort to stifle a tenuous growth of popular government even in the 'progressive twenties'. It was not until after the war that Japan's

party politics began to make headway towards a genuine development.

This thesis is an attempt to study as well as illustrate systematically the evolution of Japan's political party movement. To approach the subject, the first part will be devoted to a study of the characteristics of Japan's party organization in general. With this introductory knowledge, the second part will study the reasons for which Japan's party movement had so far failed in the prewar period.

Under the impact of the war and the subsequent Allied occupation, Japan's institutional structure has undergone a remarkable change which seems to provide favourable conditions for a political development towards democracy: the breakdown of militant control over the nation has given birth to a sign of political consciousness which has been gradually engendered among various strata in post-war Japan. It is, therefore, the purpose of the third part of this undertaking to examine the significance of the Allied occupation policy with equal attention to the results of the War which had, to some extent, shattered the traditional social structure and social outlook in Japan. It is also the aim of this part

to assess to what degree these changing factors have responded in favour of the Allied occupation policy for Japan's political reorientation and made such a policy of lasting importance.

This point leads to the opening of the last part of this thesis proper, which will be devoted largely to the analysis of responsible government in practice and the way by which the Japanese political parties readjusted themselves in the new circumstances. It will be noted that these parties have forestalled a tendency to revert to the old politics and have thereby made way for a genuine development of a 'two-party system' in Japan.

In concluding this discussion, an attempt will be made to probe into the future prospects of Japan's political life.

THE ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

The Origins of the Japanese Political Party Movement

The Influence of Japanese Institutional Structure
over the Party Organization

Weakness in Platform

Internal Relationship

Paternalism

Factionalism

Relationship with the Electorate

Personal Tie as a Factor

Monetary Power as a Factor

Party Fund - Corruption - Alliance with
Economic Group and Its Effect

Left-wing Movement in Prewar Japan

Its Origins

Its Difficulties

Similar to and Different from the
Conservative Party

THE ORIGINS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties in Japan first came into being shortly after the Meiji Restoration. They were inaugurated by the clan leaders, Itagaki and Okuma, in the period of transition from feudalism to constitutionalism. It is, therefore, natural that they should exhibit the marks of their birth and breeding: feudal loyalty handicapped their integrity. As a result, this condition "not only prolongs the influence of an ultra-conservative aristocracy beyond the epoch of history to which it belonged, it sets the mode for the attitude to be observed between party leaders outside the aristocracy and in the rank and file of party membership"¹

It is true that the ferment of Western democratic ideas had been at work before the Meiji Restoration. To some extent, it may be said that the formation of political parties originated with the conception of constitutional government. However, one should not overlook the immediate motive of the party movement, as it foreshadowed the nature and

¹ H. S. Quigley, Japanese Government and Politics
The Century Co., New York, London, 1932 p.233

the consequent development of the party movement. It is clear that the beginning of political party movement in Japan was more concerned with clan rivalry rather than with championing a genuine democratic development. Itagaki and Okuma organized parties to agitate against the Sat-Cho combination only when they "became dissatisfied with the distribution of offices, a distribution too favourable in their view to the Satsuma and Choshu clans".² Thus it is not strange that the components of these parties were "thousands of young and discontented men", whose political education "was still sadly immature".³ Moreover, "it was not that birds of the same feather flocked together; it was that birds of all feathers flocked under one leader. Within the framework of parties, in its earlier stage, one cannot help noticing the same relationship that had formerly bound his vassals to a feudal lord".⁴ Taken against such background, further developed are a train of corollaries which manifest the characteristics

2 Ibid., p. 201

3 Inazo Nitobe, Japan, some phases of her problems and development, Ernest Benn Limited, London, 1931, pp.177-178.

4 Ibid., p.179

of the organization of Japan's political parties. Although the two main parties, Jiyuto (later Seiyukai) and Kaishinto (later Minseito) proclaimed their platforms - Jiyuto, Itagaki's radical group advocated a thorough-going democratic constitution, akin to the French, while Kaishinto, the moderates, was in favour of a British model. However, they showed "no clear line of demarcation"⁵. This absence of concrete principles and programs was even more clearly demonstrated after the Meiji Constitution was proclaimed. Since the true nature of the constitution of 1889 was all but an Imperial ordinance, it created what was almost an absolute Monarchy. In this respect, the political parties found themselves confronted with a dilemma between the dual concepts of Imperial absolutism and popular government. Because essentially an attempt to unite these two concepts was irreconcilable, it was apparent that the parties could not profess one at the same time without sacrificing the other. Thus, the parties "were torn between a glorification of the state and an emphasis on the individual; between obeisance to the Imperial symbolism

⁵ Ibid., p.183

and service to popular government"⁶. At the time when the institutional structure was still feudal in character, it was obvious that they should compromise with their democratic ideals in favour of Imperial absolutism. It was this philosophic conflict that plagued the party movement, and in consequence obscured their party ideology.

Since the organization of the party was not bound on any concrete principle, it is natural that the party life of Japan should be a "peculiar combination of a high degree of loyalty to a leader with a low degree of loyalty to the party itself"⁷. In this regard, of equal significance was the fact that the pattern of Japanese familial relations also had a profound effect upon the relations between party leaders and followers. The familial pattern not only had a tremendous impact upon the individual personality, but it also had a corresponding effect upon the role of the individual in the large social group. For that reason, the most pronounced characteristic of the absolute power of the

⁶ Robert A. Scalapino, Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan, University of California Press. Berkeley. Los Angeles, 1953, p.68.

⁷ Quigley, op. cit., p.234

family head should become equally apparent in the feudal relationships outside the family, where the "father-child image was made a dominant one"⁸. In this fashion, "when the political parties developed, relations between leaders and followers naturally bore the earmarks of paternalism"⁹.

Moreover, the Japanese familial system represented a system of fixed unilateral rights and duties, the submissive did not regard themselves as the possessors of independent values. Instead, they tended to think of themselves as the recipients of protection from the 'powers'. Since this is a trait "which has strongly affected every institution of modern Japan"¹⁰, the party organization is no exception. As such an attitude transformed itself into the party organization, the subordinates, whose personal responsibility was obfuscated by loyalty to the leadership, were ever ready to acquiescence in the concept of paternal absolutism. For their part, leaders, whose outlook was imbued with the traditional concept of the superior's role, were also ready to assume the

8 Scalapino, Op.cit., p.129
9 Ibid., p.132
10 Ibid., p.131

leadership with a solicitude for the feelings of subordinates. Thus, only when this paternalistic pattern of relationship prevailing in Japanese society is fully realized, does it become understandable that when the party leaders made abrupt switches in policy, they could depend upon their faithful followers to accompany them. In this regard, perhaps, no incident will serve as a more telling example than the rapprochement between the anti democratic oligarches and the anti oligarchy parties. Because of this, the government was able to play a decisive role in dealing primarily with a handful of leaders to convert an opposition into a regiment of support force. At different times, both Jiyuto and Shimpoto had been in alliance with clan cabinets. Itagaki "had been a member of the first Ito ministry in 1896, and Okuma of the second Matsukata Administration in 1896-7"¹¹. The significant thing was that although both of the parties had been ranged on the side of the administration at various times, as well as in Opposition, they secured no substantial change in the governmental policy.

11 W. W. McLaren, A Political History of Japan during the Meiji Era, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, New York, 1916, p.257.

Like paternalism, factionalism has a similar origin in the Japanese familial system. If paternalism represents the leader-follower relationship based on personal loyalty, then factionalism reveals the internal struggle based upon regional sentiment. Within the party the subordinated groups clustering around their respective leaders acted as a unit in seeking to advance its fortunes and in struggling for power without due consideration or any real sense of unit. In this fashion, "the party leaders represented daimyo-fathers in the political world, to be followed with that faithful allegiance which had been the model for feudal relationships"¹², and factional struggle resembled 'Han' and regional rivalry. As a result of the fact that within the party, a premium was placed on loyalty to one's group, not upon consistency to one's principles, factional affiliation prevailed over the party affiliation. Since factionalism, based upon personalities and mutual power interests was given full rein, the shifting in leadership always resulted in the splitting of party ranks and the shifting of party lines. Moreover, the factional loyalty was not always easy to maintain, "and relations

12 Scalapino, op. cit., p.117

among those aspiring to be leaders themselves were especially unsteady"¹³. This not only made it difficult for party organizations to maintain any real unity and cohesion, but also rendered the party rank and file susceptible to the temptation of opportunity.

For instance, in Jiyuto, the antagonism¹⁴ between the followers of Itagaki and those of Goto threatened on more than one occasion to ruin the party". Within the Kaishinto, the problem of personal factionalism was even greater. Although there was little challenge to Okuma's leadership within the party, there were three identifiable factions. While two factions, the Mita faction (the Keio University group) and the Numa faction (the Mainichi newspaper faction), disliked each other and carried on a silent strife, the third faction (the Tokyo University faction) was in the middle, not aligning itself to either side. When the "share of spoils" factor was ushered in, the factional rivalry became even more acute. Since collaboration with the bureaucrats was the only means of attaining political power, this problem became the root of great dissension within the Kenseihonto in 1908.

13 ibid., p.118

14 ibid., p.140

From the time when Okuma retired from active politics, the party divided into three factions. With the Hatoyama faction, led by Hatoyama Kazuo, in between, the Oishi faction, led by Oishi Masami, urged coming to terms with the bureaucrats in order to "share the spoils", while the Inukai faction, led by Inukai Ki, "demanded that the party be true to its principles as a people's party".¹⁵ More significant was the case in 1913 when Katsura decided to build up a party of his own in an effort to check the opposition power in the Diet, party affiliation yielded to the temptation in terms of money. A few of Seiyukai's members surrendered while the "Kokuminto was split in two, and all of its leaders except Inukai and half of the rank and file deserted to the Government".¹⁶

The Japanese familial system not only had its imprint of the inner party relations, but also had its effect upon the relationship between the party and the electorate. Generally, it might be said that the Seiyukai appealed more to the rural and agrarian

¹⁵ Ibid., p.190

¹⁶ McLaren, op. cit., p.348

elements, while the Minseito was more urban and pro business in its outlook.¹⁷ But this differentiation was rather based on the sentiments of their respective members than on a clear line of demarcation in principles.¹⁸ There is evidence for this in frequent shifts in party affiliation without due regard to the interests of the respective constituencies. Still more so, when the party movement developed to the stage of becoming subservient to the bureaucrats' will, the parties could hardly possess any real appeal to the public interests. It was, therefore, not that the party platform was an important factor to bind them together; it was blood relation, social affiliation, and 'traditional ties' that constituted the relationship between party members and their respective constituencies. In each constituency there was "a recognized boss or group of bosses, to whom politics was the daily business ... binding it faster by threads of personal relationship, working for the cause of the community, making contributions on public occasions, boycotting heresies, etc!"¹⁹

¹⁷ Nobutaka Ike, Japanese Politics, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1957, p.165.

¹⁸ McLaren, op. cit., p.369

¹⁹ Quigley, op. cit., p.264

In most cases, it was these bosses, or party agents, who exerted the influence over the electorates rather than the party platform. Of equal importance, personal prestige was also an essential quality in a candidate, such as a connection with a formerly powerful clan, or relationship to a locally respected family. All these attributes were reasons which decided the object of a voter's choice.²⁰

In addition to the above mentioned factors, another striking connection between the party candidate on one hand and the voter on the other was the practice of vote-buying. This practice was not desultorily conducted; it was rather a perfected scheme. In earlier elections in Japan it had been said that "a public advertisement like '100 votes wanted for 50 yen' "²¹ was not an isolated exception. Furthermore, this business-like bribery was carried even to such an extent as to create a special profession. 'Election brokers' acted as the middlemen who bought votes from electors and sold them to candidates or their managers.

20 Ibid., p.264

Nitobe, op.cit., p.215

21 Quigley, op. cit., p.268

As a result, through constant practising, this buying and selling business became an indispensable part of their campaign to the buyers, while to many voters it was akin to accepting payment for a day's work or other routine service and carried with it no flavour of dishonour²². It is interesting to note that through the recurrence of usage, some familiar passwords were adopted with proper meanings: "a 'spade', meaning money in advance; a setta (a sandal with a leather sole having a piece of metal on the heel), meaning money afterwards; a 'fly-hook', meaning to catch a voter without bait; and a 'pair of trousers' a voter suspected of pretending to support opposing candidates"²³. Thus, the practice of buying votes, if not officially permitted, was generally accepted in Japan.

In connection with the extensive use of bribery on the part of the party members, one logical result was corruption. Election bribery bred the need for corruption while corruption in part stimulated bribery. Therefore, it left no doubt that the party rank and file in the Diet should consult their own

²² Ibid., p.269

²³ Ibid., p.269

interests "in order to recoup as rapidly as possible the immense sums spent to procure their seats"²⁴. The device used by the party members was that "Opposition for the sake of obstruction gave place to acquiescence in the Government's various budgets and programmes, with only that amount of hesitation which was necessary to bring out the money from Ministry's bribery fund"²⁵. On the other hand, as the party members' corruption became public knowledge, "the average voter saw no reason why he should not secure some of the rewards for himself: he set a price upon his vote and sold it to any purchaser, not once but as often as possible, in every campaign"²⁶. Thus, monetary power, apart from the personal relationship, constituted a significant part of the party-voter relations.

Corruption provided an important part of the party funds, but by no means the whole of it. Another source of securing the party funds was by alliance with the great business and industrial corporations. Certainly this type of business-political relations was not based upon unilateral interests only in favour of the parties; it functioned on an interdependent basis.

24 McLaren, *op. cit.*, p.337

25 *Ibid.*, p.338

26 *Ibid.*, p.370

On their part, "the industrial-commercial elements were cognizant of the need to strengthen their position against the 'anti business' forces still present in government and in the country"²⁷. Moreover, since industrial business developed under government tutelage, it was apparent that it should become inextricably connected with administrative fiscal and economic plans. All the more so, when the economic groups were in a weak position to fight the battle against traditional 'anti commercialism' and struggle for survival in a world containing industrial giants. As a result, "it was important to avoid making enemies and cultivate coalition with power"²⁸.

In spite of all the political parties' weaknesses, at least one bargain power was in their possession - they could pose as an obstacle to the passage of Government measures in the Diet. It was this bargaining power that enabled them to render service to the business groups. For in coalition

²⁷ Scalapino, op. cit., p.262

²⁸ Ibid., p.262

with the political parties, the obstacle could be used against a hostile government policy. For these reasons, the so-called 'zaibatsu' were not only supplying a large campaign donation before each election but also "constantly making personal gifts to party leaders".²⁹ While the industrialists approached party leaders in an effort to cultivate friendship and win supporters, they did not neglect high administrative officials. Because their paramount need was to obtain the support of unified government which would look favourably upon their requests, it was necessary to unite these friends into a workable coalition on their behalf. In effect, this type of business-political relations paved the way for party-bureaucratic alliance and contributed freely to the corruption of political leadership and of the rank and file.³⁰

The connection between the economic groups and party leaders was almost as old as the party movement itself. Thus, there is no need to recount the history of their economic relations in detail, but a few outstanding incidents may serve well as telling examples.

²⁹ Ibid., p.263

³⁰ Ibid., p.258

As early as in 1882, Mitsui had provided money for the European trip of the two Jiyuto leaders, Itagaki and Goto. Upon the formation of the Seiyukai, Mitsui, based on its former relations with Ito and Jiyuto, became closely associated with the new party. If Mitsui, among others, helped to bridge the gap between Ito's group and certain Jiyuto leaders, Mitsubishi functioned in a similar fashion in the relationships between Okuma's party and the Satsuma faction, especially Matsukata.³¹ If Mitsui money provided financial help to the Jiyuto leaders, it was generally believed that Mitsubishi money was behind both the Boshin Club and the Kokuminto, and that sizable funds were given to such individuals as Okuma, Inukai, and Oishi. However, one of the first big scandals to be made fully known was the famous 'Sugar Scandal' of 1907-1908. In short, the story involved was that the Sugar Refining Company bribed a number of Diet members in an attempt to secure the passage of a bill making sugar a state monopoly. Most significant was that the members involved, "twelve belonged to the Seiyukai, five to the Kenseihonto, and two were members of the Daido Club; thus every major party was represented, and in fair proportion to its

³¹ Ibid., p.261

voting strength".³² Furthermore, the experiments with party cabinets in the 'twenties demonstrated no improvement in this direction. In the late 'twenties, chief among several notorious scandals "as the 'Matsushima Scandal' which touched all three parties - the Kenseikai, the Seiyukai, and the Seiyuhonto".³³

As the practice of corruption continued, the popularity of the parties and party government dipped from one low to another. Therefore, little doubt was left, at the moment, when General Araki declared that "only the army, religiously upholding the moral principles of Samurai virtue (bushido), after taking control of government policy from the political parties, which have disintegrated and sold out to the capitalist, will be able to lead the country out of the morass into which it has fallen".³⁴ he could find a ready audience. As a result of the militarists' rise to power in the 'thirties, the party movement was suppressed to a point of near-annihilation and finally dissolved on the eve of World War II.³⁵

32 Ibid., p.263

33 Ibid., p.285

34 O. Tainn and E. Yohan, Militarism and Fascism in Japan, International Publishers, New York, 1934, p.183

35 Nobutaka, op. cit., p.166

Under the influence of Japanese institutional structure, especially the lack of political maturity in the nation as a whole, if the philosophy and actions of the conservative parties were doomed to failure in terms of a broad popular movement, the left-wing development suffered the same fate as that of the conservatives. First of all this was due to the fact that in Japan the consciousness of the labouring class was chiefly aroused by the intellectuals. Secondly, it was due to the aloofness of the peasants and workers towards the union movement. Thirdly, it was due to the suppression of the authorities. All these factors contributed to the weaknesses as well as characterized the labour movement in pre war Japan.

In its initiative stage, since the consciousness of the labouring class was chiefly aroused by the intellectuals, "whose interests were at first largely theoretical and later didactic"³⁶, labour unions were founded on the dreams of their theoretical leaders rather than on the real needs of the labour movement itself. Since organizations consisted of well educated men, it was natural that a good deal of theoretical

³⁶ Nitobe, op. cit., p.291

dispute should take the place of effective action. It soon became evident that the men at the helm were many of them syndicalists of an advanced type yet with no insight into the realities of the labour problem. This divorce of ideology from realities left a gap which was soon filled by the dissensions of political views, personal animosities and sentimental reasons. As a result, the movement was split into conflicting factions instead of uniting in one body and presenting a solid front, which "would prove a formidable force, able to defy any on the existing bourgeois combinations".³⁷

On the other hand, the aloofness on the part of peasants and workers was also a factor of no less significance. In spite of the increasing unrest and frustration in the agrarian society, there was little to suggest that Japanese leftism in any form could capture the obvious agrarian unrest and shape it into an organized political movement with capacities for victory. Among other things, the traditional conservatism of the peasant and his reluctance to enter organization external to the family were the powerful obstacles. Although the urban workers were relatively susceptible to certain

37 Ibid., p.292

advanced ideas and actions closely connected with leftist polemics, their ties with ruralism were still strong. It was strong enough to be "a definite check upon the development of strong unions or political associations based upon compact labour support. In addition, the unique paternalism, which characterized employer-employee relationships, replaced, in some measure, the family centralism and captured a part of unionist emotional appeal"³⁸. Thus, without their enthusiastic support, the labour movement appeared to be more of a formal skeleton than a solidary organization. Even when there was a small proportion of the labouring element joined the movement, it was not only weakened by the dissension of factionalism,³⁹ but also further menaced by constant government suppression.

Although socialism had made some progress prior to the Russo-Japanese War, it was stringently repressed by the authorities thereafter. At times, the left-wing organizations were forced to dissolve one after another. At others, many police coups were staged with the result that the left-wing leaders were either arrested or driven

³⁸ Scalapino, *op. cit.*, pp.308-314

³⁹ Nitobe, *op. cit.*, p.296

into exile. In 1925, the Peace preservation Law was proclaimed, "which defined as a criminal offense the organization of or participation in societies having for their object the alteration of the national policy or the negation of the system of private property"⁴⁰.

Under the extreme penalties provided in this law, the left-wing movement was placed in a precarious position.

The fact was proven by the further split between the elements of the Right and Left within the labour camp. As a result of the imposition of the restrictions by the peace preservation law, "to the normal caution of groups accustomed to operating under restrictions was added still further stimulus to make non-committal statements and to avoid association with groups regard-⁴¹ed by the authorities as under Communist influence".

Thus, in spite of the unanimity of the desire to form a proletarian party, the difference of opinion as to what elements should be admitted into such a party was wide. Worse still, as a result of non-committal statements, much of the colour of their platform faded away

⁴⁰ Evelyn S. Colbert, The Left Wing in Japanese Politics, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1952, p.14

⁴¹ Ibid., p.14

and consequently mutual suspicions between the leaders arose. Weak in platform, they demanded only "political reform couched in the most general of terms and directed toward limited objectives rather than basic constitutional change".⁴² Mutual suspicions intensified factional conflict between the leaders, who allowed "personal feelings to affect their decisions on matters of policy".⁴³ More than that, as in the conservative parties, "there was also a marked inclination to perpetuate the feudal relationship of lord and vassal between the leaders and the rank and file of the labour groups".⁴⁴ It cannot be denied that in the world of labour there is such a thing as labour aristocracy; the more so in prewar Japan.

However, in contrast to the conservative parties, the proletarian organizations certainly represented some distinct colours of their own. First of all, their distinction from the conservatives lay "in the clear declaration of their views on the income and inheritance

⁴² ibid., p.83

⁴³ Quigley, op. cit., p.246

⁴⁴ ibid., p.246

tax, land reform, labour legislation, disarmament⁴⁵. Secondly, their leaders were elected from within the parties, instead of being drawn from without. This showed that their organizations were not as loose as those of the conservatives. Thirdly, unlike the conservatives, the proletarian drew support from various unions or federations. This implied a financial weakness which made them unable to compete either in legitimate expenditures or in heavy bribery with the conservative parties.⁴⁶

After the War, Japan's political party movement turned into a new phase. The War had brought the militarist oppression to an end; the new constitution had insured, among other things, political freedom in the nation. However, the outward forms of governmental institution may be changed by any draft of constitution; the traditions, customs and general mental attitude of a people bred for centuries in a feudal or semi feudal atmosphere cannot be transformed by such a process. (Political maturity of a people has to be achieved through generations).

⁴⁵ Nitobe, op. cit., p.214

⁴⁶ Colbert, op. cit., p.22

In post war Japan, the spirit of the parties engaged in the new political structure has proven to be that which, in some measure, animated the old. The nucleus of the newly organized parties since 1945 are those personal groups of politicians of pre war Japan. Among the four principal parties, "the Liberal party (Jiyuto) and the progressive party (Shimpoto) were both conservative and traced their roots in a very general way to the Seiyukai and Minseito respectively";⁴⁷ the Socialist Party (Nihon Shakaito) composed of men who had been active in prewar proletarian parties; the Communist Party (Niho Kyosanto), for the first time acquiring legal status, came to be led by Communists who had either been released from prison or had returned from exile. What was significant was that all the four principal parties still retained their time honoured characteristics in one way or another. Party members "have shifted from one party to another ... usually between conservative parties, but on occasion between conservative and radical parties."⁴⁸ It is important to note that the Socialist Party even was involved in "the Nishio and other scandals in 1948".⁴⁹ Only after

47 Nobutaka, *op. cit.*, p.166

48 *Ibid.*, p.166

49 Colbert, *op. cit.*, p.81

these happenings, "the Socialist Party resolved to seek its major income from Party members and from the trade unions".⁵⁰ As for the factional rivalry, the Socialist Party, being composed of socialists of varying political hue, has been plagued by internal struggles. In this respect, even the strictly disciplined Communist Party is no exception. In spite of its "revolutionary attribute"⁵¹ and in spite of its relatively small number of people pure in ideology, "it, too, like most Japanese organizations, has been plagued by factionalism".⁵²

50 ibid., p.81

51 Nobutaka, op. cit., p.170

52 ibid., p.170

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE IN THE PRE-WAR JAPANESE
PARTY POLITICS - THE FACTORS WHICH FORESHADOWED
THE FAILURE OF PARTY GOVERNMENT IN PRE-WAR JAPAN.

1. The Nature of the Meiji Constitution of 1889.
2. The Militarists' Entrenchment in Politics and Their Peculiar Position Accorded by the Constitution.
3. Party Movement First Phase - Uncompromising Campaign for Popular Government.
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6. Party Movement Fourth Phase - An Era of Party Cabinets: a nominal victory; a complete defeat.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE IN THE PRE-WAR JAPANESE
PARTY POLITICS - THE FACTORS WHICH FORESHADOWED
THE FAILURE OF PARTY GOVERNMENT IN PRE-WAR JAPAN.

In pre-war Japan, the institutional structure not only constrained the internal weaknesses to the party organization but also imprisoned a genuine democratic development and party movement. In the relationship between the composite set of political institutions and the emerging 'liberal' movement, the Meiji Constitution was a fair representation of the contemporary nature of Japanese society and of the balance forces therein. Implanted in Japanese political relations, the vast unwritten customs had given form to the Constitution of 1889. It is this fundamental law, skillfully timed and cleverly drawn up, which gave the minimum of concession to popular government yet at the same time put the democratic movement within the structure of an incompatible framework.

In the light of its preamble, the Constitution can best be construed as a promise on the part of the Emperor rather than a contract between the ruler and the ruled; it was devised without the assent or consent of the people.⁵³ In view of its very nature, the Meiji

⁵³ Matsunami, N., The Constitution of Japan, Maruzen and Co., Tokyo, 1930, pp.12-15.

Constitution was only a system of self-limitation imposed by the Emperor upon himself: he retained, therefore, "all those powers which were not expressly limited, and he alone had the right to initiate and sanction the amendment of the Constitution".⁵⁴ By the simple device of having made the Constitution a benevolent gift to the people, this important fundamental law of a state became, thus, subordinate to the Throne, i.e., the Throne is the sovereign, not the people. Not surprisingly, the Meiji Constitution mentioned no concept of collective responsibility. On the contrary, the idea of individual responsibility of Ministers of State toward the Emperor was clearly embodied in the article 55 which read: "The respective Ministers of State shall give their advice to the Emperor, and be responsible for it."⁵⁵ Furthermore, in accordance with the provision of article 5, the legislative power was to be exercised exclusively by the Emperor, while the Diet possessed merely the right of consent.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Causton, E. E. N., Militarism and Foreign Policy in Japan, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1936, pp.48-49

⁵⁵ Matsunami, op.cit.p.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.43

Thus far, the Constitution carefully deprived the legislative branch of sufficient power to infringe on the executive, while on the other hand it perpetuated the strength of the latter. This lack of provision for collective cabinet responsibility toward the Diet consciously omitted the very important essence of a parliamentary system. Since the Ministers were appointed by the Emperor, on advice of an extra-constitutional body, and acted for him, they were nearly as far above reproach as their sovereign. Of no less significance, even the limited budgetary power given to the people's representatives was further undermined by the House of Peers, which was a conservative body consisting mostly of appointed members. As the two Houses practically shared the same legislative power, the Peers had a virtual veto over legislation forward to them by the lower body. The powers of the House of Representatives were stifled to such an extent as to enable a cabinet to stay in power regardless of the wishes of the legislators. On the whole, the House of Representatives - the only constitutional ground of party politics - was trapped in hostile surroundings. This constituted one of the greatest difficulties under which

the effective operation of the political parties was doomed.

In this connection, the treatment accorded the militarists by the Constitution also deserves further observation. This is not only because the military caste had, from the very beginning, formed predominate a force against the tendency of a democratic development but also because, while the prospect of a party government appeared to loom up in the 'twenties, the military elements counteracted by oppressing the political parties again into their submissive position. The militarists had, long in Japan's history, entrenched themselves in politics. It is sufficient to say that Japan in modern times, as in the pre-Restoration period, was under the reign of a military caste. Although the Japanese policy was theoretically an absolute monarchy, in practice it was an oligarchy. Whether the militarists took the form of Shogunate or Genro, it was a group of oligarchs by whom the supreme rights were to be exercised.⁵⁷ The Emperor's sovereign power was to devolve upon this group of oligarchs who formed the extra-

⁵⁷ McGovern, W. M., Modern Japan, its political, military & industrial organization, T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London, 1920, p.47

constitutional agencies and actually ruled the country.

In this respect, the Constitutional system inaugurated in 1889 even further raised the military privilege in the nation. Among those extra-constitutional agencies, Genro (a body of elder statesmen) was one of greatest importance. It was important not only because its members assumed the principal offices, civil and military, but also because it consisted, with one exception, of high military and naval officers. As a result, they found that "the military agencies should, on occasion, decide what action the government should take", and "thereby carved out a place for military influence in the midst of the civil government".⁵⁸ In complement to the Genro's exertion, there were certain articles embodied in the Constitution of 1889 which allocated to the military caste a peculiar independent position. By articles 11 and 12, the supreme command and the power to determine the organization and the standing forces were vested in the Emperor. This in itself was not unusual because monarchs in other countries possessed such power. Nevertheless, the

⁵⁸ Quigley, H. S. Japanese Government and Politics, p.105
Causton, op.cit.p.84

intention to remove control over the military far beyond the reach of the Diet was of tangible significance. By article 67, the phrase 'already fixed expenditures', which included the ordinary expenditures required for these Services, blocked out any attempt on the part of the Diet to withhold appropriations save in the event of increased expenditure. Thus far, the customary democratic checks upon the Military were absent, and the Services enjoyed, therefore, an immense privilege under the Constitution. Moreover, by the Imperial Notification 135 of 1889, the military agencies secured a position superior even to that of the Privy Council and the Cabinet. This Notification had dictated to these agencies the power to go over the head of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to report directly to the Emperor: "With the exception of military or naval affairs of grave importance which, having been reported directly to the Sovereign by the Chief of Staff, may have been submitted by his majesty for the consideration of the cabinet, the Ministers of State for War and the Navy shall report to the Minister President."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Quigley, op.cit. pp.87-88

The last, but not the least, important feature of the military privilege consisted in an ordinance of 1900, which stipulated that the cabinet posts of War and the Navy should be held only by officers on active service of at least the rank of Lieutenant-General or Vice-Admiral. Although the Ordinance had been modified in 1913 to make reserve officers eligible for appointment, this had, in fact, never occurred. It was modified only to be changed back to its original form later in 1936.⁶⁰ What is of great importance, however, was that, in its origin, this Ordinance was promulgated at the instigation of Yamagata, father of the modern Japanese Army and a confirmed foe of democracy, who "deemed it wise to secure the absolute independence of the Service Ministers".⁶¹ In consequence, the effect of Yamagata's effort was by far more significant than he had anticipated. For it not only ensured the absolute independence of the Service Ministers, but also provided a means by which the military faction as a

⁶⁰ Borton, Hugh, Japan's Modern Century, The Ronald Press Co., New York, 1955, p.146

⁶¹ Causton, op.cit. p.77

whole could dictate its will upon the civil authority. The Cabinet could be made to collapse simply by a resignation of the Service Ministers, without whom "it is impossible to set up or maintain a Cabinet ... Thus the military service and the influence that work through them hold a favoured position for the control of government policy".⁶² During the ensuing years of popular government struggle, the party politicians fought against the military caste without hope of success. By the turn of the year of 1932, again and again the party leaders and the prominent politicians were attacked by the militarist-terrorists. Many of them fell as victims, few escaped from death. It came to a halt only when the party movement was subjugated completely by the militarists.

Turning now to the picture of the party struggle for power in pre-war Japan, the whole historical epoch of the Meiji Constitution can be divided into four phases. First, immediately following the inauguration of the Constitution, there was a period of uncompromising campaign for popular government on the part of

⁶² Quigley, op.cit. p.89

the political parties. Secondly, a development of 'party-oligarchic ententes emerged in the period between 1895 and 1918. Thirdly, a refinement of the preceding evolution resulted in the oligarchs' affiliation with and leadership of the party movement. Fourthly and lastly, from party movement to party government, this was a period known as that in which the parties enjoyed their greatest power. But at a time of crucial importance, it was to be witnessed that the party's influence began first to recede and finally to capitulate under the militarists' oppression. These phases cannot, however, be approached on a purely chronological basis because the two rivalry forces - political parties and the oligarchs - each came to be divided into two major groups and the evolution of one cross-bred party-oligarchic alliance moved at a different speed from the other. Nevertheless, both camps proceeded through approximately the same evolutionary course and the outcomes were of no tangible difference.⁶³

⁶³ Scalapino, R. A., Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan, pp.151-2.

Although for some years in the past the party elements had been, as they claimed themselves to be, the veteran of the campaign for popular government, with the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution and with election for members of the low house of Parliament in the offing, "the political parties (minto) had a new 'raison d'etre'".⁶⁴ At last, they were given a legitimate opportunity to advance their professed ideas. Small wonder, in their first phase of power-struggle, the two rival forces should engage in an intensive and bitter conflict. While on one hand, the 'liberal' elements held fast to their beliefs and offered no compromise, on the other hand, the ruling oligarchs stood firm in defending their privileges and refused to yield. Through these exploratory years, the validity of the old order was challenged, the hope, entertained by the political parties, was put on trial, and above all the premise of the Constitution was to be demonstrated. Out of their clashes, many political undercurrents were brought into light; a number of political precedents were established.

⁶⁴ Borton, op.cit. p.196

To begin with, when the First Diet opened on November 25, 1890, the oligarchs resolutely determined to meet the political parties with a policy known as 'Chozen Naikaku Shugi' (the principle of transcendental cabinet) despite the parties combined majority in the Lower House. In response to this challenge, the political parties utilized their only constitutional power by blocking the administration budgetary program. This in return provoked a sequence of counter-measures from the Government ranging from physical violence to bribery; from dissolution of the Diet to interference in elections. It is interesting to note that the pressure imposed by the Executive contributed, to some extent, virtually a factor that held the 'liberal' elements together in a united front, if not behind a single leader. It not only enabled the political parties to withstand the oligarchs' attack but also made their strength to bear some effects on the Government. In consequence, the first few years of constitutional government in operation had resulted in "the constant changes in Cabinets, the frequent dissolution of the Lower House, and the violence during the general elections".⁶⁵ Of most importance, this political

⁶⁵Ibid. p.179

instability had made Ito, a prominent oligarch and the chief architect of the Meiji Constitution, finally come to admit the precarious nature of the Constitutional structure and recognize that if it was to become effective, some sort of compromise must be worked out. He further questioned the wisdom of the Yamagata Cabinet's repressive measures and bribery as a means of overcoming the Diet's opposition. He also criticized the Matsukata Ministry's unethical practice in its interference in the Second general elections, which resulted in twenty-five people being killed and 388 wounded. In both cases, Ito's criticism contributed, for the most part, to the downfalls of the two respective governments. While on one hand, Ito launched his verbal attack on his colleagues, on the other hand, in order to cope with the insuperable difficulties in the Diet, he also made himself known as favoring the creation of a 'government party'.⁶⁶ In this regard, though Ito's administration party proposal was temporarily stifled in the face of a united opposition by other Genro, its political implication was of great significance.

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Scalapino, op.cit. p.163

It revealed the first sign of cracks on the oligarchs' armour; a split between the civil and military oligarchs was later to become inevitable. For their part, the political parties viewed the resignation of Yamagata as Premier not only as the first sign of a breach between the oligarchs but also as a prophetic signal of their coming victory. Thus, they considered that the constant turnover in Cabinets and the resignation of three Premiers since October, 1889, was mainly attributable to their maneuvers.

However if Ito's 'government party' suggestion had been proved to be premature, the parties' optimistic conviction of an early victory was even more of a speculation. For when the Fourth Diet was convened on November 25, 1892, the Constitution was to reveal its true light - "in the awe-inspiring light of the Throne".⁶⁷ After the parties' attempt to reduce the budget and the appropriations for a large naval building program had failed, they "produced 146 signatures on a memorial to the Emperor impeaching the Ministry".⁶⁸ It soon became clear that the Emperor's response constituted

67 Ibid. p.164

68 Ibid. p.164

an unprecedented blow to the 'liberal' party. It read, in part: "I hereby will save expenses of the Imperial household and for six years, every year, I will give ¥ 300,000. and I order the civil (including the members of Parliament) and military officials ... for the same period, to pay one-tenth of their salary, and by this, the naval construction expenses will be sufficiently made up."⁶⁹ This use of the Emperor, based upon the sanctity and absolutism of the Throne to placate the opposition had the desired effect. As a result, "the party members became dispirited and even agreed to approve the national budget with only minor changes".⁷⁰ Consequently, a spirit of defeatism was certain to arise among the 'popular' parties. They, disillusioned by their experience in fighting the oligarchy, had also come to a conclusion - the futility of their continued resistance. It was against such a background that the way toward compromise and corruption had been finally paved.

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ibid., p.165

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Borton, op.cit. p.202

Thus, at the end of the first phase, both sides had recognized that some sort of rapprochement was inevitable, if not desirable. Following the exploratory years, there was, therefore, an experimental period in which the party-oligarchic alliances were to be exhibited. Although a formal party-oligarchic coalition did not materialize until the morrow of the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, an early sign of rapprochement was already foreshadowed by the diverse opinions concerning the impending crisis. While the Kaishinto (Progressive Party) faction explicitly favored an all-out-aggressive policy in line with the military oligarchs, the Jiyuto (Liberal party) element cautiously sided with Ito's cabinet advocating a relatively prudent foreign policy.⁷¹

In spite of the diversity of opinion, the Diet held two peaceful sessions during the War period, in which the parties assumed a manner of unanimity and perfect subordination to administrative requests. However no sooner had the War been concluded than the internal friction was revived in consequence of the Three Powers intervention.⁷² Again on matters of foreign policy, the

⁷¹ Scalapino, op.cit. pp.166;169

⁷² Borton, op.cit. p.205

nation was divided. At this juncture, Itagaki, the President of the Jiyuto, formally offered Ito a pledge for cooperation. To counteract this new alignment, the Kaishinto was obliged to adopt a similar measure: first, it "effected a merger with certain other anti-government groups in the Diet to form a new party, the Shimpoto (Progressive party)" headed by Okuma, and then an understanding was reached with the Satsuma faction.⁷³ The political implication of this development was significant in twofold: for one thing, stripped to its barest political essentials, the parties' motivation was a desire of sharing some administration power; for another thing, to extricate themselves from impossible difficulties, the oligarchy had made and even welcomed the rapprochement. Thus, within the framework of the Meiji Constitution which called for a unitary approach rather than encouraged a liberal interpretation, the party elements and the ruling class had both come to compromise for the first time with each other. The effectiveness of the new alignment had yet to be proved.

73 Ibid. p.170 (Satsume clan - a powerful military faction).

Unfortunately, the coalition reached between them was more a superficial one rather than a genuine cooperation. Neither of the political parties had given up their principles of party cabinets and responsible government, nor had the oligarchs changed their attitude toward party premises or parties themselves. The nature of the new relationship was precarious. For this reason, within a short span of time from 1895 to 1897, the second Ito Cabinet and the second Matsukata Cabinet collapsed one after the other. This chaotic situation finally reached its climax when Ito was unable to fulfil his pre-election promises to Jiyuto in March, 1898, and the latter severed all connections with the Ito Government.⁷⁴ On this occasion, Itagaki frankly admitted: "Each party has tried the experiment of cooperation with the clan statesmen, and each has found it a failure because the Government attaches no real importance to political parties, but merely consults its own convenience in taking them up and casting them out."⁷⁵ Out of the unhappiness in their flirtations with the clan powers,

⁷⁴ ibid. p.171; 172

⁷⁵ McLaren, W.W., A Political History of Japan During the Meiji Era, p.252.

there was a short-lived attempt to reunite the 'liberal' parties. Both "the Jiyuto and Shimpoto momentarily reconciled their past differences and joined together in a new party, the Kenseito (constitutional party)".⁷⁶ The immediate effect of this party reunion appeared to be encouraging. For only a week later, the Ito Cabinet was obliged to resign and made the way for the first party cabinet under the joint leadership of Okuma-Itagaki. The far-reaching significance was, however, not so promising, for the easy accession to power tended to introduce a desire for power rivalry rather than to reduce the long existing differences between the two old party-factions. Moreover, since Ito's resignation of premiership had revealed the final breach between the civil and military groups within the oligarchy, the party Cabinet was confronted with an unremitted challenge on the part of the militarists. Not surprisingly, the Kenseito Cabinet should soon be brought down even without meeting a single session of the Diet.⁷⁷

As a result of the collapse of the Kenseito Government, the party elements again found themselves

⁷⁶ Scalapino, op.cit. p.173

⁷⁷ ibid. p.179

disunited. In the meanwhile they also sensed that the victory for the military faction must be uncomfortably felt by Ito. To some extent, Ito, thus, assumed a position which was in common with theirs, i.e., the militarists hence became a political foe of them both. Viewed in such a light, the old Jiyuto faction, who retained the name of Kenseito, approached Ito "and requested that he lead them".⁷⁸ Meanwhile the Okuma faction, who took the new name Kenseihonto (Orthodox Kenseito) held aloof. Undoubtedly, the militarists should view the new realignment with alarming hostility. But the significance of this development was underlined by Ito's harsh terms that he claimed as the pre-requisite of his acceptance of leadership so requested by Jiyuto faction. Ito demanded first of all the old party be dissolved and replaced by a new one, in which every member must accept his mandates. At the founding meeting of the new party, the Rikken Seiyukai (Friends of Constitutional Government Association) Ito stressed: "The appointment and dismissal of the Cabinet Ministers appertain, under the Constitution, to the prerogatives of the Sovereign who consequently retains absolute

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Ibid. p.179

freedom to select His advisers from whatever quarters He deems proper, be it from among the members of political parties or from circles outside those parties", and in no circumstances whatsoever should the political party members interfere in any manner with the discharge of their political duties.⁷⁹ Though Ito's words betrayed the principles the old-time 'liberals' had so far professed, they acquiesced in them without a protest. They reconciled themselves to their new position partly because the internal pressure had become increasingly great; to their hitherto battered ranks "the rewards of political power under the sponsorship of such an influential figure as Ito were heady wine".⁸⁰ On the whole, the contestants in the struggle were somewhat realigned but the struggle continued. Although the Kenseihonto was still to remain, for a period of years, the purer exponent of the liberal cause, it hardly had enough power to make its principles real issues. The continued struggle could, therefore, no longer be called one of popular government versus oligarchy. The foundations of the party movement were

79 ibid. p.180

80 ibid. p.183

slowly disintegrating, while the colour of the 'liberal' banner began to fade into background.

During the decade following the founding of Ito's party, the Seiyukai, in September, 1900, when the administrative power alternatively shifted between the military faction with Katsure in the foreground and the Seiyukai with Saioji as a successor of Ito, the Japanese political arena produced no dramatic change until 1907. It was in this year that the Kenseihonto, after a period of continuing on its lonely way, impotent and feeble, began to show signs of hunger-for-power. When its leader, Okuma temporarily retired from active politics, the Kenseihonto was divided into three factions. With the third group assuming a neutral position in between, one faction urged coming to terms with the ruling oligarchs as the only means of attaining political power, while the other denounced the idea of compromise and claimed to uphold its party principles. As a result, the Kenseihonto was reorganized into a new party, the Rikken Kokuminto (Constitutional Nationalist Party) in March, 1910. In spite of the new party's principles calling for Party cabinets and the consummation of the constitutional

system, the cleavage among its rank and file was still to remain. It soon became clear that when the second Saionji Ministry was brought down by the resignation of the War Minister for protesting the Cabinet rejection of his expansion military budget and program, with the prospect of Katsura's coming into power, the power-hunger faction of the old Kenseihonto, now the Kokuminto, approached Katsura for an alliance.⁸¹ At this juncture, Katsura for his part also came to the conclusion that a party led by himself was desirable. As soon as he was summoned, for the third time, to form a government, he welcomed such an overture and, together with some other elements, established a new party, the Rikken Doshikai (Constitutional Fellow Thinker's Association).⁸²

The formation of the Katsura's party whirled up another disturbance in the Japanese political arena. After the dust had settled, in the Diet, the new government found itself confronted with a combined majority of the Seiyukai and the remainder of the Kokuminto in its opposition. As a result, a motion of non-confidence was intro-

81 Quigley, op.cit. p.106

82 Scalapino, op.cit.p.193

duced and subsequently passed in the Lower House. Katsura, nevertheless, decided to strike back. He resorted once again to the use of the Throne as an effective means to refute such a motion. In this attempt, the Ministry, however, failed; never before in Japanese political history had the political parties in a united effort defied the Emperor's order.⁸³ Boldly the parties had challenged the political misuse of the Throne and the effect was striking: it was not only that Katsura was humiliated in the eyes of the 'liberals' but also that he was bitterly criticized by his oligarchic colleagues. More important, by their daring action, the political parties had virtually brought personal intervention by the Throne in political controversies to an end and scored a significant victory.

For a moment their victory appeared to be a matter for rejoicing indeed; however in the long run, the whole picture of the party movement was not as bright as this momentary success had indicated. As the party movement entered into the fourth phase, in the midst of what seemed to be their greatest triumph, the

⁸³ Ibid. p.195

major parties themselves grew more timid and became more conservative in their outlook. In the depth of time, the interplay with the ruling oligarchy had resulted in the party movement losing of most of its distinguishing colours. Worse still, the movement had imbued itself with most of the bureaucratic characteristics as a result of the 'party-oligarchic entents'. Thus once they wielded the political power, the party-men became hardly distinguishable from the old ruling class. They won a significant battle, yet they failed to broaden its effect immediately thereafter. They had defied their improper constitutional obligation by rejecting an order from the Throne, yet they failed to take reform measures henceforth. A survey of the subsequent development tends to lead to one possible conclusion that factors other than a genuine success of the party-movement itself had brought the major parties to power.

In this connection, special attention must be given to the political role of Japan's modern capitalism. The development of capitalism in Japan unlike its counterpart in the West, did not serve as an impetus to promote a democratic society. Conversely, it had effect as to give the conservative trend an added force. An inquiry into this would necessitate a study of the

history of Japan's industrial revolution. The history of Japan's capitalistic development is no more than a history of the rise and growth of the Zaibatsu, which was borne under the government patronage.⁸⁴ At the time when the world was already full of industrial giants, in order to meet the competition from without as well as to overcome the adverse economic situation from within, an effective central control and concentrated effort to shortcut the leisurely evolutionary development of the West seemed to be of more appeal to the Meiji advocates. Taken against such a background, the new class of capitalistic enterprisers and financiers, all in one convenient name, the Zaibatsu, succeeded, gradually, in establishing themselves as the monopolistic rulers in all major industries. This pattern of development, obviously, could produce no middle class - a fundamental force of democracy. Since the Meiji political and economic elites were extremely small in number, with the latter frequently selected and supported by the former, they should have a similar background and consequently close

84 Yoshitada Kumamoto, "The Zaibatsu - Past, Present and Future", This is Japan, No.3 Published by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper Publishing Co., Oct.1955, Toppan Printing Co.Ltd., Tokyo, Japan. p.51 (in this the author gives his definition as:"The word Zaibatsu has multiple and rather obscure meanings. Generally, it means a group of financial magnates who, being the heads of the largest financial houses or combines enjoyed a monopoly, monopolistic power over the economy of Japan.)

personalized contacts should exist between them. At the early stage, their relationship was, however, not based upon one of equal political stratum. But the Zaibatsu's position was considerably bolstered as a result of two wars, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. Particularly since World War I, the Japanese capitalists had come of age. They were no longer subordinate to the other ruling forces in the state. Still more so, they began to make their influence known. They secured themselves firmly a position in dominating not only Japan's economy but politics as well. As a result, the major parties, in an effort to strengthen their position, leaned closer and closer upon the Zaibatsu. In this fashion, the Japanese capitalists were eventually facilitating the amalgamation of the parties and the oligarchs.

By the same token, certain changes also occurred in the military faction. The military nobilities did not remain aloof from the capitalist development and they too became connected by innumerable links with the Zaibatsu, through whom the militarists affiliated themselves with the political parties. In the late 'twenties' "Satsuma circles were closely connected with the Mitsuhi

firm and through it with the Minseito party. The Choshu circles were connected with the Mitsui firm, and to a still greater extent directly with the Seiyukai party",⁸⁵ and finally Tanaka, the Choshu leader, assumed the leadership of that party. This development appeared, at first sight, to be that the military cliques were maneuvering in an attempt to make extensive use of the method of adopting desirable elements from other spheres. Yet if the fact had anything to prove, it only "proved that the period of the almost undivided rule of the militarists had passed".⁸⁶ In any event, with Yamagata's passing away, a powerful bulwark against the party movement was thus removed and consequently the Genro was no longer so closely identified with the military casts.⁸⁷ In addition to this, certain changes also took place inside the military organization, which resulted in a further weakening of the military position. The reform program of Japan's military forces begun in 1922 had evoked an 'Old' and 'New' conflict within the military faction itself. The reforms had brought into the Services many young officers who represented the petty-middle class. At the moment,

85 Tainn, O., and Yokan, E., Militarism and Fascism in Japan, p. 178

86 Ibid. p. 176

87 Quigley, op.cit. p.117

when the 'Old' cast their lot with capitalists' circles, the young group professed themselves to champion the interests of the mass. As the depression worsened, the wider the split became. Though the young officers were not in a position to claim for themselves the control of the military faction until the 'thirties, yet they were in such a position as to degrade the 'Old's' prestige in the 'twenties. On the whole, it happened to be that, while the parties' position was gaining, the militarists' power was ebbing. It was in this see-saw process, that the 'liberal's' success was temporarily staged in the political arena.

Nevertheless, in a situation as such, it did offer a golden opportunity to political parties. Had they been equipped with dynamic leaders willing to serve as tutors for democracy, had they been prudent enough to seek popular understanding and support instead of turning inward to the mechanisms of the bureaucracy, "substantial changes might have been effected. Even a modification of the Constitution might have been secured from 'a benevolent Emperor anxious to meet the needs of his people'."⁸⁸ Unfortunately, this was not the case. Through years of

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Scalapino, op.cit. pp.200; 149

amalgamations in the past, "the major parties were now led and peopled more than ever before by a congeries of state officials, militarists, and titled peers".⁸⁹ As a result of this assimilation of more and more bureaucratic personnel and techniques, when either major party had the opportunity to hold the reigns of administration, "its actions were little different from those of the old oligarchy".⁹⁰

In this regard, perhaps no better example can be found other than Hara's regime in the early 'twenties. Hara, a man known as 'The Great Commoner Premier', had led the Seiyukai to a nominal success "not by any process of building up either the theory or the prestige of representative government", but by way of conciliating the conflict with the institutional forces.⁹¹ Furthermore, with their ranks full of professional officials, militarists and opportunists, the parties were split more basically than ever before in struggles over either principles or power. The result was that even when there were a few

89 ibid. p.201

90 ibid. p.208

91 ibid. p.212

leaders who openly challenged the reactionary forces, the merit of their effort was gravely jeopardized by the factional elements either within the rank and file of their own party or among the parties. In this respect, the downfall of Hamaguchi-Wakatsuki regime in 1931 was a striking case of presentation. At the time when Hamaguchi courageously challenged the military and the Privy Council for a showdown over the London Naval Treaty of 1931 issue, his administration won the supremacy over the militarists in the control of national policy. Despite the strong objections from the militarists, the Minseito Ministry finally secured the Emperor's sanction to that Treaty. However, Hamaguchi's victory was one of short duration. During and after the dispute, the Seiyukai members chanted in unison with the military cliques and the oligarchs to embarrass the Government. In so doing, it was hoped that the Minseito Cabinet would soon be overthrown and replaced by themselves. Before long, things took a drastic turn, Hamaguchi was shot by a 'patriot' and subsequently Wakatsuki replaced him both as Premier and as Minseito President.⁹² The Minseito position was thus weakened as

⁹² Borton, op.cit. pp.314-16

a result of the losing of Hamaguchi's leadership. At this critical moment the Home Minister seized the opportunity in a quarrel within the Cabinet over the issue of a proposed coalition government and defied Wakatsuki's policy by assuming an independent movement in negotiating "with diverse factions: including certain military and Seiyukai elements" in order to fulfil his long nurtured ambitions for party leadership and premiership.⁹³ The Wakatsuki Cabinet was, therefore, forced to resign.

Obviously, in the rut of oligarchic and autocratic institution, the deeper the major parties were mired, in the minds of the Japanese people, the more grossly appealing democratic symbolisms became distorted. Between the oligarchs and the militarists on one hand the the political parties on the other, there appeared, indeed, very little which might be differentiated one from the other in the eye of the public. It is of great significance as well as interesting to observe the public response to the state affairs particularly during the finest-hours of the party movement. Significantly the party-politicians' corruptions and their affiliations with capitalist interests had discredited much of their merit in the struggle with militarists in the eyes of the

93 Scalapino, op.cit. p.241

country as a whole. It was, therefore, not surprising as the people tended to regard that "there was little point in a parliamentary regime which merely transferred power from the militarists who sought to exploit and fight the foreigner to the industrialists who sought to exploit and control the homeland".⁹⁴ It is interesting to note that while a military coup occurred on February 25, 1936, the people showed an amazing attitude toward the whole affair. An observer has described the scene in the following colourful passage:

"During the first day of the attempted coup many white collar workers in Tokyo spent their lunch hour walking between the columns of soldiers facing each other on opposite sides of the busy downtown streets. The strollers tried to find out from the soldiers what group they represented, but had little success. The entire Tokyo populace was completely docile and amenable to any inconvenience caused them by the coup. They carried on their routine activities and left the struggle up to the Army, as they left it up to the ruling cliques to settle their future."⁹⁵

The apathetic attitude assumed by the people manifested the great weakness of the party movement in pre-war Japan. Their indifference marked a political divorce of the party movement from the popular support. No party

94 Craigie, Robert, Behind the Japanese Mask, Hutchinson & Co., London, New York, 1945, p.25

95 Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, p.340

victory could permanently undermine those residual powers of the oligarchic and militaristic forces mixed by Imperial law without public appeal. No parliamentary government could sustain the feudal institutional pressure without the essences of democracy. Thus, at a critical moment the political parties together with the fate of the nation became subjugated under the military caste. The movement was finally brought to an end in the dissolution of the old parties in 1940.

POLITICAL REORIENTATION UNDER ALLIED OCCUPATION

1. The Impact of Defeat.
2. The Principles of the Allied Post-Surrender Policy for Japan - The Potsdam Declaration of July, 1945.
3. MacArthur's Non-punitive Philosophy and His Leadership.
4. The Purges and the Reforms.
5. The Gist of the New Constitution of Japan, 1946.

POLITICAL REORIENTATION UNDER ALLIED OCCUPATION

The militarists had plunged the nation into war; and the war ended in disaster. The impact of defeat was so great that an unprecedented spiritual ruin had engulfed every Japanese. Never before in Japan's history had its people been more completely crushed than they were at the end of the struggle. It had been reported that a month before the end of the war, "nearly 70 per cent of them ... have reached a point ... where they felt unable to carry on. Civilian casualties had surpassed three-quarters of a million; over three million homes had been destroyed by raids or had been torn down for firebreaks."⁹⁶ Worse still, the average daily rations afforded as low as about 1680 calories. Civilian goods were practically non-existent. As a result, the will to resist and the physical means to support continued resistance were both exhausted. The defeat was, therefore, more than the destruction of the armed forces. It was a collapse of their entire faith in the Japanese way of life, which had been cherished as invincible for many centuries. The extra-ordinary feudal structure, which had prevailed in this isolated land in almost a mythological fashion, was, thus, severely damaged in the war

⁹⁶ Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, pp.399-400

ruins. On the whole, the impact of defeat had suddenly caught the nation in a feeling of concentrated shock. More than an overthrow of their military might, it was the disintegration of everything the Japanese people had been taught by tradition, legend and their feudalistic masters to believe in, live by and fight for.⁹⁷ Now in one dreadful moment, they became subject of an alien occupation.

It was against such a background that the Occupation authority, under General MacArthur, was entrusted by Allied powers not only to demobilize the Japanese militant structure but to provide also the leadership for the establishment of a new, popularly controlled government. The most important aspect, however, was how to bring the liberalized principles into reality. Although the Allied objectives had been outlined in the Potsdam Declaration of July, 1945, and further supplemented by the U.S. 'Post-surrender policy for Japan', they provided no concrete program but rather over-all principles. The execution of these policies was, therefore, left to the discretion of General MacArthur. The power vested in

⁹⁷ Major General Courtney Whitney, MacArthur, His Rendezvous with History, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1956, p.273

him was broad enough to meet any exigencies that might develop; the freedom of action given to him was wide enough to provide leeway, if the circumstances warranted it. In many respects, "the history of the Occupation is ... that of the personal rule of General MacArthur".⁹⁸ To some extent, the administration of the occupation was in accordance with his own policies.⁹⁹ The underlying importance of this was the fact that while it is easy to defeat an enemy on a battle field, even easier to destroy the fragment of an enemy's forces once it has surrendered, it is not so easy to promote a democratic development among an alien people. It was even more difficult in Japan, where the people, with a few enlightened exceptions, "were abject slaves to tradition, legend, mythology and regimentation".¹⁰⁰ In compliance with the principles advocated in the Potsdam Declaration, both to convert the traditional 'Bushido spirit' into a

98 Borbn, op.cit. p.396

99 SOAP, Government Section, ed., Political Re-orientation of Japan, Sept.1945 to Sept.1948, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1949, p.xx

100 Whitney, op.cit. p.273

peace-loving nature¹⁰¹ and to foster a democratic movement out of the chaotic background left over by the war formed, therefore, the most delicate problem to resolve. No merely ready-made plan could ever achieve this; no wholesale program could ever become effective. It was a mission which involved the call for both statesmanship and leadership. Moreover, a democratic development, as MacArthur perceived it, was a thing of spirit which cannot be imposed upon a nation. If it is to be lasting and durable, it must, then, impregnate the very roots of society; it must, then, have its origin in the understanding and faith of the common people. Democracy will, therefore, not survive simply because it is instilled from above.¹⁰²

On the other hand, what he regarded as basic and fundamental weaknesses in military occupation was the fact that the replacing of civil by military dominance would inevitably result in the loss of self-respect and self-confidence by the population of occupied territory; the ever growing ascendancy of centralized dictatorial

101 Nitobe, Bushido, the soul of Japan, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1905, pp.11-17, ('Bushido': a militant teaching imbued with strong national appeal, i.e., loyalty to the sovereign and love of the country; obedience to the call of duty, and utter submission to the command of the higher authority.)

102 Whitney, op.cit. pp.288-89

and arbitrary power would run counter to the localized and representative system of freedom. In effect, all of these would certainly further contribute to the lowering of the spiritual and moral tone of a people controlled by foreign bayonets. Most important of all, the gradual deterioration in the occupying forces themselves as a result of the disease of power slowly infiltrating their ranks and infecting the troops would carry "the poisonous implications that occupation meant some sort of race superiority".¹⁰³ Had this been allowed to happen, it would not only have betrayed the Potsdam principles which "do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation", but aim at the "strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people".¹⁰⁴ Not only that, had the occupation fallen into the same pattern as had been the case on the morrow of World War 1, it would undoubtedly have provoked resentment, even fostered hatred among the occupied populace, and thereby nurtured the strength of the reactionaries.¹⁰⁵

103 ibid. p.214

104 'The Potsdam Proclamation' July 26, 1945, Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, Appendix I pp.485-86

105 Whitney, op.cit. p.214

For all these reasons, General MacArthur took "a much more moderate course than his directive required and modified its punitive philosophy to a philosophy shaped merely to ensure a leadership spiritually equipped to pursue a course conducive to democratic growth".¹⁰⁶

In this manner, it was only too clear that General MacArthur should enter into strong arguments frequently with other Allied representatives, for whom the memory of the brutal war conduct of the Japanese militarists was still fresh. Nevertheless, neither the Far Eastern Commission of Washington nor the Allied Council for Japan was in a competent position to supervise the General; he did not flinch. When the move to indict the Emperor as a war criminal had strong support at the Allied Council for Japan, MacArthur vigorously denounced this line.¹⁰⁷ By doing so, he protected the Emperor's dignity and possibly his life. Since Japanese loyalty toward the Emperor remained intact, MacArthur

106 SCAP, op.cit. Political Reorientation of Japan, Sept. 1945 to Sept. 1948, p.xx

107 Yoshida, S., 'Reminiscences', This is Japan, Tokyo Asahi Shimbun Newspaper ed., p.198

appeared to them, therefore, as a symbol of protection against those animated solely by the basic instinct of blind revenge. This, as a result, had created an impression of lasting effect upon the Japanese people, politicians and the man in street alike.¹⁰⁸ In turn, it "had a powerful influence upon the cooperation they extended to the occupation authorities".¹⁰⁹ It constituted one of the major factors which contributed to the docile submission of the military and civilian populace under the Occupation, but, even more, the Emperor himself, from the start, became SCAP's chief ally in the spiritual regeneration of Japan. He, on several important occasions, unexpectedly gave his support to the Occupation policy.¹¹⁰

108 Ibid. p.194 (Mr. Yoshida comments on the occupation policy in saying that "... the main reasons why the Occupation was completed peacefully...I believe, was due to the...influence of General Douglas MacArthur's policies".)

109 Whitney, op.cit. p.284

110 Ibid.p.275 (At the time when SCAP issued a directive ordered state subsidization of Shintoism to cease, the Emperor voluntarily and publicly renounced the concept of his own divinity and by this he gave an unexpected assist to SCAP's directive.)
op.cit.Yoshida, p.197 (While the Japanese Cabinet debate on SCAP prepared draft of the new Constitution reached an impasse, it was the Emperor who ordered its acceptance, despite all his political power was to be deprived.)

Thus, by and large, General MacArthur "conceived his mission to be the transformation of a militaristic state into a peace loving democratic country. He provided the Japanese with the leadership and the hope they needed so desperately in their darkest hour of history."¹¹¹ His personality, attitude and reputation had greatly contributed to the success of the Allied Occupation in Japan.

Under MacArthur's leadership, as soon as the foremost military measures were fulfilled, SCAP took the initiative in pushing for political reconstruction. The ultimate goal of this was to establish in Japan, through the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a fully representative, peacefully inclined and responsible government. The first logical step was to eradicate every trace of militarist influence from the Japanese Government. The political reorientation program was, therefore, unfolded in a twofold policy: purges and reforms. Since the two measures were virtually in complement with each other, they were undertaken as an overlapping process. Here, it is significant to note

¹¹¹ Borton, op.cit. p.396

that within the framework of MacArthur's non-punitive philosophy, the purge programs in Japan were pursued in a much lenient manner than was the Allied post-surrender policy for Germany. They became effective only to the extent of barring those who precipitated the nation into war, from positions of power and influence in public life; beyond that broad fields of endeavour in the professions and in business were left open to engage the talents of those persons. Unlike the Allied policy applied in post-surrender Germany, throughout the period of purge, there was no person jailed nor sentenced to menial labour; there was no property confiscated nor any person fined.¹¹² The purge policy was so designed only as to "strike the shackles from the efforts of the Japanese people to rise toward freedom and democracy".¹¹³ Through the whole period, which started early in 1946 and ended in mid 1948, the program was tempered and timed into three phases: at first the purge program was focused on the national level,

112 Maj.Gen. C. A. Willoughby, & J. Chamberlain, MacArthur 1941-51, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, Toronto, London, 1954, p.331

113 SCAP, op.cit. p.14

then attention was given to the local governments, and thirdly and lastly the program was extended to the economic field. Under the directive issued by SCAP, two of the enumerated categories were of great significance. They were categories C. and D.. According to category C., all "influential Members of Ultrationalistic, Terroristic or Secret Patriotic Societies" were to be purged from political life, while category D. excluded all "persons influential in Imperial Rule Assistance Association, Imperial Rule Assistance Political Society, etc." from participating in politics.¹¹⁴

On the eve of the first post-war elections in April 1946, the execution of SCAP's purge program began on the national level. It started with a preliminary screening of all Diet candidates in the coming general elections and concluded with a final screening of the successful candidates before the Diet met for business in June of the same year. As a result of this action, about 1,000 incumbents of and candidates for important positions were either removed or excluded from the national government. Next to this, the Occupation authorities shifted their attention to the local government.

¹¹⁴ SCAP, op.cit. p.12

The second phase of the purge was, therefore, projected to remove undesirable persons from positions of leadership in the prefectural, city and village governments. The timing of this program coincided not only with the local elections, which were held for the first time, in Japan's history, but also with the second general elections, which were scheduled immediately after the local votings. As a result, "some 7,000 persons were removed or barred from important offices, principally in the local government".¹¹⁵ The effect on the course of post-war politics in Japan was both profound and cumulative. Although the detailed account will remain to be seen in a later discussion of the parties activities, it is worth notice here that the execution of the purges had marked a great confusion in the councils of Japan's political parties. It resulted in "almost daily shifts of alliances as one wartime political leader after another fell under successive interpretations of the purge and his followers and partisans sought new standards under which to serve".¹¹⁶

115 ibid. p.8

116 SCAP, op.cit. p.25

While the Occupation authorities took care to remove the undesirable elements from the political arena, SCAP did not overlook the Japanese economic structure. In this regard, the dissolution of the Zaibatsu was ordered early in the fall of 1946, and the process was completed in late 1951. SCAP's policy in this concern appeared, however, to be less firm. With the passage of time, the dissolution of the Zaibatsu had undergone a process of revision and modification. Particularly at the time when the Cold War between the East and the West became intensified, the Occupation policy reversed its originally intended project. It was believed that had the stern policy been carried out to its intended end, the Japanese economy "would have been rendered so completely incompetent and helpless that post-war recovery would have been almost wholly impossible".¹¹⁷ It was further believed that only as Japan regained its economic strength could it expect to become independent politically and to be a reliable ally in the struggle against world communism.¹¹⁸ In any event, the Occupation policy did not destroy the Zaibatsu as a trust

117 Kumamoto, Y. 'The Zaibatsu - Past, Present and Future' This is Japan, p.53

118 Borton, *op cit*, p.416

or combine but it barred the Zaibatsu families from enjoying their former monopoly.¹¹⁹

On the whole, the purge program represented only one side of the occupation policy. Good or bad, the merits of this question could not be judged simply. Early in the occupation period, there were arguments in protest against the purges. One contention of the opponents of SCAP's policy held that the political purge would inevitably result in the removal of the best brains of Japan and would tend to create resentment and hostility to Allied objectives even among those disposed to be friendly. In consequence of this, an underground resistance would be fostered: the government would be weakened; chaos, confusion and communism would follow. Obviously, this observation merely scratched the surface of the question. More deeply to the point, "how could the Allies, having chosen to utilize for Occupation purposes the existing Japanese government and administrative machinery, entrust the operation of that machinery to the leadership responsible for Japan's previous aggressive policies"?¹²⁰ The Occupation policy could not, therefore,

119 Kumamoto, op.cit. p.54

120 SCAP, op.cit. p.8

be fully appreciated without giving due consideration to its positive measures. Precisely for this reason, overlapping the purge period in 1946-48, SCAP undertook to bring about civil reforms.

In order to create conditions which would assist and enhance the growth of democratic institutions, SCAP sponsored various reform programs. Shortly after the surrender, MacArthur gave his first positive encouragement to the movement of democratization in Japan. On October 4, 1945, he issued what came to be known as the 'Japanese Bill of Rights'. According to this SCAP directive, "all of Japan's existing laws restricting political, civil, and religious liberties were suspended" and in one of the most revolutionary changes, woman suffrage for the first time in Japan's history was inaugurated in the political system.¹²¹ In the same dispatch General MacArthur also prodded the Diet into framing a liberalized election law, which enlarged the Japanese limited voting right to a popular adult franchise. The prewar political prisoners were also ordered to be released including Communists. To finalize the first step of civil liberation, the Ministry

¹²¹ Whitney, op.cit. p.243

of Home Affairs, center of centralized police control, was deprived of most of its powers.¹²² However, no political reforms could be of lasting significance, if the majority of the people's economic life was still under the yoke of a feudal structure. In this regard, SCAP induced the Japanese government to take drastic measures. Among many other reforms inaugurated by the occupation, two were of great importance. One of these was the land reform which was designed to give those who tilled the soil a chance to own it. This program started in late 1946 and was completed in 1950. Upon its completion, it was reported that some three million cultivators were given the right to acquire possession of five million acres of land. Moreover, for those who still remained as tenant farmers, the rental rate of the farm land was drastically reduced to "25 per cent of the crop and written leases were required to be given by all land owners".¹²³ The other was the encouragement given to the growth of a modern labor movement through recognizing the right of labor to organize and to bargain collectively. As a result, two largest labour federations, "the All-Japan

122 Borton, op.cit. p.401

123 Ibid. p.416

Federation of Labour (JFL) with 900,000 members and the National Congress of Industrial Unions (CIU) with 1,600,000 members" came into existence early in the mid 1946.¹²⁴ Although the last two measures mentioned above were not purely a political matter, their political bearings were, nevertheless, of far-reaching effect. The new farmer class created by the land reform program was to become one of the bulwarks in safeguarding the trend of democracy. For it would be highly unlikely that they would surrender their newly acquired means and right of living without a fight. By the same token, this newly emerged labour force was also to be one of the strongest deterrents to a rapid revival of nationalism and militarism. But what is worthy of special notice is the fact that the Japanese farmer, like, perhaps more than like, any farmer in the world, is of conservative nature. Once his economic and social life are well established, he tends to oppose Communism politically.

While SCAP's Government Section was busy developing a democratic tendency in post-surrender Japan, the Education Section was helping to free the Japanese mind.

¹²⁴ ibid. p.417

Reforms in education became imperative because Japan's pre-war educational system had been so designed as to command conformity and absolute obedience. This authoritarian system in education had contributed directly to the growth of ultrapatriotism and militant nationalism. In order to ensure a democratic and peace-loving development, a radically different educational philosophy became an urgent matter. From the early part of the occupation, military training and courses in ethics were both stricken from the curriculum; teachers with ultra-nationalistic tinge were barred from office; and textbooks in history and geography were thoroughly revised. Further, on January 1, 1946, the Emperor, under the influence of SCAP, issued a new edict in which he openly denied the Imperial divinity and the superiority of the Japanese people. A few months later, when a U.S. sponsored education mission reached Japan, SCAP officials worked together with this organization and with a Japanese advisory committee in close cooperation. As a result, two important recommendations among many others were made to and subsequently adopted by the Japanese government. One of these was a major concern of principle. According to this recommendation "a new educational philosophy stressed the

importance of individual initiative and inquiry, academic freedom, and equal educational opportunities"¹²⁵ and this new philosophy should be incorporated into new laws. Later in the spring of 1947, the Diet enacted accordingly. The other was chiefly an administrative matter. It proposed that schools thereafter, should be controlled by local elective school boards responsible to the local community. This was also later put into effect.

However, all civil reforms as such, no matter how close in line with democratic principles they were, would be rendered insignificant, if the Meiji Constitution had been allowed to remain intact. It was the attempt to revise the old Constitution that had caused great concern to both SCAP and Japanese officials. It marked the most controversial approach between them. In the first place, General MacArthur, in the early part of the occupation, made it clear to the Japanese government on several occasions that a drastic change in the Constitution was necessary. He urged that the Japanese should undertake this work themselves, while SCAP assumed a position of guidance and general supervision. Mr. Konoye was, then Vice-Premier, the first Japanese official to take

125 Borton, op.cit. p.419

initiative in this matter. After he had learned of the minimum reforms which the Occupation authority believed necessary to assure a representative form of government for the future, Konoye formed a constitutional drafting commission under his direction. However before the government could act on his proposed changes, his suicide on December 15, 1945, made the first attempt abortive. The succeeding effort in this course was the formation of the Constitutional Problem Investigation Committee, a cabinet organization established by Prime Minister Shidehara. In spite of the guidance given by SCAP, "all indications pointed to a concerted effort by the Cabinet to avoid making fundamental changes in the old Constitution".¹²⁶ After a long delayed process, finally by the end of January, 1946 "the Committee unofficially presented SCAP headquarters with two documents, one entitled 'Gist of the Revision of the Constitution' and the other 'General Explanation of the Constitutional Revision drafted by the Government'".¹²⁷ In these two documents no substantial changes were made. On many important points, the spirit of the Japanese prepared

126 Borton, op.cit. p.402

127 Whitney, op.cit. p.248

drafts was far from being democratic, it was contrary to the aims of the Potsdam Declaration. The Emperor's position remained unchanged. No cabinet system was made responsible to the people's elected representatives in Parliament; no basic human rights were guaranteed. On the whole, the two documents recommended little more than word-changing of the old Constitution. As a result, it was only too obvious that MacArthur should be satisfied by neither one of them.

On the eve of the first post-war general elections in Japan, he, therefore, instructed the Government Section of SCAP to prepare a draft for Japanese consideration.¹²⁸ It was at this point that SCAP played the decisive role in the course of Japan's Constitutional reforms. More significant was, however, that when the SCAP draft was strongly opposed by the Japanese officials in the cabinet, it was the Emperor who, in spite of the fact that all his political power was to be drastically reduced, exerted his influence and secured the final acceptance of the SCAP revised draft.¹²⁹ As a result

128 ibid. p.249

129 Yoshida, op.cit. p.197

on November 3, 1946, the new Constitution was promulgated and it became effective six months later.¹³⁰

The new Constitution had fundamentally altered the political philosophy of Japan's government. An absolute monarchy under the guise of the Meiji Constitution had been superseded by a liberal one; the sovereignty of the Emperor had been replaced by a popular sovereignty. The Constitution of 1946, therefore, divested the Emperor of all his political power and left him merely as a constitutional monarch to serve as 'the symbol of the state and unity of the people'.¹³¹ The Diet henceforth became the highest organ of state; it was a sole legislative branch of government based upon a bicameral system with the House of Representative being superior over the new House of Councillors. In contrast to the old Constitution, the responsibilities of the cabinet were specifically enumerated. The Premier was to be elected by the Parliament and his executive was held collectively responsible to Parliament. Should the Diet

¹³⁰ Borton, op.cit. p.410

¹³¹ 'The Constitution of Japan 1946' Article 1, Chapter 1., Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, Appendix IV, p.491.

adopt a vote of non-confidence in the government, the cabinet must choose between two alternatives: either to resign or to order a new general election. Furthermore, the new Constitution had not only conferred an enlightened bill of rights upon the people but had provided them also with adequate safeguards for their protection in the enjoyment of these rights.¹³² All in all, the foregoing brief summary is sufficient to indicate that the new constitution contained within it the most liberal spirit any modern constitution could reveal. It provided "for a central government based partially on the presidential system of the United States and partially upon the parliamentary system" of the United Kingdom.¹³³ Yet the Japanese Diet enjoys considerably more control over national policy and administration than has the United States Congress; it possesses powers as such, slightly less than the British Parliament.¹³⁴

132 Ibid. pp.490-507

133 Whitney, op.cit. p.256

134 SCAP, p.157

Thus far, the political reorientation in post-war Japan had resulted in far-reaching changes in the governmental structure. To remove the obstacles to liberalization, the manifold purge programs had cleared the way; to bring it in line with democratic principles, the various reform measures had laid the ground work. What was then still needed was the political leadership. In effect, it is this leadership that will channel the national desire for democracy in its proper direction and will ensure its development to be flourishing. In this regard, could the old political parties readjust themselves in such a manner as to assume the new leadership, or could the newly emerged parties become quick enough to take up such a responsibility? This is by far the more important question which remains to be answered.

IV

POST WAR PARTY POLITICS IN JAPAN

A. The Revival of Japan's Political Parties and Their Operation under Occupation

1. The Re-grouping of the Old Parties and the Emerging of the New Ones - A Time of Confusion.
2. The Effect of Political Purges on the Course of Post War Politics in Japan - A Time of Transition.
3. Party Politics and the First Post War Election in 1946.
4. Party Politics and the Second Post War Election in 1947.
5. The Untenable Nature of Intra-party Coalition and Yoshida's Contribution to the Development of a Stable Party-system.

POST WAR PARTY POLITICS IN JAPANA. The Revival of Japan's Political Parties
and Their Operation under Occupation.

In the spirit of parliamentary system provided by the democratic Constitution of 1946, Japan's political parties underwent a slow process of readjustment. However, before the post war changes effected in the party system became detectable, it was quite natural that the characteristics of the old parties should reappear in, and dominate over, the party organization and operation and should so remain for a period of time. This is due to the fact that most of the important parties emerged from re-grouping of the old ones. Here, it becomes necessary to recall the effect of the dissolution of the old parties in 1940. Under the military regime, the dissolution of those parties was succeeded by the formation of a single body bearing the name of 'the Imperial Rule Aid Political Association' and later 'the Great Japan Political Association'. Thus, before Japan's surrender, all political activities were organized on a totalitarian basis in order to give the government militant policy their unanimous support. Be it 'the Imperial Rule Aid Political Association' or 'the Great Japan Political Association', this outward unanimity, however, did not altogether eliminate

the politicians' inward factional affiliations. In fact, "they had never quite lost their identity for ... they clustered around leaders, cliques, and clubs, which had been important in party life before the War and had maintained some measure of continuity".¹³⁵ Shortly after the Occupation began, the 'Great Japan Political Association' was dissolved in August 1945, and in its place emerged a number of new parties of which the major ones represented the stirrings of life in the old political parties.

The first of the major parties to be formally established during the Occupation was the Social Democratic party (Nippon Shakai-to), under the leadership of Komakichi Matsuoka, a long time leader in labour movements. This party, at the time of its formation, included only fifteen members in the existing Diet, i.e., the Diet prior to the first post war general election. Nevertheless it was the third major party in rank. It advocated a general socialist policy and took initiative in advancing specific proposals for dealing with national problems such as inflation, housing, administration of elections, extension of the franchise to women, protective labour legislation and agricultural land reform. Despite its most liberal policies, the Social Democratic party was seriously weakened from the start by cleavages of opinion between all factions; left,

¹³⁵ Wakefield, Harold, New Paths for Japan, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1948, p.129.

right and centre.¹³⁶ The second party coming into being was the Japanese Liberal party (Nippon Jiyuto). With 50 members in the Diet, the party was officially inaugurated on November 9, 1945. Its platform was "couched in general terms favouring woman suffrage, lowering the voting age, reorganization of the House of Peers, the Privy Council, the education system and bureaucratic reform".¹³⁷ The party's conservative view was, however, clearly reflected on the issues of the Constitution and the powers of the Emperor during their debating stage. Its program suggested that "the existing Constitution was democratic and did not require the transfer of powers from the Emperor to the Diet".¹³⁸ The third, yet the largest, party was organized on November 16, 1945. It bore the name of the Progressive party (Shimpoto). The party embraced the largest number of 240 members in the Diet. It was composed of heterogeneous elements of old line politicians belonging to the prewar Minseito and Seijukai parties, "most of whose members had been absorbed in the war-time Imperial Rule Assistance Association".¹³⁹ Because of this, it went without saying that

136 Wakefield, op. cit., p.130

137 SCAP, Govt. Sec., ed., Political Reorientation of Japan, p.343

138 Ibid., p.343

139 Ibid., p.343

this party was the most conservative of all.

The other political parties worthy of special mention here, were the Cooperative Democratic party and the People's party. They were worthy of notice not because they were major parties rather because they represented a force between the extreme right and the socialist camps. They professed to follow a course of moderate democracy, or as it might be called, an enlightened conservatism, with an opportunistic pattern.¹⁴⁰ Their formation came about in an amalgamation of various factions, mainly based on personal loyalties. Due to this very nature and together with their middle of the road outlook, they were the elements shifting their lines more frequently between the conservative and socialist camps. Finally, these elements were either absorbed into one of the two extreme groups or simply disappeared from the scene. Beside these minor parties, there also had been numerous splinter ones swarming within the whole political arena. The number of these was reported up to 257 on the eve of the first post-surrender elections,¹⁴¹ for most of them "had failed to attract independent Diet members to their ranks",¹⁴² and were of little political importance considered

140 Wakefield, op. cit., p.130

141 Whitney, C., MacArthur, His Rendezvous With History, p.263.

142 SCAP, op. cit., p.343.

individually. Yet they were significant taken as a whole, because their appearance had marked the character of a particular time. It represented a period of political transition, a time of confused searching and irresponsible venturing in politics between the vanishing of the old and the shaping of the new order.

However, one exception among these splinter parties must not be overlooked, it is the Communist party. In the case of the Japanese Communists, though they never yet had exerted any substantial influence on the course of Japan's post-war political development, their continued existence suggests something that could not be simply written off as of no account. In view of its subversive policy and international character, the Communist party of Japan represents a potential menace to the possible development of the democratic system. For this reason, the Communist party will be dealt with separately at the end of this discussion. In any case, the immediate threat to the establishing of a democratic institution in Japan was not from the Communists who, though masquerading under the name of democracy, seek a totalitarian result. It rather was the threat from the undermining efforts of the extreme right, who "in the early phase of the Occupation had frankly espoused the cause of the ruling and industrial groups and favoured the concept of 'laissez-faire' and

generally the status quo ante".¹⁴³

It was against this background that concurring with the planned coming first general election on April 10, 1946, the political purge was executed. Implementing the initial SCAP's purge directive, the succeeding interpretations and the promulgation of Japanese Government ordinances had created a profound and cumulative effect on the course of post-war politics in Japan; particularly affected were the political parties. The first among the political parties which sustained a mortal blow was the dominant Progressive party, "whose members held 257 seats in the Lower House during the 'lame duck' session of the Diet".¹⁴⁴ Initial estimates of the number of its members who would fall under the purge ran as high as 200, even the entire Diet membership of that party. In the light of this prospect, the Chief Party Secretary Tsurumi declared on January 12 that only three of the party's leaders would not be affected. However, since the initial application of the purge was executed primarily on the national level, the party's prefectural organization was expected not to be so badly shaken. With the party's strong support in the agricultural regions, based almost exclusively on personal loyalties among the politically

143 SCAP, op. cit., p. xxx.

144 Ibid., p. 16

untutored, "the Progressives hoped to replace their purged candidates in the election with others not similarly affected and thus to continue in control of the Diet".¹⁴⁵ This optimistic hope was, however, dwarfed even before the purge program was extended down to the local level, as the result turned out to be that all but 27 of the party's 274 members in both houses of the Diet were announced ineligible for government office. Since party position was also regarded as public office, the party was placed in such a position as to be unable to find successors to the presidents, managers and other members. Thus the extensive interpretation of the term 'public office' dealt a further and almost fatal blow to the already dwindling and decimated Progressives. Consequently, it shrank from its previous dominant position into the rank of a minor party holding only 93 seats in the National Diet after the 1946 election.¹⁴⁶ On account of this, the party dissolved itself a few days before the 1947 election and re-emerged with a change in its policies and platform in the spirit of the age as the Japan Democratic party.¹⁴⁷

145 SCAP, op. cit., p. 16

146 Wakefield, op. cit., p. 134

147 SCAP, op. cit., p. 29

In striking contrast to the Progressive party's position the Social Democratic party (Shakai-to), though it had but 17 members in the Diet prior to the election of 1946, was regarded as the third major party and suffered the least among the three. At first it was estimated that only three of its members in the lower house would be forced into political oblivion; the party did not, therefore, expect to be greatly affected by the directive issued in January. But the succeeding interpretation of the directive resulted in considerable changes in the party's leadership. Among its dominant members 10 out of the 17 right-wingers "were disqualified before election time, including such founders of the party as Jotaro Kawakami, Seion Kawamata and Shoichi Miyake".¹⁴⁸ It is, however, interesting to note that while such losses of established leaders reduced the party's immediate chances at the polls on one hand, on the other it "had the incidental effect of consolidating the left-wing with the remainder of the party".¹⁴⁹ As a result, Tetsu Katayama's leadership of the Social Democratic was, thus, strengthened. In any event, through the implementation of the purge program this party gained more than it lost; it took advantage from the result of the Directive upon rival

148 SCAP, op. cit., p. 27

149 Ibid., p. 27

groups and increased the number of its candidates for the coming election. Its membership in the Diet jumped from 17 to 92 as a result of the 1946 election.¹⁵⁰ The political consequences were of great significance. The position of the Social Democratic party had, then, become well established as a political force in its resistance to the conservatives' later attempt to restore the post-war development back to the old track. The role the Socialists played during the ensuing years was principally as an opposition force and to no small measure contributed to the establishment of a stable party system in Japan which the subsequent development was to demonstrate.

As for the Liberal party, though it was a conservative gathering, like the Socialists, it expected to suffer less of a setback from the purge than the Progressives. This was because the Liberals had less tangible connection with the war-time government than had the Progressives. They even hoped further that the immediate adverse effect of the purge, should it apply to them, would be counteracted by the relative gains made at the expense of the discredited Progressives. Therefore, when the purge in fact resulted in eliminating 20 of the

150 Ibid., p. 27

party's 50 Diet members, they foresaw in the directive still a relative advantage enabling their party to profit from the plight of the Progressive party in the coming election.¹⁵¹ Thus they were not caught by surprise when their party emerged with a marked plurality from the election of 1946. The amazement rather came from the sudden purge of Hatoyama, leader of the Liberal party, when he was about to form a government. As a result, Mr. Yoshida assumed the leadership of that party and took up the task of forming a coalition government, which was made up principally of Liberal and Progressive elements. However, the real significance of this changing in leadership was not immediately known until Hatoyama staged a comeback after being depurged in 1952. Hence, it foredoomed the disintegration of the Liberal party which was later to contribute to the two-man power struggle.

Nevertheless, in so far as the three major parties were concerned, the immediate effect of the purge had foreshadowed the results of the 1946 election. The general election carried more political implications than the mere scoring of the results of the voting. It was at least an unprecedented general election in Japan's history, if not one representing the dawn of a new era. In general, the

¹⁵¹ SCAP, op.cit., p.26

election of April 1946 marked the first clear test of the strength of these political forces in post-war Japan. Never before had the Japanese electorates been able to cast their votes without official interference. In the past, prefectural governors had involved themselves in party politics; their positions were bound to change with each new Cabinet, and for this reason they used the police and every other means of coercion available to them to secure the return of their own parties. The 1946 election was, however, carried out under the close scrutiny of SCAP. In view of these novel circumstances, it seems worth while to recite the results in detail:

152

The composition of the new Diet after 1946 election:

<u>Pol. parties</u>	old Diet	new Diet	women in new Diet	those in last Diet	those in former Diet	new faces
Progressives-----	274	95	6	13	10	70
Liberals-----	46	139	5	14	23	102
Social Democrats-----	17	92	8	7	15	70
Cooperatives-----	--	14	-	--	1	13
Communists-----	--	5	1	--	--	5
Minor parties-----	--	38	8	--	1	37
Independents-----	72	83	10	4	1	78
Vacancies-----	57	2	-	--	--	--
Total-----	466;	466;	38;	38;	51;	375.

Thus the Diet elected in 1946 was in many respects a contrast to the previous ones. In place of the one-party legislature of the wartime regime, it contained the representatives of no less than 33 political parties. 153

152 SCAP, op. cit., p. 321
153 Whitney, op. cit., p. 263

More significant was, however, the fact that hundreds of unknowns were elected to replace the old faces. In addition, the professional distribution among the Diet members had been broadened to many fields: the new membership included 32 educators, 22 authors, 13 physicians and 49 farmers, while it contained only six who could be called 'politicians'. Whereas the previous Diets had been made up almost exclusively of lawyers, industrialists and professional politicians.¹⁵⁴

One of the most interesting features of the election was, however, the success of thirty-eight out of eighty-two women candidates. It was interesting to note not only because of the fact that the right to both to elect, and to be elected, was for the first time enjoyed by the Japanese women but also because of the fact that the number of women elected was nearly half the number of the women candidates while only about one-sixth of all candidates succeeded.¹⁵⁵ This was really an amazing surprise, even to the most experienced observers. Prior to the votings, there had been speculations suggesting "that in all probability 90 percent of the Japanese women would abstain from the polls on election day" and "that not one woman had even the faintest chance of being

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 263

¹⁵⁵ Wakefield, op. cit., p. 135

elected to the Diet".¹⁵⁶ Yet both contentions were disproved by the fact that Japanese women took advantage of their newly acquired suffrage and voted heavily.

With regard to the electorate, the proportion of women voters was, in particular, large as a result of the exceptional displacement of the male population. Of 37 million eligible voters at the moment 20.6 million were women and only 16.4 million men. Therefore a possible explanation of the high rate of success in women candidates was that women voters tended to support women candidates instead of being influenced mainly by party candidates.¹⁵⁷ This nascent political enthusiasm of women was, however, not followed at the next elections of 1947. In general, the turn-out was heavy on election day. According to official figures, 72.1 percent of the total registered voters had cast their ballots. Considering that more than half the register was composed of women inexperienced in politics and, in accordance with many forecasts, not interested, this was a remarkable high poll.¹⁵⁸

Another point of note was to be found in contrast to the past marked by the campaign issues. Instead of advocating vague principles, all parties in their appealing

156 SCAP, op. cit., p. 321
 157 Wakefield, op. cit., p. 135
 158 SCAP, op. cit., p. 321

to the electorates stressed "the promise of providing for their immediate needs, such as food, clothing, housing, farm necessities and jobs".¹⁵⁹ All major parties pledged themselves to support the general principles of the proposed draft constitution. While "all save the Communists advocated retention of the Emperor as a national symbol", the Social Democratic party emphasized more than other "the necessity of eliminating the Emperor's powers and strengthening those of the elected legislature".¹⁶⁰

While on one hand, the first post-war election revealed many interesting points, on the other hand it also manifested a number of weak points. In this regard, a contemporary analysis of the 1946 electoral campaign by the Government Section of SCAP led to the various conclusions. On the part of the electorate, their latent power to effectuate basic reforms had been partly dissipated and misdirected by three main factors, which were:

- "a) general unfamiliarity with democratic concepts,
- b) lack of understanding of basic political, economic, and social issues, c) difficulty in choosing among the multiplicity of parties and independent candidates whose stated objectives and platforms were ambiguous and sometimes interchangeable." ¹⁶¹

159 Ibid., p. 320

160 Ibid., p. 320

161 SCAP, op. cit., p. 345

On the part of the political parties, their power was also diminished for a number of reasons. Among other things, "a multiplicity of parties organized primarily on the basis of personal leadership rather than on political principles and policies and whose status was established solely by self-declaration rather than by any demonstration of public support" was chiefly to be responsible.¹⁶²

Because of these reasons, Yoshida's government, in spite of a combined conservative majority in the House of Representatives, could not get the popular support needed to retain office. To this the deteriorated economic situation gave an added push to its collapse. Thus, under General MacArthur's influence, Mr. Yoshida agreed to call for a new election - a second post-war general election held in 1947.¹⁶³ As the scheduled date of election drew closer, the political maneuvering among the parties became more and more eager. Most notable was the change which had taken place in the Progressive party. In an effort to rejuvenate itself, the Progressive party drastically announced its dissolution and in alignment with some independents re-emerged in the spirit of age as the Japan Democratic party. As a result, its membership in Diet increased to 145 in number.¹⁶⁴ Thus on the eve of the 1947

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 345

¹⁶³ Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, pp. 412-13

¹⁶⁴ Wakefield, op. cit., p.137

election, the Diet representation of the major parties had been changed as follows:

Democratic party-----	145	
Liberal party-----	140	
Social Democratic party-----	98	
People's Cooperative party-----	63	165
Communist party-----	6	

Their platforms for overall policies may be illustrated in a general classification, ranging from right to left, such as:

Liberals-----	'laissez faire'
Democrats-----	modified capitalism (meaning stringent government controls)
People's Cooperatives-----	cooperative unionism
Social Democrats-----	State control as a preliminary to government ownership (e.g., key industries, coal, iron, steel, fertilizer, etc.)
Communists-----	people's control of Zaibatsu-owned enterprises and the key industries. ¹⁶⁶

As for the election itself, three features were interesting to note. Firstly, there was a set-back in the participation of women. Although the number of their standing was nearly as great as during the last election, the number of enfranchised women going to the polls was as low as only about thirty percent. Women candidates who succeeded this time only numbered fifteen. Secondly, there was a demonstration of the lack of progress on the part of the Communist party. The election had reduced one-third

165 SCAP, op. cit., p. 329

166 ibid., p. 329

of its former representation in the Diet. Thirdly, one of the most important features was the attitude which the voters assumed in the elections for the House of Representatives. In contrast to the past the electorate at large had "showed a surprising preference for parties as against personalities".¹⁶⁷ It is significant to note that preference as such would undoubtedly discourage the independents and minor parties' candidates and thereby paved the way for the development of a stable party system in the future. The election result was, however, mostly highlighted by the emergence of the Social Democrats as the leading party in the lower house. The complete House of Representatives election results by parties is indicated in the following tabulation:

<u>Parties</u>	<u>new</u> <u>members</u>	<u>re-elected</u> <u>members</u>	<u>former Diet</u> <u>members</u>	<u>total</u>	<u>+gain or</u> <u>-loss</u>
Social Democrats-----	69	71	3	143	+45
Liberals-----	60	71	1	132	- 8
Democrats-----	60	63	3	126	-19
People's Cooperatives-	7	24	0	31	-32
Communists-----	2	2	0	4	- 2
Minor parties-----	15	3	0	18	+14
Independents-----	8	4	0	12	+ 3
Total-----	221	238	7	466	168

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 332

¹⁶⁸ SCAP, op. cit., p. 334

(The gain or loss figures showing in this tabulation are in comparison with the close session of the last Diet. Therefore the minor parties and the independents are virtually among the loser's group, if the number of their elected members are compared with the result of the first election.)

As a result of this election, although the Social Democratic party had displaced the Liberals and showed a spectacular gain in strength, it failed to win a clear majority. This called for a coalition of two or more parties strong enough to command such a majority. Accordingly, negotiations leading up to the necessary inter-party agreements on the policies and personnel of the new government were taking place among the four major parties. In consequence of their negotiations, the Social Democratic party's platform was watered down to such an extent as to make it acceptable to its conservative partners. The main point of the original policy advocated by the Socialists was 'democratic state control of vital key industries', while the subsequent modification claimed only that "key industries should be brought under state control only when necessary".¹⁶⁹ All in all, hammered through their differences, a ten points program of agreement was reached by all four parties, Liberal-Democratic-Social Democratic-People's Cooperative. But no sooner had the agreement been reached than Mr. Yoshida attempted to press for a further concession from the Socialists. He demanded that not only would left-wing members of the Social Democratic party be excluded from the projected cabinet, but also the party should rid itself of its left-wing

169 ibid., p. 348

elements.¹⁷⁰ Katayama, leader of the Social Democratic party, though he agreed on the first demand, felt it impossible to accept the second one. The Socialists, in order to achieve agreement, had already sacrificed important planks of their platform, on which their candidates had run; any further concession at the expense of the left-wing members would more than likely cause an open split among the rank and file of their party. As a result of Katayama's refusal, the Liberals stayed out of the coalition government and soon went into open opposition. All this willy-nilly business added up to the precarious position of the Katayama Cabinet. Only four months after its formation, many indications already pointed that the existing alignments and forces were such as to limit the life expectancy of the coalition government.

At this point, things made a bad turn for the already doomed Katayama cabinet, when the internal friction within the Social Democratic party emerged onto the surface. Within the Socialist bloc there were four factions ranging from the extreme left almost identical to the Communists to the extreme right differing little from the conservatives.¹⁷¹ This hazardous situation became even worse when it was viewed in the light of the

170 SCAP, op. cit., p. 349

171 Ibid., p. 350

question as to whether the party leadership would be based upon personalities or upon the advocacy of definitive policies. Therefore being unable to withstand pressures from both within and without, Katayama cabinet resigned on February 10, 1948. This was followed again by a time of political wrangling over the election of a new prime minister. At the end of this maneuvering Mr. Hitoshi Ashida, leader of the Democratic party, assumed the premiership and he approached the Social Democratic party to form another coalition government. As a result, included in his cabinet, there were 7 Democrats, including Ashida himself, 8 Social Democrats and 2 People's Cooperatives. Like its predecessor the Ashida cabinet was founded on the basis of a predetermined inter-party agreement.¹⁷² It is interesting to note that this three-party agreement represented considerable concessions on the part of the Democrats, in which were incorporated statements of major policies previously advocated by Katayama's party but opposed by most of the Democrats. This 'flexibility' in matters of policy was further demonstrated by the inclusion in the new government of two members of the left-wing faction of the Social Democratic party. Here, it is significant to recall that during the formation of the Katayama ministry in 1947,

172 SCAP, op. cit., p. 351

Ashida had joined Yoshida to press for an assurance from Katayama that no member of the left-wing faction of his party would be appointed to a cabinet post. Katayama had accepted such a demand thus sowing the seeds of intra-party discord which later contributed to the downfall of his government. Now, only a year later, his successor, leader of the more conservative party, "for the same reason placated that faction both by including two of its members in the cabinet and by incorporating some of their objectives in the coalition government's policy agreement".¹⁷³ This extreme flexibility, if it may be so called, illustrated the tangled maze of personalities, political cross currents and compromises which fashioned current Japanese politics.

However, the Liberals led by Mr. Yoshida had remained for all the while in aloofness from this entangling business. What significance it bore on the course of Japan's party politics is rather an important point to observe. At the time when Mr. Yoshida refused to take part in the Katayama government, there had been some growls, particularly among the Diet-members of his party. In order to calm down this dissatisfied murmuring, Yoshida addressed a Dietmen's Club meeting of the Liberal party in the following words:

173 Ibid., p. 353

"... A political party should be founded on party politics. To join the cabinet of an opposition party that has different policies, with a view to gaining political power, means only the loss of your own policies and the destruction of the true spirit of political government. Such a coalition cabinet could not last long, and when the government collapses both parties of the coalition will incur the criticism and distrust of the nation." ¹⁷⁴

He ended his speech by the warning "beware of dew drops before you are drenched by the rain".¹⁷⁵ The highlighted language contained in Mr. Yoshida's speech undoubtedly is the expression of a conviction that being willing to barter away a party's principles merely for the sake of power would mean the destruction of the true spirit of party politics and would incur distrust of the nation. Had not Mr. Yoshida insisted upon his rejection of joining such a coalition, the government would eventually have embodied all the major parties in such a way as would appear to be no different from the 'spoils of office' system which had prevailed in the past. Had such a tradition been continued in operation, it would virtually have left little possibility of installing a stable and sound foundation for a party system in the future. It is in this sense that Mr. Yoshida by his insistence of his party remaining true to its spirit and by refusing to join the 'spoils of office' had laid the first milestone towards the development

174 Yoshida, S., "Reminiscence", This is Japan, Tokyo Asahi Shimbun Newspaper, p. 198
 175 Ibid., P. 198

of a parliamentary party system in its genuine nature.

The immediate validity of Mr. Yoshida's conviction was given by the fact not only that the two coalition cabinets of Katayama in 1947 and Ashida in 1948 were both short-lived but also that in the 1949 elections, "the first ones to be held since the electorate had shown a preference for the Social Democrats, Yoshida received overwhelming support for his conservative policies".¹⁷⁶ The Liberal party, from then on, under Yoshida's leadership had continuously been in office for six years. It was a considerably long tenure which overlapped the remaining years of the occupation period and the first years of Japan's recovery of her sovereign power. Following the conclusion of the Peace of Japan, party movement in Japan entered into a new phase, in which a two-party system was to be established.

¹⁷⁶ Eorton H., op. cit., p. 430

POST WAR PARTY POLITICS IN JAPAN

B. Party Movement and the Emerging
of a 'Two-party System' in the
Post Occupation Era

1. Socialist Party Movement.
2. Conservative Party Movement.
3. A Note on the Communist Party.

POST WAR PARTY POLITICS IN JAPANB. Party Movement and the Emerging of a
'Two-party system' in the Post
Occupation Era

Japan's history had turned a new page since the signing of the Japanese Peace Treaty in April 1952. Almost simultaneously, however for a different reason, the date after the conclusion of the peace treaty had marked the beginning of furious intra-party embroilment in both camps. For the Socialists, the peace treaty issue gave rise in opinion to a polarized divergence between the left- and right-wings: on one hand, the right-wing, though opposing the related Security Pact, wanted to accept the peace treaty, while on the other hand the leftists bitterly renounced them both. The party then seemed to be hopelessly divided. For the Conservatives, many of the purgees with previous political experience sought to re-enter the political arena after Japan's recovery of independence. The initial post-occupation period was, therefore, marked by a rivalry between depurgees and occupation-era men over public office and party leadership. It is true that factional rivalry and intra-party struggle had long characterized party organizations in Japan. Before, there was always intra-party embroiling as common as there was always cross-line affiliation. The cross-line affiliation had, often in the

past, obscured the political consequences of factional rivalry, which would render the disintegration of one's own party of little concern. But this time, it made the cross-line practice become almost impossible when the attempted constitutional revision became an issue in the immediate post-occupation years. It constituted too great a challenge for the Socialists to allow their strength to be dissipated by internal discord. Were the Constitution to be revised in line with that of the past, it would spell out a policy of oppression, if not of annihilation, to them, which they had experienced for so long in the past. In this sense, their split only made them realize later the vital importance of their reunion and, in this sense their split virtually commenced the beginning of their later unification with lasting effect. Thus, the political consequences of the termination of the Occupation-era had set in motion a train of inter-related developments: the conservative-attempted constitutional amendment hastened the Socialists' reunification; the unified Socialist forces in turn played a decisive influence on the evolution of the conservative merger. As a result of this major re-construction of the Japanese political forces, both groups made their gains at the

expense of the splinter and independent elements.¹⁷⁷
 Of great importance, the unity achieved by both conservatives and Socialists, hardly a month apart from each other, had signified the establishment of a 'two-party system' in Japan.

The Socialist party like all other political groups in Japan was internally weakened by factional conflict and was deficient in mature responsibility. Until the electoral setback early in 1949, the party leadership was chiefly held by the rightists, some of whom were temporarily excluded from office as a result of purge. By then the labor movement had become the best organized core of support, and the left-wing's position was by far the stronger. Nevertheless, with the right-wing accused "the left of flirtation with the Communist united-front strategy and with tendencies toward 'direct action' instead of staunch support of parliamentaries" and with the leftists rebuking their intra-party rivals as "disguised conservatives and opportunists", the internal friction remained the same.¹⁷⁸ Early in 1950, the party

177 Kublin, H., "Japanese Politics and the Socialist Minority", Yale Review Je., 1957. p. 577

178 Uyehara, C.H., "Social Democratic Movement", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 308, N., 1956, Philadelphia, 1956, p. 55

had broken in two but the rift was temporarily patched. A more serious split was, however, precipitated by divergent emphasis regarding foreign policy. The first major consequence of the peace treaty and its related security pact with the United States was the flaring up of an open conflict within the Social Democratic party. By the time the treaties were submitted to the Diet for ratification the Socialist Diet-members found themselves divided. While one side was conditionally willing to accept the peace treaty, the other bluntly rejected them all. As a result, a party convention was summoned late in October in an effort to settle the deputies' dispute. To make things even worse, the only result was an intensification of the conflict. The climax of the crisis was contained in the following statement, "the twenty-nine right-wing Socialists of the Lower House of the Diet have informed the Diet's Steering Committee that they have shed their sixteen left-wing ex-colleagues".¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, "the sixteen left-wingers have registered themselves as a separate party, have called a party convention for January, and are setting up separate party machine in the prefectures".¹⁸⁰ The party then seemed to be hopelessly divided.

179 "Comment (on Socialist party)", 20th Century,
D. 1951, p. 449

180 ibid., p. 449

While the two wings of the Socialist party had given the impression that they had gone through the motions of formal and permanent divorce and while their broken segment seemed destined but for the role of a perpetually carping minority party, things took a drastic turn for the best. Fortunately for them their political foes came to their rescue. Through their long tenure of power, the conservatives had tended to become callous and careless in their disregard for opposition. Their overconfidence had, thus, successively "raised the national issues that helped to resuscitate the Socialists as a political force".¹⁸¹ Of vital importance in hastening the reunion of the Socialist party in the fall of 1955 was the conservative attempt to revise the post-war Constitution and modify various reforms installed by the Allied Occupation. It was generally considered by the Socialists that any suggestion for constitutional revision or alteration of the prevailing institutional system emanating from the conservative camp was an ominous sign to them, a threat to democracy in Japan and a device to revert to the old discredited military-police state. Therefore, with great political stakes at issue, they were practically compelled to postpone their ideological embroiling and

181 Kublin, *op. cit.*, p. 571

concentrate their effort against the immediate and pressing dangers. As a result, the Socialist party of Japan was revitalized as a powerful factor in national and local affairs.

As to the apparent strength of the re-organized party the indications were to be found in the policy of cooperation reached between the left- and right-wing members of the party. Before the new party platform was adopted at the unification convention in October, 1955, the leftwing had had an overall party policy of their own. In January 1954, they drafted a lengthy platform full of economic Marxism, yet they had steadfastly rejected Communists overtures for cooperation. With particular reference to foreign policy, their platform was strongly anti-American in tone. It further claimed that all vital economic and political points of Japanese monopoly capitalism were controlled by and completely subservient to the United States.¹⁸² In contrast to the leftist bloc, the right-Socialists did not have a platform drafted until 1955. Then with the reunification in prospect, they couched their criticism of the national policy towards the United States in the phrase 'very disadvantageous' while their attack on communism was much more severe. They

182 Uyehara, op. cit., p. 60

condemned the latter "as the instrument of a new imperialism subjugating individuals and groups to the centralized dominance of the Communist party and trampling on freedom and democracy".¹⁸³ Confronted with this rift of opinion, it was obvious that a generally agreeable program concluded at the party caucus in late 1955 was a result of the attempt to clarify the areas of agreement and disagreement. The new party platform showed, therefore, little of the traditional revolutionary punch, or more precisely, the Socialist unity rested less on a progressive than on a conservative position.¹⁸⁴

For that matter, the new Socialist policy entailed concessions by both major factions in the party. If the hard core of the Socialist left-wing could muster little enthusiasm for a membership program which threatened to obscure the 'proletarian' character of the party, the die-hard rightists found it difficult to bestir themselves actively in support of the foreign-policy view of their radical colleagues. Therefore, while distress was caused among their more radical comrades by the abandonment of the 'class struggle' on one hand, on the other hand, for the sake of the unity of the party the moderates continued to tolerate the blatant demagogy of the left-wing.¹⁸⁵

183 Ibid., p. 61

184 Kublin, op. cit., p. 572

185 Ibid., pp. 578, 579, 580

Furthermore, many right-wing Socialists had never been opposed to rearmament along cautious lines, for they were convinced that "if a healthy democracy were to develop in Japan, the responsibility for national security should be neither shirked nor shifted".¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the implications of a new cleavage were grave enough to induce a spirit of compromise within the high organs of the party and the continuing disputes over party policy were remarkably well concealed from the public eye. The Socialists were, thus, able to maintain intact their appearance of unity.

In addition to this the Japanese Socialist party was not long in opening a campaign to broaden its social base despite the distastefulness of this policy to left-wing leaders. A nation-wide organizational project was designed to enlarge the bases of Socialist strength beyond the major urban centers, for some Socialist leaders realized that the social grievances of farmers, fishermen, small businessmen and uncommitted intellectuals could be exploited for political advantage. In broadening its organizational base through the creation of political networks in every prefecture, particular attention was given to these groups. Thus the party was not only able to tap new

186 Ibid., p. 580

sources of support but also to challenge the conservatives in areas traditionally held under political monopoly. Whatever their merit, the efforts bore immediate effect. Among their sympathizers, strong support came from the younger generation and from women, because "they are attracted by the party's opposition to scandals charged against the conservatives, and to rearmament, a revision of the 'peace' Constitution, and military bases".¹⁸⁷ The significance was that these electoral gains enabled the party to hold one-third control of the Diet following its setback in 1949. This was a negative power, nevertheless, sufficient to block any immediate conservative attempt to revise the post-war Constitution. Still more important, the Socialist party was, henceforth, transformed from a preponderantly urban-centered organization into a more truly national party, a political force which represented the only feasible alternative to continued conservative government.

Hardly a month apart from the Socialists' achievement, the conservative parties who followed their lead also merged into a united organization. The contributing factors were many, but closely related to this development were the problems of rivalry or assimilation of occupation-

¹⁸⁷ Uyehara, op. cit., p. 61

era and post independence leaders, the failure of the Progressive party to become a major political force and most immediately the threat of an invigorated and growing Socialist movement. As in the case of the Socialists, the conservative reconciliation developed the hard way; it came about only after they realized that only by a united effort could they meet the Socialist challenge, which greatly undermined their political future. In this connection, the conservative merger was another major political consequence brought about by the peace treaty. Since the time when Japan had recovered her full sovereign power, "the personnel legacy of the prewar past sharply raised its head as a result of a mass rescinding of purge bans in June-September 1951".¹⁸⁸ Its immediate effect was that Yoshida, a long time unchallenged leader of the Liberal party, now presided over a divided party. 139 out of the 239 Liberal winning candidates in the 1952 elections were depurgees and first among them was ailing Ichiro Hatoyama, founder of the Liberal party.¹⁸⁹

188 Colton, K.E., "The Conservative Political Movement", The Ann. Am. Aca., vol. 308, p. 41

189 Time, the Weekly Newsmagazine, O. 13, 1952, p. 29

It soon became clear that the challenge to Yoshida in the Liberal party began to emerge. It was a challenge centered on a struggle for party control and focused in the bid of Hatoyama to reclaim his original position as party president. The problem lay in the terms of agreement posited by Yoshida in accepting the party leadership at the time when the former was purged. He then had asked no interference from Hatoyama in matters relating to his cabinet arrangement and that he be not responsible for party management. On the other hand, he agreed to retire should Hatoyama later become eligible for public office.¹⁹⁰ Taken against this background, following the elections in 1952 Hatoyama, thus, "expected and sought Yoshida's retirement and a resumption of his former position as party president and the logical right to be named prime minister".¹⁹¹ But in the interval, Yoshida had risen to independence; he wielded almost autocratic power in the Liberal Party by recruiting a favoured group of ex-bureaucrats in 1948-49. Through his long tenure of power, he then controlled a party "the majority of whose membership owed more political allegiance to him than to Hatoyama".¹⁹² He, therefore, refused to surrender control without a fight.

190 Yoshida, S., "Reminiscence" This is Japan,
p. 197

Colton, op. cit., p. 41

191 Ibid., p. 41

192 Colton, op. cit., p. 41

Although this fact was the dominant overtone of the ensuing power struggle, it involved more than a personal contest just for an individual position. Likewise involved was the opposition of essentially party-minded personnel to the ex-bureaucratic group upon whom Yoshida depended for government and party management. It was also a campaign by party-bred men and professional politicians who sought to overthrow Yoshida's personal rule that appeared to ignore the party and minimize the Diet. For in the previous years, Yoshida had given the impression that he disliked the hurly-burly of parliamentary war and the political uses of publicity. Nor had he given proper consideration to the operation of his party, because "he remained aloof from rank and file, communicated his directions through lieutenants whose power depended primarily upon their closeness to him".¹⁹³ As a result, in his fight with an experienced and popular political challenger like Hatoyama, these weaknesses or failure in Yoshida's methods were bound to swell the ranks of his opponents and solidify the opposition.

On the other hand, in the forty-three months between his second cabinet formed in October, 1948 and April 1952, Yoshida also established himself a reputation. After the 1949 elections resulted in the decisive rejection

¹⁹³ ibid., p. 43

of weak coalition governments by the public, Yoshida "was felt to be the man most capable of preserving political stability".¹⁹⁴ Business circles favoured him for the same reason, for it encouraged more effective industrial planning. He was further believed to be a skilled diplomat and a friend of the West. A more important factor which abetted his position was the change in SCAP policy. Coincident with Yoshida's rise to power, "in 1948-49, SCAP policy changed from an emphasis upon reform to economic recovery",¹⁹⁵ and as a result of the Korean war, the United States viewed Japan's position in the Far East as more an ally than a former enemy. On both accounts the United States had relied upon the conservative power of Yoshida's Liberal party and thereby boosted up his influence as a national leader. All these had the effect of counterbalancing his disadvantages, when he was confronted with an all-out assault, within and without the Liberal party. In the ensuing thirty-two months struggle, Yoshida was, therefore, able to maintain his position until 1954.

The anti-Yoshida sentiment developing inside his party gave its first sign in the fight over the appointment of the party's secretary-general in July-August 1952. When Yoshida nominated from among his own inner circle a

194 Ibid., p. 42

195 Colton, op. cit., p. 42

freshman Diet member with limited party experience, his opponents regarded his choice as indicating either that he was completely indifferent to the other interests of the party or that he was preparing to wage an all-out war against them.¹⁹⁶ They, therefore, exerted pressure to force Yoshida to withdraw his nomination and accept a compromise. This incident possessed significance because the opposition came from elected Diet members who previously had docilely acquiesced in his rule. However, it served only as a prelude to the major intra-party battle over the control of the party, which was soon to follow.

Since the October 1952 elections gave the party a precarious Diet majority, Yoshida's position had further become vulnerable. At this point, Hatoyama's faction held the balance of power in the party parliamentary struggle and succeeded out of proportion to its strength in weakening Yoshida's control of the party and the Diet. As a result, they first ousted Yoshida's minister of International Trade and Industry, Hayato Ikeda, from office in November 1952. Then "they threatened the government's supplementary budget bill and got a reallocation of seats in the party executive committee and the designation of a skilled Hatoyama tactician and bitter Yoshida foe as

196 Ibid., p. 43

chairman" in December of the same year.¹⁹⁷ In consequence of this change in leadership, the committee proceeded to compel the government to submit all legislative proposals to party organs for consideration prior to their submission to the Diet. In so doing, a practice which had long been established by Yoshida was then altered. As a result of this sequence of happenings, the declining of Yoshida's influence was made ever clear. Before long the Hatoyama faction was able to stage a non-confidence vote against the government on March 14, 1953, which consequently ended the first phase of the Liberals' internal embroilment centered on a struggle for party control.

In retaliation, Yoshida dissolved the Diet and called a general election for April 19. The ensuing campaign translated the party struggle into a contest for control of the government. The anti-Yoshida faction succeeded in splitting the liberals and claimed themselves the bearer of the party's banner under Hatoyama. Thus, in the 1953 election there were officially two Liberal parties, which conducted separate campaigns. Yoshida, though he failed to secure a parliamentary majority, won a Diet plurality and the right to form his fifth cabinet. It is worthy of notice here that what Yoshida Liberals lacked

197 Colton, op. cit., p. 44

for a majority was precisely the thirty-five seats won by the splinter Liberals. More significantly it was demonstrated in this election that any further success against Yoshida would require a political combination with reasonable prospects of forming a government. For as things stood after the voting, no role of a single splinter party would become sufficient to further menace Yoshida's position. On the other hand, it was believed by the Hatoyama faction that before securing a political combination opposition to Yoshida would be more effective from within rather than from without the party. Admitting these facts of political life "led Hatoyama and all but eight of Yoshida's most implacable foes back into the party fold in November 1953".¹⁹⁸

Yoshida's position became vulnerable, but not until the outburst of a series of scandals in December 1953 which robbed him of a major weapon against his opponents. Most damaging to Yoshida were charges of political outrages involving contributions to party coffers from government subsidies to the shipbuilding industry.¹⁹⁹ This brought into doubt his reputation of being concerned only with the national welfare. By the middle of 1954, the record of continuous political wrangling over two years

198 Colton, op. cit., p. 44

199 Ibid., p. 45

had already destroyed the belief that Yoshida alone was most capable of preserving political stability. Business and industrial groups began to cast about for a substitute. All added up to Yoshida's waning influence. The legislative record of the government in 1952 made the situation even worse. It was in this year that the government revised the police laws to re-introduce centralization, amended the anti-monopoly law and educational laws to curb the political power of the left-inclined Japan's Teachers Union, and publicly indicated a desire to abolish by legislation the popular election of prefectural governors in favour of their appointment.²⁰⁰ In short, Yoshida government had created an impression which tended to confirm the public fear of a backfire program to turn back the post-surrender reforms.

While Yoshida's influence was at its low ebb, the Progressive party (Kaishinto), on the other hand, also failed to develop into a majority political force. This Progressives' failure made the essential cooperation later with Hatoyama faction possible and contributed to a final assault upon Yoshida's rule. This party was organized on February 8, 1952, with its origin going back to the Progressive party (Shimpoto) in the early post-surrender

200 Ibid., p. 45

period, and still further back to Minseito in the prewar era. It was expected that the effectiveness of personal and organizational efforts would revive the Minseito influence and it was hoped that the party's new president, Manoru Shigemitsu, chosen by ex-Minseito depurgees in June would rally popular support.²⁰¹ More interesting, the choice of Shigemitsu raised hopes that "the prominence of his name, sympathy for his role at the war crimes trial and his reputation as a skilled diplomat and a friend of the western democracies would provide an effective challenge to Yoshida".²⁰² In fact, these expectations were never realized. Prior to the October 1952 elections, the party had only 68 seats in the lower house. Although the party's membership increased to 85 after the elections, it dropped again to 76 in the April 1953 elections. The disappointing results of the two elections demonstrated that the Minseito prewar influence in politics had been effectively overshadowed by post-war development in the Liberal and to a lesser degree, in the other conservative parties. The effort to establish the Progressive party as a major force had thus failed. By then, the frustrated Progressives changed their early rejection to the splinter Liberal party's overture for cooperation and were ready to

201 Colton, op. cit., p. 46

202 Ibid., p. 46

grasp Hatoyama's hand. The two groups finally combined to form the Japan Democratic party (Nihon Minshuto) on November 23, 1954, with Hatoyama as its president.²⁰³ On this occasion, further reinforcement was brought into the new party by Miki and Kishi who succeeded in splitting the Liberals and played an important role in founding the Democratic party.²⁰⁴ As a result, the party secured 185 seats in the Diet and, in a temporary alliance with the Socialists, they finally secured enough votes to force Yoshida's resignation in December of the same year.²⁰⁵

The most significant development in post-1952 conservative politics was then reached in its final stage. With the formation of the Democratic party, a merger of the long-divided movement of the conservatives had been proved possible. As a result of the fall of Yoshida, the prospect of a complete union of all the conservative forces was brightened. The mounted pressures of such a development was not long in coming after the February 27, 1955, general elections. In this election, the Liberal party, with Ogata replacing Yoshida as its president, fell to 112 seats. If the Socialist reunification, then in process of negotiation, came into existence, the Liberal

203 Ibid., p. 47

204 "The Men behind Hatoyama",
This is Japan, pp. 62;63

205 Colton, op. cit., p. 47

party would shrink into a third place among the Diet parties, and its position would likely become analogous to that of the Progressives prior to November 1954: it would be confronted with prolonged frustration in opposition or worse, oblivion, if its membership dwindled further. More important, "a collapse of the Hatoyama cabinet would probably bring to power the Socialists rather than the Liberals".²⁰⁶ In the face of this threat, most of the remaining Liberals became anxious for a complete conservative union. In this way, what the Democratic party had lacked for a Diet majority the Liberals could easily provide. Above all, both groups wanted to forestall a Socialist government from coming to power. When the two wings of the Socialist party reunited in October and had a membership only 31 seats short of the Democratic strength in the lower house, the matter became still more urgent. The conservatives thus hastily merged in November 1955 to form the Liberal-Democratic party (Jiyu Minshuto) and it enjoyed an absolute majority numbering 299 in the Diet.²⁰⁷ Of greatest significance, the two mergers had produced a two-party system for the first time in Japanese parliamentary history.

206 ibid., p. 47

207 Colton, op. cit., p. 47

Although the political, social and economic conditions in Japan justified and warranted the coexistent rivalry of political forces advocating 'Laissez-faire' conservatism on one hand and state socialism under democratic process on the other, they did not seem to warrant the development of political forces advocating communism. Nevertheless, the Communist party, though a splinter, still continued to struggle for its survival. Its policy was also marked with a change since the signing of the peace treaty. Before then the Communist party "announced that its program would concentrate on peaceful evolutionary change rather than on an immediate proletarian revolution".²⁰⁸ But this so-called 'peaceful revolution policy' was not really a gesture to show the gratitude for its liberation to the occupation policy under which the Communists were, for the first time, permitted to organize as a party and their leaders were either released from prison or allowed to return home from exile. The Communists adopted a 'peaceful' policy rather because of the fact that they were uncertain about their strength after being long oppressed, and more significantly because under the unique occupation circumstances the

208 Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, p. 406

Japanese Communist party had been given special dispensation by Moscow at the time when the International Communist line had become more militant in 1948.²⁰⁹ Even so the Communist party had intrinsically the intention neither to be peaceful nor to be independent during its 'peaceful revolution' period. The Communists had no intention of genuine 'peaceful evolution' since this policy was regarded as no more than a type of tactics. With changing conditions the Communists believed that "the approach must also change".²¹⁰ Still the more so, Nozaka, leader of the party, stated in 1949 that to pursue a 'peaceful revolution policy' was only for the purpose to "facilitate the development of conditions for direct revolution and make possible the seizure of power".²¹¹ As a matter of fact, the Japanese Communists, like their counterparts in many other countries, were more anxious in action than in words. Not long after they had secured an official stand as a legal party, they seized upon the opportunity of the occupation reform policy to infiltrate some of the newly organized labor movements. In a belief that the poverty, discontent, and hardship of

209 Swearingen, R., "Japanese Communism and the Moscow-Peking Axis", The Ann. Am. Aca., p. 64

210 Swearingen, op. cit., p. 64

211 Ibid., p. 64

post-war Japan were fertile ground for the growth of communist dogma, the Communists intended to further promote such a situation by planning a general strike scheduled on February 1, 1947. The attempted general strike was, however, avoided only at the last moment by the personal intervention of General MacArthur.

By ordering them to desist, he made the following statement:

"A general strike in the present impoverished and emaciated condition of Japan, the fatal impact of such extreme measures upon an already gravely threatened public welfare, crippling transportation and communications, would prevent the movement of food to feed the people and of coal to sustain the essential utilities, and would stop such industry as is still functioning. The paralysis which would inevitably result might reduce large masses of the Japanese people to the point of actual starvation, and would produce dreadful consequences upon every Japanese home, regardless of social strata, or direct interest in the basic issue... The persons involved in the threatened general strike are but a small minority of the Japanese people. Yet this minority might well plunge the great masses into a disaster not unlike that produced in the immediate past by the minority which led Japan into the destruction of war."²¹²

By so doing, MacArthur placed his case squarely before the Japanese people, and by so doing, he won a showdown with the Communists. The nation at large, including the rank and file of labour, responded whole-heartedly to his

212 Whitney, C., MacArthur, His Rendezvous with History, pp. 270-71

command and rendered him their full support. The threatened general strike inspired by the Communists thus collapsed.

The Communist trouble-making, however, came to a climax in 1949 with a gigantic strike against Japan's railways, where the Communists had a foothold in a large union. As a result of this, "not only did railway workers walk out, but switches were loosened, wires were cut, and derailments were attempted".²¹³ Yet their most ruthless conduct was demonstrated in the case of Shimoyama's death, who was, then the president of the Japanese National Railways, found murdered on the rail-track. Like a bolt from the blue, both the public and SCAP were caught by shock. The Communists' ruthless tactics astonished the public and as a result their slim popularity became even thinner; their restoration to violence and direct action alarmed the occupation authority and as a result it viewed the lawlessness and stated aims of the Communists as beyond the protection of the law.²¹⁴ In view of this, General MacArthur ordered the Japanese government to ban the twenty-four members of the Central Committee of the Communist party together with some other leading figures from engaging in political activity. In

213 Whitney, op. cit., p. 308

214 Borton, op. cit., pp. 341-342

consequence of this purge, the Communist leaders once again went underground. Thus, while expressing overtly the intention to collaborate unreservedly with the occupying authority, the Communists were not bound by their pledge of pursuing a 'peaceful policy'.

On the other hand, neither was the Communist party independent. Although the Japanese Communists, in line with the new post-war policy, deliberately attempted to reduce their formal, visible ties with the Soviet Union, "there is sufficient evidence to support that the basic relationship remained unchanged".²¹⁵ In this respect, the suddenness of Moscow's 'suggestion' for a shift to a more positive policy in 1950 gave a driving-home proof. In an editorial in the late official Cominform journal, the Japanese Communist party was bluntly told in the following language:

"For a 'Lasting Peace', for a 'People's Democracy'...the Japanese party would have to improve its discipline and ideological level, become more militant and active, stop toying with occupation and with unreliable social democrats elements (and above all) publicly declare its dedication to the Soviet cause." 216

In his response, Nozaka duly admitted that his party had committed grave mistakes and bowed to the Cominform's

215 Swearingen, op. cit., p. 64

216 Ibid., p. 64

criticism by stressing that "we must ... fulfill the important mission assigned to the Communist party of Japan as a link in the international revolutionary movement".²¹⁷

It soon became apparent that once revealed in their true nature the Japanese Communists were immediately exposed to two major disadvantages: for its positive policy, the Communist party evoked a resentment among the great mass of the people and hence became unpopular; for its connection with Moscow, the existing national feeling of a traditional dislike and dread of Russia as the enemy and rival of Japan proved to be another obstacle in the Communist path to popularity.²¹⁸ At this point, perhaps no incident would shed more light on the declining Communist position since 1949 than the results of the 1952 general elections. In this election, the Communists failed to win even a single seat, whereas in the previous Diet they had held 22 seats. It was the biggest ballot-box defeat ever suffered by any Communist party since W.W. II.²¹⁹ More precisely, as General MacArthur said some years ago, Communism had its full chance and on its

217 Ibid., p. 64

218 Tracy, H., Kakemono, A Sketch Book of Post-War Japan, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1950, p. 145

219 Time, op. cit., p. 29

merits so far had failed.²²⁰ The Communist party even lost the support of the labour forces, on which rested its only logical meaning of existence. The anti-conservative votes went for the left-wing Socialists rather than for the Communists.

220 Wakefield, H., New Paths for Japan, p. 138

V

CONCLUSION

On the whole, will the parliamentary system in accordance with democratic process survive in Japan? This is a question which has attracted the attention of many experienced observers. Ever since the occupation era began there have been arguments with regard to the future of constitutional democracy in Japan. One contention, based on the historical record of absolutism and successful totalitarianism, argued that "Japan has established as yet no strong and reliable democratic tradition".²²¹ The conservative attempted reversion seemed to lend support to this argument. However, in interesting contrast, another observer, using the same historical background of Japanese party movement, but with different emphasis, draws the following conclusion:

"... the Japanese already have shown the ability by their own efforts to lay the foundations of an imperfect but substantial constitutional structure. ... They also are characterized by marked capacity for group action and for the various arts of conciliation, compromise which play a vital part in any government by consent. All these traditions should be regarded as potential assets, ..." ²²²

221 Bronfenbrenner, M., Prospects of Japanese Democracy, Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Toronto, 1955, p.10

222 Harvard University ed., Japan's Prospect, Harvard University Press, Mass., 1946, p.331.

This argument chiefly draws its support from a comparison made between the Japanese constitutional experience with that of the West, mainly of England. It is believe that the two cases for the most part are analogous.²²³ A third point of view, since the re-organization of Japan's political forces, has based its optimism on the establishment of a two-party system in Japan after 1955; it believes that democracy in Japan will survive as long as such a system continues to exist.²²⁴

Rightly or wrongly, neither of these arguments possess a thorough or satisfactory conclusion. If the first two viewpoints were both valid; the former stressing the historical record of absolutism, and the latter a like course as necessarily leading to a like result - in comparing the Japanese constitutional experience with that of England - they are bound to cancel each other out. The third contention merely hails the emergence of a two-party system in Japan. There is little doubt about the importance of this point of view, though it is by no means indispensable. The two-party system is the best form of preserving a democratic political process, but it is not essential, for democratic institutions have survived worse

223 *Ibid.*, pp. 308; 314-17.

224 Kublin, H., "Japanese Politics and the Socialist Minority", *Yale R.*, June '57, p.384

difficulties in other countries, France being an obvious example. Therefore, what is of fundamental importance for the survival of democratic institutions is the popular basis of parliamentary government.. Although the second argument has barely touched this point, much of its importance in connection with the evolution of party politics in Japan has yet to be developed. In this respect it has been therefore the attempt of this undertaking to elaborate systematically before a conclusion can be reached.

In the early discussion of this study, the failure of the party movement in prewar Japan has been based chiefly on the factors of militarism, ultra nationalism, and above all, the lack of popular support. Also along these lines, the second half of the discussion has been devoted to probing into the changes brought about in the post war period. Now the balance sheet perhaps can be drawn with reference to the foregoing analysis. If the prewar situation has been effectively altered and the difficulties have been overcome by the occupation-nourished reforms, the foundation of a sound development of party politics has, then, been established. Together with the emergence of a two-party system, democracy in Japan may be by all odds most promising.

First of all, there have been expressions of skepticism concerning the genuineness of Japan's post-war political reconstruction and alarm at an apparent tendency to revert to the old order. To some extent, both the skepticism and alarm are not wholly unjustified, because as demonstrated in the immediate post-occupation period, "the Japanese Government and Diet are in the process of revising many occupation inspired laws and reforms, some of them substantially".²²⁵ Examples of this are the passage of the Antisubversive Activity Law in 1952, the reversion of centralized police system in 1954, a reversion to prewar educational policies, and the revival of the Zaibatsu.²²⁶ On the other hand, however, neither should this reversion tendency be over-simplified as purely a sign of a reactionary upsurge, nor should its importance be over-estimated as a wholesale reversion to the old order. For one thing, in the light of the suitability of some reforms and of the changed domestic and international conditions, "this is a perfectly normal readjustment".²²⁷

225 Willoughby, C.A., and Chamberlain, J., MacArthur 1941-51, p.340.

226 Borton, H., Japan's Modern Century, pp.462-3. Kumamoto, Y., "The Zaibatsu - Past, Present and Future" This is Japan, p.54

227 Willoughby, C.A., and Chamberlain, J., op. cit., p.340.

It is interesting to note here that the Communist inspired 'May Day riots' in 1952 had virtually strengthened the support for the passage of the Antisubversive Activity Bill.²²⁸ For another thing, in spite of all the current talk of possible change, no evidence has indicated that any section of the government or any responsible quarter of popular opinion "advocates restoring the sovereignty to the Emperor, or reducing the Diet to its former status of impotence".²²⁹

Above all, the conservative-attempted constitutional revision and the issue of rearmament have so far failed of realization. The fact of these failures shows that the Socialist party can array behind it enough popular support to forestall such policies, and that clearly those basic reforms are responsive to Japanese needs and desires. So long as the new constitution remains in effect, it is the keystone in the arch of popular politics. Within its framework, the power of the national Diet, though it may not be a measure of wisdom, is surely a safeguard against most forms of arbitrary rule. So far as the popular will is against

228 Borton, op. cit., p.446

229 Willoughby, and Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 340.

the issue of rearmament, however, unsound as it may be in reasoning, it proves the existence of a force opposed to a possible revival of militarism and ultra-nationalism under which the popular party movement had been stifled in the past. All these facts point to one possible explanation, that it accords with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people at large.

It is therefore an undeniable fact, admitted even by the most hostile critics, that the Japanese people have by and large awakened to political consciousness. They are behaving differently now that their habits and attitudes in political life have undergone remarkable transformation. In contrast to the past, they have not only shown their eagerness to experiment with new institutions but also made their voting power a decisive factor in national politics. Firstly, they abandoned preference for personalities in favour of preference for party sponsored candidates and thereby curbed the insignificant activities of splinter parties and independents. As a result, their dislike of the extreme leftist movement has brought about almost a fatal defeat to the Communist party in 1952, from which the Communists never recovered. Thirdly, and most important, they have swung

their support from the Communists to the Socialists and made their choice of a moderate course, "which would ensure preservation of freedom and the enhancement of individual liberty".²³⁰ The significance of this is the strengthening of the Social Democratic party's position, which made the later development of a stabilized party system possible.

While the Japanese people are progressing in the direction of exercising their sovereign power, the political parties, on the other hand, act accordingly to appeal to them for support. The efforts to broaden the party's organizational bases in both camps may, perhaps, serve as the best illustration. When the Social Democratic party was transformed into a national party by extension beyond the large urban centres, the conservatives immediately followed suit after their merger. They not only made necessary efforts to increase the importance of the national organization, but also succeeded in establishing a permanent prefectural branch office in each province, with its aim chiefly to recruit young men and women. This project is a new trend of development in conservative politics. With the two major parties undergoing a 'reach to the people' campaign for the purpose of power, it

230 Wakefield, H., New Paths for Japan, p.138

suggests to many Japanese "not only a way of realizing political hope but also a new opportunity to participate actively in political affairs".²³¹ Undoubtedly, it is a significant step towards the development of a popular government.

The growth or retrogression of democratic practices depends, of course, upon many other factors, such as the economic conditions, international relations (with particular regard to the East-West conflict) and the expansion of Communism in Asia, which will certainly affect the future of representative institutions in Japan. But all of the resulting issues reach well beyond the sphere of politics. What can safely be said, however, is that in so far as the pre-conditions of constitutional democracy are concerned, the post-war development in Japan has made remarkable headway in the direction of producing a popular basis which was non-existent in the past. By exercising their sovereign right, the Japanese people have proved to be the primary source of political power. With the establishment of a two-party system, the political process under the parliamentary system has thus become stabilized. Should other influential factors also remain favourable, in prospect, democracy in Japan is likely to flourish.

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